

From: Eliot Brenner ^{PA}
 To: Brian Ross
 Date: 8/29/05 4:40PM
 Subject: RE: NRC info re 1981 Diaz document, info request--length alert

Thanks. I would appreciate it if he could call me this afternoon. My direct number is 301-415-8201, and my cell if I'm gone is [REDACTED] Ext 4

Eliot

>>> "Ross, Brian E" <Brian.E.Ross@abc.com> 08/29/05 4:37 PM >>>
 Eliot, John Zucker of the ABC News legal department will contact your video request.

-----Original Message-----

From: EXB2@nrc.gov [mailto:EXB2@nrc.gov]
 Sent: Monday, August 29, 2005 11:18 AM
 To: Ross, Brian E; madeline.i.sauer@abcnews.com
 Cc: Schwartz, Rhonda
 Subject: NRC info re 1981 Diaz document, info request--length alert

Mr. Ross/Ms/ Sauer: Several points of which you should be aware and we need your assistance. (See item 2)

1: First and foremost, if you use the citation you provided from the University of Florida Safety Analysis Report prepared under Dr. Diaz' supervision in 1981 and submitted to the NRC for evaluation, for the sake of balance the maximum hypothetical accident analysis discussed in the report must be put in context with the following quote from the report:

"However, the assumption of total fuel meltdown (upon which the scenario is based) is unrealistic for the UFTR under any credible accident conditions with current safety requirements...." "Therefore, it is concluded that the high doses resulting from the calculations presented here are extremely conservative and unlikely to occur under any circumstances; and specifying the distance to Sands Hospital complex as the urban boundary is therefore considered both reasonable and very conservative." (emphasis added)

Therefore, the material you cited was prepared in a deliberately overly conservative manner and is not a credible scenario. It was included to look at the upper level of emergency preparedness in something that the report describes as "unrealistic." If you use the scenario described in the report, you are duty bound to balance it with the portion of the response describing it as unrealistic. The chairman has reviewed the report again and to quote the Chairman at a discussion of this issue - "It is not credible. There is no way to melt that reactor."

A 1982 NRC analysis of the 1981 University report - an analysis assisted by Los Alamos National Laboratories -- validated the University report and said that the maximum hypothetical accident was "unrealistic ... under any credible accident conditions." The NRC's Safety Evaluation Report concludes, in part: "The staff concludes that the possible credible accidents involving the UFTR do not pose significant hazard to

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the public or to the environment. The event with the greatest potential impact to the public is the loss of integrity of the cladding of one or more fuel plates, coupled with the loss of function of the room containment systems. No credible operational conditions of the reactor, including a rapid loss of all coolant, will lead to fuel-cladding failure. The conservative analyses ... give reasonable assurance that the operation of the reactor for the 20-year renewal period does not pose significant risk to the health and safety of the public." (emphasis added) ." ... The staff's current analyses continue to conclude this fact for the University of Florida research reactor (as well as all other NRC-licensed research reactors as we discussed with you).

With respect to the UF reactor, well before the 1981 report was prepared, under Dr. Diaz a variety of significant safety and security steps were taken, some of which take into account situations in which large crowds are gathered at the University. (Unfortunately, we cannot provide you with the specifics.) Additional security measures have been required and evaluations continue. NRC will continue to evaluate the safety and security of all its licensed facilities including the information you raised to us.

2. As stated, we are evaluating the specific issues you raised and will keep you informed to the extent we can. We need some further information to assist in our investigation but we would ask you not to make the existence of these evaluations public at the moment to ensure the integrity of our assessments.

We need to immediately clarify at least one point on the University of Florida. We saw on the film clip that the University of Florida allowed the interns access before the reactor cell without ID check. We need to know whether University of Florida personnel checked the interns IDs before they went into the reactor cell. This is not clear from the information we have. (For your information, the University of Florida has previously said that the interns were confused when they were looking at an external experimental facility located in the radio-chemistry lab adjacent to the reactor.) The University said the interns thought they were looking at the reactor at that point when in fact they were not.) Please clarify as soon as possible, as we are trying to evaluate this in timely fashion.

As we discussed, many NRC staff had many communications with many law enforcement agencies and many research reactor staff members on the interns' activities. (Not all of these personnel were privy to all the communications.) We reminded them, as we have you, of the responsibility to protect security information. We also requested, similar to our request to you, that any follow-up on the interns not be made known to ensure the integrity of that follow-up. If any information potentially related to security was revealed to you other than that which you have told us of, we need to know that as well to ensure any potential problem is dealt with immediately.

Further, because we want to maintain the integrity of all follow-up, we need to know if you have any other information that contradicts what we told you. Mr. Mendonca received Ms. Sauer's e-mail that the "guard booth" was at the University of Texas not the University of Missouri. For the record, the personnel at the "guard booth" is not a part of the

required security plan for the University of Texas and we hope you will mention that in the script.

3. The above item further emphasizes the importance of getting all the film you have on these visits and we appreciate your efforts to provide that information. We renew our request for at least the short video and anything you have on Wisconsin.

4. Concerning staff analyses of potential terrorist actions, we have first ensured that the security provisions at NRC licensed facilities appropriately protect the public health and safety. Specifically for research reactors, the NRC-required security plans and procedures ensure potential radiological releases are not likely and will not endanger the public health and safety. Additionally, research reactor operational controls, design features and emergency preparedness requirements further reduce this potential. There has been a long history of evaluations on research reactors, and NRC has considered all related accidents, events and reports to ensure the risk of radiological accident or event caused by any source remains low. With specific regard to security, we have analyzed possible sabotage or theft events and conditions, and we required plans, procedures, system and controls to prevent such conditions. We have considered -- and continue to consider -- the tasks and times it would take to modify or subvert these systems and controls. We have so far concluded NRC-required detection and response systems would prevent or mitigate potential radiological releases and ensure the public health and safety. However, we will implement additional requirements or direct corrective actions if needed.

As discussed with you, security and safety enhancements have continued to be required and implemented at all NRC licensed facilities, and NRC inspections also verify the continued safety and security of these licensed facilities. Security at U.S. research reactors is in accordance with our international obligations. There is no significant public health and safety issue.

Finally, I and the other members of the NRC staff who visited your Washington, D.C. offices on Thursday, and the Chairman, wish to thank you for opportunity to understand the findings of your investigations. We are evaluating the information you have provided and would be pleased to hear from you if you have any questions or concerns.

Regards,

Eliot Brenner
NRC Public Affairs

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