

A REPORT
TO THE
NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

by

THE CHAIRMAN
NATIONAL SECURITY RESOURCES BOARD

on

NATIONAL MANPOWER MOBILIZATION POLICY

August 1, 1950

WASHINGTON

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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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August 1, 1950

NOTE BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
to the
NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
on
NATIONAL MANPOWER MOBILIZATION POLICY

The enclosed memorandum by the Chairman, National Security Resources Board on the subject, is submitted herewith for consideration at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the National Security Council on Thursday, August 3, 1950.

At the direction of the President the Secretary of Labor is being invited to participate in the Council's consideration of this report.

As requested by the Resources Board, it is recommended that, if the Council approves the two recommendations contained in the last paragraph of the enclosure, this report be submitted to the President with the recommendation that he approve those recommendations and direct their implementation by all appropriate executive departments and agencies of the U. S. Government.

JAMES S. LAY, JR.
Executive Secretary

cc: The Secretary of the Treasury
The Secretary of Labor

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July 31, 1950

MEMORANDUM FOR THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
SUBJECT: National Manpower Mobilization Policy

The National Security Resources Board is directed by the National Security Act, 1947, "to advise the President concerning the coordination of military, industrial and civilian mobilization", particularly in regard to the "relationship between potential supplies of and potential requirements for manpower, resources and productive facilities in time of war".

Developments since the invasion of South Korea have made it obvious that measures more adequate than those which currently exist are now required to coordinate manpower resources.

The present machinery for meshing the manpower incident to military mobilization and civilian production is clearly inadequate; and therefore in the interest of national security, immediate action should be taken toward the establishment of a coordinated policy in this overall area.

Our potential enemies can marshal enormous manpower resources. There is no chance the United States can match their manpower in terms of numbers. The factors in our favor, however, are our probable technological superiority and greater industrial capacity.

The effectiveness of these two factors depends almost entirely upon the technical, scientific, managerial, and industrial

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skills of a relatively small segment of our population. Success or failure in meeting the now unmasked menace of Soviet strength depends upon the intelligence with which we husband these skills and use them to their fullest advantage.

Because of the long periods of training required, any additional supply of persons with such skills cannot be created quickly. It is only common sense, therefore, to plan for the most effective utilization of all such persons.

This is even more true now because, in any new war effort, there will be a definite limit to the overall volume of manpower, both skilled and unskilled.

It would be most unwise to proceed on the assumption that any present mobilization can be undertaken without regard to possible further expansion.

Current manpower policy should be founded upon the possibility of further mobilization; and no steps should be taken now which will diminish the ultimate capacity of the United States to wage war with maximum effectiveness.

About a year ago the Resources Board conducted a test re the feasibility of meeting certain estimated mobilization requirements for critical materials and manpower. This test showed the manpower shortage would be serious. (Said estimate did not include civilian and military casualties if the United States itself was subjected to enemy attack.)

As example, with an estimated 16.3 million required for the armed forces, including 2.3 nonrecoverable losses, our total

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estimated manpower resources would fall some 4½ million short of meeting the combined needs of both the armed forces and the war-supporting civilian economy.

There are several reasons for this potential manpower shortage. It is estimated the size of the armed forces, plus nonrecoverable losses, would be about 2½ million above World War II; and while our total population is now about 12 million above April 1945, the potential labor force, including the armed forces, is only some 2 million above April 1945.

Significant shifts in the composition of our population explain these changes since World War II. The proportion of the population in the employable age groups has declined, while the proportion of older persons and the very young has increased. The proportion of married women with young children has also increased. All these factors contribute to a smaller labor force in relation to the total population.

The decrease in the proportion of the total population in the military age male group is particularly significant. Because of the low birthrates in the '30's, the application of the peak World War II ratios of armed forces to male population in specific age groups would yield armed forces of only 12.6 million in 1952 as compared with a 12.3 million peak in World War II. Inasmuch as any significant increase in armed forces strength can therefore be obtained only by taking into the services more youths, older men, limited service personnel, and

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women, it is obvious the manpower shortage will be grave, not only in skills but also in sheer numbers.

There is at present no national mobilization policy for the efficient utilization of the country's manpower resources; and individual users of manpower are shaping their plans with insufficient regard for the needs of other users.

This condition is reflected in the fact there are now three separate and uncoordinated channels for drawing on the manpower pool; namely, (1) Selective Service; (2) direct military personnel procurement, including enlistment, commissioning from civilian life, and the activation of reserves by the Services; and (3) civilian employment, both government and private. There is also now a fourth potential channel -- civil defense.

In the absence of any coordinated policy, such government departments as the Atomic Energy Commission, the Department of Labor, the National Advisory Committee on Aeronautics, and many of the major industrial corporations vital to defense production have already indicated to the Resources Board major difficulty in planning for the use of their key personnel.

These current manpower problems are arising as the three military services increase their personnel by both voluntary and compulsory means. The armed forces assert they must be free to call all their reserves to active duty at any time; and are now doing so with little or no regard to the relative value of the individual reservists in military and civilian occupations.

In addition, the armed forces have been unwilling to commit

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themselves to any policy requiring utilization of reservists possessing critical skills in military assignments which would make full use of such skills.

With the premise, therefore, that there should be maximum utilization of skilled personnel, there is immediate need for a national policy which would provide that:

1. No person possessing a critical skill should be enlisted voluntarily or commissioned direct from civilian life unless the armed forces are prepared to use such person in a job which requires the use of his skill.

2. In mobilizing their organized reserve components, the armed forces should adopt similar policies which, within the limits set by immediate military necessities, will insure effective utilization of highly skilled personnel.

3. In calling up unorganized reserve components, policies should be adopted which will insure deferment of personnel possessing critical skills unless such personnel are to be used in military assignments which make full use of their skills.

4. Regulations governing occupational deferment of persons liable to induction under the Selective Service Act of 1948, as amended, should be changed to provide for the occupational deferment of persons possessing such skills if they are currently using said skills in essential activities, except to the extent the military services require persons with those skills.

It is necessary for the government to provide now a basis

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for the proper division of manpower between the current major claimants. Only under such provision can the nation utilize its manpower effectively, especially if further mobilization becomes necessary.

In order that the country may have an adequate basis for present and future manpower mobilization in the interest of national security, the Resources Board requests that the National Security Council approve the following Recommendations and submit them to the President for approval and direction of appropriate implementation:

1. That the United States adopt a national manpower mobilization policy which would be based on the principle that each individual should be expected and permitted to serve in the capacity in which he can contribute most to the total national effort.

2. That provision be made for a central determination of requirements and allocations of manpower to the various major claimants upon the manpower resources of the nation.

W. Stuart Symington

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