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FOLDER MR #A -7, Hardtack Vol. 3

1349th AEC
Meeting
4-1-58
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1. AEC 952/39 - Special Shots for HARDTACK (See Minutes of Meetings 1345, 1346, and 1347)

The Commissioners resumed consideration of the question of the high altitude shots to be carried out during Operation HARDTACK.

General Starbird reported that subsequent to the Commissioners' request at Meeting 1347 on March 28, 1958, he had requested a report by General Alvin R. Luedecke, Commander, Joint Task Force-7, on the question of alternative locations for the TEAK shot to be carried out during Operation HARDTACK. He then read a telegram dated April 1, 1958, from General Luedecke on this question. (See AEC 952/40, subsequently circulated.) General Luedecke had commented at length on the advantages and disadvantages of carrying out the TEAK shot at Wake, Midway, Christmas, and Johnston Island.

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General Starbird said that in considering locations for the shot, two important considerations were involved: (1) should the shot be carried out at Eniwetok with the possibility of resulting flash blindness for anyone witnessing the shot; and (2) would the Commission be willing to establish a new danger area if an alternative location is selected. He also remarked that the instrumented satellite which was recently orbited to telemeter information on the shot would be burned out if the shot is delayed for a considerable period of time.

Mr. Strauss said he had visited Johnston Island and believed this would be a satisfactory location. He added that in view of the possibility of flash blindness for natives on atolls in the vicinity of Eniwetok, he could not support holding the shot there. Mr. Libby remarked that he also would favor Johnston Island.

At this point Mr. Floberg and Mr. Dunning entered the meeting.

Mr. Libby commented on the possibility of a smaller shot to obtain the desired information as well as the question of delaying the shot if the TEAK is to be fired at another location. General Starbird said that if the shot were to be fired elsewhere, the delay and extended length of the series could be explained by pointing out that the open shot for U.N. observers had required additional time. He added that there is a compensating factor involved if the TEAK shot is moved to another location since the danger area in the Trust Territory would be dropped at an earlier date than originally announced and the new danger area would not affect international shipping as much as the Eniwetok danger area.

Mr. Graham inquired about the danger area to be established if the shot is fired at Johnston Island and the relationship of

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this area to Honolulu and the Hawaiian Islands. General Starbird outlined the extent of the danger area around Johnston Island and said the shot would actually be about 800 miles from Honolulu. He added that aircraft and shipping in the Johnston Island area could be easily controlled.

The Commissioners discussed the question of Air Force control of Johnston Island and their approval of its use by the AEC. Mr. Strauss suggested that the DOD be informed of the Commission's position regarding cancellation of the high altitude shots at Eniwetok. At the same time, the Commission's preference of Johnston Island as an alternative location for the high altitude shots should be discussed. Subject to DOD concurrence of this alternative location and a final determination by the President, plans would be carried out for proceeding with the shots at Johnston Island.

Mr. Graham questioned the possible use of Christmas Island as an alternative location. General Starbird said that it is believed that the U.K. will be undertaking test activities at the same time the high altitude shots are to be carried out. Mr. Strauss also commented on such factors as U.S. control of the area, the consultations required with the U.K., and reciprocal use by the U.K. of facilities at Eniwetok which would be involved in the use of Christmas Island. Mr. Fields observed that if the U.K. was permitted reciprocal use of Eniwetok, other U.S. allies might request similar consideration with the possible result that this question would again be raised in the United Nations.

Mr. Floberg inquired about the additional time required if the shots are to be moved to Johnston Island. General Starbird replied that necessary construction work and the movement of personnel would require an additional five or six months. He added that this might be a conservative estimate of time required.