tion's budget request not been overturned, major aspects of inertial fusion research would have been curtailed, DOE officials say. According to one program official, the newly completed Nova laser at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory alone requires a budget in excess of $50 million annually to operate productively.

Congressional action for the coming fiscal year, which begins 1 October, combined with a positive Academy report, could discourage the Administration from seeking a massive cut in the 1987 program budget. The Academy expects to complete a final report on the inertial confinement fusion program this fall. The Administration must submit it to Congress by January.—**Mark Crawford**

British Scientists Urge Supercomputer Program

British scientists are asking the government to support the creation of a national center for advanced computing, equipped with one of the latest American supercomputers. They are also demanding that a special committee be established to devise a long-term national strategy for the use of advanced computers, and that significant new funds be allocated to upgrading Britain's existing interuniversity computer network.

The recommendations have been made in a report prepared by a group of university and industry scientists at the joint request of the three bodies concerned with the use of computers in research.* Its main conclusion is that Britain is currently in danger of falling behind other Western nations, particularly the United States and Japan, in many fields of advanced research—both in fundamental science and its industrial applications—because of the lack of adequate advanced computing facilities.

There are, for example, only two supercomputers currently available to university researchers, both now outdated and heavily oversubscribed, compared to five in West Germany. Government civilian research laboratories in Britain only have access to one such machine, while similar institutions in the United States have 20 at their disposal.

In order to stop Britain falling further behind, the committee, which was chaired by Alex Forty of the University of Warwick, argues that the government should spend an extra $66.5 million over the 5 years 1986–1990, a figure broadly comparable—in terms of computing power per scientist—to that which has recently been committed by the National Science Foundation in the United States.

Of this sum, $21 million would be used to purchase a Cray X-MP multiprocessor system to be installed at the Science and Engineering Council's Rutherford Appleton Laboratory, for use by both academic and industrial research workers. In addition, $11.2 million would be spent over the 5 years to introduce high-speed trunk lines between major research centers and to install fast local area networks and faster switches.

The commitee suggests that a second stage, involving the installation of a second supercomputer in 1990, should be considered in 1988, designed to take advantage of new developments in supercomputers such as the Cray 2 and 3, CDC's ETA 10, and their competitors from Japan. This second stage would cost an extra $28 million.

Members of the committee emphasized last week that the provision of adequate advanced computing facilities was vitally important for all fields of research, and it was for this reason that additional funds were being sought from the government, rather than asking the separate research councils to provide the money.

"We should look upon supercomputers as a general enabling technology, rather than a tool with specific applications," said Alistair Macfarlane, professor of engineering at Cambridge University.

The report does not mention any difficulties that could arise if the U.S. government decides to apply restrictions on those who are allowed to use American-built state of the art machines. In terms of ad hoc use by foreign individuals or groups, the report states that "the principle of free access according to merit . . . is something that we would wish to safeguard." Research proposals would be referred to a peer-review body and "assessed strictly on merit in competition with other applications."

A spokesman for the Department of Education and Science, the government agency that would be responsible for the operation of a national advanced computer center, described the suggestion that the United States might insist on restrictions being applied to those who were allowed access to such a machine as "far-fetched."—**David Dickson**

*"Future Facilities for Advanced Research Computing," published by the Science and Engineering Research Council, Polaris House, North Star Avenue, Swindon SN2 1ET.

Ohio State's Telescope Granted 10-year Reprieve

Ohio State University's radio telescope, which has been under threat of demolition for more than 2 years to make way for a golf course, has been granted at least a 10-year reprieve from the bulldozers. The future of the instrument, popularly known as Big-ear, has been uncertain ever since the land on which it sits was abruptly sold to the Delaware Country Club by Ohio State's neighboring seat of higher learning, Ohio Wesleyan University (*Science*, 18 February 1983, p. 821).

The club, which bought a large tract of land from Ohio Wesleyan for residential and recreational development, wanted the telescope removed so that it could expand a nine-hole golf course to 18 holes. The resulting publicity sparked a rescue effort by a committee consisting mostly of local businessmen, which culminated in the signing on 9 August of a 10-year lease with an option to renew for another 10 years.

But the instrument's future is still somewhat uncertain. According to John Kraus, an emeritus professor who is director of the observatory, no money has yet been set aside to pay for the lease ($6000 a year for the next 5 years and $9000 a year for the 5 years after that) or to reconnect the water and telephone services, which have been cut off. As for operating expenses, Kraus says that he hopes soon to apply for some grants. He has plans to use the telescope to monitor radio frequencies from comet Halley's hydroxyl radical clouds and to conduct a complete sky survey. The signing of the lease, he says, "is certainly a turn for the better,"—**Colin Norman**