

Columbia University

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

NATIONAL MANPOWER COUNCIL

A STATEMENT

TO BUILD a stronghold of democracy and freedom, the United States has assumed responsibilities which make a heavy demand upon its most critical resource—manpower. With only six percent of the world's population, we are required to expand our industry to new heights, to assist our allies, and to maintain a military force strong enough to deter aggression. To be adequately prepared, we are also compelled to build a base for full-scale mobilization.

Our strength lies in our people. To meet the challenge of the present crisis, we must strive to develop and use our manpower resources as wisely and effectively as possible. To contribute to the appraisal and solution of our nation's manpower problems, the National Manpower Council has been established at Columbia University, under a grant from the Ford Foundation.

The National Manpower Council has been identifying and analyzing the major short-run and long-run manpower problems which face the United States. It will submit to the public, to voluntary groups, and to the governmental agencies directly concerned, its manpower policy recommendations.

WE DO NOT now face an overall manpower shortage. Women, older workers, and young people coming into the labor market provide manpower reserves. So do the physically handicapped, groups frequently discriminated against in employment, and workers whose talents and skills are poorly utilized. There is, moreover, some unemployment and

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considerable underemployment in various industries, among them, agriculture, textiles and clothing. Even though the unemployed represent only a small proportion of a civilian working force of some sixty-four million, the human costs of unemployment are always a challenge to a responsible democracy.

While there is no overall shortage at present, the nation's manpower pool is relatively shallow. The low birth rate during the depression of the 1930's has reduced the number of young men available today for military service and for training in civilian skills. The required numbers of skilled people for important defense jobs are frequently not available or not in the localities where they are needed. The defense industries have already made major demands upon our manpower, and a sharply intensified mobilization program would severely strain our resources.

BECAUSE we value freedom, we have been reluctant to adopt a system of compulsory military service. Nevertheless, we have come to recognize that we must use Selective Service to build up and maintain our Armed Services at the required strength. The passage of the Universal Military Training and Service Act of 1951, however, does not resolve all our military manpower problems. Congress will shortly decide whether to depart further from tradition and enact a program of universal military training.

The solution of these military manpower problems is made more difficult by insufficient numbers of scientists, doctors, engineers, and other specialists and technicians to meet the combined demands of the Armed Services, industry, teaching, and research. To reduce and eliminate these deficiencies we need to develop more trained people.

THE SUCCESS of our efforts to protect our way of life rests on our ability to eliminate manpower wastes and to develop the full potentialities of all of us. We are made weaker by every practice, wherever it exists, which restricts the opportunities of individuals for employment, training, and effective utilization. Government has a special responsibility to utilize its personnel effectively. Defense procurement policies in particular should be developed with full recognition of their impact upon existing manpower resources and reserves.

Our strength as a nation depends even more on the quality than on the numbers of our people. Their potential capacities and capabilities are at once our richest and most precious possession. Every field of endeavor will benefit as we provide greater opportunities for the training of skills and the development of talent and leadership.

We must also learn how to adapt the social advances of pension schemes and security benefits to the needs of the present and the future so that they will encourage older, com-

petent workers to stay on the jobs for which they are suited and not hinder the transfer of workers from one job to another. We have to discover the additional ways through new housing, day nursery centers, and training programs for facilitating the full use of our manpower.

OUR nation's manpower policies are not made by the government alone. They grow out of countless voluntary decisions by individuals, employers, and unions. We believe that each individual should continue to have primary responsibility for determining his choice of work and pattern of civilian life. In the United States the individual not only has a stake in manpower policy; he shares in making it.

There is no simple formula for solving the manpower problems which confront us. Some must be met immediately to insure the success of our mobilization efforts. Others, equally urgent, will influence the long-run security and prosperity of the United States. Every manpower policy must meet the test of consistency with the traditions and goals of American democracy and with the principle of equality of sacrifice.

THE National Manpower Council, recognizing the crucial importance of skilled workers and scientific personnel, has selected as its first problem the policy of Student Deferment. After review and evaluation of current deferment policy, the Council will formulate its recommendations and submit them for public consideration early in 1952.

Shortages of highly skilled and specialized personnel, the utilization of the older worker, the education and training of tomorrow's worker and citizen, the development and use of womanpower in an industrial society, and military manpower policy are among the problems with which the National Manpower Council will later deal.

November 5, 1951

I am pleased to be able to send you a Statement on manpower problems and policies just issued by the National Manpower Council. *dlc*

Henry David
Henry David
Executive Secretary

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