

*Mr. [unclear]*  
*Dear Sir,* I draw your attention to the following fact  
Discoveries made in the last four months by E. Fermi and L. Szilard in this country and F. Joliot in France have raised the question whether the element uranium may be turned into an important new source of energy in the near future. ~~Some~~ <sup>through the</sup> recent work by Fermi and Szilard which has been communicated to me in manuscript makes it now appear as very probable that the liberation of energy from uranium by means of a chain reaction <sup>(indeed)</sup> could be achieved in the immediate future. ~~Incidentally~~ <sup>Incidentally</sup> this would lead also to the production of large quantities of new radium like elements. It is ~~also~~ <sup>further</sup> conceivable though much less certain that this phenomenon will lead to the construction of bombs of an entirely new type. These ~~the~~ bombs might be too heavy to be transported by air-planes but they might be transported by boats and a single bomb of this type exploded in a port might very well destroy the port together with the surrounding country side. ~~Even~~ <sup>if</sup> this possibility ~~may~~ <sup>be</sup> appear ~~remote~~ <sup>to be</sup>, it ~~will~~ <sup>would be</sup> constantly ~~have~~ <sup>to</sup> be kept in mind from now on.

In these circumstances <sup>it would</sup> appear desirable to continue these experiments <sup>(the continuous work made)</sup> with tons of material rather than the small quantities hitherto used and if the facilities of the laboratories in which such experiments are carried out should prove insufficient additional facilities ought perhaps <sup>to</sup> be provided by public spirited <sup>private</sup> persons <sup>in order to</sup> without avoidable delay. Also it may be desirable that some action be taken by the Administration even before new experiments can be carried out.

I understand that Germany has ~~already~~ <sup>it</sup> stopped the sale of uranium from the Czechoslovakian mines which they have taken over. Some of the work published in USA has been repeated in Germany in the Kaiser Wilhelm Institut für Chemie in Berlin and it so happens that the son of the German Undersecretary of State, von Weiszäcker, is working as a physicist in this laboratory. This close personal link between the laboratory and the



~~It appears that the element uranium may be turned into an important new source of energy in the near future by setting up a chain reaction in a large mass of this element. This has been made probable during the last four months mainly through the activities of E. Fermi and L. Szilard in this country and F. Joliot in France. Recent work by Fermi and Szilard which has been communicated to me in manuscript makes it now appear as very probable that the liberation of energy from uranium could be indeed achieved in the immediate future. Large quantities of new radium like elements would also be produced together with the liberation of energy.~~

It is further conceivable though much less certain that this new phenomenon will lead to the construction of bombs of an entirely new type. ~~The bombs might be too heavy for transport by air but they might be transported by boat and a single bomb of this type exploded in a port might destroy the port together with the surrounding countryside.~~

*however to be transported by air.*  
I understand that Germany has stopped the sale of uranium from the Czechoslovakian mines which it has taken over. Some of the work published in America has been repeated in Germany in the Kaiser Wilhelm Institut in Berlin and it so happens that the son of the German Under-Secretary of State, von Weiszäcker, is working as a physicist in this laboratory. This close personal link might perhaps be the explanation for the early action which seems to have been taken by the German Government.

The United States has only very poor ores of uranium in moderate quantities; there is some good uranium ore in Canada but by far the most important source of uranium is Belgian Congo.



Institut in Berlin where some of the American work on uranium has now been repeated, there is in Germany a close personal link between the work on uranium and the government.

The United States has only very poor ores of uranium in moderate quantities; there is some good uranium ~~in~~ ore in Canada, but by ~~far~~ the most important source of uranium is Belgian Congo.

In view of the situation it ~~appears~~ <sup>would</sup> very desirable that a permanent contact ~~between~~ established and maintained between the physicists who work in this field <sup>in this country</sup> and the Administration. One possible way of achieving this would be for you to entrust <sup>with this task</sup> a person who has your confidence with this task. Such a person could perhaps serve in an unofficial capacity and ought to be capable <sup>of dealing</sup> to deal with ~~the~~ different aspects of the situation i.e. he ought to be able:

- 1) to contact various Government Departments, keep them informed of the further developments and put forward proposals for Government action if necessary.
- 2) to promote the experimental work which is now being carried on within the budgets of University laboratories by providing funds, if such funds <sup>be</sup> are required, through his contacts with public spirited private persons or <sup>industrial</sup> concerns.
- 3) to establish <sup>at a later stage</sup> contact between industrial laboratories and the University laboratories in which this work is being carried on in order to accelerate the development of a new technic.

Yours very truly,

*Handwritten notes at the bottom of the page:*  
One ~~problem~~ <sup>problem</sup> ~~of~~ ~~action~~ ~~which~~ ~~may~~ ~~require~~ ~~immediate~~ ~~investigation.~~ ~~Study~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~problem~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~supply~~ ~~of~~ ~~uranium~~ ~~ores~~ ~~for~~ ~~the~~ ~~U.S.A.~~  
~~is~~ ~~connected~~ ~~with~~ ~~the~~ ~~supply~~ ~~of~~ ~~uranium~~ ~~ores~~ ~~for~~ ~~the~~ ~~U.S.A.~~

*Vertical handwritten note on the right margin:*  
written by the former part



Institut in Berlin where some of the American work on uranium has now been repeated, there is in Germany a close personal link between the work on uranium and the government.

→ In view of the situation it appears very desirable that a permanent contact be established and maintained between the physicists who work in this field and the Administration. One possible way of ~~achievement~~ achieving this would be for you to entrust a person who has your confidence with this task. <sup>Such a</sup> ~~This~~ person could perhaps serve in an inofficial capacity and ought to be capable to deal with three different aspects of the situation i.e. he ought to be capable of:

- 1) <sup>to contact</sup> ~~contacting~~ various departments of the Administration <sup>and</sup> ~~and~~ <sup>to keep them informed</sup> ~~and~~ putting forward <sup>proposals for government action</sup> ~~disposals~~ directly towards securing <sup>and</sup> ~~and~~ a supply of ores of uranium. <sup>to</sup> ~~of~~ <sup>of necessary funds for purchase</sup> ~~of necessary funds for purchase~~ <sup>recording stocks of uranium in the</sup> ~~recording stocks of uranium in the~~
- 2) <sup>the</sup> ~~promoting~~ with experimental work which is now carried on in the University department <sup>the laboratories by</sup> ~~of providing funds,~~ such funds are required through his contacts with public spirited private persons or industrial concerns. <sup>laboratories</sup>
- 3) establishing a contact between industrial ~~concerns~~ and university laboratories in order to bring about a cooperation between them and thereby to accelerate the development of an entirely new technic.

Yours very truly,

*One possible line of action being directed towards recording stocks of uranium ore from Bergbau*



In view of this situation the establishment of a permanent contact between the physicists who work in this field and your Administration would seem highly desirable. If you entrusted a person who has your confidence with establishing such a contact he could serve, perhaps in an inofficial capacity, as a link between your Administration and the laboratories concerned. Perhaps he also might approach public spirited private persons if facilities were required for speeding up the work which is now confined within the limited budget of University laboratories.

Yours very truly,

*This might perhaps be the best way to have the best of the situation. It is no longer possible to have the best of the situation. The son of the German Undersecretary of State von Wed. works as a phys. in the KWI in Berlin where the work published in the journal of American physics has now been repeated. Their is a close personal link between the scientists and the Government, which might perhaps help*



In view of this situation the establishment of a permanent contact between the physicians who work in this field and your Administration would seem highly desirable. If you entrusted a person who has your confidence with establishing such a contact he could serve, perhaps in an unofficial capacity, as a link between your Administration and the laboratories concerned. Perhaps he also might approach public spirited private persons if facilities were required for speeding up the work which is now confined within the limited budget of University laboratories.

Yours very truly,

*This might perhaps explain the early action which seems to have been taken by the Government, and the son of the former Undersecretary of State von Weizsäcker as a type. In the W.D. Institute where the work has been reported their wife's share has been reported but the Government's contribution and the Government's contribution might be explained.*