

September 21, 2001

Paul Leventhal, President
Nuclear Control Institute
1000 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Suite 410
Washington, D.C. 20036

Daniel Hirsch, President
Committee to Bridge the Gap
1637 Butler Avenue, Suite 203
Los Angeles, California 90025

Dear Messrs. Leventhal and Hirsch:

This is in response to your letter dated September 14, 2001, concerning the security of nuclear power plants in light of the recent terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. The Commission is evaluating current requirements and statutory authority related to acts or threats of terrorism, including but not limited to those that you presented in your letter.

Like all Americans, the Commission and its employees are appalled at the recent attacks on the United States. No words could reflect the deep sense of sorrow felt here at the NRC. Neither are words adequate to express the seriousness with which we take our responsibility to ensure that nuclear facilities are adequately protected, whether that protection is provided by licensees, by State and local authorities, including the National Guard, or by the United States military, as appropriate.

Immediately after the tragic attacks on September 11, the Commission took a number of responsive actions. All nuclear power plants were notified that they should immediately be placed on the highest state of alert. In response to the President's activation of Government-wide Continuity of Operations Plans, the NRC implemented its plan to ensure its capability to perform its essential functions. The NRC Operations Center was directed to be fully staffed 24 hours a day at the time. The NRC's own building security also was immediately upgraded. In addition to these and other specific actions, the Commission has been in contact with National law enforcement, defense and intelligence agencies to ensure that appropriate attention is given to nuclear facilities.

The tragic and horrifying events of September 11 show a need for a review of physical security provisions for nuclear power plants. The Commission, on an ongoing basis, is evaluating whether existing NRC requirements should be upgraded and whether the Commission's authority under the Atomic Energy Act should be expanded or clarified. Furthermore, the Commission is actively participating in Government-wide evaluations of the need for additional statutory authorities or changes in existing statutes to be better able to combat terrorism.

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I can assure you the Commission takes the issue of security at nuclear plants very seriously. We are, and will continue to be, a full and active participant in the coordinated National response to the recent acts of terrorism against the U.S.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Richard A. Meserve

cc:

The Honorable Condoleezza Rice, National Security Advisor to the President
The Honorable Colin Powell, Secretary of State
The Honorable Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary of Defense
The Honorable Robert S. Mueller, III, Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation
The Honorable Joe M. Allbaugh, Director, Federal Emergency Management Agency

Senator Joseph Biden, Chair, Senate Foreign Relations Committee
Senator Jesse Helms, Ranking Minority Member, Senate Foreign Relations Committee
Representative Henry Hyde, Chair, House International Relations Committee
Representative Benjamin Gilman, Ranking Minority Member, House International Relations Committee

Senator Carl Levin, Chair, Senate Armed Services Committee
Senator John Warner, Ranking Member, Senate Armed Services Committee
Representative Bob Stump Chair, House Armed Services Committee
Representative Ike Skelton, Ranking Member, House Armed Services Committee
Senator Jeff Bingaman, Chair, Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
Senator Frank Murkowski, Ranking Member, Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
Representative W. J. "Billy" Tauzin, Chair, House Energy and Commerce Committee
Representative John Dingell, Ranking Minority Member, House Energy and Commerce Committee

Senator James Jeffords, Chair, Senate Environment and Public Works Committee
Senator Bob Smith, Ranking Minority Member, Senate Environment and Public Works Committee

Senator Harry Reid, Chair, Subcommittee on Transportation, Infrastructure, and Nuclear Safety, Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works

Senator James Inhofe, Ranking Minority Member, Subcommittee on Transportation, Infrastructure, and Nuclear Safety, Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works

Senator Bob Graham, Chair, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence

Senator Richard Shelby, Vice Chair, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence

Senator Barbara Boxer, Chair, International Terrorism Subcommittee, Senate Foreign Relations Committee

Senator Mike Enzi, Ranking Member, International Terrorism Subcommittee, Senate Foreign Relations Committee

Representative Edward J. Markey

Alabama Governor Don Siegelman
Arizona Governor Jane Hull
Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee
California Governor, Gray Davis
Connecticut Governor John Rowland
Delaware Governor Ruth Ann Minner
Florida Governor Jeb Bush
Georgia Governor Roy Barnes
Illinois Governor George Ryan
Iowa Governor Thomas Vilsack
Kansas Governor Bill Graves

Louisiana Governor Mike Foster, Jr.
Maryland Governor Parris Glendening
Massachusetts Governor Jane Swift
Michigan Governor John Engler
Minnesota Governor Jesse Ventura
Mississippi Governor Ronnie Musgrove
Missouri Governor Bob Holden
Nebraska Governor Mike Johanns
New Hampshire Governor Jeanne Shaheen
New Jersey Governor Donald DiFrancesco
New York Governor George Pataki
North Carolina Governor Michael Easley
Ohio Governor Bob Taft
Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge
South Carolina Governor Jim Hodges
Tennessee Governor Don Sundquist
Texas Governor Rick Perry
Vermont Governor Howard Dean, M.D.
Virginia Governor James Gilmore, III
Washington Governor Gary Locke
Wisconsin Governor Scott McCallum