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E.O. 12085, Section 9-108
by NND NARS, Date 7/27/77

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9-24-8

MEMORANDUM FOR The Chairman, Military Liaison Committee

SUBJECT: LOCATION OF PROVING GROUND FOR ATOMIC WEAPONS

Reference is made to your memorandum, subject as above, file MLC 11.2478 of July 30, 1948 in which you request that the comment and recommendation of the Atomic Energy Commission on the above subject be forwarded to the Military Liaison Committee for transmittal to the Joint Chiefs of Staff in compliance with the latter's request.

The Atomic Energy Commission agrees that a continental site may have certain advantages over the Nevada site for certain types of tests of atomic weapons. The ease of access to a continental site would allow greater flexibility in the preparation for and conduct of these tests and would facilitate the participation of scientific and technical people.

The Commission further agrees that continental operations may be less expensive logistically than operations at Nevada; however, the extent of economy effected may be offset to a large degree by the cost of increased safety and security measures which would be required at a continental site.

Under conditions today, continental operations will obviously pose difficult domestic and possibly international relations problems; however, the magnitude of these problems could in time change, as in the event of a national emergency.

The Commission therefore considers it desirable that a preliminary study of possible sites be conducted to make possible a more accurate evaluation of the factors discussed above. At the conclusion of such a study, we shall be in a position to decide whether further action is desirable or justified.

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DATE 6-14-73
For The U. S. Atomic Energy Commission
R. L. Jackson
Division of Classification

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12065, 12958
NND 97806
By ST/... Date 4/20/99

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 By WSD NARS, Date 4/19/77

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- 2 -

It is understood that much of the basic information, experience and facilities required to conduct such a study are available within the Armed Forces. The Commission therefore recommends that the National Military Establishment conduct a preliminary study. Such information and assistance as is desired from the Atomic Energy Commission will be provided by the Director of Military Application.

In light of the very tentative nature of any work at this time looking toward continental test operations and considering the dangers inherent in a misunderstanding of the status of this proposal, it is the Commission's opinion that this study should be carefully safeguarded by maintenance of the classification "Secret," by restricting to a minimum the number of individuals apprised of this project and by conducting a minimum of field activities likely to arouse curiosity.

UNITED STATES ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION

David M. Lillenthal
 Chairman

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