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April 1, 1949

General McCormack

Colonel Cooney

This document consists of 1 pages
Copy No. 1 of 1 Series B

REMARKS - RADIOLOGICAL WARFARE - JOINT PANEL STATUS REPORT OF 10 JANUARY 1949

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It appears to me that the recommendation made by the Noyes Panel of 10 January 1949, "The field testing of devices in approximately the final form before standardization, such testing of necessity to be made with tracer quantities (i. e., perhaps tens of curies)," may have been made without sufficient data to justify such a recommendation.

It is assumed that such a test will be made using materials which will eventually be used as the final RW weapon, such as radiotantalum or Zr-Cb. It is presumed that this is necessary in order to test the ballistics of the final material, to test its ease or difficulty of decontamination, and its behaviour on the soil. Therefore, it would not be possible to obtain a true picture by using radioactive materials with a short half-life.

Before the dissemination of even tens of curies of radioactive material with a half-life of approximately 100 days is made, it appears to me that the following questions should be answered in order to guard against unfavorable public reaction and political implications which might occur:

1. What is the water shed of the proposed site? Will this material eventually appear in the water in Texas or Oklahoma?

2. What is the geological structure?

3. What are the meteorological conditions? Are there dust storms in this area?

4. How much grazing is done in the surrounding country? Will the material be blown by the winds into the grazing area? (Cattle dying in Hanford Area raised this question.)

5. What effect will the dissemination of RW agents have on inhabitants of adjacent areas?

I should like to recommend that a committee consisting of a nationally known health physicist, meteorologist, radiologist, sanitary engineer and geologist be appointed for further consideration of the recommendation of the Noyes Board regarding the use of tens of curies and whether or not a full field test involving a megacurie amount should be attempted within the continental United States.

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