Prime Minister (1)

John Fairclough has now checked with DOE and Brian Unwin and they are content for him to explore with his scientific colleagues where there are any gaps in our knowledge which Chernobyl has exposed and which need to be filled. Cabinet Office have provided an explanatory note (attached). Content, subject to seeing this work does not cut across other initiatives or enquiries? MEA 14/5

WO957

MR ADDISON - No. 10

7 May 1986

CHERNOBYL NUCLEAR REACTOR ACCIDENT

At the present time the main concern of Ministers is rightly the immediate domestic and international issues arising from the accident. However, there are a number of important longer-term scientific and technical implications which will have to be addressed.

2. It is my intention to convene a meeting at Chief Scientist level, when the immediate operational activity has abated, to establish what questions need to be asked and who will be answering them. I consider it important to ensure at an early stage that adequate steps are being taken to ensure that we learn all possible lessons from this accident and that there is proper coordination of the different strands.

3. If the Prime Minister is content with this approach, I will proceed as above and report back to her when I see her on 3 June.

JOHN FAIRCLOUGH
Chief Scientific Adviser

DISASTERS: Chernobyl - April 86

CF
Fuller

10 DOWNING STREET

Nigel Wicks – for info.

I have spoken to Michael Stark and to John Fenday L.

John F. will speak to RIA, bearing in mind the need to avoid cutting across other work going on in Whitehall, and come back to us.

MEA

MEA 5/5

Noted

NW

5.5

CF

WO8

MR ADDISON - No. 10

13 May 1986

MJ(RTA) to provide more info on what he is actually proposing to do.
MGA 13/5

CHERNOBYL NUCLEAR ACCIDENT

As a result of my minute of 7 May you expressed fears about possible duplication of existing initiatives.

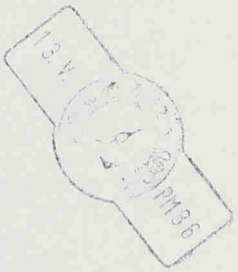
2. The matter has now been discussed with DOE officials and Mr Waldegrave, and with Brian Unwin in his capacity of Chairman of the Civil Contingencies Unit. These discussions have been useful in clarifying what other initiatives are planned, but there is agreement that what I am proposing complements, rather than duplicates, them.

3. I therefore hope that you are content for me to proceed.

4. I am copying this minute to Michael Stark.

JOHN W FAIRCLOUGH
Chief Scientific Adviser

Soviet Nuclear Accident : DISASTERS
Apr 86



Mr. Fairclough
Chief Scientific Adviser

CHERNOBYL NUCLEAR REACTOR ACCIDENT

The Prime Minister has seen your minutes to me of 7 and 13 May, together with Michael Stark's of 14 May. She is content that you should convene a meeting at Chief Scientist level as you propose; she has also noted the importance of ensuring that this work does not cut across other initiatives and enquiries.

I am copying this to Michael Stark.

(MARK ADDISON)
15 May 1986

Ref. A086/1447

MR ADDISON

You asked for advice about the Chief Scientific Adviser's proposal to hold a meeting on matters arising from the Chernobyl accident.

2. There is work in hand on a number of fronts:

a. Immediate Issues (current risks to health in the UK, public information, co-ordination of Government actions etc)
These are primarily for the Department of ~~Energy~~ Environment (in the lead) and other Departments as appropriate. To the extent that co-ordination is appropriate from the centre rather than from the lead Department, it is being handled through the Civil Contingencies Unit which has been meeting regularly.

b. Preparation for a Future Similar Contingency
At the proposal of the Department of the Environment, an interdepartmental review is to be conducted among interested Departments, with the aim of determining whether better arrangements could be instituted for the future: both to ensure improved co-ordination and a faster response to public concern, and to prepare for the contingency of an even more serious accident closer at hand (eg in France). Sir Robert Armstrong is to discuss this with Permanent Secretaries shortly.

3. Mr Fairclough's proposal does not cut across this work, since it is concerned with the question whether anything could or should be learned from Chernobyl about reactor design, protective measures etc which could help to prevent such a contingency arising. His aim in the first instance is simply to convene a meeting of the Chief Scientists in the three main Departments (Environment, Energy and DTI) with a role in the planning and design of nuclear installations, to see what data is available and whether there are gaps in our knowledge which should be filled. This would be well

worth doing. He will report back to Sir Robert Armstrong and I shall ensure that you are kept informed of the outcome.

MS

M C STARK

14 May 1986