



Department of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

UNIQUE DOCUMENT #5AB20009500000

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COPY

Dr. Harold P. Smith, Jr.
Assistant to the Secretary
of Defense (Atomic Energy)
Department of Defense
Washington, D.C. 20301-3050

Dear Dr. Smith:

I solicit your assistance in obtaining Department of Defense support for mitigating surety concerns with the B53 nuclear bomb. The B53 is an old design which does not meet modern nuclear safety design criteria, especially in abnormal or accident environments. Following cancellation of the W61 warhead program, plans for early retirement of the B53 have been deferred, and the B53 will remain in the stockpile for the indefinite future.

95-196
Obtained Under the
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by Hans M. Kristensen

See page 1493
Spokane

The Department of Energy will provide trainers and support to facilitate these safeguards.

I also strongly recommend you pursue retiring the B53 at the earliest possible date. If there is a continuing mission for a weapon with the B53's characteristics, our two Departments should pursue alternate approaches to meet the requirements.

I realize the lost operational flexibility these restrictions bring, but I believe the surety enhancements are worth the inconvenience.

Please refer any questions or comments you have in this matter to me, or Dr. James Turner at (301) 903-3463.

Sincerely,

Eugene G. Hewitt

W. G. Ellis
Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy
Deputy Assistant Secretary
for Military Application
Defense Programs

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CLASSIFIER: Joel Smith, General (Name and Title)

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3. CONTAINS NO DOE CLASSIFIED INFO
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OTHER (SPECIFY):

121 REVIEW DATE: 1-27-17
AUTHORITY: DAOC DADC/ADD
NAME: [redacted]
ZNP REVIEW DATE: 1-27-17
AUTHORITY: ADD
NAME: [redacted]

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(Name and Title)
Project Engineer
Jan 21, 1996