

July 12, 1999

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NOTE TO: James L. Blaha, Assistant for Operations  
Office of the Executive Director for Operations

FROM: Charles L. Miller, Deputy Director *Charles L. Miller*  
Incident Response Operations

SUBJECT: COOPERATION WITH MEXICO

As you requested, attached is the preliminary assessment of the significant impacts regarding the two issues assigned to IRO pertaining to COMNJD-99-004. The responses have been coordinated with Region II and the Office of International Programs.

*A/32*

This is in response to Commissioner Diaz's request for information regarding staff recommendations for the development and implementation of an emergency evaluation exercise at Mexico's Laguna Verde Nuclear Power Plant. Coordination with Regional Administrator Luis Reyes has been factored into these recommendations.

- 1) IRO could assist Mexico in the development of an exercise involving an event at Laguna Verde, but prior to determining the scope of support, some basic parameters would need to be understood.
  - A) Is this to be a Plume or Post plume phase exercise?
  - B) Is this to be a Tabletop or Field play exercise?
  - C) What organizations would be involved in the play?
  - D) What is IAEA's interest and role in organizing, funding or evaluating exercise play?
  - E) What is the time frame for developing the exercise?
  - F) What is the anticipated exercise date?
  - G) Would there be any organized evaluation of the exercise and by whom?
- 2) Without the answers to the aforementioned questions, IRO has developed an impact estimate based on an initial Tabletop exercise, focusing on the plume phase only, lasting approximately one day, with no formal evaluation. This would be a scenario that provides minimum impact to IRO staff resources.
- 3) Under these conditions, IRO estimates about one month of staff time (1/12 FTE)<sup>1</sup> in developing the scenario, meeting with Mexican authorities to develop objectives and conducting the Tabletop using NRC's NUREG-1514, Guidance for Developing a Large Scale Tabletop Exercise for a Nuclear Power Plant. It is reasonable to assume some additional resource impact from IP staff.
- 4) We anticipate 3 trips to Mexico by one staff member or Mexican authorities traveling to the NRC Operations Center in Rockville to scope the exercise. One trip to develop objectives, meet participants, scope the exercise and assign and schedule tasks. The second to discuss accomplishment, modify the scenario and schedule the facility. The last to conduct the exercise.
- 5) Finally we would recommend that all efforts should be coordinated through the IAEA. NRC has assisted other nations on a number of similar efforts in the past through the IAEA technical assistance programs who also can provide limited funding for the effort. This should be pursued under the IAEA.
- 6) All efforts would be coordinated through IRO who would keep Regional Administrator Reyes of NRC Region II informed and request his assistance based on the exercise scope, however, since primary assistance would be rendered through the NRC Operations Center in an actual event, that organization should lead the project.

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<sup>1</sup>A Field exercise and/or additional parameters will impact the FTE estimate by a factor of 3 or more.

This is in response to Commissioner Diaz's request for a dedicated phone line between CNSSN and the NRC Emergency Operations Center. Although, the proposal to establish a dedicated phone line between CNSSN and the NRC Emergency Operations Center would be cost prohibitive, there are newer technologies that could be employed to ensure reliable communications in the event of an emergency. For example, NRC is procuring Iridium satellite phones as part of its Y2K Contingency Plan. A satellite phone could be used for voice communication between CNSSN and NRC even in the event that the local telephone infrastructure is congested or damaged (e.g., by an earthquake). With regard to sharing of meteorological and radiological information, we would support a meeting between NRC and CNSSN to discuss the best means for sharing this information, provided this support activity is approved by the Commission.

This is in response to Commissioner Diaz's request for information regarding staff recommendations for the development and implementation of an emergency evaluation exercise at Mexico's Laguna Verde Nuclear Power Plant. Coordination with Regional Administrator Luis Reyes has been factored into these recommendations.

- 1) IRO would be pleased to assist Mexico in the development of an exercise involving an event at Laguna Verde, but prior to determining the scope of support, some basic parameters would need to be understood.
  - A) Is this to be a Plume or Post plume phase exercise?
  - B) Is this to be a Tabletop or Field play exercise?
  - C) What organizations would be involved in the play?
  - D) What is IAEA's role in organizing or evaluating exercise play?
  - E) What is the time frame for developing the exercise?
  - F) What is the anticipated exercise date?
  - G) Would there be any organized evaluation of the exercise and by whom?
- 2) Without the answers to the aforementioned questions, IRO will proceed with an impact estimate based on an initial Tabletop exercise, focusing on the plume phase only, lasting approximately one day, with no formal evaluation.
- 3) Under these conditions, IRO estimates about one month of staff time (1/12 FT)<sup>1</sup> in developing the scenario, meeting with Mexican authorities to develop objectives and conducting the Tabletop using NRC's NUREG-1514, Guidance for Developing a Large Scale Tabletop Exercise for a Nuclear Power Plant.
- 4) We anticipate 3 trips to Mexico by one staff member or Mexican authorities traveling to the NRC Operations Center in Rockville to scope the exercise. One trip to develop objectives, meet participants, scope the exercise and assign and schedule tasks. The second to discuss accomplishment, modify the scenario and schedule the facility. The last to conduct the exercise.
- 5) Finally we would recommend to all efforts are coordinated through the IAEA. NRC has assisted other nations on a number of similar efforts in the past through the IAEA technical assistance programs who also can provide limited funding for the effort. This should be pursued under the IAEA.
- 6) All efforts would be coordinated through IRO who would keep Regional Administrator Reyes of NRC Region II informed and request his assistance based on the exercise scope, however, since primary assistance would be rendered through the NRC Operations Center in an actual event, that organization should lead the project.

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<sup>1</sup>A Field exercise and/or additional parameters will impact the FT estimate by a factor of 3 or more.