

The above conditions should obtain in the event of failure to reach orbit, and in addition the capsule should fall in broad ocean areas.

In the event of failure to obtain a stable orbit, or in re-entry from a successful orbit for any planned time, the capsule and contents should be burned and dispersed in the upper atmosphere.¹⁹

Citing results of tests already conducted, the Board indicated that a definitive program of further tests was being planned. An initial step in this program would involve placing pods on Atlas test vehicles launched from Cape Canaveral.²⁰

At the end of 1960, the Chairman of the Aerospace Nuclear Safety Board, Lieutenant Colonel Joseph A. Connor, Jr., of the United States Air Force, announced an AEC position on safety in the nuclear space program. Addressing the Atomic Industrial Forum, he stated that SNAP isotope and reactor devices had been thoroughly tested and found capable of burn-up on re-entry into the atmosphere at speeds above 24,000 feet per second, for a burn-up time of 300 seconds or more. Connor concluded: "the use of nuclear powered devices sufficient to meet all space requirements expected to be developed by 1980 would release but a small fraction of the radioactivity considered by the Federal Radiation Council to be tolerable for the general population."²¹

Firming a Base for Accelerated Space-Nuclear Achievements

President Kennedy had defined sharp views on new approaches to atomic energy and its control in the international arena at the outset of his Administration. Glenn Seaborg, then Chancellor of the University of California at Berkeley, recalled being in the university's Radiation Laboratory on 9 January 1961 when President-elect Kennedy called to ask him to accept the post of Chairman of the AEC. Upon his acceptance, Seaborg found himself "plunged into a new kind of chemistry, that of national and international events."²²

Seaborg was to find out that President Kennedy wanted a scientist as the AEC Chairman, and although he wanted a Democrat for that job, he was not interested in the party affiliation of those named to fill the other senior level positions within the agency. "I felt my job as chairman was nonpartisan," said Seaborg, and he added that it became clear to him that in the nuclear field the new president wanted most to mobilize the scientific community and involve its