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United States
Atomic Energy Commission
Washington 25, D. C.

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July 3, 1956

Advised by 7/18/56

The President
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

Two circumstances in combination have led me to write this letter. First, the Atomic Energy Commission now has a requirement from the Department of Defense to develop a megaton weapon. Second, a recent test at the Pacific Proving Ground, which I witnessed, indicated that we can manufacture weapons with this yield in a form which can be delivered by our presently available aircraft. Even larger weapons are technologically feasible.

My basic question is, whether the stockpiling of a weapon of this size is in the national interest. The more particular questions are two:

- (1) Is a weapon of this size necessary or useful for military purposes?
- (2) Would its use be consistent with the dictates of the moral law with regard to the moderate and discriminating use of force in warfare?

.....bombs we now have in stockpiles are already large enough and may possibly be too large.

I stated this conviction at some length in testimony before the Subcommittee on Disarmament of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on April 12, 1956. A copy of my prepared statement was sent to your office at that time.

I have made every effort to have the Commission as a body bring to your attention this vital question of setting an upper limit on the size of nuclear weapons. Since these efforts were unsuccessful I felt it my duty personally to present the question to you.

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*Betty Seroga
42-76
RM F-016/GTN
U.S. Dept of Energy
Washington DC 20545*

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I know your deep and continuing concern with the problems of nuclear warfare and your exceptional competence to evaluate both the military and moral aspects of our nuclear weapons policy. I am also aware of the fact that you alone in the ultimate instance can take effective action to insure that our nuclear stockpile is assembled in accord with the dictates of military reasons and moral principle. This is why I presume to urge the matter upon your attention.

Your splendid recovery from your recent illness has been a source of gratification to me as to all the American people. Please God it may continue in order that the nation may have your wise leadership toward the goal of a just and lasting peace.

Respectfully yours,

(SIGNED)

Thomas E. Murray
Commissioner

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