

Thomas Franz  
1 Tormes  
Mayor 20, 1º, Dcha.  
Lamanca, Spain

United States Senate

April 9, 1979

Respectfully referred to:  
Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Federal Aviation Administration

POOR ORIGINAL

Because of the desire of this office to be responsive to all inquiries and communications, your consideration of the attached is requested. Your findings and views, in duplicate form, along with return of the enclosure, will be appreciated by

Howard M. Metzenbaum,  
U.S.S.

Attn: Don Sarff (envelop only)  
Washington, D. C. 20510  
Telephone 224-2315

Form #2

791219

79082 30016

Thomas Franz  
Hostal Tormes  
Rúa Mayor 20, 10, Dcha.  
Salamanca, España

April 1, 1979

United States Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C., U.S.A.

Dear Senator Metzger:

1573 LFR -6

I am a professor from Ohio University, in Athens, presently carrying on research in Spain. On the afternoon of March 28, at approximately 3:30 PM, I was on board TWA Flight 596 as it passed almost directly above the Harrisburg, Pennsylvania nuclear power plant which only that morning had been sealed off owing to a nuclear leak. No attempt whatsoever was made to steer us away from this area as we followed the river toward Philadelphia. In the past few days Spanish newspapers have stated that winds were spreading contamination as far as 25 kilometers. Since our plane could not have been more than 2 miles away (we could see into the plant's funnels), I am wondering whether the United States Government and Trans World Airlines should not take immediate steps to check both (1) all commercial aircraft which may have passed within the contaminated area, and (2) all passengers who rode aboard such aircraft.

If you need any further contact with me, I can be reached by mail or telegram to American Express, Plaza de las Cortes, Madrid, Spain.

In advance, I would like to thank you for whatever attention you can give to this matter.

Sincerely yours,  
Thomas R. Franz

Thomas R. Franz  
Associate Professor of Modern Languages  
Ohio University

791220

POOR ORIGINAL

JUN 05 1979

The Honorable Howard M. Metzenbaum  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Metzenbaum:

We are pleased to reply to the concerns of your constituent, Dr. Thomas Franz, noted in his letter to you of April 1, 1979. He was flying over the Three Mile Island power plant in a commercial aircraft on the day of the recent accident and is fearful that proper steps are not being taken to protect the health and safety of airline passengers who fly over that site. We must apologize for the lateness of this reply; our initial efforts, of course, were with the handling of all immediate problems related to the safe shutdown of the plant.

There are two main areas of concern regarding potential radiation exposure to people in aircraft which may have flown close to Three Mile Island (TMI) during the accident. These are: 1) the reactor building acts as a source of radiation emitted in all directions much as a light bulb emits light; and 2) there may be a release of radioactivity to the atmosphere, where it can be dispersed both vertically and horizontally. An aircraft could fly through a cloud of such radioactivity and possibly become contaminated.

As regards the first item, a calculation based on the maximum radiation reading taken above the reactor building during the course of the accident would result in a radiation exposure, to an airplane in flight (300 miles per hour) at 10,000 ft. altitude, of about 0.2 millirem. The background radiation to which everyone is exposed naturally varies from place to place, and is approximately 100 millirems per year.

Regarding the second item, the dispersal of radioactivity and possible subsequent aircraft contamination, meteorological conditions the day of the accident were such that maximum vertical dispersion of the release that actually took place was about 1500 ft. Thus, an aircraft flying at 10,000 ft. would be well above any detectable concentration (cloud) of radioactive material.

Regarding Federal Aviation Administration and/or Trans World Airlines control of airplanes or passengers, it should be noted that in the response to TMI we had significant contact with the FAA even though they were not formally notified. An FAA representative was at the Operations Center on at least one occasion and was briefed by the NRC staff several times. As a result of contacts made by the Department of Energy aerial surveillance contractor on March 28, the FAA restricted a large area around Three Mile Island in order to allow the helicopters to fly monitoring missions at any time without interference.

791221

*dup*  
7907260520  
T-3  
AIR

OFFICE  
SURNAME

DATE

In addition, on at least one occasion, the Harrisburg International Airport was closed to facilitate air transport operations related to Three Mile Island.

I hope that the above information is responsive to your needs.

Sincerely,

(Signed) T. A. Rehm

*for*

Lee V. Gossick  
Executive Director for Operations

Distribution  
✓ Central Files  
MPA Reading  
LOEB Reading  
EDO cy

bcc: Chairman Hendrie  
Commissioner Gilinsky  
Commissioner Kennedy  
Commissioner Bradford  
Commissioner Ahearne

PE CA

OGC

PA

SECY

PDR

OIA

ACRS

IRC

NMHaller

LVGossick

EKCorneil

TAREhm

JGDavis

JCook

RAHartfield

RGMuranaka

MRBeebe

JJRizzo

EDO #05294

JFlynn

JBuchanan

791222

POOR ORIGINAL

*This answer was coordinated with John Buchanan, O-1, a member of the Interagency Task Force on Population Dose and Health Impact of the Accident at TMI. He referred me for meteorology to James Fapich, meteorologist with NRR. FAA information taken from letter to Commissioner Ahearne from John Davis, IE, dated May 22, 1979.*

OFFICE	MPA LOEB	MPA LOEB	MPA LOEB	MPA LOEB	MPA	MPA
SURNAME	MRBeebe: csh	JJRizzo	RGMuranaka	RAHartfield	NMHaller	JBuchanan
DATE	5/30/79	5/30/79	5/30/79	5/30/79	5/30/79	5/31/79