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COPY NO. 19

March 30, 1955

ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION

MINUTES OF NINETY-SIXTH AEC-MLC CONFERENCE

Note by the Secretary

1. ^{*}The attached minutes of the Ninety-sixth AEC-MLC Conference, held on February 24, 1955, are proposed for approval at the Ninety-seventh Conference, scheduled for 2:00 p.m. on March 31, 1955.

2. These minutes have been approved in draft by the MLC with several revisions. The revised draft minutes were approved by the Commission at Meeting 1071 on March 28, 1955.

W. B. McCool

Secretary

*MND 982027
SDT/WD 7/13/98*

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WITH ATTACHMENT(S)

SEARCHED	INDEXED	SERIALIZED	FILED
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1ST REVIEW DATE: <u>04/21/95</u>	2ND REVIEW DATE: <u>4-21-95</u>		
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This document consists of 7 Pages
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March 30, 1955

ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION - MILITARY LIAISON COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF NINETY-SIXTH CONFERENCE

February 24, 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

Col. Vincent G. Huston
John Mackenzie, Jr.
Richard Hallinan
William L. Oakley

K.D. Nichols
William Mitchell

W.B. McCool
John H. Stumpf

MILITARY LIAISON COMMITTEE

Major Gen. Herbert B. Thatcher, USAF, Acting Chairman
Major Gen. Harry McK. Roper, USA
Brig. Gen. Richard T. Coiner, USAF
Rear Adm. George C. Wright, USN
Rear Adm. Paul H. Ramsey, USN

Major Gen. A.R. Luedecke, USAF - Chief AFSWP

Col. Orin S. Richardson, USAF, Executive Secretary, MLC
Col. Robert A. Olson, USAF
Comdr. Nels R. Nelson, USN
Lt. Col. Clark J. Smith, USAF
Lt. Col. Charles E. Graham, USAF

1. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the Ninety-Fifth AEC-MLC Conference were approved with the revisions proposed by the Commission.

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See memo dtd. 3-30-55

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2. Report on the Effects of High-Yield Nuclear Explosions

Mr. Libby commented on the reaction to this report, and said that it appeared favorable enough so that when future releases are contemplated the general reaction need not be considered as important a factor as in the past.

General Luedecke reviewed activities of AFSWP in revising the Effects of Atomic Weapons Handbook and said that it had reached the point at which discussions with the AEC on the classification of certain information were necessary. Mr. Libby stated that the Commission felt that any necessary action to expedite the revision should be taken.

Mr. Libby commented on his testimony before the Senate Armed Forces Committee concerning the effects of nuclear explosions. The Commissioners and the Committee then discussed such matters as the yield-region of "blow-out" and the need for emphasizing to the public certain information such as blast and thermal scaling laws.

At this point, Mr. Strauss entered the meeting.

3. Radioactive Contamination from Thermonuclear Weapons

General Thatcher said that the Secretary of Defense was prepared to sign a letter on Department of Defense interest in developing thermonuclear weapons with various contaminating characteristics. This letter would state the Department of Defense position that more study on the question of developing both a reduced contamination weapon and an increased contamination weapon is needed before the Department would be in a position to state a development requirement, but that the Department is extremely interested in such weapons.

Mr. Murray said that he had hoped the Department of Defense interest would go beyond merely an expression of support for

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preliminary studies. Inasmuch as the AEC could assure the DOD that there would be no interference with present military requirements, he hoped that a military requirement for a "pure" weapon would be immediately forthcoming. He pointed out that an intensive development program, if promptly initiated, should permit the testing of a reduced contamination weapon at Operation REDWING. Otherwise, such a test would probably be delayed until 1957.

Mr. Libby said that he felt that such a research project would contribute to knowledge of the whole field of thermonuclear weapons.

General Thatcher said that he felt the Department of Defense letter was sufficient guidance for the present and would enable the AEC to explore this area actively. When more facts are known and the Department is able to evaluate their military significance a development requirement might be appropriate. General Thatcher pointed out that all available information indicated great losses in yield would result from current design concepts of "pure" weapons, and that such "costs" need careful examination.

4. Continued Use of the Nevada Test Site

Mr. Strauss informed the Committee that a letter had been received from the Chairman of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy questioning whether any device except those of very small-yield should be tested at the Nevada Site in view of the delays, costs and dangers entailed. He said that a reply was being prepared which would emphasize the advantages of continental tests over tests in the Pacific, and asked if the members of the MLC had any suggestions for the reply. Members of the MLC pointed out that there were urgent requirements for troop participation

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ing Senator Anderson's letter for publication. He had told Mr. Allardice that he would object strenuously, particularly before AEC answers the letter.

General Thatcher said that the Department of Defense would be prepared to support the AEC position that the Nevada test site is preferable to the Pacific for the type of tests under the criteria.

Mr. Murray said that he was very concerned that such a suggestion as moving into the Pacific with any of the devices now scheduled for "TEAPOT" should even be considered by the Chairman of the Joint Committee. It was his view that Senator Anderson's letter emphasized the need for vigorous defense of the Nevada tests, and indeed of the whole concept of the importance of testing to weapons development. He observed that initially much opposition had been encountered in beginning tests in Nevada and even in the Pacific and thus it was a setback to encounter such criticism now. In addition, the great importance of testing to weapons development had only been recognized comparatively recently and should now be made clear to everyone. Questions like those raised by Senator Anderson, even though they did not cause the loss of the use of the Nevada site, might cause a loss of impetus in the testing program through fear of criticism and could have grave consequences for the whole

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weapons program and ultimately the national security. In addition, the loss or partial curtailment of the use of the Nevada site would be even more serious.

Mr. Murray concluded that the AEC should take an aggressive and very firm position that the tests are in the national interest and that any delays, costs or possible dangers in using the Nevada site are more than justified: he hoped that the Department of Defense would support this position.

General Thatcher said that the Department of Defense shared Mr. Murray's views and would continue to support the requirement for use of the Nevada site.

5. Foreign Observers at Operation TEAPOT

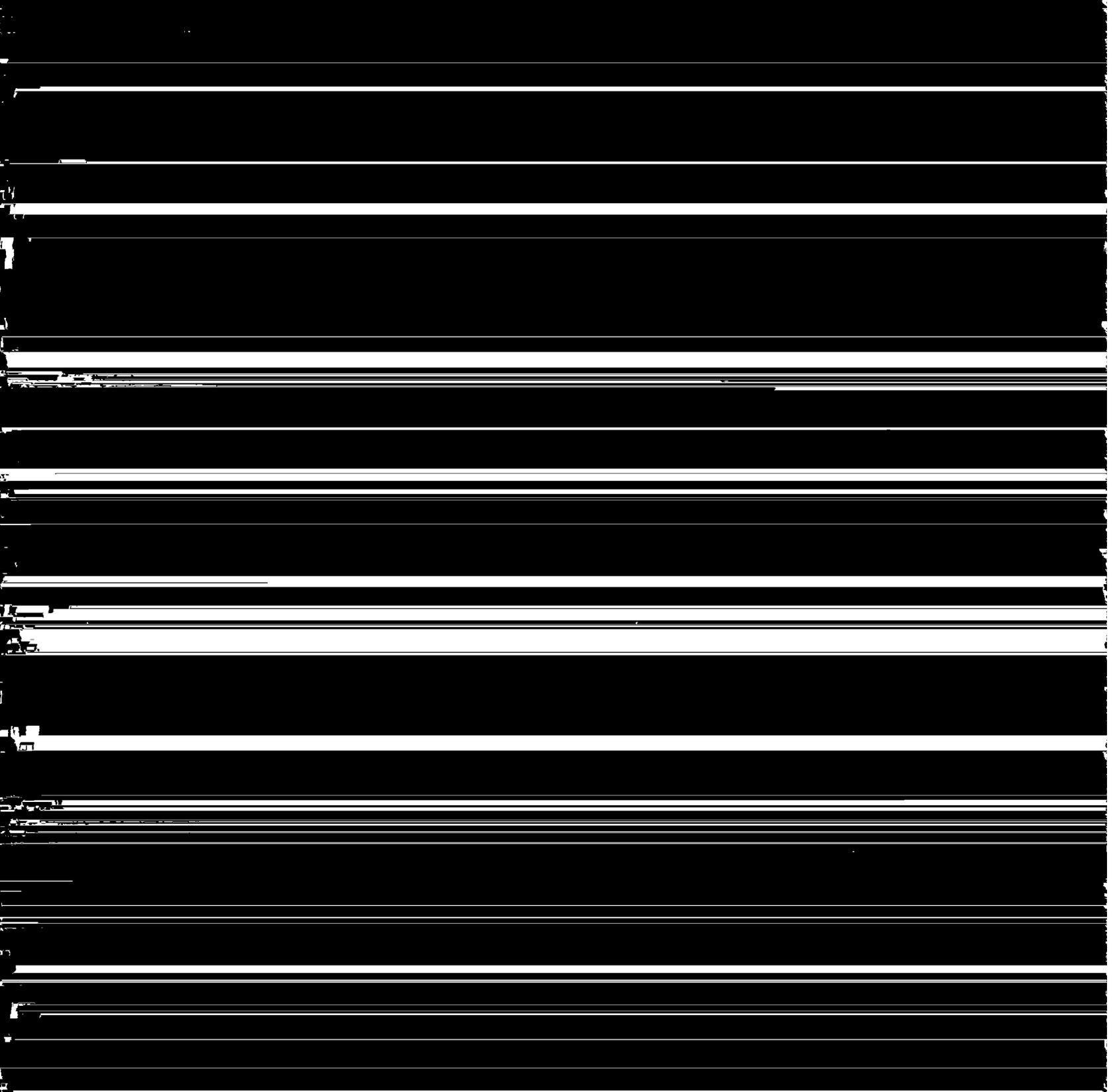
General Thatcher said that the Joint Chiefs of Staff had approved the NATO, British and Canadian observer program for Operation TEAPOT, and that the Department of the Army had been designated the responsible agency. In response to a question by Mr. Strauss, General Luedecke said that the Army plans to have foreign observers quartered outside the Proving Grounds and that they would make only one visit to the Proving Grounds prior to the "shot" they were to witness. He also said AEC would receive a copy of any briefing given such observers.

6. MLC Letter on the Classification of "Schedules of Base Changes and Base Prices"

General Thatcher asked for the AEC reaction to the MLC letter of February 8, 1955, which expressed concern over AEC action in reducing the classification of unit prices of special nuclear material

Mr. Strauss said that he believed it would have been better for the AEC and the MLC to discuss the matter informally, rather than in formal correspondence. He and Mr. Nichols reviewed the factors which the Commission had taken into consideration

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8. Date for Ninety-Seventh AEC-MLC Conference

March 24, 1955, was set as the date for the next conference.

W.B. McCOOL
Secretary
Atomic Energy Commission

ORIN S. RICHARDSON
Colonel, USAF
Executive Secretary, MLC

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