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Honorable Carl T. Durkin  
Acting Chairman  
Joint Committee on Atomic Energy  
Congress of the United States

Dear Mr. Durkin:

The purpose of this letter is to advise you of the current status of plans for Operation CASTLE.

After considering the successful results of ITI together with various technical and procurement questions involved in the Kansas nuclear program, the Commission has decided that Operation CASTLE will be deferred until early 1954. Our plan for CASTLE includes the detonation of six shots, three of which it is hoped will be practical nuclear weapon models. With the emphasis that is being placed on this program, there exists the possibility that one of the several devices now under development may unexpectedly develop ahead of the others to the point where it becomes feasible and advantageous to proof test that model in the Fall of 1953. Accordingly the Department of Defense has been alerted to the possibility for conducting Joint Task Force 132 development plans for a much simpler weapon test in late 1953 on an emergency basis.

Consequently the Commission has directed that the [redacted] be fabricated at the maximum rate allowable by the availability of materials. This has been done so that an emergency capability of a nuclear weapon will exist in standby prior to testing the devices now contemplated.

The changed date for CASTLE will require a reprogramming of the other tests, both continental and overseas, now scheduled for Spring 1954 and subsequently. These changes are presently under consideration. You will, of course, be kept informed as they are made.

Sincerely yours,

*Gordon Dean*  
Chairman

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