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January 5, 1952

ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION

MEETING NO. 775

4:30 p.m., Friday, November 14, 1952

Present

Henry D. Smyth
Eugene M. Zuckert

M. W. Boyer
Everett L. Hollis
Harold L. Price

Roy B. Snapp
John H. Stumpf

Also Present

Paul C. Fine
Morse Salisbury
Rodney L. Southwick
Capt. John T. Hayward
Col. R.G. Butler
Lt. Col. Raymond P. Campbell
Col. Vincent G. Huston
J.A. Waters, Jr.

775th AEC Meeting 11-14-52
Discussion of Security and Public Reporting Aspects of Pacific Tests

Mr. Salisbury distributed to the Commissioners and members of the staff copies of an "Outline for Report to Commissioners on Security and Public Reporting Aspects of Pacific Tests" which had been prepared as the result of extensive informal discussions on this subject on the morning of November 14. (Copies of this paper are on file in the Office of the Secretary. See also AEC 483/35, subsequently circulated.) This outline served as the basis of the ensuing discussion.

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The objectives of the security and public information programs for Operation IVY and the measures taken to achieve those objectives were reviewed in detail. (See AEC 483/27 and previous papers of the AEC 483 Series) The questions of whether censoring or delaying the dispatch of mail of persons engaged in the operation or delaying their return to the mainland after the first shot would have been helpful were discussed.

The present status of the security and public reporting programs and of the psychological strategy plan were next considered, and the extent to which those programs had been affected by publication of letters written by JTF-132 personnel and by other unauthorized statements.

On the subject of vitiation of the psychological strategy plan, Mr. Salisbury said that unquestionably considerable harm had been done which it would be difficult, if not impossible, to repair. It remained to determine what steps might be taken to prevent further damage. On the subject of the timing and contents of the public announcement to be made after the second (KING) shot, Mr. Smyth suggested that the only advantage in delaying the announcement would be that such a procedure might reduce the probability of successful long-range detection. He pointed out that if the announcement were held up, the departure of personnel and observers from the test site would also have to be delayed, and that it would be necessary to postpone both the departures and the announcement for a period of weeks in order to achieve what would probably prove to be a very small gain or none at all. Mr. Zuckert said he, too, believed that the possibility of lessening the chances of successful detection by delaying the announcement seemed slight.

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The most appropriate time for release of the announcement was discussed and in the light of existing plans for the KING shot, it was decided that the afternoon of Sunday, November 16, would be the most satisfactory and that departures and the dispatch of mail from the test site would not be delayed.

The question of a supplementary statement expressing the Commission's concern regarding the published letters of JTF-132 personnel was raised, and it was decided that a final decision on the contents of the statement would be deferred until the following day.

Mr. Zuckert suggested that the information and security policy that will be pursued by the AEC and the factors determining that policy ought to be communicated to Congressmen Durham and Cole and Senator Hickenlooper, and arrangements to accomplish this were considered.

ROY B. SNAPP
Secretary

Approved by the Commission: Jan. 8, 1953.