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February 14, 1964

AEC 610/47

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ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION

GAS CENTRIFUGE

Note by the Secretary

The General Manager has requested that the attached report by the Director, Division of Classification, be circulated for the information of the Commission.

W. B. McCool
Secretary

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January 29, 1964

ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION

REPORT ON COLLABORATION WITH OTHER NATIONS IN CLASSIFICATION
POLICIES RELATIVE TO GAS CENTRIFUGES BY DIVISION OF
CLASSIFICATION, USAEC

1. Since 1947, the U.S. has been collaborating with the U.K. for the purpose of maintaining uniform declassification policies relative to atomic energy work. In the 1959 discussions concerning the classification of the gas centrifuge process, it was agreed by both nations that a "breakthrough" could occur which would require that subsequent data concerning the process be withheld from declassification.

2. As a result of studies of developments in this field in the U.S., the Division of Classification concluded that a "breakthrough" in gas centrifuge technology had occurred which would require that future information be held classified. At about the same time, it appeared from open literature publications that both West Germany and the Netherlands were working on gas centrifuges and that their technology might be somewhat more advanced than our own. However, no classification arrangement existed with either Germany or the Netherlands which would serve to prevent dissemination of their information to Nth powers.

3. As a consequence, the Director, Division of Classification recommended to the Director, Division of International Affairs, that immediate consideration be given to amending the classified

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bilateral agreements with Germany and the Netherlands to cover gas centrifuge work so as to provide a vehicle for the U.S. to establish classification agreements as well. The Director, Division of Classification advised the U.K. in March of 1960 that the U.S. had now determined that further information produced as a result of U.S. work in the gas centrifuge method of isotope separation would be classified. The U.K. was also informed that the U.S. was considering seeking the cooperation of West Germany and the Netherlands as well as the U.K. in order to preserve the classification status of such information.

4. In July of 1960 a mission consisting of representatives of the Divisions of International Affairs, Research, Production and Classification, and representatives of the Department of State studied the status of gas centrifuge work with representative from West Germany and the Netherlands with a view toward determining whether these nations might conceivably classify gas centrifuge technology and control the export of gas centrifuge equipment. During these studies and meetings with the Germans and Netherlands officials and later the U.K. officials, the Division of Classification offered to provide a draft classification guide. The Netherlands, Germany and the U.K. agreed to study the kind of classification procedures that might be feasible. In the middle of July 1960, the Division of Classification provided a guide to the Department of State for transmittal to Germany, the Netherlands and the U.K.

5. Early in March of 1962, another meeting was held with Germany, Netherlands and the U.K. at which agreement was reached to continue classification on gas centrifuges, using common classification standards such as those set forth in the above mentioned classification guide developed by the Division of

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of Classification. At this meeting, it was also agreed that Washington would serve as the principal clearing house on gas centrifuge classification matters and that periodic reviews of classification policies would take place.

6. Recently the Netherlands advised the U.S. that it wished to propose another meeting to be held early this year with U.S., U.K. and German representatives to review the practices of the four cooperating parties with regard to the classification of gas centrifuge information and to review the handling of classified patent applications in this field. The Division of Classification has worked closely with the Division of International Affairs in this regard. The Division of International Affairs has sought the concurrence of the Department of State in such a meeting which has been proposed for sometime in February. The Department of State now has this matter under advisement.

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