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Henry S. Rowen, 90, RAND Chief Who Quit in Pentagon Papers Case, Dies

By William Grimes

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Henry S. Rowen, an economist and a military expert who led the RAND Corporation in the 1960s, expanding its research mission to include domestic policy, and who resigned abruptly in 1971 after a RAND copy of the top-secret Pentagon Papers was leaked to the news media by Daniel Ellsberg, died on Nov. 12 in Menlo Park, Calif. He was 90.

His son Chris confirmed the death.

Mr. Rowen, an analyst with RAND in the 1950s, became its president in 1967 after working on NATO strategy in the Defense Department for several years. Created under government and military auspices in 1946, RAND (its name is a contraction of research and development) became an independent nonprofit research institute two years later, providing expert guidance to the government on defense and national security from its headquarters in Santa Monica, Calif.

The Defense Department, the Air Force and NASA accounted for more than 90 percent of its contracts when Mr. Rowen took over, but under his leadership, RAND analysts began looking at social welfare issues as well.

In 1967, Robert S. McNamara, then the secretary of defense, created a task force to write a comprehensive history of America's political and military involvement in Vietnam, recruiting several RAND analysts, including Mr. Ellsberg, to work on the project. Drawing on a wealth of classified material, the completed study ran to 7,000 pages and 47 volumes. Two copies were given to RAND.

Mr. Rowen had been a close friend of and mentor to Mr. Ellsberg, from their time at RAND in the late 1950s. He had steered contracting work to Mr. Ellsberg at the Defense Department, brought him back to RAND as a strategic analyst soon after becoming its president and authorized him to work on the Pentagon study.

Increasingly disillusioned with America's role in Vietnam, Mr. Ellsberg photocopied the study in late 1969 and, after resigning from RAND in 1970, turned it over to The New York Times, which began publishing excerpts in June 1971.

Some of RAND's military clients and board members were already unhappy with Mr. Rowen's focus on social policy. The leaking of the Pentagon Papers was the final straw. In November 1971, Mr. Rowen announced his resignation. In a terse statement, he said, "Maintaining vitality in institutions and in people is brought about by change — RAND and I are no exception."

He went on to become a leading policy intellectual at Stanford University and the Hoover Institution, and served in a variety of government posts. As assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs under Dick Cheney in the administration of the first President George Bush, Mr. Rowen was deeply involved in military planning for the Persian Gulf war. His study of a 1941 British operation to put down an Iraqi revolt led him to propose an end run around Iraqi forces rather than a frontal attack, an idea that, with modifications, found its way into the successful "left hook" strategy employed by American forces.

Henry Stanislaus Rowen, known as Harry, was born on Oct. 11, 1925, in Boston. He earned a bachelor's degree in business and engineering administration from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1949, then served a management internship at the Barnsdall Oil Company before joining RAND as an economist.

One of the most important studies he worked on, "Selection and Use of Strategic Air Bases," showed that Soviet short-range missiles could eliminate the forward European bases operated by the Strategic Air Command, a finding that led the Air Force to close all of them.

Mr. Rowen left RAND to study economics at Oxford but returned after earning a master's degree in 1955 and continued writing on issues including nuclear strategy, international security and the emerging economies of Asia. He helped develop RAND's Planning-Programming-Budgeting System, which sought to improve decision making by combining systems analysis with budgeting abilities. It grew out of a RAND analysis of the relative costs and benefits of the B-52 and B-70 bombers.

He joined President John F. Kennedy's administration in 1961 as deputy assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs. Working under the Cold War strategist Paul Nitze, Mr. Rowen helped develop the policy known as "flexible response," an alternative to the Eisenhower-

era policy of massive nuclear retaliation to defend NATO allies. In 1965, he was named assistant director of the Bureau of the Budget, where he promoted the RAND planning and budget system. President Lyndon B. Johnson went on to order all federal agencies to use it.

In pursuing his social agenda at RAND, Mr. Rowen signed a contract with New York City to analyze police, fire, housing and welfare services and how to improve them. And in 1970, he established a graduate school for the study of public policy at RAND headquarters in Santa Monica. "There are a lot of problems around, and a shortage of people who are good at defining and analyzing them and suggesting how they can be solved," he told The Times.

Now known as the Frederick S. Pardee RAND Graduate School (named after a former RAND researcher and philanthropist), it is the largest program in the United States offering doctorates in the field, and the only one based at an independent policy research institution.

After leaving RAND, Mr. Rowen became a professor of public policy and management at the Stanford Graduate School of Business. He taught there off and on until his retirement in 1995.

The government in Washington frequently recruited him as an adviser. In the early 1980s, he was the chairman of the National Intelligence Council at the Central Intelligence Agency, a group created by William J. Casey, the agency's director, to supply better intelligence estimates.

He later served on the Presidential Commission on the Intelligence of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction, a panel formed to investigate the quality of American intelligence leading to the invasion of Iraq in 2003, and on the Defense Policy Board Advisory Committee, outside experts who help the Pentagon formulate policy.

In addition to his son Chris, Mr. Rowen, who lived in Palo Alto, Calif., is survived by his wife, the former Beverly Griffiths; his daughters, Hilary, Sheila and Diana Rowen; two other sons, Michael and Nicholas; and nine grandchildren.

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