

orig. to Sec. War. Mar. 4 1945

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**OFFICE OF WAR MOBILIZATION
Washington, D. C.**

March 3, 1945.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: JAMES F. BYRNES

I understand that the expenditures for the Manhattan project are approaching 2 billion dollars with no definite assurance yet of production.

We have succeeded to date in obtaining the cooperation of Congressional Committees in secret hearings. Perhaps we can continue to do so while the war lasts.

However, if the project proves a failure, it will then be subjected to relentless investigation and criticism.

I know little of the project except that it is supported by eminent scientists. Even eminent scientists may continue a project rather than concede its failure. Also, it may be feasible to continue the experiment on a reduced scale.

In any event, no harm could come from an impartial investigation and review by a small group of scientists not already identified with the project.

Such a review might hurt the feelings of those now engaged in the project. Still 2 billion dollars is enough money to risk such hurt. I think Dr. Bush would be glad to have two or three scientists whose pride was in no way involved in the project, check it and report that results justify continuance of the project.

A favorable finding would justify continuance, regardless of future success or failure. An unfavorable finding would at least indicate the need for further justification by those who are responsible for the project.

In any event, it would be clear that we were mindful of the tremendous expenditure of men and materials.

(Note attached: "Mar. 6, 1945. MEMO. FOR THE SEC. WAR: I think you should read this. Please speak to me about it at your convenience. F.D.R.")

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