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WAR AND NAVY DEPARTMENTS
ARMED FORCES SPECIAL WEAPONS PROJECT
P. O. BOX 2610
WASHINGTON, D. C.

8 NOV 1947

IN REPLY REFER TO:
SWP/HS/pr
RSD 322.117

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4 November 1947

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Doctor John vonNeumann
Institute for Advanced Studies
Princeton University
Princeton, New Jersey

Dear Doctor VonNeumann:

The Armed Forces Special Weapons Project has been directed to discharge all the military service functions relating to atomic energy. In order to carry out this responsibility, the project is forming a Scientific Advisory Board to provide assistance in solving the technical problems. This will involve a variety of scientific studies particularly in the field of defense, both active and passive, against atomic weapons, but certain aspects of the offensive atomic warfare will also require consideration. Although the Atomic Energy Commission is primarily responsible for the development of atomic weapons, this project is at present the only agency concerning itself with the overall problems of defense against atomic warfare. The solution of the many technical problems involved in this field is basic to the security of the nation.

We feel that your presence on this Advisory Board would be of inestimable value in solving many of the problems in this field, and I am therefore writing to see if you would consider serving as a member of this Board.

One of the most pressing problems which must be solved both from an offensive and defensive point of view is the feasibility of radiological warfare. In a recent directive, the Joint Research and Development Board has assigned to the Armed Forces Special Weapons Project the responsibility for a continuing study of this problem. In answer to this directive, we are planning to organize a small group composed of some members of the Advisory Board and certain other scientists who have been interested in this field, to conduct this study. In order to get the work underway, it is hoped to be able to have a meeting of this group early in December, and we should appreciate greatly if you could attend. I should like to suggest two alternative dates for your consideration, Friday, December 5, or Monday, December 15. If neither of these days are satisfactory to

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Doctor John von Neumann

you, I should appreciate if you could suggest some other date around this time at which you would be able to attend. As soon as I hear from you and the others who are being invited, I shall let you know the definite date selected.

In advance of this meeting, Captain Frank I. Winant, Chief of the Radiological Safety Division, Major William W. Stone, who is responsible for radiological warfare within this Division, and I would very much like to come to Princeton to discuss a number of problems in this field and explain in greater detail the objectives of the Advisory Board. Would November 14 be a satisfactory date for you, or could you suggest some other time which would be more satisfactory?

Very truly yours,

Herbert Scoville, Jr
Technical Director

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