

James C. Hagerty, Press Secretary to the President

O.F.!

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THE WHITE HOUSE

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

To my knowledge, there has been no suppression of information on fallout. One particular Department of Defense report, dealing with this subject, a summary of which was furnished to the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy on February 19, was originally classified because it dealt with certain operational techniques affecting the national security. At the Committee's request, those portions of the summary report containing the tentative conclusions derived from this operation to date, were declassified.

It was pointed out to the Committee that the data were subject to different interpretations by different technical experts. Therefore the Department of Defense had indicated that in view of the preliminary nature of the information, in its judgment it should not be publicly released until it has been more thoroughly evaluated. The recent release of the differing interpretation of these data by the Department of Defense and the Atomic Energy Commission does not represent fundamental disagreements but rather emphasizes the preliminary nature of these findings.

Every effort is being made by this Government to develop the facts about fallout and to disclose these facts fully to the public. The Atomic Energy Commission is spending about \$18,000,000 a year on research on problems associated with radiation standards and protection. In addition, there are other substantial expenditures for sampling and analysis for national and world-wide fallout studies. As Chairman McCone pointed out in his testimony yesterday, in Fiscal Year '60 the figures for radiation standards and protection will be increased to \$20,000,000.

The National Academy of Sciences has asked its committees on the biological effects of radiation hazards to consider and appraise the present state of scientific knowledge in this field, the degree of potential hazard from such radiation, and to recommend further research that should be undertaken. This means that the excellent comprehensive study made under the auspices of the Academy nearly three years ago will now be brought up to date by competent scientists.

Everyone in Government who has a responsibility with respect to this matter feels it of the greatest importance that we be diligent in our study of this problem.

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