

DSI-22
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From: G. D. McPherson
To: WND1.WNP2.JCH, WND1.WNP7.JWC1
Date: 11/18/96 11:46am
Subject: Stategic Assessment and Rebaselining Initiative

The attachment to this message contains 3 proposals I wish to enter for consideration in the Strategic Assessment and Rebaselining Initiative.

Please contact me if with comments or for clarification.
Don McPherson, 415-1246, E-Mail GDM

CC: GMH, MJV, WNP4.BWS, WNP4.ACT, TWD2.TWP0.DLM3, WND1...

acknowledged by *e-mail* *11/20/96*
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STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT
and REBASELINING INITIATIVE

THREE PROPOSALS by Dr. G. Donald McPherson DSSA/NRR, November 18, 1996

FIRST PROPOSAL

This proposal addresses

Issue Paper DSI 20 - International Activities, Function 3: International Regulatory Information Exchange

and

Issue Paper DSI 22 - Research - that portion dealing with the international research programs and international exchanges in research results

The proposal would support both Options 3 and 5 of DSI 20, Function 3 (increased benefits to NRC and an expanded role for NRC), with little or no added FTE demand on the staff. Similarly, it would support Option 7 of DSI 22 (continue active participation in International Safety programs). The proposal is that NRC establish a post to support the following activities:

- (a) increased technical and information exchanges with the larger regulatory organizations,
- (b) fuller participation in Cooperative International Projects, and
- (c) continuity of participation in OECD Nuclear Energy Agency activities

The need for these improvements can be justified as follows:

(a) The regulators with whom NRC has the most active exchanges are those of France, Germany, Japan, Sweden, Switzerland and Britain. At any given time these organizations are developing positions and dealing with issues that directly or indirectly affect the affairs of NRC. It is therefore important not only that we remain in close touch with these organizations through periodic visits and communications, but as NRC's resources decrease, we should increase these exchanges in ways that would further enlist contributions from our international colleagues towards collegial solutions of our common problems. A special post emphasizing this activity would permit us to decrease the number of foreign trips and maintain a more regular interface with the organizations concerned.

(b) Cooperative International Projects contribute strongly towards the efficient use of NRC resources, for they involve sharing of the responsibilities for resources and management in carrying out projects that support NRC's goals. To obtain the best return on our investment it is important that we take our place at every meeting of the technical and management committees of those projects, which currently we are finding increasingly difficult to do. The new post would provide greater opportunity for NRC to be represented at every meeting of the technical and management groups of these projects, with less time lost for this purpose by the appointed NRC representatives.

(c) OECD Nuclear Energy Agency activities involve the exchange of information among all NEA member countries with nuclear power installations. Its Divisions of Nuclear Safety and Radiation Protection/Waste Management support committees dealing with reactor safety research (CSNI), reactor regulation (CNRA), waste management (RWMC) and radiation protection (CRPPH), plus several jointly-funded research projects at any given time. That NRC recognizes much value in NEA activities is demonstrated by NRC's participation in about 30 of the approximately 36 committees, working groups, task groups and projects, and by participation of the Acting Deputy Director of NRR as Vice Chairman of CNRA and the Director of RES as Chairman of CSNI. Unfortunately, resource constraints prevent regular attendance at the semi-annual and annual meetings of these various groups, which often precludes NRC from influencing their activities to the degree that would otherwise be possible. The proposed new post would provide a greater opportunity for NRC to be represented at meetings of those groups we wish to influence in areas of special interest to NRC, with less time lost for this purpose by the NRC staff.

The benefits to NRC to be derived from the establishment of this post would include:

- closer and more frequent interaction with our regulatory and research counterparts,
- more frequent participation in cooperative project meetings and informal visits to the sites of the cooperative research projects,
- closer relations with the European members of NEA committees and working group,
- closer relations and a greater influence with the NEA secretariat in Paris,
- NRC participation in important meetings that our appointed representatives are unable to attend,
- increased NRC influence over cooperative research projects and the direction of NEA activities,

reduction in preparation and travel time by NRC's appointed representatives to the various projects and NEA groups, and to bi-lateral meetings with regulators; this is not to say that such contacts would cease, but that the new position would reduce significantly the frequency of these contacts.

IMPLEMENTATION

Two major activities would occupy the incumbent: contacts with the responsible NRC staff members, and participating in the various meetings abroad. It therefore seems reasonable that his/her time be split equally between Rockville and Europe. (Since the majority of the interfaces abroad are in Europe, those in the far east should probably be handled as they are now, or at least separately.)

I would suggest we begin with temporary duty assignments to Europe for the Autumn and Spring, coinciding with the CNRA related meetings). Summer and Winter could be spent at headquarters interfacing with those same staff members to develop strategies and agenda for the forthcoming activities, and other related duties. The cost of this approach would be comparable to the reductions that have lately been imposed in FY'95 and FY'96 foreign travel costs and therefore have negligible budgetary impact. After a year or two, the contribution of this approach towards NRC's mission could be assessed and the subsequent level of support decided.

SECOND PROPOSAL

This proposal addresses Issue Paper DSI 20, International Activities, Function 4: Assist Other Countries by Strengthening their Regulatory Programs.

Chairman Jackson has proposed the formation of an International Nuclear Regulators Forum - a body in which nuclear regulatory officials could exchange views and coordinate approaches for the safe and secure use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. My proposal is that the OECD Nuclear Energy Agency's Senior Regulators be used to provide that international nuclear regulators forum.

Although the NEA's official membership currently excludes most countries of Eastern Europe, the Former Soviet Union and Taiwan, the NEA committees nevertheless frequently invite officials of regulatory agencies of several of these countries, and their supporting research organizations, to the NEA meetings where they participate as equals.

It would not require any change in NEA policy, to invite any number of targeted nuclear regulators to attend meetings of the Senior Regulators especially organized for this purpose, and to use the NEA secretariat and conference facilities, if so desired. Furthermore, such meetings of the proposed Forum - in this case, the Senior Regulators Forum - would be free to discuss matters of policy, as they have done in the past, thus achieving the Chairman's purpose in proposing the Forum.

This approach has the particular advantage that information exchanges and cooperative projects among the broader membership of international regulators are already in progress through NEA committees that are chaired by members of the same organizations that are headed by the senior regulators. The benefits of this close-knit relationship would be lost if the proposed Forum were to be set up independent of the NEA Senior Regulators.

THIRD PROPOSAL

Judging by the titles of the Issue Papers, there is little in this assessment that deals with human resources. If this is the intention, then this topic must be addressed in a parallel exercise, because there is bound to be much fall-out from the current initiative that will affect the NRC staff. Among the many subjects to be dealt with in the human resources document the following two subjects should be included.

The first deals with the problem that the reductions in NRC's staff combined with the unusually high numbers considering retirement or recently retired is causing a rapid and dramatic loss in our corporate memory. This problem could be addressed by establishing a formal program whereby new retirees may continue to work for a significant length of time, on a part-time basis immediately following their retirement. I realize that ad hoc arrangements of this nature already exist, but these should be formalized to ensure we have a consistently fair approach and well-rounded plan, and above all, to make all prospective retirees aware of such possibilities. The benefits of this initiative to both the agency and to the participating retirees, are sufficiently well recognized that they need not be repeated here.

The second subject deals with financial planning for retirement for those in the FERS system. Generally speaking, FERS retirees will be dependent on their savings (TSP and other sources) to generate 50% and more of their retirement income. The Planning for Retirement course too-briefly covers the options for withdrawal from TSP, providing no assistance as to the pros, cons and risks associated with the options, including the influence of the existing financial conditions on those options. The retiree who may be responsible for generating **tens of thousands of dollars** annually from savings of **hundreds of thousands of dollars** must be well equipped for this daunting responsibility. This can be handled through an appropriate change in the Planning for Retirement course.