

MR. A. 7 - Redwing
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FOLDER MR A 7 Redwing Vol 1

September 17, 1956

CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED
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McCool 9-22-73

MEMORANDUM FOR THE COMMISSIONERS AND GENERAL MANAGER

Subject: ANNOUNCEMENT OF SHOTS IN OPERATION REDWING

During the Executive Session of Meeting 1222 on September 5, 1956, in the course of the report on the current Soviet test series, Mr. Libby asked what the Commission's position had been on announcing individual shots in Operation REDWING.

In accordance with this request, we have prepared the attached report on the Commission's discussion of and final decision on the announcement of the shots in Operation REDWING.

CONFIRMED TO BE UNCLASSIFIED
BY AUTHORITY OF DOE/OC
Carroll 1/25/84
REVIEWED BY *BAR*

W. B. McCool *By T. Fehner 3/19/86*
Secretary

Attachment
Chronology

cc: General Counsel

(When separated from enclosure, handle this document)
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9-17-56

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COMMISSION DISCUSSION OF AND POSITION ON
ANNOUNCEMENT OF OPERATION REDWING SHOTS

Mtg. 1188
3/28/56

Following a review of the proposed method to be used in handling information concerning the progress of Operation REDWING during the test period, the Commission approved the AEC-DOD joint information plan, and noted that:

1. The Joint Test Information Office would prepare announcements, as the Commission and Department of Defense thought necessary, that a shot had taken place on a certain date at any time subsequent to the detonation;
2. If all detonations were to be announced, revelations of the total number will require declassification from Confidential Defense Information;
3. In view of possible international repercussions of such a nature as to affect the national interest, a flexible procedure is established to take additional informational actions as thought necessary.

Press Report A Washington News and a Washington Star press dispatch
5/28/56

stated that the Tokyo Central Meteorological Observatory had reported that on the basis of seismographic recordings throughout Japan, nuclear tests were apparently being conducted in the Pacific. Both Washington papers reported silence on the part of the United States Atomic Energy Commission.

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Mtg. 1203
5/29/56
Exec. Sess.

Mr. Strauss said that the Commission was under considerable pressure from the press to comment on the Japanese announcement. Consequently, he had suggested a statement to the effect that tests were continuing, their number and occurrence were matters of military security, and that the Commission would not customarily announce a test without some particular reason. This was submitted to the Department of Defense where objections were raised, and no statement was made. Mr. Strauss added that he did not believe the matter to be one for Department of Defense jurisdiction and although the proper moment had passed for such a statement, he would contact the Secretary of Defense about the matter to prevent similar instances.

Mtg. 1205
6/1/56
Exec. Sess.

During further discussion concerning the announcement of shots at Operation REDWING, Mr. Strauss said the Commission had no specific policy on the subject, and repeated that the immediate question stemmed from newspaper inquiries concerning the Japanese announcement. He believed there was no obligation to announce specific shots, since the USSR neither announces its shots nor responds to U. S., U.K., and Japanese statements concerning detection of USSR shots.

In response to the Chairman's request for other opinions on the matter, Mr. Murray said he believed it would be wiser to announce the larger shots, since their detection would not

then put the Commission in the position of withholding information from the public.

Mr. Libby observed that because shots in this test series were not being shot at very high altitudes, they were detectable whether announced or not. He wondered therefore, whether any security aspect was involved in announcing shots.

The General Manager thought there was some uncertainty as to whether single shots could be detected.

Mr. Strauss questioned the advisability of setting a precedent for announcing each shot. He believed the Commission would then have a moral responsibility vis-a-vis the public for failing to announce such future shots as the Commission will definitely not wish to publicize (i.e., MICE, BATS). He emphasized also the security problem consequent to the differentiation between the size and type of test to be announced.

Mr. Libby agreed with Mr. Murray's point, but thought some intermediate point could be reached in the matter of public announcement.

Mr. Vance thought the immediate problem could be resolved by a statement repeating that a test series was in progress, and stating outright that no separate announcements will be made for individual tests. He emphasized that such a statement needed to be made in view of Japanese concern.

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Mr. Strauss agreed that a statement of this type would be reassuring, particularly to the Japanese. He suggested a draft announcement to include the following:

1. A reference to previous press releases stating that a test series was underway;
2. The test series was halfway through to completion;
3. No shots were of the magnitude of the 1954 series;
4. The Commission will make no separate announcement of each shot.

The Commissioners agreed to the proposed statement.

Ltr. to Commissioners
from Acting
Director,
Division of
Information
Services
6/5/56

In his letter to the Commissioners transmitted with a draft press release for their approval and/or comment, Mr. Thompson suggested that the release be issued in response to inquiries expected when another detonation became evident outside the Proving Ground. He believed that this would be an effective method for making a "sort of self-serving progress report while not breaking with our policy of not announcing or confirming any shots other than Lacrosse and Cherokee."

The following statement was released to the three wire services on June 9, 1956.

"The 1956 test series -- the so-called REDWING series -- at the Eniwetok Proving Ground is continuing. Individual tests will not ordinarily be announced or described. We have, to date, made good progress with

the detonation schedule established for the series. As previously stated, all REDWING detonations are substantially smaller than the largest in the 1954 (CASTLE) series; in fact, the expected yield of most of the REDWING devices individually is considerably lower than the individual yield of a majority of the detonations in the CASTLE series.

Joint Task Force Seven, which is conducting the test program for the AEC and the Department of Defense, is rigidly adhering to the safety criteria in effect at the Proving Ground. No detonations are taking place until weather conditions are calculated to be entirely satisfactory."