

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : General Starbird
 Thru : Colonel O'Bryan *W.B. 1/17*
 Thru : Captain Musick *R.M. Musick*
 FROM : Lt. Colonel Schnittke

DATE: January 8, 1957

SUBJECT: USE OF TAONGI ATOLL

RECEIVED
 DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
 OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
 6/14/57
 H.R. Schnittke
 6-16-57

In reference to the possible development of Taongi Atoll as a future test site, we have received the UCRL proposal for an oceanographic and marine survey of the atoll. The cost of this survey by Scripps Institute is estimated at \$18,000 although we have informally learned from Jim Reeves that the final costs may exceed this amount.

The question of whether to proceed with the survey depends on what our future plans are for Taongi. Marked advantages are promised for tests conducted at Taongi, with respect to the degree of protection against fallout for local inhabited areas, and with respect to weather delays. These considerations are of major importance as the problem of radioactive fallout becomes more sensitive (especially if this results in increased use being made of the EPG) and as test operations increase in scope and duration.

Before use can be made of Taongi the feasibility of conducting test operations there must be determined. In addition, there are political and economic factors which must be carefully evaluated before a decision can be made. From the political viewpoint, the concurrence of the Departments of State and Interior would have to be obtained before we could expect the President to act favorably on this matter. Their concurrences would involve questions of our legal position on testing in the Trust Territories, international pressures against nuclear tests, propaganda efforts by Communist nations, and public opinion with the U. S. in

From the economic point of view we must take into account the cost of operations at Taongi, considering the remoteness of this test site from the logistic base at Eniwetok, the necessity to conduct the operation afloat (to include diagnostic instrumentation stations), and the improvement of Taongi Atoll to establish base facilities of a temporary nature.

The proposed oceanographic and marine survey of Taongi has for its purpose the collection of data and information on which to base an evaluation of the feasibility and desirability of conducting tests there. From the long-range viewpoint on nuclear testing our feeling is that such a survey is needed since in all probability we will eventually be forced to seriously consider the use of Taongi as a backup for Bikini. The only question is whether the survey should be made at the present time. If there is a possibility that Taongi will enter into our plans for HARDTACK then the survey should be made now/ the expenditure is justified. and

Raymond I. Schnittke
 Raymond I. Schnittke
 Lt. Colonel, Ord Corps

SO:General Starbird then DMA Files
 Attachment: Memo Reeves to Starbird w/encls.(ALOO 6-12773)

500567

2763

MILITARY RESEARCH & APPL 7 E PG (Taongi)