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1252nd AEC
Meeting
12-5-56
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1. AEC 944/2 - Proposed Test Plans for CY 1957 (pp. 2-32)
(See Minutes of Meeting 1246)

The Commission considered AEC 944/2 - Proposed Test Plans for CY 1957 - which recommended that Operation PILGRIM be conducted as one continuous operation at the Nevada Test Site from May 1957 to October 1957 in accordance with Plan III as outlined in the staff paper.

Mr. Fields said that in accordance with the Commission's discussion at Meeting 1246 on November 14, 1956, AEC 944/2

presented considerations on reducing or eliminating off-site radiological fallout in the vicinity of NTS from Operation

PILGRIM. He said two alternatives were outlined in the staff paper to accomplish this: (a) Transfer all or a part of Operation PILGRIM from NTS to the Eniwetok Proving Ground; and/or (b) redesigning the test devices and firing some of them suspended from balloons.

In response to a question by Mr. Murray, General Starbird said that the Class A weapon referred to in the staff paper in connection with the next Pacific Tests would be either a clean or normal weapon. General Starbird also said

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REVIEWED BY H. Schmidt 6/24/85
DATE
By T. Fehner

that, the specifications for the weapon to be tested would be received from the Department of Defense about January 1, 1957, and that the status of the weapon was still that of a feasibility study. He added that the proposed test would be a developmental test of either a clean or normal weapon, depending on the stated DOD developmental requirement, and that if a clean weapon were required, it would actually be less than 60 megatons. Mr. Murray asked General Starbird if he believed the AEC had a requirement for a 60 megaton normal weapon, and General Starbird replied that he believed the AEC had a requirement for a study of the feasibility of 60 megaton weapons.

Mr. Murray asked about the difference, in terms of fallout between the test series as outlined in the staff paper under consideration and as outlined in AEC 944 which had been discussed at Meeting 1246. General Starbird said that the estimated fallout from the test series outlined in AEC 944 was 6,600 megacuries in contrast to 4,000 megacuries as estimated under the test plans outlined in AEC 944/2.

General Starbird then commented on the work of the planning board which had been established to consider radiological safety criteria as well as means of reducing local fallout. He said that in view of the Commission discussion at Meeting 1246, an accelerated review had been made of each planned shot to determine how the estimated fallout of these shots could be reduced and that the 4,000 megacurie figure was the result of this review.

Mr. Libby said that in accordance with Commission discussion at Meeting 1246, he had reviewed radiation effects data. He then commented on the basis of the calculations made of the radiation doses received by individuals in the vicinity of NTS and observed that the actual radiation doses received by these people are probably less by a factor of two than the measured values. Therefore, he said he believed the 10 roentgen limit for radiological criteria was a conservative figure.

The Commissioners discussed with Mr. Graves the manner in which radiation doses had been measured at NTS. Mr. Libby suggested that although the figures used at NTS are conservative an improved and expanded monitoring program should be conducted in the communities surrounding NTS. He said that the new figure would be valuable in an examination of the fallout problem at NTS prior to the next test series after Operation PILGRIM.

Mr. Murray then commented on the possibility of moving some of the proposed shots such as the 60 kiloton shot, to the Eniwetok Proving Ground. He said that this action might preclude any adverse public reaction which would affect the availability of NTS for future tests. Mr. Graves commented that the proposed 60 kiloton shot would be a high tower shot and

would actually be less difficult than some of the other proposed shots. Mr. Murray then discussed with Mr. Graves and Mr. Salisbury the public relations aspects of conducting large shots such as the 60 kiloton shot at NTS.

Mr. Murray said that although Mr. Libby's comments about the conservative nature of the figures on radiation doses received by individuals in communities in the vicinity of NTS did affect the Commission's previous position on the transfer of some large shots to the Pacific, he believed this question should be discussed. Mr. Libby said that information received after Operation PILGRIM on fallout would confirm whether his position on the 10 roentgen figure was correct but that he did not believe there is any possibility that the 10 roentgen figure would be achieved by a single shot. Mr. Graves then commented briefly on fallout figures of previous shots.

The Commissioners discussed with General Starbird the estimated fallout of the individual shots proposed for Operation PILGRIM. Mr. Libby said that he believed Plan III as outlined in AEC 944/2 would be satisfactory for the conduct of Operation PILGRIM.

Mr. Murray said that in view of Mr. Libby's comments on the conservative nature of estimates of fallout as well as his questions on transferring some shots to the Pacific, he would like to reserve his position on AEC 944/2 until he had reviewed the staff paper again. He then asked about the length of the period set for the tests, and General Starbird discussed the reason for extending the test period from May to October.

The Commissioners discussed at length the extended test operation and the possibility of conducting the tests as a two-phase operation. General Starbird commented on the problems of conducting a two-phase test series, and Mr. Libby then commented on the need to compress the length of the proposed one-phase operation.

After further discussion, Mr. Libby and Mr. Vance approved the recommendations of AEC 944/2, subject to a request by Mr. Strauss or Mr. Murray that the staff paper be reconsidered.