



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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No. S-02-023

REMARKS TO STAFF

by

Dr. Richard A. Meserve
Chairman, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission

September 11, 2002

8:40 a.m.

Good Morning. This is Chairman Meserve.

At 8:45 a.m. on this day, one year ago, the first of four hijacked aircraft crashed into the North Tower of the World Trade Center, turning an ordinary day into a cataclysm. Many of us at the NRC were glued to television monitors in an effort to understand the significance of the crash when the second hijacked aircraft struck the South Tower at 9:03 a.m. Many of us were stunned by the terrible images. Minutes later, at 9:38 a.m., we could see the smoke rising from the Pentagon crash from the upper floors of the NRC Headquarters building. Subsequently, at about 10:03 a.m., the last of the four hijacked aircraft crashed in an empty field in rural Pennsylvania, the result of the determined efforts of the passengers to prevent terror from succeeding a fourth time. In the space of one hour and 18 minutes, our vulnerability was fully exposed.

To say that the world was changed forever by these events is both a cliché and an understatement. For those who lost family members, friends, and colleagues on that day, the world will surely never be the same again. For those who survived the attacks or were near enough to be witnesses, the images will be forever seared in memory. For the rest of us, merely seeing the video images again during this period of remembrance brings back all the emotions we experienced on that terrible day.

But the events of September 11 triggered actions as well as memories. They set in motion a coordinated Federal response designed to protect our Nation from such attacks. You have played a critical role in these activities. The NRC has taken measures to enhance security at NRC-licensed facilities; undertaken a comprehensive review of our safeguards and security programs; established a

continuing dialogue with other Federal agencies, including the Office of Homeland Security; taken steps to cope with the threat of a radiological dispersal devices; established the Office of Nuclear Security and Incident Response; developed a new Threat Advisory and Protective Measures System; and improved security at our own buildings, among other actions. My fellow Commissioners and I take great pride in the part the staff has taken in the government-wide response to the terrorist attacks. We are grateful for the support the NRC staff has provided.

We have more that we need to accomplish together, and I am confident that we will be successful. As our efforts proceed, I can think of no greater honor we can pay to those who gave their lives on September 11, 2001, than to dedicate our continuing activities to their memory. I ask you, therefore, to join me now in a moment of silence to honor the victims of the terrorist attacks of one year ago and to renew our commitment to the work that lies ahead.

(Silence: one minute)

Again, thank you for your support.

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