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Greenhouse Vol. #1

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UNITED STATES ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

DECLASSIFIED AUG 21 1950
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.8

By DM LSC Date 8/15/05

This document consists of 5 pages
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August 21, 1950
U. S. ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION
BY: Greg. J. [unclear] McConnell (fls)
DOCUMENT NO. LET-73824

Dear General Quesada:

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The Atomic Energy Commission has been able to review briefly your draft report to the Joint Chiefs of Staff regarding possible rearrangements in the GREENHOUSE program to meet the realities of the military situation in the Pacific.

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We have noted that the Los Alamos Laboratory is prepared, through Dr. Graves, to reduce the number of test sites from four to three, and to defer the target date to April 15, 1951, and we approve these changes. We are confident further that Dr. Graves has given careful attention to other possible savings in Armed Forces support, and that a watchful eye will be kept on the possibility of effecting even further economies as the situation may develop. We appreciate, too, that you have screened, and will continue to screen, the military requirements essential to your tasks, and that the entire operation will be conducted on an economical basis.

However, we would like to emphasize the point that some apparent economies would in fact be false economies. The foreseeable gains in our position in atomic weapons, both immediate and long term, which may be expected from these tests are of such a magnitude that we would stand very firm against any reduction in the scope of the work which would raise serious questions as to the ability of the scientific group to collect the vital elements of the data which are involved. We believe that some of the reasons for our strong view in this matter will be apparent from following considerations.

With regard to the longer term, that is, the next three to five years, there are two principal points:

A. The Commission is giving high priority to the development of the Hydrogen Bomb. We know of no way more effective to accelerate theoretical progress toward this weapon than by conducting full scale experiments as soon as the Laboratory is ready. The Laboratory believes that they will be ready for the first such experiment next Spring. We must therefore plan to make it possible for this test to be conducted.

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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY DECLASSIFICATION REVIEW	
1ST REVIEW DATE: <u>8/17/01</u>	DETERMINATION (CIRCLE NUMBER(S))
AUTHORITY: <u>CLASSIFIED</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1. CLASSIFICATION RETAINED
NAME: <u>Billy H. Graves</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> 2. CLASSIFICATION CHANGED
2ND REVIEW DATE: <u>11/20/01</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> 3. CONTAINS NO DOE CLASSIFIED INFO
AUTHORITY: <u>ADD</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> 4. COORDINATE WITH:
NAME: <u>Avery Austin</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> 5. CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED
	<input type="checkbox"/> 6. CLASSIFIED INFO BRACKETED
	<input type="checkbox"/> 7. OTHER (SPECIFY): <u>6107-11</u>

To:

R. B. Snapp

P. J. Farley

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[unclear]

[unclear]

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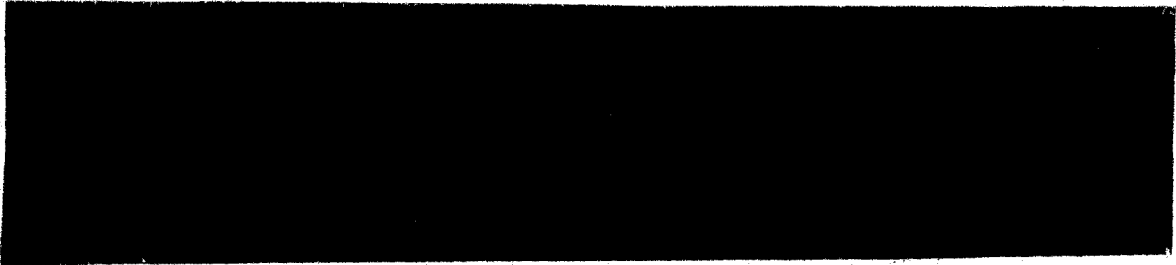
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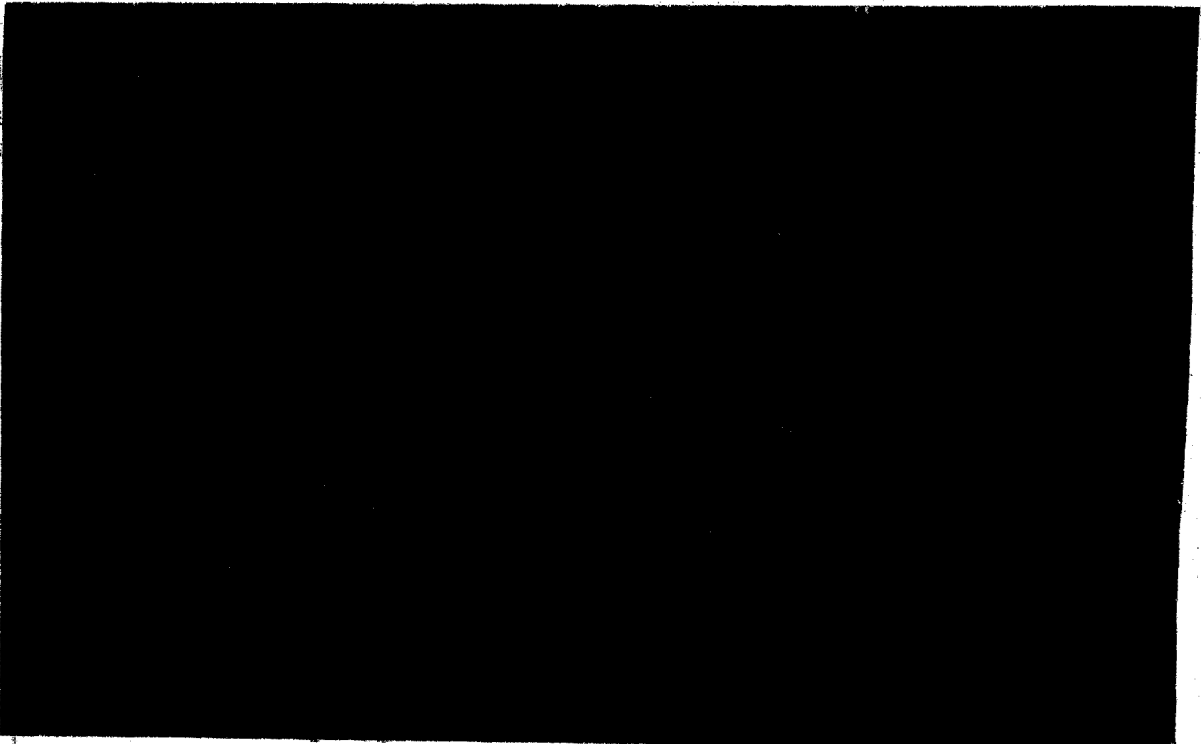


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We have no doubt that the long term military and scientific interests, as outlined immediately above, are generally understood; we repeat them here primarily for the purpose of completing a picture.

With regard to short-term implications, we are aware that, in troublous times such as these, the pressures are often very great to postpone for a few weeks or months, projects of long term significance when they compete with the severe requirements of the current situation. We are therefore devoting the remainder of this memorandum to the significance of the planned test program as viewed in the light of the short term requirements as we understand them.

A rather wide field of atomic weapon possibilities is beginning to open out before us, and some improvements of very great importance seem possible of attainment within six to eighteen months following a successful test program.



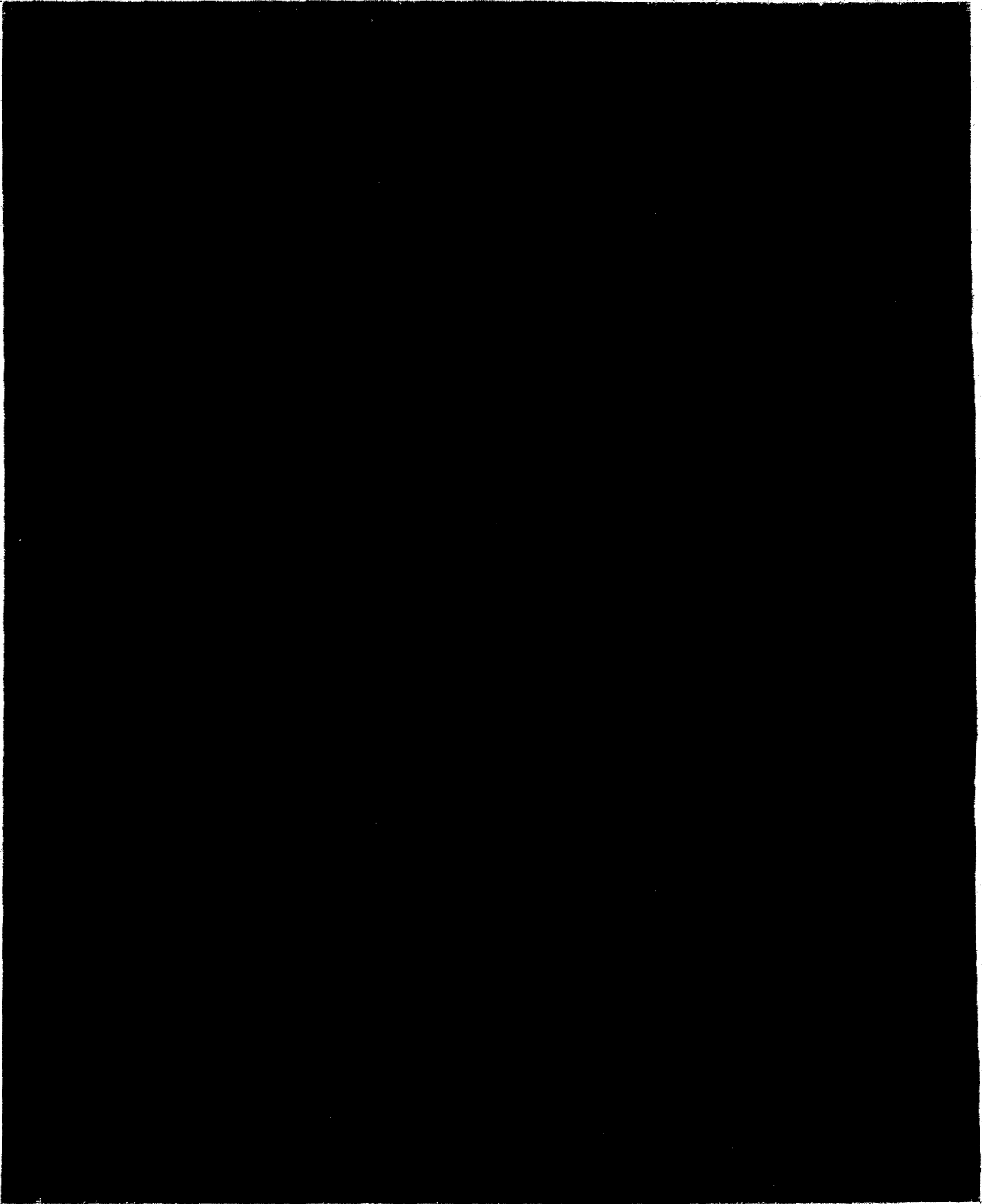
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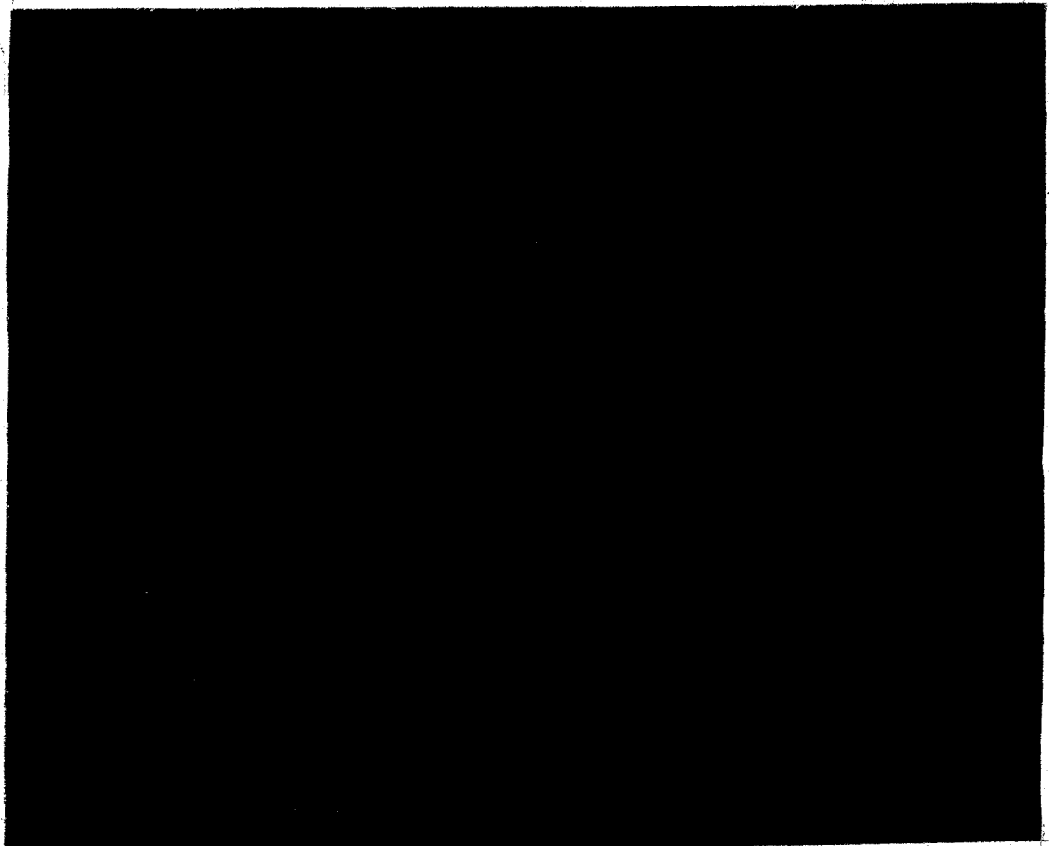
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C. Non-Nuclear Weapon Assemblies

In addition to these immediately possible new cores and this new pit, there is a military requirement for lighter and smaller weapons.



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Adequate instrumentation of the GREENHOUSE tests has one additional and especially significant bearing on future tests and on the conduct of military operations. Every effort will be made in GREENHOUSE to develop new test methods and to calibrate new instrumentation which will make possible much less elaborate preparations for future proof tests. It seems reasonable to assume that with two well instrumented tower shots at Eniwetok next Spring we may be able to proof test subsequent fission weapons by a relatively simple air drop over open water. We would also hope thus to make available to the Armed Forces air borne instruments for possible combat use, to facilitate assessment of strike damage.

We hope that the above outline of our views on the possibilities in the weapons field will be of assistance to you in the course of your preparations for GREENHOUSE. We find in these possibilities, particularly as

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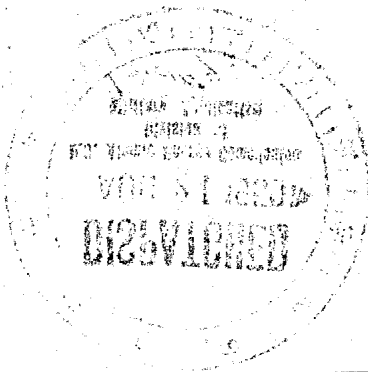
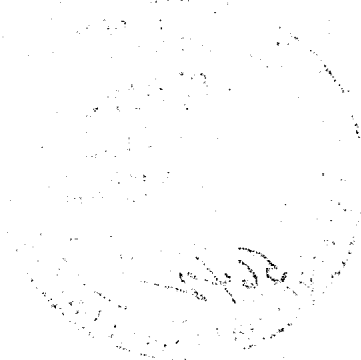
regards cashing in on them in the short term, completely unassailable reasons why an adequately instrumented and carefully conducted GREENHOUSE program of the scope generally as planned, and in the Spring of 1951, is an essential to the National security, growing more urgent in fact as the world situation deteriorates. We feel, furthermore, that the availability of an alternate site, or sites, for standby development is required. We plan to continue our exploration of this matter to the end that GREENHOUSE may positively be accomplished, whatever emergency may arise affecting Eniwetok.

Sincerely yours,

UNITED STATES ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION

Sumner T. Pike
Acting Chairman

Lt. General Elwood R. Quesada, USAF
Commander, Joint Task Force Three
Washington 25, D. C.



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