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990th AEC
Meeting
5-24-54

1. Briefing on CASTLE (pp. 2-21)

Mr. Nichols prefaced General Fields' briefing of the Commission by saying that it was a preview of the briefing by General Fields of selected members of the Planning Board later that day.

After referring briefly to the development of fission weapons and the present fission weapon family in stockpile, General Fields commented on the successful detonation of the first thermonuclear device during IVY in November 1952, and the resulting acceleration of the thermonuclear production program. He then reviewed the CASTLE series of tests and the results which they achieved.

In summarizing the conclusions derived from the CASTLE tests General Fields said one of the most significant results was the elimination of our requirements for tritium due to success with the redesign and firing of [redacted]. He then described the family of thermonuclear weapons being produced or developed ranging in yield from 1/4 to 20 megatons plus and the carriers for which they are intended.

There followed a description of expected destructive effects of these weapons including an estimate of fall-out results from a 15 megaton weapon detonated at zero point in Washington, D. C., based on partially evaluated fall-out results of the first CASTLE shot. General Fields also commented on the implications of the development of thermonuclear weapons with respect to air defense and intercontinental missiles and ended the briefing by presenting a comparison of relative costs of TNT and thermonuclear weapons.

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