

UNCLASSIFIED  
Memorandum for Record 1/29/61-4/5/62

~~SECRET~~

Box 2, Folder 1

ACD 436A/1

72A

Exc. 50d

December 21, 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD:

This memorandum will expand numbered paragraph 5 of Dr. Scoville's memorandum of December 19, 1961, reporting on the State Department meeting.

(1) Mr. McCone requested permission of Rusk that he be permitted to express his views on the question of resumption of nuclear testing, indicating that in doing so he, McCone, was going beyond his responsibilities as DCI, but desired to make his views known because he had been associated with the problem longer than any man in the room, with the exception of Mr. Farley.

(2) Mr. McCone stated that he felt it was of paramount importance to the United States that we maintain our nuclear superiority; it was not advisable, in McCone's opinion, to exchange moral leadership for proper security forces and in this modern day this meant, among other things, nuclear superiority. McCone further stated that if we were to lose nuclear superiority, our loss of prestige throughout the world would be very great -- far greater, in his opinion, than the losses we have suffered because of our inferior position in space.

(3) McCone then said that it was very obvious that the Soviets had made a quantum jump in nuclear technology during the period of the three year moratorium, and that the analysis of the Soviet tests indicated a weapons sophistication equal to ours in most areas and superior to ours in some. He pointed out that the United States had made some advances during the moratorium through theoretical laboratory work, but the advances were relatively minor, and this was due to many factors not the least of which was the fact that the AEC weapon laboratories turned their attention to the peaceful applications of nuclear energy, competent scientists drifted into other work, and generally the tempo of weapon development slackened.

~~SECRET~~

148

ST DM/75

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

UNCLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED FOR PUBLICATION IN FOREIGN RELATIONS OF THE UNITED STATES

~~SECRET~~

ACD 436A/2

(4) McCone then stated that if we did pursue a moratorium policy for another two or three years, we would be awakened at some future time by a new series of Soviet tests which they would proceed with under some excuse or other, and that these tests would evidence a very great advance in weapon technology and a marked superiority of the Soviets over the United States in this critical field. McCone forecast that our laboratories would not make such advances as it was simply not in the American tradition to work hard at things unless there was a stated purpose for doing so. McCone made reference to the specific areas of advancement, 58 megaton and 25 megaton devices, the effects test, the improvement in weight yield ratio, as well as the high nuclear efficiency, all of which were indicators of the improvements made by the Soviets during the three year interregnum. McCone stated it still could not be determined whether clandestine underground testing conducted during the moratorium had assisted the Soviet laboratories in making their advances because no scientific means of detection were in existence during the three year period, or are in existence at the present time. With respect to pursuing our developments in the underground, McCone stated that while such a course was possible, recent shots had indicated greater difficulty with underground testing than had been expected, and moreover, he questioned whether we could confine ourselves to such a slow and costly program with our principal adversary free to test in the atmosphere.

(5) It is for all these reasons that McCone concluded that we must proceed with atmospheric testing, accept the political and propaganda consequences, but maintain nuclear superiority.

John A. McCone  
Director

20/8

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

UNCLASSIFIED

CONFIDENTIAL FILES  
Date for Record 4/21/61-4/5/62

ACD 436A/3  
61-9826

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

ANNEX A  
22 December 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: State Department Meeting on 18 Dec. 1961 to Discuss  
Position Paper re Nuclear Testing for Bermuda  
Meeting.

Listed below are the names of those that were present  
at the above meeting:

State Department

Secretary of State Dean Rusk  
Mr. William C. Foster, Director ACDA  
Mr. Philip J. Farley, Special Asst. for Atomic  
Energy and Outer Space, Department of State

Defense Department

Hon. Robert S. McNamara, Secretary of Defense  
Dr. Harold Brown, Director, DR&E, OSD

Atomic Energy Commission

Dr. Glenn A. Seaborg, Chairman  
Brig. Gen. Austin Betts, Director, Div. of Military  
Applications

White House

Mr. McGeorge Bundy, Special Assistant for  
National Security  
Dr. Jerome B. Wiesner, Special Asst. to the  
President for Science and Technology  
Mr. Spurgeon Keeny, Assistant to Dr. Wiesner

CIA

Mr. John A. McCone, Director  
Dr. Herbert Scoville, Jr., AD/SI

30/8

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

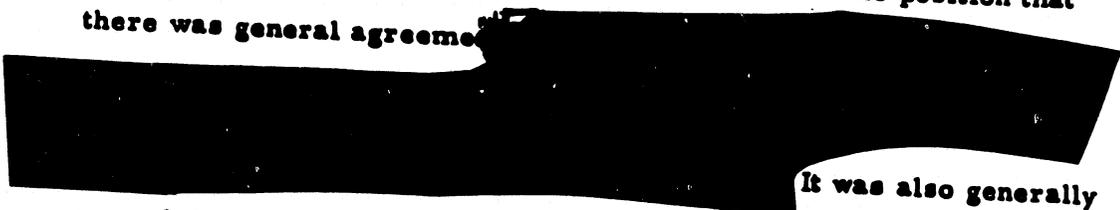
UNCLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED FOR PUBLICATION IN FOREIGN  
RELATIONS OF THE UNITED STATES

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: State Department Meeting on 18 December 1961 to Discuss  
Position Paper re Nuclear Testing for Bermuda Meeting.

1. Secretary Rusk opened the meeting by summarizing his views that the probable British position would be a reluctance towards the resumption of atmospheric nuclear tests either by the U.S. or jointly with the British. He felt it was important that, if possible, the U.S. be in a more positive position since any waivering might be exploited by the Prime Minister. He requested a review of the status of the intelligence analysis. The CIA members presented the position that there was general agreement



E

It was also generally agreed that while the analysis was still in a preliminary stage and would continue ~~to~~ for a long time, it was unlikely that such further analysis could change sufficiently to affect the decision to resume testing.

2. The proposed U.S. program was discussed and all concurred that some 20 - 25 tests could be justified. However, it was agreed that, with the exception of effects tests, no single test was of overriding security importance but it was the sum total which was critical.

408

~~SECRET~~  
YES ONLY

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

It was generally agreed that the UK was cool to the US requirements although apparently no real attempt had yet been made to persuade the British. The DCI referred to our views that Sir William Penney, a key adviser to the PM in this matter, was unconvinced by the US arguments, although Dr. Seaborg pointed out that his session with Sir William just prior to his departure indicated that he probably did support the resumption. Mr. McNamara felt that the proposed position paper, which admittedly involved quotes from an agreed joint AEC-DOD study, did not truly set forth the DOD's strong requirement for atmospheric testing. It was agreed that the DOD would prepare such a paper so that their position could be explicit without any dilution by the views of other agencies. Mr. Bundy indicated that the DOD papers which he had seen did not put the case as strongly as Mr. McNamara indicated, in that need for testing to maintain nuclear superiority was not clearly enunciated. Dr. Seaborg stated that he felt that the critical feature was not the present relative status but the rate of progress of the USSR vs. US in a situation where the US was inhibited from atmospheric testing while the Soviets could test at intervals to their liking.

3. Secretary Rusk indicated that the greatest addition to US nuclear superiority that he had seen in the last year was our intelligence

598

~~SECRET~~

ACD 436A/6

on Soviet missile site information since this type of information did enable us to use our nuclear forces with very much greater effectiveness. Dr. Wiesner indicated that the development of a Soviet ABM capability could be most critical and therefore that the proposed test series (both tests for improving yield to weight ratios and effects) were designed to improve the US position in this connection.

4. Mr. Foster quoted from a draft paper of his group looking into the public relations aspects of US test resumption. This statement made a strong case for test resumption without defending any particular event. He indicated that Mr. Stevenson and perhaps others had the view that the US might afford some reduction in nuclear superiority if, in exchange, the US could assume moral leadership of the world. Mr. Foster did not agree with this view and indicated that various Embassies had been quizzed for possible foreign reactions to the US resumption. While the replies were still incomplete, the general tenor indicated that we might lose if we did not resume testing, since many countries were worried by the apparent loss of the US nuclear superiority as a result of the Soviet tests. Mr. Foster was worried about any nuclear developments which might make a major shift in the offensive-defensive balance.

60/8

~~SECRET~~  
~~EYES ONLY~~

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

~~SECRET~~

ACD 436A/M

5. Mr. McCone stated that he felt very strongly that it was paramount for the US to maintain nuclear superiority. The Soviets had already in the past three years made a quantum jump in weapons development and that a possible future jump of a similar nature is the most critical problem. US world leadership was in question, and underground tests by themselves could never compete in a situation where the Soviets were free to test in the atmosphere when they pleased. Secretary Rusk concurred in this view and was very skeptical that one could substitute moral leadership for power. Moral leadership could only be had when one had the power position to back it up. Dr. Wiesner indicated that we must not only have the power, but we must make it look to the world that we have this power; therefore, the US tests must be made to look significant.

6. When questioned as to the firmness of the US position on testing, Mr. Bundy indicated that the President was prepared to go ahead with atmospheric testing unless something drastic happened to change this view between now and the actual time for the tests. On the other hand, he did not wish to make such a firm decision now which would inevitably become publicly known. The President was also troubled by the difficulty of being able to point to any single test as crucial to the

7/28

~~SECRET~~  
YES ONLY

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

ACD 436A/8

~~SECRET~~

national security since the more generalized requirement was more difficult to defend. Mr. Farley quoted Mr. McMillan's criteria for resuming testing which were quite rigid.

7. During the meeting there was a discussion of the need for the use of Christmas Island for the US tests. The AEC indicated that this could be useful for improving the quality of information but not at the expense of any loss of control. The AEC and DOD had prepared a staff paper which gave the minimum conditions of acceptability for the use of this site. Mr. McCone indicated that if Sir William Penney had been strongly in favor of the testing, then the program might have proceeded without any restrictions but in view of his present attitude, it is not certain that this could be guaranteed. Mr. Bundy summarized the US position that we would like to use Christmas Island if the UK would participate actively as a partner in the test series, but that we were not prepared to make any concessions to obtain this use.

8. State, DOD, and AEC were to prepare a revised position paper as soon as possible; CIA need not participate but were to obtain copies for review.

*Herbert Scoville, Jr.*  
HERBERT SCOVILLE, JR.  
Assistant Director  
Scientific Intelligence

*sgp*

Distribution:  
Original - DCI  
1 - AD/SI  
OSI/OAD/HScoville:mb (19 Dec 61) 7113  
- 5 -

~~SECRET  
EYES ONLY~~

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

UNCLASSIFIED