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The RAND Corporation

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23 April 1953

Dr. Walter D. Claus
Chief, Biophysics Branch
Division of Biology and Medicine
U. S. Atomic Energy Commission
Washington 25, D. C.

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Dear Dr. Claus:

This confirms our conversation by phone with you and with Dr. Western. We are going ahead with plans for an AEC sponsored extended working conference on radioactive fallout and Project Gabriel. We hope to get participation by high caliber talent not otherwise available. We have generally had good luck with such conferences. The luck depends on the choice of the chairman, amount of preparation before and after the session, and the caliber of the participants.

Preliminarily, we are planning the session to last three or four weeks, broken into three phases. The first will be a two or three day session devoted to familiarizing the entire group with the work that has already been done and to formulate the course of action for a smaller, working group. In the second phase, the smaller working group will spend the next two weeks preparing a report summarizing the state of the art and a recommended research program. Then, in the third phase the summary report will be submitted informally to the entire group for critical review, revision, and final acceptance. Final editing will probably be done largely by the RAND staff. If the session is successful, the resulting report should form an authoritative statement of what is known and what might profitably be further investigated in the fallout problem.

We suggest that the conference be limited to the radiochemical and geophysical aspects of the problem. While it might be well to do a similar thing on the biological side of the problem, we suggest that this be considered separately, if for no other reason than the fact that RAND has relatively little experience in this area, while your staff does have considerable competence.

Attached is a preliminary list of people who might be invited for the first and third phases. Some six or eight people of the total group, tabulated separately, in addition to the RAND people, would be appropriate for the second phase, with occasional participation by others. Either Professor Libby or Dr. Wexler would make an excellent chairman. Dr. von Neumann is, of course,

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also an excellent possibility, particularly since he is already planning to spend three or four weeks in Santa Monica this summer. We'd appreciate any suggestions you may have for possible chairman or participants in the conference.

Now as to the timing for the session: summers are generally excellent, and while time is short, we will like to attempt a start of, say, Monday, June 29.

In our thinking of ways in which work on the radioactive fallout and Gabriel problem could be accelerated, the best suggestion we have been able to come up with is the conference idea. We hope that Dr. Western, Dr. Bugher and you will pass on additional thoughts.

Sincerely,

Ernst Plesset

Ernst H. Plesset
Nuclear Energy Division

EHP:lse
Encl.

SUGGESTED LIST OF PARTICIPANTS IN RADIOACTIVE FALLOUT CONFERENCE

1. Harry D. Smythe, AEC
2. Thomas E. Murray, AEC
3. Eugene M. Zuckert, AEC
4. Edward Teller, University of California
5. John Bugher, AEC
6. Merrill Eisenbud, NYOO, AEC
7. Roderick W. Spence, IASL
8. Gaelen L. Felt, IASL
9. Philip W. Allen, USWB
10. Donald H. Rock, AFOAT-1
11. Capt. Russell Maynard, USN, AFSWP
12. Maj. Thomas A. Gibson, USAF, AFSWP
13. Maj. N. M. Lulejian, USAF, ARDC
14. Capt. Kendall Russell, USAF, ARDC
15. C. E. Anderson, GRD, AFCRC
16. Heinz Lettau, GRD, AFCRC (not currently
AEC cleared)
17. John Turkevich, Princeton University
18. A. F. Spilhaus, University of Minnesota
19. Robert E. Holzer, University of California
at Los Angeles
20. James H. Shearer, Tracerlab
21. Cmdr. E. W. Pate, J-3 Div., JTF 132
22. Robert F. Bacher, Caltech
23. Col. George F. Taylor, ARDC
24. Don Perkins, AFDAP, USAF
25. George M. Kavanaugh, AEC

WORKING GROUP, PHASE 2

1. Willard F. Libby, University
of Chicago
2. John von Neumann, Institute for
Advanced Studies
3. Walter D. Claus, DEM, AEC
4. Forrest Western, DEM, AEC
5. Col. Ben G. Holzman, Kirtland
Air Force Base
6. Harry Wexler, Chief SSD, USWB
7. Lester Machta, USWB
8. Herbert Scoville, Jr., AFSWP
9. S. G. English, Division of
Research, AEC
10. Milton S. Plesset, Caltech,
RAND consultant
11. Forrest Gilmore, Caltech,
RAND consultant
12. Paul Fine, AEC