

**March 23, 1960**

**Philip J. Farley, special Assistant to the Secretary of State, to Algie A. Wells, Director, Division of International Affairs, Atomic Energy Commission, 'Control of and Cooperation in Gas Centrifuge Research and Development Program'**

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**Summary:**

As West Germany and The Netherlands developed ultra-centrifuges without a classification policy, the AEC discuss ways to keep the technology under wraps without arousing suspicion from the other members of Euratom.

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ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION

PRELIMINARY STATE VIEWS ON GAS CENTRIFUGE

Note by the Secretary

The General Manager has requested that the attached letter from Mr. Philip J. Farley, Department of State, be circulated for the information of the Commission in connection with consideration of AEC 610/15.

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Secretary

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SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

March 23, 1960

## MEMORANDUM FOR

Mr. Algie A. Wells,  
Director,  
Division of International Affairs,  
Atomic Energy Commission.

SUBJECT: Control of and Cooperation in Centrifuge Research and  
Development.

The Department has given careful consideration to your memorandum to me of February 19 on the problem of ultra-centrifuge research and technology and the distribution of isotope separation equipment. I am writing now to give the Department's preliminary views, which we might discuss in detail at a meeting between officers of the Department and the Atomic Energy Commission.

The Department shares the concern of the Commission over the implications of unclassified development of ultra-centrifuge isotopic separation equipment in Germany and the Netherlands and the availability of such equipment on the commercial market. The Department believes, however, that possibilities of control of information pertaining to this equipment are very limited, although export controls by the German and Dutch Governments might be practicable.

The Department does not feel qualified to say whether information pertaining to ultra-centrifuge work in Germany and the Netherlands ought to be classified, but it believes that efforts to have such information classified would raise unusually difficult problems.

To begin with, the Germans would probably be unwilling to classify any information of this kind either unilaterally at our urging or through a bilateral agreement with the U.S. The classification of such information would raise suspicions that Germany was engaged in atomic weapons development and thus would raise serious foreign policy and public relations problems for the German Government. The problem would not be made easier from the foreign policy standpoint if classification were made under a bilateral

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agreement with the United States, since we have refused to collaborate with France in the field of isotope separation and Germany might encounter serious difficulties with Euratom if it attempted to conclude such an agreement.

Furthermore, Euratom probably would insist that all such information be made available to the Commission under the terms of the dissemination of information provisions of the treaty.

Another possibility would be to request that Euratom attempt to persuade the member states to classify all information connected with the ultra-centrifuge development on the basis of an understanding similar to the one we have with the United Kingdom covering gaseous diffusion. The Department, however, doubts whether Euratom would be prepared to meet such a request; it would probably press us to conclude an agreement covering cooperation in this field, in which it has expressed strong interest. Furthermore, France, which has attempted to gain our cooperation in the field of isotope separation, probably would also be reluctant to consent to such a request and might regard our interest in this problem as an important bargaining point for attaining its objectives.

Euratom in the past has expressed a readiness to become a party to classified information that has peaceful applications as well as military. An agreement with Euratom that covered cooperation in this field as well as others could provide an acceptable framework, from a foreign policy point of view, for applying classification. Assurances by Euratom that classification was not a cover for military activity might win greater acceptance than those coming either from Germany or the United States. Furthermore, Euratom, through its treaty responsibilities for gathering and disseminating information within the Community, is probably best equipped to keep abreast of all significant developments in this field. This approach, however, may raise serious questions regarding Euratom's security. We would have to assume that any information classified under an agreement between the United States and Euratom would be made available to the French Atomic Energy Commission. Therefore, since the United States Atomic Energy Commission has not been able to approve the French AEC for security, it is questionable whether it could approve Euratom from the security standpoint. The Department believes that a negative finding would be quite damaging to Euratom's status and that no attempt to check on its security procedures should be made unless the USAEC agreed not to object to the transmittal of information obtained by Euratom through an agreement with the United States to the French AEC.

Control of exports of ultra-centrifuge equipment could not be exercised by Euratom, but the German and Dutch Governments might be able and willing to impose such controls. We could determine this, however, only after discussions with representatives of Germany and the Netherlands. Safeguards might be applied by the IAEA. Euratom itself has no power to exercise safeguards outside the Community. The commercial firms and universities now working on this ultra-centrifuge development might also be prepared to restrict the circulation of information pertaining to their work; informal commercial restrictions of this nature might prove to be quite effective.

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The Secretary has called Chancellor Adenauer's attention to the implications of Germany's work in the ultra-centrifuge field. The Chancellor indicated that he would look into the matter.

I shall be happy to arrange a meeting between Department and AEC officers to discuss this problem further if you wish. If this is acceptable to you, I suggest that a member of your staff get in touch with Mr. Chapin.

/s/ Philip J. Farley

Philip J. Farley

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