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N.I.A. 6th Meeting

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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE AUTHORITY

Minutes of Meeting held in Room 214,  
Department of State Building,  
on Wednesday, 21 August 1946, at 11:00 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Acting Secretary of State Dean Acheson, in the Chair  
Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson  
Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal  
Fleet Admiral William D. Leahy,  
Personal Representative of the President.  
General Hoyt S. Vandenberg,  
Director of Central Intelligence.

ALSO PRESENT

Assistant Secretary of State William Benton  
Colonel William A. Eddy, Special Assistant  
to the Secretary of State for Research  
and Intelligence  
Mr. John D. Hickerson, Department of State  
Colonel Charles W. McCarthy, USA  
Captain Robert L. Dennison, USN

SECRETARIAT

Mr. James S. Lay, Jr., Secretary, N.I.A.

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1. COORDINATION OF INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES RELATED TO FOREIGN  
ATOMIC ENERGY DEVELOPMENTS AND POTENTIALITIES  
(N.I.A. 6)

SECRETARY PATTERSON stated that the present position is that, despite the President's directive establishing N.I.A. and its implementation, the Manhattan Engineer District under General Groves has a small division collecting information on foreign activities in the field of atomic energy. It seemed to Secretary Patterson senseless to have this division isolated without any connection with or relationship to C.I.G. He stated that he had talked with General Groves about this problem. Secretary Patterson believes that the N.I.A. will be carrying out the President's directive only if this division is transferred. He is not concerned particularly as to where it is transferred, although he approves the proposed transfer to C.I.G. This intelligence division has nothing to do with the Manhattan Engineer District proper and therefore has nothing to do with the Atomic Energy Commission. Even if it did, it would still come under the terms of the President's directive to N.I.A. At the present time the intelligence on this subject is lost and is not available to the agencies represented on N.I.A.

SECRETARY FORRESTAL questioned whether it is intended to deny the use of this information to the Atomic Energy Commission.

SECRETARY PATTERSON felt that the information involved has nothing to do with ideas for improving our own atomic energy program since we are already so far ahead of other nations.

SECRETARY ACHESON said that he was troubled by this paper and had spoken about it to the President who was not familiar with it. Secretary Acheson said that he had been informed that the Atomic Energy Commission would be almost entirely dependent on foreign sources of uranium ore. He understood that it was one function of General Groves' intelligence group to find out where uranium ore is and how to get it to this country or to deny it to others. The President expressed the opinion that this paper might be all right but that, if it is carried out before the Commission is established, it may take away from them an important part of their activities. The President felt that it would be wiser to let the matter rest until the Commission is established.

SECRETARY PATTERSON pointed out that the transfer of only a few people here and abroad is involved. Their sole job is to watch what is going on in foreign countries in the development of atomic energy. The present position is hard to defend and Secretary Patterson believed that the N.I.A. should have taken this action before this. He noted that this was an Army unit under General Groves, about which General Vandenberg knows nothing. Secretary Patterson expressed the belief that it has nothing to do with the statutory authority of the Atomic Energy Commission since it involves what he considers to be a military intelligence unit.

ADMIRAL LEAHY stated that he was favorably impressed with the paper but had not wanted to act on it in a hurry. He found no fault with it on the assumptions expressed by Secretary Patterson.

SECRETARY FORRESTAL felt that it was urgent that something be done. He stressed the fact that there was no intent to deny the information involved to the Atomic Energy Commission.

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SECRETARY PATTERSON agreed on the urgency. He felt that the Commission will have a big job to do, of which this is only a small segment. He believed that the Army and Navy would be open to serious criticism if they did not act on this matter. He felt that they could not go on treating this new field of intelligence concerning atomic energy as if it didn't exist because they knew nothing about it.

GENERAL VANDENBERG stated that he would hate to have anyone think that C.I.G. withheld material from any governmental agency that needed it, since the furnishing of such information is basically the mission of C.I.G. If the N.I.A. authorizes C.I.G. to furnish this information to the Atomic Energy Commission, he will certainly do it. He feels that C.I.G. can perform this function more efficiently since it can use all collecting facilities, whereas neither General Groves nor the Commission are or will be able to do this. At the present time the intelligence agencies are not cooperating with the Manhattan Engineer District because it is a one-way street. The best source of this information, according to General Groves, has been SSU, which will be replaced by C.I.G.'s Special Operations. If this nation is to know about foreign developments in this field, it must use all sources. If the N.I.A. approves this paper, the entire intelligence organization of the government will be utilized.

SECRETARY PATTERSON pointed out that if General Groves had information that the Russians were prepared to use atomic bombs, the members of N.I.A. would not know about it.

SECRETARY ACHESON stated that he was not clear about the facts. He agreed that insofar as this involves finding out what other countries are doing, it should be under General Vandenberg. If, however, it involves finding out where uranium ore is, this is of vital interest to the Atomic Energy Commission.

SECRETARY PATTERSON stated that General Groves is performing this function in complete isolation. Mr. Patterson feels this is hostile to the spirit and probably the letter of the President's directive establishing N.I.A.

ADMIRAL LEAHY believed it was conceivable that the Commission might find it necessary to build up an intelligence organization of its own. He felt that this organization, however, should coordinate with C.I.G.

SECRETARY ACHESON thought it would be a mistake to do anything in the week or ten days before the Commission is appointed. He also understands that this is the President's wish.

SECRETARY FORRESTAL could see no great harm that would be done by acting now and was very reluctant to delay action on this matter.

SECRETARY PATTERSON pointed out that this could not be accomplished after the Commission is appointed because then the personnel involved would be under the Commission. If he was a member of the Commission, he would ask for all that General Groves has, would take up the important problems first, and in the meantime freeze all personnel. It would, therefore, involve serious delay to ask the permission of the Commission.

SECRETARY ACHESON felt that these points were the strongest reasons for not acting at this time.

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SECRETARY FORRESTAL stated that it was the intent of N.I.A. to draw together all intelligence activities of this type. He felt that there should not be one unit separate and isolated. If this principle were sound, he believed the N.I.A. should approve this paper.

SECRETARY PATTERSON reiterated that this involved only military information. The whole subject involved is military and will be unless the United Nations is perfected and international controls are effected. He considered that it would be extremely derelict to frame major policies without considering what other countries are doing in this field.

ADMIRAL LEAHY believed that the Commission could get better information from C.I.G. than from any organization that might be set up for some time to come. He pointed out that the N.I.A. has the authority to direct C.I.G. to furnish this information to the Commission.

SECRETARY ACHESON observed that naturally all N.I.A. members would do whatever the President desires. He suggested that Admiral Leahy might clear this paper with the President.

SECRETARY PATTERSON stated that he of course had no objection to taking it up with the President but questioned the need since the matter falls so clearly within the directive to N.I.A.

ADMIRAL LEAHY stated that he agreed with Secretary Patterson and Secretary Forrestal. He thought it would be possible to reverse the decision, if necessary, after the Commission is established.

SECRETARY ACHESON was concerned about acting too hurriedly. He said that the wording sounded all right to him but that this was a very complex subject. He thought that if similar wording were used regarding a matter of finance, the N.I.A. wouldn't act because they would be familiar with the fact that the Treasury Department would be deeply concerned. He agreed that it might be necessary to coerce the Commission on this matter, but in any case he felt that they should have an opportunity to express their views.

GENERAL VANDENBERG stated that C.I.G. was interested primarily in obtaining the existing organization since C.I.G. is not now getting the necessary information. He suggested that the unit might be transferred to C.I.G.; then if the Commission asks N.I.A. to reconsider, the unit will be intact for any future disposition decided upon.

SECRETARY PATTERSON noted that he had taken the view regarding other units of the Manhattan Engineer District, that they should be kept intact for the Commission. This unit, however, dealt with military intelligence and fell within the terms of the President's directive to N.I.A. He, therefore, felt that the proposed action could be taken immediately.

ADMIRAL LEAHY asked why it would not be possible for C.I.G. to go ahead and do this type of intelligence in addition to Groves' people.

GENERAL VANDENBERG said that this might result in having two agents in the field on the same mission, which always results in one exposing the other.

ADMIRAL LEAHY then suggested that the N.I.A. direct C.I.G. to collect and evaluate the information, without transferring the unit at this time.

GENERAL VANDENBERG noted that the individuals are a part of General Groves' personal staff and they have been brought to the point where they know generally all that General Groves knows. They are, therefore, in a position to tell other agencies to collect certain information without divulging their background knowledge on atomic energy. If, however, C.I.G. sets up a new unit it must inform additional people of the basic atomic energy secrets, which might further jeopardize their security.

SECRETARY FORRESTAL believed that N.I.A. would be doing a dangerous thing to mark time on this matter.

SECRETARY PATTERSON stated that he already has the power to send the intelligence personnel involved to G-2 right away. He can not, however, transfer them to C.I.G. without N.I.A. agreement.

SECRETARY FORRESTAL stated that he wanted the record to show that, if the Atomic Energy Commission is created, he does not want the military people who are charged with national defense to be denied this vital information regarding foreign atomic energy developments.

GENERAL VANDENBERG noted that that was exactly the position to date.

MR. LAY suggested that, since the Atomic Energy Commission was not mentioned in the directive, an additional paragraph might be added to the effect that intelligence produced as a result of this directive should be made available as required to the Commission.

GENERAL VANDENBERG suggested amending this to indicate that C.I.G. would make the intelligence available "as directed by N.I.A."

MR. BENTON suggested an additional paragraph to the effect that this directive would be reviewed with the Atomic Energy Commission when established.

ADMIRAL LEAHY proposed certain editorial amendments. He then suggested that the proposed directive be rephrased either with or without the proposed amendments, and sent by telegram to the President with a notation to the effect that the N.I.A. recommends approval without prejudice to any future change that may be desired by the Atomic Energy Commission.

THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE AUTHORITY:-

- a. Agreed to recommend that the President approve the directive in the Enclosure to N.I.A. 6, amended as follows, with an understanding that any action taken by the N.I.A. will be without prejudice to future change that may be desired by the Atomic Energy Commission:
  - (1) Page 3, paragraph 1, line 4 change "N.I.A. coordination" to read "coordination by N.I.A."
  - (2) Page 3, paragraph 1, line 5, change "affecting" to read "which may affect."
- b. Noted that Admiral Leahy would transmit the above agreement to the President by telegram. (The President subsequently replied that he wished to defer taking action until he returned to Washington.)