DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

President's Board of Advisors on Historically Black Colleges and Universities; Meeting

AGENCY: Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice of Meeting; Correction.

SUMMARY: On April 10, 1997, a notice of meeting was published in the **Federal Register**, (62FR p. 17602) for a meeting of the President's Board of Advisors on Historically Black Colleges and Universities. This notice corrects the meeting place as follows: Key Bridge Marriott, 1401 Lee Highway, Arlington, VA 22209. All other information in the notice remains the same.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Amy Billingsley, White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities, U.S. Department of Education, 600 Independence Avenue, SW, The Portals Building, Suite 605, Washington, DC 20202–5120. Telephone: (202) 708–8667.

Dated: April 4, 1997.

David A. Longanecker,

Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education.

[FR Doc. 97–10656 Filed 4–23–97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000–01–P

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

A Study of the Nonproliferation Implications of Chemical Separation of Aluminum-based Research Reactor Spent Nuclear Fuel

AGENCY: Department of Energy.

ACTION: Request for comments on nonproliferation study's scope and proposed outline.

SUMMARY: The Department of Energy (DOE) announces its intent to prepare a study on the nuclear nonproliferation and other (e.g., cost and scheduling) implications of chemically separating (i.e., reprocessing) aluminum-based research reactor spent nuclear fuel at DOE's Savannah River Site, and requests comments from the public on the scope and proposed outline of the study. The objective of the study is to assess the nonproliferation benefits and disadvantages, and cost and timing issues involved with chemically separating aluminum-based research reactor spent nuclear fuel. The study will also identify potential ways to mitigate any disadvantages identified by the study. DOE announced its intent to perform this study in the *Record of Decision on a Nuclear Weapons Nonproliferation Policy Concerning Foreign Research Reactor Spent Nuclear Fuel.* Although the Record of Decision specified that the study would only address foreign research reactor spent fuel, the Department has subsequently decided also to cover domestic research reactor spent fuel at the Savannah River Site in the study because many, if not all, of the same considerations that apply to management of the foreign spent fuel also apply to the domestic spent fuel. The Department of Energy has already proposed to manage domestic spent research reactor fuel in a manner consistent with foreign spent research reactor fuel.

DATES: Comments on the scope and proposed outline for the study must be postmarked or submitted by fax or electronic mail by May 27, 1997 to ensure that they will be considered in the drafting of this study. Comments received after the close of the comment period will be considered to the extent practicable. DOE plans to hold at least two public meetings (in Washington, D.C. and near the Savannah River Site) to discuss the draft study. The locations, dates, and times for these meetings will be announced later by appropriate means.

ADDRESSES: Questions and comments concerning the Study of the Nonproliferation and Other Implications of Chemical Separation of Aluminum-based Research Reactor Spent Nuclear Fuel, as well as comments on the scope of the study, may be submitted by writing to: Spent Fuel Nonproliferation Study, Office of Arms Control and Nonproliferation, NN–42/JBW, U.S. Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20585.

Questions and comments can also be submitted via electronic mail at: Assessment@hq.doe.gov. Questions and comments may also be submitted to the following toll-free telephone numbers: phone 800–930–2014 or fax 800–930–2019.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The *Record of Decision on a Nuclear Weapons Nonproliferation Policy Concerning Foreign Research Reactor Spent Nuclear Fuel,* 61 FR 25091, May 17,1996, stated, in part, that:

> In order to provide a sound policy basis for making a determination on whether and how to utilize the F-Canyon for chemical separation tasks that are not driven by health and safety considerations, DOE will commission or conduct an independent study of the nonproliferation and other (e.g., cost and timing) implications of chemical separation of spent nuclear fuel from foreign research reactors. The study * * * will be completed in a timely fashion to allow a subsequent decision about possible * * * chemical separation of foreign research reactor spent nuclear fuel to be fully considered by the public, the Congress and Executive Branch agencies.

Background

Following completion of the *Final Environmental Impact Statement on a Proposed Nuclear Weapons Nonproliferation Policy Concerning Foreign Research Reactor Spent Nuclear Fuel* (the Final EIS, DOE/EIS–218F of February 1996), DOE and the Department of State decided to implement a new policy for accepting from foreign research reactors spent nuclear fuel containing uranium enriched in the United States (Record of Decision, 61 FR 25091). Implementation of this policy will result in the acceptance by the United States of up to 22,700 individual spent nuclear fuel elements [about 19.2 metric tons of heavy metal (MTHM)]. Of the total, about 17,800 elements (about 18.2 MTHM) are aluminum-based spent fuel elements which have been assigned to DOE's Savannah River Site for management. The remaining foreign research reactor spent nuclear fuel elements (about 1 MTHM) will be managed at the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory.

In the Record of Decision, DOE announced that it will implement the new spent fuel acceptance policy through a three-point strategy. First, DOE has initiated an accelerated program to identify, develop, and demonstrate one or more non-reprocessing, cost-effective treatment and/or packaging technologies to prepare the foreign research reactor spent nuclear fuel for ultimate disposal. The purpose of these technologies would be to put the foreign research reactor spent nuclear fuel into a form or package that is suitable for geologic disposal and meets all applicable safety and environmental requirements, without necessarily separating the fissile materials. Examples of such treatment or packaging technologies could include: (1) press and dilute or poison, (2) melt and dilute or poison, (3) plasma arc treatment, (4) electrometallurgical treatment, (5) glass materials oxidation and dissolution, (6) dissolve and vitrify, (7) direct disposal in small packages, and (8) direct co-disposal with high-level radioactive waste.[1]

[1] These alternatives are discussed in ''Technical Strategy for the Treatment, Packaging, and Disposal of Aluminum-Based Spent Nuclear Fuel: A Report of the Research Reactor Spent Nuclear Fuel Task

Continued

DOE would select, develop, and implement, if possible, one or more of these treatment or packaging technologies by the year 2000. After treatment and/or packaging, the foreign research reactor spent nuclear fuel would be managed onsite in ''road ready'' dry storage until transported offsite for continued storage elsewhere or for disposal. DOE is committed to avoiding indefinite storage of this spent nuclear fuel in a form that is unsuitable for disposal.

The second part of this strategy addresses the possibility that, despite DOE's best efforts, a new treatment and/or packaging technology may not be ready for implementation by the year 2000. In this instance, the Department has stated that it will consider chemically separating some of the foreign research reactor spent fuel elements, if Savannah River Site canyon operations are still being conducted to stabilize at-risk materials in accordance with the Records of Decision (60 FR 65300 of December 19, 1995, 61 FR 6633 of February 21, 1996 and 61 FR 48474 of September 6, 1996) issued after completion of the *Interim Management of Nuclear Materials Final Environmental Impact Statement* (DOE/EIS–0220 of October 1995). In order to provide a sound policy basis for determining whether and how to use chemical separation when health and safety considerations are not implicated, DOE committed to commission or conduct an independent study of the nonproliferation and other (e.g., cost and timing) implications of chemically separating spent nuclear fuel [2] from foreign research reactors (i.e., the study discussed in this request for comments). Although the Record of Decision specified that the study would only address foreign research reactor spent fuel, the Department has subsequently decided also to cover domestic research reactor spent fuel at the Savannah River Site in the study since many, if not all, of the same considerations that apply to management of the foreign spent fuel also apply to the domestic spent fuel.

The third part of DOE's strategy for managing foreign research reactor spent nuclear fuel involves closely monitoring the spent fuel placed in wet storage at the Savannah River Site to allow prompt detection of any health or safety problems that might arise. DOE currently is unaware of any technical basis for believing that this spent nuclear fuel cannot be safely stored until one or more of the new packaging and/or treatment technologies becomes available. Nevertheless, if health and safety concerns involving any of the foreign research reactor spent nuclear fuel are identified prior to development of an appropriate new treatment or packaging technology, DOE would use either or both of the reprocessing facilities at the Savannah River Site, if those facilities are operating, to process the affected spent fuel elements.

Scope of the Study

This request for comments presents the scope of the study of the nonproliferation implications, including cost and scheduling aspects, of possible chemical separation of the foreign and domestic research reactor spent nuclear fuel in DOE's inventory at the Savannah River Site, for reasons other than health and safety. The study will examine the following issues:

(1) nonproliferation impacts of chemical separation of the foreign and domestic research reactor spent nuclear fuel in either or both of the Savannah River Site reprocessing canyons;

(2) comparable nonproliferation impacts of other alternatives for managing the spent nuclear fuel;

(3) potential ways to mitigate any nonproliferation disadvantages associated with chemical separation of this spent fuel; and

(4) the impacts of cost and scheduling considerations on nonproliferation implications.

In examining these issues, the following outline is proposed:

Study Outline [3]

I. Introduction

- A review of the origins of the proposed study in the Record of Decision on a Nuclear Weapons Nonproliferation Policy Concerning Foreign Research Reactor Spent Nuclear Fuel (61 FR 25091).
- Scope, factors for analysis, and plan of the study.

II. Background and Context

- U.S. nonproliferation policy dealing with the proliferation risks of fissile materials, including highly enriched uranium (HEU).
- The Reduced Enrichment for Research and Test Reactors (RERTR) Program.
- The use of weapons-usable fissile material in the civilian nuclear fuel cycle.
- Research reactor spent nuclear fuel—acceptance, inventories, status and expectations.
- Status and future of DOE reprocessing facilities.
- New technologies and other alternatives for disposal of spent nuclear fuel without chemical separation.[4]

III. Technological Aspects of Chemical Separation Versus Alternative Treatments

- Description of treatment technology.
- Quantities of foreign and domestic fuels under study.
- Scheduling the input/output stream.
- Relative cost.
- Physical form of output products.

IV. Nonproliferation Impacts of Chemical Separation Versus Alternative Treatments

- Reducing access to weapons-usable materials.
- Reducing inventories of weapons capable materials abroad.
- U.S. nonproliferation and arms control policy and goals.
- Foreign fuel cycle choices and policies.
- Foreign cooperation with the United States on broader nonproliferation issues.
- IAEA safeguards and transparency.
- Broader U.S. policies on storage and disposition of excess weapons-usable fissile materials.
- Cost and/or schedule implications for nonproliferation.

V. Implications for Other Fuels Under DOE Management

Domestic research reactor fuels.

Other materials.

VI. Possible Mitigation Steps for Nonproliferation Disadvantages

VII. Conclusions

Issued in Washington, D.C. on April 15, 1997.

Cherie P. Fitzgerald,

Acting Director, Office of Arms Control and Nonproliferation.

[FR Doc. 97–10611 Filed 4–23–97; 8:45 am]

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Team,'' Volume I, June 1996, United States Department of Energy.

[2] The term ''spent nuclear fuel,'' in the context of the planned study, includes domestic as well as foreign research reactor fuel, and target material from research reactors.

[3] This outline is included to indicate the types of information that the Department plans to include in the study and how it might be presented. The Department may revise the outline, as the study progresses, as appropriate.

[4] These alternatives may include, but are not necessarily limited to, direct disposal, HEU dilution, and advanced treatment technologies as discussed in the report cited in footnote 1.