

GENERAL SCIENCE

National Defense Research Committee Sets To Work

Will Work Through Organized Scientific Laboratories In Universities and Industry to Solve Defense Problems

AMERICAN science and technology can "cut rings around any other country on earth," given sufficient time, Dr. Vannevar Bush, chairman of the new National Defense Research Committee, affirmed in his first press conference since President Roosevelt announced the new Committee.

Charged with solving problems encountered in this nation's rush to arm, the NDRC will devote its major attention to "instrumentalities" needed by the defense program.

Because the work of the Committee will be highly confidential, definite projects to be considered will not be made public.

To the defense preparations, the Committee will bring the energies and expert knowledge of the best-equipped scientists of the nation. For instance, if a new weapon should be under development, the best brains in physics, mathematics, chemistry, and engineering can be concentrated upon it so far as they are needed.

In general, the new Committee will work through the best organized scientific laboratories and groups in leading laboratories, both in universities and industry. Since research today is a matter of the coordinated effort of many persons, problems are likely to be turned over in most cases to groups of scientists who have been used to working together.

There will be ample opportunity for new ideas and suggestions to get a hearing by the committee or agencies connected with it. The mere announcement of the Committee brought to Dr. Bush's desk some 200 research defense suggestions from scientists.

A little later, under the direction of Commissioner of Patents Conway P. Coe, a Committee member, a mechanism will be set up to provide a clearing house for all the suggestions that individual inventors and others may wish to make. During the last World War, Dr. Bush recalled, some 2,000 such ideas and inventions were submitted each week to the joint Army-Navy board handling inventions.

The NDRC will not duplicate what the Army and Navy are already doing in research, and it will not concern itself with aviation because research in that field is being handled by the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, the government agency of which Dr. Bush is also chairman.

Medicine and food are other fields outside the activities of the NDRC. Existing agencies, such as the appropriate divisions of the National Research Council and government agencies, will handle such problems.

With Dr. Bush, who is president of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, as chairman, the National Defense Research Committee has eight members. Two, representing the War and Navy Departments, are not yet named. The others are: Commissioner of Patents Coe, representing the Commerce Department; Dr. Frank B. Jewett, president of the National Academy of Sciences and president of Bell Telephone Laboratories;

President James B. Conant of Harvard University; President Karl Compton of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Dr. Richard C. Tolman of the California Institute of Technology.

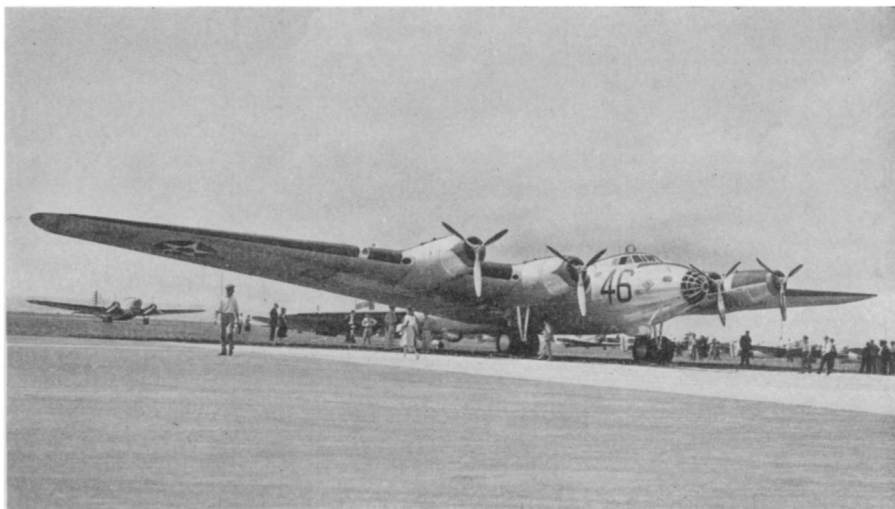
Offices of the NDRC will probably be established at the administration building of the Carnegie Institution of Washington in Washington.

The new National Defense Research Committee is the fourth major group called into existence to aid the government in times of emergency. The National Academy of Sciences was created by Congress at President Lincoln's request during the Civil War and it has continued as a "senate" of science, election to which is one of the highest honors in American science. The National Research Council was created during the World War as a government agency and continues today as a part of the Academy. The Science Advisory Board was appointed by President Roosevelt in 1933, made effective reports on scientific research by the government and then went out of existence. Now the National Defense Research Committee is formed to play its part in the present situation.

Science News Letter, June 29, 1940

There are 3,000,000 *Italians* in Argentina and 2,000,000 in Brazil.

Dresses worn by Navajo Indian women are said to be a *style* inspired by fashions of the 1860s worn by Army officers' wives.



"FLYING FORTRESS"

This "Flying Fortress," largest airplane in the service of the U. S. Army, officially known as the B-17 heavy bomber, was recently shown in Washington. Made by the Boeing Aircraft Company, the ship weighs thirty tons, has a wing spread of 150 feet and is powered by four engines of 1,000 horsepower each. It carries a crew of eleven, and full living quarters are provided on board. Machine guns are mounted in blisters on the fuselage, and a large load of bombs can be carried. Air Corps officials state that this is larger than any plane now in use in the European war.