

November 13, 2006

MEMORANDUM TO: Jack R. Strosnider, Director
Office of Nuclear Material Safety
and Safeguards

FROM: Robert C. Pierson, Director **/RA/**
Division of Fuel Cycle Safety
and Safeguards, NMSS

SUBJECT: FOREIGN TRIP REPORT FOR MEETINGS FROM
OCTOBER 9-13, 2006

Attached is the final foreign trip report for my travel the week of October 9-13, 2006.

On October 9, 2006, I attended the (FINAS) Advisory Committee Meeting which met to review the status of the web FINAS development and schedule, and to witness a demonstration of the FINAS prototype. On October 10 and 11, I attended the Joint IAEA/NEA Technical Meeting (TM) to Exchange Information on Recent Events in Fuel Cycle Facilities during which TM participants discussed fuel cycle events in their respective countries and on October 11 and 12, I Chaired the Nuclear Energy Agency/Committee on the Safety of Nuclear Installations (NEA/CSNI), Working Group on Fuel Cycle Safety. This was our first meeting as a Working Group within CSNI.

Enclosure:
Foreign Trip Report with attachment

cc: M. Johnson, OEDO
J.D. Lee, OIP
T. Rothschild, OIG
L. Silvius, NSIR
D. Cool, FSME
D. Pstrak, NMSS

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OFFICE	NMSS/FCSS	
NAME	RPierson	
DATE	11/ 13 /2006	

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NRC FOREIGN TRIP REPORT

Subject

- (1) Fuel Incident Notification and Analysis System (FINAS) Advisory Committee Meeting
- (2) Joint IAEA/NEA Technical Meeting to Exchange Information on Recent Events in Fuel Cycle Facilities
- (3) Nuclear Energy Agency/Committee on the Safety of Nuclear Installations (NEA/CSNI), Working Group on Fuel Cycle Safety

Dates of Travel and Countries/Organizations Visited

All meetings were held at the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA) Headquarters just outside Paris in Issy-les-Moulineaux, France.

- (1) October 9, 2006 (FINAS) Advisory Committee Meeting; Paris, France
- (2) October 10-11, 2006 Joint IAEA/NEA Technical Meeting to Exchange Information on Recent Events in Fuel Cycle Facilities; Paris, France
- (3) October 12-13, 2006 Working Group on Fuel Cycle Safety, Nuclear Energy Agency/Committee on the Safety of Nuclear Installations (NEA/CSNI); Paris, France

Author, Title, and Agency Affiliation

Robert C. Pierson, Director
Division of Fuel Cycle Safety and Safeguards
Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research

Sensitivity

Not sensitive

Background / Purpose

The traveler is the NRC representative for FINAS and the current Chairman of the NEA/CSNI Fuel Cycle Safety Working Group. The purpose of the trip was to participate in the FINAS Advisory committee meetings to draft recommendations to the Technical Meeting of FINAS National Coordinators, to participate in the exchange of technical information on recent fuel cycle events with member states and to participate in the Fuel Cycle Safety Committee which provides a forum for participating member countries to discuss, compare and address fuel cycle safety issues.

Enclosure

Abstract

On October 9, 2006, the (FINAS) Advisory Committee Meeting met to review the status of the web FINAS development and schedule, and to witness a demonstration of the FINAS prototype. Additional needs and corresponding actions were discussed and recommendations were prepared for the TM of FINAS coordinators.

On October 10 and 11 the Joint IAEA/NEA Technical Meeting (TM) to Exchange Information on Recent Events in Fuel Cycle Facilities was conducted with presentations by TM participants on fuel cycle events in their countries.

On October 11 and 12 the Nuclear Energy Agency/Committee on the Safety of Nuclear Installations (NEA/CSNI), Working Group on Fuel Cycle Safety met in their first meeting as a Working Group within CSNI, to discuss fuel facility safety issues of the member states.

Discussion

The Fuel Incident Notification and Analysis System (FINAS) is a process in development to exchange important lessons learned from operating experience in fuel cycle facilities of the IAEA and NEA member states. The objective of FINAS is to provide a constructive means to assure proper feedback on events of safety significance on a worldwide basis to help prevent occurrence or recurrence of serious events or accidents. The Advisory committee met to evaluate the progress to date and to review the recently upgraded WEB system reporting being developed for this system which was described by the IAEA representative. A demonstration of the FINAS prototype was observed.

Member States have noted the high priority of sharing lessons learned through the exchange of operating experience. Accordingly, FINAS Coordinators note the importance of initiating the release of the system (either on a provisional or actual basis) as soon as feasible. The participants concluded that this should be based on timeliness and should not be delayed by development requirements related to other data bases or systems. A list of actions related to this effort was compiled which will be provided to the FINAS coordinators or the IAEA as appropriate. These actions include such items as the need for FINAS National coordinators to provide a list of their facilities and to update their reports to include the existing events within their national data bases.

The Joint IAEA/NEA Technical Meeting (TM) to Exchange Information on Recent Events in Fuel Cycle Facilities provided a forum for participating member states to provide an update on events in their nation. Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Egypt, France, Germany, Japan, India, the United Kingdom and the United States provided updates on events or safety issues of note in their respective nations.

The Fuel Cycle Safety Working Group is a joint regulatory and industry organization devoted to nuclear fuel cycle safety in the international community. The group has broad wide ranging interests covering topics which encompass the full scope of fuel cycle activities including safety assessments, nuclear criticality, probabilistic safety assessment, safety management, fire protection, human factors, decommissioning and site remediation. Member states in attendance included Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States. A List of Participants is included in Attachment A. Member state

representatives reported on developments of interest in their states including fuel cycle operating experience, regulatory changes, and significant events. A report was provided by the secretariat regarding CSNI's recent approval of our proposal to establish us as the Working Group on Fuel Cycle Safety within and reporting to CSNI.

Mr. Robert Pierson, Chairman, opened the meeting and welcomed participants. The list of participants is provided as Attachment A. Mr. Reig, Head, NEA Nuclear Safety Division, also welcomed the participants, noting that as a result of the recent review of and current trends in the nuclear arena, the CSNI decision to reconstitute this as a Working Group depicted the need of having this expert group to deal with safety issues in the nuclear fuel cycle. Mr. Vitanza of the Secretariat provided an update of the current CSNI Operating Plan and how it relates to foreseen safety issues in the program of work. Mr. Kaufer, of the NEA Nuclear Safety Division, provided a brief update on the current programs of CSNI and CNRA. The Agenda was adopted with the addition of a discussion on the WGFCS mandate and definition of safety issue for the CSNI Operating Plan.

The Summary Record for the 7th Meeting of the Working Group on Fuel Cycle Safety was approved. It was noted that CSNI agreed that the report, "Use and Implementation of Safety Cases by Regulators and Nuclear Site Operators on Fuel Cycle Facilities in NEA Member Countries," be issued as an FCS internal report.

A round table discussion was held in which delegates reported on recent regulatory changes and recent fuel cycle events. IAEA also presented a report on related activities. Copies of the reports and presentations were provided to all participants. These presentations are available if requested.

WGFCS members reviewed the proposed mandate and agreed to forward it to CSNI for approval with a few minor changes.

Mr. Pierre Nocture provided a presentation on the current status on FINAS, a demonstration of the web based system and the results of the FINAS Co-ordinators Meeting. He noted that due to funding issues, launching of the web based system will be delayed until the middle of next year.

WGFCS members stated that IAEA and NEA should take actions to ensure that the new system is placed in service as soon as possible. They noted that FINAS is a separate reporting system and should not be delayed due to future objectives related to linking it with other systems.

Two proposals were made by the Japanese Delegation as follows:

- (1) Management of Ageing of Fuel Cycle Facilities
- (2) Risk Assessment and Risk Information Utilization in Fuel Cycle Facilities

The proposals were discussed in detail in conjunction with the discussion on the results from the 2006 Survey and including the previous results from the workshop discussions. WGFCS members agreed to submit the 2 proposals to CSNI for approval at their next meeting.

2007 Workshop

1. Members discussed the timing, location and preliminary program for the planned 2007 Workshop. The following was agreed to:
 - a. The workshop will take place 16th – 18th October 2007 in Wilmington, North Carolina, United States. A site visit to the Global Nuclear Fuel (GNF) which is located in Wilmington is planned.
 - b. The workshop will look at Fuel Cycle Safety: Past, Present and Future and focus on the following three (3) topics:
 - Legacy waste concerns (including facilities and waste)
 - Reprocessing of Nuclear Fuel and Recycling of Waste
 - Ensuring the future safety of the current and new fuel cycle facilities

The opening session will include an overview presentation on the recent publication, *The Safety of the Nuclear Fuel Cycle*. The Secretariat with the assistance of the Chairman will make contacts to invite Keynote Speakers. Suggested topics include Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP) by the US Department of Energy; Fuel Cycle Safety in the United States by the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and recent advances in nuclear fuel by Global Nuclear Fuel (GNF).

The Secretariat will prepare a draft announcement based on the discussions of the issues by WGFCs and disseminate for comment in November. Following agreement by the members, the formal Announcement and Call for Papers will be issued. Member agreed to disseminate to interested parties (e.g., other fuel cycle organizations, industry). WGFCs members will form the organizing committee for preparing the final program.

WGFCs members proposed holding the next meeting in conjunction with the 2007 workshop. The proposed date would be the 19th of October 2007. The Chairman closed the thanked the members for their active participation and closed the meeting.

Pending Actions/Planned Next Steps for NRC

FINAS is developing into an integrated international fuel incident notification system. NRC should foster International utilization of this process to enhance international fuel cycle safety.

The Working Group on Fuel Cycle Safety will continue to support the exchange of information and experience of activities related to nuclear fuel cycle safety in member countries, and will indicate where further research and analysis is needed including the preparation of technical reports to advance fuel cycle safety.

Points for Commission Considerations/Items of Interest

No Commission action is required.

“On the Margins”

There are no issues on the margins.

Attachment A: List of Participants

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