

From McCone's Letter Protesting the Anti Nuclear Test Stand of 10 Caltech Scientists

Admiral Strauss' Successor Provides A Self-Portrait of His Own Views

"This morning I read with amazement your statement. It seemed to me the arguments you use concerning renouncing the H-bomb tests are without validity. . . . You mention Foreign Minister Shepilov's statements of July 17, suggesting abandonment of bomb tests; but what you fail to mention is that on almost the day Mr. Shepilov made the statement the Russians were conducting nuclear tests in the interior of Siberia.

"You, Dr. Lauritsen, and your associates know the lead time required to conduct a test. You know that almost a year must transpire from the time the test is decided upon until it is made. This year is consumed in planning, assembling material and construction and, finally, in the transportation of the device to be tested. Now, if we make a unilateral decision of a type you and your associates advocate and then Mr. Shepilov does as he did last July—turns around and sets off a few hydrogen bombs in their own testing ground—where do we stand? The answer is simple. We have lost a year; we are behind in the race. . . .

No Harm in Fall-Out

"Your statement is obviously designed to create fear in the minds of the uninformed that radioactive fall-out from H-bomb tests endangers life. However, as you know, the National Academy of Sciences has issued a report this year completely discounting such danger. Also you know from your close contact with the tests that one of the important objects of them is to develop techniques for reducing fall-out.

"Your proposition that postponement of tests will delay the time when other nations might possess practical H-bomb experience seems to have no foundation. In fact, it is an argument that has for several years been a prominent part of Soviet propaganda. . . .

"As far as our prestige in Western Europe is concerned, I have spent much more time in Europe during the past two years than you have and have been in touch with the civilian or military officials of practically all Western European governments and I can tell you that our conduct of tests, H-bomb or other nuclear devices, is not at issue with our prestige in Western Europe.

"You infer that our government shields our people from the realities of the dangers which confront us. This impression is false. President Eisenhower has repeatedly warned us of these dangers. . . .

Suppose We Had Listened to Robert Oppenheimer?

"A unilateral decision of the type you recommend might be fatal to our country. It might easily lose for us the

The Scientists Who Angered McCone

Here is the gist of the letter sent by John A. McCone, new chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, on October 15, 1956, to Dr. Thomas Lauritsen, professor of physics at California Institute of Technology. Mr. McCone is a trustee of Caltech. Prof. Lauritsen and nine other Caltech scientists including Dr. Carl D. Anderson, Nobel laureate in physics for 1934, that day published a statement supporting Adlai Stevenson's proposal for a ban on H-bomb testing.

The 10 scientists disagreed with Eisenhower's expressed regret that the nuclear issue had been injected into the campaign. "On the contrary," they said, "we find it regrettable that discussion of our military strength, of our vulnerability and of our foreign policy in relation to the H-bomb have thus far represented such a small proportion of current political discussion."

That statement also took issue with the argument that Stevenson's suggestion would be dangerously unilateral and permit the Soviet Union to get ahead in nuclear technology. The other signers were Harrison Brown, Robert F. Christy, James W. M. Dumode, Robert V. Langmuir, Charles P. McKinney, Matthew Sands, John M. Teem and Robert L. Walker.

precious technical advantage we now hold. Think of the desperate circumstance we would find ourselves in today had we followed the advice of one scientist, Dr. Robert Oppenheimer, a few years ago and abandoned the development of the H-bomb. Democrats and Republicans alike at that time saw the folly of such thinking. I am sure the more thoughtful members of both parties will see the extreme hazards to our national security in the course you recommend and advocate.

We Can't Disarm Yet

"I stand steadfastly behind a policy of disarmament when we reach agreement with other nations for a safe and proper procedure of inspection so that we Americans will be sure that, as we take our guard down through agreement with Russia, we will not be exposing ourselves to their unrestricted power against which we will have no defense. This President Eisenhower has advocated time and again. It continues to be his policy and you, unfortunately, have completely distorted his position in your press release."

McCone Defends Teller's Right to Speak But Not His Opponents

Sen. Anderson. Here were ten scientists who individually decided it was safe for this country to stop testing as long as other countries stopped testing. Mr. McCone took them pretty strongly to task and there were suggestions which I understand he did not make, that they all be fired. . . . Now, if Mr. McCone becomes chairman of the Commission, and it has been established that he would, do you think a scientist would dare express himself on the subject if he worked for AEC while you were chairman?

Mr. McCone. There was no scientist fired from Caltech on advice or recommendation from me, sir. . . .

Sen. Anderson. Now, Dr. Teller has made some statements about the ability to detect tests. He is a scientist. He was connected with the University of California. . . . Do you see anything wrong in that?

Mr. McCone. Not at all.

Sen. Anderson. Then he went on to television and expressed himself very freely on the subject. Is there anything wrong with that?

Mr. McCone. Nothing at all.

Sen. Anderson. What is the difference between what Dr. Harrison Brown did and what Dr. Teller did?

Mr. McCone. Well, Dr. Teller was speaking as an individual and as an authority in a particular area. I felt, as I have said before, that Dr. Harrison Brown recruited ten men, I assume he did, ten of them together, and using their position in the Institute [of nuclear research at Caltech] injected themselves into what appeared to me to be a political argument. That was my objection to their procedure.

—July 2 before the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy.

Senate Confirmation of AEC Members Not Supposed to be Rubber Stamp

(Continued from Page Two)

examination because this is not Mr. McCone's first appearance in dealing with the government. There was a cryptic reference to the past when Senator Anderson said early in the hearings, "a good deal of the mail that I got after your name came up had to do with your partnership in the firm of Bechtel-McCone." The Senator never explained what kind of mail it was, whether any charges had been made, nor what investigation disclosed. The only other reference in the record to this company occurs in Mr. McCone's own letter to Governor Adams, where it appears that the Bechtel Company (Mr. McCone has given up his partnership in it) is one of those concerns which will be dealing both with the AEC and the private companies of its new chairman.

His Old Firm Makes Reactors

The Bechtel-McCone company has been engaged in making atomic reactors for the AEC, and its importance is indicated by the announcement June 30 that W. Kenneth Davis, director of the AEC's Division of Reactor Development, was resigning to become vice-president of Bechtel. Mr. McCone as chairman of the AEC will be dealing with a company he helped to form in 1937 as the Bechtel-McCone-Parsons Corporation to engage in construction and engineering work. During the war it built a huge center at Birmingham, Alabama, for the modification of B-24's and B-29's. It also had a management contract to run the war-time California Shipbuilding Company of which Mr. McCone was president.

According to testimony from the General Accounting Office before a 1946 investigation by the House Merchant Marine Committee into wartime shipyard profits, this shipbuilding company was formed in January 1941 with \$100,000 in capital, half of it put up by Henry J. Kaiser companies. A year later it declared a \$1,000,000 dividend. The GAO claims the company made \$44,000,000 in profit. Mr. McCone claimed in rebuttal that after all taxes and non-reimbursable costs, the earnings were less than \$9,000,000, or an average of about \$2,000,000 a year, itself not a bad return on that original \$100,000 invested in the risk-free business of running a war-time government owned shipyard. The same Congressional committee, reporting a few months later on the disposal of government owned yards, complained that Mr. McCone's company was paid \$2,500,000 by the Maritime Commission to take over a yard costing \$25,000,000 and surplus material costing \$14,000,000. The whole operation showed a genius for making a fast and fancy buck.

A Small-Time Operator

In the light of their long running fight with Admiral Strauss, it is difficult to understand the complaisant attitude toward Mr. McCone by men like Senator Anderson and Congressmen Holifield and Price. The angry letter he sent the Caltech scientists on nuclear testing (see page 3), when coupled with his defense of Dr. Teller, shows how completely he shares Admiral Strauss' preconceptions. He is unlikely to be any friendlier to public power. His continued private business connections carry the seeds of potential scandal, and establish a dangerous precedent in the conflict-of-interest field. He seems to have no visible qualifications for so important a position. He is a small-timer as a business man, an operator

on the fringes of bigger enterprises. This is the man chosen to boss that huge sector of American scientific talent which is employed directly or indirectly by the AEC.

Privately some of the Joint Committee members rationalize by saying that the President has a right to pick the members of his official family. So he has. But Mr. McCone will be in office three years after Mr. Eisenhower leaves. The law, in providing for Senate confirmation of AEC appointments, certainly did not intend this to be a mere routine rubber stamp operation. Especially because so many people feel that the retirement of Strauss is some sort of victory, it was important to hold a hearing which would give the public a fuller look at the man he chose to be his successor.

A Carbon Copy of Strauss

From the Eisenhower Administration point of view, Mr. McCone fills the bill perfectly. He entered government earlier as a protege of Secretary Forrestal and has much the same arms race views. He was satisfactory to the Air Force lobby as Under Secretary of the Air Force in 1951. He served agreeably on the Wriston committee which made an innocuous inquiry into the foreign service for Secretary Dulles in 1954-5. He was a financial banker of Knowland in the recent California primaries and has often played golf with Ike. He was the latter's representative at Pius XII's 80th birthday in 1956. In background and outlook he promises to be a carbon copy of Strauss.

When a telegram was read by Senator Anderson from the Los Angeles chapter of the Federation of American Scientists, asking the nominee's views on academic freedom, information policy and government development of atomic power, the Republicans on the committee acted as if a group of servants had suddenly turned impertinent. Senator Anderson was half-hearted about putting the questions and the other Democrats sat in stultified silence. Mr. McCone was allowed to get away with a few vague generalities. It was only through the submission for the record of the "Dear Sherm" letter and the letter to Dr. Lauritsen (see page three) that a fuller portrait of the new AEC Chairman was inadvertently presented. Thanks to non-coverage by the press, very few people will know about this anyway. This is a strange way to pass on an appointment to one of the most important positions in our government.

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