

# Stanford Institute Shifts Research Aims

Stanford unit to sever university tie, drop CBW research after student demonstrations; urban, social problems gain emphasis

By Richard G. O'Lone

**Menlo Park, Calif.**—Stanford Research Institute is moving into a new era marked by independent status and a fresh direction to its work, but no assurance that it has seen the last of the disturbances that were responsible—at least in part—for the changes.

With the summer vacation promising a respite from the pressures and disorders of the past half-year, leaders of SRI and its relative—Stanford University—can contemplate these changes that have followed the wave of anti-military feeling gripping campuses here and throughout the country (awast June 16, p. 49):

- Decision by the Stanford University trustees to sever the legal ties between the University and SRI.

- Announcement by SRI that it will drop research projects leading to development of chemical and biological warfare weapons.

- New emphasis on research projects dealing with social and urban problems.

SRI president Charles A. Anderson maintains that this last is not a result of the student protests; rather, the disorders have tended to slow the implementation of a decision made a year ago to begin focusing more attention on areas of social and urban concern. He also emphasized that SRI was not getting out of the military research business, and that the institute's "desire and willingness to engage in research for national security" has not changed.

"The activities of the radical students have not changed the course and direction of research at SRI," Anderson told

AVIATION WEEK & SPACE TECHNOLOGY.

"The course and direction are in fact changing, but only in response to the normal, orderly changes that take place in any organization."

The new emphasis, Anderson said, reflects interests of the SRI staff, and results from "the realization that sometime in the future, national priorities would swing to dealing with other kinds of problems, and we wanted to have our organization in position to usefully deal with these problems."

Abandonment of CBW research could be scored as a victory for the dissidents, but the other major change—the separation of SRI from the university—oddly enough infuriated them and apparently led to one of the major incidents of the entire affair—an attack on an SRI building on May 16.

The radical group, first under the banner of Students for a Democratic

Society and later the April 3rd Coalition, initially had sought this separation. But, the most recent position later called for firmer control of SRI research by the university.

The announcement May 13 by the university trustees that the school and SRI would be separated led the dissident group to launch the May 16 attack on the Hanover Building, where SRI conducts some counter-insurgency research—one of the militants' favorite targets. In what Anderson labeled a "vengeful tantrum," the group broke windows and set fires, causing damage estimated at more than \$10,000 before they were dispersed by police.

## Long-Term View

While this represented the peak of militant activity, Anderson feels that SRI's troubles are not over. "We have not relaxed," he told the Commonwealth Club of California recently. "This is a long-term problem that we face. The radical groups have convinced me that they will persist perhaps for several years to disrupt our work and destroy our institutions."

Abandonment of CBW research came about in a May 9 statement by the executive committee of SRI's board of directors, which pointed out that the university-SRI relationship and the type of research conducted at SRI "have been the subjects of review, comment, and controversy."

The statement continued: "The issues are varied and complex, and the continued viability of the institute as an ongoing research organization and the integrity of its staff are at stake. . . ."

The committee pointed out that SRI's most recent plan calls for increased emphasis on research for industry and "development of programs designed to assist in the solution of major social problems. . . ."

## Research Policy

"At the same time, research in support of other government programs, including those in national security, will continue, with a modification which now is considered appropriate . . . the institute will not engage in research projects dealing directly with the development of weapons of chemical or biological warfare."

This policy was adopted after an earlier moratorium on new CBW work was declared at the behest of the university trustees, pending a final decision on the SRI-university relationship. Still earlier, a request for such a moratorium by the president of the Stanford student body had been turned down.

In an "open letter to working people

## Labor Dept. Issues Noise Standards

New noise exposure limits set by the Dept. of Labor are causing little more than paperwork problems for most aerospace companies, which have had employee hearing conservation programs in effect for several years.

Many of these programs, designed to meet earlier union, state or federal regulations have stricter limits than the new Labor Dept. standards. The other aerospace companies are re-surveying plant working areas and say they expect no difficulty meeting the new noise standards either through acoustical engineering or by providing individual workers with protective devices.

The main problem for some companies will be record keeping—both of acoustical surveys and of individual worker audiograms, which will be made available on request by the government or workers.

The new Labor Dept. noise standards, which took effect May 20 under the Walsh-Healey Public Contracts Act, are intended to set a minimum, uniform standard for all companies holding government contracts above \$10,000.

A government contractor failing to meet the new noise standards in "a reasonable length of time" after notification can be barred from receiving government contracts for three years. The standards require a company to provide "protection against the effects of noise exposure" when the sound levels—measured on the A scale of a standard sound level meter at slow response—exceed levels ranging from 90 dba. for 8 hr. daily to 115 dba. for 15 min. daily, or 140 dba. maximum permissible exposure to impulsive or impact noise.

Most aerospace manufacturing operations, company safety engineers said, run under 90 dba. except for riveting and drop hammer operations, where workers are given hearing protective devices.

Instrument makers are already on the market with new sound level meters designed to measure sounds in ranges covered by the new provisions.

SRI," the SDS said the workers were not aware of the nature of some of the military research being conducted at SRI, and suggested they look further into such items as these:

"Contracts for the Army Chemical Corps such as 'the dissemination of chemical solid and liquid materials' (\$2.5 million) and 'investigation of incapacitating chemical materials' (\$1.1 million). This research has contributed to defoliation and crop destruction in Vietnam as well as to . . . tear gas, which has been used to 'flush out' Viet families from shelters dug beneath their homes. In a close space, the gas can kill."

At the time that CBW work was abandoned, Anderson said, SRI had two contracts that could be considered in the CBW field. Neither was classified, he said, and they represented less than 0.05% of SRI's total volume.

That volume was \$64 million last year, of which about \$45 million was supported by the government and about \$32 million by the Defense Dept. About 11% of SRI's projects were classified. Such projects as "ballistic missile defense analysis," and "analysis of counterinsurgency in southeast Asia" are the type that draw the fire of the campus militants, who are crusading against military research by universities.

SRI officials point out that the institute's efforts also have included a study of land reform in Vietnam, and a list of SRI projects—which total about 775 at present—includes such items as "urban passenger transportation systems" and "technical-economic aspects of ocean resources."

### 3,000 Employees

The institute employs nearly 3,000 persons—half of them members of the professional and scientific staff—here and at five other U.S. locations, plus regional offices in Bangkok, Sydney, Zurich, Stockholm and Tokyo.

SRI was founded in 1946 as a non-profit, tax-exempt scientific research organization. Since the early years, it has been financially independent of Stanford University. Anderson has described its relationship to the university as that of "a co-equal, sister organization under a common board of trustees."

While these trustees have made what Anderson considers a firm, irreversible decision to sever this relationship, the mechanism and timetable for accomplishing the legal separation has not yet been determined.

Anderson expressed his feelings about the separation like this:

"The forthcoming separation is in the best interests of the university and SRI. Both now realize that their activities are considerably different. The university cannot be a highly research-oriented organization and do its job, nor can this organization engage in educational pur-

## Firm Opposition Shown Dissidents

Washington—Firm opposition to dissident student demands but a willingness to discuss controversial questions in an atmosphere of calm is Stanford Research Institute's answer to current campus turmoil, SRI President Charles A. Anderson said last week.

Anderson testified before the Senate Government Operations Investigations Subcommittee, which is currently conducting hearings on militant organizations and campus disorders. The hearings were called by the committee chairman, Sen. John L. McClellan (D.-Ark.).

"Unfortunately, the truth is no deterrent to the hard-core revolutionaries who are bent on destroying America's work in national security research. . . ." Anderson told the subcommittee. He offered the following examples:

- System for collecting, storing and retrieving village information, devised for the Royal Government of Thailand, was characterized by radicals as a counterinsurgency program.

- Project for the Small Business Administration, aimed at finding better ways to guard against burglary, robbery and vandalism, was attacked as an example of domestic counterinsurgency.

Anderson told the subcommittee that SRI has maintained the position that "we will not tolerate disruption of our business activities and work for our clients, and that we must ensure the integrity and security of classified and proprietary information and equipment." He said that he has kept in close contact with police at all times.

At the same time, SRI has furnished facilities, including coffee, for any citizens who wish to discuss institute programs with staff members. At one point daily meetings were scheduled.

suits while performing its role of applied research."

The legal relationship was a "cause of embarrassment" to the university, and a source of problems to SRI, Anderson feels, but the separation will not, however, "interfere with the productive professional relationship between the two." He pointed out that the severance would have no effect, for example, on Stanford faculty members who work with SRI on special research projects.

One alternative to separation—tighter control of SRI research by the university—drew stiff opposition from SRI staff.

"The staff at SRI, by an overwhelming majority, let it be known they would quit rather than submit to control of their work by some outside morals committee," Anderson told the Commonwealth Club. "Strangely enough, the morals committee idea seemed to have some support among faculty members until others began pointing out how deadly such an idea could be to their own academic freedom."

The issue of academic freedom also has been raised by Prof. William R. Rambo, director of Stanford Electronics Laboratories, following a nine-day occupation of the school's Applied Electronics Laboratory (AEL) building during the same wave of anti-military disturbances. The school's systems techniques laboratory, which is centered in AEL, conducts considerable research for the Defense Dept., some of it classified.

The AEL occupation brought about a vote by the Stanford Academic Senate not to engage in classified research, and

may spell an end to the STL program. In a letter to Anderson, Prof. Rambo expresses some bitterness at these developments:

"I have always regarded as singularly attractive features of this university, both its instinct to harbor divergent views representing the persuasions of its individual members and groups, and its ability to accommodate the consequent interplay of contending thoughts. . . ." he wrote.

"Unhappily, we seem now to be entering a period of 'consensus' in which the university itself is urged to adopt a position on issue moral and political, and those within who do not naturally subscribe to the consensus view must conform or be quiet. My alarm is heightened by the apparent ability of any hyperactive group . . . to gain enormous strength from the tacit enlistment through this process of the force of the total university community."

### Issues Continue

While these issues continue to simmer at Stanford, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and other campuses, SRI now can chart an entirely independent course. While Anderson freely admits that this course is changing, he has no specific timetable for altering the balance of research projects.

"This organization must be responsive to the needs of society," he said. "But we can't just decide to do research in urban development, and then go ahead and do it. It must be supported. But we must be ready when the resources are ready."