

Orig: Bill Burton  
cc: CHR  
file "Chernobyl"

TO: Carol Rasco  
FROM: Brian Burke

July 13, 1993

SUBJ: PROPOSAL FOR FUNDING TO STUDY THE HUMAN HEALTH AFFECTS  
OF LOW LEVEL RADIATION FROM THE CHERNOBYL ACCIDENT

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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

You have asked me to advise you on whether the White House should endorse the International Consortium for Research on the Health Effects of Radiation ("ICRHER") in its effort to obtain funding from DOE. (See attached). ICRHER seeks funding to begin a pilot program for the long term study of the human health affects of low level radiation on Chernobyl accident survivors. In short, the request for White House support is moot. DOE and ICRHER have already reached an amicable conclusion. DOE has decided to fund a revised version of the project.

Background

ICRHER originally submitted its proposal to DOE in September 1992. The National Marrow Donor Program was designated as the Coordinating Center for all aspects of the proposed research. Four research teams contributed specific projects to the proposal, including the following: the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle ("FHCRC"),<sup>1</sup> the Hadassah Medical Organization in Jerusalem, the Methodist Hospital/Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, and the National Marrow Donor Program in Minneapolis. The original proposal represented a broad range of research proposals and objectives. Only one component of the project proposed to be conducted within Russia itself, the pilot study proposed by the FHCRC team.

DOE formed an ad hoc review committee to assess the proposal. The committee concluded they could endorse funding only for the FHCRC component which was designed to conduct a preliminary assessment of the radiation dose and to conduct a pilot cohort study in Bryansk. Consequently, DOE invited ICRHER to resubmit a more focused proposal.

In April 1993, DOE received a revised proposal which focused on the FHCRC component of the original proposal. DOE has reviewed the modified proposal, met with ICRHER's Chairman, Admiral E.H. Zumwalt, and worked with ICRHER to further design the FHCRC pilot program. Subsequently, in June of this year (approximately the same time that ICRHER requested White House support for the project), DOE decided unilaterally to fund the project and initiated the funding appropriation process. The

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<sup>1</sup> Since mid-1990 a team of investigators at FHCRC in Seattle has been working to develop collaborative ties with scientific colleagues in areas of the former Soviet Union that were contaminated by radiation from the Chernobyl accident.

revised project will receive funding shortly.

Available Research Funds/Original Proposal Costs

ICRHER originally requested \$7.9 million to fund the first two years of its proposal. (The need for long term funding is inherent in the proposal). This amount drastically exceeded the \$ 2 million total annual amount available for all DOE research funding.

DOE has agreed to fund \$200,000 for the FHCRC pilot program. Regarding the original ICRHER proposal submitted in September 1992, DOE scientists and technical staff concluded that it was: complex; beyond the existing charter of agreement between the United States and Russia; far in excess of DOE's available funds; would require a large administrative commitment and costs; and would have no clear scientific pay-off.

RECOMMENDATION

It is my understanding that ICRHER's request for support is now moot. However, if ICRHER continues to seek White House support for funding each of the components contained in its original proposal, despite the complexity and costs problems, the National Institute for Health would be a more appropriate funding source.

From the Office of the Chief of Staff

Phone: 202/456-6797 Fax: 202/456-1121

Date: 7-7-93 Response needed by: 7-14-93

COS Office Contact: Bill Burton

	Action	FYI		Action	FYI
Joan Baggett			Leon Panetta	✓	
Rahm Emanuel			Howard Paster		
Mark Gearan			John Podesta		
David Gergen			Jack Quinn		
Jack Gibbons			Carol Rasco	✓	
Marcia Hale			Bob Rubin		
Alexis Herman			Eli Segal		
Nancy Hermann			Ricki Seidman		
Tony Lake			George Stephanopoulos		
Bruce Lindsey			Christine Varney		
Katie McGinty			David Watkins		
Regina Montoya			Maggie Williams		
Dee Dee Myers					
Roy Neel					
Bernie Nussbaum					

Remarks: Please have the attached reviewed with your advice as to whether we should proceed in recommending this grant as requested.  
Thanks.

Response:

GENERAL LAND OFFICE

GARRY MAURO  
COMMISSIONER

MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 17, 1993

TO: Bill Burton, Policy and Staff Director,  
Office of the Chief of Staff, The White House

FROM: Garry Mauro, Texas Land Commissioner



SUBJECT: Chernobyl Proposal

Attached is a proposed memo from you to Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary indicating White House support for the Chernobyl low-level radiation study proposed by the International Consortium for Research on the Health Effects of Radiation.

Those involved in this initiative wish to thank you and Chief of Staff Mack McLarty for your support and encouragement on this highly important health care initiative. Given the tremendous demands on your time, we felt that such a memo would be the most efficient and effective way of communicating that support to the Secretary.

PROPOSED MEMORANDUM

Dear Madam Secretary:

During the last several months, the White House has become aware of a proposal submitted to the Department of Energy that we feel holds great potential to further the President's policies with regard to the former Soviet Union, Israel and the United States. The proposal is to study the human health effects of low level radiation from the Chernobyl accident, and involves residents in Russia, Belarus, Ukraine as well as emigres in Israel and the United States.

We feel this initiative fits well under the President's commitment for assistance announced following his Vancouver summit meeting with Russian President Yeltsin, and that the timing is right for the Department of Energy to consider fully funding the proposal.

The recent Tomsk-7 nuclear explosion reminded us dramatically that Russia, and much of the rest of the world, is terribly vulnerable. Another Chernobyl is almost inevitable and the proposed research can aid us in helping the Russian people, as well as ourselves, to understand and prepare for such an event.

This project is of a humanitarian nature and would be recognizable as such by the Russian, Israeli and American publics. Funding would be consistent with the \$1.6 billion assistance package announced by the President in Vancouver. Specifically, this project will require \$4 million the first year and \$3.9 million the second year.

Aspects of this project of particular interest to the President:

1. It is in line with his plan/commitment to invest in Russia and the Administration's objectives of improving nuclear safety and expanding "people-to-people" exchange programs.
2. It builds infrastructure (communications/training/facilities) in Russia with a high degree of accountability -- funds can be positively tracked.
3. The research is directed at health effects of radiation -- a significant concern of the American population, which is surrounded by radiation.
4. It initiates a critical public/private partnership between the people and governments of Israel, Russia, Belarus, Ukraine and the United States.
5. It helps to prepare the world for another nuclear "accident".

I have asked Admiral E.R. Zumwalt, who is, as you know, chairman of the International Consortium for Research On the Health Effects of Radiation, to contact you regarding implementation of this program.