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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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STAFF NOTES NO. 109

May 8, 1957

1. Labor Laws. -- Noting the Administration's emphasis upon State rather than Federal legislation, Labor reports that since 1953 every State and Territory has improved its labor laws, in contrast to the preceding 20 years when the enactment of Federal laws was emphasized. The trend is continuing in the States this year in such fields as unemployment insurance, atomic energy and radiation hazards, and workmen's compensation. (Adm. Conf.)

2. Atomic Energy Notes. -- (a) Admiral Strauss reports that the power reactor at Fort Belvoir which was dedicated April 29, is now operating; it is the third to begin operating in 1957 and the first fixed-price reactor built. (b) After Admiral Strauss wrote to Chairman Durham of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy that it was preferable to pass indemnity legislation (a bill indemnifying third parties in the event of a reactor accident) in present form this session rather than delay to obtain ideal wording, Durham succeeded in having the bill reported unanimously on May 2, and AEC is content with it. (c) Commerce informs us that initial design and feasibility studies by several firms on applying reactor systems to merchant ships have been completed and are being evaluated by AEC and Maritime officials. (Adm. Conf.)

3. International Atomic Exchanges.

(a) We shall inform the NAC tomorrow of our plans to invite civil defense observers from NATO countries and Sweden to observe the Nevada nuclear test on July 25. The invitations, to be issued by FCDA, will suggest that observers include each country's representative on the NATO Civil Defense Committee. A press release on invitations to foreign military and civil defense observers and to news media representatives is scheduled for issuance here late on May 10 for the May 11 newspapers. (C)

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(b) We are cooperating in all respects with British insistence that the trip of our observers to their Pacific nuclear test be made under cover and that there be no public revelation of the detonation date. Our party will arrive individually in Honolulu by May 12 (3 days later than previously planned) to be flown by Britain to the Malden Island test area. (C)

(c) In accordance with the President's February 5, 1957 memorandum on exchange of military reactor information with U.K., two meetings with the British were held on April 15 and 17, 1957. At these meetings, the extent and means of cooperation were discussed and agreed upon. All information developed in the U.K. submarine reactor program will be available for transmission for use by U.S. U.K. representatives have expressed satisfaction with the results, and DOD and AEC staffs have agreed on the general procedures. Admiral Rickover currently plans a visit to U.K. in mid-May on this matter and it is expected that the first U.K. Technical Mission would probably come here about June 1, 1957. (S)

4. UK Views on Near East. -- Embassy London reports that recent U.S. actions in the Near East, particularly the Sixth Fleet movement and the support of King Hussein, have been welcomed by the British public. From the Cabinet level down the majority apparently feel that a firm U.S. line in the area is overdue and identify themselves emotionally with U.S. actions which might reduce Nasser's prestige and check Soviet influence there. (C)

5. USIA and Syria. -- With the local by-elections over, and in response to requests from educated Syrians, USIS Damascus plans to reopen on a test basis its library, which was closed since last November. Unfavorable government or public reaction is not expected. (C)

6. Turkish Earthquake. -- Believing that the recent earthquake disaster offers an important opportunity to counter current anti-American feeling in Turkey, State has forwarded a \$5000 American Red Cross check for presentation to the Turkish Red Crescent, and is planning further action with Defense cooperation. (S)

7. U.S.-Rumania. -- Our Minister believes that the Rumanians are ready to go ahead on cultural exchanges with the U.S. but that they will bargain every inch of the way for commercial advantage by trying, for example, to exchange trade representatives for our musical artists or reopening the question of trade relations. (C)

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