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May 28, 1954

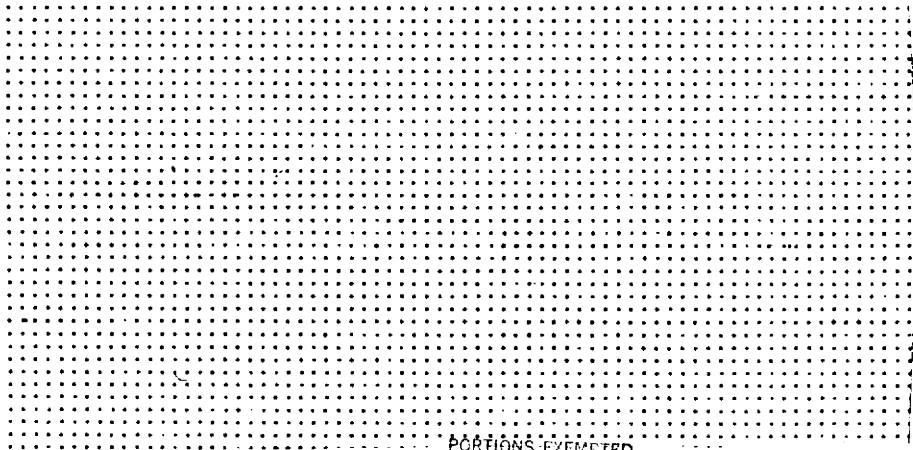
MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Discussion at the 199th Meeting
of the National Security Council,
Thursday, May 27, 1954

Present at the 199th meeting of the Council were the President of the United States, presiding; the Vice President of the United States; the Secretary of State; the Acting Secretary of Defense; the Director, Foreign Operations Administration; and the Director, Office of Defense Mobilization. Also present were the Secretary of the Treasury; the Attorney General (for Items 1 through 6); the Director, Bureau of the Budget; the Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission (for Items 5 and 8); Assistants Attorney General Barnes and Rankin; Mr. Herbert Hoover, Jr., Department of State (for Item 2); the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; the Director of Central Intelligence; Mr. Robert Cutler, Special Assistant to the President; the Deputy Assistant to the President; Mr. Robert Amory, Jr., Central Intelligence Agency; the White House Staff Secretary; Mr. Bryce Harlow, Administrative Assistant to the President; the Executive Secretary, NSC; and the Deputy Executive Secretary, NSC.

There follows a summary of the discussion at the meeting and the chief points taken.

1. SAUDI ARABIAN-BRITISH TERRITORIAL DISPUTE OVER BURAIMI OASIS



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E.O. 12356, SEC. 1.3 (a)(1)(4)(5)

NSC letter 9/29/84

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FOLDER 199th Meeting of NSC
May 27, 1954

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8. PROPOSAL FOR AN INTERNATIONAL MORATORIUM ON FUTURE TESTS OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

(Memos for NSC from Executive Secretary, same subject, dated May 17, 25 and 26, 1954; NSC Action No. 1106-h; NSC 112)

Mr. Cutler reminded the Council that the Secretary of State, as chairman of a committee, would report on the question of United States agreement to a moratorium on further tests of nuclear weapons. He pointed out that the Council had before it three reports on the subject; one from the Department of Defense opposing U. S. agreement to the moratorium, one from CIA, and one from the Federal Civil Defense Administration. No written report had come from the Department of State, but Secretary Dulles had some remarks to make on the subject.

Secretary Dulles said that he and his committee had been studying this problem intensively over the last two weeks. He had talked as recently as yesterday with Admiral Strauss, and as a result of these conversations, three or four significant questions had been posed. The subject needed further study before the committee could present its recommendations to the National Security Council.

The second important question stemmed from the fact that we do not have very accurate methods of measuring the size of nuclear explosions in the Soviet Union. This would make it extremely difficult to police a moratorium and to assure ourselves that the Soviets were not evading their commitments. Nevertheless, the proposal for a moratorium was now before the UN, and while we have asked that the subject be deferred, we will presently have to decide whether to reject this proposal flatly or to offer some sort of counter-proposal. Secretary Dulles concluded his statement with a promise to put the varying opinions together and to present a comprehensive report at next week's Council meeting.

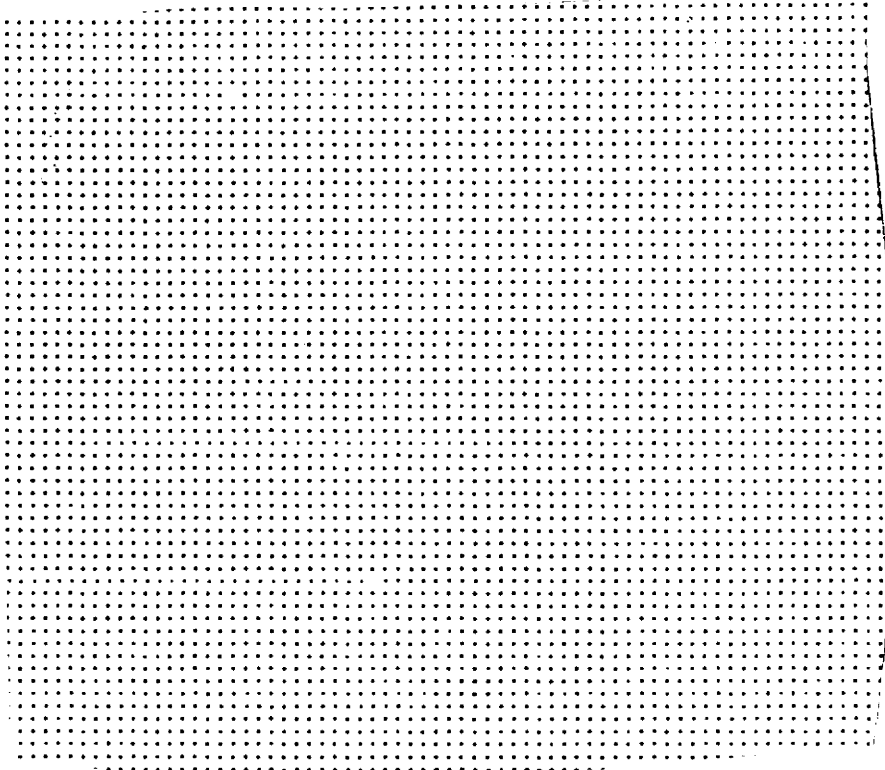
Turning to Admiral Strauss, the President inquired as to the degree of accuracy on the size of Soviet explosions which the AEC obtained after it had put together all the results of its investigations. Admiral Strauss replied that there was always a considerable difference of opinion and of debate after the Russians had tested one

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of their nuclear weapons. It sometimes took as long as a year to achieve final agreement as to the yield of the weapon.



The President reiterated the view he had expressed at previous meetings of the Council, that he could perceive no final answer to the problem of nuclear warfare if both sides simply went ahead making bigger and better nuclear weapons. While, of course, he did not want the Soviets to gain a lead on us in this field, it was nevertheless a matter of despair to look ahead to a future which contained nothing but more and more bombs. He therefore believed it wrong for the United States merely to take a negative view of this terrible problem. We must try to find some positive answer, and to do so would require more imaginative thinking than was going on at present in this Government. Soon, said the President, even little countries will have a stockpile of these bombs, and then we will be in a mess.

Admiral Strauss observed that it would be quite a long time before the little countries were in a position to manufacture nuclear weapons.

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Secretary Humphrey stated that he simply couldn't see how this country could jeopardize the one great advantage that it now possesses over the Soviet Union. To him it was unthinkable that we should take any measures to retard our progress in this field. We must keep all the edge we now have.

The President said he could understand Secretary Humphrey's view, but what was the long-run answer to this problem? Secretary Humphrey then asked the President whether he really believed that the Soviets would honor a promise to stop conducting weapons tests. The President replied that the minute we learned that the Soviets had not stopped testing these weapons, we would ourselves start our own tests again.

Admiral Radford pointed out that, unhappily, we were in the awkward position of being unable to explain to our friends and allies why we felt it necessary to go on testing these weapons.

Admiral Strauss then turned to the President and expressed the hope that he would let him show the President charts indicating the results of prior tests of nuclear weapons, before the President made a decision to accept a moratorium.

The President said that of course he had no intention of making any impulsive decision on so grave a matter, but he did insist that we were now pursuing a course which had no future for us. All we are doing now is to make more certain our capability to destroy.

The Attorney General expressed serious concern as to the effect on our own people of accepting a cessation of nuclear tests. This country had taken the development of atomic weapons more calmly than the peoples of other nations, and Americans would react adversely, he believed, to any decision to discontinue tests of nuclear weapons.

Dr. Fleming said he felt, with the President, that somehow or other we must develop something that would give hope to our people. Otherwise, we would produce an atmosphere of despair, and people would feel that there was no use in trying to defend themselves against atomic warfare. Such despair would have very bad effects on the whole mobilization program and on the program for civil defense.

Governor Stassen suggested that the answer to this problem might lie in an approach consisting of alternatives which the United States could offer to the Soviet Union. Force was obviously one of these alternatives. But if the Soviets could be induced to move toward peaceful courses of action, we had other alternatives--for example, increased trade--with which to respond. If, however, the

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Soviets got to feel that the United States was weakening in its determination to maintain the alternative of force, Governor Stassen warned that they would surely take advantage of this evidence of weakness.

The National Security Council:

- a. Discussed the subject on the basis of oral remarks of the Secretary of State and the Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission.
- b. Deferred action on the subject until the next meeting of the Council, at which time the report called for by NSC Action No. 1106-h will be presented and will be considered together with the reference memoranda.

9. MOBILIZATION PLANNING

(NSC Actions Nos. 1004-d and 1086-a; NSC 5414/1)

Mr. Cutler pointed out the three alternative concepts of mobilization planning which had been discussed in the NSC Planning Board. Since these discussions had concluded, Dr. Fleming had prepared a new paper, which he had talked over earlier this morning with Acting Secretary Anderson, Admiral Radford and Mr. Cutler. This paper had been shown to the President just prior to the meeting, and he had thought well of it. Mr. Cutler then asked Dr. Fleming to describe this paper.

Dr. Fleming read his paper to the Council, and pointed out in conclusion that he believed it met the situation. (Copy of this paper is attached.)

Secretary Anderson said that he had nothing to add to Dr. Fleming's statement except to point out that he shared Dr. Fleming's feeling that if we got into one of the situations described, we would want the power and authority to move ahead in mobilizing just as rapidly as the circumstances dictated.

The President said that of course what we wanted was to be absolutely ready with our mobilization measures. On the other hand, we did not want to do anything that would scare people in advance. Accordingly, Dr. Fleming's solution seemed to provide the most satisfactory answer.

The President said that plans must be made in advance so that the economy would not go wild at the first signs of an international crisis. Secretary Humphrey expressed his emphatic agreement, and pointed out that even such newspaper talk as was now current, regarding the possibility of U. S. intervention in the Indochina war, was producing strong demands that the United States