



4 February 1952

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHAIRMAN, RDB

SUBJECT: <sup>1</sup>Basic Research in the Department of Defense

1. RDB Policy - RDB 173/9, 17 January 1951, "Policy of the Department of Defense on Basic Research" established an annual obligation rate by each Department in support of basic research, of not less than 6 percent of the average of its research and development budgets for the preceding 5 years with a further stipulation that "the funds obligated annually by the Department of Defense as a whole for the same purpose shall not be less than 30 million dollars." In this document, the Board outlined its own responsibilities in connection with basic research.

2. Budget Levels for Basic Research - Basic research has been supported at a level of about \$30-million per year since 1946. Since the issuance of the Board policy, the Departments have increased their budgetary support of basic research beyond the minimum which would have been required. For the Department of Defense as a whole the estimates appear to be about \$50-million in 1951, \$65-million in 1952, and may be as much as \$80-million in 1953. The 6% rule would have required \$30-million in 1951, \$35-million in 1952, and \$45-million in 1953.

3. Department of the Army - The Department of the Army has recently established a Basic Sciences Section of the Research and Development Division of the Office of Assistant Chief of Staff, G-4. The mission of this Section is to bring about an effective, integrated Army program of basic research. Under discussion is a proposal to establish an Army Research Committee to consist of the chief scientists of the Technical Services and certain staff organizations such as G-3 and Psychological Warfare. This committee would, among other things, examine the overall basic research program of the Army with regard to adequacy, magnitude, effectiveness, and duplication, and would initiate means of facilitating coordination of proposed basic research. It is planned that this committee would develop for the Department of the Army a uniform contract policy and procedures with respect to proposals and contracts for basic research. There has been increased activity in the Tech Services in the operation of their basic research programs. The Ordnance Corps established the Office of Ordnance Research at Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, in the Spring of 1951. In August of 1951 the Quartermaster Corps established the "Pioneer Laboratory Branch" in Philadelphia which is to be devoted primarily to their internal research program. All of the other Technical Services of the Army, except the Transportation Corps, appear to be supporting basic research programs.

4. Department of the Navy - Public Law 388, enacted 1 August 1951, established the Office of Naval Research and gave it the responsibility and the authority for planning, fostering and encouraging scientific research;

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coordinating and disseminating to the Offices and Bureaus of the Navy scientific information; providing necessary services for specialized and imaginative research; supervise, control, and administer matters concerning patents and inventions. This Law also provided for the establishment of a Naval Research Advisory Committee consisting of not more than 15 persons prominent in the fields of science to consult and advise the Chief of Naval Operations and Chief of Naval Research. Navy support for basic research comes primarily (about 80%) from ONR. The Bureaus of Aeronautics, Ordnance and Ships, and to a small extent the Bureau of Yards and Docks support the remainder of the Navy basic research program.

5. Department of the Air Force - The Air Force Research and Development Command has established the Office of Scientific Research which will supervise for the ARDC about 1/2 of the basic research program. This portion of the program will be handled somewhat as the ONR handles its contract research program. The remainder of the basic research program of the Air Force is supervised by the Laboratories.

6. Miscellaneous Data - A survey by the RSB staff of the 1950 basic research program indicated that (a) interpretation of the definition of Basic Research as applied to specific projects or parts of projects varied depending upon the point of view, (b) about 80% of basic research program financed by the Department of Defense was by contract with universities, colleges, non-profit institutions and industrial laboratories, 20% is performed in Government Laboratories, (c) more than half of the basic research program was in the general field of Physics, (d) approximately one-third of the basic research program was classified in operational categories of the Planning Guide; one-third in Supporting Research and one-third in the Basic Research categories.

7. Overall RSB Guidance in Basic Research - RSB 173/9 outlined the Board's responsibilities in connection with basic research. Since the issuance of this document, the Departments of the Army and the Air Force have taken a number of steps to coordinate basic research programs within their own departments. There is a need now for the Board to assume its responsibilities in accordance with its stated policy in order to assist the departments in overall coordination and to coordinate with the National Science Foundation which was established by Law under the National Science Foundation Act of 1950, approved by the President on 10 May 1950.

8. Interim Measures - The Chairman has appointed an informal group under the Chairmanship of Dr. Cornell, Director, Planning Division, RSB, consisting of one representative each from the Army, Navy and Air Force whose immediate purpose is to determine (a) what the Department of Defense basic research program is and where it is being done; (b) whether or not the present basic research policy of the Board should be modified. The first meeting of this group is scheduled for Wednesday, February 6.

F. J. SETTE  
Deputy Director  
Resources Division