

MINUTES OF CABINET MEETING

April 29, 1955
10:00 A. M. - 12:15 P. M.

The following were present:

President Eisenhower

Vice President Nixon
Sec. Dulles
Sec. Humphrey and
 Under Sec. Folsom
Sec. Wilson
Mr. Brownell
Deputy PMG Charles Hook
 (for Mr. Summerfield)
Under Sec. Clarence Davis
 (for Sec. McKay)
Sec. Benson
Under Sec. Walter Williams
 (for Sec. Weeks)
Sec. Mitchell
Sec. Hobby

Director Hughes
Deputy Director Fitzgerald
 (for Gov. Stassen)
Dr. Flemming
Chairman Young



Dr. Chester Keefer, HEW (in part)
Dr. Leonard Scheele, HEW
 (in part)
Director Streibert, USIA
 (in part)

Gen. Persons
Mr. Harlow
Mr. Morgan
Mr. Martin
Mr. Rockefeller
Mr. Anderson
Mr. Shanley
Col. Goodpaster
Mr. Murray Snyder
Dr. Hauge
Mr. Rabb
Mr. Patterson

DECLASSIFIED
EO 13526, 13527

AMB 76-127, DOCUMENT NUMBER 4
By J.W. Date 9-17-79

The Salk Vaccine (CI - 24) - Mrs. Hobby opened by explaining why last Friday's meeting in HEW was closed to the press. The reasons were two: (1) We simply could not ask drug companies to discuss their trade secrets and distribution plans publicly; (2) there would be anti-trust aspects to a public discussion. She said that the meeting was a complete success.

Dr. Keefer, the President's Special Advisor on matters associated with the distribution of the Salk vaccine, then gave the highlights of CI-24. The group which met on April 22nd had recommended that distribution be on a voluntary basis, and that priorities be by age group, the first being children 5 to 9 and the second being children 1 to 5. It had also recommended that distributions be started earlier in the South where, along with temperature, the incidence of the disease rises first. He emphasized that it is expected that if the distribution program goes smoothly, all children between 1 and 9 will have received the vaccine by August 1st. The President queried how much it would cost to provide the vaccine for children who could not afford it (other than those to whom it was now being donated through the NFIP). He was told it would be \$4.20 for three CC's -- enough for three shots. The President inquired again whether there was an estimate for the overall nation-wide cost of a program for indigent children. Mrs. Hobby pointed out that



five states had already enacted laws to provide these funds and thirteen more were doing so. She said HEW was now considering alternative proposals for financing shots for poor children. She said that rather than announce a program of matching grants now, she wants to see how many of the states will provide this themselves, and the Government's program should probably be limited to assisting those states who cannot do this. The President emphasized that the Government must ensure that, if necessary, Federal funds will be forthcoming to cover the cost of the vaccine for children who cannot afford it. No child must be denied the vaccine for financial reasons. He said that if necessary we would use the President's Emergency Fund, but some source must be found. Mrs. Hobby pointed out that they were discussing whether the Public Health Service or the Childrens' Bureau would be the proper distributing agent in such a program and that was still undecided.

General Persons asked whether production was as "all-out" as it could be. Mrs. Hobby reminded the Cabinet that monkeys were scarce, that the vaccine was one of the most complicated ever made, and she emphasized that we must never speed up production at the expense of quality. Surgeon General Scheele pointed out that the production took 90 days regardless and if we took special steps now to increase production the results would not show for 90 days, at which time a sufficient supply is expected anyway. He described the painstaking methods by which the Public Health Service checks the production process. Putting every batch of vaccine through an actual monkey test (as compared with a tissue culture test) would slow down the vaccination program by 30 to 40 days.

Referring to the recent polio outbreaks, the President inquired if this wasn't a little early for them to come naturally. Dr. Scheele replied that while the incubation period ranges from 3 to 31 days, it is almost always 14 to 16 days which means that the children now coming down with it had it before they were inoculated. He mentioned one medical phenomenon that is now getting its first large-scale test: When the skin of persons who are incubating polio is punctured, paralytic polio has a tendency to come to a head. Sec. Wilson said that if this were so, why isn't winter the best time for inoculation. The Surgeon General agreed but said that now is the time when the vaccine became available -- not earlier. Dr. Scheele warned that we must not forget the 60 - 90 percent range of the Salk vaccine effectiveness as applied to the three varieties of polio, and that we must still expect hundreds of cases of paralytic polio from children inoculated. General Persons referred to an instance of which he had already heard -- where doctors were telling mothers that they couldn't give out the vaccine because the Government was controlling its distribution. Mrs. Hobby emphasized that of course this was not the case, that the drug companies were cooperating fully to insure adequate distribution without violating the anti-trust laws, and that they are going to accept the recommendations of the National Advisory Committee which meets on Monday. Sec. Benson confirmed General Persons' report about public misunderstanding. It was then stressed that every Cabinet member should make it clear in public statements that the Government was not controlling the distribution of the Salk vaccine. The President requested that arrangements be made for him to speak about this in his press conference next Wednesday.

CI-24 was handed around and Mrs. Hobby emphasized that it should be drawn upon for "ammunition".