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FUTURE STATUS OF EPG (4)

12/11/58

As stated in paragraph 4, General Luedecke's November 29, 1958 memorandum proposes changes in the Task Force concept and organization to permit greater economy, efficiency and harmony in the conduct of nuclear tests at the Eniwetok Proving Ground.

However, the larger problem requiring resolution, before deciding on JTF-7 reorganization, is the future of EPG as a test site. We have been advised that the Commission does not desire to go back to testing at EPG. In order to permit a definite decision, alternate overseas test sites must be evaluated to determine whether a new location will in fact reduce international and other problems or rather increase them.

JTF-7 is proceeding with studies of weather and shipping problems in alternate locations particularly south of Hilo and east of Christmas. The Navy is evaluating barge handling problems in the open sea including feasibility of recovery by an LSD.

Should open sea handling prove feasible and our laboratories indicate that adequate diagnostics can be accomplished in the open sea, then fallout problems, size of necessary danger areas, interference with fishing and commerce and number of suitable firing days must be determined. A close look must be taken at new international problems that these factors may raise. The results of such a study would probably be presented to the Commission for a decision on the future of EPG. Should it be decided to abandon further testing at EPG, more than \$1 million per month can be saved by early discontinuance of its support. If, on the other hand, we find that the reasons which dictated going to EPG are still overwhelming, General Luedecke's suggestions must be considered along with the opposite approach some laboratory personnel have suggested, that of going to a civilian run operation similar to NTS.

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