

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Los Alamos
Gen

June 29, 1950

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD:

FROM: Walter Hamilton ✓

SUBJECT: Los Alamos ✓

The decision to maintain Los Alamos as our permanent principal weapons research center is the result, not of a single decision, but of the accretion of many decisions. Within the past six weeks, the Joint Committee has received two Budget overrun reports covering one plant and one laboratory at about \$26 million total cost. These two construction projects - the new explosives plant and the chemical-metallurgy laboratory - constitute the core of the technical and laboratory facilities of Los Alamos. They are part of the permanentizing program now in progress. Less than \$2 million has been spent on these jobs so far. Completion dates are in 1952.

This is probably our last economical chance to review the desirability of keeping the weapons research work at Los Alamos. "All the results of continued use of this remote site are being "brought" at one stroke. For the several hundred workers required to man these plants, there must also be several thousand service and supporting personnel. The high operating costs, Government town problems, difficulty of getting top scientists, and the bad military security of the area are all intrinsically accepted as inevitable in this decision. Yet there is nothing about 90 per cent of the work done at Los Alamos which couldn't be done equally well at a more accessible site such as Sandia, Berkeley, or some Eastern educational center.

The profits which might be gained by moving Alamos now might be more top scientists in the progress on weapons research projects, and financing which would free dollars for bombs instead of war courses for Los Alamos. It's worth thinking about

The text in this area of the original letter was inadvertently blocked out by a note that was attached to the letter before it was copied. However, it is clear what that text probably was.

Borden	✓
Burman	
Ersbeck	✓
Hamilton	✓
Heller	
Mansfield	✓
Sheehy	✓

NO DEPT. OF ENERGY CLASSIFIED
INFORMATION (NO RD, FRD; DOE-NSI)
COORDINATE WITH _____
BEFORE DECLASSIFICATION/RELEASE
AUTHORITY: DOE-DCI
BY: K.S. ON DATE: _____

8/22/90
Rob
2/20/92

W.A.H.

JOINT (

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REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

[A copy of the following memorandum was recently found in the Study Group files. A portion of the text was obscured as noted below. A stamp on the document reads, "Reproduced at the National Archives." It appears to have been declassified on either 8/22/90 or 2/20/92; both dates are present near the declassification certification.]

June 29, 1950

Memorandum for the Record

From: Walter Hamilton [Member, Atomic Energy Commission]

Subject: Los Alamos

The decision to maintain Los Alamos as our permanent principal weapons research center is the result, not of a single decision, but of the accretion of many decisions. Within the past six weeks, the Joint Committee has received two Budget overrun reports covering one plant and one laboratory at about \$26 million total cost. These two construction projects – the new explosives plant and the chemical-metallurgy laboratory [the CMR Building] – constitute the core of the technical and laboratory facilities of Los Alamos. They are part of the permanentizing program now in progress. Less than \$2 million has been spent on these jobs so far. Completion dates are in 1952.

This is probably our last economical chance to review the desirability of keeping the weapons research work at Los Alamos. All the results of continued use of this remote site are being "brought" at one stroke. For the several hundred workers required to man these plants, there must also be several thousand service and supporting personnel. The high operating costs, Government town problems, difficulty of getting top scientists, and the bad military security of the area are all intrinsically accepted as inevitable in this decision. Yet there is nothing about 90 per cent of the work done at Los Alamos which couldn't be done equally well at a more accessible site such as Sandia, Berkeley, or some Eastern educational center.

[The following text was obscured in copy by attached note;]

The profits which might be gained by mo...Alamos now might be more top scientists in the pr...progress on weapons research projects, and financ...which would free dollars for bombs instead of wat...courses for Los Alamos. It's worth thinking abo....

[signed]

W.A. Hamilton

[Copies to: Borden, Brobeck, Hamilton, Mansfield, Sheehy]

[A possible reconstruction of the last paragraph:

The profits which might be gained by mo[ving projects from Los] Alamos now might be more top scientists in the pr[ogram and more] progress on weapons research projects, and financ[ial savings] which would free dollars for bombs instead of wat[ering more golf] courses for Los Alamos. It's worth thinking abo[ut].]