

offers of collaboration, which can mean little more than working as a subcontractor.

"The advantage of starting at the research end is that it is relatively inexpensive, but it is also likely to raise the question: Is this another SDI-type program, where the United States is trying to buy all our ideas on the cheap," says Hartley. "I am not saying that is necessarily the case; but some people will certainly use that argument."

David Greenwood, director of the Center for Defense Studies at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland, warns that the Nunn initiative "is a potential distraction from intra-European cooperation" which, he argues, remains essential if Europe is to strengthen its own technological capabilities. "One way around this would be to add a clause to the amendment saying that the United States would not try to take a slice of any cooperative deal unless two or more European countries are already involved—even if the United States offer has acted as a catalyst," suggests Greenwood.

Nevertheless, Beard of NATO says "the mood is there." He suggests that, with broad political endorsement of the first six projects, "we have run the first 10 yards of a 100-yard race." With a firm deadline of September 1987 by which formal contracts must be negotiated in order to qualify for the Nunn amendment funding, and progress being closely monitored from Brussels, "there is going to be some banging of heads together" to get things to work, says Beard. ■ **DAVID DICKSON**

Briefing:

David Packard Tackles OMB on Indirect Costs

"The [Office of Management and Budget] did precisely what we recommended they not do," when it proposed a uniform cap of 26% on the administrative costs that universities recover on research grants, says David Packard, chairman of a panel of the White House Science Council. The Hewlett-Packard board chairman, whose panel is about to release its study of "The Health of U.S. Universities and Colleges," is one of the most influential persons to step into the very heated debate that is taking place between universities and OMB officials.

The forthcoming Science Council report will recommend a cap on administrative costs, which constitute about half of total indirect costs. But, by singling out this one recommendation, the OMB has distorted the intent of the report, in Packard's view.

"The OMB lacks any understanding of what the problem is all about," according to Packard.

Placing emphasis on the report's recommendations as an "integrated package," Packard said, "In suggesting a fixed administrative overhead allowance, we also recommended important measures to inject reality into the way research costs are identified and paid for." For instance, the report, which was circulated in draft form in January (*Science*, 31 January, p. 447), recommends a shift to longer term grants (5 years), an end to the administratively burdensome reporting by faculty of how they spend their time, and a new formula for more rapid depreciation of buildings and scientific equipment.

Packard's comments were made during an interview with Spyros Andreopoulos, director of communications at Stanford Medical Center and were released by the university. D. Allan Bromley of Yale is vice chairman of the Science Council panel.

The rates charged for administrative costs vary from institution to institution, with most exceeding the 26% cap that OMB proposed earlier this year in a move that took university administrators by surprise. Robert Rosenzweig, president of the Association of American Universities, has called the OMB proposal "arbitrary and capricious" (*Science*, 7 March, p. 1059). Various estimates have been made of the total impact on academic research, were the cap to stick. Most recently, Stanford president Donald Kennedy put the figure at \$300 million, with 40% concentrated in fewer than a dozen institutions.

OMB's original plan was to cap administrative charges at 26% as of 1 April, fewer than 6 weeks after the proposal was made public. However, strong opposition from universities, backed by pressure from members of Congress, forced OMB to grant a stay of execution until 1 July (*Science*, 4 April, p. 17). Now the budget office is considering comment from all quarters, including "scientific professionals who would have less opportunity to pursue research if overhead continues to climb."

At present, there is reason to speculate that implementation of the OMB cap may be delayed even further while the issue is more fully debated. In the House of Representatives, Sidney R. Yates (D-IL) has introduced an amendment to an important supplemental money bill that would mandate a delay. The congressman objected to the "arbitrariness" of OMB's action, which was taken without consulting the affected universities.

And Packard is talking to OMB to "see if we can get this thing turned around." ■

BARBARA J. CULLITON

NAS Signs New Pact with Soviet Academy

After a year of negotiation, the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) has reached agreement with the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. on a new program of scientific cooperation. The 2-year pact, signed on 1 April, will be the first formal arrangement between the academies since 1980, when the previous program was partially suspended by the NAS as a protest against the treatment of Andrei Sakharov.

In a telephone interview, NAS president Frank Press listed the principal features of the new program. "Both sides will have access to the scientists who are at the forefront of key fields," Press said. This will be accomplished, the agreement says, through exchanges of up to 20 scientists per year for visits of 2 weeks to 12 months, all of whom are "known by their scientific publications and by their participation in scientific meetings." Reflecting an NAS concern that past Soviet nominees for the exchange have not always been at the forefront, the agreement notes that "an important and significant portion" of the exchanges will occur by invitation of the other side.

In addition, the pact calls for up to two joint workshops per year in each country, involving roughly ten scientists, and an annual exchange of six members, specially designated as "Academy Scholars," who will consult and conduct public lectures for 2-4 weeks on problems of mutual interest. The entire arrangement will be reviewed at least once a year by the officers of the Academy, who are free to raise matters such as the "human rights environment," Press said.

A year ago, when the negotiations began, the NAS was sharply criticized by some of its members because Sakharov remained in exile (*Science*, 3 May 1985, p. 530). Richard Perle, an assistant secretary of defense for international security policy, also attacked the decision on the grounds that it could facilitate the transfer of sensitive U.S. technology.

The agreement addresses the latter criticism by specifying that the exchanges will be conducted only in "nonsensitive" or "open" fields. The NAS attempted to defuse the former argument by sending a telegram about Sakharov to members of the Soviet Academy several days after the new pact was announced. The telegram asks that Sakharov be allowed to resume his scientific work, and it was paired with an NAS press release listing similar appeals in the past.

A new approach is warranted, Press said, "because we had no channel of communication in the absence of an agreement. Our