GERMAN REACTIONS TO THE GENEVA CONFERENCE ON PEACEFUL USES OF ATOMIC ENERGY

Report No. 215 Of Enc Foiler, Police Series No. 2 USIS Bonn 1/6/ September 21, 1955

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

RESEARCH STAFF DEFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AMERICAN EMBASSY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
INTRODUCTIO	М	1
HEADLINE SU	IMMARY	ii
Section 1:	Awareness of Atomic Conference and Judgments of Those Informed	l – 2
Section 2:	General Knowledge of Peaceful Uses of Atonic Energy and Areas in Which It Has or Can Be Applied .	5 - 4
Section 3:	Advantages and Disadvantages of Atomic Energy	5 - 10
Section 4:	Peaceful VS Military Empharts 1	l – 12
Section 5:	German Activities in the Atomic	1 2

INTRODUCTION

From August 8th through 20th, 1955, the Geneva Conference on the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy was held. This Conference was heralded with considerable acclain and newspapers and radio stations throughout Western Germany followed the proceedings closely and gave the sessions extensive coverage. International events were comparatively calm during this period. Since the United States Government desired to further the aims of the Conference and hoped through its participation to help dispel some of the pessinistic views with which the whole subject of atomic energy was surrounded, the Research Staff designed this study to ascertain German opinions following the Conference.

The report is based upon a 940 case probability sample representative of the West German population 18 years of age and over. Interviewing was conducted between September 1 and 7, 1955, and was conducted under the auspices of DIVO - Gesellschaft fuer Markt- und Meinungsforschung m.b.H., Frankfurt/Main, a German survey organization working under contract with the Research Staff.

A special sample of 322 persons in an area where American atomic weapons are stationed was also made in order to determine whether closer proximity; greater awareness of such weapons, or increased sensitivity would give rise to significantly different opinions.

HEADLINE SUMMARY

(Data, and comment concerning the special sample have been omitted since their opinions did not differ from the national average in any significant respect.)

Section 1: Awareness of Atonic Conference and Judgments of Those Informed

- ... BARE MAJORITY OF POPULATION AWARE OF GENEVA CONFERENCE
- ... THREE-TENTHS OF THE INFORMED PEOPLE LEARNED OF NEW USES
- ... CONFERENCE GAVE MAJORITY OF INFORMED PEOPLE MORE CONFIDENCE THAT THE ATOM VILL BE A BOON TO MANKIND
- ... INFORMED PEOPLE CONSIDER AMERICA LEADING SCIENTIFIC COUNTRY AT THE CONFERENCE

Section 2: General Knowledge of Peaceful Uses of Atonic Energy and Areas in Which It Has Or Can Be Applied

- ... NO GAIN IN GENERAL KNOWLEDGE OF PEACEFUL USES AFTER THE GENEVA CONFERENCE
- ... USE OF ATOMIC ENERGY FOR PROPULSION OF SHIPS AND PLANES MOST KNOWN USE IN AGRICULTURE LEAST KNOWN
- ... AMERICA JUDGED TO HAVE MADE MOST USE OF ATOMIC ENERGY IN FIELDS CITED

Section 3: Advantages and Disadvantages of Atonic Energy

- ... THERE IS INCREASED CONFIDENCE IN FUTURE BENEFITS OF ATOMIC ENERGY
- ... FUTURE VIEWED OPTIMISTICALLY
- ... PAST, HOWEVER, VIEWED PESSIMISTICALLY
- ... MAIN ADVANTAGES SEEN IN MEDICINE AND AS SOURCE OF ENERGY
- ... USE IN WAR CITED AS OVERWHELMING DISADVANTAGE
- ... DESPITE DISADVANTAGES, NEAR MAJORITY WOULD PUSH AHEAD

Section 4: Peaceful VS Military Emphasis

- ... U.S. HAS SHIFTED ITS EMPHASIS TOWARD PEACEFUL USES
- ... STILL, U.S. SHOULD DO MORE FOR PEACEFUL DEVELOPMENT OF THE ATOM
- ... EVEN GREATER PERCENTAGES THINK RUSSIA SHOULD DO MORE FOR PEACEFUL USES OF THE ATOM

Section 5: German Activities in the Atonic Field

- ... LITTLE KNOWLEDGE OF CURRENT MEDICAL USES IN GERMANY
- ... SIZEABLE MAJORITY AWARE THAT GERMANY WILL SET UP ATOMIC REACTORS
- ... HALF WANT FEDERAL REPUBLIC TO DO MORE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY

Section 1: Awareness of Atomic Conference and Judgments of Those Informed

BARE MAJORITY OF POPULATION AWARE OF GENEVA CONFERENCE ...

Despite the extensive coverage by press and radio given to the Geneva Conference on peaceful uses of atomic energy, hardly more than a majority were aware that it had taken place.

"In July the Four Power conference took place in Geneva, and in the middle of August another big international conclave was hald in Geneva. Can you tell me what this international conference held in August dealt with?"

	West Germany (940)	Vest Berlin (300)
Yes, I know about conference No, I know nothing of a	51%	56%
conference	<u>49</u> 100%	<u>44</u> 100%

THREE_TENTHS OF THE INFORMED PEOPLE LEARNED OF NEW USES ...

Very few of those aware were able to learn anything new about the peace-ful uses of the aton, for almost two-thirds (64%) of the informed people answered that they did not learn anything new. Only three-tenths (29%) said that they did.

"As far as you followed the Geneva gonference on atomic developments, have you learned something new about the peaceful uses of atomic energy, or haven't you?" (Asked of those aware of conference = 100%)

Yes, learned something new No, didn't learn anything	29%	25%
nev	64	71
No opinion	Ž	4
	100%	100%

CONFERENCE GAVE MAJORITY OF INFORMED PEOPLE MORE CONFIDENCE THAT THE ATOM WILL BE A BOON TO MANKIND ...

While knowledge was not greatly augmented by the Geneva Conference, confidence was. About six-tenths (58%) replied that their confidence in the development of atomic energy turning out to be a boon for mankind has grown as a result of what they had heard or read of the Conference. Three-tenths (31%) had as much or as little confidence as they held before it started, while only 4% had their confidence diminished.

"Has your confidence in the development of atomic energy turning out to be a boon for mankind grown or diminshed due to what you've heard or read of the Geneva Conference, or is it unchanged? (IF "Unchanged": Do you have just as much or just as little confidence as before?)" (Asked of those aware of Conference = 100%)

Yes, confidence has grown No, confidence has diminished	58% 4	67% 4
Just as much confidence as before	18	15
Just as little confidence as		-
before No opinion	13 7	12
	100%	100%

INFORMED PEOPLE CONSIDER AMERICA LEADING SCIENTIFIC COUNTRY AT THE CONFERENCE ...

Not only did two-thirds (65%) of those aware of the Conference cite the U.S.A. as the country which revealed the greatest scientific progress in developing atomic energy but this figure is six times as large as the percentage naming Russia (11%).

"And which country at this conference, in your opinion, revealed the greatest scientific progress in developing atomic energy?" (Asked of those aware of Conference = 100%)

	West Germany	West Berlin
America	65%	73%
Russia	11	11
England	.	4
France		-
Germany		
Other countries	9	•
No opinion	2 <u>3</u>	12 100%

The U.S. also gained nore prestige through its conduct at the Conference than did the Soviet Union, although here the difference was not as great (38% for the U.S. as against 22% for the Soviet Union).

"Considering everything, which country has, in your eyes, gained most in prestige through its conduct at the Geneva conference on atomic developments?" (Asked of those aware of Conference = 100%)

America		38%	61%
Russia		22	20
England		3	4
France		-	-
Germany		3	-
Other countrie	8	4	2
No opinion		30	13
		100%	100%

* Less than one half of one per cent.

Section 2: General Knowledge of Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy and Areas in Which It Has or Can Be Applied

NO GAIN IN GENERAL KNOWLEDGE OF PEACEFUL USES AFTER THE GENEVA CONFERENCE ...

As compared with a recent survey, (during a period overlapping that in which the Conference was in session) there was no gain in the general population with respect to knowledge of peaceful uses of atomic energy. In mid-August, 62% said they had heard of such uses, while after the Conference the figure remained unchanged (61%).

"Have you heard of any peaceful, non-military uses of atomic energy?"

	We	st German	<u>K</u>	West Berlin
	Feb 55 (820)**	Aug 55 (865)**	Sept 55 (920)**	Sept 55 (300)
Yes	58%	62%	61%	74% 26
No	42	33	39	26
Don't know	100%	<u>5</u> 100%	* 100%	100%

USE OF ATOMIC ENERGY FOR PROPULSION OF SHIPS AND PLANES MOST KNOWN - USE IN AGRICULTURE LEAST KNOWN ...

When shown a card and asked in which fields atomic energy has been applied so far, 39% named "propulsion of ships and airoraft" while "in medicine" and "in generation of electricity" followed closely with 35% and 33% respectively. Despite the possibility of an individual's naming more than one field, (and indeed the average person gave two selections) only 7% selected agriculture as a field in which atomic energy was currently being used.

"As far as you know, in which fields has atomic energy been applied up to now? (CARD)
And in which fields, do you think, atomic energy will be utilized within the next 5 to 10 years?"

	West	Germany	West	Berlin
	Up to	Within 5 to 10 years	Up to	Within 5 to 10 years
For the propulsion of ships and aircraft In the field of medicine In the generation of	39% 35	34% 37	54% 51	58% 57
electricity	33	40	52	58
In industrial production	18	40	27	52
In the field of agriculture	7	24	18	36
No opinion	139%	<u>5</u> 180%	205%	263%a

It should be noted that when asked to look forward to the next five to ten years, the areas showing the greatest gain are industrial production and agriculture.

* Less than one half of one per cent.

Some respondents named more than one field.

^{**} Includes people 21 years of age and over to permit comparison with earlier survey.

AMERICA JUDGED TO HAVE MADE MOST USE OF ATOMIC ENERGY IN FIELDS CITED ...

In a comparison of America, Russia and England, America was considered in every case the country which has done the most to make peaceful use of atomic energy.

The U.S.A.'s biggest lead (principally over Russia) was registered in the fields of medicine and ship and plane propulsion - 71% versus 2% in the former and 67% versus 2% in the latter. Even in the field of agriculture, where knowledge was least and only 33% chose the U.S.A., this was still almost three times as many as chose the U.S.S.R. (12%).

"In your opinion, which of these three countries America, Russia or England - has done the most to
make use of atomic energy in the following fields?"
(CARD)(Asked of those who know about peaceful uses
of atomic energy = 100%)

West Germany			
America	Russia	England	No opinion
71%	2%	3%	24%100%
67 .	2	6	25
50	13	7	30
47	9	4	40
33	12	3	52
	67 50 47	America Russia 71% 2% 67 . 2 50 13 47 9	America Russia England 71% 2% 3% 67 2 6 50 13 7 47 9 4

Has Done the Most	America	Russia	England	No opinion
In the field of medicine For the propulsion of	81%	1%	2%	16%100%
ships and aircraft In the generation of	80	1	4	15
electricity In industrial pro-	69	9	5	17
duction In the field of	58	3	4	35
agriculture	48	8	1	43

Section 3: Advantages and Disadvantages of Atonic Energy

THERE IS INCREASED CONFIDENCE IN FUTURE BENEFITS OF ATOMIC ENERGY ...

A plurality expects to benefit personally from peaceful uses of the atom some time in the future - 46%, as against 32% who do not.

"Do you or do you not expect to benefit personally from any peaceful uses of the atom during your lifetime?"

	West G	ermany	West Berlin
	Aug 55 (865)*	Sept 55	Sept 55 (300)
Expect to benefit Do not expect to	36%	46%	60%
benefit Don't know	42 22	32 22	37
DOIL & KIIOA	100%	100%	100%

FUTURE VIEWED OPTIMISTICALLY ...

The future - the next five, the next 20 and the next 100 years - is expected to bring more advantages than disadvantages for mankind. Although sizeable groups are not able to express an opinion, the ratio of the "optimis" (those who see more advantages) to "pessimista" shifts with the time projection from 2:1, to 3:1, to 4:1.

"And what effect, do you think, the development of atomic energy will have within the next five years: Will it bring more advantages or more disadvantages within the next five years? (And within the next twenty years?) (And within a hundred years?)"

	<u> </u>	est Germany		
	Within 5 years	Within 20 years	Within 100 years	
More advantages More disadvantages Advantages and disadvantages will	3 <i>6</i> % 18	39% 12	40% 9	
balance No opinion	13 33 100%	8 41 100%	5 46 100%	
	West Berlin			
	Within 5 years	years 20	Within 100 years	
More advantages More disadvantages Advantages and disadvantages will	65% 16	65% 14	59% 15	
balance No opinion	12 - 7 100%	8 <u>13</u> 100%	6 20 100%	

^{**} Includes people 21 years of age and over to permit comparison with earlier survey.

PAST, HOWEVER, VIEWED PESSIMISTICALLY ...

While there was the usual "looking forward to the future with confidence" almost half (47%) feel that there have been more disadvantages than advantages so far. Those who feel there have already been more advantages than disadvantages are considerably in the minority in West Germany (14%).

"All things considered, do you feel that the development of atomic energy has brought more advantages or more disadvantages for mankind so far?"

	1	West Germany	West Berlin
More advantages	· · · · ·	14%	32%
More disadvantages		47	44
Advantages and disadvantages balance		19	16
No opinion		<u>20</u>	8
		100%	100%

MAIN ADVANTAGES SEEN IN MEDICINE AND AS SOURCE OF ENERGY ...

"Considering everything, what would you call the advantages of atomic energy for mankind?

advantages of atomic energy for manking:		
	Vest Gernany	West Berlin
Atomic energy can be used in the field of medicine:	33%	49%
"It will serve to promote medical research." "Atomic energy may prove a boon to medicine, diseases which have been incurable up till now may at last be conquered."		
"Above all, medicine will benefit from this new development. A new curative will be made available		
to man whose healing power is unlimited." "It will mean a great step ahead if succeed in preventing such scourges of mankind as cancer and		
silicosis." "Obscure diseases will be cured." "Atonic radiation will be applied to combat		
diseases."		
New and inexpensive sources of energy will be opened up:	29	49
"Man will become independent of all other sources of energy."		
"Atonic energy is inexhaustible. With its aid electricity can be produced cheaply and also we will no longer be dependent on coal."		
"Once our conventional sources of energy are (musted, atomic energy will take their place." "Once our present sources of energy, coal, oil		• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •
and water, have been exhausted, atonic power will our best bet for an efficient source of energy."	be in a	
"New sources of energy will be made available."		

(Contid on next page)

(Contid from preceding page)	West Germany	West Berlin
Atonic energy can be used in the fields of industry and technology:	15%	17%
"Passenger and transport services will be improved. I'n thinking of atomic energy-propelled airplanes and ships."		
"Atonic onergy will be an asset in all spheres of life, especially in the field of production." "The use or atonic energy will be an advantage in the field of industry."		
"Atonic energy can be exploited connercially. Electric power will be available at cheaper rates, and as an indirect result, coal and wood prices will go down."		
Working processes will be simplified and the standard of living will be raised:	11	26
Marhaps living costs could be reduced through the application of atomic energy, and then all nations would benefit."		
"The application of atonic power will nean less back-breaking work and nore conforts for nap." "Manpower can be saved as less energy will be needed for doing a job." "Atonic energy will be a boon for mankind as		
living conditions will gradually improve." Atomic energy will be used in the field of agriculture:	4	11
"More food will be grown and deserts will be cultivated. "It will be possible to grow more crops per year and to increase the yield." "It will be a help in developing agriculture."		
Atonic developments may prevent war:	1	7
"One country fears the other, and thus it just may be that there will be no more wars." "The threat of atomic weapons will make all states— nen think twice before starting a new war."		
Other answers:	6	2
"If they use this energy judiciously, it may turn out to be beneficial for mankind." "If it's used for the benefit of mankind, it's a good		
thing, to be sure, but they nustn't produce bombs."		•
There are no advantages:	5	5
"I feel they should leave atomic energy alone, in the end it will only spell disaster." "I don't wish to hear anything about it. They should		
keep their hands off atomic energy." "Mankind as well as the world will be destroyed in the end."		• :
No opinion/No answer:	28 132/19	9 16940

"And what would you call the disadvantages of atomic energy for mankind?"

	West Germany	West Berlin
Atomic energy may be abused for war purposes:	56%	67%
"If atomic energy is used for war purposes, entire nations may be wiped out." "The danger of war hasn't yet been banned, and therefore there still is the possibility that atom bombs will be employed."		
"The atom bomb would be a means of mass extermination "If another war should break out, this would mean the end of the world in the atomic age." "Atomic energy may be used for war purposes and thus men may be slaughtered." "There is the danger that powerful political figures will employ atomic energy to destroy human lives."		
Atomic radiation may endanger the life and health of man:	9	
"In the wake of atomic tests currents are created which contaminate the air and thus injure people's health." Through radioactive dust permeating the atmosphere people may come to grief. Just take that case of the Japanese fishermen."	n Se	
"I'm afraid the growth of plants might be stunted and the lives of human beings endangered through atomic radiation."		
Atomic energy may cause the destruction of human live even the annihilation of mankind:	9	7
"It has such a destructive effect on mankind, that atomic radiation kills all life and makes whole districts uninhabitable." "Through the by-products of atomic energy the popula-		
tion of the earth may be poisoned and eventually annihilated." "The atom will mean the end for mankind, I do not wis	n	
The effects of atomic energy cannot be controlled reliably - thus its use will always be attended by dangers:		5
"These chain reactions represent a constant danger as hobody can control them."		
"There always is a danger of an atomic reactor blowin up, the hazards of the atomic age aren't yet fully understood," "One isn't yet sure how the atom operates, and as		
long as one doesn't know that, this business with atomic energy is a danger to the whole world."		
(Contid on next page)		

(Contid on next page)

(Cont'd from preceding page)	West Germany	West Berl
Atomic energy may have an unfavorable effect on	• •	
meteorological conditions:	3%	
"Atomic explosions strongly influence the weather. It gets unsettled and catastrophes occur;" "The atmosphere is being contaminated, those floods in Holland were somehow connected with these atomic trials." "Atom bombs are responsible for those thunderstorms we have had."		
Atomic energy will cause unemployment:	2	1
"If those enormous sources of energy are exploited, many people will lose their jobs." "There will be even more jobless as human labor won't be needed any more. Machines driven by atomic power will replace man." "If atomic energy is used on too large a scale, un- employment will ensue."		
Atomic developments create anxiety and fear among people:	2	
"It will only serve to create anxiety all over the world." "People will lose their nerve because all this develop- ment is coming too fast." "All this only serves to complicate life."		
The discharging of atomic wastes is an unsolved problem:	1	
"In the generation of atomic energy dangerous waste materials are produced, and those wastes are harmful to man." "It would be a bad thing if no way were found to get rid of atomic wastes. As far as I know no method has been developed yet."		
Other answers:	2 2	
"This will never turn into something positive, It will only have disadvantages for Germany." "There may be disadvantages if they overstep their		
limits - if they fly to the moon, for instance."		
There are no disadvantages:	1	

DESPITE DISADVANTAGES, NEAR MAJORITY WOULD PUSH AHEAD ...

Rather than forego the possible future advantages, half (50%) would accept the disadvantages. A sizeable minority, however, (31%) would prefer to do without the possible future benefits if they could be spared what they feel are the present dangers.

> "Mr. Schmidt and Mr. Maier discuss the advantages and disadvantages of atomic energy. (CARD) Which of these two views comes closest to your own opinion?"

A - Mr. Schmidt says: From what I've heard of the disadvantages and dangers inherent in atomic energy - just think of atom bombs, deadly radiations, etc, -I would prefer to do entirely without atomic energy, even foregoing possible future advantages, if this would mean getting rid of our fear of its evil consequences at the same time.

B - Mr. Mader says:

The disadvantages and dangers are great, of course, but I am willing to accept them as I expect them to be balanced by the blessings of atomic energy - just think of power generation, cancer therapy, etc. which will usher in a happier era for mankind.

No opinion

		West Germany	West Berlin
A	taking Palacing	31%	25%
B		50	72
No	opinion	_19	`3
		100%	100%

Section 4: Peaceful VS Military Emphasis

U.S. HAS SHIFTED ITS EMPHASIS TOWARD PEACEFUL USES ...

There has been no change in the past few weeks in the feeling that the U.S. has shifted its emphasis in recent months towards the peaceful uses of the aton, although an increase might have been expected as a result of the release of much data at the Geneva Conference. Fully as many in this survey as last month (45%) thought there had been such a shift.

"Is it your impression that the U.S. has shifted its emphasis in recent months toward peaceful uses, toward military uses, or hasn't there been any change?"

	West Germany	West Berlin
	Aug 55 Sept 55 (865)** (920)**	Sept 55 (300)
Toward peaceful uses Toward military uses No change Don't know	45% 45% 10 14 13 12 32 29 100% 100%	73% 10 9 <u>8</u> 100%

STILL, U.S. SHOULD DO MORE FOR PEACEFUL DEVELOPMENT OF THE ATOM ...

Despite an apparent realization that U.S. emphasis has shifted to the peaceful uses of atomic energy, the West German population wants even more. As in April, 1954, 40% think the U.S. should do more to utilize atomic energy for peaceful purposes. There is but a small gain in the percentage who believe that the U.S. is already doing everything it should (27% now as against 21% earlier).

"In your opinion, does America do everthing it should do in order to utilize atomic energy for peaceful purposes, or do you feel it should do more?"

	West Germany	West Berlin
	April Sept 1954 1955 (618) (940)	April Sept 1954 1955 (207) (300)
Does everything it should do Should do nore No opinion	21% 27% 40 40 <u>39</u> <u>33</u> 100% 100%	55% 59% 27 34 18 7 100% 100%

^{**} Includes people 21 years of age and over to permit comparison with earlier survey.

EVEN GREATER PERCENTAGES THINK RUSSIA SHOULD DO MORE FOR PEACEFUL USES OF THE ATOM ...

Very few people (8%) think Russia is doing everything it should do to utilize atomic energy for peaceful purposes. Six times as many moreover, (49%) believe that they should do nore.

"And how about Russia: Is Russia, in your opinion, doing everything it should do to utilize atomic energy for peaceful purposes, or do you feel it should do nore?"

	West Germany	West Berlin
Does everything it should		
do	8%	14%
Should do nore	49	68
No opinion	<u>43</u>	<u> 18</u>
	100%	100%

Section 5: German Activities in the Atomic Field

LITTLE KNOWLEDGE OF CURRENT MEDICAL USES IN GERMANY ...

Only one-fifth (20%) of the population realizes that radio isotopes are actually available and are being utilized in German hospitals in the treatment of various diseases. Two-thirds (66%) frankly admit that they simply do not know whether such a thing is taking place in Germany or not.

"Can you perhaps tell me whether or not atomic energy is already being used in the treatment of diseases in Germany?"

	West Germany	West Berlin
Yes, is used	20%	26%
No, is not used	14	15
Don't know	66	59
	<u>66</u> 100%	<u>59</u> 100%

SIZEABLE MAJORITY AWARE THAT GERMANY WILL SET UP ATOMIC REACTORS ...

Six out of ten West Germans (60%) are aware that the Federal Republic plans to set up atomic reactors for the production of atomic energy, while almost all of the remainder say that they do not know whether plans exist or not;

"Can you perhaps tell ne whether or not it is planned to set up atomic reactors, that is, plants for the production of atomic energy, in West Germany?"

Yes, it's planned	60%	62%
No, it's not planned	4	7
Don't know	<u>36</u> 100%	31 100%
	100%	100%

HALF WANT FEDERAL REPUBLIC TO DO MORE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY ...

Every other German queried (50%) wants the government to do nore than it has done up to now for the exploitation of atomic energy. Almost no one (5%) wants the government to do less than it has done.

"Do you feel that the Federal Government should do more to promote research for the exploitation of atomic energy : than it has done up till now, should it do less, or just as much as it has been doing?

Do nore	50%	61%
Do less	5	6
Do just as much as		
it has been doing	13	20
No opinion	32	13
	100%	100%