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280th AEC 7. AEC 952/5 - Test Activities for CY 1958 (pp. 42-49)
tg. 5-1-57

General Starbird said the recommendation of AEC 952/5 is intended to provide the staff with Commission guidance regarding the general scope of testing to be conducted at Operation HARDTACK and also to obtain the Commission's views regarding the use of Taongi Atoll as an additional test site for Operation HARDTACK. He pointed out that the DOD does not favor the use of Taongi Atoll, a desert island two hundred eighty-five miles east of Bikini, since it would necessitate additional DOD support during the operation. The question to be resolved, General Starbird said, is whether the decreased possibility of fallout reaching the Rongelap Islands is worth the added DOD support which would be required to conduct a test at the Taongi Atoll. Mr. Murray said he believed that the Atoll should be used as one of the test sites.



He said he wished to revise this statement to provide that the test would occur only if the Special Committee of the NSC appointed by the President, consisting of Chairman Strauss, Secretary of State Dulles and Secretary of Defense Wilson, determines that the NSC should approve a requirement for this particular weapon. Mr. Murray said he would circulate for the other Commissioners' concurrence specific language to revise the statement under discussion.

General Starbird then called the Commissioners' attention to the fact that the Division of Biology and Medicine had estimated that Operation HARDTACK might produce more world-wide fallout than did Operation REDWING.



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Mr. Libby said he wished to emphasize again the importance of making a thorough study of the fallout resulting from Operation HARDTACK.

After further discussion the Commission:

a. Approved, for the purpose of guidance to the weapons laboratories and other agencies involved in the planning for Operation HARDTACK, the general scope of the test program, described in paragraph 11, of approximately 27 shots;

b. Noted that the occupancy and use of Taongi Atoll as a firing site, in addition to Eniwetok and Bikini, would reduce fallout problems and minimize the length of test operations in the Pacific;

c. Approved a request for DOD comment on the desirability of occupancy and use of Taongi Atoll, and the feasibility of DOD support of such occupancy and use by letter to the MLC such as Appendix "C" to AEC 952/5;

d. Noted that the actual test program for Operation HARDTACK will be presented to the Commission for consideration at a later date;

e. Noted that the test program outlined above and assuming the use of Taongi will require approximately \$10.0 million over the \$34.7 million budgeted for overseas tests in FY 1958, and that this increase will have to be absorbed within the \$452.3 million budgeted for the weapons program for FY 1958 in estimates submitted to Congress. If the additional cost cannot be thus absorbed, the test program will be rescoped; and

f. Noted that it is not deemed appropriate to notify the JCAE at this time.

At this point, Mr. Murray left the meeting.

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