

ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION

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MEETING 1364

8:30 a.m., Saturday, April 26, 1958
Suite L, Harry Lee Hall, Marine Corps Schools
Quantico, Virginia

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Present

Lewis L. Strauss
W. F. Libby
Harold S. Vance
John S. Graham
John F. Floberg

K. E. Fields
W. B. McCool

REPOSITORY NARA/College Park
COLLECTION AEC Minutes (UN3-326-92-006)
BOX No. 11
FOLDER Vol 20 (2 of 2)

1. Letter to the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy Regarding Public Information Plan for HARDTACK (See AEC 952/46 - Joint AEC-DOD Operation HARDTACK Public Information Plan)

Mr. Strauss said that in submitting for his signature the proposed Commission letter to Congressman Carl T. Durham, attaching a copy of the Public Information Plan for Operation HARDTACK, the General Manager had noted that it had been approved by all Commissioners except Mr. Graham, and that Mr. Naiden had suggested to the General Manager that Mr. Graham's separate views on the plan be given to Mr. Durham. The General Manager had commented that it was not normal practice for the Commission to mention the separate views of Commissioners in such letters to the Joint Committee.

Mr. Graham said he had been informed of the proposed letter while out of the city attending Senator Kerr Scott's funeral, and that for this reason had requested Mr. Naiden to inform the General Manager of his position, which was that public announcements should be made on all shots and that the Joint Committee should be so informed.

Mr. Libby asked whether it was intended that the Joint Committee be told why the Commission did not plan to announce shots with yields under 200 kilotons. Mr. Fields said he thought they should be informed of the reasons but not in the transmittal letter. Mr. Strauss commented that if the AEC states at this time that every shot will be announced, it would then be very difficult to

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change such an announcement procedure at a later time. Additionally, he thought considerable weight should be given to the views of the intelligence community with respect to such a plan.

Mr. Floberg commented that while he thought there were advantages in a new policy of announcing all shots, if the intelligence services had sound reasons for requesting that this not be done, he would agree to the proposed limitation.

Mr. Graham said that his chief concern was that the AEC might be accused of wanting to withhold announcement of small shots so as to avoid talking about detection and that the AEC would then be in the same status as it was following the controversy over the range of detection of the Rainier shot. In view of the representations made by the Intelligence community and primarily CIA, Mr. Graham said he would accept the proposed procedure if it included a provision for informing the Joint Committee about the 200 kiloton cut-off limit and the reasons therefor. General Fields indicated his understanding that the procedure called for informing the Joint Committee of these reasons as had been done in previous test series, but that he would verify this upon return to Washington. Mr. Strauss observed that in previous tests the Joint Committee had recognized the need not to announce some shots. Nevertheless, he asked General Fields to instruct Mr. LaPlante to visit Chairman Durham on April 28, 1958 and provide him with the background and the reasons for the procedure.

After discussion, the Commission:

- a. Approved the Joint AEC-DOD Operation HARDTACK Public Information Plan (Appendix "A" of AEC 952/46):
- b. Noted that the Joint Office of Test Information authorized under the Plan will issue announcements of all HARDTACK test detonations having predicted yield of 200 kilotons or higher. (Specifications for announcements are given in Paragraph 6, Page 5, of Appendix "A" of AEC 952/46 and rationale of the yield criterion is discussed in Annex "A" of Appendix "A" of AEC 952/46);
- c. Noted that the projected News Media Observer activity at the Pacific Proving Ground in connection with the UN observers will be covered by a special program which will be submitted separately for Commission consideration;

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d. Noted that a letter such as that circulated at Meeting 1364 will be transmitted notifying the JCAE of the Operation HARDTACK Public Information Plan; and

e. Noted that an opportunity to comment upon the Plan, particularly with respect to b above will be afforded the Operations Coordinating Board.

2. U. N. Observer Shot

During the above discussion, the Commission requested that details of the U.N. Observer Shot be announced in sufficient time to allow detailed monitor arrangements by seismologists.

W. B. McCool
Secretary

Approved by the Commission: Meeting 1385, June 25, 1958