

November 8, 2000

MEMORANDUM TO: Chairman Meserve
Commissioner Dicus
Commissioner Diaz
Commissioner McGaffigan
Commissioner Merrifield

FROM: Janice Dunn Lee, Director */RA/*
Office of International Programs

SUBJECT: 44th INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY GENERAL
CONFERENCE, SEPTEMBER 18-22, 2000

The 44th International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) General Conference (GC) was held in Vienna, Austria, September 18-22, 2000. Chairman Meserve and the NRC delegation participated in the plenary activities of the GC and held various meetings and consultations with regulatory colleagues, the IAEA Secretariat management and staff. The discussions and events on the margins of the GC included 24 bilateral meetings hosted by NRC; 4 additional bilateral meetings hosted by the Department of Energy (DOE) in which NRC participated; and 5 meetings with the IAEA Director General, the Deputy Directors General, and members of their staffs. Chairman Meserve also renewed NRC's bilateral regulatory information exchange arrangements with the Republic of Korea, Spain, the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic, and Lithuania, and signed an initial arrangement with Romania.

While the scope and depth of the bilateral discussions varied, they provided useful insights into activities and significant concerns of foreign regulatory agencies. Reporting cables were prepared for each of the bilateral meetings (Attachment 1). In addition, three classified cables were generated which were provided to you under separate cover.

The U.S. Government achieved its objectives for the GC. Actions taken included resolutions related to regional issues in the Middle East and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and on broader issues concerning Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty outcomes, measures to strengthen the safety of transport of radioactive materials, and safeguards. A Russian-sponsored resolution endorsing an IAEA role in the development of innovative and proliferation-resistant nuclear power technologies was rejected, as were several attempts to include language, in several resolutions, excluding nuclear power projects from the clean development mechanism of the Kyoto protocol. A resolution sponsored by Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine on radiological criteria for long-lived radionuclides in commodities (especially food stuffs and wood) passed. The resolution calls for the IAEA to develop a report on the impact of nuclear accidents on commodities using the IAEA and radiation protection advisory mechanisms.

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Technical cooperation and safeguards financing issues were resolved at the September 11-15, 2000, Board of Governors meeting, and adopted by the GC. The regular budget was approved at zero real growth, resulting in a slight decrease for the U.S. scale of assessment. Reporting cables describing these and other issues are at Attachment 2.

On September 21, 2000, Chairman Meserve visited the Slovak Republic to sign a five-year renewal of the NRC-Nuclear Regulatory Authority (UJD) bilateral arrangement as noted above. Hosted by Miroslav Lipar, Chairman of the UJD, Chairman Meserve toured the Emergency Response Center in Bratislava and the Bohunice V-1 nuclear power plant. A report of this visit is at Attachment 3.

A scientific forum titled, "Radioactive Waste Management: Turning Options into Solutions," was conducted, parallel to the GC. The objective of the forum was to bring to the attention of senior representatives present at the GC some of the important scientific and technical issues in the field of radioactive waste management and to promote awareness of the international dimension of current developments. Panelists observed that technological solutions to the safe management of radioactive waste exist, but public acceptance is needed; a structured participatory process for decision making is needed; the consensus of all parties is unlikely and therefore a formal, transparent decision-making process with public participation is essential; the decision-making process needs to be step-wise with the ability to reverse decisions at a later date; and progress has to be made on a national level in relation to siting of repositories. A copy of the provisional program is at Attachment 4.

The annual Senior Regulator's Meeting was held on September 21, 2000, in conjunction with the GC. EDO William Travers chaired the meeting that included senior regulators from 25 nations. Discussions were held and views exchanged on the impact of economic deregulation on nuclear safety regulatory work (led by Spain); the research capacity needed to ensure operational safety in the long term (led by Canada); and the regulatory control of radiation sources and radioactive materials (led by the U.S./NRC).

Attachments: 1. Reporting cables (bilateral meetings)
2. Reporting cables (General Conference issues)
3. Report of 9/21/00 Chairman Meserve visit to the Slovak Republic
4. Provisional Program

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