

NOTES OF THE INTERIM COMMITTEE MEETING

THURSDAY 21 JUNE 1945

9:30 A.M.-1:15 P.M.; 2:00 P.M.- 4:15 A.M.

PRESENT:

Members of the Committee

Hon. Ralph A. Bard  
Dr. Vannevar Bush  
Hon. James F. Byrnes  
Hon. William L. Clayton  
Dr. Karl T. Compton  
Dr. James B. Conant  
Mr. George L. Harrison, Acting Chairman

By Invitation

Maj. Gen. Leslie R. Groves  
Mr. Harvey H. Bundy (discussion of item III)  
Mr. Arthur W. Page

I. DRAFT STATEMENTS OF PUBLICITY:

The Committee went over in detail three sets of statements of publicity designed for use (1) at the time of the test; (2) by the President; and (3) by the Secretary of War. It was agreed that a sub-committee consisting of Mr. Page and a representative from General Groves' Office should redraft the statements on the basis of the detailed suggestions made by the members of the Committee at the meeting and that the redrafts should be transmitted to the Secretary of War for his approval and transmitted, in turn, by him to the President for his approval.

With regard to timing it was agreed that the President's statement should be followed immediately by the release of the

Secretary of War and the next day by the historical scientific statement. Copy of all three statements should be released to the press at the same time with the proviso that the scientific statement be withheld until 24 hours after the simultaneous release of the other two statements.

General Groves reported that Dr. H. D. Sayth of Princeton was in charge of preparing the scientific release and that it was in the final stages of completion. It was now being cleared with the major participants in the project to insure accuracy. He explained that carefully drawn criteria had been established by which to determine what information could properly be included in the report.

a. Statements to be issued after the test.

In view of the time lag between the test and actual use of the weapon the Committee felt that as little information as possible should be released at the time of the test and that the release should be confined to the local press. It was agreed that draft "A" should be the basic form used whatever the extent of the damage, with the understanding that reference to exploded gas shells should be made if it was necessary to evacuate and that a list of the dead should be added if any fatalities occurred. The Committee realized that the final decision as to the exact content of the statement would, subject to the above considerations, have to be decided on the spot at the time of the test.

b. Statement of the President.

The Committee considered the draft in detail and suggested a number of changes for the guidance of the subcommittee in rewriting the statement. It was agreed that the substance of the last paragraph was a policy matter which the President alone could decide and would have to be held in suspense pending the outcome of the "Big Three" Conference.

In any event, it was felt that it would have to be re-written so as not to make any commitment concerning the establishment of international control.

c. Statement of the Secretary of War.

Detailed suggestions were made concerning changes to be made. Particular emphasis was placed on making proper acknowledgment of the activity of American scientists in this field before the war, of the assistance of the Navy Department on the project, and of General Groves' outstanding contribution to the prosecution of the work. It was agreed that all specific reference to the Quebec Agreement, the Combined Development Trust, and negotiations and agreements with respect to the acquisition of ore, particularly with reference to thorium, should be deleted.

II. POLICY WITH REGARD TO GENERAL AND CONTINUING PUBLICITY AFTER USE:

Mr. Harrison raised the question of the welter of publicity which would arise from the release of the initial

statements and pointed out that the nature and volume of this publicity would be such that the Committee would not be prepared to handle it. He suggested, and the Committee agreed, that the responsibility for the preparation of future releases should be turned over to General Groves and Arthur Page. General Groves said he would prepare a list of general rules to be followed in handling future publicity and present them to the Committee for approval.

III. CLAUSE TWO OF THE QUEBEC AGREEMENT:

At this point, Mr. Bundy entered the meeting and raised the question of Clause Two of the Quebec Agreement which provides that the signatories may not use the weapon against a third country except by mutual consent. After some discussion Mr. Bard made the motion that the Secretary of War be advised that the Interim Committee favored revocation of Clause Two by appropriate action. The motion was unanimously carried.

The Committee recessed for luncheon at 1:15 P.M. and reassembled at 2:00 P.M. All who were at the morning meeting were present except Dr. K. T. Compton and Mr. Bundy.

IV. PETITION THAT DR. UREY BE ADDED TO THE SCIENTIFIC PANEL:

Mr. Harrison explained that he had received a petition from certain members of the Chicago Group at the Metallurgical

Laboratory in Chicago and at the Clinton Laboratories requesting that Dr. Urey be made a member of the Scientific Panel. The Committee agreed that Dr. Urey should not be added to the Panel and that in replying to the petition Mr. Harrison should state that the Scientific Panel would consult with Dr. Urey from time to time with regard to his views in his special field of competence.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SCIENTIFIC PANEL:

The recommendations of the Scientific Panel, transmitted to the Secretary of War under date of 16 June, were received and read by the members of the Committee. These recommendations were in three parts: (1) future policy with regard to research, development, and control; (2) immediate use of the weapon; and (3) interim program.

a. Future Policy with regard to Research, Development, and Control.

It was the consensus of the Committee, as expressed by Dr. Bush, that consideration of the over-all post-war research and development program should be deferred and that the Committee at this time could properly consider only the problem of establishing a Post-War Commission. Dr. Bush pointed out that any organization for control in this field would have to be integrated with the general organization which was being recommended in his report to the President to have charge of all governmental research and development. Mr. Byrnes felt that the research aspects of this

field should be tied in with the general governmental research body but that a Post-War Control Commission would have to be established in addition. Dr. Bugh thought that the Commission should not itself serve as an operating agency but should be a policy and control body which would farm out operations under contract. The Committee was in agreement with this view. In discussing the membership of the Commission the Committee took the position that civilian members should comprise a majority, perhaps five out of nine, with two Army and two Navy members. At the suggestion of Mr. Harrison, the Committee agreed that a small sub-committee should be set up to work immediately to study this problem in all its ramifications and prepare draft legislation. It was further agreed that Mr. W. L. Marbury, Brigadier General Royall and a representative from General Groves' Office should constitute the sub-committee.

b. Immediate use of the weapon.

Mr. Harrison explained that he had recently received through Dr. A. H. Compton a report from a group of the scientists at Chicago recommending, among other things, that the weapon not be used in this war but that a purely technical test be conducted which would be made known to other countries. Mr. Harrison had turned this report over to the Scientific Panel for study and recommendation. Part II of the report of the Scientific Panel stated that they saw no acceptable alternative to direct military

use. The Committee reaffirmed the position taken at the 31 May and 1 June meetings that the weapon be used against Japan at the earliest opportunity, that it be used without warning, and that it be used on a dual target, namely, a military installation or war plant surrounded by or adjacent to homes or other buildings most susceptible to damage.

c. Interim Program.

The Committee approved the third recommendation of the Scientific Panel to the effect that the directive to the Manhattan Engineer District be extended to include work of post-war importance, such work not to exceed an annual budget of \$20,000,000.

VI. POSITION OF THIS SUBJECT AT THE "BIG THREE" CONFERENCE:

In considering what might be said by the President concerning the project at the "Big Three" Conference, the Committee discussed at length the many ramifications that had to be taken into account. In the hope of securing effective future control and in view of the fact that general information concerning the project would be made public shortly after the Conference, the Committee unanimously agreed that there would be considerable advantage, if suitable opportunity arose, in having the President advise the Russians that we were working on this weapon with every prospect of success and that we expected to use it against Japan.

The President might say further that he hoped this matter

might be discussed some time in the future in terms of insuring that the weapon would become an aid to peace. The Committee felt that, should the Russians press for more details, they should be told that we were not ready to furnish more information at present. The Committee agreed that under the provisions of the Quebec Agreement this whole problem should be discussed with the Prime Minister in advance of the Conference.

The Committee asked Mr. Harrison to make known its position, as stated above, to the Secretary of War.

VII. NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for Friday, 6 July 1945, at 9:30 A.M., the place of meeting to be determined later.

The meeting adjourned at 4:15 P.M.

*R. Gordon Arneson*  
R. GORDON ARNESON  
1st Lieutenant, A.U.S.  
Secretary.