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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY DECLASSIFICATION REVIEW
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NAME: Jim Sheehy
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NAME: Nazir Khalil AL
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Mr. Michael Q. Guy
Weapons Production Division
U. S. Department Of Energy
Albuquerque Operations Office
P. O. Box 5400
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87115

Dear Sir:

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO YOUR TWX OF OCTOBER 3, 1980, REGARDING BRUSH WELLMAN LETTER AND ALO PROPOSED BERYLLIUM PROGRAM. (U)

REFERENCE:

1. Proposal of Brush Wellman Inc. for upgrading of Beryllium Metal Plant at Elmore, Ohio, July 28, 1980.

2. Memorandum, R. E. Caudle to H. E. Roser, "Beryllium Supply Program", DP-252, September 12, 1980.

3. TWX, H. E. Roser to Rockwell International, Rocky Flats, "Beryllium Supply Program," September 8, 1980.

4. Letter, Brush Wellman Inc. (M. B. Powers) to M. Q. Guy, reiterating Brush Wellman Inc. position and stating certain demands, August 29, 1980.

5. Letter, T. C. Jones to Maj. Gen. W. W. Hoover stating "AL's position in regard to the Brush letter and beryllium", September 17, 1980.

6. TWX, M. Q. Guy to distribution, requesting comments on References 3, 4, and 5, October 3, 1980.

7. Letter, Seymour Sack, LLNL, to M. Q. Guy, responding to References 5 and 6, October 14, 1980.

8. Letter, R. O. Williams, Jr., AI,RF, to H. E. Roser, discussing References 4 and 5.

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The above long list of references has been reviewed and digested at LASL within the past few days. It is obvious to any reader that there are differing and conflicting opinions presented; further, there are contradictory positions within some of the organizations involved in the beryllium supply situation. There are, indeed, differences of opinion within LASL as to the need for either beryllium metal or its oxide; however, there is a policy that was spelled out on August 2, 1979, by the Associate Director for National Security Programs, R. D. Baker. This policy has been neither modified nor rescinded.

In essence the LASL policy is:

1. Weapons have been designed, tested, and entered into stockpile, that contain no beryllium or beryllium compounds.

2. LASL is designing future weapons to use as little of beryllium products as possible, but probably we can not eliminate their use completely in the near term, i.e., for current production.

3. LASL is pursuing investigations of alternate materials, to beryllium and beryllium oxide, not desperately, but as a part of the responsible action that should be undertaken by a laboratory concerned about a possible supply problem of any material that is used in nuclear weapons.

4. LASL supports and encourages the investigation of effective utilization of scrap beryllium product; it recommends serious consideration of reactivating the ingot sheet program at AI,RF. In particular, the reclamination of beryllium materials that have been surface contaminated by contact with radioactive materials and of beryllium materials, which contain activated impurities resulting from irradiation, should be investigated.

It appears from Reference 2 that ALO was charged with developing a comprehensive program management plan to address future beryllium materials needs for weapons, to consider all options including alternate materials, and to include serious consideration of Brush Wellman Inc. proposals as part of the plan. Reference 3, which requests that Rockwell International "establish a program function to provide management and technical support to the AL Program Manager" is a first step in responding to MA. Reference 5 does no such thing and seems to be a complete and utter capitulation to Brush Wellman Inc. Fortunately it was followed by Reference 6, to which this letter purports to respond.

From the vantage point of hindsight, having digested the responses from LLNL and AI,RF, the following comments are offered:

1. The Brush Wellman Inc. letter is tantamount to industrial blackmail and should be considered as a bargaining position, rather than a final one, and subject to negotiation.

2. As pointed out by LLNL, there is not presently a Beryllium Program. In fact, there does not appear to be a Beryllium Coordinating Committee--unless the two AI,RF personnel and the SNLL person, who met with ROF Cardiff people, are the Committee. The functions of such a committee, or even the desirability of one is not known at LASL. If such a committee is deemed desirable, then the functions should be clearly delineated and all members should participate and should be kept informed by the AL Program Manager.

3. Although inclined to agree with LLNL that AI,RF is attempting to make a big production out of a request for a little help for the AL Program Manager, LASL does recommend that serious consideration be given to the AI,RF response when a Program Plan is prepared. Personally, I believe that the LLNL response is a gross oversimplification of the beryllium materials supply situation. It certainly does not meet the basic requirements of Reference 2.

4. The LASL position to use a minimum of beryllium products will make it difficult and expensive for DOE, DoD, and MOD in UK to meet the Brush Wellman Inc. demand that 50,000 lbs. per year of beryllium metal be purchased. Also, our suggestion that the ingot sheet facility be reactivated to process scrap beryllium metal could cause Brush Wellmann Inc. to carry out their threat to stop producing beryllium.

5. The suggestion that Rockwell International contract with Brush Wellman Inc. is fraught with problems. Brush Wellman Inc. wants to analyze their own plant and decide what steps to take to upgrade it--with $3.6 M of government money--with no interference from outside.

They particularly do not want to deal with Rockwell on this matter and, from a word-of-mouth report, they do not want SNLL in on it either. They politely refused any technical assistance from "experts" in DOE or any of its contractors. Surely such a program should be monitored, both for technical content and for financial accountability. The question naturally arises as to the adequacy of General Accounting Office auditing of Brush Wellman Inc. when, or if, the government does agree to the $3.6 M transaction. LASL believes representatives of DOE should monitor and audit any such program as the above.

Yours truly,

John E. Hockett

J. E. Hockett
Group WX-5

JEH:rg/edt

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