

Roll 3

Target 6

File 23 - Military Policy Committee, Minutes of Meetings

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POLICY MEETING 5/5/43

ACTIONS REPORTED BY GENERAL GROVES

1. A story to be allowed to leak out on the Los Alamos project to reduce the curiosity of the local population was read.
2. The resignation of Dr. Condon from the Los Alamos project; the alleged reasons for his resignation were given.
3. The special committee has investigated the feasibility of the Oppenheimer program. The basic recommendations were reported verbally. The formal committee report is now being prepared. It appears that the principal recommendations will be:
 - a. The removal of Dr. Mitchell from New Mexico and his use in procurement work in New York.
 - b. The addition to Oppenheimer's staff of an administrative officer.
 - c. The addition of an engineering section, of about 150 persons, headed by a very fine developmental engineer.
 - d. The addition of military and naval officers to work on the ordnance problems.
 - e. The desirability of practical discussion as to the practicability of doing the chemical and metallurgical development at Los Alamos.
4. The above program would entail considerable increase in the population.
5. The present estimated schedules on the various plants were reported, as follows:
 - a. Tennessee IA -- to be ready to go on July 1.
 - b. XBI -- to be reasonably sure on September 1, although we are still shooting at August 1.
 - c. The Diffusion Plant (10 to 12 stage boiler plant in series) -- to be in operation in July on the basis of about 15% operation, 85% adjustment and modifications.
 - d. The unsolved problems in the Diffusion process are still the barrier plugging and the actual separation of the actual gas.
 - e. The corrosion problem is reported as solved but only time can tell whether this is correct.
 - f. The Lawrence production, when the 500 tanks are in operation, should give a sure output of 1500 grams a month with a maximum of not over double that amount. Lawrence has reported that if he were furnished a material of 33% purity he can produce with that equipment 2½ kg a day. This indicates very strongly the advisability of tying the Diffusion Plant, with its product of 36% purity, into the Lawrence method. This would give one kg a day.
6. The Comptroller General has approved the wording of the critical paragraphs in the duPont contract by stating that he would not be required to object.

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7. The estimated production of heavy water was reported to the Committee as follows:

The Trail Plant will start producing in May
The first duPont Plant in September

a. Total production in pounds from all sources, as follows:

<u>Month</u>	<u>Lbs.</u>	<u>Month</u>	<u>Lbs.</u>
May	30	Sept.	2,185
June	110	Oct.	5,410
July	385	Nov.	11,135
August	985	Dec.	17,135

8. Information on the destruction of the heavy water plant in Norway was reported and discussed.

9. General Electric has asked special consideration from a patent viewpoint. Discussions are now under way with that company with a view to making the special treatment as limited as possible. There appears to be nothing to indicate that their work would be a controlling factor on the 25 process.

10. The estimated cost of the P-9 contracts with the duPont Company -- a total of \$44,107,000 including approximately \$13,000,000 for operation.

DECISIONS

1. The estimated total fund requirements of \$850,000,000 were reported and explained to the members of the Committee. It was agreed that no report should be made at this time by the Committee to higher authority, in view of the general indefiniteness, but that the situation should be reviewed about August when the knowledge would have clarified to such an extent so as to permit of a general review of the situation which might well mean the cutting out of some of the facilities to be constructed, particularly the upper stage of the Diffusion Plant, and that it might at the same time be practicable to reduce the safety factor in the '49' construction.

2. General Groves should ask the S-1 Committee to prepare a report on radioactive poison.


3. The advice of the Committee was asked as to suitable engineers, metallurgists and chemists for Los Alamos and it was agreed that the best fitted engineer was Commander Parsons, U. S. N. Admiral Purnell agreed to discuss the possibility of obtaining him with Admiral King. Dr. Bush agreed to submit names of other personnel who might be suitable.

4. The letters of April 26 of Mr. Littell, Assistant Attorney General, to the members of the Washington Delegation, in which he made certain disclosures about the Hanford project was discussed and General Styer requested that in view of the general situation no action be taken on the matter.

5. The point of use of the first bomb was discussed and the general view appeared to be that its best point of use would be on a Japanese fleet concentration in the Harbor of Truk. General Styer suggested Tokio but it was pointed out that the bomb should be used where, if it failed to go off, it would land in water of sufficient depth to prevent easy salvage. The Japanese were selected as they would not be so apt to secure knowledge from it as would the Germans.

PRESENT:

Dr. Bush
Dr. Conant
Admiral Purnell
Major General Styer
Brigadier General Groves


L. R. GROVES,
Brigadier General, C. E.

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RESTRICTED DATA
DOCUMENT WITHDRAWN
JOB NO. NNMM-472-16

DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION *MED, Series I, Part I, Folder 23*
DOCUMENT DATE *(April 26, 1945)*

RD as marked

DATE WITHDRAWN

1/14/72