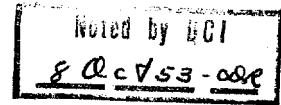


The Director of Central Intelligence

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EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON



September 8, 1953

MEMORANDUM FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

SUBJECT: Implications of Soviet Test of Thermonuclear Device

REFERENCES: NSC Action Nos. 799 and 869

The enclosed letter to the President from Mr. W. Sterling Cole, Chairman of the Congressional Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, is circulated herewith for information and study by the National Security Council in accordance with the President's reply thereto, which is also enclosed.

JAMES S. LAY, Jr.
Executive Secretary

cc: The Secretary of the Treasury
The Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission
The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
The Director of Central Intelligence

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C O P Y

Denver, Colorado
August 25, 1953

Dear Mr. Chairman:

My grateful thanks for your very thoughtful letter of the twenty-first. You will be interested to know that in recent days I have been working on a talk, to be delivered early this fall, on some of the subjects that you discuss in your letter. I find that our thoughts are almost identical on these vital matters.

I am sending your letter on for study by the National Security Council and by the Head of the Atomic Energy Commission.

With warm personal regard,

Sincerely,

DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER

The Honorable W. Sterling Cole
Chairman
Joint Committee on Atomic Energy
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C.

cc: NSC
AEC

C O P Y

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
Joint Committee on Atomic Energy
(Created Pursuant to Public Law 585, 79th Congress)

August 21, 1953

Dear Mr. President:

No American of this generation has spoken more eloquently than you on the folly of hoping to maintain lasting peace solely through material might. Yet no American has been more insistent in calling for all the weapons required for the defense of freedom and liberty.

I am therefore sure you will be the first to agree that the test of a thermonuclear device by the Soviet government on August 12 now imposes a twin obligation upon our nation--maintaining and increasing our existing lead in fission weapons and the development of hydrogen energy and, side by side with this, re-exploring old ways and searching out new ways of bringing about effective control of nuclear armaments and all other instruments of war.

This letter is written to assure you that the members of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy will lend their support to all measures intended to enlarge still further our present advantage in atomic and hydrogen developments, and to all proposals designed to bring real and lasting peace to the world.

After Hiroshima, it was the deepest desire of our Government and our people that the output of all weapons, including nuclear weapons, be regulated through workable international arrangements. This remains our deepest desire, even though our strivings for such a plan--strivings extending over the past eight years--have met only with rebuffs from the Kremlin.

As you know, President Truman's decision of January 31, 1950 to step-up the tempo of our thermonuclear program was made with heavy heart. He issued his directive only after the evidences of Soviet intransigence and hostility had become so overwhelming as to leave us no alternative but to proceed with the development of these dreadful armaments. This Committee not only supported your predecessor's decision, but it independently made positive and vigorous representations in support of an enlarged hydrogen program. We have long been on record as urging that no effort be spared in developing hydrogen energy to the extent required for the defense of this and like-minded nations.

August 21, 1953

Because of the requirements for security, few Americans can know of the devotion, skill, and sheer hard work which the pioneer researchers in thermonuclear energy have brought to our program over the past three and a half years. Some day, I hope that the American people can come to appreciate more fully the immense contributions these men and women have made to our national security.

Thanks to their work, we are now well ahead of the Soviets-- both in fission weapons and in thermonuclear developments. Yet, in this dynamic and fast-evolving science, what is adequate today may be inadequate tomorrow. I therefore believe that our thermonuclear program should henceforth be characterized by even greater vigor, imagination, and boldness--toward the end of making hydrogen energy play, as rapidly and fully as possible, its appropriate role in the defense of the free world. Fundamentally, I believe this means that more men and more resources should be devoted to this phase of the activities of the Atomic Energy Commission.

Yet no sensible person could imagine for an instant that accelerating the rate and scale of our hydrogen work, vital though this is, in itself represents a complete answer to the Soviet test of August 12.

I presume that this latest sign of Soviet atomic progress will be reflected in the plans you and your advisers are formulating for more effective defenses against nuclear attack from land or sea. I presume also that the Soviet test will have a bearing on our policy toward releasing more information on the effects of atomic weapons.

Above all, I earnestly hope we will not let feelings of hopelessness dissuade us from continuing to press for international control over nuclear and conventional armaments.

My own hope, in addition, is that we will seize every opportunity to assure the world that we stand ready to share the benefits of peacetime atomic energy with decent people everywhere. It is, I think, most urgent that we construct as quickly as possible a reactor turning out large amounts of useful power, and then aid our allies in the construction of similar machines--always subject, of course, to necessary security safeguards.

As Chairman of the Joint Committee, I am now framing for Committee consideration, proposals which aim at enabling us and our allies to pool our resources and talents more effectively in developing peacetime applications of the atom. I look forward to transmitting the Committee's considered recommendations on this subject for your study soon after the Congress reconvenes in January.

I cannot close without recalling your address of last April 16--which I deem to be one of the great state papers of our era--in which you declared that, if effective and world-wide disarmament could be achieved, you would ask our people to join with all other nations in devoting a substantial portion of the defense monies thereby saved to a fund for world reconstruction.

The goal of our people has been and ever will be a just and lasting peace for all men of good will. The members of this Committee stand behind you in your efforts to lead us toward that goal.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ STERLING COLE

Sterling Cole
Chairman

The President

The White House