

FEBRUARY 17, 1954

CAUTION: The following message of the President scheduled for delivery to the Congress today, February 17, 1954, MUST BE HELD IN STRICT CONFIDENCE and no portion, synopsis or intimation may be given out or published UNTIL RELEASE TIME.

The same caution applies to all newspapers, radio and television commentators and news broadcasters, both in the United States and abroad.

PLEASE USE EXTREME CARE TO AVOID PREMATURE PUBLICATION OR ANNOUNCEMENT.

James C. Hagerty  
Press Secretary to the President

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THE WHITE HOUSE

TO THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES:

For the purpose of strengthening the defense and economy of the United States and of the free world, I recommend that the Congress approve a number of amendments to the Atomic Energy Act of 1946. These amendments would accomplish this purpose, with proper security safeguards, through the following means:

First, widened cooperation with our allies in certain atomic energy matters;

Second, improved procedures for the control and dissemination of atomic energy information; and,

Third, encouragement of broadened participation in the development of peacetime uses of atomic energy in the United States.

NUCLEAR PROGRESS



In 1946, when the Atomic Energy Act was written, the world was on the threshold of the atomic era. A new and elemental source of tremendous energy had been unlocked by the United States the year before. To harness its power in peaceful and productive service was even then our hope and our goal, but its awesome destructiveness overshadowed its potential for good. In the minds of most people this new energy was equated with the atomic bomb, and the bomb spelled the creature of cities and the mass death of man, woman, and children.

Moreover, this Nation's monopoly of atomic weapons was of crucial importance in international relations. The common defense and world peace required that this monopoly be protected and prolonged by the most stringent security safeguards.

In this atmosphere, the Atomic Energy Act was written. Well suited to conditions then existing, the Act in the main is still adequate to the Nation's needs.

Since 1946, however, there has been great progress in nuclear science and technology. Generations of normal scientific development have been compressed into less than a decade. Each successive year has seen technological advances in atomic energy exceeding even progressive estimates. The anticipations of 1946, when government policy was established and the Atomic Energy Act was written, have been far outdistanced.

One popular assumption of 1946 -- that the United States could maintain its monopoly in atomic weapons for an appreciable time -- was quickly proved invalid. That monopoly disappeared in 1949, only three years after the Atomic Energy Act was enacted. But to counterbalance that debit on the atomic ledger there have been mighty increases in our assets.