

UNITED STATES ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION

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In the Matter Of:

CLASSIFIED TESTIMONY OF :

MERVIN J. KELLY

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BY MR. ROBB:

Q Doctor, I have before me a photostat from the report of December 29, 1950.

A I say that is undoubtedly the report.

Q Entitled, "Military Objectives in the Use of Atomic Energy". Was that your report?

A That is right. I would expect that to be the title.

Q Submitted to the Atomic Energy Committee of the Research and Development Board of the Department of Defense.

A Yes.

Q I will read all the excerpt paragraphs I have here:

"1. Victory in a general war in the near future is likely to depend on bringing to bear in all aspects of our military operations the maximum application of atomic weapons."

"3. The most urgent requirements for research and development lie in the field of fission weapons."

"12. Intensive study of thermonuclear warheads as has been established that they are more uncertain and much more difficult of development and if achievable, much more costly in nuclear materials than were thought a year ago.

"13. The determination of the feasibility of thermonuclear weapons is an important but very definitely long range undertaking (more than five years)."

This has been extracted for security reasons.

"14. Only a timely recognition of the long range

character of the thermonuclear program will tend to make available for the basic studies of the fission weapon program the resources of the Los Alamos laboratory."

Does that refresh your recollection as to your report?

A I have no doubt that is there. Those statements would have such a small impinging on my memory that I still don't remember any discussions about it. In the first place, the whole background of this, and my expertness and contribution were the things that I knew as the technical leader of Sandia. As of that time, the thermonuclear had not reached the Sandia discussion stage at all. That is a long report, and that must be a relatively small part. Any statement about the status of the thermonuclear I would have had to rely on others there that were in that. I haven't the time and don't attempt to get over into things that don't reach my cognizance. I knew the general situation and knew the discussions in the advisory committee, and so on, but I had really not put my mind to the thermonuclear problem. It did not reach Sandia until quite a bit later.

Q Dr. Kelly, upon whom would you have had to rely with respect to the thermonuclear?

A The people who would know, as nuclear physicists that were there would be Bacher, Alvarez, and Dr. Oppenheimer. I think all the rest of us would -- probably Lauritsen to a little less extent -- but all the rest of us would have been

dependent upon the judgment, and the judgments of Bacher, Alvarez, and Oppenheimer. I would certainly have respected in that area. But I don't remember that part of the deliberations at all. It is blank in my mind. If they were in the committee, I don't remember them.

C Did you know Bacher and Alvarez at that time?

A Yes, very well.

Q You have already said, if I recall, that Dr. Oppenheimer was pre-eminent in this field.

A That is right.

(Conclusion of classified section of Kelly testimony.)