

Hudson Institute: Think Tank's Civil Defense Work Criticized

In an unusual effort to assess the value of work performed by a nonprofit "think tank," the General Accounting Office (GAO) has published a report* that ascribes shoddy thinking to the Hudson Institute Inc., headed by defense strategist Herman ("Thinking About the Unthinkable") Kahn. The GAO, which is the fiscal investigatory arm of Congress, states that seven recent civil defense studies prepared by Hudson were judged by the Office of Civil Defense to be "less useful than had been expected" or to require "major revision" before they were acceptable. Various Hudson studies were criticized for superficiality, for "tired thinking," for "sensationalism," and for lacking "immediate value." The criticisms are presented as the judgment of civil defense officials and are not specifically endorsed by GAO. However, Comptroller General Elmer Staats, in a cover letter, asserts that GAO's findings "illustrate the need for exercising careful control" over research contractors "so as to provide greater assurance that the reports obtained are truly useful."

The criticisms in the report are answered to some extent by a letter from Kahn, which is included in the appendices. Kahn argues primarily that Hudson's objective is to "stimulate the imagination" and that there is bound to be a relatively high rate of failure in the "rather speculative areas of study" the institute engages in. "Success should not be expected on every try . . . if the batting average gets too high, we believe that one should be suspicious that the work is not being imaginative and adventurous enough," Kahn writes. Kahn also suggests that there is an element of bureaucratic pride behind the criticisms of Hudson's work made by key officials of the Office of Civil Defense (OCD). "It is . . . characteristic of the kind of research that we are engaged in that it will cause negative reactions, in some cases, among the people concerned with the government

programs upon which we are commenting," he says.

The GAO says it decided to review Hudson's work because of congressional interest in the Defense Department's extensive use of "think factories" and because Hudson was "a significant contributor of think-factory-type reports" to the OCD. The institute, located in Croton-on-Hudson, New York, was organized in July 1961 by Kahn, a former member of the RAND Corporation's research staff and author of a number of books and articles on civil defense, nuclear war, and related matters. Hudson primarily engages in research related to national security and international order. In its first 5 years the institute received contracts worth \$5,741,000, of which \$5,154,000 came from government agencies and the rest from private sources.

From fiscal year 1962 through fiscal year 1966, the OCD awarded Hudson eight contracts, totaling \$1,721,147. The GAO reviewed three of these contracts, with a total estimated cost and fee of about \$600,000. GAO investigators interviewed responsible officials of the OCD, examined agency records pertaining to the three contracts, visited the Hudson Institute, examined its records, and interviewed its personnel with respect to the three contracts.

The key finding of the review was that seven of 11 study reports submitted by Hudson under the three contracts with OCD "were of limited usefulness or required extensive revision." Brief comments made by OCD officials on some of the reports follow:

► The director of OCD's systems evaluation division criticized a report on the rating of blast shelters because the author did not have sufficient knowledge of the subject area and the report added nothing to the state of the art. OCD refused to approve the report for publication.

► The previous director of OCD's systems evaluation division returned for major revision a report on the design of low-budget civil defense systems because the report appeared to be "a rehash of old, if not tired, ideas" and

because "sensationalism . . . is not appropriate in research papers."

► A report on low-cost fallout shelter systems was also returned for major revision because its assumptions were either obvious or unproved and its recommendations indicated Hudson was unaware of OCD's present activities.

► An operations research analyst criticized a study whose goal, according to Hudson, was to show the importance of peacetime preparations for the management of crisis programs, on the grounds that "such a goal has long been achieved."

► Another report was accepted for only limited distribution in order to preclude "loading bookshelves" with a report which the monitor deemed of no value on a subject he considered of no immediate significance. However, the monitor did acknowledge that the report presented "some interesting considerations."

► Another report presented hypotheses that "stirred the imagination" but was judged of "no immediate value to OCD operations or research."

After revisions were made, three of the seven reports were published and distributed within OCD and to other agencies and private groups interested in civil defense; three were distributed only within OCD; and one was accepted only as a "working paper," not as a final report.

In a mild letter responding to the GAO's findings, Joseph Romm, acting director of civil defense, states that the fact that a report is not cleared for general publication does not limit its value to OCD, but merely represents a judgment that the report is "not appropriate for general release." Romm also notes that GAO's comments on certain reports indicate "that the only value . . . is to stimulate thinking." Says Romm: "This is in fact not a limited value to OCD, but the basic purpose of research undertaken by organizations such as Hudson Institute."

The GAO put most of the blame for Hudson's "less-than-fully-satisfactory reports" on OCD's failure to ride herd closely on the institute. The GAO found that OCD's procedures for administering the contracts were sound but that "implementation of the procedures was inadequate." One problem was that the scope of the work as defined in the contracts was so broad that Hudson could perform work that was of little direct interest to OCD. Another problem was that OCD did not follow its own monitoring procedures. OCD personnel made few visits to Hudson dur-

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ing the course of the work, failed to hold formal conferences with Hudson, and received quarterly progress reports from Hudson that "provided very little information on what Hudson had done and what had been accomplished during the reporting periods." Finally, OCD's agreements with Hudson were often not put into writing, so that deviations from the objectives sought by OCD became more likely.

The GAO report recommends tighter administration in all these areas and notes that OCD has already taken steps to correct many of the problems. How-

ever, some OCD officials expressed the fear that any effort to define research objectives more specifically might inhibit creativity. And Kahn also argued that a speculative organization like Hudson "must be allowed an unusual degree of freedom to develop its thinking as it goes along." Kahn said Hudson is "only willing to take contracts that provide such scope for what we believe to be necessary to good work of this kind."

Nevertheless, the GAO report contends that objectives can be made more specific without limiting the contractor

to specific ways of accomplishing the objectives and "without unduly interfering with the researcher's freedom." Apparently the OCD leadership agrees, for it has issued instructions calling for OCD contract writers to include more "specific" and "definitive" descriptions of work objectives. The GAO expresses the belief that the various measures being taken by OCD "should ensure more useful research studies," but GAO is taking nothing for granted—it plans to "look into the effectiveness of the improved procedures at a later date."

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The Draft: Congress Unlikely To Change Current Policy

Unless the President takes action, which seems unlikely, Congress remains the only hope for modifying the draft regulations that are scheduled to go into effect 30 June. These regulations, issued in early February, end deferments for all students currently graduating from college or completing their first year of graduate school.

Congress, however, does not appear to be inclined to take up the problem of the draft, and, as a consequence, it seems reasonably certain that students are going to make up a sizable portion of military inductees. The Department of Defense (DOD) estimates that more than half of next year's projected draft call of 240,000 men will be comprised of students. What is uncertain and a matter of considerable contention is the numerical effect that this change in draft eligibility will have on graduate enrollments. The Department of Defense's Office of Procurement Policy and General Research estimates that the depletion in male enrollment will not exceed 15 percent. On the other hand, a report released 23 March by the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) stated that enrollments will be down by 50 to 70 percent from last year. The report, based on a survey conducted by CGS and the Scientific Manpower Commission, a private research organization, predicted that there will be more women than

men in first-year graduate classes for the first time since World War II. The survey included 122 graduate schools, representing nearly 40 percent of the total graduate enrollment in the country. The graduate-school officials were asked to give detailed estimates of what their enrollments would be if no draft-eligible men were enrolled next year.

According to one DOD official, the CGS survey is "totally unrealistic." He said it is wrong to assume that every student who loses his deferment will be drafted. "It would be physically impossible to draft all of them," the official said. DOD's estimate of 10- to 15-percent depletion in enrollment is based partly on the assumption that many students who are not drafted this summer will be allowed to start school in the fall and finish the year. However, spokesmen for the National Selective Service Headquarters have said that no provisions have been made, as yet, to permit drafted students to complete the school year before reporting for duty.

In Congress, a bill introduced by Senator Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) offers little hope that draft policy will be altered this year. Introduced in both the Senate (as S. 3052) and the House (as H.R. 15799), the bill would allow any students who are now vulnerable to the draft to continue their education. The Kennedy bill does not

call for the reissuance of graduate-student deferments, but it does seek to avoid a mass induction of students by reversing the order of draft selection. Under the current draft ruling, the oldest available men between the ages of 19 and 26 are drafted first. Since the vast majority of college seniors and graduate students are over 22, they are among the more vulnerable of prospective draftees. The Kennedy bill advocates drafting first the eligible 19- and 20-year-olds, though undergraduates would be permitted to keep their deferments while they are enrolled in college.

However, the Kennedy bill has already encountered formidable resistance, and its supporters are not optimistic about its chances of success. Representative Mendel Rivers (D-S.C.), chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, which has jurisdiction over all proposed draft legislation, told reporters shortly after the Kennedy bill was introduced that his committee did not intend to conduct hearings this session on draft legislation. Rivers, who gave no further explanation, has gone on record several times this year as opposing legislative change of the draft. If changes are to be made, Rivers believes, the law gives President Johnson ample freedom to make them. In a letter to Elvis Stahr, president of Indiana University, dated 1 February, Rivers stated that the President could adopt under the law "a modified young age system"—that is, draft younger men without recourse to legislative action. If Rivers remains unwilling to hold hearings on the Kennedy bill, its supporters could attempt to bypass the committee and bring the bill to a House floor debate. However, the action would require a two-thirds con-