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STATEMENT BY GORDON DEAN, CHAIRMAN, U. S. ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION

As co-host today, along with Mr. Robert Le Baron, Chairman of the Military Liaison Committee, I would like to welcome you to this press conference. The purpose of the conference is to give you all of the facts that can be released at this time on the series of atomic weapons tests recently completed at the AEC's Eniwetok proving ground.

Here to give you these facts are Lt. Gen. Elwood R. Quesada, of the U.S. Air Force, who commanded the task force that conducted the test program for us; Dr. Alvin C. Graves, of the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory, who was in charge of the experimental activities of the task force, and various members of their staffs.

Before we get into the main part of the conference, however, I would like to take just a few moments to say on behalf of the AEC that we deeply appreciate the fine cooperation given us in this test program by the Defense Department, and particularly by General Quesada and the military people of the task force organization, without whose services the program would not have been possible.

Joint Task Force 3 was set up back in 1949 to carry out these tests because the scope of the program required the assistance and active participation of all of the armed services. The task force provided the command structure and security for the tests, the means for an overseas movement to a base 4500 miles from the mainland, and an organization in which the construction, operating and technical units -- both military and civilian -- could function. The result, under General Quesada's capable leadership, has been a combined operation by military and civilian personnel that is a credit to all who participated.

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I would also like to extend the appreciation of the Commission to all those in the AEC program who participated in the tests and the work that led up to them. In particular, I would like to mention Dr. Norris E. Bradbury, director of the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory, who shortly after the 1948 tests laid down the requirements for the tests we have just completed; Dr. Graves whose outstanding contribution at Eniwetok is amply demonstrated by the success of the test program; and all of those talented and dedicated people at Los Alamos, of whose excellent research and development work -- carried on day in and day out under Dr. Bradbury's very capable direction -- these tests were but an outward manifestation.

There is one more thing I would like to say, and that is that in the reports you will hear today there will be references to the words "thermonuclear" and "hydrogen." It seems that every time we use these words, reports are stimulated that we either have a hydrogen bomb, have tested a hydrogen bomb, or are on the verge of producing a hydrogen bomb. In fairness to the American people, I think I should call your attention to the fact that neither the AEC nor the Department of Defense has said any of these things.

We feel we have a responsibility to the public to report as lucidly and as completely as we can on this subject of hydrogen bombs and still stay within the bounds of security. We have tried to do this. We have said that we are working on the development of a hydrogen bomb, in furtherance of the President's directive to do so, and we have said these most recent tests included thermonuclear research experiments which contributed to this work. Our precise rate of progress and the status of the program we have not given out and we feel we should not give out, in the interest of security. We have meant what we have said and we have not meant any more than we have said. The same thing, I am sure, will be true of the reports you will hear today.