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UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

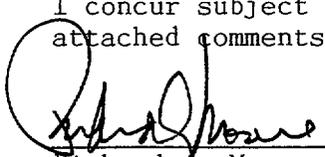
April 12, 2001

COMJSM-01-0001

COMMISSIONER

I concur subject to the
attached comments.

MEMORANDUM TO: Chairman Meserve
Commissioner Dicus
Commissioner Diaz
Commissioner McGaffigan


Richard A. Meserve 6/6/01

FROM: Jeffrey S. Merrifield 

SUBJECT: COORDINATION WITH MEXICO AND CANADA

Over the last several years, I have become aware of several regulatory issues of mutual concern to Canada, Mexico, and the United States. I propose that senior staff conduct a trilateral meeting with representatives from the Canadian Nuclear Safety Committee (CNSC) and the Commission National de Seguridad Nuclear y Salvaguardias (CNSNS) to exchange information on material issues which may be of mutual safety concern. I believe this could be a recurring exchange on some, as-of yet, undefined periodicity (perhaps yearly or every other year). I believe a periodic trilateral meeting would serve to improve our relationship with our closest neighbors in case other, unforeseen issues may arise.

I am particularly concerned about the lack of consistency in the United States of notifying either Canada or Mexico of lost or stolen sources near their respective borders with the United States and the lack of notification to the United States of similar lost or stolen sources that could arrive in the United States. Such events are of significant safety importance for large sources and for smaller sources could create significant economic issues if they were inadvertently recycled. During a recent visit to Mexico, the then head of the Commission National de Seguridad Nuclear y Salvaguardias (CNSNS) informed me that one of the most significant radiation exposures in Mexico's history was the result of a stolen source from the United States. Therefore, I believe that one topic that should be addressed in the initial meeting is a process or procedure for appropriate notification when sources are lost or stolen near the appropriate borders. The purpose of this notification is to aid in identifying and retrieving lost or stolen sources and returning the sources to their rightful owners.

I recognize that my proposal could have potential resource implications, but my desire is to reduce those resource implications to the minimum possible. For example, I am not proposing a formal agreement between the three countries. Rather, I am proposing an informal arrangement between the three regulatory agencies. As a more specific example, concerning the issue of a notification process for lost or stolen sources, the notification could be by informal mechanisms, such as a telephone call or an e-mail between designated agency officials. There are other details on the notification process, including addressing the safety and economic significance of the lost

June 6, 2001

COMMENTS OF CHAIRMAN MESERVE ON COMJSM-01-0001

I support the proposal in COMJSM-01-0001 that the NRC should seek to strengthen its relationships with Canada and Mexico in the materials area. As indicated by Commissioner Dicus, there may be mechanisms in place that are serving to assure adequate coordination on issues associated with lost or stolen sources. However, it is appropriate to hold a staff-level meeting in Washington with staff counterparts from Mexico and Canada to explore the opportunities for improved cooperation in the general materials area and to discuss the means to achieve that end. One outcome of the meeting might be the establishment of an high-priority e-mail contact list, as suggested by Commissioner Dicus.

The question of whether to establish periodic meetings should await a showing that there are sufficient specific issues of mutual concern among the three countries as to warrant their consideration on a trilateral basis. Of course, bilateral issues involving the U.S. and our neighbors can and should be pursued aggressively outside the trilateral format.



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COMMISSIONER

June 4, 2001

MEMORANDUM TO: Chairman Meserve
Commissioner Diaz
Commissioner McGaffigan
Commissioner Merrifield

FROM: Greta Joy Dicus 

SUBJECT: COMJSM-01-0001 - COORDINATION WITH MEXICO AND CANADA

Having a longstanding documented interest in and support of the NRC's international activities, I can support the basic concept embodied in COMJSM-01-0001. Although the emphasis of the COMJSM-01-0001 appears to be on orphan and lost source issues, I believe the underlying theme of the COMJSM-01-0001 is to consider the establishment of a periodic trilateral meeting of technical management from Mexico, Canada and the United States to discuss mutual technical issues. I support this theme so long as the NRC resources to support such an initial meeting are kept to a minimum. I would, therefore, propose that if a meeting were held, and as this is a United States initiative, that the first meeting be held in the Washington, D. C. area.

With regard to lost and orphan sources, a subject I have been involved with for many years, it is important to note that the vast majority of States bordering Mexico and Canada are Agreement States which routinely discuss materials events and occurrences with their neighbors, although I would agree with Commissioner Merrifield that there is no *formal* procedure in place for such routine contacts. Because this type of notification would most likely be regarded as high priority, I could easily envision a "high priority" e-mail contact list that could be verified periodically to send notifications to not only our neighbors to the North and South of us, but as a point of information for our other foreign counterparts as well, rather than formally setting up periodic meetings. Therefore, it is highly possible that the NRCWEB could also be used as a point of gathering timely information, if the staff and/or the Agreement States could enter lost or stolen notifications or other priority information on a highlighted portion of the web.

I would also note that there are already international and national cooperative programs in place, through the IAEA, the Conference of Radiation Control Program Directors, as well as with the bordering Agreement States, to continue to foster the exchange of timely information

on such issues. I would encourage the NRC to augment, and not duplicate, these existing programs. Therefore, I propose that we move forward with the initiative embodied in COMJSM-01-0001, coordinating the staff's activities through OIP and OSTP. A similar approach to any other issues identified for an initial tri-lateral can help assure we have maximum beneficial impact from our resources as we pursue the concepts in COMJSM-01-0001.

cc: EDO
OGC
OCA
SECY



4/12/01 NRP/01 4/27
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April 12, 2001

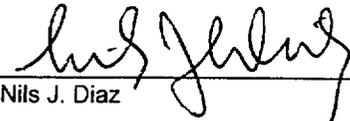
COMJSM-01-0001

COMMISSIONER

For years, you and I have been supportive of furthering NRC's relationship with our neighbors, Mexico and Canada. The specific concern you raised regarding notification of lost or stolen sources is especially important to me. Therefore, I agree with your proposal of an informal arrangement among the three regulatory agencies and commend your interest.

MEMORANDUM TO:

Chairman Meserve
Commissioner Dicus
Commissioner Diaz
Commissioner McGaffigan


Nils J. Diaz 4/17/01

FROM:

Jeffrey S. Merrifield 

SUBJECT:

COORDINATION WITH MEXICO AND CANADA

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COMMISSIONER

June 6, 2001

MEMORANDUM TO: Commissioner Merrifield
FROM: Edward McGaffigan, Jr. 
SUBJECT: COMJSM-01-0001 - COORDINATION WITH MEXICO AND CANADA

I approve the basic concept of the subject memorandum, namely to consider with our Canadian and Mexican colleagues the establishment of a periodic trilateral meeting on nuclear materials issues of mutual interest at a senior staff level. I agree with Commissioner Dicus that the staff should offer to host the first meeting in Washington, D.C. The agenda for the meeting should be worked out among the senior nuclear materials regulatory staffs of the three countries. If there are potential agenda items of only bilateral interest, concurrent bilateral meetings could be offered to both the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission and the Mexican Commission National de Seguridad Nuclear y Salvaguardias. The staff should periodically report to the Commission whether the trilateral nuclear materials forum is proving useful.

cc: Chairman Meserve
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Commissioner Diaz
EDO
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OIP
OCA