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Review of Project NUTMEG

404131

This study, conducted in 1948, has been reviewed from the standpoint of our more recent information. In general, the meteorological considerations are consistent with present findings, and the general reasoning with respect to the importance of public opinion in the operation of a test site is well founded. The conclusions given under paragraph 2, page 42, have perhaps been over-stated in the light of the greatly increased amount of information which has developed during the last two or three years.

Specifically, conclusion 2a which states that "Tests conducted within the continent of the United States ... under proper meteorological conditions, will result in no harm to population, economy or industry" is an extreme statement since the tests have resulted in considerable harm to the photographic industry. The statement would be more nearly accurate if the word "serious" were to precede the word "harm".

Conclusion 2c which states that "...there yet remain sites within the United States where absence of fall-out on populated areas can be assured" is not true. It is quite clear that there is no site within the United States nor within the North American continent where absence of fallout on populated areas could be assured.

The analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of the eastern coastal area as against the western desert would seem to be sound and the conclusions

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derived therefrom to have the same weight today as when first formulated. It is my impression, however, that meteorological prediction pertaining to the western states may have a higher order of precision than that dealing with the movement of low altitude air masses over the eastern shore of the United States, unless in the latter case restriction of consideration is limited to weather patterns that are moving from west to east across the continent. Cyclonic air movement is common along this coast and may result in masses of air returning from well out to sea within a day or two of previous contact with the land area. From this standpoint, and the relatively short distances from the Cape Hatteras region to our most densely populated areas, it would seem that there is more inherent hazard to an east coast testing station than is true with respect to the present Nevada site or any other located in the desert region.

From all these considerations it appears that from the standpoint of human hazard the Nevada Site is as good as any that might be selected.