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Approved For Release 2005/04/28 : CIA-RDP80R01731R003000100009-3

March 23, 1954

Dear Mr. Strauss:

At the meeting of the Operations Coordinating Board, March 17, consideration was given to a suggestion developed in a paper presented by Mr. C. D. Jackson, Special Assistant to the President, relating to Western Europe.

One proposal which is included in a part of Mr. Jackson's report relates to the possibility of establishing an atomic reactor in Berlin for the purpose of power generation. I believe that the objectives of this proposal have been outlined to you in personal conversations with Mr. Jackson and are set forth in the attachment. Subsequently the Department of Defense requested that the analysis of the proposal include the possibility of locating a similar reactor in Japan.

The OCB would appreciate receiving from you at an early date your estimate of the technical and economic feasibility of the specific proposals referred to above with an indication as to the time factors and costs involved. It would also appreciate any other comments bearing upon either the practicability or advisability of the proposals.

After receiving your comments, the Board will desire to discuss with you arrangements for such further analysis of the proposals as may be appropriate at that time.

Sincerely,

Elmer B. Staats
Executive Officer

Attachment

The Honorable
Lewis L. Strauss,
Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission,
Washington 25, D. C.

cc: Mr. C. D. Jackson
Mr. Radium
Mr. Codel
Mr. Wayne Jackson
Gen. Forster
Mr. Koons

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**EXCERPT OF A REPORT BY MR. C. D. JACKSON
UPON HIS RETURN FROM THE BERLIN CONFERENCE**

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There is at least one big thing that could be done in Berlin which might have tremendous impact, and that is the announcement of a plan to erect the first atomic power reactor under the Eisenhower proposal in Berlin.

There are very practical as well as propoganda reasons for doing this. Every ounce of fuel, liquid or solid, used in Berlin has to be brought in to the city across Soviet territory. In spite of the reserve stocks we have accumulated, a new blockade would be very serious, particularly as the Soviet rail and canal Berlin by-passes now make it impossible for us to impose a counter-blockade.

An atomic power plant would be completely independent of any kind of emergency "lift" into Berlin, and while the first installation might not be able to supply one hundred percent enough power for normal peak loads, it would be able to supply the basic minimum needed to take care of the city under siege conditions. The propoganda aspects vis-a-vis the Germans and the Soviets are obvious.

There is nothing in the President's proposal nor in the talks between the Secretary and Khrushchev in Berlin, nor the upcoming talks with Khrushchev in Washington on the President's proposal, to interfere with our taking unilateral action. As a matter of fact, such action might speed Soviet acceptance of the President's proposal.

Someone will be sure to raise the objection that this puts fissionable material and/or atomic secrets into the very hands of the Russians. The answer to that is that a quick check with Lewis Strauss will give you the answer on the negligible amount of "material" needed. Furthermore, the kind of material to be used is not "bomb" type. And finally, there is no military secret involved in a power reactor.

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