

Folder: Killian

3 April 1958

MEMORANDUM FOR THE FILES OF LEWIS L. STRAUSS

Last night I had dinner at the home of General White, Chief of Staff of the Air Force. Dr. Killian was present as was Secretary McElroy. Dr. Killian took me to task for the Commission's decision in the matter of the high-altitude tests scheduled in HARDTACK. He said that he understood I had said that they could not take place at Eniwetok and that he thought this was a great mistake. Mr. McElroy said the same. I explained to them that my position had been misrepresented; that I had no objection and my colleagues had no objection to the high-altitude shots at Eniwetok, provided the tests could be conducted without the risk of blinding the natives on the nearby atolls, and that unless the natives could be evacuated or some other satisfactory means could be found for giving them complete protection, it was a violation of the trust since the United States is the Trustee of the Trust Territory and that, under such circumstances, we would have to insist on the tests being held elsewhere, for which purpose I said that Johnson Island was being surveyed. Dr. Killian took the position that this was a calculated risk. I said that under no circumstances could I agree with such a contention.

Today General Loper called me and we rode out to Germantown together. He also took the same position and reminded me of the fact that to move the particular shots to Johnson Island would entail an additional cost of \$8 million. I said that I did not think the additional cost would be anything like that large, but that the amount was de minimus compared with the issue involved.

When I reached the Commission office, I called the Commissioners together and repeated this to them. They said that they backed my position unanimously. I promised that I would carry the matter to the President if I could not convince the Department of Defense and Dr. Killian of the injustice of their point of view.

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