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ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION

MINUTES OF NINETY-NINTH AEC-MLC CONFERENCE

Note by the Secretary

1. The attached minutes of the 99th AEC-MLC Conference, held on July 5, 1955, are proposed for approval at the One Hundred and First AEC-MLC Conference scheduled for 2:00 p.m. on November 17, 1955.

2. These minutes have been approved in draft without revision by the MLC. They were approved without revision by the Commission at Meeting 1135 on October 5, 1955.

W. B. McCool

Secretary

APPROVED FOR THE BOARD
BY THE SECRETARY

Carl Wilson 3/25/84

Jose Diaz 8/5/85

By: W. Tend 3/20/86

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ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION - MILITARY LIAISON COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF NINETY-NINTH CONFERENCE

JULY 5, 1955

The Conference convened at 2:00 p.m. with the following persons present:

ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION

Lewis L. Strauss
Thomas E. Murray
W. F. Libby
John von Neumann

K. E. Fields
W. B. McCool
John H. Stumpf

Manuel Dupkin
William L. Oakley

Col. Alfred D. Starbird, USA
Col. Vincent G. Huston, USAF
Lt. Col. Norman D. Greenberg,
USA
John Mackenzie, Jr.

William Mitchell
Everett R. Holliman
Richard J. Hallinan

BRIEFING GROUP

AFSWP

R/Adm. John Sylvester
Capt. John H. Lofland
Dr. A. B. Focke

JTF 7

Col. David O. Byars, Jr.
Capt. W. H. Ashford
Capt. W. M. Coleman
Cdr. Charles A. Bellis

MILITARY LIAISON COMMITTEE

Maj. Gen. Herbert B. Thatcher, Acting Chairman
Maj. Gen. Harry McK. Roper, USA
Rear Admiral George C. Wright, USN
Rear Admiral Paul H. Ramsey, USN
Col. Perry O. Griffith, USAF (Acting AF Member)

Col. Orin S. Richardson, USAF, Executive Secretary
Col. Richard H. Free, USA
Col. H. L. Whitten, USA
Cdr. Nels. R. Nelson, USN
Lt. Colonel David R. Griffin, USMC
Lt. Colonel Merwin E. Forbes, USA

[REDACTED] RE [REDACTED] data as
of [REDACTED] the Atomic Energy Act of 1954.
[REDACTED] CS
con [REDACTED] ed
[REDACTED] d.

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MILITARY LIAISON COMMITTEE (Cont'd)

Lt. Colonel Clark J. Smith, USAF
Lt. Colonel Charles E. Graham, USAF
Lt. Cdr. Robert E. Adamson, USN
Lt. William H. Austin, USN

Lt. Col. Mark H. Terrel, USA

Dr. Herbert B. Scoville, AFSWP
Col. I. L. Branch, USAF, AFSWP

Mr. Strauss introduced Colonel A. D. Starbird, USA, as the Director, Division of Military Application, Atomic Energy Commission, effective 1 July 1955.

1. Approval of Minutes

The Minutes of the Ninety-Seventh and Ninety-Eighth Conferences were approved. Mr. Strauss observed that the next meeting would be the one-hundredth and should be appropriately marked as a milestone in the cooperation of the Atomic Energy Commission and the Military Liaison Committee. Mr. Strauss and General Thatcher agreed to share arrangements for the occasion.

2. Briefing on Operation WIGWAM

Admiral Wright introduced Admiral Sylvester, Commander, Task Group 7.3, who was assisted by Dr. A. B. Focke in summarizing orally the general results of Operation WIGWAM. A film of the operation was shown. In the discussion which followed, the Task Group representatives stated that the operation had been valuable in confirming calculated effects of deep water atomic explosions

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on modern submarine hulls. The appropriateness of the site of the operation and of the advance public announcement of the test had also been confirmed.

Members of the Commission expressed great interest in the formal weapons test report which will be issued when the results of the test have been fully analyzed.

3. Department of Defense Statement of Long-Range Requirements

Mr. Strauss referred to a recent AEC study on this subject and emphasized the importance to the AEC of obtaining longer-range guidance from the DOD on military requirements for special nuclear materials. General Thatcher stated that the MLC had received one copy of the AEC study "Cast Lightning" only two working days earlier and had not yet had time to examine it or to compare it with a somewhat similar study being made by the MLC staff.

In the discussion of the two studies, it appeared that the purposes, time periods and basic assumptions were different. It was agreed that the MLC and AEC staffs might jointly try to reconcile a set of assumptions for a revised AEC study. General Thatcher noted that the AEC study covered the next 15 years, whereas the JCS Long-Range Plan would probably cover up to 10 years ahead. Revision of the JCS Plan is not likely to be completed for some time. In answer to a question of Mr. Strauss', General Thatcher replied that the recent MLC staff study of Lithium-6 production requirements is now in the JCS staff, but that a JCS reaction could not be expected for several months. General Fields stated that the Commission hopes to receive the DOD position on "Cast Lightning" before several months. It was agreed that the

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subject would be carried over to the next regular meeting since MLC had just received the AEC study.

4. Discussion of Operation ALERT

Dr. Libby observed that in addition to the communications problem, the Operation had revealed the lack of planning for fallout. He said that if the AEC took the lead with precautionary measures in its own organization, it would not only help itself but would also provide guidance to FCDA. General Thatcher raised the problem of getting timely authority for emergency transfer of weapons and stated that the DOD is studying automatic features of such transfer; however, he did not know what form the recommendations of the DOD would take. Mr. Strauss observed that there might be danger that automatic actions would be initiated by an error. He said he expected that there will be another test similar to Operation ALERT in about one year, and that partial tests may be held in the meanwhile with or without warning.

5. Revision of Weapons Effects Handbook

Mr. Strauss said that the revised edition of the Handbook had given the Commission considerable concern, especially the proposed upper yield limit of 100 megatons on the yield/effects curves which the DOD desires be used in assessing effects.

General Thatcher stated that the DOD did not insist on the 100 megaton figure, but simply wanted to provide a yield curve that would bracket possible yields so that the book would be most useful. It would appear that the figure should be in the range of 70 to 125 megatons. The DOD did not wish the effects curve to stop at today's capability nor to approximate stockpile weapons' yields.

Mr. Strauss stressed the danger of unrealism on the one hand and, on the other hand, the possible interpretation by competitors

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that such a yield is the U.S. goal. Colonel Branch stated that the upper limit figure would be explained in the preface to the handbook as a hypothetical point on effects curves, which had been provided to avoid complicated scaling laws and extrapolation to higher yield ranges.

With regard to the Commission's preference that the book not include yields/effects curves beyond the 20 megaton range, but include scaling laws to permit users to extrapolate, Dr. Scoville said that such laws would be so complicated as to negate the usefulness of the Handbook to most users in the field, and further, that the use of an upper limit such as 20 megatons would tend to limit the view of designers and civil defense planners to 20 megaton effects. He observed that we have no assurance that enemy capability will not exceed such yields. Dr. von Neumann said he believed that an upper limit of about 100 megatons could be used by designers and planners, with the explanation that this limit is a convenient number beyond practical expectations, without serious psychological effects on the U.S. public or abroad. General Thatcher stated that the DOD would agree to any statement modifying or explaining the inclusion of an upper limit in the 100 megaton range.

Mr. Murray commented on the moral responsibility of the Commission for any high weapon yield figures, and the use or misuse thereof by the public and other nations. He said that if the AEC collaborated in issuing information that 100 megatons is possible, it would be inferred that the U.S. is planning to make 100 megaton weapons, and the Commission would be responsible for the inference. He suggested that if the DOD wants 100 megaton yields, it should so state to the AEC. He said also that he was concerned that mentioning of such yields might cause possible enemies to try to achieve them. Dr. von Neumann said that while

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he concurred in the need to consider the psychological impact of any information put out by the AEC, he felt that such considerations were not compelling when compared to the pressing need of designers for information on which to base planning for construction which must serve ten to twenty years. He added that we should not confuse general information such as the curve limits with any specific judgment the Commission might be called upon to make, regarding the most likely yield of an enemy weapon, for dispersal purposes. Mr. Strauss said again that he preferred to plan on what we know yields will be and to provide scaling laws for higher yield ranges.]

Colonel Huston said that the Commission had received from the Office of Defense Mobilization a request for specific AEC planning figures for dispersal purposes and that DMA had recommended formation of a study group within the AEC to recommend such figures.

Mr. Strauss suggested that the AEC and AFSWP staffs prepare a joint memorandum to the Operations Coordinating Board to request evaluation of the psychological impact of including high-yield curves in the Handbook, and that the MLC and Commissioners would meet on call to discuss the resulting opinion of the OCB prior to the next regular meeting. The MLC members concurred in this procedure.

6. Date of One-Hundredth AEC-MLC Conference

The date of the one-hundredth Conference was scheduled for August 25, 1955, so as to follow the Geneva Conference on Atomic Energy.

The Conference adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

W. B. McCOOL
Secretary
Atomic Energy Commission

ROBERT A. OLSON
Colonel, USA, Executive Secretary
Military Liaison Committee