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SEP 16 1960

Dear Mr. Kirgosh:

During your November 1959 visit, the subject of reactor siting and safety was discussed briefly, in connection with reactors to be built in the Community under the Joint Program. You may recall that Chairman Hobson expressed his confidence that the type of reactors considered allowable for the Joint Program can be built and operated safely, and that the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission's participation in the safety review which it made during the selection process is proper and desirable. He also observed, however, that the AEC cannot assume responsibility for reactor siting and safety decisions after a reactor project has been accepted under the joint program since this is properly the prerogative and responsibility of authorities within the Community.

More recently, our Commission has had occasion to review in further detail the matter of hazards evaluations in connection with the JEPN proposal. We believe that the preliminary hazards review made as a part of the selection process has been very satisfactory, and we certainly look forward to the use of the same or similar procedures in connection with the selection of reactor projects proposed under the 1965 phase of the Joint Program. A preliminary examination of this type enables our two Commissions to assess in some detail the considerations that have been given to safety matters in preparing the plans of the proposed reactor project.

The U. S. Atomic Energy Commission, as noted above, cannot be responsible for post-selection siting and safety decisions. Our participation in these projects is such, however, that we have a major interest in knowing that measures are taken by appropriate authorities within the Community to insure that reactors selected will be built and operated without hazard to the health and safety of workers and adjacent populations. We hope that procedures will be established by authorities within the Community which are generally similar to those under which we regulate and license reactors in the United States. These include the review of design, construction, operating procedures and qualifications of operating personnel by technically competent groups so that the reactor can be operated with reasonable assurance as to health and safety.

Since we are not prepared to participate in the post-selection hazards review for Joint Program Reactors, we believe that the Joint Reactor Data cannot appropriately be used for the promulgation of any formal or informal safety findings after the initial processing of proposals.

A) 187  
RD-1-2

However, we do feel that it would be desirable if this group served to gather facts and disseminate information on the safety of Joint Program reactors for all interested parties. We will be pleased to continue to assist your Commission, and, through it, the member states in the field of reactor safety, as may be requested, so long as such assistance does not conflict with the foregoing principle. As stated in Working Paper IX D., we will provide Euratom with information on our experience in the formulation of health and safety standards, health physics, monitoring for radiation protection, reactor hazards evaluation and regulations and licensing. In addition, we will assist you by providing technical advice in such matters affecting health and safety, as you may request.

Our Commission believes that the role proposed by Euratom in the post-selection follow-up of the hazards problems of the Joint Program reactor projects is a proper one. We believe that you can play a most important function in assuring that careful consideration is given to the safety aspects of these reactors, both in the technical-regulatory area and in the shaping of public opinion. Obviously, we have a continuing interest in the safety aspects of such projects, and will appreciate being kept informed by your Commission, either directly or through the Joint Reactor Board, of such information and of the steps which have been taken by Euratom to assure that adequate consideration has been given to the review of design, construction and operating procedures and the selection of qualified operating personnel.

Sincerely yours,

Chairman

Honorable Etienne Hirsch, President  
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cc: Chairman (2)  
AGMIA  
GM  
Secretariat (2)

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