

# **The Growing Prominence of Science in the Aftermath of World War One**

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Following World War One powerful groups in society substantially raised their expectations from the natural science. Scientific research became a promise for decisive transformations in technology, and consequently in economy, society and military affairs. This expectation was not completely new, yet before the war it had been fiercely contested. The success of scientific research in fields like submarine detection, sound ranging for locating enemy artillery and wireless communication, and in the infamous development of poison gas, convinced many of the sceptics about the practical value of science for technology and society. Many expected that once employed for good causes science would be a strong force in ameliorating human welfare. Yet science was also a threat, as used for malice ends, or by one's competitors. The threat of competition was especially strong at the international level, where policy makers emphasized that investment in science is crucial for "the economic struggles of peace-time." The promise and threat alike led to increase in national and private funding of science, and the establishment of special institutions for the fostering of science and its application to technology. Most of the new national organizations had roots in the wartime institutions, which had been designed to serve also in peace.