

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FOR “TECHNICAL ANALYSIS OF UNMANNED AERIAL VEHICLES
FOR NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS AND CATEGORY I FUEL CYCLE FACILITIES”
SECY PAPER

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff monitors and continuously analyzes terrorist and criminal tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) that occur domestically and worldwide to assess and ensure the continued adequacy of the NRC’s design basis threats (DBTs). These TTPs are evaluated using the Adversary Characteristics Screening Process (ACSP). The ACSP is a five-step process used by staff to review evolving threats and changing adversary TTPs. In Step 1, “Screening,” the staff completes a routine review of intelligence reporting. In Step 2, “Assessment,” the staff performs a more in-depth analysis and review and provides the results to the Commission. In Step 3, “External Input,” the staff interacts with peers from other government agencies within the Intelligence Community to seek additional information and input. In Step 4, “Technical Analysis,” the staff conducts a technical analysis focused on the use of the adversary characteristic against nuclear facilities in the United States and provides the results to the Commission. If directed by the Commission to move on to Step 5, “Disposition and Communication Plan,” the staff assembles and analyzes stakeholder input and submits this information to the Commission to inform their decision on adding the adversary characteristic to the DBTs.

In 2017, the Commission was informed that the staff would be evaluating unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), commonly known as drones. The staff completed Step 2, “Assessment,” in November 2017, and Step 3, “External Input,” in September 2018¹. The staff has provided a paper² to the Commission that presents the staff’s evaluation of the Step 4 Technical Analysis. Based on this analysis, staff has determined that nuclear power plants and Category I fuel cycle facilities do not have any risk-significant vulnerabilities that could be exploited using UAVs and result in radiological sabotage, theft of special nuclear material (SNM), or substantial diversion of SNM. Similarly, the staff has determined that information gained from UAV video surveillance of an NRC-licensed facility is bounded by the type of information that could be provided by the knowledgeable insider currently permitted in the DBTs. Accordingly, based on the staff’s evaluation of the Step 4 Technical Analysis, the staff made the decision not proceed to Step 5, “Disposition and Communication Plan.” The NRC staff has committed to continue working with other Federal agencies to monitor and evaluate the potential impact of the evolving UAV technology and its growing availability in the United States.

¹ Both documents contain classified information and are, therefore, withheld pursuant to Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR) Part 95.

² Contains classified information and is, therefore, withheld pursuant to 10 CFR Part 95.