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931007948 PART III

WEAPONS

December 18, 1950
U. S. ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION
BY: [Signature]
DOCUMENT NO. 0-1371-1A

PROGRESS REPORT TO THE
JOINT COMMITTEE ON ATOMIC ENERGY

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BY MEMO DATE 11-29-93

JUNE THROUGH NOVEMBER 1950 (U)

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UNITED STATES ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION

Washington, D. C.

December 15, 1950

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JOINT COMMITTEE ON ATOMIC ENERGY

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It should be emphasized that the test at Eniwetok in the Spring of 1951 will necessarily be an intermediate step, perhaps only the first of several intermediate steps, in the development of a hydrogen bomb, and may well not provide a clear-cut answer to the question of whether or not it is possible to construct a hydrogen bomb.

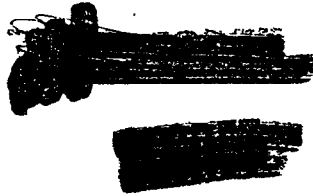
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pages 4-14

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with observers from the AEC or its contractors attending in most instances. Practice exercises of emergency transfer of nuclear components from AEC to the Department of Defense were held; dummies were substituted at the point of transfer and no fissionable material left the custody of AEC.

E. Full-Scale Tests

Operation GREENHOUSE

Although still tentative, it is now expected that the devices to be test-fired at Eniwetok in the Spring of 1951 (Operation GREENHOUSE) will be as shown below. The tests are listed in one possible chronological order of firing. The changes from the probable firing list contained in the previous report reflect the decision to stop work on

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test program.

<u>Test Device</u>	<u>Type of Shot</u>
1. TX-5	Tower
2. DELETED	Tower
3. DELETED	Tower
4. Mark 6	Air Drop
5. Booster (Thermonuclear test)	Tower

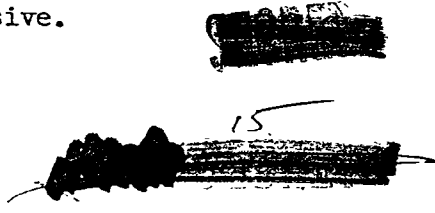
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The Booster will not be fired if results of sufficiently conclusive.

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Preparations for the tests are well under way. In addition to the array of actual firing and recording equipment, such necessary things are being provided as shelter and messing facilities, test structures for blast damage studies, medical and biological equipment both for the care of personnel and for studying radiation effects on animals, etc.

General E. R. Quesada, Commander, Joint Task Force 3, is to be designated as over-all representative of the Atomic Energy Commission during the tests.

Proposed Continental Proving Ground

The war in Korea has emphasized the need for selection of a continental site for testing atomic weapons in order to reduce the extensive logistics requirements of overseas tests, to obtain greater security, and to provide access on a reduced time schedule. There would be outstanding advantages in having a continental site for all atomic weapons tests involving a wide range of energy release on the order of 1000 to 500,000 tons TNT equivalent or more, and for tests of a special nature having unusual radiation hazards. A continental site satisfactory for such a range of tests might be found after careful study and evaluation. However, the essential need now is for a site at which one or more relatively low-order detonations may be conducted safely and with minimum cost in time, effort, and money within the next three months.

The criteria for such a site include primarily: (1) ready accessibility

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to the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory by land and air, (2) good communications, (3) adequate radiological safety, (4) reasonably regular topography, and (5) prospects of economy of preparation and operation and immediate availability possible only where the Government is already in possession of the land. Several sites within the continental United States have been considered, and the Commission has recommended for Presidential approval one on which it is believed a considerable portion of the expected testing program could be conducted safely. If the site is approved, it is expected that tests will be conducted there in the near future.

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