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No. 5 of 8 Series

MAR 25 1954

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Minute

Mr. Thomas E. Murray, Acting Chairman
United States Atomic Energy Commission
Washington 25, D. C.

DOE - 1194-B

Dear Mr. Murray:

Transmitted herewith are the comments and recommendations of the Advisory Committee for Biology and Medicine on the "Report of the Committee to Study the Nevada Proving Grounds" as requested by the Commission in a memorandum dated February 19, 1954 to Dr. John C. Fugher, Director, Division of Biology and Medicine, from the Division of Military Application.

The Advisory Committee held a special meeting to consider this report at the Atomic Energy Commission in Washington, D. C., on Saturday, March 13, 1954.

Paraphrasing General Forrest's famous saying, "Victory goes to the nation that gets there fastest with the mostest and bestest weapons." This is no less true in the atomic age.

It is therefore essential to continue the Nevada Proving Grounds in order to achieve maximum speed in the development of weapons. Speed is essential to national survival.

In emergencies such as this some risks, immediate and long term, must be accepted. These risks should be frankly and publicly acknowledged. However, the policy of minimizing these risks must be continued in both the local and national interest.

Our recommendations relative to the criteria beginning on Page 2 of AEC 111/22 are as follows:

- a. The number of nuclear shots at the Nevada Proving Grounds in one year should be held to a planned maximum of ten. The number of three high yield tower shots should not normally be exceeded.
- b. & c. Each nuclear shot programmed, whether for AEC, military or civil defense, should be justified individually, evaluated as to probable off-site hazard, and should include plans for controlling or reducing its fall-out.

WITHOUT ENCLOSURE-3/ATTACHMENTS

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- d. No change
- e. Marginal shots should be fired only under satisfactory weather conditions that have a high degree of predictable stability. The possibility of continuing postponements and perhaps of resulting extension of series duration should be accepted. Participating organizations and units should be advised that they must accept the possibility of postponements on such shots.
- f. Deleted as meaningless
- g. No change
- h. Shots should be limited as follows with regard to yield and burst altitude, with maximum yield to incorporate a reasonable allowance for error:

Surface and sub-surface, 1 KT
 300-foot tower, 25 KT
 500-foot tower, 50 KT
 Air drop, 50 KT (fireball not to touch ground)

We suggest that approval of the 50KT yield for a 500-foot tower be withheld until experimental detonation at a lower KT level has proved that the safety factor indicated here actually exists.

In addition to the recommendations on the criteria given above, there are certain other general concerns which we desire to make:

- (1) We commend the use by the Test Director of an advisory panel which has been customary at WFO and recommend that this practice be extended to the operations in the Pacific.
- (2) The Committee noted that the first announcement of the recent incident in the Pacific came as a result of the letter a Marine wrote to his mother. The Committee considers it highly desirable that there should be an early official release of authentic information to avoid permitting unreliable and inaccurate reports to become controlling by default.
- (3) The Advisory Committee for Biology and Medicine notes with approval the studies now being carried out. It further urges that: (a) all feasible emphasis be placed on the extension

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and acceleration of the studies on the distribution and effects of radioactive material from tests; (b) the Gabriel and Sunshine studies be expanded to include other elements than those now regarded as being controlling (Ru, I, Pu, for example).

- (4) The experimental evidence obtained by the staff of the Division of Biology and Medicine indicates that the biological food chains must be considered broadly and not only along conventional agricultural lines. The Committee considers of utmost importance the provision of adequate support for extensive and intensive studies on these phases of the problem.

As of possible interest to the Commission we are sending you a complete transcript, classified SECRET, of the discussions at the recent meeting of the Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

E. G. Stakman, Chairman
Advisory Committee for Biology
and Medicine

Enclosure:
Cy. 2A, Transcript (SECRET)

cc: Brig. Gen. E. E. Fields
Dr. Shields Warren

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