

EDO Principal Correspondence Control

FROM: DUE: / /

EDO CONTROL: G20110283
DOC DT: 04/15/11
FINAL REPLY:

Dick Griest

TO:

Chairman Jaczko

FOR SIGNATURE OF :

** GRN **

CRC NO: 11-0230

DESC:

Watts Bar Visit with Senator Lamar Alexander on
April 18, 2011 (EDATS: SECY-2011-0247)

ROUTING:

Borchardt
Weber
Virgilio
Ash
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OGC/GC
McCree, RII
Wiggins, NSIR
Burns, OGC
Bowman, OEDO

DATE: 04/21/11

ASSIGNED TO:

CONTACT:

NRR

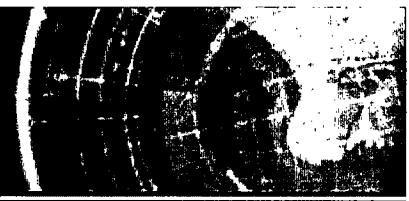
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SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS OR REMARKS:

For Appropriate Action.

EDATS

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Source: SECY

General Information

Assigned To: NRR

OEDO Due Date: 5/19/2011 11:00 PM

Other Assignees:

SECY Due Date: NONE

Subject: Watts Bar Visit with Senator Lamar Alexander on April 18, 2011

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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
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Date Printed: Apr 19, 2011 09:18

PAPER NUMBER: LTR-11-0230 **LOGGING DATE:** 04/19/2011
ACTION OFFICE: EDO

AUTHOR: Dick Griest
AFFILIATION: TVA
ADDRESSEE: Gregory Jaczko
SUBJECT: Watts Bar visit 4/18/11 with Sen. Lamar Alexander

ACTION: Appropriate
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LETTER DATE: 04/15/2011
ACKNOWLEDGED: No
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FILE LOCATION: ADAMS

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EDO --G20110283

From: Dick Griest [mailto:rgriest@att.net]
Sent: Friday, April 15, 2011 3:35 PM
To: Gibbs, Catina; Conrad_Schatte@alexander.senate.gov
Cc: dflessner@timesfreepress.com; psohn@timesfreepress.com; apaine@tennessean.com; mungerf@knoxnews.com; sullivanb@shns.com
Subject: Media Questions for NRC Watts Bar Visit April 18
Importance: High

April 15, 2011

Honorable Gregory B. Jaczko, Chmn.
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Mail Stop O-16G4
Washington, D.C. 20555-0001

RE: Watts Bar Visit April 18, 2011 with Senator Lamar Alexander

Dear Chairman Jaczko,

I am writing to express some concerns and suggest some questions that Tennessee's energy beat reporters apparently weren't given the opportunity to ask or were reluctant to ask during their tour of the Browns Ferry reactor. In one of the attached emails I discuss a phenomenon noted by Bloomberg's Brendan Greeley where reporters just put on their "dunce cap" when visiting the topic of nuclear energy and shy away from asking even common sense questions. Hopefully presenting these questions to you in advance, removing any doubt of a "gotcha" intent, will loosen their tongues.

Since the time of writing the attached emails, 3 U.S. senate hearings have transpired on nuclear safety and yesterday the California senate held a hearing. As reported by various papers in the Tennessee press the TVA has asserted on numerous occasions subsequent to Fukushima that its reactors are safer. For example the Knoxville News' Ed Marcum quoted TVA's Bill McCollum on the hardened vent systems in a piece titled, "TVA says its reactors, pools safer." This raises the question of how TVA can make a statement involving a comparison between Browns Ferry and Fukushima when you repeatedly told Sen. Carper's senate hearing Tuesday that the NRC itself is still not certain what the configuration of the Fukushima reactors was at the time of the accident.

After sending the attached email to William Theobald on the risk to spent fuel pools due to a possible grid outage of years caused by a solar flare, I followed up with a call to the newsroom of the Tennessean. Despite this, Senator Alexander was apparently not aware of this Oak Ridge study as he failed to question you on it at Tuesday's hearing. Similarly, Senator Alexander did not raise any questions about the terrorism risks to nuclear facility during Tuesday's hearing despite following up with his office on my Op/Ed on this topic back in February last year. Senator Carper's hearing was ostensibly about risks to nuclear plants, not just earthquake and tsunami related risks.

None of the questions at these hearings have addressed what would happen to the Tennessee River (which passes through seven states) if it became necessary to flood the reactors with water as has been done in Fukushima. The hundreds and hundreds of tons of Cesium 137 contaminated radioactive water which in Japan has been flushed into the ocean would contaminate the drinking water of the Tennessee not unlike PCBs that contaminated the Hudson. There was no mention of vessels to store such water in during the recent media tour of Browns Ferry.

At a House hearing on Wednesday of the previous week, University of Wisconsin-Madison's Professor Michael Corradini touted the capability of the NRC to make "risk informed" decisions. It would be illustrative to the public to see the exact calculations that have taken place at the NRC on the risks to the cooling ponds due to a solar flare. At that same House hearing, Dr. Edwin Lyman of the Union of Concerned Scientists lamented the NRC's defensive posture taken in releasing details of SOARCA the UCS having had to resort to a FOIA request. I can't help noting the similarity in the timing of the SOARCA simulation preceding Fukushima and Operation Pam which took place shortly before New Orleans was drowned by hurricane Katrina.

Dr. Lyman mentioned that the actual details of the B.5.b improvements that the NRC keeps touting to illustrate how much U.S. reactor safety has been improved, are classified. (are such details shared with the Japanese?) This highlights a "Catch-22" in the NRC's position in the 9th Cir. C.A. case with the San Luis Obispo's Mothers for Peace concerning the terrorist threat to the dry waste casks at Diablo Canyon. The NRC asserts that the casks are "safe" but can't disclose its reasoning to the SLOMFP's attorney who holds the proper security clearance, because doing so would render the casks "unsafe". Yet the NRC can share this kind of information with an Iranian national, Majid Shahriari, a citizen of an "Axis-of-Evil" country who until recently headed up the construction of Watts Bar #2 reactor. This kind of secrecy shows the fallacy of the idea of a public discussion of the risks versus benefits since the risks are classified. Just this morning Rep. Markey issued a press release that the NRC inspectors performing the post Fukushima safety analysis have been warned not to write anything down on problems found since that material would eventually have to be released under FOIA.

At the several hearings you have attended following Fukushima you have reminded congress that your primary area of purview is safety. I am curious to know what kind of numbers you use in your model for the probability that a repository will eventually be built versus the probability that legislative gridlock will result in the dry casks eventually rotting and releasing the radiation into the environment (similar to the garbage in the movie Idiocracy). This is a serious philosophical question to pose. How can a congress that can't fund the government for more than a week at a time hope to build a repository, fill it with waste, and monitor it for 100 years before closing when those tasks will take 10 years, 30 years and 100 years respectively? And in this same vein, how can the NRC convince the public it can ride herd on reactor safety when it can't even get two iodide pills costing 20 cents each, distributed to the at risk public? (see attached email 'NRC said to be rascals')

In the NRC's risk informed decision making, what numbers does it use for the probability of the country going bankrupt and not being able to carry out its responsibilities under the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982/1987? At least one member of the Fed has stated that given its

accrued obligations, the country is already bankrupt. Similarly there is a risk that utilities themselves will collapse if distributed solar power reaches the grid parity threshold. (see attached email Questions for TVA) Bill Joy has since joined the group of people speculating that this might occur. What number does the NRC plug into its model for the probability this will happen? I hope that the NRC lives in the real world and isn't running its calculations somewhere in a vacuum.

At yesterday's hearing in California NRC representative Troy W. Pruett use the word periodically 15 times without defining it, in describing the frequency the NRC updates its earthquake data. Reading between the lines of an article on Limerick in the Reading Eagle by Dan Kelly shortly after Fukushima erupted, one might conclude that the NRC didn't update its earthquake data for that plant in the period between Three Mile Island and 1997 at which time the power utility applied to build a new reactor.

Your bio posted on the NRC website cites one of your goals as "thorough environmental reviews, and promoting strong enforcement and accountability." As detailed in an attached email no one went to jail after the near miss at Davis-Besse. TVA has a pattern of taking retaliation against whistle blowers as detailed in an attached email and hopefully will result in some penalties after your visit. Why was action taken against the electrical contractor who falsified records at Watts Bar only after Fukushima occurred? Why was the report on the stuck valve in the emergency cooling pipes at Browns Ferry originally classified, and only declassified after Fukushima occurred? Why did it take the NRC six months to have a meeting in Atlanta on the stuck valve with TVA? Why did no reporter from the Atlanta Journal Constitution feel it was newsworthy to send a reporter to this meeting? See the attached "not read" receipts from Nashville WKRN TV's anchor Bob Mueller on the topic of nuclear safety post Fukushima.

Since another of your stated goals is "confidence of the public," perhaps the NRC needs to do some coordination with the FCC in seeing that WKRN meets its obligations required under its federal license. But one of the best ways in boosting public confidence in nuclear would be for the NRC to seek the repeal of the Price-Anderson Act. Yesterday Mr. Pruett outlined how the safety of nuclear plants has constantly improved since being built in the 1960s. With the rigorous review that nuclear plants are now receiving by the NRC subsequent to the Fukushima disaster, they will be safer than at any time in history. Repealing the Act and substituting legislation where the companies who design reactors share liability with the companies that operate them would do more to restore public confidence than a Library of Congress full of pronouncements by the Commission.

Regards,

Dick Griest
Nashville

cc: Honorable Thomas R. Carper c/o Laura Haynes FAX (202) 228-2190 and attachments on Compact Disc via U.S. Mail

Champ, Billie

From: Dick Griest [rgriest@att.net]
Sent: Thursday, March 17, 2011 12:12 PM
To: dflessner@timesfreepress.com; psohn@timesfreepress.com; apaine@tennessean.com; mungerf@knoxnews.com; sullivanb@shns.com
Cc: newsroom@newschannel5.com; news@wkrr.com; news@fox17.com
Subject: 'NRC said to be rascals' -- Updated 3/17/2011

Importance: High

This morning's NY Times reports that Chinese are buying up table salt because they lack "potassium iodine" (sic) pills.

In an interview Tuesday night, Zhang Wei, quality management director at the Ministry of Health's National Institute for Radiological Protection, said the level of iodine in salt was far too low to provide any protection. "Eating iodized salt will do nothing to protect a person from nuclear radiation," he said. "Even eating two kilos of salt won't help. More likely, it could kill a person."

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/18/world/asia/18china.html>

As I reported yesterday, the Bush administration did not implement the 2002 Act which required distribution of iodide pills so the U.S. is in no better position today than China. Yesterday Rep. Markey sent out a letter requesting HHS assistance in implementing the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002 .

Atom Agency Tries to Avoid Financing Fallout Drug By MATTHEW L. WALD Published: April 24, 1999

WASHINGTON, April 23 — The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has quietly backed away from its offer to give states with nuclear power plants stockpiles of a drug that cuts the risk of thyroid cancer in people exposed to fallout in an accident. The commission decided in July 1997 to pay for the drug, potassium iodide. But on Thursday it approved a document that calls for trying to shift the cost to the Federal Emergency Management Agency. William F. McNutt, a senior policy adviser at the emergency management agency and chairman of a multi-agency subcommittee on potassium iodide, said of the N.R.C. "**Those rascals.**" <http://www.nytimes.com/1999/04/24/us/atom-agency-tries-to-avoid-financing-fallout-drug.html>

Nuclear Agency to Pay for Radiation Drug By MATTHEW L. WALD Published: December 25, 2000
ROCKVILLE, Md., Dec. 23 — Eighteen years after it promised to decide how best to protect the public in a reactor accident, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission said on Friday that it would require the states to consider stockpiling a drug to protect against thyroid cancer and that it would pay for the pills for any state that wanted them. The commission has apparently spent more on considering whether to pay for the pills than on what the pills themselves would cost. Last year the commission told Congress that it had spent \$2.6 million studying the use of the drug, potassium iodide. With an average of 80,000 people living within 10 miles of each of 70 reactor sites around the country, and with the maximum anticipated use being two pills, at 20 cents each, per person, the pills would cost less than \$2.4 million if every state wanted them. Several states, however, have decided against them.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2000/12/25/us/nuclear-agency-to-pay-for-radiation-drug.html>

Given its regulatory power you would think that the NRC could get something as simple as iodide pills implemented. There are two possible explanations why not, both equally scary. One, it could be that the NRC is totally incompetent, an argument supported by the fact they would approve the Mark I reactor when three G.E. engineers resigned over its lack of safety and NRC records predicted a 90% chance of meltdown. Or

alternately, the NRC may have failed to get the pills distributed because they felt there was no risk from nuclear reactors. This is supported by the fact that they don't have a stockpile of the giant-sized sandbags as were used in Katrina and lead lined CH-47 helicopters which would be needed to smother a runaway reactor here in Tennessee.

The NBC Today Show reported this morning that relations between the U.S. and Japan have been severely strained which could explain why there has been no reporting of an effort to produce such sandbags here in Sweetwater, Tennessee at the MHF Logistical Solutions plant which supplied them during Katrina and send them to Japan. At 15,000 pounds per bag it would take 2,666 bags to drop the 5,000 tons on each of the four Fukushima reactors that was dropped on the errant Chernobyl reactor.

A full list of New York Times articles tracing the iodide pill history follows below. The 1997 Trenton article is interesting in that New Jersey decided it would evacuate the state if there was a nuclear emergency. Easier said than done as the renown scientist, Harold Smith, who negotiated the arms reduction treaty with the Soviets explains in this Berkeley interview. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OnOIONHvYbo> If it is an atomic bomb blast the roads will likely be worse than the evacuation of Galveston (Galveston Respects Rita) following Katrina. And where do you go? Speaking of which, one source I talked to suggested that those FEMA Katrina trailers that were sitting in Hope Arkansas should be on a boat on their way to Japan.

<http://www.nytimes.com/1991/05/05/opinion/1-chernobyl-makes-ukraine-want-independence-in-us-no-stockpiles-061591.html>

<http://www.nytimes.com/1997/07/21/nyregion/antidote-to-radiation.html>

<http://www.nytimes.com/1998/08/22/nyregion/states-will-receive-drug-for-public-use-in-nuclear-mishaps.html>

<http://www.nytimes.com/1999/04/24/us/atom-agency-tries-to-avoid-financing-fallout-drug.html>

<http://www.nytimes.com/2000/12/25/us/nuclear-agency-to-pay-for-radiation-drug.html>

<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/02/10/nyregion/in-brief-nuclear-medicine-chief-calls-for-pill-stockpile.html>

<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/05/12/us/atomic-plant-casts-a-pall-on-paradise.html>

<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/06/07/opinion/1-radiation-potassium-iodide-and-indian-point-426407.html>

<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/12/03/us/national-briefing-washington-protecting-postal-workers.html>

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/02/19/opinion/1-potassium-iodide-pills-402192.html>

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/02/23/nyregion/preparing-for-the-unthinkable.html>

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/03/25/science/worried-about-terror-preparations-that-make-sense.html>

Champ, Billie

From: Dick Griest [rgriest@att.net]
Sent: Tuesday, April 12, 2011 4:21 PM
To: dflessner@timesfreepress.com; apaine@tennessean.com; mungerf@knoxnews.com; sullivanb@shns.com
Cc: bmueller@wkrn.com; newsdesk@newschannel5.com; sarnold@newschannel5.com
Subject: Senator Alexander at Hearing on Nuclear Safety Today

Importance: High

I wonder if the story about the Nuclear Waste Trust Fund (see below) will come up at this afternoon's hearing, currently ongoing. Letting the spent fuel sit around in pools was the lead story for Tennessean yesterday April 11.

http://energy.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=Hearings.Hearing&Hearing_ID=e8a6b69c-9a06-a2e4-eb1e-2ed705f85bd6

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

From: Dick Griest
To: newsdesk@newshour.org
Cc: abell@newshour.org
Sent: Tuesday, April 12, 2011 1:06 PM
Subject: **\$30 billion in Yucca Mt. lock-box is gone - Las Vegas Sun**

<http://www.lasvegassun.com/news/2011/apr/12/despite-house-gop-push-harry-reid-declares-yucca-d/>
<http://www.examiner.com/homeland-security-in-chicago/llinois-congressman-s-nuclear-dreams-on-hold>

This money has already been applied against the deficit, so when the government goes to build a repository it will need to come up with \$30 billion in additional revenue to replace it, since you can't credit the same non-marketable securities twice (unless you're Bernie Madoff of course). Given the current focus on the deficit and the debt ceiling this discovery will come as a severe blow to the nuclear energy industry, on top of the current reexamination caused by the Fukushima disaster, just raised this morning to a level 7.

Illinois Congressman Shimkus had planned to lead a bus tour to visit Yucca Mountain. Given the magnitude of the newly discovered \$30 billion deficit gap it's not clear the trip will go forward.

http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/political-fix/article_29b3fb8c-6468-11e0-a4c1-0019bb30f31a.html

Perhaps the NewsHour could have Rep. Shimkus and Rep. Berkley on the program to discuss this since they have been filing dueling blogs at The Hill's web site. Despite the plan of one candidate in the 2008 election campaign to build 100 new nuclear plants, I don't believe the words "Yucca Mountain" crossed the lips of any NewsHour anchor.

<http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/energy-a-environment/155225-us-needs-nuclear-waste-storage-site>
<http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/energy-a-environment/155437-solving-the-problem-of-nuclear-waste>

Regards,

Dick Griest
Nashville viewer

Champ, Billie

From: Dick Griest [rgriest@att.net]
Sent: Thursday, March 24, 2011 1:02 PM
To: dflessner@timesfreepress.com; psohn@timesfreepress.com; apaine@tennessean.com; mungerf@knoxnews.com; sullivanb@shns.com
Subject: Questions for TVA at media tour tomorrow - Brown's Ferry
Importance: High

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

From: Dick Griest
To: bpoovey@ap.org
Sent: Thursday, March 24, 2011 10:18 AM
Subject: **TVA execs discuss US reactor safeguards -- questions for Friday media tour**

RE:TVA execs discuss US reactor safeguards as Japan struggles with nuclear crisis after quake -- by Bill Poovey AP

March 24, 2011

Mr. Bill Poovey
Staff Writer
Chattanooga Bureau
The Associated Press
Chattanooga, TN

Dear Mr. Poovey,

Will you be attending the TVA's media tour at Brown's Ferry tomorrow? If so here are a few questions you may want to ask.

- (1) What will the TVA do about its spent fuel pools if the electrical power grid goes dark for up to two years as predicted in an Oct 2010 alert by Oak Ridge National Labs as reported by Bartholomew Sullivan in the Memphis Commercial Appeal a week before Fukushima?
- (2) Has TVA installed the safeguards recommended by the National Academy of Sciences discussed in this morning's Op/Ed in Washington Post by Matthew Bunn? Why has TVA needed waivers from NRC regarding improvements to safeguard their reactors against terrorist attack that were announced a decade ago following 9/11? Who from TVA attended the NRC's public webinar held Jan 14, 2010 on proposed rulemaking for further strengthening reactors against terrorist attack?
- (3) If the TVA has not implemented these safeguards you might remind them that the tsunami risk was pointed out to TEPCO in 2009 by Yukinobu Okamura, a prominent seismologist. See "Japanese nuclear plant's safety analysts brushed off risk of tsunami" by David Nakamura and Chico Harlan in the Washington Post.
- (4) How can the public be confident in the NRC when it allows TVA to fire whistle blowers without making them pay a stiff fine. The most recent incident involved Robert Klock who was fired for pointing out a defect in the fire prevention system at Watts Bar. Mr. Klock ended up losing his home, his car and his wife over the incident according to a Feb 4 Tennessean article by Anne Paine. A December 24, 2009 article by Brian Lawson

in the Huntsville Times involving retaliation against two other workers shows the Klock incident was a pattern on the part of TVA.

TVA violated rules designed to allow workers to express safety concerns without fear of retaliation in two separate incidents at its Browns Ferry Nuclear plant near Athens, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission said Wednesday. The incidents occurred in 2005 and 2007. In the first incident a contractor working on quality assurance programs during the Browns Ferry Unit 1 restart was removed from his position at Browns Ferry. The NRC determined he was terminated, at least in part, for raising safety concerns to management. The worker accused his manager of being "too close to the line organization" to do his job properly, the NRC said.

(5) A Bloomberg News story March 17 by Brendan Greeley says the press has failed miserably at discussing the risks versus benefits of nuclear power. Not understanding how atoms are split, the press just puts on its "dunce cap" and shies away from asking even common sense questions. With respect to TVA such questions might include: (a) If measurements on the strength of earthquakes have only been taken since 1880 and the earth is 4.54 billion years old isn't that 131 years of data like predicting who is going to win an election by only sampling 8 people out of 300 million? Gallup would be laughed out of the country if it did this, why isn't TVA? (b) Even if the risk of a fuel rod meltdown at Watts Bar is 1 in 27,778 as reported by Pam Sohn in the Chattanooga Times Free Press, this is almost a ten times better chance of happening than winning the Tennessee State Lottery where the odds of winning a million are reported as 1 in 200,000. Anyone who buys a lottery ticket definitely ought to be worried about TVA's nukes. (c) Why hasn't TVA learned the lesson from Fukushima that you don't want to build multiple reactors on one site, because an accident at one prevents you from getting near other reactors when there is a need to evacuate? Yet TVA is doing this at Watts Bar and has plans to do so at other sites.

(6) Finally given that TVA is near it's debt ceiling, shouldn't it spend what little money it has improving the safety of its existing plants instead of building new ones? A front page story in the Wall Street Journal yesterday regarding "residual risk concerning earthquakes and tsunamis," pointed out that TEPCO elected not to retrofit its older plants with a new steam condenser, which in retrospect has had disastrous consequences. The last time that TVA's finances were broached in any kind of serious manner was in the 2007 Tennessee Business Journal and Sen. Alexander was quoted "I'd assume it's the SEC," who would look into that. Of course we know from the Bernie Madoff scandal that SEC does nothing of the kind. Sen. Alexander is co-chair of the TVA congressional caucus so if he doesn't know the details of TVA's finances, I suspect no one does.

"I think they're getting better in some of their reporting," Smith says. "But who is holding them accountable? Who is taking those reports, scrutinizing them and then bringing the decision-makers at TVA to account for what they've done? Where is there an honest discussion about whether TVA could spend \$3 billion and moderate demand over spending \$3 billion and building a new facility?" "The SEC looks at [the 10-K] and sees that it complies with its format," Kilgore says, "but if somebody's going to be bothered, it's probably going to be a congressman or a senator or someone like that." **Alexander says he's unclear who's charged with assessing the exhaustive financial report: "If [TVA] files with the SEC, I'd assume it's the SEC.** TVA would have to answer that question. Tennessee Business Journal 2007

Decreased demand and increased regulation following Three Mile Island put many a utility into bankruptcy during the first wave of nuclear reactor building. Now there is also the threat of disruptive technology on the horizon.

Electric utilities today look a lot like newspapers in 2000: Too much debt in an industry primed for disruption. Speaking at the Economist's Intelligent Infrastructure Conference, Brad Tirpak, Managing Partner at the private investment fund Locke Partners made the case that electric utilities are as woefully unprepared for the coming disruption of cheap, distributed solar power as newspapers were unprepared for the disruption of the Internet in 2000.

Regards,

Dick Griest
Nashville

cc: Mr. Len Tepper - CBS News
Hon. Edward Markey's office

Champ, Billie

From: Dick Griest [rgriest@att.net]
Sent: Wednesday, March 30, 2011 6:54 PM
To: wtheobal@gannett.com
Cc: ryan.tracey@wsj.com; lliebert@bloomberg.net
Subject: Alexander overlooked Oak Ridge report on spent fuel danger

Importance: High

March 30, 2011

Mr. William Theobald
Political Reporter
Gannett News Service
for the Nashville Tennessean

Dear Mr. Theobald,

Let me bring to your attention that Senate Appropriations Energy Sub-Committee held hearings today on lessons learned from the Fukushima nuclear disaster, particularly with respect to spent fuel storage.

Senator Alexander read into the hearing record and article from the British paper, The Guardian, "Why Fukushima made me stop worrying and love nuclear power" by George Monbiot.
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/mar/21/pro-nuclear-japan-fukushima>

Yet, Mr. Alexander failed to have read into the record an article that appeared Feb 27 in the Memphis Commercial Appeal, a paper in his own back yard, discussing a major risk to spent fuel pools seen by Oak Ridge National Laboratory. The study, which was released last October, said that electrical grid power could be knocked out in an entire region of the country for up to two years. "Solar disruptions' threats to power grid draw concern" by Bartholomew Sullivan <http://m.commercialappeal.com/news/2011/feb/27/power-grid-draws-concern/>

Just as an A.P. investigation has shown that the Fukushima mishap could have been predicted by reviewing historical records in Japan back to the Jogan tsunami of 869, Oak Ridge has reviewed historical damage caused by solar flares such as Carrington Event of 1859 to arrive at its conclusion.

Dick Griest
Nashville

cc: Hon. Dianne Feinstein - Chmn. Senate Appropriations Energy Sub-Committee
Hon. Lamar Alexander - ranking member Energy Sub-Committee

Nation's nuclear plants must be protected

By Dick Griest • February 9, 2010

•Tennessee Voices

On Dec. 29, 2009, former Vice President Dick Cheney accused President Barack Obama of "trying to pretend we are not at war" with terrorists. The Obama administration's nominees for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission serve to drive home that point and Sen. Lamar Alexander should vote them all down.

In its draft technical basis posted in the Federal Register on Dec. 16, Obama's NRC still relied on calling local law enforcement instead of requiring on-site security forces to defend nuclear waste storage in dry casks at the nuclear plants.

This strategy called Detect, Assess, and Communicate has been proved a failure in Iraq, New Orleans and Haiti. In times of crisis, local law enforcement is overwhelmed, and in the case of Iraq simply ran off, leaving the munitions depots unguarded.

Given that each dry cask holds as much spent fuel as was released into the atmosphere at Chernobyl and given the tremendous destructive potential of vehicle borne bombs demonstrated in Iraq and Oklahoma City, it is not hard to envision the nation's nuclear plants being turned into strategic weapons as effective as the IED.

The U.S. military's blunder in Iraq, of relying on local law enforcement to secure the depots, was strongly criticized by the nonpartisan Government Accountability Office in a March 2007 reports "DOD Should Apply Lessons Learned Concerning the Need for Security over Conventional Munitions Storage Sites to Future Operations Planning"

(<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d07639t.pdf> and <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d07444.pdf>).

Obama's Nuclear Regulatory Commission has been slow to learn this lesson.

Tennesseans are dutifully impressed by the president's choice for NRC candidates, all being schooled in risk-base analysis. Still, none of them is a Nobel laureate in this field like Alan Greenspan's "whiz kid," whom he blamed during congressional testimony for the failed risk model that led to the great recession of 2008. ("How Risk Models Failed Wall St. and Washington"

http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/10/01/AR2008100101149_pf.html

)

Dick Griest is a Nashville conservative who supported Ron Paul for president in the 2008 presidential campaign.