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WAR DEPARTMENT  
WASHINGTON

26 June 1945

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF WAR:

Many of the scientists who have been working on S-1 have expressed considerable concern about the future dangers of the development of atomic power. Some are fearful that no safe system of international control can be established. They, therefore, envisage the possibility of an armament race that may threaten civilization.

One group of scientists, working in the Chicago Laboratories, urges that we should not make use of the bomb, so nearly completed, against any enemy country at this time. They feel that to do so might sacrifice our whole moral position and thus make it more difficult for us to be the leaders in proposing or enforcing any system of international control designed to make this tremendous force an influence towards the maintenance of world peace rather than an uncontrollable weapon of war.

This anonymous statement of the Chicago scientists was submitted for comment to the Panel of Scientists appointed by the Interim Committee. Their answer was that they saw no acceptable alternative to direct military use since they believe that such

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use would be an obvious means of saving American lives and shortening the war.

It is interesting that practically all of the scientists, including those on the panel, feel great concern for the future if atomic power is not controlled through some effective international mechanism. Accordingly, most of them believe that one of the effective steps in establishing such a control is the assurance that, after this war is over, there shall be a free interchange of scientific opinion throughout the world supplemented, if possible, by some system of inspection. This they admit is a problem of the future. In the meantime, however, they feel that we must, even before actual use, briefly advise the Russians of our progress.

This matter of notice to the Russians was made a subject of thorough discussion at the last meeting of the Interim Committee on June 21. It was unanimously agreed that in view of the importance of securing an effective future control, and in view of the fact that most of the story, other than production secrets, will become known in \_\_\_\_\_ in any event, there would be considerable advantage, if a suitable opportunity arises at the "Big Three" meeting, in having the President advise the Russians simply that we are working intensely on this weapon and that, if we succeed as we think we will, we plan to use it against the enemy. Such a statement might well be supplemented by the statement that in the future, after the war, we would expect to discuss the matter further.

assuming that this means of warfare will become a

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weapon of terror and destruction.

It was felt by the Committee that if the Russians should ask for more details now rather than later or if they should raise questions as to timetables, methods of production, etc., they should be told that we are not yet ready to discuss the subject beyond the simple statement suggested above. Our purpose is merely to let them know that we did not wish to proceed with actual use without giving them prior information that we intend to do so. Not to give them this prior information at the time of the "Big Three" Conference and within a few weeks thereafter to use the weapon and to make fairly complete statements to the world about its history and development, might well make it impossible ever to enlist Russian cooperation in the set-up of future international controls over this new power.

It was agreed by the Committee that in view of the provisions of the Quebec Agreement it would be desirable to discuss this whole aspect of the question with the Prime Minister in advance of the "Big Three" Conference.

*George L. Harrison*  
GEORGE L. HARRISON

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