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SCIENCE AND NATIONAL DEFENSE¹

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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

¹ From an address delivered at the joint luncheon of the Acoustical Society of America, the Optical Society of America and the Society of Rheology in New York on October 24, 1941.

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 instrumentalities 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,

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