

OFFICE FOR EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
NATIONAL DEFENSE RESEARCH COMMITTEE
OF THE
OFFICE OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT
1530 P STREET NW.
WASHINGTON, D. C.



August 24, 1945

Personal

Mr. George L. Harrison
Office of the Secretary of War
Room 4E924, Pentagon Building
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Harrison:

I tried to get you on the phone today without success just to say two things.

First, I very much hope proper awards are in store for our friend Groves. To my mind, the country owes him what he wants, which I feel quite sure is to be the next Chief of Engineers. I understand it would take a slight alteration in the law as he is a bit too young. This is none of my business, but I feel very strongly about it and intended to mention it to you the last time I was in Washington.

Second, I feel there should be some statement for distribution in the United States about the atomic bomb which would bring out the following points:

1. In 1940 the basic scientific facts on which the bomb was based had already been discovered in the laboratories of the world in the normal course of scientific work. The problem on which the two billion dollars was spent was largely engineering and applied science.
2. To make bombs, another country would have to have a well-developed heavy chemical industry and electrical industry, and the bomb can't be made by a minor nation or group of wild men in a desert. This has implication for the deindustrialization of Germany and Japan.
3. *deindustrialized* Estimates of experts differ as to how long it would take another nation starting from the information we had in 1940 and which they had to duplicate our efforts. The estimates vary from five years to twenty.
4. This revolution in warfare does involve the rethinking of all army and military problems, including the important problem of location of civilian industry and the nature of American cities.

Mr. George L. Harrison

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Conant

Query: Would it be advisable for the Interim Committee to get out a ~~manuscript~~ clear-cut statement along some such lines which could be sent to the President for public release? I believe that at present a great deal of the discussion is proceeding on false assumptions and in general muddying up the waters.

Best wishes,

Sincerely

J. B. Conant
James B. Conant