

# EIR Science & Technology

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## U.S. military capability placed in jeopardy

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*As a government report underlines, the U.S. not only has no industrial mobilization capability, but has lost the industrial foundation for even peacetime military readiness. By Carol White.*

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While the Justice Department was seizing headlines with fanciful tales of corruption in the Pentagon and avarice in the “military industrial complex,” the Defense Department was sponsoring a study more closely tied to reality. This was the *Report of the Defense Science Board (DSB) Summer Study on the Defense Industrial Technology Base*, which was released on Oct. 21. As the excerpted sections of that report show, America’s technology base is eroding at a rate which, in the words of the report, “threatens the effectiveness of our deterrent.”

As any serious defense analyst knows, at least nine-tenths of a nation’s war-fighting capability depends upon the infrastructure of production and the morale of the population. Therefore, we emphatically agree with the premises of this study, that reversing the deteriorated state of the United States economy is a number-one priority for defense.

The study is particularly welcome, since it has been a shibboleth of the Reagan administration to pretend that the U.S. economy is fundamentally sound. It also usefully challenges the obsessive Reaganite concern with free-market economics and deregulation, which would axiomatically rule out support to industry.

In line with the findings of the report, the authors recommend that the President sign an Executive Order or a National Security Directive which would create an Industrial Policy Committee to be chaired by the National Security Adviser. They would also have the Secretary of Defense take an active role in the formation of national economic policies, including membership on the Economic Policy Council.

The criteria for industrial preparedness of a military mo-

bilization include *surge capability*. As we have reported in detail in *EIR*, the U.S. electric power grid no longer even functions with a margin for peak demand under *peacetime* conditions—and this is only one example. The state of the deregulated airline industry is a disaster in its own right, and symptomatic of the destruction of transportation systems, including the U.S. rail system. The report emphasizes the decline of the U.S. maritime industries, which they say, “has reached the stage at which they can no longer deliver America’s forces or supplies to the theater of war.”

The report indirectly attacks the Justice Department assault on military industry, which was particularly promoted by William Weld during his tenure at Justice, and is presently being continued by his hatchetman, Alexandria, Virginia U.S. Attorney Henry Hudson. They emphasize that the “defense industry does *not* conduct business in a free-enterprise system” since there is only one purchaser to whom they sell their wares—the government. The result of tendencies to micro-manage defense contracts, and then subject them to intensive judicial review with criminal penalties, has been to cause defense contractors to withdraw from the market.

We would take exception with the report’s authors’ acceptance of what they term the “globalization” of the U.S. defense market, which they view as an irreversible dependence by the United States upon its allies. Not only is such vulnerability highly dangerous in time of war, but it can also add to the kind of paralysis of will that is now feeding tendencies toward appeasement of the Soviet Union which are afflicting a large section of U.S. (and Western European) policymakers today.