

MAY 27 1953

Honorable W. Sterling Cole
Chairman, Joint Committee on Atomic Energy
Congress of the United States

Dear Mr. Cole:

The purpose of this letter is to outline the effects of recent proposed reduced efforts on the Aircraft Nuclear Propulsion Program. In general, the effect is to postpone to a presently undetermined time the ground and flight testing of an aircraft nuclear propulsion system.

The Aircraft Nuclear Propulsion Program under way at the OML on fluid fuel reactors will continue such as presently constituted, since the OML-AMP program has been in the past and it is planned to be in the future one principally of analysis, research, and development on reactors suitable for aircraft propulsion but short of actually engineering and constructing full scale power models. In addition to the OML program, analysis and research on the Supercritical Water System will proceed at the rate of effort previously planned. Contract negotiations are continuing with the Pratt and Whitney Co. with a view to direct AEC support of that company in its aircraft nuclear powerplant research.

The program at Lockheed under the General Electric Company, which company has been under contract to the AEC to develop and construct an aircraft reactor based upon the direct cycle, will be considerably revised. The revision will necessitate cancellation of the development and construction of the so-called E-1 (plate type fuel element) direct cycle reactor and powerplant and redirection of the program primarily toward applied research and component development for an advanced direct cycle reactor concept based upon a new configuration and more promising type of fuel element. Since all previous schedules for ground and flight test were based upon fabrication of a direct cycle reactor, design of which was based upon the flat plate type fuel element, these schedules are now, of course, invalid and further schedules have not as yet been determined. In any event, these schedules will be altered

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by an amount dictated by the time required to bring the advanced type of reactor up to the presently existing developmental status of the E-1.

Construction of Phase I AEP ground test facilities at the NRETS will continue; however, the IRT facility, which is not yet under contract, will be delayed. The plans and specifications for both the IRT facility and buildings within the Administration and Service Area (which are already under contract) will be reviewed with the intent of effecting whatever economies may be possible under this new AEP Program. The construction of the facility in which to test on the ground at full power prototype aircraft nuclear propulsion systems will be postponed.

DOE ARCHIVES Sincerely yours,

SIGNED AND
DISPATCHED

Gordon Dean
Chairman

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