

Originally Processed With FOIA(s):
2005-0336-F

FOIA Number:
2005-0336-F

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Record Group/Collection: George H.W. Bush Presidential Records
Collection/Office of Origin: Science and Technology Policy, Office of (OSTP)
Series: Bromley, D. Allan, Files
Subseries: Education Files

OA/ID Number: 62032
Folder ID Number: 62032-014

Folder Title:
University - General [1990]

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

May 31, 1990

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

D. Allan Bromley

FROM: D. ALLAN BROMLEY, ON BEHALF OF THE
PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL OF ADVISORS ON SCIENCE
AND TECHNOLOGY

SUBJECT: DOD-UNIVERSITY RELATIONSHIP

The pace of change around the globe is so fast and so profound that our defense-related research must be both broad and deep. We must prepare for the unexpected. This means searching for new knowledge whose application is not immediately obvious and investing in our most flexible resource, people. Accordingly, the Council was pleased to learn from Mr. Atwood that the Department places high priority on maintaining the strength of its technology base--especially the so-called 6.1 and 6.2 programs. We applaud the wisdom of such long-term strategic planning.

In this regard, we draw attention to an opportunity and a need: the rebuilding of the DoD-University partnership.

During the Second World War, and immediately thereafter, the relationship between DoD and academe was a robust one. During the decade of the '60s, in response to Sputnik, the DoD strengthened that relationship further through a broad thrust in science and technology emphasizing both new knowledge and the education of scientists and engineers. New interdisciplinary programs were created at research universities, helping to advance new fields such as artificial intelligence, computing and materials science and engineering. The latter, for example, produced whole new classes of materials, including polymer composites, rapidly solidified metals, sensor materials and new laser materials.

Equally important was the training of thousands of graduate students, who have dedicated their careers to national security, energy sufficiency, environmental protection and industrial competitiveness. A large portion of the nation's technical leaders received their graduate education through DoD support. This support of research and education was a wise investment. The new technologies that have emerged have become essential to DoD and to the nation as a whole in ways not anticipated at the time.

For a variety of reasons, the DoD-university partnership has weakened during the past two decades.

In this changing world, we urge that DoD return to its important role in stimulating more Americans to become scientists and engineers and in creating new knowledge. Such an effort would be fully consistent with the President's initiatives in education and basic research. We believe that a rebuilding of the DoD-academe bridges that served the nation so well in the post World War II period will prove equally important in the decades ahead.

cc: The President