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Medical Research Program

29 August 1944

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WASHINGTON DISTRICT
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Colonel Warren has suggested that I summarize the biological research program which was agreed upon in our conference with you and Mr. Kennedy on 25 August 1944. This program which will be pursued with a relatively high priority will consist of three parts:

1. The development of chemical methods of determining plutonium in the excreta and in tissues and of ionization methods of detecting plutonium in the lungs.
2. Animal experimentation to check the methods described above.
3. Tracer experiments on humans to determine the percentage of plutonium excreted daily.

When satisfactory analytical methods have been developed in this laboratory the problem of carrying out further metabolic studies will be turned over to another medical group, presumably the Rochester group. It was also decided that the Rochester group should undertake a series of experiments with plutonium supplied by this project to determine the lethal dose in animals.

It is felt that a temporary staff of ten or eleven people will be required to complete the above program within a reasonable period of time. This will include four chemists, four chemical technicians, one physicist and two unskilled laboratory assistants. Of these, it is probable that one chemist and two or three technicians will remain permanently with the Medical Group to test for plutonium in the excreta of the working personnel. Only the physicist and two technicians are needed to complete the proposed temporary staff; arrangements have been made to secure these people. It is planned to have the activities of the above group supervised by an advisory committee representing the chemistry, physics and medical divisions.

Considerable additional laboratory space will be needed for this program. This will amount to about 1500 square feet, the approximate size of the Q building. If the Q building can be obtained, this will allow us to have a room to house the animals and carry out dirty operations (ashing and drying of tissues, etc.) and another for electronics.

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Page 2- Continued

It will also be necessary for us to have a "counting shack" outside the Technical Area as we will be concerned with the detection of very small amounts of radioactivity. It is proposed that the present hematology laboratory (U-1) and the medical office be retained at least until the temporary program has been completed. It is hoped that with the personnel and facilities outlined above the program can be completed in four months.

CC/ Col. Warren
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