

UNITED STATES
ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

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December 21, 1956

Dear Mr. President:

A number of nuclear devices for early entry into our defense stockpile, or important to the most rapid advancement of later weapons designs, will require testing in calendar year 1957. Such tests would include:

- a. The proof-firing of certain air defense and anti-submarine warheads scheduled for early production. Included in this category are a warhead for the TALOS-W missile, two warheads for the NIKE-B missile and an atomic depth charge.
- b. Development tests of components and mockups which provide design information for thermonuclear devices, which we plan to test in the Eniwetok Proving Ground in 1958. These include an ICBM warhead and devices directed toward a higher yield-to-weight ratio.
- c. Exploratory and development tests directed toward achieving more efficient use of active material and warheads of smaller size and weight.
- d. A deep underground test designed to explore this manner of testing. This testing technique would guarantee no off-site fallout and would furnish information of importance to several new possible applications of atomic weapons.

In addition, the Department of Defense and the Federal Civil Defense Administration have indicated a need to secure from any test series in 1957 certain effects data important to the protection of our people and military forces. A portion of this data can be secured from diagnostic shots. However, two special shots designed specifically to secure such effects information may be required, one of which would be a Department of Defense test involving an airburst of the nuclear warhead in the new USAF air-to-air rocket following its launching from an interceptor aircraft.

Finally, it will be necessary during the year to conduct certain safety tests—tests wherein the high explosive is detonated in an asymmetrical manner to prove that no nuclear reaction will occur if the weapon, while safed, is subjected to fire or accident, and to determine the extent of local contamination which might result from the spread of nuclear material from weapons involved in fire or accident.

CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED
OR CHANGED TO
BY AUTHORITY OF DCC-ERDA
BY J. Whitman DATE 10/7/75 **SECRET**

~~RESTRICTED DATA~~

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Approximately 25 nuclear shots, together with five or more safety tests, may be required during the year. The first nuclear device would be detonated on or about May 1, 1957, and it is estimated that all nuclear shots would be fired in a period of the order of five months. The safety tests, from which no nuclear reaction is expected, would be fired on an "as needed" basis throughout the year.

The operation would be designated PILGRIM. So as to avoid hazard to participants or the public, shots will be limited in yield, will be fired only under favorable weather conditions and will be placed so as to minimize local fallout. Larger shots of the series will be detonated generally at higher altitudes than those for past shots of comparable yield. The expected local fallout from such shots should be reduced materially thereby.

It is not possible at the present moment to specify exactly what shots are to be fired. This information is now being developed by the laboratories which are studying intensively the detailed results from REDWING and laying their plans for PILGRIM. It is our intention, however, to finalize a schedule as early as possible and immediately thereafter to request your approval for the expenditure of the necessary special nuclear material.

In the meantime, it is necessary that major preparations proceed. These include the mobilizing of forces at the proving ground and the inauguration of necessary construction. Importantly, too, it should involve the informing of the public in the area and others possibly affected, such as the photographic industry, of the timing of our series.

We request your approval, therefore, for the conduct of the tests on the scale and in a manner as we have described above. As soon as practical after receipt of your approval, it is our intent to issue a brief public announcement as to our plan for the conduct of tests at the Nevada Test Site during calendar year 1957.

Respectfully yours,

Henry Stimson

Chairman



The President
The White House

I approve the conduct of Operation PILGRIM on the scale and in the manner outlined above, and authorize the issuance of a suitable public announcement of plans for tests at the Nevada Test Site during calendar year 1957.

Dwight D. Eisenhower

Dwight D. Eisenhower DEC 28 1956

The above approval by the President is subject to his understanding that all the tests proposed will be held in Nevada.

~~SECRET~~

A. J. Goodpaster
A. J. Goodpaster, Colonel, USA Army
DEC 28 1956

Unclassified

LIST OF MATERIALS TO BE PHOTOCOPIED

(PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT)

Name of Researcher M. S. Marne

Card No. _____

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Collection and/or Series (e.g. OF; PPF; Mitchell Papers)	Box No.	File No. and/or Folder Title (e.g. 41-A; 62-B; 'Civil Rights')	Correspondents and/or Subject (e.g. Memo, Smith to Jones)	Date of Docs.	Number of Pages
Ann Whitman file Administration file	4	Atomic Energy Com 1955-1956 (1)	Letter to President defense stockpile From Strauss	12/21/56	2 ✓
"	"	"	Memo to Goodpastor RE: human effects of nuclear weapons	11/23/56	2 ✓
"	"	"	memo to File human effects of nuclear weapons	11/21/56	3 ✓
"	"	"	Report: The human effects of Nuclear weapons devel.	11/21/56	2 ✓
"	"	Atomic Energy Com. 1955-56 (2)	The White House Statement by the Pres.	10/24/56	17 ✓
"	"	"	Memo to president from Strauss	10/21/56	2 ✓
"	"	Atomic Energy Com. 1955-56 (3)	Letter to Strauss unsigned) Attached Strauss speech	9/26/56	10 ✓
"	"	"	Letter to President Re Strauss speech	9/21/56	1 ✓
"	"	"	Letter to Strauss from DD Eisenhower	8/8/56	1 ✓
"	"	"	Letter to Gen. Loper from LA. Minnich	8/8/56	1 ✓
"	"	"	Letter to Minnich from KE Fields	8/7/56	1 ✓
"	"	"	Hand written note from Strauss	undated	1 ✓
"	"	Atomic Energy Com. 1955-56 (4)	Diary - Adm. Strauss	8/6/56	1 ✓
"	"	"	Letter to President from Strauss	8/1/56	3 ✓
"	"	"	Classified materials Receipt	8/2/56	1 ✓
"	"	"	Letter to President Re: Anderson's letter; Strauss	7/31/56	1 ✓
"	"	"	Letter to President From C. Anderson	7/27/56	2 ✓
"	"	"	Letter to President Effects of Radiation on Humans	6/13/56	1 ✓
"	"	"	Nomination of Libby for Re-appoint	5/29/56	3 ✓
"	"	"	Letter to President from Strauss Re Pacific test	5/22/56	1 ✓
"	"	Atomic Energy Com 1955-56 (5)	Letter to President Re Soviet test -	3/28/56	2 ✓
"	"	Atomic Energy Commis. 1955-56	Letter to Chairman from D. Eisenhower RE: IC BMS	9/13/55	2 ✓