

Rain as Weapon Thought Possible By U. S. Scientists

West-East Pattern Gives Us the Edge Over Soviet Russia

By **FRANK CAREY**
AP Science Reporter

WASHINGTON (AP)—It may some day be possible to cause torrents of rain over Russia by seeding clouds moving toward the Soviet Union.

Or it may be possible if an opposite effect is desired—to cause destructive droughts which would dry up food crops by "overseeding" those same clouds.

And fortunately for the United States, Russia could do little to retaliate because most weather

moves from west to east.

The possibility such a spectacular device as this might be used in some future total war "should not be discounted," according to the man who heads a group set up by Congress to advise it on the chances for success of plans to control the weather.

Capt. Howard Orville, U. S. N. ret. who charted the weather for Doolittle's raid on Tokyo and helped prepare the forecasts for the North African and Normandy invasions, is chairman of an 11-member advisory committee charged by Congress with seeing that current efforts at rain making and rain suppression don't get out of hand.

It is Orville's personal view that if the United States would devote the same effort and money to weather experiments that it does to atomic development it could, in about 40 years, "increase precipi-

tation over any area almost at will, using favorable situations."

However, he emphasizes that the advisory committee does not take it for granted weather control will or will not work.

In the law setting up the advisory group, Congress said application of scientific advances to the problem of weather "appears to be practical."

Primarily, Congress wants the committee to determine whether experiments, public and private, strengthen possibilities of large weather control.

But the committee has a corollary job: to determine whether federal legislation is necessary to be sure that attempts at weather modification don't result in disaster, such as "catastrophic droughts, storms, floods and other phenomena . . ."

And finally, Congress wants the committee to recommend to what extent the government should experiment with or engage in weather control activities.

The weather bureau has been conducting extensive cloud-seeding tests in the Seattle area. Meteorologist Ferguson Hall, the man in

charge, says results still are being evaluated. He adds, however, that as of now he does not think weather control on any kind of worthwhile scale will be worked out.

This opinion is echoed by one of the top scientists in the bureau. Dr. Harry Wexler, who maintains that if rainfall increases claimed by commercial rain making firms were real "they would stand out like a sore thumb and such has not been revealed, at least in the cases we have studied."

Orville sums up the work of his investigators this way: "If the advisory committee finds that weather modification project cannot produce important results it will so report -and thus detour farmers and ranchers from spending their money unwisely."

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"If the committee finds out I can confirm the results claimed by reputable and scientifically competent operators -claims of rainfall increases of from 7 to 50 per cent and more- then, the dollar benefits to agriculture, industry and government will be so great as to be incalculable.

"In other words, this study will produce direct and immediate benefits no matter what the advisory committee finds out."

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