different ways) in Britain, an important one I think, and also in Germany, and there's a wish in other countries too. But it's certain that the effort is strongest and most coherent in France".

On European cooperation, Fabius considers plans for the coordination of research in electronics, informatics and so on to be "good enough". The concrete consequence, the Brussels-inspired Esprit programme for research and development in new information technologies, "has the support of all the countries of Europe". There are a few "nuances" distinguishing the countries over methods of running the programme (for example, there are fears of creating a new bureaucracy) and "some financial problems", but on the fundamentals of the programme, there is agreement that it should devote "a great amount of resources" (1,500 million ECU) and that while Brussels will pay 50 per cent, industry must also pay 50 per cent "to guarantee involvement". Esprit, says Fabius, will concentrate on the "technology of the future".

Cooperation in big scientific equipment (as at the European Organization for Nuclear Research at Geneva) is already successful and may be extended. In political coordination "there is a favourable trend" and in common programmes "there are some very positive things" (such as Esprit). "But Europe, including France, does not want these programmes to be directed against anyone — they are for the countries of Europe. And since all countries are suffering from financial constraints, the question is more one of the better coordination of what exists than of raising massive new expenditures. In industry, things are more delicate; but in research and technology, very favourable."

What are the main problems facing his European policies? "First, national egotism and traditions; second, the fear in many countries of bureaucracy, of rigidity and of *dirigisme*. We must take care that this is not what happens, that we coordinate action with the governments retaining control and, above all, that we do not create jobs for civil servants."

The third obstacle is financial. "Financial constraints tend to induce governments to sacrifice the long term, but this is just the time when a government must emphasize the long term."

Fabius is also greatly interested in the opening-up of public markets in Europe (for example in telecommunications). "To say that we have European collaboration when public markets for high technology products stay completely closed is a contradiction that cannot be maintained for ever", said Fabius. "We must prepare for a certain reciprocity; I think this is one of the great directions of development."

As no doubt he might. Whatever the logic of his views in general, the French electronics and telecommunications industry, the leading edge of the French Government's drive into the twenty-first century, is desperately in need of new markets.

So did Fabius, when recently in London, discuss the forthcoming privatization of British Telecom (the nationalized British telecommunications monopoly)? "No, we discussed the opening of markets." And what was the reply? Fabius laughed. "The response was much faster on privatization than on opening markets. . .".

Robert Walgate

US universities

Academic lobby over pork barrel

Washington

AMERICAN universities are squaring up for what promises to be a bad-tempered argument about the way they compete for federal research funds. At a closed meeting in Los Angeles next week, presidents of the 50 elite research universities belonging to the Association of American Universities (AAO) will decide whether to reprimand two of their number for using congressional sleight of hand to win federal support for projects that would not otherwise have been funded.

The two universities, Columbia University in New York and Catholic University in Washington, caused uproar last May when they hired a professional lobbying firm to talk Congress into spending money on two projects that had not been reviewed by the federal science bureaucracy or routed through the specialist science committees (see *Nature* **303**, 272; 1983). Catholic received $5 million to start building a new vitreous state laboratory and Columbia received $5 million for new chemistry facilities.

Despite the small sums involved, the manoeuvre outraged both the White House and a number of fellow universities. The $5 million for Catholic's vitreous state laboratory was poached from the $26 million requested by presidential science adviser George Keyworth for the proposed National Center for Advanced Materials (NCAM) at Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory. Columbia's $5 million was cobbled together by raiding funds earmarked for upgrading Van de Graaff accelerators at Yale and Washington Universities and for other university instrumentation projects.

Many university presidents have remained angry enough to insist that AAU issue a statement on the affair, calling on members to curtail their individual lobbying efforts in Congress and to reaffirm the principle that scientific merit, not political clout, should determine the allocation of federal research funds. But the proposal is certain to provoke a fierce dispute at next week's meeting.

Columbia refused last week to comment on the AAU proposal but confirmed that it would continue to employ the Washington lobbying firm, Schlossberg–Cassidy and Associates, which masterminded its congressional campaign last May. Columbia's president, Michael Sovern, is known to believe that the university did nothing different in kind from the tactics regularly used by other major universities in promoting their interests in Congress.

The president of Catholic University, Father William Byron, is equally unrepentant. He maintained last week that it would be inappropriate for AAU, a voluntary membership body, to issue a statement that sought to regulate the activities of individual universities. Any statement AAU did formulate, he added, should draw a careful distinction between research programmes — which ought to be peer reviewed — and funds for buildings to house them. All the money Catholic and Columbia gained in May was for buildings.

A number of AAU members regard the distinction as casuistical. And they insist that the manoeuvres of Catholic and Columbia were an unusually brazen use of pork-barrel politics by institutions that should know better. Catholic's funds emerged only after the university mobilized the bishops among its trustees to press the merits of the vitreous state laboratory on their local congressmen. House speaker Tip O'Neill intervened personally to support the budget amendments.

According to Father Byron, the university would never have considered asking for the extra funds but for the controversy surrounding the White House proposal for NCAM, which had itself been rushed into the federal budget at the last moment and, in the view of many materials scientists, without having undergone adequate scientific review. While agreeing to provide funds for Catholic and Columbia, Congress chose to be high-minded about the absence of peer review for NCAM, and reduced the $26 million White House request to a mere $3 million.

Since then, Dr Keyworth has been forced to watch the NCAM proposal unravel still further. A Department of Energy panel, chaired by Albert Narath of Sandia Laboratories, has a produced a report that questions the chief idea behind NCAM — that materials research at Berkeley should be coupled in a single facility with an advanced new synchrotron light source.

According to the Narath panel, the materials research centre and the light source projects should be treated separately because the latter would constitute such a large undertaking that it could be expected to unbalance the activities of a single centre for materials research. The panel does recommend pressing ahead with Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory's plans for a new center but suggests calling it the Berkeley Center for Advanced Materials to reflect its more modest role. **Peter David**

0028-0836/83/420659-01$01.00