

Mr. Price



ATOMICS INTERNATIONAL

A Division of North American Aviation, Inc.

ETD

April 18, 1961

Mr. A. A. Wells, Director
Division of International Affairs
U. S. Atomic Energy Commission
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Algie:

I thought you would be interested in the attached translation of an article from Deutscher Forschungsdienst indicating the effect on German nuclear policy of our moves in the reactor siting area.

Kindest personal regards.

Sincerely yours,

J. J. Flaherty
Vice President
Atomics International Division

JJF:jh

Enclosure

cc: Dr. Clifford K. Beck w/Encl.
Division of Licensing & Regulations
USAEC, Wash.

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Partial Translation from German Newsletter
"Deutscher Forschungsdienst" Issue 14/61
pages 68/69, dated April 5, 1961

AEC Proposed Rules on Reactor Site Criteria

An appendix to the ground rules gives a table which contains distances up to the boundary of the "exclusion area", the "low population zone", and the "distance to cities", calculated under certain assumptions considered as normal and determined according to the thermal output of the reactor concerned. Accordingly, a nuclear power plant of 200 electrical megawatts would not be allowed closer than 20 km (abt. 14 miles) to the boundary of a population center of even not more than 20,000 inhabitants. Since no reactor operator wants to dispense from the outset with the possibility of a future increase of the plant output, as is common practise also for conventional power stations, the safety distance of the site would have to be enlarged right from the beginning. It would mean a job for a population statistics expert or geographer to find areas in Europe with a minimum distance of 20 km away from the nearest population center of 20,000 inhabitants, while at the same time meeting the natural requirements for the construction of a nuclear power plant, e. g. cooling water availability, connection to high-tension grid system, etc. In this context it should be emphasized that according to the AEC proposal such site criteria will be applied only to proven reactor systems, whereas reactor of a more novel design should be put up only in remote areas, according to American standards.

In view of the fact that in the Federal Republic of Germany - because of the lack of own experience - people have to resort largely to results developed in the United States, and considering further the general tendency here to adopt American precautions regarding radiation protection and reactor safety in a more stringent rather than a more lenient interpretation, then an almost frightening outlook will result. If the new proposed ground rules of the AEC were to become obligatory in the U. S., and were subsequently taken over by the EURATOM signatories, it would prove difficult to pinpoint any suitable site at all for larger nuclear power plants.

Once before, a "Notice of Proposed Rule Making" issued by the AEC in May 1959 along similar lines met with surprisingly strong echo and criticism. At the time, the said publication provoked comments from

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Translation from "Deutscher Forschungsdienst"
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about one hundred interested parties whose rejection of the site criteria was almost unanimously supported by the argument that - if the proposed rules were enacted - this would entail a serious obstacle to the further development of uses of nuclear energy. Moreover, it was too early yet to set up any specific criteria and consequently the ground rules would be bound to base largely on assumptions, since experimental or practical experience had not been available in the past. Now the ALC appears to be of the opinion that such experience has been accumulated meanwhile. There is reason to believe already at this stage that the new attempt to spell out and lay down a procedure for firm principles to determine proposed reactor plant sites, will meet with the same reactions as previously, during the 120-day period when objections may be raised.

In any case, also we in the German Federal Republic will have to deal with these concepts and principles in a serious and thorough manner. Primarily we will have to make sure that in this field no precedential decisions are taken which will jeopardize a continued growth of the German nuclear industry, where there is no genuine need for such decisions.