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EUR - Mr. Kohler

GER - Martin J. Hillenbrand

United States-German Cooperation on Control of Ultra-Centrifuge Development

While the development of the ultra-centrifuge method of producing enriched uranium has been a subject of discussion for some time between the Atomic Energy Commission and the Department, our first official approach on this subject to the Germans was by the Secretary to Foreign Minister Brentano on March 15, 1960 on the occasion of the Adenauer visit to Washington. At that time we conveyed our concern that the development might be used by other countries for the manufacture of nuclear weapons. (Excerpt of memorandum of conversation at Tab A.)

On April 28 Mr. Sullivan wrote to Ambassador Dowling describing further our interest in German developments in this field and concern with future developments. (Tab B) On May 12 Dr. Knoeks of the German Embassy called on Mr. Farley to convey German comments on the question as it had been raised by the Secretary with the German Foreign Minister (memorandum of conversation attached at Tab C).

The most recent German views on this matter are contained in Bonn's telegram 2312 (Tab D). S/AE and AEC are still planning to send a group of experts to Bonn to discuss this problem with the Germans and there is no inclination on anyone's part in the Department, as far as I am aware, to hold things up. I was surprised to learn that Chairman McCone is under the impression that the Department thinks it will take six months to a year to determine the German position. It seems to me that the German position could be determined a good deal more quickly, particularly if a group of specialists is sent to Bonn as planned. I believe, however, that learning the German views and getting them to adopt the strict controls desired by AEC are two different things. As mentioned in the Bonn telegram, such controls would raise questions concerning the legality under WEU of the work already done by the Germans on the centrifuge. There is also the question, not mentioned in the telegram, of compensation for the German commercial interests which have invested substantially in this development and which would be foreclosed from a commercial return on their investment if the AEC view were adopted.

Attachments.

Coordination: S/AE - Mr. Chapin (in draft)

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TO THE SECRETARY
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