

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
WASHINGTON

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The President  
The White House

Dear Mr. President:

At the earliest practicable date following the capitulation of Japan, scientific groups effected a survey of damage produced by the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Medical scientists studied the effect on personnel. These observations were conducted under the auspices of the Army and Navy through the agencies of the Manhattan District and the Naval Technical Mission in Japan.

Preliminary surveys involve about 14,000 Japanese who were exposed to the radiation of atomic fission. It is considered that the group and others yet to be identified offer a unique opportunity for the study of the medical and biological effects of radiation which is of utmost importance to the United States. Such a study should continue for a span of time as yet undeterminable. However, the study is beyond the scope of military and naval affairs, involving as it does humanity in general, not only in war but in anticipated problems of peaceful industry and agriculture. In addition, demobilization and consequent loss of military scientific personnel engaged in this study prevent its continuation.

In order that the studies might be followed to their logical conclusion, a conference group of the Division of Medical Sciences, National Research Council, convened to discuss the problem. The group recommended that appropriate action be taken toward the evolution of a Presidential Directive to effect the study. The recommendation with which the Surgeon General of the Navy, the Vice Chief of Naval Operations, and the Chief of Naval Research concur is as follows:

"That the Presidential Directive instruct the National Academy of Sciences - National Research Council - to undertake a long range, continuing study of the biological and medical effects of the atomic bomb on man. That in this directive the council be authorized to enlist the aid of governmental agencies and personnel, and such civilian agencies and personnel as may be needed. Further, that those governmental agencies whose aid is requested by the Council be authorized and requested to provide the needed cooperation."

In view of the above, it is respectfully recommended that the National Academy of Sciences - National Research Council - be so directed.

Sincerely yours,

James Forestal

Approved

Harry Truman

November 26, 1946