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Chief, Security Branch, LAAC

March 31, 1959

Ref no 1757

Philip F. Belcher

Disposition of Classified Waste Material

ADCS-10832

TA-50

Reference is made to your memorandum of March 23, 1959, same subject, Symbol: LD:JAF, and to a brief general discussion of the subject between Lee B. McKinney, W. Tyler Aldrich, Jr., you, and I on March 24, 1959. If I recall the latter discussion correctly you indicated that your principal concern was over the fact that classified objects, which are either contaminated or which cannot otherwise be disposed of, are left uncovered in burial pits for substantial periods of time and that if a system could be devised whereby classified items could be covered immediately after being placed in a contaminated waste disposal pit you would be inclined to believe that Mesita del Buey would be a satisfactory burial site and that [redacted] (Ten Site) would not obviously be a preferable burial place.

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On the last point I might mention that representatives of this office have subsequently inspected both Mesita del Buey and Area C, and I am informed that so far as fencing is concerned [redacted] is far better protected than Area C. It is true that, at the present time, Area C is physically located further inside a general security area than is Mesita del Buey, but that advantage, if it be an advantage, will of course disappear if the Pajarito road is opened up by the deactivation of Station 405.

With these considerations in mind it seems to us to be much more preferable to develop some systematic procedure to coordinate the placing of classified objects in Mesita del Buey with regularly scheduled covering operations. W. V. Ortiz of D-4 has had lengthy discussions on this point with SP-2, H-1, and ENG-4, and it appears that it would be quite practicable to hold classified waste objects in existing security areas until H-1 advised SP-2 that a bulldozer would be at Mesita



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del Buey at a given hour on a given day for covering operations. SP-2 could then arrange to transport the classified objects to Mesita del Buey and the objects would be covered essentially immediately.

Under these circumstances, I do not comment in detail on the suggestion in your memorandum of March 23 for the development of [REDACTED] except to say that that specific area would not be acceptable from the Laboratory's point of view.

It was rather disappointing to learn during the course of our inquiries on this matter that, despite the general agreement some two years ago, burial in contaminated pits would essentially be a last resort method of disposing of classified waste, nevertheless, a substantial part of the capacity of the existing pit in [REDACTED] has been taken up with materials which are not contaminated, not of obvious security interest, and which it would seem could be disposed of by some other method. For example, I am informed that something more than seventy yards has been taken up by Security Branch, LAAO, for the dumping of technical area badges. It would seem to me that badges can be chopped up and disposed of in some other manner. I will concede that it perhaps is a tedious job, but in view of the fact that we have only a limited amount of real estate for disposal of classified waste it does not seem to me proper to dispose of badges by burial simply because it is easiest.

By the same token it appears that there have been large quantities of safety film from various Laboratory operations placed in the contaminated pits at [REDACTED]. Again, it would seem that there must be alternate methods of disposing of safety film which would not involve using up the limited space available in contaminated waste disposal dumps.

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PFB:jc

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