

'REPORT' ON PEACE GETS MIXED VIEWS

Some See Book as Hoax—
Others Take It Seriously

By JOHN LEO

The book is variously described as "a harmless subterfuge," "a hair-raising analysis," "the sinister work of a sick mind," and "a serious fraud."

It is "Report From Iron Mountain: On the Possibility and Desirability of Peace," published last week by the Dial Press and described as a suppressed Government report arguing that the world would face an unparalleled catastrophe if the world ever achieved peace.

The report states that war and war preparations are politically, psychologically and culturally indispensable to world stability. Its unidentified authors conclude that "lasting peace, while not theoretically impossible, is probably unattainable; even if it could be achieved it would almost certainly not be in the best interests of a stable society to achieve it."

"If it's authentic, it's an enormous roaring scandal," said Lee Rainwater, a sociologist at Washington University in St. Louis. "If it's caricature, it's a brilliant job. There are people who really think like that."

Richard Baron, president of Dial, says the report is authentic. Harold Hayes, editor of Esquire magazine, which is publishing a 28,000-word condensation of the book in its December issue, says he accepts Dial's assurances on trustworthiness. But generally

publishers, reviewers and Government officials who have seen advance copies consider the book a hoax.

"To our knowledge no special study group ever existed," said a press spokesman for the State Department's Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. "But it's cleverly done, and who ever did it obviously has an appreciable grasp of the disciplines involved." However, no advance reviewer has flatly labeled the book fiction.

The 109-page book has an introduction by Leonard C. Lewin, a New York freelance writer, who states that "John Doe," a professor of social science from a large Middle Western university secretly passed the manuscript to him last winter.

Doe is described as one of the 15 members of a special Government study group convened at "Iron Mountain, N.Y." from 1963 to 1966 to produce the report for an unspecified Federal agency.

Iron Mountain is described in the book as being near the city of Hudson, N. Y., apparently a reference to the Hudson Institute, the think tank where "war games" and studies on life in the future are developed under the direction of Herman Kahn for Government and private agencies.

The institute is actually in Harmon-on-Hudson, just north of Ossining.

"We had nothing to do with it," said Mr. Kahn. "It sounds nutty to me—either a practical joke or something sinister. No analysis of conversion to peacetime that I've seen has suggested such radical measures."

Slavery and Poison

In a cold, flat style—described by some readers as "perfect bureaucratese"—the report suggests that if the social cohesion brought by war is allowed to disappear without extensive planning, the world may have to introduce "a sophisticated form of slavery," invent enemies from outside the planet, or deliberately poison the atmosphere "in a politically acceptable manner."

The end of war, it said, would necessarily mean the end of the nation-state, and would introduce world government and the need for wasteful spending on a large scale, perhaps through an unlimited space program

aimed at reaching unreachable points in space.

"I disagree that the end of war would wrench and destroy the nation-state system," said Arthur I. Waskow, a resident fellow of the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington. "But this is the best case I've ever read on the other side. It gives me very tough arguments to answer."

Mr. Waskow said that if the report is authentic it would probably have come from the Bureau of the Budget or the Central Intelligence Agency. He added that he was surprised to see one of his privately circulated reports mentioned in the Iron Mountain book.

"Somebody High Up"

"As far as I know, only about 60 people in Washington ever saw my report. If it's a hoax, it must involve somebody high up."

Many analysts believe that the report reflects a grasp of the Washington scene as well as an understanding of social psychology, ecology, economics and sociology that is beyond the ability of most satirists.

Publishing figures who asked not to be identified said that the Harvard economist John Kenneth Galbraith had such qualifications. Under the pseudonym Mark Epernay, he has written several political satires, including "The McLandless Dimension," which appeared in Esquire several years ago.

He is reviewing the Iron Mountain book under the pseudonym "Herschel McLandless" for Book World, a weekly supplement of The Chicago Tribune and The Washington Post.

When asked if he was reviewing his own book for Book World, he said: "That would be unethical. Is The Times suggesting I acted unethically?"

He added that he couldn't say whether he had a hand in writing Iron Mountain because "some things are so far removed from reality that they can't be commented on."

According to the book's introduction, the study group met between 1963 and 1966. That was when a study was made by the Washington Center of Foreign Policy Research for the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. The study, published July 10, 1966, said President Johnson's disarmament plan could upset world stability instead of promoting peace.

However, both the center and the agency denied this report was the basis for Iron Mountain.