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Office Memorandum

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TO : K. D. Nichols
General Manager

FROM : Colonel Vincent G. Huston, USAF
Acting Director of Military Application

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SUBJECT: CHRONOLOGY OF ESTABLISHMENT OF DANGER AREA AROUND
PACIFIC PROVING GROUNDS

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The first Commission action on record in DMA files to establish a closed area around the Pacific Proving Grounds took place on December 2, 1947 when the State Department notified the United Nations that Eniwetok Atoll and its territorial waters were closed pursuant to the provisions of the trusteeship agreement (Enclosure 1). On December 23, 1947, in a memorandum from Carroll Wilson to the Chief of Naval Operations, the AEC requested that a danger zone be established around Eniwetok Atoll bounded by the parallels 10°15' - 12°45' north latitude and the meridians 160°35' - 163°55' east longitude (Enclosure 2). A similar memorandum was written to the Air Coordinating Committee on December 23, 1947 requesting that a similar danger zone for aircraft be established (Enclosure 3). There is no record indicating on what basis the extent of the danger area was determined.

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On December 17, 1948, Carroll Wilson approved the idea of continuing indefinitely the danger area established in 1947 (Enclosure 4). The State Department was notified on December 15, 1948 of the AEC intention to continue for an indefinite period the closed area and danger area previously established (Enclosure 5). The State Department raised no objection. On December 15, 1948, by memorandum, the AEC requested the CNO (Enclosure 6) and the Air Coordinating Committee (Enclosure 7) to post the necessary notices to mariners and warnings to airmen to the effect that the closed area and danger area would remain in effect for an indefinite period.

The danger area which was established in 1947 and which was perpetuated in 1948 for an indefinite period as outlined above was the danger area which was in effect during the last full-scale overseas atomic test operation (IVY, November 1952) which preceded the present test series.

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In preparation for operation CASTLE, numerous discussions were held with the Department of the Navy (Op-36) and the Task Force in an effort to determine the extent of the new danger area which would include Bikini. In the course of the discussions it was decided to request CINCPAC, which has security responsibility for the area, to recommend the limits of the danger area. There is no record of the discussions leading to the decision to request CINCPAC for recommendations for the boundaries of the danger area. On December 29, 1952, a telephone call was received from Op-36 which indicated that CINCPAC had recommended as new boundaries for the enlarged danger area $160^{\circ}35'$ - $166^{\circ}28'$ and $10^{\circ}15'$ - $12^{\circ}45'$. (See Memo for Record of the conversation, Enclosure 8).

On January 5, 1953, the Chief of Naval Operations forwarded formally to the Division of Military Application CINCPAC's recommendations (Enclosure 9) and recommended that AEC take necessary steps with the State Department to establish a closed area around Bikini. In the same letter, DVA was requested to inform the Chief of Naval Operations as to the date the danger area should become effective. In a letter dated March 31, 1953 to the CNO (Enclosure 10), AEC informed CNO that the AEC would take the necessary steps at the appropriate time to have Bikini closed and would fix a date to establish a danger area. In the same letter, the CNO was informed that we recommended the eastern boundary of the danger area be moved westward from the line $166^{\circ}28'$ east longitude to the line $166^{\circ}16'$ east longitude.

This revision of CINCPAC's recommendations for the proposed danger area was based on information from the Department of Interior (Enclosure 11) which stated that Ailingnae Atoll was essential to the natives of Rongelap for their subsistence inasmuch as they used the area for fishing and harvesting breadfruit. There is no official record of the discussions which transpired between AEC staff and the JTF-132 staff prior to approving the extent of the danger area, but it is known that responsible staff members of JTF-132 and SFOO concurred informally in the proposed danger area which excluded Ailingnae Atoll.

A consideration in establishing the danger area was to fix the boundaries so as not to include unnecessarily any land areas that were inhabited by natives. If the danger area had included such inhabited atolls as Rongelap and Utirik it would have required that the natives of those atolls be evacuated and that a permanent home be found for them elsewhere. Since the Department of the Interior was not sympathetic to removing the natives, having

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experienced considerable difficulty with the Bikini natives who were relocated permanently on Ujelang, the danger area was not located farther eastward than $166^{\circ}16'$ which would have included Ailingnae. As noted above, it was finally decided to exclude Ailingnae from the danger area because the Rongelap natives depended upon that atoll for their subsistence.

Even if Ailingnae had been included in the danger area, it would not have prevented the recent incident in which it has been reported that a Japanese fishing boat located at $11^{\circ}53'$ north latitude, $166^{\circ}58'$ east longitude was exposed to severe radioactive contamination as a result of the [] detonation. The reported location of the Japanese fishing boat lies north east of Ailingnae and outside the original proposed danger area. Furthermore, information from CJTF-7 indicates that the radiation levels on Rongelap exceeded the levels both on Ailingnae to the west of it and Rongerik and Utirik to the east of it.

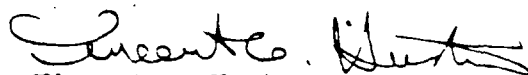
On April 9, 1953, the CNO informed the AEC that the modification of the danger area proposed for the Bikini Atoll was satisfactory to him (Enclosure 12). On April 28, 1953, the CNO was informed by the AEC (Enclosure 13) that the danger area should comprise the area bounded by the meridians $160^{\circ}35'$ - $166^{\circ}16'$ east longitude and by the parallels $10^{\circ}15'$ - $12^{\circ}45'$ north latitude. July 1, 1953 was established in that same letter as the date when the danger area should become effective. On May 22, 1953, the AEC informed the CNO of the fact that Bikini had been officially closed by UN action on April 2, 1953, and requested that the CNO take action to include in the danger area the air space as well as the surface area marked by the boundaries (Enclosure 14).

The closed area around Bikini Atoll was established by the State Department notification to the UN on April 3, 1953 (Enclosure 15). The danger area approved at the start of CASTLE was disseminated in the United States Hydrographic Office publication, "Notice to Mariners" No 21, dated May 23, 1953 and was reproduced in corresponding Japanese documents. A similar notice to airmen was issued through CNO channels.

The basic document governing operations of JTF-7 is Operations Order 1-53 dated 20 June 1953. The plan upon which this is based was approved by the JCS on 14 April 1953. CJTF-7 furnished the AEC a

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copy of Operations Order 1-53, but comment on the order was neither requested from nor offered by the AEC. Annex F, "Naval Task Group Summary of Tasks," of Operations Order 1-53 states that TG 7.3 (Navy Task Group) will "when directed before each shot, patrol the significant sector out to 600 miles to detect any surface shipping." There is no similar patrol mission assigned to TG 7.4 (Air Task Group) in the operations order. However, it is known from General Clarkson's post- reports that the danger area is continuously patrolled by air and sea. In addition, General Clarkson has reported that starting two days prior to the etonation both air and sea patrol and search actions were intensified with particular emphasis being placed upon the sector of predicted cloud travel and fall-out.



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Acting Director of
Military Application

Enclosures:

1. Cy Ltr dtd 12/2/47 Representative of U. S. to Pres. Security Council & Encls.
2. Cy Memo dtd 12/23/47 Wilson to CMO.
3. Cy Memo 12/23/47 Wilson to Air Coordinating Committee
4. Cy Memo 12/14/48 McCormick to Wilson w/approval noted.
5. Cy Memo 12/15/48 Russell to Arneson
6. Cy Memo 12/15/48 McCormick to CMO
7. Cy Memo 12/15/48 McCormick to Air Coordinating Committee
8. Cy Memo for Record 12/31/52 Greenberg to files.
9. Cy Ltr dtd 1/5/53 Wright, OpNAV to D'A w/Encl.
10. Cy Ltr 3/31/53 Boyer to Chief, Naval Operations
11. Cy Ltr Thomas to Davis dtd 2/5/53 Cy AEC-1A w/Reply 8-11-53 Cy AEC-1A
12. Cy Ltr dtd 4/9/53 Moore, OpNAV to Gen. Mgr, AEC.
13. Cy Ltr dtd 4/28/53 Fields to Chief Naval Operations
14. Cy Ltr dtd 5/22/53 Armstrong to Chief Naval Operations
15. Cy Ltr dtd 4/3/53 Representative of the U. S. to Sec-Gen.

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