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2. Proposed Change of Date for Operation CASTLE

Mr. Murray initiated the discussion by asking why it was necessary to decide on the timing of CASTLE at this particular time. General Fields replied that Mr. Bradbury had written asking for permission to take preliminary steps in the development of thermonuclear weapons, which, if taken, would make it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to carry out the tests in the fall of 1953. (see AEC 597/2)

Mr. Dean asked whether we would have as many [redacted] on the shelf in June 1954 whether it is tested in early 1954 or late 1953. General Fields said in reply that we would. It is a case of having a tested weapon at an earlier date.

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Mr. Dean said that it is not now certain that the test will be postponed until 1954 although it is highly probable. However, because of the uncertainty it would be unwise to disband the task force. Mr. Zuckert said that we should continue a requirement for a task force in late 1953 in the event that it is necessary. The military position is indeed inconsistent in that they ask for an early emergency capability but are reluctant to support one. He pointed out that the members of the MLC do not really have the responsibility to act on this task force problem. The issue might be put to the MLC in this manner: Does the DOD have an over-riding priority for a tested weapon in the fall of 1953 and if so, is this priority high enough that they are willing to risk a failure and the eventual postponement of the development of more certain weapons as a result of holding this early test? He added that the task force issue should not be brought up in the MLC meeting until the primary issue has been discussed. Mr. Dean suggested that the Commission should not act on this matter formally at this time. After further discussion the Commission:

a. NOTED that the proposal to defer CASTLE would be discussed with the MLC; and