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AEC 952/12

COPY NO. 28

August 12, 1957

ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION

PLANS FOR INITIATION OF HARDTACK

Note by the Secretary

1. The General Manager has requested that the attached letter to the President be circulated for the information of the Commission.

2. It will be recalled that at Meeting 1294 on July 17, 1957, the Commissioners approved early dispatch of a letter to the President concerning Operation HARDTACK.

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W. B. McCool
Secretary

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SPECIAL REREVIEW FINAL DETERMINATION Class: UNCL	Reviewers	Class	Date
	<i>Joe Diaz</i>		9/2/57
	<i>Wilbur Strasser</i>		9/12/57

DOE 5850.2 III 12 (Admin)
By: J. Louis A. 10/1/57
WITH ATTACHMENT
RSD-7 10/1/57

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UNITED STATES
ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

August 2, 1957

Dear Mr. President:

Normally, the Atomic Energy Commission submits to you approximately six months ahead of any nuclear test series, when the exact shots to be fired become reasonably firm, a letter outlining the objectives and scope of the series. The same letter or a later one requests approval, as required by law, for the expenditure of the special nuclear materials involved. My letter to you of December 21, 1956, described the PLUMBBOB Operation and that of February 21, 1957, requested approval for expending materials.

Planning has gone forward, as is necessary, for the next Pacific series, termed Operation HARDTACK, and planned originally to begin about May 1, 1958. HARDTACK is a critical operation to our developmental programs and should include:

1. High-altitude firings to test our capability to detect nuclear detonations under these conditions and to obtain effects information applicable to high-altitude missile and counter-missile programs.
2. Several shots necessary for the development of efficient clean weapons in medium and higher yield.
3. Proof tests of warheads for the IRBM and ICBM.
4. Developmental and proof tests of several new bombs and warheads for our defense or other tactical use.
5. Exploratory firings to establish principles connected with smaller or cleaner or otherwise improved designs, to include clean, tactical designs.
6. Certain weapons effects tests for the Department of Defense.
7. Further study of the fallout phenomena.

In view of the importance of this series to our defense posture and the present state of international relations with

Secretariat Note: *Circulated in draft as Enclosure "A" to
AEC 944/4.
**Circulated in draft as Appendix "E" to
AEC 944/8.

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respect to testing, it appears desirable that we start HARDTACK as early as possible consistent with achieving the necessary objectives of the Operation. We have reviewed this matter with the Department of Defense and believe that, if the series is limited to essential tests, the series would be initiated about 1 April and be completed within four months. An estimated 25 shots would be involved. It is not possible at this time to specify the exact devices to be fired or the expenditures of material involved.

To meet this schedule, however, we must inform our laboratories that their development effort must be expedited and be directed towards the earlier date, we must expedite the readying of the Joint Task Force which conducts the Operation, and we must expedite the shipment of materials and construction of test facilities. These actions would soon lead to surmise that we were proceeding with preparations for a Pacific test operation to start early in 1958.

We believe most strongly that Operation HARDTACK should begin as early as possible and intend to proceed with the Department of Defense with preparations on this basis. However, in view of the disarmament negotiations under way, we believe you would desire to be informed of this fact prior to our proceeding. We request, therefore, that you note that we shall proceed immediately to make plans and preparations for initiating Operation HARDTACK as early as possible and shall submit to you later a more definite listing of devices to be fired and of materials to be expended.

Respectfully yours,

/s/

Lewis L. Strauss
Chairman

The President
The White House