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**EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON**

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June 14, 1955

MEMORANDUM FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

SUBJECT: Overseas Reaction to the AEC
February 15, 1955 Statement on
the Effects of High-Yield Nuclear Weapons

REFERENCE: NSC Action No. 1344-b

Enclosed herewith, for the information of the National Security Council, is a follow-up report on the subject by the Operations Coordinating Board, dated June 8, 1955, prepared pursuant to the reference action.

Attention is invited to the statement, in paragraph 9 of the above-mentioned report, that "no specific recommendations as to additional actions are being made at this time".

JAMES S. LAY, JR.
Executive Secretary

- cc: The Secretary of the Treasury
- The Attorney General
- The Director, Bureau of the Budget
- The Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission
- The Federal Civil Defense Administrator
- The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
- The Director of Central Intelligence

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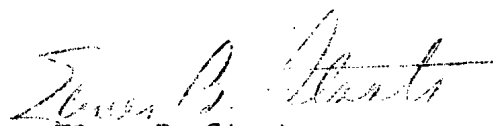
OPERATIONS COORDINATING BOARD
Washington 25, D. C.

June 10, 1955

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. James S. Lay, Jr.
Executive Secretary
National Security Council

SUBJECT: Follow-up Report on Overseas Reaction to the AEC
February 15, 1955 Statement on the Effects of
High-Yield Nuclear Weapons

The attached follow-up report by the Operations Coordinating Board, in response to NSC Action 1344-b, on overseas reaction to the Atomic Energy Commission statement of February 15, 1955 on the effects of high-yield nuclear weapons, covers the period from March 5, 1955 through June 8, 1955. The report was concurred in by the Board on June 8 for transmission to the National Security Council.


Elmer B. Staats
Executive Officer

Attachment

Subject Report dated
June 8, 1955.

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June 8, 1955

FOLLOW-UP REPORT ON OVERSEAS REACTION TO THE AEC FEBRUARY 15, 1955
STATEMENT ON THE EFFECTS OF HIGH-YIELD NUCLEAR WEAPONS.

A. BACKGROUND

1. This report has been prepared by the OCB in response to NSC Action 1344-b, approved by the President on March 5, 1955, to the effect that:

"While additional U.S. public statements specifically designed to counter unfavorable trends are not required at this time, the problem should be kept under continuous review by the Operations Coordinating Board, and a further report should be furnished the National Security Council at the end of ninety days. Special attention should be paid to the emergence of any neutralist trends which may be traceable to greater public awareness of the effects of thermonuclear explosions."

B. SUMMARY

2. There is no evidence that the AEC's February 15 statement on the effects of high-yield nuclear weapons had any significant effect in stimulating trends towards neutralism or increased reluctance of our allies to stand with us in defense preparations.

3. While it is not possible to single out the effects of the AEC statement from other related developments, it should be borne in mind that world apprehensions concerning the employment of nuclear weapons are increasing and a good part of these apprehensions stem from increasing awareness of the effects of nuclear weapons.

4. These apprehensions may result in increased pressures for relaxation of tensions and accommodation with the USSR. The authoritative estimate of this factor will be contained in forthcoming NIE 100-5-55, "Impact of Increasing Nuclear Plenty on the Policies and Relationships of the Principal Powers".

5. There was evidenced a short-lived trend to view the radiation effects of small-yield nuclear weapons such as were being exploded at the Nevada Test Site as similar to the radiation effects of the large-yield weapons described in the February 15 Report. This became discernible as the early shots and their continued postponement at the Nevada Test Site were publicly reported. There were new proposals for cessation of nuclear tests by India, Japan, the British Labor Party, and the recent Bandung Conference, as well as proposals for international study of the effects of radiation and even for international control of future tests. (See Tab "A".) In England a Labor Party motion for cessation of

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nuclear tests until an international conference of scientists had studied radiation effects was defeated in the House of Commons by forty votes. The United States was not immune from political action along this line, for on April 13th, Senator Payne, supported by 21 other Senate Members, introduced a resolution supporting a UN study of the radiation effects from nuclear explosions.

Soviet Bloc Reactions

6. In the Soviet bloc, the tendency to proclaim Communist States immune from destruction by nuclear weapons, noted in the March 2 Report to the Council, was continued. The Chinese Communist radio took special pains to belittle the destructive effects of nuclear weapons in a series of broadcasts to its home audiences, which were unprecedented for the amount of attention given to this subject.

C. CONCLUSIONS.

7. There has been no significant or widespread foreign reactions to the February 15 statement in so far as radiation effects are concerned.

8. While it is not possible to directly trace the part played by the February 15 statement in the over-all climate of opinion situation, it appears that the generalized fears with respect to nuclear weapons are increasing throughout the world.

D. RECOMMENDATIONS.

9. In view of the basic reexamination of disarmament policies now being undertaken, and the fact that the following actions with respect to information on radiation effects of nuclear weapons are now under way, no specific recommendations as to additional actions are being made at this time:

a. The Atomic Energy Commission is continuing its routine program of releasing appropriate material on radiation effects to be available for dispelling misapprehensions abroad as well as at home. This will be continued without prejudice to the definitive National Academy of Sciences study which is being carried forward with AEC cooperation.

b. A possible U.S. initiative proposing international study or exchange of information on radiation effects is being studied on an urgent basis by AEC and State.

c. Under the recently concluded NATO atomic energy information agreement, pertinent information on radiation effects will be made available to NATO.

10. It is recommended that this report be reviewed by the Council in connection with the forthcoming NIE 100-5-55.

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TAB "A"

Chronology of Events Since February 15, 1955, Affecting
Climate of Opinion Concerning Radiation

- February 15, 1955: AEC statement on effects of large-scale nuclear explosions.
- February 23, 1955: In his weekly press conference, the President indicates that the United States does not favor a moratorium on tests except as part of a comprehensive disarmament agreement (Premier Bulganin had indicated a similar position in a press interview on February 10).
- February 26, 1955: Francis Perrin, French High Commissioner for Atomic Energy, made a public statement pointing out that the effects of radiation from tests so far are minimal.
- Early March : Numerous public references to the possibility that nuclear weapons might be used in the event of hostilities in the Formosan Straits.
- March 6, 1955 : The Federation of American Scientists propose establishment of a UN Commission to study the effects of radiation from nuclear explosions.
- March 10-15, 1955: Stories in Scandinavian and U.K. newspapers concerning passage of a radioactive cloud from Nevada tests.
- March 16, 1955 : India sends a formal note to the UN Secretary General reiterating its intention to press the Indian proposal for a moratorium on nuclear tests when the UN Disarmament Commission next meets.
- March 22, 1955 : Labor Party motion for cessation of nuclear tests until an international conference of scientists has studied radiation effects is defeated in the House of Commons by 40 votes.
- March 29, 1955 : The Executive Board of UNESCO rejected a proposal for an international study by experts concerning the effects of radiation.
- April 8, 1955 : The National Academy of Sciences announces that it will undertake an independent study of effects of radiation with AEC cooperation.
- April 13, 1955 : Ambassador Lodge advised the State Department that he believes that we must expect proposals for international study on action relating to radiation effects at the next session of the UN General Assembly. He recommends that we be prepared to take the initiative in this matter.

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- April 13, 1955 : Senator Payne, supported by 21 other senators, introduces a resolution supporting a UN study of the radiation effects from nuclear explosions. (S.Con.Res.22)
- April 15, 1955 : AEC Chairman Strauss testifies concerning radiation effects before the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy.
- April 20, 1955 : Sir John Cockroft of Great Britain makes a major public statement pointing out that the level of radio-activity from tests is far below the danger point.
- April 24, 1955 : The communique at the end of the Bandung Conference appeals to the powers concerned to reach agreement suspending nuclear tests.
- April, 1955 : The U.K. metropolitan press calls for cessation of nuclear tests until qualified scientists can determine the effects of radiation.
- April, 1955 : The British Labor Party election manifesto calls for cessation of nuclear tests.
- May 4, 1955 : Swedish Foreign Minister Uden states in a speech that Sweden is considering proposing a UN study of radiation effects.
- May 10, 1955 : USSR releases a new statement of the Soviet position on disarmament--which provides for cessation of nuclear tests as an early part of a disarmament agreement.
- May 30, 1955 : Scheduled Tokyo Conference on radiation effects.

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