

Rand seen as 'think-tank of think-tanks'

(Editor's note: The following story was taken substantially from research and an article done by The Brain Mistrust, a radical research group in Ann Arbor, Michigan.)

(LNS) — Who studies thermonuclear war, whether forecasting in Southeast Asia, student activism in Latin America and rent control in New York City? Who has a head office in sunny Santa Monica, California, and is funded by the U.S. government?

If those clues don't help, it's not surprising, for the RAND Corporation — the think tank of the think tanks — has never been keen on publicity. An August, 1966, *Time* magazine statement sums it up pretty well: "Of all the behind the scenes forces that have molded America's military muscle, none have been more influential — and few more mysterious — than California's RAND Corp. . . ."

Formed to "further and promote scientific, educational, and charitable purposes, all for the public welfare and security of the United States of America," the RAND Corp. is the brains behind a good deal of government policy and action throughout the world. To date, its most important credentials

in that department are the infamous Pentagon Papers outlining the history of U.S. involvement in Vietnam which former RAND employee Daniel Ellsberg revealed in the spring of 1971.

RAND got its start in 1944 when Gen. H.H. (Hap) Arnold, head of what was then the Army Air Corps., suggested that the Air Corps hang on to its civilian brainpower "to assist in avoiding future national peril and in winning the next war." But his real reasons went deeper than that as the RAND records show. As the missile age dawned, the Air Corps fought for control of strategic missileery, and along with that an identity separate from the Army and other services.

With the help of Douglas Aircraft Company (now McDonnell-Douglas) "Project RAND" (Research and Development) was set up at the Douglas plant in Santa Monica to develop the defense schemes that would require Arnold's vision of a separate Air Force. Arnold signed a letter contract with Douglas to organize RAND without taking bids and without Congressional approval. Other aircraft companies became

involved with the project and later, because the thinkers wanted more independence, a nonprofit corporation was created with the help of the Ford Foundation. The new corporation's first president? Douglas official and top Defense Department consultant, Franklin R. Collbohm.

RAND employees got down to brass tacks and came up with RAND's first report in 1946. The document presented a carefully reasoned study of the feasibility of using spaceships in weather forecasting and military reconnaissance. Other early studies considered the use of rocket engines for strategic weapons, game theory as it applied to warfare, new concepts of air defense, new aircraft design, and the whole area of nuclear weapons.

The RAND studies weren't relegated to the back of a dusty file cabinet either. One of the "air concepts" studied led to in-flight refueling procedures and another study led to the widespread use of titanium in the aircraft industry (incidentally creating a whole new metallurgical industry).

In the fifties Cold War era, RAND studied the economics of overseas bases and Russian nuclear capacity. From there they developed the whole new set of concepts of "first strike vulnerability" and "second strike capability" which led to the Air Force's heavy reliance on Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile systems. With the advent of Kennedy in the sixties, RAND came into its own. The new administration had to devise a new defense strategy to replace the all-out, massive retaliation strategy inherited from the Eisenhower administration.

But RAND got into new kinds of war making on its own too, with the encouragement of RAND president Collbohm (who felt that the corp. was strong on thermonuclear war but weak on guerrilla war). Amrom Katz, a RAND employee who went to Vietnam early in the sixties, came back "hooked" as he puts it. From then on he devoted his time to figuring out how the U.S. might use its tactical air support more effectively against the Vietnamese. Katz's new-found interests soon enticed many at RAND and since the mid-

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sixties many studies have appeared on such topics as an "Analytic Model of Border Control" and "South Vietnam's Development Prospects in a Postwar Era." (Ellsberg worked for RAND in South Vietnam on the "pacification" program from 1965-67.)

RAND supplied the Air Force with studies of "monsoonal influences on wind, rain and clouds throughout Southeast Asia" where its bombers depend on good weather to be able to drop their millions of tons of bombs. And as employees of the Pentagon, RAND people have conducted some 2,400 intensive interviews with NLF prisoners which have, according to a RAND report, "provided U.S. policy makers with the most significant body of detailed information available on Viet Cong motivations and attitudes."

RAND's fingers are in more than one pie, too. The think tank has also assisted the Pentagon and the Agency for International Development (AID) in their relations with Latin America. RAND's contributions have included studies on a variety of subjects such as population growth and why families decide to have more children, student activism, and the influence of the Catholic Church in that part of the world. And before Nelson Rockefeller took off in 1969 on his infamous trip to represent Nixon in Latin America, he was briefed by three RAND analysts.

About 76% of RAND's \$28 million yearly budget is spent on military studies; the rest is spent to research urban housing, health care, education, city management, and even Wall Street's chaotic paper work problems. In 1968, Mayor John Lindsay brought RAND personnel into New York City to staff the RAND/New York Institute, where they began working on reforming rent control. By 1971 RAND was spending about a fourth of its time on such domestic projects, and aims by 1975 to have half of the corporation's budget devoted to non-defense work.

Who is the average RAND employee and what is he like? According to Roger Levien, a bearded, middle-aged analyst for RAND/Washington, "We tend to be what you'd expect. RAND people are fairly straight, normal, the kind turned out by universities between 1956 and 1960. You don't find irrational people here. Youth today rejects the controlled mind, but we have to have a commitment to reason, not emotion."

RAND today employs about 1,100 people with something like 800 others operating as consultants. Its main headquarters are in Santa Monica, Calif., but it has branches in Washington and New York. Salaries for RAND employees range anywhere from \$10,000 to \$30,000, and, at least at Santa Monica, employees live a comfortable life, to say the least. There, amid seven acres

overlooking Muscle Beach, researchers can relax on the sun-warmed patio, play "blind chess" at lunch, or attend presentations ranging from a seminar on Congress's role in the ABM debate to a photographic essay on the sculpture of Gustav Vigeland.

But great as the attractions of RAND may be, many employees eventually hear the call and head for posts where they can help implement some of RAND's brainst ms. Henry S. Rowen, RAND president from 1967 until he "resigned" recently over the "Ellsberg Affair," started his career in the think tank when he was 25. He was on the research team that came up with the recommendation to build up the Strategic Air Command. In 1961, he left RAND to become the Pentagon's assistant secretary for international security under Kennedy's Sec. of Defense Robert McNamara. After four years as one of McNamara's original "whiz kids," he moved over to become assistant director of the Budget Bureau. Finally, Rowen returned to assume the presidency of RAND in 1967.

Former RAND employees include James Schlesinger, who became assistant director of the budget in 1969, and is now chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission; Charles Zwick, a former U.S. budget director; Stanley M. Greenfield, now with the Environmental Protection Agency; Charles J. Hitch, Dept. of Defense Comptroller under McNamara, and now president of the University of

California system; Alain Enthoven, an assistant secretary under McNamara and now a vice president of Litton Industries; Thomas V. Jones, chief executive officer of Northrop Corporation; Herman Kahn, who left RAND just after publishing his "On Thermonuclear War" to start his own think tank called the Hudson Institute.

The "Ellsberg Affair" blew the first real long whistle on Rand and the

corporation's employees — not to mention the government — weren't too happy about the public exposure. Said Thomas W. Robinson, a China scholar and member of RAND's Social Science Department, "The Ellsberg business could close us down. If we can't talk openly with our colleagues, if we can't publish our private papers — if we can't have these freedoms, why work here?"
