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Col. Hansen

12/27

*This further emphasizes
the need for a follow-up
Hydro-tation plan when
the AEC statement
is issued.*



*Noted
12/27/54
acc*

Executive Officer

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*OCB 000.9 (Atomic Energy) (File #2)
(7) (September 1954 - February 1955)*

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Mr. E. B. Staats

DATE: Dec. 27, 1954

FROM : Richard Hirsch *RH*

SUBJECT:

Morse Salisbury of the AEC invited my attention to the attached article by C. L. Sulzberger, from Paris, which appeared in the New York Times on Christmas morning, entitled "A Thermonuclear Christmas and the Strategy of Terror", with particular reference to paragraph three and the need to counteract Soviet propaganda with respect to the ultra-destructive effects of these weapons. The AEC General Advisory Council, headed by Dr. Rabi, has reviewed the proposed AEC statement on effects of thermonuclear weapons, and has suggested certain revisions which are now being processed by the AEC staff. Undoubtedly we will be hearing further about this at an early date.

Attachment:
Clipping.

OCB/SPS:RHirsch:GBA

Col. Hirsch

DECEMBER 25, 1954.

Foreign Affairs

A Thermonuclear Christmas and the Strategy of Terror

By C. L. SULZBERGER

PARIS, Dec. 24—For the first time at Christmas mankind is haunted by the fear that it may utterly destroy itself and by the belief that this is scientifically possible. Subconscious terror underlies any peace or goodwill engendered by the customary spirit of this season.

There is little doubt that the danger of a new world conflict has receded during recent months despite bellicose Soviet statements. Governments on both sides of the Iron Curtain seem more aware of the bleak necessity for coexistence and diplomats are groping for a formula. But, since the Eniwetok thermonuclear experiments last spring, a new peril has been recognized. This is the chance that scientists, probing the unknown, may yet wreck this lovely world by rendering it uninhabitable. The gloomy idea is being encouraged by Communist propaganda seeking to hamper further American arms experimentation. But the thought is not limited to victims of such propaganda. Communist efforts to stress dangers inherent in atomic and hydrogen explosions coincide with widespread fears already latent in Europe.

Moscow's purpose is plain. A picture is being delineated in which the United States is shown as a threat to life itself. If public opinion can be mobilized against the development of American atomic weapons, the defenses of the free world will be menaced. So far, unfortunately, Washington has not taken into account sufficiently the need to counteract this propaganda. Inadequate information has been made public to demonstrate how wrong is the implication that our scientists are about to blow up the earth.

A Receptive Audience

The miscalculations in fall-out at Eniwetok are now being exaggerated and disseminated widely. This terrifying propaganda falls on fertile ground. Even Churchill is much obsessed with death in the form of a long cigar-shaped radiocative cloud capable of obliterating the entire United Kingdom. Mendès-France came within an ace, while he was in the United States, of proposing a moratorium on further thermonuclear explosions. Naturally, if the fright already prevalent were to be given impetus by distinguished statesmen, the ultimate harm to the United States and democratic defenses might be serious. The Soviet bloc has immense superiority in manpower and conventional armaments. If it could overcome our advantage in super-

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dense superiority in manpower and conventional armaments. If it could overcome our advantage in super-weapons it would be in a position to inherit the earth.

Already it is suspected that Russian progress in the nuclear and thermonuclear fields has made great steps forward. Recently Moscow permitted the departure of two German scientists, seized during World War II. It is reasoned these men are no longer essential to Soviet atomic physics. Yet one of them, Gustav Hertz, is a Nobel Prize winner and the other, Manfred von Ardenne, has an international reputation. While the Communists clamor for an end to American experiments, continued Soviet Siberian explosions have produced radioactive snowfalls in Korea.

Forebodings of European intellectuals are being carefully stirred up. Last month a truly frightening paper was presented at the French Academy of Science by a protégé of the famous Prince de Broglie. De Broglie's name carries as much scientific prestige in France as does that of Einstein in the United States. The protégé, Charles-Noel Martin, warned that dust raised into the atmosphere by monstrous experiments might eventually obscure the sun's rays and change the climate of the globe. He spoke of the danger that radioactive rain may ultimately destroy plant life. These theses were widely discussed with fearful effect.

A Russian Jules Verne

While stirring a witches' broth of atomic horror, Soviet propaganda is endeavoring to promote the idea that its own nuclear science is as devoted to purely peaceful purposes as that of the United States is to war. Minds already befuddled by indigestible science fiction are inoculated with extraordinary nonsense made in Moscow.

Thus, for example, the observations of a Russian general of engineers, G. Pokrovski, have been given considerable circulation. Any admirer of the works of Jules Verne should find them stimulating. Pokrovski speaks of the usefulness in Arctic exploration of atomic submarines which will journey under the ice and send men to the surface on stairways or elevators thrust upward. He advocates airborne tractors with atomic motors to haul ~~glider trains~~ loaded with passengers or freight. He wants to employ nuclear energy to melt the polar icecaps and warm the frozen North—quite forgetting that this would raise the general sea level some forty feet, drowning New York, Philadelphia, Leningrad and most of Holland.

The point is that Soviet policymakers are being smart enough to use public ignorance of scientific matters for general Communist political advantage. No sensible answers have yet been produced by our side. Alarms and confusion continue to obscure the scientific truth needed to explain the American position. Meanwhile Moscow is slowly and successfully mobilizing international opinion to demand an end to those experiments upon whose discoveries and success the safeguarding of democracy may ultimately depend.