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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON

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From NMB-S

Dear Mr. McCone:

As a corollary action to the reorganization of the Department of Defense, it is expected that new terms of reference now under consideration will extend the current functions of the Armed Forces Special Weapons Project to provide for a greater consolidation of the activities of the Department of Defense in the field of atomic weapons. In consideration of the present test moratorium, and the uncertainties as to the special conditions which may dictate the nature, scope and locations of future tests if testing should be resumed, the advisability of maintaining Joint Task Force Seven on a permanent basis becomes questionable. It seems probable that significant economies might accrue through transfer of the Task Force to the Armed Forces Special Weapons Project under the new terms of reference. On the other hand, the possibility that future tests might have to be conducted on very short notice argues for the maintenance of a Joint Task Force on an active status.

In recognition of the mutual concern in matters which may affect U.S. test capabilities, I would propose that the Atomic Energy Commission join with the Department of Defense in studying the various ways by which military responsibilities for participation in atomic tests can be properly and effectively related to AEC responsibilities in such tests, the proper organization to conduct future tests, and the adequacy of existing Atomic Energy Commission - Department of Defense agreements that pertain to testing. I believe the Chief, Armed Forces Special Weapons Project, the Commander, Joint Task Force Seven, and your designated representative would constitute an appropriate study group.

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I would appreciate your views on this matter and, subject to your concurrence, the designation of your representative to the study group.

Sincerely yours,

Donald A. Quarles
DEPUTY

Honorable John A. McCone
Chairman,
U. S. Atomic Energy Commission

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