

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
MILITARY LIAISON COMMITTEE
P. O. Box 1814
Washington 13, D. C.

17 July 1958

COPY NO. 18

REPROBETS
3345

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Members, Military Liaison Committee
INFORMATION ITEM: MLC Meeting 29 July 1958
SUBJECT: Effects of Atomic Radiation (U)
REFERENCE: Letter to the Chairman, Military Liaison Committee from the General Manager, Atomic Energy Commission, dated 15 July 1958, concerning the above subject, w/1 inclosure; Statement by the AEC. (Case 22714-43.1)



REMARKS:

A copy of the above reference, with its inclosure, is forwarded for your information and any action considered appropriate within your Department.

FOR THE CHAIRMAN:


JOHN B. DIMMICK
Captain, USN
Executive Secretary

1 Inclosure
Cy above ref. w/inclosure

DIST: A

WNRC:
RG: 330
ACCESSION# 14-0067
BOX# 4
FILE NAME: MLC MTG, 7/29/58, Information Items, TAB H

UNITED STATES
ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION
Washington 25, D. C.

COPY NO. 18

Jul 15 1958

Honorable Herbert B. Loper
Chairman
Military Liaison Committee
U. S. Atomic Energy Commission

Dear General Loper:

There is enclosed, for the information of the Military Liaison Committee, a copy of a statement by the Atomic Energy Commission on the Report of the U. N. Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation. The Commission proposes to issue this statement to the general news media at the same time that the Scientific Committee's report is released to the public. It is our present understanding that this will be sometime during the weeks of August 11 or 18, 1958.

Sincerely yours,

/s/Paul F. Foster
General Manager

Enclosure:
Statement by the Atomic Energy Commission

UNCLASSIFIED

COPY NO. 18

STATEMENT BY THE U. S. ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION
ON THE REPORT OF THE UN SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE
ON THE EFFECTS OF ATOMIC RADIATION

The report of the United Nations Scientific Committee is a thoroughgoing scientific study of the whole subject of the effects of atomic radiation. It generally confirms the statements in the June 1956 report of the United States National Academy of Sciences with respect to the possible hazards from radiation exposures from both man-made and natural sources of radiation. It reiterates that all unnecessary exposure to atomic radiation should be avoided.

The Committee has made estimates of the possible effects of fallout radiation in causing leukemia, bone cancer, and major genetic defects. It is important to note that in so far as leukemia and bone cancer are concerned, the Committee has pointed out there is no certainty that fallout will produce any additional cases of either disease. At the same time, the Committee has taken pains to estimate the greatest number of cases which might result from fallout under the most pessimistic assumptions. The estimates for genetic effects caused by fallout would constitute a small fraction of probable effects caused by natural radiation.

The publication of the Committee's report is especially gratifying to the Atomic Energy Commission since this committee of scientists had its genesis in proposals made by the United States. In urging the establishment of the Committee, the proposition set forth by the United States'

Representative in the Tenth General Assembly was that, "By disseminating our present knowledge and by gaining additional knowledge we can free ourselves from fear of the unknown." To this end, many Members of the United Nations have contributed reports on radiation and its biological effects. The United States itself has been the largest single contributor of the reports received by the Committee and has contributed a still greater proportion of the documentation on radioactive fallout.

As is the case with every technological advance, man must learn to live with new risks even as he accepts new benefits conferred upon him. The Atomic Energy Commission is pleased to note the Committee belief that radiation problems need not bar increasing peaceful use of nuclear energy. On this matter of such vital significance, the report states that, "In the light of general scientific experience, the Committee confidently expects that continuing research on an increasing scale will furnish the knowledge urgently needed to master those risks which we know to be associated with the development and scope of the uses of nuclear energy for the welfare of mankind."

The Atomic Energy Commission appreciates the effort that the Committee put into the task of dealing with the many uncertainties in our present knowledge. The report states that, "Any present attempt to evaluate the effects of sources of radiation to which the world population is exposed can produce only tentative estimates with wide margins of uncertainty." The Atomic Energy Commission concurs in the Committee's recommendations for further intensive study in many fields to narrow these uncertainties.