

History

The Defense Science Board was established in 1956 in response to recommendations of the Hoover Commission:

"The Assistant Secretary of Defense (Research and Development) will appoint a standing committee, reporting directly to him, of outstanding basic and applied scientists. This committee will canvass periodically the needs and opportunities presented by new scientific knowledge for radically new weapons systems."

The original membership of the Board, totaling twenty-five, consisted of the chairman of the eleven technical advisory panels in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Research and Development), the chairmen of the senior advisory committees of the Army, Navy, and Air Force, the Directors of the National Science Foundation, the National Bureau of Standards, and the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (predecessor of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration), the President of the National Academy of Sciences, and seven members-at-large drawn from the scientific and technical community.

The Board met for the first time on September 20, 1956. Its initial assignment concerned the program and administration of basic research, component research, and the advancement of technology in areas of interest to the Department of Defense.

On December 31, 1956, a charter was issued specifying the Board as advisory to the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Research and Development). Following the consolidation of the offices of the Assistant Secretaries of Defense for R&D and Applications Engineering in 1957, the Board reconstituted as advisory to the Secretary of Defense through the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Research and Engineering). Its membership was increased to 28, including as ex officio members, the Chairmen of the President's Science Advisory Committee and the Scientific Advisory Committee in the Office of Guided Missiles, Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD). A revised Board charter was issued on October 30, 1957.

In accordance with the Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1958, which stipulated the responsibilities, functions, and authority of the Director of Defense Research and Engineering (DDR&E), the Board's charter was revised on November 23, 1959. This revision harmonized the role and mission of the Defense Science Board with DDR&E's responsibilities, prescribing eight members-at-large and modifying ex officio membership to conform with the establishment or dissolution of advisory panels in the office of the DDR&E.

In the course of organizing his staff, the DDR&E appointed Assistant Directors for several types of warfare systems. Following this action in late 1959, the Board made a study of the structure of scientific and engineering advisory bodies. Its

report on this study was implemented by DoD Directive 5129.22, "Defense Science Board Charter," dated April 10, 1961. This directive was revised and reissued on February 17, 1971. In 1978, the title, Director of Defense Research and Engineering, was changed to Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering (USDRE). On July 1, 1986, the title, the Undersecretary of Defense for Research and Engineering, was changed to Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition (USD/A). On January 1, 1990, the Defense Manufacturing Board, which had reported directly to the USD(A), merged into the Defense Science Board, adding manufacturing issues to the list of items of interest.

Currently, the Board's authorized strength is thirty-two members and seven ex officio members (the chairmen of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Policy, Defense Business Board and Defense Intelligence Agency advisory committees). The members are appointed for terms ranging from one to four years and are selected on the basis of their preeminence in the fields of science, technology and its application to military operations, research, engineering, manufacturing and acquisition process.

The Board operates by forming Task Forces consisting of Board members and other consultants/experts to address those tasks referred to it by formal direction. The products of each Task Force typically consist of a set of formal briefings to the Board and appropriate DoD officials, and a written report containing findings, recommendations and a suggested implementation plan. The Board reports directly to the Secretary of Defense through the USD (AT&L) while, at the same time, working in close coordination with the DDR&E to develop and strengthen the Department's research and development strategies for the 21st Century.

In recognition of the outstanding advice provided by the DSB to the Department over the past forty plus years, the Secretary of Defense established the Eugene G. Fubini award in 1996 for Outstanding Service to the Defense Community in an Advisory Capacity. This special honor marked yet another important milestone in the Board's long and distinguished history of service to the Department and the Nation.