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DRAFT LETTER TO THE CHAIRMAN,  
JOINT COMMITTEE ON ATOMIC ENERGY,  
FROM THE CHAIRMAN, AEC

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Transmitted herewith is the TOP SECRET quarterly progress report of the U. S. Atomic Energy Commission for the period January-March 1948.

This report follows the general pattern of that submitted for the quarter ending December 31, 1947, outlining progress toward the major objectives set forth last November in the "Program Goals" report.

As in the case of the "Program Goals" report and the previous quarterly report, we are transmitting at this time only one copy. Additional copies have been prepared for use of other members of the Committee and will be made available whenever desired.

WITHOUT PREJUDICE TO THE  
CLASSIFICATION OF THE  
ORIGINAL DOCUMENT AND THE  
AUTHORITY OF THE AEC

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DRAFT OF A PROPOSED FOREWORD BY THE COMMISSION

This is the second of a series of Quarterly Progress Reports being submitted by the U. S. Atomic Energy Commission to the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy. In these reports the Commission undertakes to relate activities and progress to its major program goals. These goals were outlined in a preliminary manner in the "Program Goals" report furnished to the Committee in November 1947, and their elaboration may be considered to be one purpose of the quarterly reports. Modifications in the goals will be reported explicitly.

In suggesting this series of reports, the Joint Committee acknowledged its appreciation "that forecasts much beyond one year will be subject to many unknown and untried factors and of necessity, will be well considered estimates." The solution of technical problems of great complexity frequently must precede the actual undertaking of a project that the Commission has tentatively scheduled. In the present state of scientific knowledge, the speed with which such solutions can be provided is necessarily uncertain. Also, progress in one endeavor may serve either to raise or lower the priority to be accorded another project. The scheduling of effort is influenced by many such factors, requiring constant reevaluation. The uncertainty thus introduced into predictions of achievement is inescapable.

Each of the broad goals, as originally defined, requires for its attainment multiple courses of action. This report sketches the problems being encountered in many of these supporting programs and projects. The solution of each such problem becomes itself an intermediate goal, whose achievement is a prerequisite to success in attaining the broad objective. Much of the Commission's progress will appear as steps toward these intermediate goals.

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The quarter was marked by a continued acceleration of activity and accomplishment in programs whose results are readily measurable. There was substantial evidence, too, of a similar gain of momentum in activities such as research and development, which lack definite indices by which results can be measured. It would be misleading, however, to speak of an accelerated rate of activity without at the same time directing attention to the fact that many programs are still being defined, that many projected facilities are not yet on the drawing boards, and that probably many of the persons required to carry out even the programs already envisaged have yet to start, let alone complete their professional training.

During the quarter the Commission and its staff have looked forward expectantly to the conclusions ultimately to be drawn from the weapon tests commenced a few weeks ago at Eniwetok. These tests have been concerned with far more than the design of individual weapons. Their results make possible a reexamination of certain assumptions which underlie major program goals and plans. The Commission will continue, in oral discussions with the Joint Committee, the review of these conclusions as rapidly as analysis of test results makes this possible.

The Commission's responsibility to keep the Joint Committee fully and currently informed with respect to its activities must necessarily be discharged in a number of ways. During the quarter the methods of communication included executive sessions, meetings with members of the Committee, conferences at the staff level, letters, and written reports on more important problems. The quarterly reports are still another method. A purpose they serve is to summarize much detailed information already furnished on a week-to-week basis and to relate such developments to the broader programs of which they form a part.

The Commission will welcome suggestions on how its reports can better serve the Committee's purposes.

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