



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Office of Public Affairs Telephone: 301/415-8200

Washington, D.C. 20555-0001

E-mail: opa.resource@nrc.gov Site: www.nrc.gov

Blog: <http://public-blog.nrc-gateway.gov>

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**REMARKS OF NRC CHAIRMAN GREGORY JACZKO
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I want to spend a moment recapping for you what the United States is doing and then look forward a bit.

The NRC is a little more than two-thirds of the way through a 90-day review of the Fukushima accident to see if there are issues to address in the short term. The report of that work should be out in about three weeks and our commission will meet on July 19 to hear the staff recommendations.

While it is my opinion that U.S. nuclear plants are safe, the early work suggests there are a number of possible areas for improvement. To name a few, several of us on the commission have noted that our regulations for what is called a station blackout – essentially what happened in Fukushima – do not take into account an extended loss of AC power. Other areas that have drawn attention are spent fuel pools, emergency planning, of course seismic issues, contingency planning for situations beyond the design basis of a plant, and others.

The NRC has also run some preliminary inspections on areas like coping with unanticipated disasters, station blackout preparations, and severe accident mitigation. Again, while I see nothing that calls into question the safety of our plants, I see areas where performance was not as good as would be preferred.

I believe there is a likelihood that the agency will need to make some changes, although it is too early to say right now precisely what those changes might be.

On the global front – and this is a truly global issue – the real question is where to go from here?

This conference is building on the work started here in April and continued last month in Paris at the G-20 and NEA.

Let me offer a few thoughts about how I think the issue can be approached.

The meeting discussions indicate that each regulator is ensuring that appropriate actions are taken in the near term to improve public safety. This issue is going to linger and the approach that should be taken is methodical, taking lessons over both the short and long term.

National efforts should be developed with the maximum possible transparency in mind. For example, in the United States, our work is public. Inspection results are being made public, as usual. And our initial report will be public.

In addition, I believe there are multiple ways to approach safety assessments and implement the lessons learned. Each nation can learn from others. Each nation's path forward will depend on national and international circumstances.

In the United States our agency is doing sampling inspections to compare the existing plant conditions with the regulatory requirements and industry commitments, as well as taking a very introspective look at our regulatory system. And the industry in the United States is taking its own steps. Listening in one of the working sessions yesterday, I heard something similar from others.

Clearly, safety can be strengthened by sharing feedback among nations as we are doing here this week.

I also believe that the IAEA is very well positioned to develop international best practices – a center for global coordination if you will – and those best practices can help strengthen the international nuclear safety effort.

Finally, I would say that the work being done here this week will provide a firm underpinning for the further development of improved nuclear safety at the General Conference in September.

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