

March 16, 2006

MEMORANDUM TO: Chairman Diaz
Commissioner McGaffigan
Commissioner Merrifield
Commissioner Jaczko
Commissioner Lyons

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

SUBJECT: SIGNING OF NEW NRC ARRANGEMENTS WITH UKRAINE,
RUSSIA, AND BULGARIA

PURPOSE:

To advise the Commission of the progress and arrangements which have been made for the signing of three new NRC Arrangements for Technical Cooperation with the State Nuclear Regulatory Committee of Ukraine (SNRCU); the Federal Environmental, Industrial and Nuclear Supervision Service of Russia (ROSTEKHNADZOR); and the Bulgarian Nuclear Regulatory Agency (BNRA).

BACKGROUND:

Since May 1974, NRC has engaged in what has become a broad-scale program of developing and implementing nuclear safety and regulatory information exchange and general cooperation Arrangements with its counterparts in other countries. Originally designed to assure that the operational experience of countries with major commitments to light water reactor (LWR) technology was available to the staff, the NRC's Arrangement and Agreement Program was soon expanded to include countries with only one or two nuclear power plants and then even to some with announced plans to enter the nuclear field. The Office of International Programs administers these bilateral, agency-to-agency-level arrangements, which currently number 38 and involve 35 countries plus Taiwan. (NRC maintains two Arrangements with both Japan and South Africa because they have split ministerial-level regulatory responsibilities.)

As NRC's role in promoting nuclear safety expands, so does the Arrangement and Agreement Program. This year NRC expects to sign three new Arrangements with Ukraine and Russia, as well as Bulgaria.

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The Commissioners

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Negotiations with SNRCU (Ukraine) and ROSTEKHNADZOR (Russia) are complete. The Circular 175 clearance process for the text of the Arrangement with Ukraine is expected to be complete at the end of March. Clearance on the Russian and Bulgarian Arrangements is expected to be complete in the summer of 2006. Even though these new Arrangements are very similar to the other 38 Arrangements NRC currently has with foreign countries, adoption of the two arrangements with Russia and Ukraine constitutes a recognition that the relationship between NRC and the Ukrainian and Russian regulators is moving from one of NRC assistance to one of mutually beneficial cooperation. I believe that the signing of these two Arrangements symbolizes our progress with these two countries, and I am confident that it will further our cooperative relationship with both Russia and Ukraine. Similarly the signing of an Arrangement with Bulgaria signifies NRC's burgeoning relationship with countries in Eastern Europe.

The signing of the Arrangement with the SNRCU of Ukraine is scheduled for April 10, 2006 at NRC Headquarters. A subsequent paper with details of the signing ceremony and a copy of the Ukraine Arrangement text will be sent to the Commission in the near future. The Commission will be notified when the Arrangements with Russia and Bulgaria are complete.

Complete text of all three Arrangements are available upon request. These new Arrangements follow the standard NRC International Arrangement template.

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