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NEWS AND COMMENT

Housing: Defense Department Starts New Research Program

One of the durable political realities in government support of research is that the Department of Defense (DOD) is accorded a relatively large degree of sovereignty in picking what it wants to research, where, and under what circumstances. A case in point is one of the latest DOD ventures into research, a small but ambitious program in what might seem to be an area remote from military affairs—the design and construction of three- and four-bedroom middleclass-style houses.

Ironically, when the Commerce Department sought to establish a similar program during the Kennedy administration, Congress, egged on by lobbyists from established producers of building materials, flatly refused to appropriate the requested funds (*Science*, 28

June 1963). Since then, of course, times have changed a good deal; government is deep in research areas that once drew automatic congressional ire. But perhaps even more important is the fact that DOD, though not free of congressional impediments and restraints, enjoys a latitude of operation that is not available to other government agencies. National security, though not an infallible talisman for securing appropriations, is nevertheless a very good one, and along with it comes not only money but also a beneficent congressional indifference and permissiveness toward what happens to the money. In the case of its housing program, DOD did not seek congressional permission; rather, it merely informed several relevant congressmen of its in-

tention to go ahead, and, in the absence of any opposition from them, went ahead. And for the relatively minor amount of money involved at this point—\$200,000 for preliminary studies—it did not have to seek a specific authorization or appropriation, but was able to draw this sum from general funds.

In many respects DOD's presence in housing research is quite logical, since the Department is very probably the country's biggest landlord and home-builder: It owns some 370,000 units of housing for service families and every year constructs, as replacements and additions, another 8000 to 10,000 units. Since the home-construction business regularly and deservedly wins honors as one of the most antiquated and technology-resistant segments of the economy, Defense cannot be faulted for looking out for itself in attempting to keep down costs and hold up quality. Not without justification, it has been said that, because of restrictive building codes, work-stretching union regulations, and the fragmentation of the industry among thousands of small contractors, home-building today is the one major industry in which an 18th-century workman could show up at a job site, work with his own tools, and earn his pay.

DOD, however, is relatively immune to many of the factors that produce technological backwardness in the housing industry. Building on its own tracts, and free to ignore many of the vested-interest requirements that afflict home building, it can strive for the systems approach in housing, and tell prospective contractors, as it did in announcing the program, that "Statutory limitations, building codes and other criteria restrictions currently in effect should not prohibit contractors from developing conceptual designs which provide maximum cost benefits in construction, operation and maintenance while maintaining high livability standards and maximum standardization."

Three Contracts Awarded

Specifically, following a competition specially aimed at arousing the interest of universities, technologically advanced firms outside the housing industry, and established firms within the field, Defense has awarded three contracts, for a total of \$200,000, aimed at obtaining "a significant reduction in the unit cost of military housing by the utilization of new materials, advanced technologies and other innovations without reducing quality or livability. . . ." The specifications add that "achievement of this goal will aid the entire Nation in solving its mass housing problem, as well as benefit the Department of Defense." The recipients of the contracts were (i) a consortium headed by Karl Koch and Associates of Boston, with Kaiser Industries, National Gypsum, and the Battelle Memorial Institute; (ii) the General Electric Company; and (iii) the University of Michigan and the Aerojet General Corporation.

The preliminary studies are now either completed or close to completion, and, if they are considered satisfactory, the next step will be to draw up a more extensive program that will be submitted to Congress as part of the Department's fiscal 1969 budget.

DOD's venture into housing research naturally raises the question of the role of the newly established Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Within that agency, there is actually a good deal of approval of DOD's effort. HUD, which plans its own housing research activity, only recently received funds for research and is now going through the difficult process of acquiring a staff and developing relationships with outside research organizations. As one HUD research official put it, "DOD has two advantages. It

NEWS IN BRIEF

● CAMBRIDGE PEACE PETITION:

A resolution calling for the "prompt return home of the American soldiers in Vietnam" that appeared on the 7 November ballot in Cambridge, Mass., was defeated (*Science*, 3 November). However, both pro- and anti-war forces claimed the victory. Officially, 11,349 voters (39 percent of those voting) favored the resolution while 17,742 were opposed. The returns were counted on 28 November. A leader of the group that sponsored the initiative petition (resolution) said the group had not expected to gain a majority vote and that the results were a "remarkable repudiation of the President's policy on Vietnam." The Cambridge anti-war resolution was one of two which appeared on local ballots nationwide during November. A more strongly worded petition was defeated in San Francisco by nearly a 2 to 1 margin.

● NAS MEMBERSHIP:

The National Academy of Sciences has increased the maximum number of members that can be elected to the Academy annually from 45 to 50. The increase, which can be applied for the first time during the Academy's 1968 annual meeting in April, was approved as an amendment to the bylaws on 23 October. The Academy has also established a new membership section, Applied Physical and Mathematical Sciences, which will be part of the class in Engineering and the Applied Sciences.

● SCIENCE POLICY BULLETIN:

The first issue of a bimonthly bibliographic bulletin covering subjects on science and public policy was published in October by the Battelle Memorial Institute. Subsequent issues are expected to include listings of material published during the preceding 2 months. The *Science Policy Bulletin* may be obtained without charge by writing to Robert W. Brainard, Battelle Memorial Institute, Columbus Laboratories, 505 King Avenue, Columbus, Ohio 43201.

● FEDERAL COUNCIL ENLARGED:

President Johnson issued an executive order 8 November which enlarged the Federal Council for Science and Technology by adding members from the departments of State, Housing and Urban Development, and Transportation. The council, which the additions

bring to 12 members, was established by executive order in 1959 to consider the problems and developments concerning the overall advancement of science and technology in the U.S. In addition to the three new members, the membership is composed of one representative from each of the following federal agencies: Agriculture; Commerce; Defense; Health, Education, and Welfare; Interior; the Atomic Energy Commission; National Aeronautics and Space Administration; the National Science Foundation; and the Special Assistant to the President for Science and Technology.

● LSD LEGISLATION:

Twenty-five Congressmen introduced identical measures 20 November that would make possession or use of LSD or other hallucinogenic drugs with similar properties illegal unless prescribed by a physician. Possession and use of marijuana, already punishable by stringent penalties, was not included in the bills. Under the measures, first offenders could receive up to 1-year jail sentences or fines of \$1000. Second offenders could be imprisoned 3 years or fined \$10,000.

● FCC CIGARETTE ACTION:

The executive committee of the National Tuberculosis Association (NTA) has endorsed a ruling by the Federal Communications Commission pertaining to anticigarette announcements on radio and television (*Science*, 17 November). Because the ruling faces a court test, the committee instructed its legal counsel to make application to the appropriate federal court to file an *amicus curiae* (friend of the court) brief in support of the FCC ruling. A spokesman for the NTA said he believes the association is the first of the voluntary health agencies to take such action.

● VANNENAR BUSH PAPERS:

Vannevar Bush has given some 18,000 of his personal papers to the Library of Congress. Bush, a physicist and electrical engineer, served as president of the Carnegie Institution between 1939 and 1955. He was director of the Office of Scientific Research and Development from 1941 to 1947 and is now the honorary chairman of the MIT Corporation. After cataloging, the papers will be available to researchers in the Library's Manuscript Reading Room.

Draft Statements Stir Controversy

The National Student Association (NSA) filed a suit against Lieut. Gen. Lewis B. Hershey on 4 December in the District of Columbia U.S. District Court in an attempt to overturn Hershey's draft reclassification recommendation. Hershey, who is director of the Selective Service System, issued a statement that calls for the reclassification and induction of draft registrants who interfere with draft procedures. In addition to NSA, the suit lists 15 university student body presidents* as co-plaintiffs along with the Campus Americans for Democratic Action, the Students for a Democratic Society, and the president of the University Christian Movement. At the base of the furor is a memorandum that Hershey issued on 26 October and a letter that was sent to all members of the Selective Service System on 8 November. The memorandum sanctions local draft boards to declare registrants delinquent and to reclassify them into a class available for induction "whenever a local board receives an abandoned or mutilated" draft card. The letter authorized reclassification for draft registrants who participate in activities which are deemed by the Selective Service to be not in the "national interest." In its suit, NSA contends that Hershey's directives violate several constitutionally guaranteed freedoms including "the fundamental guarantees of freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of association, and the right of citizens to petition their government for a redress of grievances." The American Civil Liberties Union, which has filed several suits in federal courts on behalf of individuals who have been reclassified as a result of Hershey's memorandum, will file an *amicus* suit with the District of Columbia court on behalf of the NSA suit.

In addition to the legal proceedings against Hershey, his reclassification directives have also been under fire from a number of academic quarters. The American Council on Education issued a statement on 7 December condemning Hershey's memorandum as an affront to "the very heart of the governance of our institutions and of the nation." Logan Wilson, ACE president, urged that the memorandum be withdrawn or that the administration officially disavow positions taken in Hershey's letter. Wilson stated, in part, "The language of the letter is imprecise, but the intent is clear: to urge local boards to declare as delinquents under the Selective Service Act students who engage in 'illegal demonstrations' that interfere with recruiting for the armed forces." Several universities have announced they will suspend all military recruiting on their campuses pending assurances from the Selective Service System that students who interfere with recruiters will not lose their deferments. Columbia University announced on 21 November that it was suspending such recruiting. Recruiting was banned 8 December at George Washington University, until Hershey's letter "has been rescinded, overruled or clarified."

A footnote to the continuing controversy was issued on 9 December when Attorney General Ramsey Clark and Hershey issued a joint statement that was apparently designed to quell the vocal opposition to Hershey's directives. The statement warned local draft boards that "lawful protest activities" cannot be used as a reason for expediting the call-up of anti-war demonstrators. The statement cited as examples of violations that would affect a registrant's status: giving of false information, failure to appear for examination, or failure to have a draft card. "The lawful exercise of rights of free expression and peaceful assembly have incurred and will incur no penalty or other adverse action." However, in the same statement, Hershey and Clark announced that a special unit is being created in the Justice Department to coordinate the prompt prosecution of violations of Selective Service laws and related statutes.—K.S.

*Richard Beahrs, University of California, Berkeley; Ewart Brown, Howard University; James Evans, University of Houston; Robin Kaye, George Washington University; Charles Larson, Wayne State University; Dan Magraw, Harvard; Bernie Mayer, Oberlin College; Chris Murphy, Notre Dame; Frank Nero, Newark State Teachers College; William Newell, University of Minnesota; Patsi Parker, University of Illinois; Steven Press, Columbia; Paul Talmey, University of Colorado; Bruce Tischler, Union Theological Seminary; and Gary Townsend, California State College, Los Angeles.

controls its own [housing] market, and it's a going organization in research and development. They have made a gratifying beginning and we're happy about it."

There is a larger question, however, and it is one that unfortunately receives relatively little public attention. As the demands of Vietnam tend to reinforce the blank-check policy that Congress has traditionally maintained toward defense-related matters, DOD is emerging as a convenient agency for undertaking a variety of activities that are only partially related to military requirements. Thus, though the National Science Foundation was intended to be the primary source of federal support for academic basic research, DOD regularly continues to outspend NSF in university-based activities, according to DOD's own figures (*Science*, 24 November). Project Themis, a carefully conceived, well-funded design to foster scientific excellence in second-rank academic institutions, emanates from DOD, not from NSF. While the Office of Economic Opportunity endures a severe congressional battering, DOD conceives and proceeds with manpower training programs that, by any reasonable standard, are properly in the domain of the agency created to work against poverty. At issue is not the quality of the Defense-funded programs in civilian areas, or even the motives for DOD's getting into this work. In every case, some reasonable rationale can be offered for Defense moving out of the confines of what has traditionally been considered the proper areas of military-supported activity. And, by and large, Defense has performed as well as its civilian counterparts in supporting non-military or quasimilitary activities. The issue, rather, is that DOD is in the defense business and inevitably tends to assign high priority to military potential or effectiveness in whatever it does. Further, the presence of Defense's ample largesse in these fields tends to drain off political support for the civilian agencies that were specifically established to carry out such activities. It may be speculated that no small part of NSF's troubles with Congress derive from the fact that, with DOD paying many of the research bills in the nation's universities, scientists have had little motivation to agitate in behalf of NSF. Thus, on the basis of past performance, it will be interesting to observe what happens when HUD comes forth with its own housing research program.—D. S. GREENBERG