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 Minutes & Agenda
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ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION-MILITARY LIAISON COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF SIXTIETH CONFERENCE

October 5, 1951

CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED*
 BY AUTHORITY OF DOE/OC
 REVIEWED BY H.L. Hoppe DATE 12/3/95
 REVIEWED BY J. Diaz DATE 2/4/96
 *no attachment

The conference convened at 1:00 p.m. with the following persons present: By: P.M. Sweetman 6/19/84

ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION

Henry D. Smyth	Col. Robert G. Butler, Jr.
Thomas E. Murray	Col. Richard T. Coiner, Jr.
T. Keith Glennan	Capt. Andrew M. Jackson, USN
	Paul C. Fine
Walter J. Williams	Col. George F. Schlatter
Col. Kenneth E. Fields	J. C. Robinson
Everett L. Hollis	George L. Weil
Roy B. Snapp	Oliver H. Townsend
Philip J. Farley	

MILITARY LIAISON COMMITTEE

Robert LeBaron	Col. Paul O. Langguth
Brig. Gen. H.B. Loper	Capt. R. P. Hunter
Brig. Gen. Stanly R. Mickelson	Col. C. F. Ball
Rear Adm. F. S. Withington	Comdr. E. E. Shelby
Brig. Gen. H. G. Bunker	Maj. F. J. Evans

1. Minutes of Fifty-ninth AEC-MLC Conference

The Commission and Committee had previously approved minutes of the Fifty-ninth AEC-MLC Conference held on June 14, 1951.

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2. Thermonuclear Program

Mr. Smyth referred to the suggestion by Mr. LeBaron in a letter dated September 19, 1951, (AEC 334/14) that the thermonuclear program be brought up for discussion. He said that he hoped the recent briefing by Dr. Bradbury* had given the Committee the most up-to-date information on the status of the Los Alamos Laboratory effort on the thermonuclear program. Colonel Fields added that negotiations were presently under way at Los Alamos with American Car and Foundry as a prospective contractor to get engineering design under way as soon as possible. General Loper said that Major General Clarkson, Commander of JTF-132, would be in Washington later in October and that he felt it would be desirable to give General Clarkson a review of the conditions under which the mission of JTF-132 might be undertaken, to assist in preliminary planning.

At Dr. Smyth's request, Colonel Fields reviewed briefly the status of the tritium production program at Hanford, as previously reported to the Committee. He said that by about February or March, 1952, the Laboratory would know with more certainty whether tritium would be required in the device to be tested at the next Eniwetok test.

The Conference then discussed the current status of the thermonuclear program and the information which had been made available to the MLC thereon. Mr. Glennan remarked that in the present stage of research and development the Commission saw no means of more definitive joint determinations as to rate and scale of the program at the present time. Mr. LeBaron agreed but stated

*See attached "Notes on Informal AEC-MLC Conference, September 13, 1951."

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that the Committee had a continuing interest in making sure that a situation did not arise where a thermonuclear device was successfully developed and no tritium was available for production of a weapon.

Mr. Glennan suggested that the matter of security for the thermonuclear program and for the next Eniwetok test be discussed at a future conference.

3. Expansion Program

Mr. LeBaron opened the discussion by saying that the Military Liaison Committee had forwarded the staff studies on possible expansion of the atomic energy program to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. It was recognized that some details of the expansion studies would remain subject to change or supplement and that the situation itself kept changing. He indicated this action was taken in order to avoid delays in the necessary reviews to be made by the staff of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Upon being queried for an expression of Commission attitude on this matter, Dr. Glennan said he had been concerned over what appeared to be a unilateral action by the MLC without consultation with the Commission. The Commission had not had an opportunity to determine that an expansion program or any portion thereof was indeed "feasible". Dr. Glennan said he was reassured, however, by the fact that the Joint Chiefs of Staff would have an opportunity to consider and review the matter pending additional studies now being made and subsequent consideration of the complete report by the MLC and the Commission. Admiral Withington added that the MLC recommendation was for a minimum expansion of 150% in U-235 production and 50% in plutonium production.

Mr. Smyth pointed out that what would be required would be not a single decision but a series of decisions, and that it would be unfortunate to make a premature decision that would freeze the

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position. Mr. Glennan said that he was concerned not only about the need for expansion and the size of any expansion but also over the overriding priorities on technical people and special materials which would be necessary if any expansion program was to be feasible and which were taken for granted in the studies. To Mr. LeBaron's objection that a firm requirement from the Department of Defense was necessary before one could talk about priorities, Mr. Glennan replied that it was clear from the studies to date that overriding priorities would be necessary, irrespective of the scope of the program decided on.

Mr. LeBaron said that the MLC was meeting shortly with the Deputy Secretary of Defense, Mr. Foster, and with the three civilian secretaries to brief them on the alternatives for expansion. Mr. Smyth pointed out that in an enterprise of this scope and with the impact that an expansion would have on the national economy, the decision could not be made unilaterally by either the Joint Chiefs of Staff or AEC, or indeed by the AEC and the Department of Defense jointly. The National Security Council, the President, and the Congress would all have a voice in the ultimate decision and the initial AEC and JCS decisions would be in the nature of recommendations. Mr. LeBaron felt that the logical starting point for reaching a decision was a military requirement for a degree of expansion, with an estimate as to the dollar cost of such an increase.

Mr. Murray inquired as to the basis for the MLC recommendation of 50-150 expansion. Admiral Withington said that the recommended percentages had appeared to be a rational initial installment of whatever expansion should ultimately prove desirable. Accordingly, the recommendation did not imply either that the MLC felt that no more ore would be available or that the MLC thought the AEC could not handle a large expansion. General Loper said that the Department of Defense, recognizing that one of the controlling factors in the

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ultimate decision will be the military requirements of the various services for weapons, has an estimate of weapons requirements in preparation. Studies to date show that the weapons which could be produced from an expansion of 50-150 would only begin to scratch the surface of ultimate requirements. Mr. Murray suggested that the Department of Defense requirements might be stated to the AEC in terms of ore rather than in terms of weapons. For example, the DOD might ask AEC for all the production that could be obtained from the ore which AEC could procure at a certain price per pound. He pointed out that the time lag in ore procurement was so great that an increase in requirements for ore furnished a logical starting point for expansion. Mr. Glennan pointed out that the cost of an expansion program would appear in the AEC budget and he asked that the Department of Defense be ready to support the Commission in requesting funds for expansion from appropriations committees of Congress.

Admiral Withington said that other aspects of expansion were under consideration in the Department of Defense. For example, thought being given to the question whether the Department of Defense should do more in the hardware field. The considerations here related not only to what was the right and best thing to do about hardware development but also to what was politically feasible. In case of expanded activities in this field by the Department of Defense the question would also arise as to whether AEC should continue to fund such activities. Mr. LeBaron pointed out that the time might be right for a re-examination of such questions. Mr. Smyth and Mr. Glennan indicated that the Commission was giving thought to related questions.

Mr. Williams stated that the Commission's staff was looking more closely into what would be necessary in the way of men, materials, funds and administrative action under the 50-150 case recommended by the MLC. Mr. LeBaron said that this appeared a

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logical and appropriate step. Mr. Smyth remarked that he had some reservation and misgivings personally. The radiological implications of a greatly expanded production of weapons gave him concern. He had also grave questions as a citizen as to what would happen in the next ten years and as to how changes in the political situation would effect the desirability of such an expansion, which would not result in an increase in the weapons stockpile until about 1955, and which might not be fully effective until 1960. Mr. LeBaron and Admiral Withington remarked that fissionable material produced under an expansion program appeared to have other uses, as for power. Mr. LeBaron agreed that many people were concerned about the implications of further expansion of production of fissionable materials and weapons but felt that a start had to be made somewhere and that the logical initial point was a weapons requirement. Mr. Murray remarked that stockpiling of ore would be valuable from the viewpoint of the national economy as well as for the expansion program.

4. Operational Plans for BUSTER-JANGLE

Colonel Fields referred to recent correspondence between the MLC and the Commission regarding the authority of the Manager of Santa Fe Operations as test commander for Operation BUSTER-JANGLE. He pointed out that during the operational phase of the test it was important that there be one test commander with undivided overriding authority to make any minor changes or adjustments that might be necessary in the light of conditions at the site. During the pre-operational phases to date, obtaining the concurrences of both parties (and specifically of the Commanding General, Special Weapons Command, as proposed by the MLC) had been proper, but now that the operational phase was commencing, the Commission felt that a delegation of authority without reservation should be given the test Commander.

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Mr. LeBaron and Gen. Loper said that the Committee did not disagree with the principle of undivided responsibility and authority for the test commander, but rather had proposed a formula for relationship between the test commander and the senior military representative patterned on the relationship between Gen. Quesada, as Commanding General of JTF-3, and the AEC Test Director. The Committee was interested in keeping the channels clear for full advice and consultation of all parties engaged in the joint test operation. At the conclusion of the discussion of this matter, Mr. Smyth suggested that the staff of the Commission and the Committee could find language which would reflect the common desire for undivided authority for the test commander and for adequate maintenance of channels for consultation with all participants in the operation.

Col. Fields outlined provisions being made for attendance and quartering of observers at the operation.

Gen. Loper described plans for maneuvers to be conducted during the test operations.

ROY B. SNAPP
Secretary
Atomic Energy Commission

PAUL O. LANGGUTH
Colonel, G.S.C.
Executive Secretary
Military Liaison Committee

ATTACHMENT:

Notes on Informal AEC-MLC Conference, September 13, 1951.