

STATEMENT OF CAPTAIN JAMES S. RUSSELL, USN, TEST DIRECTOR, JOINT TASK FORCE SEVEN, AT PRESS CONFERENCE, HEADQUARTERS, USARPAC, FORT SHAFTER, T.H., MAY 18, 1948.

On behalf of the United States Atomic Energy Commission, I wish to acknowledge the outstanding contribution to progress in the development of atomic weapons which General Hull has made as Commander Joint Task Force Seven.

Joint Task Force Seven was formed because the scope of operations at the Commission's Proving Ground at Eniwetok required the assistance and services of all Departments of the National Military Establishment. Joint Task Force Seven provided the command structure, the military and internal security, the means for an overseas movement to a base 4500 miles from the mainland, the construction force, and the operating force for the Eniwetok Proving Ground. Not only was it a completely unified operation of the Army, Navy, and Air Force including the Armed Forces Special Weapons Project, but it was a combined operation of military personnel and civilian scientists and technicians of the Atomic Energy Commission and its contractors.

The support given to the AEC Proving Ground Group which conducted the tests was complete, and without the assistance of military personnel in the technical phases of the operations, the test program could not have been carried out.

The successful completion of this test program is a triumph for the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory, where weapon development work for the Commission is carried on. It is also a triumph for Dr. Darol K. Froman and the remarkable scientific and technical staff which he assembled for these tests. Again on behalf of the Atomic Energy Commission, I wish to congratulate Doctor Froman and his staff.

As Test Director for the Commission, I want to pay tribute to the work of Dr. Alvin C. Graves as Deputy Scientific Director under Doctor Froman and to Colonel Paul T. Ferruss, USAF, as Deputy Test Director.

In order to understand the importance of the operations of Joint Task Force Seven it is necessary only to consider the reasons why these tests were held. During the period of wartime development of atomic energy, the one goal relentlessly pursued was the creation of an atomic bomb which would work - - and work in time to be effective in World War II. It had only to work; it needed not to be too efficient, and the related problems of engineering and production were dealt with in the urgency of wartime conditions.

The bomb did work. It worked initially at Alamogordo, N.M., where the first test took place on July 16, 1945. It worked again at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, then the following year at Bikini.

But all of these weapons, as far as their state of development is concerned, were about on a par. They were the wartime weapon - designed under extreme pressure and without regard for many problems which in the long run are of great importance in the military application of atomic energy.

In its January Report to Congress, the Atomic Energy Commission said its goal in the field of weapon development was the scientific and engineering perfection of improved designs, and that thorough testing of weapons and components is necessary to improved design.

In any program of developing and producing weapons, the need for proof testing, or for conducting full scale experiments, is natural and obvious. Failure to test new developments would soon throttle the design of improved weapons. America's preeminence in the field of atomic weapons is not a static thing, it depends upon achievement - - day to day, year to year, and test to test achievement.

(Note to correspondents: If Captain Russell is to be quoted, please use remarks as contained in this statement.)