

Notes of an Informal Meeting
of the
Interim Committee
Monday, 14 May 1945, 10:00 A.M. - 12:30 P.M.

PRESENT:

MEMBERS

Hon. Ralph A. Bard
Dr. "Vannevar" Bush
Hon. James F. Byrnes
Hon. William L. Clayton
Mr. George L. Harrison, Acting Chairman
(in the absence of the Secretary of War)

BY INVITATION

Maj. Gen. Leslie R. Groves

I. PANELS.

1. Scientific Panel.

It was agreed that the membership of the Scientific Panel should be as follows:

Dr. Arthur H. Compton
Dr. Ernest O. Lawrence
Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer
Dr. Enrico Fermi

It was agreed further that the Secretary of War or Mr. Harrison, on his behalf, should write to these four scientists inviting them to become members of the Panel. In line with suggestions made by Dr. J. B. Conant and Dr. Vannevar Bush, it was the sense of the meeting that the Scientific Panel should be free not only to discuss technical matters but also

to present to the Committee their views concerning the political aspects of the problem.

2. Military Panel.

After some discussion the Committee concluded that the Secretary of War should discuss with General Marshall and Admiral King the desirability of establishing a Military Panel and secure their recommendations as to membership. The Committee was of the opinion that the Panel, if constituted, would be most effective if its membership were drawn from high levels of the Army and Navy and, accordingly, expressed agreement that the following membership would be desirable:

For the Army:

General of the Army George C. Marshall
Lt. General Thomas T. Handy
Maj. Gen. Leslie R. Groves

For the Navy:

Admiral of the Fleet Ernest J. King
Admiral Richard S. Edwards
Rear Admiral William R. Purnell

3. The question was raised whether an Industrial Panel should be established to advise on the potentialities of industrial mobilization in this field in other countries. The Committee took the view that no panel on this question should be organized at this time, but that such men as Mr. James A. Rafferty of Union Carbide and Mr. A. K. Chapman of Eastman Kodak should be invited to sit in with the Committee to discuss this question.

II. PUBLIC STATEMENT.

The inclusiveness of a public statement concerning the weapon was felt to be dependent upon the outcome of the test to be made in July. In the event that the test showed poor results, it would suffice to have only a brief notice made public by the theater commander to the effect that a dump of high explosives had blown up. If, however, the results that are now confidently expected are borne out by the field test, a more complete public statement would be necessary. Such a statement should be made by the President and should indicate the general nature of the weapon, trace the history of its development and of the controls, both national and international, that are contemplated.

It was agreed that William L. Laurence, a science editor of the New York Times, now under contract with the Manhattan District, should be brought in to work up drafts of these two alternative statements and that Arthur Page should review these statements before their presentation to the Committee for consideration.

III. INTERNATIONAL SITUATION.

The international aspects of the program were discussed at some length, the Quebec Agreement and the operations of the Combined Development Trust being stressed. Copies of a memorandum from Drs. Bush and Conant on this question were distributed to

the Messrs. Byrnes, Bard, and Clayton, and General Groves for further study after the meeting. Copies of a memorandum from certain scientists addressed to Dr. Arthur Compton were also distributed to the Messrs. Byrnes and Bard for further study.

IV. LEGISLATIVE CONTROLS.

The matter of controls and the legislation necessary to effectuate such control were discussed in general terms; no attempt was made, however, to arrive at any definite conclusions.

V. THE CHICAGO SCIENTISTS.

General Groves and Dr. Bush outlined the nature of the work being carried on by the Chicago Group and raised the question as to its future status. It was agreed that the group should continue its work for the present and that the question of future status should be taken up later after the weapon was put to offensive use.

VI. APPOINTMENT OF SECRETARY.

On the recommendation of the Acting Chairman it was agreed that Lieutenant R. Gordon Arneson, Assistant to Mr. Bundy, should be appointed as Secretary of the Committee.

VII. NEXT MEETING.

The next meeting of the Committee was set for 2:30 P.M., Friday, 18 May 1945.

R. Gordon Arneson

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