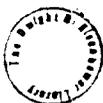




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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.



20 August 1954

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. BUTTON

SUBJECT: Meeting at Atomic Energy Commission Regarding Proposed Press Release

Sometimes seems plural

1. Mr. Heslep's meeting (scheduled for 15 minutes), hitting a snag or two, lasted for an hour and a half. Present were representatives of AEC, USIA, the weather Bureau, and myself, representing Defense and OCB.

2. As expected, the purpose of the meeting was to chew over the proposed press statement, copy attached.

3. Two difficulties still exist on page 2 of the release. There were some objections from USIA on the paragraph indicated, on the grounds that it was a little weak. This paragraph will be redrafted by the Weather Bureau people without the quotes and phrased somewhat differently. Other more serious problems arose with regard to the indicated portion on page 3. This statement cannot be made:
..... The Weather Bureau people will also rephrase or somehow get around this hooker.

USIA objections to 2nd para

4. The Weather Bureau people are apparently already reluctant to make this statement on their own, and would have preferred a joint Weather Bureau-AEC statement.
..... The AEC people, however, were successful in persuading the Weather Bureau that the latter should make the release, based on the argument that a release coming from AEC would give the appearance of an alibi.

5. I was assured by Mr. Heslep that this draft release had already been cleared by Defense and the AEC. On that basis I raised no objection, and stated that as far as Defense and OCB were concerned, we would readily agree to whatever solution AEC and the Weather Bureau could work out regarding the two points described above.

6. Suggest you forward this draft release and the copy of my memorandum to Pete Craig for his information.

JJK

JAMES J. KELLEHER, JR.

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In the Spring of 1953 public attention was focused on the unusual number of tornadoes. Many people attributed this weather anomaly to the Nevada test series. On the other hand, study of these tornadoes has shown that there were relatively fewer tornadoes in the regions in which the atomic cloud was located or in which radioactive dust had fallen than in the rest of the country. It is not claimed that the atomic cloud actually inhibited the tornadoes, but certainly a strong case can be made against any causal relationship.

This Spring, the Atomic Energy Commission conducted a test series at the Pacific Proving Ground -- over 5,000 miles from the shores of the United States. As occurs every year, there have again been weather anomalies and accusing fingers pointed at the dust produced by the explosion. This time, some areas of the United States and certain foreign countries complained about drought conditions while others felt that the atomic tests might have produced unusually heavy rainfall. The latest tests in the Pacific differ from the previous Nevada tests in several ways: First, more powerful bombs were fired; second, the bombs were detonated over types of terrain different from that of Nevada; and third, the test location was thousands of miles from large land masses rather than within the United States. In the light of these differences, it seems worthwhile to review what we now know about the effects of

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the recent Pacific test series on the weather.

Meteorologists of Joint Task Force SEVEN have analyzed weather conditions following each of the explosions, and conclude: "Aside from local increases in middle and high altitude cloudiness and possibly a few induced showers in the immediate area, there is no evidence that the Pacific tests produced any noticeable effect on the weather at or near the Pacific Proving Ground. There is no basis for believing that these slight local disturbances in weather which existed at the PPG during the test propagated outside the immediate area."

As a result of observations of the dust from the Krakatoa volcanic explosion, which took place in the tropics in 1883, and from observations of the upper air flow pattern, it is expected that the heaviest concentrations of the dust will circumnavigate the globe in the tropics with minor northward and southward excursions of the cloud and slow mixing toward the temperate latitudes of both hemispheres. Inspection of rainfall records in the tropics indicates no unusual amounts, although the year-to-year variability is small and abnormalities would readily stand out. There is no evidence of widespread heavy tropical rainfall depleting the supplies of moisture for drought-stricken areas of the United States or elsewhere.

Turning next to the United States, a study of deposited radioactive dust collected during the Spring of 1954 indicates that the United States as a whole has had much less radioactive dust settle

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forecasts. Finally, it is difficult to see how dust produced in the Southwest Pacific could selectively provide Boston with 400% of its normal May rainfall, yet give parts of New York State, not more than 200 miles away, less than its normal quota, or how the dust can be blamed both for producing no rain in central New Mexico in April and 150% of normal in southeast New Mexico in the same period.



Weather records show that it is normal for rainfall to be abnormal somewhere, whether or not A-bombs, H-bombs, or any other kind of man-made explosion occurs. We can find no evidence to link these weather abnormalities with atomic explosions.

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