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UNITED STATES
ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION

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REVIEWED BY	DATE
H.L. Toppe	12/19/85
J. Diaz	2/19/86
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By: P.M. Sweetman 6/19/86

August 22, 1956

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE COMMISSIONERS AND GENERAL MANAGER

Subject: NOTES ON INFORMAL MEETING - 2:30 P.M., THURSDAY, JULY 19, 1956

At 2:30 p.m., on Thursday, July 19, 1956, an informal meeting was held in Room 213. Those present were:

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| Lewis L. Strauss | Paul F. Poster |
| Thomas E. Murray | John A. Hall |
| W. F. Libby | Bryan F. LaPlante |
| Harold S. Vance | J. C. Potts |
| K. E. Fields | Manuel Dupkin II |
| William Mitchell | Everett Hollis |
| W. B. McCool | Richard J. Hallinan |
| William L. Oakley | Ruth Thomas |

(Since no formal Commission business was conducted, minutes will not be prepared for the meeting. No transcript was made for the meeting.)

The following subjects were discussed:

1. Report on the Radioisotope Mission to South America

Mr. Hall reported on the U. S. Radioisotope Mission to South America which visited Venezuela, Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay. He attributed the success of the Mission to good publicity, and to the interest of these governments and their scientists in the peaceful uses of atomic energy. However, Mr. Hall said that during the visits he received the impression that these countries felt that the U. S. had tended to develop closer

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cooperation with European nations than with them. As a result of arrangements coordinated by the U. S. Embassies with the governments of the countries visited, symposiums and lectures were conducted by the technical representatives of the Mission, usually at universities, covering the use of isotopes in research, medicine, agriculture and industry.

Mr. Hall said that he discussed with the U. S. Ambassadors and their staffs the scope and method of organizing and administering the Atoms-for-Peace Program. He then commented on the following observations of the

Mission:

- a. South American countries have not progressed very far in the development of atomic energy;
 - b. There is a grave shortage of scientific and technical personnel in the countries visited;
 - c. There are many worthwhile projects which could be undertaken by private foundations; and
 - d. There is a need for assignment of scientifically trained personnel to U. S. Embassies in South America.
- He also commented on the varying directions the atomic energy programs of these nations were taking as a result of their different natural situations.

After the Mission had disbanded in Buenos Aires, Mr. Hall reported he had remained in South America and visited Chile, Peru and Colombia to discuss implementation of their bilateral agreements.

Both Mr. Foster and Mr. Hall said they felt that the continuance of programs similar to this Mission is vital to the foreign atomic energy program and would contribute considerably to the implementation of the

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President's Atoms-for-Peace Program. They also emphasized the value of including an official AEC representative in the Mission. Mr. Hall then observed that South American countries are in dire need of technical assistance for their atomic energy programs, and said he believed other nations would meet this need if the U. S. did not do so.

Mr. Libby said it was his opinion that such work should be carried on under contracts with U. S. universities, since the increased use of AEC and contractor personnel on foreign missions would handicap AEC programs. Mr. Foster said he believed ICA would object to the AEC contracting for university scientists because they considered such activities to be an ICA responsibility.

2. Asian Nuclear Center

Mr. Foster briefly reported on the status of plans for an Asian Nuclear Center to be located in Manila, Philippines. He said that present plans contemplated a very ambitious facility and would require the U. S. to send a number of outstanding scientists to work in the center. The Commissioners indicated that a letter to the Secretary of State, with a copy to ICA, should be prepared pointing out that because of the limited supply of scientific and technical personnel it would not be possible to assign large numbers of scientists to foreign activities without impeding the progress of U. S. atomic energy programs. Therefore, any loan of these personnel would be limited.

Mr. Libby said he had sent a part of the Brookhaven Report concerning the proposed Asian Nuclear Center to Sir John Cockcroft.


3. Proposed Inter-American Isotope Meeting

Mr. Foster briefly mentioned that an Inter-American Meeting on use of isotopes was now being planned.

4. Education Conference at Gatlinburg, Tennessee

Mr. Fields reported on the Education Conference which AEC is sponsoring at Gatlinburg, Tennessee, for Presidents of universities and Deans of Engineering Schools. He said that AEC would pay for the travel expenses of the participants, and that there would be a press announcement concerning the Conference.

At this point Mr. Murray left the meeting.

5. Inter-Agency Committee on Engineering and Scientific Education

Mr. Libby said that at a recent meeting of the Inter-Agency Committee on Engineering and Scientific Education there had been a report that an increasing percentage of students were electing scientific and engineering courses.

6. Sandia and ACM-Albuquerque Labor Situations

Mr. Fields briefly discussed the labor situations at Sandia and ACF-Albuquerque. He informed the Commissioners that the Union at Sandia had requested the Atomic Energy Labor Management Relations Panel to participate in the negotiations.

7. Public Announcement on Reduced Fallout Weapon

Mr. Fields said a press release announcing the end of Operation REDWING had been prepared in the usual form for press releases announcing

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the end of test operations. He inquired whether the Commissioners wished to consider the press release at this time. Mr. Strauss referred to previous discussions at Meetings 1214, 1215 and 1217 of a Presidential announcement on Operation REDWING regarding the success of efforts to develop weapons with reduced radioactive fallout. He said that the Secretary of State had spoken to him earlier in the day and had said that it was unfortunate that this announcement had not been released as planned, prior to the U.S.S.R. proposal in the United Nations. However, Mr. Dulles had requested that the announcement now be issued before the beginning of Operation Alert the following day. Mr. Strauss said he had informed Mr. Sherman Adams and Mr. Murray Snyder of the Secretary of State's request and that he had been informed that the President did not wish to make such an announcement since he did not wish to respond to technical questions on the subject at press conferences. Mr. Dulles had then requested that Mr. Strauss issue such a statement immediately.

Mr. Strauss said that Mr. Libby had prepared a proposed statement which concerned the total radioactive fallout from Operation REDWING but which Mr. Libby believed could be issued more appropriately after the end of the Operation when information on total fallout from the entire Operation would be available.

Mr. Strauss then read a statement proposed by Mr. Vance. Mr. Libby said he could not agree to such a statement since it disclosed information from which it could be deduced that the U. S. had discovered the principle of reducing or increasing radioactivity of thermonuclear weapons. Mr. Vance observed that there would be little purpose in a public statement if there

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were no indication that fallout could be reduced. Mr. Libby said he agreed, but he believed since the Secretary of State felt it urgent to make some statement, that it would be better not to disclose important weapons information in it. Mr. Strauss observed that even if no statement were issued the President would later be asked whether the U. S. had made progress in developing weapons with reduced radioactive fallout since the President had stated that this is one of the objectives of Operation REDWING. Mr. Vance pointed out that it would be more desirable to have a considered statement issued by the Commission than to place the President in the position of responding to such questions at a press conference. Mr. Libby said he believed that the Commission would be obliged to declassify the "clean bomb" principle if a statement on the subject were issued. He observed that the situation was somewhat analogous to AEC's February 15, 1955, statement on the effect of high yield weapons which had indicated that a fission-fusion-fission reaction principle had been used. Mr. Strauss pointed out that Mr. Vance's statement did not actually say that the "clean bomb" principle had been discovered and that AEC would not be obliged to confirm that it had discovered the principle. Mr. Libby observed that, in general, if inferences about such principles seemed logical they were generally accepted.

Mr. Vance said that in view of a series of events, such as General Gavin's May 25 statement before the Air Force Subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee, it was necessary to say something on the subject. Mr. Libby said that if the proposed statement were made, it was conceivable that it would confirm for the U.S.S.R. the possibility of constructing radiological weapons or that it would lead to pressures for stockpiling

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only clean weapons. The Commissioners then discussed whether public opinion might force the DOD to such a step.

Mr. Strauss said he believed such a statement would accomplish two purposes: one, to assure the world that the objective of the U. S. weapons program was not the development of weapons of mass destruction; and, two, to reduce pressure for the cessation of weapons tests. Mr. Libby said that if the statement would assist in maintaining the weapons testing program, he would be in favor of it. Mr. Vance said he believed it would assist in doing so. Mr. Libby then indicated his agreement with the principle of a press release on this subject but pointed out that it was an extremely important step and should be coordinated with the DOD and other interested parts of the Government. Also, he said he believed it would be necessary to declassify the principle of varying the fallout from thermonuclear weapons. Mr. Strauss said he did not agree that declassification was necessary. Mr. Libby pointed out that the Commission must be prepared to go as far as it had in releasing the fission-fusion-fission principle. The Commissioners then considered the significance of information in the proposed release. They agreed that further discussion of the matter should be deferred until the end of the meeting.

8. Letter to JCAE Regarding ACRS Report

Mr. Fields pointed out that the next Commission meeting was scheduled for July 24 and inquired whether the Commission wished to consider before that time a reply to Senator Anderson's letter concerning the ACRS report. He said that the staff had considered the following factors in the course of deciding to recommend that the report be transmitted to the JCAE without

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the request that it be treated as administratively confidential.

a. Such an action might impair future exercise of the Commission's regulatory functions;

b. In a normal situation the report would be discussed with the Joint Committee; however, AEC would probably not be asked to transmit the report itself; and

c. If the report were provided, it might lead to uninformed public pressures against construction of the PRDC reactor.

Mr. Vance observed that the report had already been sent to Senator Anderson and had been returned by him because of the request that it be treated as administratively confidential: a request which Senator Anderson had construed as a condition. He suggested that a reply be prepared stating that the Commission was obliged to request that the report be treated as administratively confidential because its release might endanger the further development of nuclear power. He added that it should also be pointed out that since the report had been submitted to the Commission by the ACRS, the Commission had discussed with PRDC the additional tests needed before a license to operate the reactor was issued, and that the Commission will not approve a construction permit for the company until it is satisfied that the safety of the reactor could be proved before its operation. Mr. Strauss observed that the Commission had not acted to release the ACRS report and said he believed it had been released improperly by Mr. Murray at Appropriations Subcommittee Hearings. He also pointed out that Senator Anderson was not compelled to honor the AEC request that the report be treated as administratively confidential but that AEC was compelled to make

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this request. The Commissioners also suggested that the letter request a hearing with the JCAE to discuss this problem and similar issues of a broader nature if it were possible to do so before the adjournment of Congress.

In response to a question by Mr. Fields, the Commissioners agreed that a letter should be prepared to Governor Williams of Michigan inviting a representative of the Governor to review the report in Washington and explaining the functions and responsibilities of the ACRS.

9. Operation REDWING Press Release (See Item 7 above)

Mr. Fields read the routine press announcement which had been prepared on the termination of Operation REDWING and which had been mentioned earlier in the meeting. The Commissioners discussed revisions to the release and at Mr. Vance's suggestion, deferred further consideration of it until after the press release on clean weapons had been discussed after the meeting.

cc: General Counsel

W. B. McCool
Secretary