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July 24, 1970

CONTRIBUTION TO "CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR"
by
SENATOR MIKE MANSFIELD (D., MONT.)

The quality of life on earth tomorrow will be determined largely by the measure of the scientific research undertaken today. There is thus a significant public responsibility to sponsor research in the various scientific disciplines. Where the emphasis should be placed is a most delicate responsibility. That emphasis is determined by the size of the resource devoted to the various disciplines.

Since the end of World War II, the Government's contribution to research, development and the supporting facilities has reached nearly \$200 billion. Where and by whom that money was spent has determined not only the science policy of this nation but the entire emphasis in science education and training. During this time well over half of the government's contribution to science has been channeled through the Department of Defense. It must be clearly emphasized that most of this money purchased research of the highest quality. However, not nearly so clear is the rationale for the Department of Defense being the sponsoring agency for much of this vital research.

For the past 25 years the Pentagon has sponsored research in almost every scientific discipline imaginable. From the most esoteric examinations of ornithology to the study of broad social movements in foreign countries, the Pentagon has run the gamut in its research endeavors. The Pentagon has assumed a significant

role in determining the nation's science policy. The desirability of such a large role for this mission agency is the issue.

The phenomenon of channelling so many of these dollars through the Defense Department developed over the years not only from normal bureaucratic urges to grow but because the research community and the Congress acquiesced in that growth. To put the question simply: Why should the Defense Department be the principal government agency through which is funded the federal research that has no apparent relationship to the security needs of this nation?

To reply by saying that the research community has found that funds simply were more readily available at the Defense Department rather than at other civilian agencies states a fact and not an answer. Nor is it sufficient to say that Pentagon requests for funds receive less Congressional scrutiny than those requested by non-military agencies. Too often in the past the prevailing attitude has been expressed by the question: Are we giving you enough, rather than, why do you need so much? In part the historical answer lies in the fact that the cloak of national security lined with the international threat of communism simply prevented a close scrutiny of Defense requests including requests for research and development. In part, Defense spending requests

became so large that even billions for research and development seemed dwarfed. As a result the scientific community came to rely upon the immunity of Defense funding from close scrutiny and occasional budgeting squeezes. For years Defense funding provided a very stable source of research money. It was the easiest path for the research community to follow.

It wasn't long before the most able members of the science community gravitated to this source of funds. It became apparent, too, that although only a relatively small fraction of the federal research dollar was spent on university campuses, that money became vitally important to those universities in maintaining their solvency. The salaries paid by the research grant paid in effect the salary of the faculty member and a good share of the institution's overhead as well. The universities were not prepared to accept direct subsidies for fear of losing their autonomy -- but they were prepared to accept such a dependence indirectly.

In an effort to change this whole direction of federally funded research I added a rider to the Defense Department Authorization bill last year. It reads as follows:

"None of the funds authorized to be appropriated by this Act may be used to carry out any research project or study unless such project or study has a direct and apparent relationship to a specific military function or operation."
(Section 203 of Public Law 91-121)

The intent of this provision was clear. It is a mandate to reduce the research community's dependence on the Defense Department when it appears that the investigation under consideration could be sponsored more comfortably by a civilian agency. After all, the National Science Foundation was created by Congress back in 1950 specifically to channel federal funds into basic research. Since its creation, it has been the orphan child of the federal government's science policy. Since 1955 NSF has been given \$2 billion to sponsor basic research -- research conducted solely in the pursuit of knowledge. During this same period, Pentagon spending has been \$3 billion on this same type of research; it has spent 50% more for the fundamental investigations - in addition to the many billions on advanced research and development for specific military needs - than has the agency set up for this sole purpose.

The addition of Sec. 203 to the military authorization law thus sought to set in motion a realignment. The language was intentionally imprecise. It can be interpreted in many ways. Most importantly, it affords the Executive Branch an opportunity to start a process that would lead to the transfer of resources from the Defense Department to the civilian agencies - primarily to the National Science Foundation.

Clearly Congress does not exist to scrutinize the daily workings of the Executive. By law, however, Congress does have a responsibility to establish broad policies. Congress has a right to assume that

policies so established will be implemented. It must be remembered that in this endeavor, Congress hoped to overcome 25 years of built up momentum with respect to the Pentagon's involvement in basic research. It is surprising that so much progress has already been made, especially in the face of the resistance that has lingered in some quarters of the bureaucracy. It is most encouraging, for instance, that NSF funding for this coming fiscal year has been increased by about \$75 million over last year. This is a good beginning. By comparison, this year the Defense Department's share of basic research funds will be \$50 million less than that of the National Science Foundation. For the first time, NSF has taken the leadership role that was designed for it in the first place.

By no means, however, does Section 203 intend to get the Defense Department out of research that it needs. Whether the language chosen is interpreted strictly or loosely, it is hoped that the ultimate result of this whole endeavor will be a continued high level of basic research funding by the federal government and a stronger National Science Foundation. Hopefully, we will see in the near future that the civilian agencies under the leadership of the National Science Foundation will develop as the primary source for these research funds. The responsibility of the civilian agencies to fund an appropriate share of basic research is in no way diminished by Section 203. Incidentally of course, the Pentagon will continue having a responsibility for research; one that allows

those in charge of our security needs to maintain a full and necessary exchange with the researchers at the frontiers of science. It is hoped, however, that the role of the Defense Department in sponsoring basic research of this nature will be incidental rather than predominant.

I believe that if all interested parties will cooperate constructively in the implementation of the law, then the Defense Department, the research community and the country as a whole will benefit immensely.