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404706

July 29, 1953

Those listed below

Morse Salisbury, Director
Division of Information Services

(483)

STATEMENT THAT MIGHT BE ISSUED IF AUTHORITATIVE SOURCES CRITICIZE
NPG OPERATIONS

SYMBOL: IS:MS

This is my try at a statement to be held in standby for use
in case there is an attack from authoritative sources on
our conduct of test operations and on the use at all of the
proving grounds.

I haven't circulated this earlier waiting for the results
of the studies on animals. However, the Commissioners are
leaving on vacation and our instruction from the Chairman
is to get this approved by all of them while they are in
town so that it may be used quickly if need arises. Could
you let me have your comments on this including its
declassifiability? Please amend it in any way you think
necessary or desirable.

Attachment

Addressees:

H. W. Boyer, General Manager
Brig. Gen. K. E. Fields, DMA
Dr. J. C. Bugher, B&M
J. G. Beckerley, OC

CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED
BY AUTHORITY OF DOE/OC

P.R. LAPLANTE 12/3/82
REVIEWED BY DATE

By: W. Tensch 6/5/87

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HCB -
Good to me.
JCR

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This document consists of 3 pages
No. 203 of 200 copies, Cont.

July 29, 1953

Statement that might be issued if authoritative sources criticize
NPG operations.

It has been asserted that the operations at the Nevada Proving Ground particularly those in the spring series, 1953, have been adverse to the national interest. The Atomic Energy Commission and the Department of Defense believe, to the contrary, that these operations have well served the national interest.

The four test series of the past 2½ years involving _____ detonations have speeded the weapons development program of this nation by at least one year and possibly two as compared with what would have been possible had these tests been located at the Pacific Proving Ground. The cost in dollars has been less than _____ that of carrying on these operations in the Pacific, and the savings in scientific manpower have been invaluable.

The most recent series yielded results of the highest importance. Five of the detonations advanced the thermonuclear weapons program. Of the remaining six, all were important to the improvement of standard weapons. For example, one confirmed a theory which is now being applied to increasing the striking power of the fissionable materials in our weapons. Another proved-in the atomic warhead for large caliber artillery projectiles. A third produced knowledge of the effects of

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DOE ARCHIVES

weapons which will lead to more efficient use of both tactical and strategic atomic weapons should the need arise.

In short, enormous gains in defensive power of the free world have come from these tests.

The detonations have produced no substantial hazards to the public health and safety. On the proving ground itself none of the workmen, the scientists, engineers nor the troops have come even close to experiencing radiation sickness or blast injury. For the people off-site there has been no reason to give serious consideration to injury. The record of highest radiation exposures in populated areas outside the proving ground has been published in the AEC's 14th Semiannual Report to Congress. It's analysis shows no hazard to health.

Livestock grazing in the immediate vicinity of the proving ground have suffered some nominal injury from radioactive fall-out. (Here supply the facts as are finally determined.) The livestock herds and flocks affected were in close-in areas where their grazing was a calculated risk on the part of the owners. Nevertheless the AEC has moved to compensate. (Here what the facts turn out to be.)

The tests have brought inconvenience to some industries and scientific study enterprises whose products or operations are affected by increase in the background radiation brought on by radioactive fall-out. The film industry, however, with AEC cooperation has learned to live with the

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increases in background radiation brought on temporarily by test detonations. There have been no claims made for compensation.

In order to assure protection of the public health and safety, we have taken rigid precautions as to the character of the shots and their timing to coincide with favorable meteorological conditions.

Our view of the net effect of the tests on the national interest is that they have greatly advanced our military strength; and have not in any serious or even significant regard brought harm to persons or property.

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