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SCIENCE AND NATIONAL DEFENSE

By Dr. Vannevar Bush
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In this discussion of the present position of science and research in National Defense I will confine myself to two points. The first concerns the form of organization under which the scientists of this country are working. The second, which is very brief, has to do with the spirit with which the task is undertaken. As to the work itself I can not, of course, be specific at the present time.

Details of the organization have been made known, but I think they are not well understood generally. In June, 1940, there was formed, by order of the Council of National Defense, a group called the National Defense Research Committee (NDRC), for the purpose of supplementing the work of the Army and Navy in the development of devices and instrumentalties of war. This new organization was intended to function in an executive, not an advisory, capacity. The advisory function was being adequately cared for by the National Academy of Sciences, which has been in existence since the Civil War period, having been created by Act of Congress for the express purpose of advising the government on its scientific and technical problems. There was, however, need for a civilian group with executive powers to supplement the scientific and technical work of the Army and Navy, for,