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STATEMENT BY COMMISSIONERS STRAUSS, LIBBY,
VON NEUMANN AND VANCE

Commissioners Lewis L. Strauss, Willard F. Libby, John von Neumann and Harold S. Vance issued the following statement in response to inquiries raised by the address in New York of Commissioner Murray, as released to the press today.

"The remarks of Mr. Murray about security and classification of information are consonant with the views of the Commission. This was demonstrated by the recent Conference in Geneva on the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy initiated by the Commission. We have progressively declassified non-military information relating to atomic energy, while intensifying security in vital defense areas.

"The recommendation which Mr. Murray makes as the major theme of his address is one which he has long advocated. A number of months ago, the Commission by formal action rejected Commissioner Murray's motion to invite foreign observers, among them Communist observers, to witness tests of nuclear weapons in the Pacific. The Commission has never changed its position on this matter. Mr. Murray's proposal, therefore, is contrary to the best judgment of the Atomic Energy Commission.

"It should be noted that Russian and other foreign observers were invited to the tests at Bikini in 1946 where they witnessed atomic explosions of previously unimaginable destructive force. This demonstration, however, did not persuade the Soviet government of the need to join with us and other nations in an effective system for the international control of atomic energy in all its forms. On the contrary,

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it appears to have spurred them in their nuclear weapons program, a fact which is underlined by the recent series of test explosions in Soviet territory.

"Commission tests in the Pacific have never been designed as a 'show of force' but are solely for the development of weapons necessary for defense of the free world.

"With reference to Commissioner Murray's discussion of radioactive fall-out resulting from atomic weapons, the Commission calls attention to the fact that it has long provided the principal support of the most thorough study of this subject in Commission and University laboratories. Furthermore, an international study of radiation effects has been sponsored by our Government in the General Assembly of the United Nations. Until much further progress has been made on such studies, it is impossible to be definite about the genetic effects.

"Mr. Murray's reference to the exposure of the Japanese fishermen to fall-out from the Castle tests might be subject to misinterpretation as indicating that their injuries were the result of negligence on the part of the Commission and those in charge of the tests. The facts are that a warning area had been established around the test islands as early as 1947 and information to this effect had been published world-wide in navigational and marine notices. The area was searched by radar and visually by Navy planes prior to the tests."