

July 12, 2001

MEMORANDUM TO: Chairman Meserve
Commissioner Dicus
Commissioner McGaffigan
Commissioner Merrifield

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

SUBJECT: VISIT OF COMMISSIONER SENDIN OF THE CONSEJO DE
SEGURIDAD NUCLEAR IN SPAIN, JULY 16-18, 2001

Commissioner Sendin, accompanied by Mr. Juan Carlos Lentijo, Deputy Director for Emergencies of the Consejo de Seguridad Nuclear (CSN), will visit the Commission on Tuesday, July 17.

The purpose of their visit to the U.S. is to observe the V.C. Summer Emergency Exercise Drill on Wednesday, July 18, and to pay a courtesy call on the Commission to discuss current CSN activities.

By copy of this memorandum, SECY, OGC, EDO, and the program offices are also being advised of the arrangements for this visit.

Attachments: 1. Schedule
2. Current Activities
3. Talking Points
4. Background
5. Biographical Information

cc: SECY
OGC
EDO
OCA
OPA
NRR
RES
NMSS

Contact: Suzanne McGuire, OIP
415-3433

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| DATE | 7/11/01 | | 7/11/01 | | 7/11/01 | | 7/11/01 | | 7/ 12 /01 | |

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Attachment 1

**NRC VISIT OF
COMMISSIONER SENDIN
AND
MR. JUAN CARLOS LENTIJO, DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR EMERGENCIES
CONSEJO DE SEGURIDAD NUCLEAR OF SPAIN**

Tuesday, July 17, 2001

Schedule

10:30am - 11:00am: Meeting with Commissioner Merrifield (0-18-F-1)
11:00am - 11:30am: Meeting with Commissioner Dicus (0-18-H-1)
11:30am - 12:00pm: Meeting with Commissioner McGaffigan (0-18-G-1)
12:00pm - 1:00pm: Chairman-hosted Commission Lunch
1:00pm - 1:30pm: Meeting with Chairman Meserve (0-17-D-1)

CURRENT COOPERATIVE ACTIVITIES BETWEEN CSN AND NRC

There has been a high level of cooperation between the NRC and CSN of Spain in a variety of areas related to facility safety and licensing. This may be due in part to the mature and mutually beneficial relationship that has developed between the CSN and the NRC under the auspices of our bilateral arrangement with Spain, due in turn to the regulatory program in Spain, which largely mirrors the NRC's.

The NRC has established and maintains strong working relationships with CSN representatives on multiple staff levels. Commissioner Diaz participated in a round table discussion in Madrid to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the constitution of the CSN. He visited Madrid again during the week of March 25, 2001, for meetings with CSN Commissioners, and then continued on to Malaga to participate in an IAEA conference. Commissioner Dicus has recently participated in international meetings in Spain and with the CSN Commissioners. Chairman Meserve has accepted the invitation from the Sociedad Nuclear Espanola to participate in the Spanish Nuclear Society's (SNE) 27th annual scientific technical congress on October 24-26, 2001 in Valencia, Spain. He will be participating in the Plenary Session II, "The Security of Electricity Supply and the Role of Nuclear Energy". NRC Program Office Directors meet with CSN management representatives several times a year, specifically in connection with our involvement in OECD/NEA CSNI and CNRA Committee work. There also have been informal discussions by the Director of the Office of International Programs as well as other NRC staff members and CSN representatives regarding international efforts to prepare for the national report review meeting for the Convention on Nuclear Safety.

Visits to Spain at the staff level have been relatively frequent as well. For example, several NRR and RES specialists have provided assistance during the CSN's review of the Jose Cabrera control room. Richard Eckenrode of NRR visited the plant November 3, 6, and 7, 2000, during the CSN's human factors engineering review inspection. With the CSN, he observed an Emergency Operating Procedure walkthrough demonstration by the licensee, and provided comments on a control room engineering review project plan prepared for the CSN by Brookhaven. And RES staff members completed another round of control room review discussions by telephone exchange with CSN representatives on February 22.

By way of background, nuclear power facilities in Spain are, by law, regulated strictly according to the regulations of the vendor country. When CSN decided that there were concerns with the design of the control room of the Jose Cabrera facility, a 1-loop Westinghouse 160 MWe PWR which has been operating since 1969, it advised the licensee to perform a human factors engineering review of the control room. The licensee contracted with BNL to perform the review. The staff briefed Chairman Meserve and Commissioner Diaz on this matter on February 20.

Jennifer Uhle, Team Leader for the Code and Models Development Team in the Safety Margins and Systems Analysis Branch of the Division of Systems Analysis and Regulatory Effectiveness,

RES, traveled to Spain during the week of March 5, 2001 to discuss the Spanish Code Applications and Maintenance Programs (CAMP) in-kind contributions, to update the Spanish CAMP members with regard to the status and approach of the consolidation plan, and to train the participants on the TRAC-M Code and Graphical User Interface. She was accompanied by Professor Mahaffy of Penn State University, one of the key developers of the TRAC-M code and a consultant to the NRC. RES has reported that to date the Spanish have published over 40 NUREG/IA reports assessing the NRC codes, and that their contributions are especially valuable because a large number of these reports compare the code calculations to actual plant data rather than data generated at a scaled test facility. Additionally, a Spanish attache,

working with Professor Mahaffy at Penn State University for a period of six months in FY 2001, coupled the CONTAIN code to the TRAC-M code to prove the TRAC-M code's extend ability and to enhance the capability to model containment behavior.

On June 26, 2001, Mr. Ashok Thadani, Director of the Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research, participated in a Probabilistic Safety Analysis (PSA) Seminar conducted by CSN for their Executives (i.e., Commissioners, General Secretary, Technical Directors, their Deputies and Utility Executives). Significant discussions focused on U.S. NRC Risk-informed Regulation Implementation Plan, quality of PSA's, uncertainties, and degree of reviews of PSA's. The objective of the seminar was to (1) help Senior Executives understanding of the major issues as they contemplate moving in the direction of introducing PSA into their regulatory process; and (2) share U.S. NRC management experiences.

NRR and OIP met on July 10 with Mrs. Isabel Mellado, Deputy Director General for Nuclear Installations, CSN and Mr. José Garcia, Ascó-Vandellós, NPP Licensing Manager who are leading members of a working group in Spain made up of CSN and utility representatives. The goal of establishing the working group is to identify improvements in the efficiency of the Spanish regulatory process. The members of the group are trying to accomplish their goal by learning from past Spanish, Finnish, Swedish, German, and US experiences as well as documented international agency information. The result of the study will be an integrated proposal with priorities to the management of CSN and utilities regarding the improvement initiatives to be pursued and implemented. A draft of that proposal is expected to be completed by the December 2001 - January 2002 time frame. It is anticipated that the US, Finland, Sweden, and Germany will be given a preview of the proposal in December 2001.

Finally, the Spanish have shown keen interest in participating in NRC training courses. The most recent request was for a Technical Coordinator of Environmental Radiation Protection at CSN to attend the Environmental Monitoring Radiation Course presented at Oak Ridge in June 2001.

TALKING POINTS

1. The Commission recently received the National Report for the Convention on Nuclear Safety. You may want to mention that to Commissioner Sendin and express interest in the status of the Spanish National Report for the Convention on Nuclear Safety.
2. Commissioner Sendin and Mr. Lentijo will have attended the Operations Center Training on Monday, July 16. You may ask what she thought of the training session and if she has any specific questions about the Summer Emergency drill which she will observe on Wednesday, July 18.
3. There have been new appointments made to the Commission at the Consejo de Seguridad Nuclear (CSN) including new President, Commissioner María Teresa Estevan Bolea, Commissioner Carmen Martínez Ten, and Commissioner Julio Barceló Vernet. You may ask if she anticipates any significant changes in the structure or operations of CSN under the new leadership.

******After consultation with Mr. Lentijo, Deputy Director for Emergencies, OIP has learned that Commissioner Sendin does not have any fixed issues to talk about and anticipates having open meetings with the Commission.

BACKGROUND

Spain has seven nuclear power plants comprising nine units (seven PWRs and two BWRs). The last two nuclear units to be completed were Trillo and Vandellos II in 1988. The nuclear share of electricity generation in Spain is 32%. Plants are well managed, and the Government is taking over the problem of waste disposal. However, due to public resistance and the possibility of building gas combined cycle plants after 2000, there is pressure for nuclear power to be abandoned, increasing Spanish dependence on gas imports.

CSN is affected by the deregulation of the electrical sector and the corresponding need for increased efficiency by both the utilities and the CSN (which is a fee recovery agency). The CSN is analyzing how PSA can be used in the movement towards greater efficiency. There have been a number of technical exchange meetings between CSN and NRC staff on these topics over the last two years.

Spain was at the forefront of creating a Forum of Iberian-American Regulators. The preparatory meeting was held in Madrid in January 1997 and included Spain, Argentina, Mexico and Brazil. Its first meeting (which also included Cuba) was held in July 1997 in Veracruz, Mexico, where an agreement was signed by all parties. The purpose of the group is to promote the exchange of information and experiences on topics of nuclear safety and radiological protection. The ultimate objective is to integrate all of the Latin American countries interested in these topics. The initial group is composed of those countries which have nuclear power stations under construction or in operation. Other countries that have expressed an interest in joining include Chile, Columbia, Peru, Portugal and Venezuela.

Spain has maintained its special identification with Latin America. Spain emphasizes the concept of "Hispanidad," a mixture of linguistic, religious, ethnic, cultural, and historical ties binding Spanish speaking America to Spain. Spain maintains economic and technical cooperation programs and cultural exchanges in Latin America and is a good example of a country making a smooth transition from authoritarianism to democracy.

The first five year NRC information exchange Arrangement with Spain was signed in 1974. It has subsequently been renewed four times and relations have been cordial and extensive. Most of the Spanish NPPs are U.S.-designed and the CSN closely follows NRC regulations. The exchange has included Commission and staff visits, collaboration on safety problems and on-the-job training assignments. A nuclear reactor safety research agreement was also signed with Spain in 1985 and renewed in 1991. Cooperation under the research agreement has included the areas of thermal-hydraulic computer code development and assessment studies, technical information exchange in the area of reliability risk, accident management and human factors and participation by the CSN in severe accident and materials research. Two Spanish foreign assignees have worked with NRC staff during the last two years, one on thermal hydraulic research and the other on instrumentation and control matters.