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### AEC INVESTIGATIONS COMPLETED ON KERR-MCGEE WORKING CONDITIONS AND QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURES

The Directorate of Regulatory Operations and the Division of Inspection of the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission have completed investigations into a series of allegations made by members of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic ~~Workers~~ International Union. The allegations were about working conditions and improper quality assurance procedures at the Kerr-McGee Nuclear Corporation plutonium processing facility near Crescent, Oklahoma.

Inspectors from the AEC Regulatory Operations Offices investigated 39 items reported by the Union members dealing with four areas of concern. Only two of those items, and a third which was not among the allegations, were found to be in apparent noncompliance with AEC requirements. Eighteen others among the 39 items were found to have some substance and were called to the attention of Kerr-McGee.

The three items of apparent noncompliance -- failure of the company to report to the AEC about a processing equipment problem; exceeding on two occasions the amount of plutonium permitted in a specific work area; and use by the licensee in a work area of a small quantity of plutonium in a form difference from that authorized by the license -- did not pose a hazard to workers or the public. Enforcement action will be taken by the AEC against Kerr-McGee concerning those items of apparent noncompliance.

On the matter of quality assurance procedures investigated by the Division of Inspection, four allegations were made by the Union concerning falsification of records and other related irregularities in connection with the production of fuel for the AEC's Fast Flux Test Facility (FFTF) at the Hanford plant in Washington State. The investigation was for fact-finding purposes and no conclusions are set forth in the report. An AEC task force has been established to review all quality assurance and inspection procedures related to the fabrication of FFTF fuel by Kerr-McGee. If this review raises any question about the integrity of any of the fuel, that fuel will be rejected.

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Kerr-McGee has a contract with the AEC to provide 18,500 plutonium fuel rods for the FFTF, a facility for testing components in the breeder reactor development program. None of the fuel has yet been used in the reactor. The FFTF is scheduled to go into operation in early 1978.

The investigation findings show some evidence to support two of the allegations -- falsification of photomicrograph negatives of weld test samples and improper use of sample analytical data. The photomicrographs are used for verifying and recording the thickness of the fuel cladding next to the weld, and they supplement metallographic examinations for determining weld quality. In addition to the required inspections conducted by Kerr-McGee, the fuel is subjected to stringent over-inspection after it arrives at Hanford, both destructive and non-destructive examinations are made of samples from each shipment. Of the fuel pins delivered to Hanford, about half have been so inspected with the result that less than two percent have been rejected.

Although the investigation showed some violation of quality assurance procedures, the Hanford inspections have revealed no evidence or indication to date that the quality of the fuel pins has been compromised.

The investigation reports were released January 7, 1975. Copies will be available for public inspection at the local Public Document Room in the Guthrie, Oklahoma Public Library, at the AEC's Regional Regulatory Operations Office in Chicago, and at the AEC's Public Document Room in Washington, D.C.

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