

HOOVER INSTITUTION

ON WAR, REVOLUTION AND PEACE



Stanford, California 94305-2853

May 22, 1984

Dr. George A. Keyworth
Executive Office of the President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Jay:

During our dinner meeting, you recommended some introspection. Here are the results together with some comments on the subject that you discussed later.

A little more than 56 years ago, I arrived in Leipzig on the final stage of the journey that made out of me some kind of a physicist. An important part of this transformation was the ping-pong evenings with Heisenberg, approximately eight times as frequent as your meetings of WHSC, but not as lengthy than your evenings. In a strange way, I know of no better analogy.

I felt then and feel now that I am in the company of some remarkable and quite heterogeneous people. Frankly in both cases I am a little proud to belong to the group, a feeling I have had on few other occasions—certainly not in faculty meetings, not in the national labs, nor in meetings of the foreign intelligence advisory board. It might have happened if Fermi and I ever had participated jointly in some formal functions, but we never did.

During those evenings in Leipzig, it was quite clear to me that I was finding out something quite basic and fundamental about the world. This common knowledge served as a link between people who a short time before had been strangers. The end of this community was tragic. Heisenberg was eventually caught between his patriotic duties and the job that he neither wanted nor could carry out. To me one of Hitler's greatest crimes was to have obliterated one of the great cultural expressions of our century, a part of which I knew intimately.

Those of us in Heisenberg's group, of course, had no awareness that what we did would have any historic significance other than the most important: pure understanding. In our present case, the historic implications are completely obvious. This to my mind is the greatest real difference.

I hope these comments are sufficient to explain how much I appreciate being a part of your group and how seriously I take the job that is before us.

Dr. George A. Keyworth
May 22, 1984

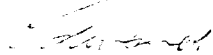
Page 2.

Now to your subsequent remarks. You have probably noticed how seriously I took your proposals. I have one important request. The suggestions you threw out require careful evaluation. This evaluation in turn makes it necessary to have all relevant facts available. I don't see how this can be done except through an appropriate sub-committee where we can deal with facts rather than with hints. I certainly would like to serve on this sub-committee for two reasons: the topic has been my main interest for a little less than half a century; I believe (and it seemed to me that you agreed with me) that the main question--will our efforts end in tragedy--depends on the eventual recommendations of this sub-committee.

In connection with the questions you raised, let me assure you explicitly that I have great interest, quite a few points of agreement, some skepticism, but few fixed conclusions. I certainly do not believe that work in any single direction will suffice.

Having used up perhaps a little more than the proper amount of paper, I hope to hear in one form or another how the important points you raised are developing.

With best regards,



Edward Teller

ET:pf