

September 3, 1953

74447

This will refer to our conversation of last night concerning the Commission's emergency capability.

As I told you, this subject was brought up in December 1951 by the MLC and later pushed by me.

The outcome was a letter, dated April 10, 1953, from Mr. Dean to Mr. LeBaron, which, so far as I know, has resulted in no comment or new requirement. The report indicated that an "all out" effort might increase the stockpile by more than [redacted] weapons in eight months and by almost [redacted] by July 1954. Certain liabilities were involved.

I don't really know whether more weapons in this quantity would be significant.

The first step I would think would be to do as you suggest and determine from someone like Admiral Radford whether any results different from those currently planned would be of interest to the JCS. The next step would be for us to determine what the limiting factors are and whether they would respond to acceleration through money, effort, or diversion of emphasis.

It may be that the limiting factor is delivery capability in the DOD and that there isn't much we can do.

But if the JCS considered something important, we might be able to do some things not now considered necessary or even practical in this mixed atmosphere where urgency and economy are uneasy mates.

Among the things we might be able to do:

1. Accelerate parts of our weapons production schedule by turning on some heat and being willing to spend money for higher production and more rapid assembly.
2. We might be able to get almost immediately some more fissionable material for weapons by reducing diversions, cutting down pipelines, etc.
3. We might be able to step up refabrication, or at least prepare for a broader refabrication program in the event that, say the Chiefs wanted us to be so prepared. We have the plant capacity. I don't think we are manned and trained for a big refabricating effort.

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~~TOP SECRET~~

4. It might even be wise to think about accelerating a quick and dirty test of one of the thermonuclears. For Moscow purposes, I would rather have a capability of a couple in March (when the nights are longer) than a few more in July. This is obviously not an orderly idea, probably not even a good one. But I think we must explore to make completely sure that the test date has not become the objective instead of a deliverable thermonuclear at the earliest moment. We might find there is a degree of risk which we would be willing to accept.

As I said, I think it's hard for a logistics agency to think tangibly in terms of any kind of speed-up without any indication of what the consumer wants. I feel reasonably sure that if we suggested the possibilities of a speed-up to the staff in the absence of any indications of demand, the answers as to what we could do would be heavily salted by considerations of not rocking the boat.

DOE ARCHIVES

This may be a useless project, but I really think that we are doing less than our duty if we do not try to find out whether the Chiefs could use added effort on our part.

//s//

EUGENE M. ZUCKERT
Commissioner

distribution
L111-38-1A - *Stinson*
L111-38-2A - *Langley*
destroyed 4/23/54
L111-38-1B - *Tukey*