SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY AND PUBLIC POLICY

By Dr. LYMAN CHALKLEY
OFFICE OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

For some years the world has been engaged in the most destructive war of history. This has been the most destructive war because it has been the most "scientific" war. The sciences have been mobilized, and, through their expressions in technology, have been applied to destruction. The devastating results have been of a magnitude and worldwide distribution, utterly beyond the reach of even the most bloodthirsty militarists of former ages.

Thus, in destruction, as in its more constructive applications to medicine, industry and the comforts and conveniences of living, the scientific method has shown itself more efficient and more powerful than any other approach to the solution of practical problems which mankind has devised. In spite of this generally accepted fact, no adequate machinery for bringing our public policy into harmony with the development of science and technology has been set up.

There are many evidences of this situation. As early in the war as April, 1942, Fortune magazine pointed out that, although this was a scientific war, neither scientists nor technologists were members of the top military or civil policy-making groups. This is still true. The Dumbarton Oaks Plan, while recommending an Economic and Social Council, entirely ignored science and technology. The San Francisco United Nations Conference has done likewise. Yet no field of human activity is to-day a greater factor in the war-making potential of nations.

Another problem growing out of the war is the postwar control of Germany. In a letter of Sep-
Science 102 (2647), 289-314.

http://science.sciencemag.org/content/102/2647.citation

http://www.sciencemag.org/help/reprints-and-permissions