

"An awful lot of very good people were fired," Fisher told a House hearing in 1974. "There was a purge in this agency, there is no question about it." He described the purge as part of an effort by Nixon's White House staffers to gain "personal control" over other areas of the executive branch. Another witness, Donald G. Brennan, of the Hudson Institute, an occasional consultant to ACDA, said he understood that "the people on the White House staff who were responsible for the purge were reacting against what they perceived to be an excessively liberal activism within the agency's upper reaches in the preceding year or two or three."

Whatever the reasons, the agency's current status is viewed as something of a disappointing low by many of its supporters in Congress. As Clement J. Zablocki (D-Wisc.), the key House figure behind the amendments, expressed it earlier this year: "I recently was at a briefing in the executive branch and, seeing the National Security Council chart, I asked: 'Where is the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency?' I couldn't even see a slot for it. And the briefer said: 'Oh, it must be here somewhere.' We finally found it in [small] type way down at the bottom."

An analysis of the agency's achievements and problems was prepared in 1974 for Zablocki's Subcommittee on National Security Policy and Scientific Developments by George Berdes, the subcommittee's staff consultant, and Philip Farley, former deputy director of ACDA. Their two principal criticisms were (i) that ACDA "has not played a sufficiently imaginative and independent adversary role within the executive branch, and has not carried its disagreements often or vigorously to the Congress and public;" and (ii) that ACDA, and the entire executive branch for that matter, "have not subjected defense proposals (weapons systems, deployments, and strategies or policies) to a sufficiently balanced, rigorous, and analytic adversary process, both as to their impact on arms control and foreign relations and as to their intrinsic merits."

They also questioned the "special skills, experience, or motivation" of many of the agency's top officers, expressed doubts about the effectiveness of the agency's research program, and noted that ACDA generally "takes the executive branch party line" in public discussions.

These and other alleged weaknesses were argued over at hearings before the House subcommittee in 1974 and 1975 and at similar hearings before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. There were also quiet negotiations between Congress and the executive branch. In the process,

some of the original proposals for amending the 1961 act so as to strengthen ACDA got watered down to win broader acceptance. Ultimately, the House approved its version of the amendments on 9 July 1975 by an overwhelming vote of 382 to 28, and the Senate approved a weaker version on 11 September by 76 to 8. Then, surprisingly, the House-Senate conference committee, convened to reconcile the two bills, took what arms control advocates consider the toughest provisions from each

and combined them into a "highest common denominator bill."

The most controversial provision of the act as it became law is the one which requires that an "arms control impact" statement be filed every time a government agency—most often this would be the Defense Department or the Energy Research and Development Administration—submits a legislative or budgetary proposal to Congress for an important weapons system or other military program. Such im-

## Private Colleges Holding Their Own

Private colleges and universities have not become the disaster area that everyone was predicting in the late 1960's, according to a report released by the Association of American Colleges.\* The AAC, in the first of a series of annual reports it plans on the state of private higher education, says a survey of 100 institutions, excluding the larger research universities, shows that while things are not exactly rosy, the private sector is "still a viable and sturdy part of the American system of higher education."

The general picture is one of gradual, but not alarming, financial erosion, and the chief problem for most institutions is maintaining enrollment in the face of intense competition with public institutions.

The study, headed by educational economist Howard R. Bowen, was conducted to ameliorate the lack of reliable data relating to the health of the independent sector. It covers the academic years 1969-70 to 1973-74.

Among the findings:

- Student enrollment, after a gain in the late 1960's, has held "remarkably steady," although there has been a shift toward higher numbers of students in graduate and professional courses.

- SAT scores of entering students are lower, but in line with the nationwide increase in student ignorance and illiteracy.

- Student bodies have abandoned the disruptive behavior of the 1960's, are generally more mature and highly motivated. Their main problems are rising alcohol consumption, nonpayment of bills, and, as one respondent put it, "sex folkways disenchanting to donors."

- Faculty salaries have gone up 33 percent, a little behind the cost of living. Faculty-student ratios have declined slightly.

- Competition with the public sector, both for funds and for students, has become "less gentlemanly," and promises to intensify.

- Investments in clerical and support services have increased disproportionately to investments in curriculum improvement, largely because of annoying amounts of paperwork attendant upon government support and intrusion.

- The 10 predominantly Negro institutions in the sample have made the most rapid progress in revenues because of increased government aid.

- Additions and expansions to academic programs are overwhelmingly more numerous than deletions and retrenchments.

- Small liberal arts colleges are having the hardest time of it, both in terms of enrollments and finances.

The report says a remarkably small number of schools—16 accredited ones out of a total of 866—went defunct in the 5-year period, and although 27 percent of the sample are in "serious trouble," it is not predicted that all are headed for extinction.

The AAC hopes to add major research universities and professional schools to its future surveys, and intends to confront the question as to whether private institutions are in jeopardy of losing their uniqueness in their struggle to remain competitive.—C.H.

\*The report is available for \$1 from the AAC, 1818 R Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20009.