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NOTE TO GENERAL STARBIRD

25 February 1960

404265

THRU Colonel Hood
Captain Houston

FROM CDR P. F. Bankhardt, USN
Test Branch

SAB2000642 7A001

SUBJECT: SAC PLANS TO IMPACT ICBM'S AT ENIWETOK (U)

HQDP10048104

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY DECLASSIFICATION REVIEW
1ST REVIEWER DATE: 6/10/94
DETERMINATION [CIRCLE NUMBER(S)]
5. CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED
6. CLASSIFIED INFO BRACKETED
AUTHORITY: ADD
NAME: [redacted]

On Wednesday, February 24th, I visited the Air Force Strategic Missiles Office in the Pentagon and talked to Major McDonald about SAC plans to use Eniwetok Atoll as a target for Atlas missiles.

Major McDonald indicated that their plans are still formative but STL is studying the problem of safety to personnel at Eniwetok and has found that moving the target point from Mack Tower westward to a point located at 11°34'30" north and 162°11'30" east would result in a kill probability of only $3/10^7$. In order to benefit by deeper water, the target point might be moved another 1-1/2 nautical miles westward.

A plot of Atlas impacts to date showed that a great majority were within the one mile circle while the greatest error in deflection was within 2 miles. The grestest error in range was less than 10 miles; however, missiles would approach Eniwetok Atoll from 75°True so deflection errors would have to be over 15 nautical miles to approach FRED island. Major McDonald felt that such a small risk would certainly be acceptable and use of Bikini Atoll need no longer be considered. I cautioned him that acceptance where civilians are employed would be more difficult than were only military personnel present and that a new type of risk is harder to sell than one we face daily and learn to accept -- therefore, it would be best not to finalize plans on the assumption that AEC would accept these plans. I reminded him that we had agreed to let PMR use Eniwetok only for a communications station and a monitoring station for hydrophones leading to an impact area hundreds of miles away.

STL is to brief the Air Staff on their evaluation of plans to fire 5 missiles into this area - 3 to be air bursts and 2 surface impacts. When these plans are accepted in the Pentagon, the approval of the AEC would be requested. I asked that they keep us informed as plans developed to prevent a last minute disruption of plans as might occur should our first knowledge of SAC's chosen program reach us through a formal letter to the AEC via the MLC proposing a program which we could not accept.

O/K
Fwd. Please do
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DECLASSIFICATION REVIEW

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