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411330

July 21, 1949

Mr. William E. Webster
Chairman
Military Liaison Committee
Atomic Energy Commission
Room 3E-740 Pentagon Building
Washington 25, D. C.

CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED
DATE *6-15-73*
For The U. S. Atomic Energy Commission
R. B. Jackson
Division of Classification

Dear Mr. Webster:

This refers to your letters of July 15 and July 20 in which you state that the MLC has "no formal objection to the publication of the report on the basis of security". Your July 20 letter sets forth, however, specific reservations regarding the report which your July 15 letter referred to in general terms. We should now like to comment on these reservations.

Throughout the period of eight weeks in which the several drafts of the Sixth Report have been in process of review, the comments of MLC staff members and others in AEC have been acted upon, either by deletions or editorial changes which effectively removed the basis of objection. We recognize, of course, that the material recently added to the report has complicated the review procedure to some extent, with the result that the representatives of MLC reviewing the material may not have been fully and currently advised as to deletions or editorial changes. The galley references noted herein are to the galley proofs supplied to MLC on July 20. We are attaching herewith a complete set of these galleys, with all latest changes.

It is noted that the ten specific reservations listed in your July 20 letter are the same as those given us late on July 19 in the form of a memorandum from General Nichols to the Military Liaison Committee, which points could not be reconciled at staff levels. The Commission's comments on these ten items follow.

No. 1 - The number of technical workers in the two laboratories referred to in earlier drafts has been previously deleted by Commission staff. (Galley No. 4)

No. 2 - References to agreement with South Africa and to thorium recovery from gold dredging operations had been previously removed by Commission staff, (Galley No. 4). The reference to the tripling of ore production in the Colorado area has also been deleted.

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Rm. 344

*This
July 21, 1950, MLC
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Mr. William Webster

No. 3 - References to deterioration in reactors, which was covered in the Commission's Fifth Report, were replaced by the statement that the management at Hanford had succeeded in extending the useful life of the reactors. (Galley 44, 5)

The reference to plutonium production has been changed in accordance with the views of the Director of Production and of General Nichols, and now relates to efficiency of product on a unit quantity. We do not concur, however, in your objection to the statement that production of fissionable materials is at an all time high.

No. 4 - The change suggested in the description of the reactor program has been made on the basis of other considerations than those set forth in your letter.

No. 5 - In the section on accountability systems, your reference to "possible points of weakness" is not clear, but it apparently indicates the paragraph on Galley No. 47 under the subhead, "Testing during continuous operation." This paragraph, which also contains the reference to Y-25, to which you objected, has been substantially revised to remove the reference to any specific plant or any specific type of material. In this section of the report, certain other deletions have been made of references which you may have had in mind. (Galley Nos. 47 and 48)

No. 6 - The reference to "health effects as distinguished from the effects on individuals," is not clear, but all of the examples cited have been deleted (Galley 23). These relate to the size of the crater at Alamogordo, two references to the tolerance time in the surrounding area, and the statement that "biological studies have begun to outweigh in importance those concerned only with explosive force." This statement was not a "finding," but related only to recurrences of biological effects several years after the tests.

No. 7 - On the matter of plutonium toxicity, at least four research papers on plutonium poisoning and its treatment have been declassified. The information developed in this research is considered of vital importance to medical science and was found to be declassifiable under the Guide. Its possible value to potential enemy could not be considered as justification for the withholding either from the medical profession or the general public of information of such great significance to the morale of the families and associates of atomic energy workers on a subject of possible national concern in certain eventualities.

No. 8 - The question of beryllium poisoning is of great concern in certain industries and the need for even more information is urgent. Under these conditions this information should not be withheld because of its possible value to potential enemy. As indicated in the text of the report, American workers not in atomic or related activities have suffered from beryllium poisoning and the dissemination of information as to its treatment is very important.

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Mr. William L. Webster

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No. 9 - As your letter states, "detailed" discussion of radioactive wastes are "primarily" of interest to atomic energy workers, but the general public and particularly people living near AEC installations, are quite properly interested in and perhaps concerned about the measures taken by the Commission to assure safe handling of waste materials and to prevent their release in any quantities which might be even remotely harmful. The Commission feels that the importance of information as to the tendency of certain living organisms to concentrate radioactivity makes it necessary to include the references to this matter.

The plutonium references in your item 9 have been deleted from the report, as has the reference to the proposed special report on radioactive wastes. (See Gallies 22 and 23)

No. 10 - In view of the importance to the public of information as to progress toward more effective control of radioactive hazards, the Commission believes that the references to improved methods of waste handling should remain in the report.

In addition to these ten items, we have been advised through Commander Rogers of the MLC staff that General Nichols objects to the publication in the Sixth Report of the material on Hiroshima and Nagasaki which was presented before the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy in public hearings by Dr. Shields Warren, Director of the Division of Biology and Medicine, AEC. We are advised that the objection is not based on the content of the statement by Dr. Warren, but upon the premise that such material should not be included in the report because of the status of the proposed Weapons Effects Handbook.

We do not feel that any unclassified and publishable information in this field should wait upon publication of the handbook. It is noted that the material assembled by Dr. Warren is largely a digest of information previously published in USBS Reports, in AED Reports of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, in the booklet, "What You Should Know About the Atomic Bomb," published last year by the Surgeon General of the Army, and in medical and scientific journals. In view of the need for such information, as expressed, among other places, in the Hopley Report, we do not believe the suggested deletion relayed by Commander Rogers should be made.

We understand that the MLC has no security objection to the issuance of the Sixth Report to Congress and have accordingly made arrangements for the printing of the report.

Sincerely yours,

UNITED STATES ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION

David S. Lilienthal
Chairman~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

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Handwritten initials or signature

July 21, 1949

Dear Mr. Webster:

Your letter of July 19 containing the specific security objections of NSC on the drafts of the Commission's Sixth Biannual Report is of great assistance since it enabled us to make an immediate check of the points in question and to take appropriate action.

We note your statement that the deletions or changes suggested in your letter would, if accepted by the Commission, "eliminate specific objections to publication of this report on the basis of security." We interpret this as meaning that NSC has no further security comment on the Sixth Report, except for the reservation mentioned in your memorandum of July 19.

Throughout the period of eight weeks in which the several drafts of the Sixth Report have been in process of review, the comments of NSC staff members and others in NSC have been acted upon, either by deletions or editorial changes which effectively remove the basis of objection. We recognize, of course, that the material recently added to the report has complicated the review procedure to some extent, with the result that the representatives of NSC reviewing the material may not have been fully and currently advised as to deletions or editorial changes. The galley references noted herein refer to the galley proofs supplied to NSC on July 19. We are mailing you a complete set of these galleys, with all latest changes, today.

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It is noted that the ten specific comments listed in your letter are the same as those given us into on July 19th in the form of a memorandum from General Nichols to the Military Liaison Committee, which points could not be reconciled at staff levels. The Commission's comments on these ten items follow.

No. 1 - The number of technical workers in the two laboratories referred to in earlier drafts had been previously deleted by Commission staff. (See galley No. 4)

No. 2 - References to agreement with South Africa and to thorium recovery from gold dredging operations had been previously removed by Commission staff. (See galley 4) The statement that ore production in the Colorado area had been tripled in the past 18 months (Galley 5) was given in testimony in public hearings before the Joint Congressional Committee. Since the statement contains no quantitative indication but as a ratio is an important item in appraising the effectiveness of a necessarily publicized program, the Commission feels this reference should not be deleted. No quantitative data on procurement of ore has been published by the Commission.

No. 3 - References to deterioration in reactors, which was covered in the Commission's Fifth Report, were replaced by the statement that the management at Hanford had succeeded in extending the useful life of the reactors. In this connection, the Commission believes it quite important that the American people understand that these costly machines do not have

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an indefinite life and that their permanency as high-output production facilities is not by any means established.

The reference to plutonium production has been changed in accordance with the views of the Director of Production and of General Nichols, and now ~~it~~ relates to efficiency of production and not quantity. The Commission cannot accept the suggestion to delete the statement that production of fissionable materials is at an all time high.

No. 4 - The Commission does not agree that the outline of the reactor program, listing the four reactors currently planned, gives a competing nation information as to the priority on the many tasks in reactor development. Without regard to the previous necessary publication of information as to the main types of reactors to be built, the Commission feels security of the more basic and valuable information is served by publication of sufficient information to permit intelligent public discussion. It would be completely impractical and probably prejudicial to security to attempt to carry out such a program without making available to the public general data as to the nature of the reactor development effort or without delineating the areas of publishable information.

No. 5 - In the section on accountability systems, your reference to "possible points of weakness" is not clear, but it apparently indicates the paragraph under the subhead, "Testing during continuous operation." This paragraph, which also contains the reference to A-25, to which you objected, has been substantially revised to remove the reference to any

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specific plant or any specific type of material. In this section of the report, certain other calculations have been made which may be covered by your reference. (see galley Nos. 47 and 48)

No. 6 - The reference to "bomb effects as distinguished from the effects on individuals," is not clear, but the examples cited have all been deleted (Galley 21). These relate to the size of the crater at Alamogordo, two references to the tolerance time in the surrounding area, and the statement that "biological studies have begun to outweigh in importance those concerned only with explosive forces." This statement was not a "finding," but related only to resurveys of biological effects several years after the tests.

No. 7 - On the matter of plutonium toxicity, at least four research papers on plutonium poisoning and its treatment have been declassified. The information developed in this research is considered of vital importance to medical science and was found to be declassifiable under the Guide. This information is not restricted data as defined in the Atomic Energy Act and its possible use to a potential enemy could not be considered as justification for the withholding either from the medical profession or the general public of information of such great significance in the morale of families and associates of atomic energy workers on a subject of possible national concern in certain eventualities.

No. 8 - The question of beryllium poisoning is of great concern

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in certain industries and the need for even more information is urgent. Under these conditions this information cannot be withheld because of its possible value to a potential enemy. As indicated in the text of the report, American workers not in atomic energy activities have suffered from beryllium poisoning and the information as to its treatment is not considered restricted data, nor should it be withheld on grounds of military security.

No. 9 - As your letter states, "detailed" discussion of radioactive wastes are "primarily" of interest to atomic energy workers, but the general public and particularly people living near AEC installations, are quite properly interested in the measures taken by the Commission to assure safe handling of waste materials and ^{to} ~~to~~ prevent their release in any quantities which might be even remotely harmful. It is important that the public be informed as to the tendency of certain living organisms to concentrate radioactivity, therefore, since no mention is made of security, nor of possible aid to a potential enemy, your recommendation for deletion of this information cannot be accepted.

The plutonium references in your item 9 have been deleted from the report, as has the reference to the proposed special report on radioactive wastes. (See Callays 22 & 23)

No. 10 - In the absence of any reference to security or possible aid to an enemy, and in view of the importance of this type of information

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to the public, the Commission cannot accept your recommendation to delete information on improved methods of waste handling. This is specifically a field in which wider knowledge may lead directly to increased knowledge, especially in view of the number of institutions which may have radioactive wastes resulting from the use of isotopes.

In addition to these tax items, we have been advised through Commander Rogers of the NLC staff that the Committee objects to the publication in the Sixth Report of the material on Hiroshima and Nagasaki which was presented before the Joint Committee in public hearings by Dr. Shields Warren, Director of the Division of Biology and Medicine, AEC. We are advised that the objection is not based on the content of the statement by Dr. Warren, but upon the premise that such material should not be included in the Report because of the status of the proposed Weapons Effects Handbook.

We do not feel that any unclassified and publishable information in this field should be withheld because of the handbook. It is noted that the material assembled by Dr. Warren is largely a digest of information previously published in USSSS reports, in NED reports, of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and in the booklet, "What You Should Know About the Atomic Bomb," published last year by the Surgeon General of the Army. In view of the need for such information, as expressed, among other places, in the Hopley Report, we want to advise you that the suggested deletion relayed by Commander Rogers cannot be accepted. *Info should be included*

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- 7 -

It does not appear from the second paragraph of your letter that NRC would withdraw its "reservations" on the proposed Report on the basis of any comment or guidance thus far received by the Commission from NRC. This, of course, makes it impossible for us to proceed on any basis which might bring about full concurrence of NRC. If, upon review of our action on the ten items in your letter, NRC is able to state that it has no security objection to the Report, we would appreciate hearing from you as soon as possible.

If, on the other hand, you still desire to register some reservations on the part of the NRC, it is suggested that the Secretary of Defense be informed in order that a decision may be reached on this matter without delay.

Sincerely yours,

UNITED STATES ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION

David A. Lilienthal
Chairman

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JUL 20 1949

Wilson
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Honorable David E. Lilienthal
Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission

Dear Mr. Lilienthal:

Reference is made to our memorandum of 15 July to the Atomic Energy Commission, "Subject: Sixth Semiannual Report of the Atomic Energy Commission." In this memorandum it was stated that "Although the Committee has reservations as indicated below, it will interpose no formal objection to the publication of the report on the basis of security, as authorized in Sec. 2(c) of the Atomic Energy Act of 1946."

In accordance with subsequent conversations suggesting that we indicate in greater detail the nature of the reservations, particularly insofar as they pertain to the Sixth Semiannual Report, we have studied the report further and list below suggested deletions or changes in the report which, if accepted by the Atomic Energy Commission, would eliminate specific objections to publication of this report on the basis of security. Although many of these changes and suggested deletions do not as individual items represent violations of security, it is felt that the combination of this information with other information within the report and that previously published would fall in the category of reservations indicated in paragraph 2 of our memorandum of 15 July 1949.

Specific comments are as follows:

1. "Military Application," Page 1. Number of technical workers at both laboratories contrasted with beginning of 1947 indicates comparative size of effort and if repeatedly given would assist in keeping a potential enemy informed of the status of our over-all effort in the atomic weapon field.
2. "Raw Materials," Pages 3 and 4. Information pertaining to status of agreement with South Africa, potential thorium production in connection with gold dredging operations, and tripling of ore production in Colorado region combined with previous information on ore keeps a potential enemy informed of our current status in procurement of ore.
3. "Production of Plutonium," Pages 6, 7, 8. Reference is made on Page 6 and again on Page 8 that production of plutonium is at

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an all-time high. On Page 7 the statement is made that fissionable material is being produced in greater quantities than ever before. On Page 8 the Atomic Energy Commission's repeated reference in other reports to deteriorated plants is more specifically pinned down here to trouble in the reactors. (Moreover, should we now inform the public and a potential enemy that we are having a recurrence of the same trouble in reactors?) Repeated reports giving comparative status of production can keep a potential enemy informed of our over-all effort in the production line. Other piecemeal information on quantitative production figures can thereby be better integrated for the purpose of estimating our over-all production and stockpile of weapons to any given time.

4. "Reactor Development," Page 13. Second paragraph outlining the four reactors comprising the core of our program gives an excellent lead to any competing nation on what we consider the priority of the many tasks in the field of reactor development. As a bare minimum, the reference to fast neutrons and intermediate neutrons should be deleted.

5. "Accounting for Materials," Pages 3, 4. Reference is made to possible points of weakness in the system, thereby encouraging efforts to penetrate our protective system at a point of weakness. In particular, the reference to the difficulty of accountability in the K-25 plant is considered undesirable.

6. "Radiation at Bikini and Alamogordo," Page 36. Specific reference to bomb effects as distinguished from the effects on individuals is considered undesirable. For example, on Page 36 reference is made to size of dangerous area and tolerance time at Alamogordo. On Page 36, "Bikini," reference is made to "biological studies have begun to outweigh in importance those concerned only with explosive force." If this is correct it may be an important finding from a military point of view and there is no need to inform a potential enemy. On Page 36b reference is again made to permissible time of visit at Alamogordo.

7. "Plutonium Toxicity," last half of Page 44 and top of Page 45. Considerable detail is given concerning why plutonium is dangerous. The only individuals handling plutonium are cleared and working for the Atomic Energy Commission. Such information is not of particular use to the general public and would be of considerable use to a potential enemy trying to solve the difficulties of how to handle plutonium safely. The subject of plutonium toxicity could very well end after the second paragraph on Page 44.

8. "Beryllium Poisoning," Page 45a. To a lesser degree the same comments as above apply to beryllium poisoning, except it is recognized that there is a greater commercial interest in beryllium poisoning.

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9. "Radioactive Wastes," Pages 47, 48, 49. Detailed discussions pertaining to radioactive waste are primarily of interest to Atomic Energy Commission contractors and employees who can be given all the necessary information in a classified form. In particular, no reference should be made to a more complete report on this subject prior to a more thorough discussion with the Military Liaison Committee concerning the advisability of covering this subject in greater detail. Reference on Page 48 to concentration of radioactivity by animals, plants, fish, or algae, and reference on Page 49 to plutonium are considered in the category of information that should be deleted.

10. "Improved Waste Handling," Pages 51, 52. In view of the fact that Commission contractors are the only ones primarily interested in how to dispose of radioactive wastes and this information could be given in a classified form, it is considered that possible improved methods of handling these wastes, as treated under "Biological Treatment of Wastes," on Pages 51 and 52, should be deleted.

Very truly yours,

Wm. Webster
Chairman

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