

Transcript of Proceedings

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON THE ACCIDENT
AT THREE MILE ISLAND

DEPOSITION OF: JACK WATSON

Washington, D.C.

September 6, 1979

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PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON THE ACCIDENT
AT THREE MILE ISLAND

DEPOSITION OF: JACK WATSON

The White House
Washington, D.C.

September 6, 1979
1:50 p.m.

APPEARANCES:

On Behalf of the Commission:

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Associate Chief Counsel
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Washington, D.C. 20037

On Behalf of Mr. Watson:

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Senior Associate Counsel to the President

KEITH M. WERHAN, Trial Attorney
U.S. Department of Justice

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C O N T E N T S

<u>WITNESSES:</u>	<u>DIRECT</u>	<u>CROSS</u>	<u>REDIRECT</u>	<u>RECROSS</u>
Jack Watson	2			

I N D E X

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P R O C E E D I N G S

1
2 Whereupon,

3 JACK WATSON

4 having been first duly sworn, was called as a witness herein
5 and was examined and testified as follows:

EXAMINATION

6
7 BY MR. HARVEY:

8 Q Would you give us your name and exact title within
9 the White House staff?

10 A My name is Jack Watson. I am Assistant to the
11 President for Intergovernmental Affairs and Secretary of the
12 Cabinet.

13 Q One of the things that the Commission has been
14 interested in is a background sketch of some of the decision
15 makers who were involved in the response to the incident.
16 Could you give us a resume of your training, experience?

17 A I took a bachelor's degree from Vanderbilt Univer-
18 sity in 1960. I went into the United States Marine Corps for
19 three years on active duty. Having been in college on a
20 Naval ROTC scholarship, I was obligated to do that.

21 Upon release from the Marine Corps in May of 1963,
22 I had already been accepted at Harvard Law School. I went
23 to Harvard Law in the fall of 1963; stayed there, enrolled in
24 a full-time course of study until May of 1966, at which time
25 I left law school, having graduated. Went to Atlanta,

1 Georgia; joined the law firm of King and Spaulding, which is
2 a law firm engaged in the general practice of law in Atlanta.

3 I served as an associate with the firm from
4 approximately June 1 of 1966 until December of 1971, at
5 which time I was made a partner in the firm, effective
6 January 1, 1972, if my memory serves me correctly.

7 I remained as a partner in the law firm engaged
8 in litigation and general trial practice predominantly,
9 overwhelmingly I should say, in civil matters as opposed to
10 criminal until I asked my partners for a leave of absence from
11 the partnership in the summer of 1976, I think about July 1.

12 My partners granted me that leave of absence from
13 the law firm. I did not withdraw from the law firm at that
14 time but became full time involved in activities which were
15 preliminary to a possible election of the President, of
16 Jimmy Carter. I remained as a partner in the law firm,
17 though on a leave of absence, until December 31, 1976, at
18 which time I withdrew from the law firm and severed all of
19 my relationship with it.

20 On January 20 or 22, I became employed by the
21 Federal government in my present capacity.

22 Q When you joined the White House staff, did you
23 go -- were you assigned immediately -- to the position you
24 are in now?

25 A Yes.

1 Q Could you give us a description of what your unit
2 does on a day-to-day basis within the White House staff?

3 A It is a wide range of activities; it is hard to
4 characterize. But let me try to put it in three or four
5 categories. As Secretary to the Cabinet, my principal
6 function is to coordinate and manage the way the Federal
7 government executes programs and policies, particularly
8 those that involve more than one agency of government.

9 Obviously it would not be my responsibility to
10 execute or to oversee the execution of a particular agency's
11 mission; that is clearly within the purview and responsibility
12 of the Secretary of that department or the head of that
13 agency. But in many, many cases, as a matter of fact in
14 most cases involving major domestic issues, there are multiple
15 departments and agencies of the Federal government involved.

16 That in turn requires frequently that someone on
17 behalf of the President, some representative either out of
18 the White House staff itself or out of the Executive Office
19 of the President, act as a kind of coordinator or convener
20 or manager of the activities involving so many agencies.

21 I do that across a wide range of areas. For
22 example, the execution of domestic urban policy; of small
23 town and rural development policy; of energy policy, much
24 of which involves an interplay with state and local govern-
25 ments; would be within my general purview of responsibility.

1 As Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental
2 Affairs, I am the person on the White House staff who speaks
3 and acts where appropriate on behalf of the President with
4 respect to governors, mayors, county officials, state
5 legislators; in effect, all of the elected political leaders
6 of the country who serve at the state and local level as
7 distinguished from those who are elected to serve in
8 Washington in the Senate or the House of Representatives.

9 Arising out of these responsibilities of working
10 with state and local governments, of coordinating the
11 execution of domestic policy, at the earliest time after
12 coming into the Administration, it also became clear that I
13 would be on an as needed basis the President's crisis manager.

14 My memory may not serve me correctly, but it seems
15 to me that we were hit within the first 90 to 120 days after
16 coming into office in January of 1977 with a series of
17 natural disasters of one sort or another; whether it was
18 tornedo damage or flood damage or whatever.

19 Q When you use the word "crisis," you are referring
20 to a natural calamity, is it?

21 A That is what it was originally. It has evolved
22 into being a kind of crisis manager job for anything requir-
23 ing, for any subject or incident or episode requiring, an
24 integrated Federal government response domestically.

25 Now it probably would be helpful for me here to

1 distinguish between domestic and international affairs.
2 Virtually 100 percent of my time and attention and responsi-
3 bility lie in the area of domestic affairs, not international
4 affairs. But anything that would arise of a crisis nature,
5 whether a natural catastrophe or something like the Three
6 Mile Island incident, has become my responsibility to act and
7 work on behalf of the President.

8 That is not a separate responsibility so much as
9 it is a natural extension of what I do in the ordinary course
10 of business. I am just the logical person, given the way
11 the President has organized his White House staff and
12 assigned responsibilities to do that.

13 Q I understand that the prior Administration, the
14 Secretary of the Cabinet role and the Assistant for Inter-
15 government Affairs; although the names may change, the
16 functions are pretty much consistent throughout different
17 Administrations. At least that is my understanding.

18 A That is incorrect.

19 Q It is incorrect?

20 A Yes. For example, --

21 Q What I was going to say is that my understanding is
22 that this is the first time that those two functions have
23 merged.

24 A That is correct.

25 Q All right.

1 A But the definitions of those functions really do
2 change from Administration to Administration. For example,
3 I don't think this is a terribly important point so I won't
4 belabor it, but the person who was called Secretary of the
5 Cabinet under President Ford was a man named Jim Connors
6 whose principal responsibility or responsibilities were
7 similar to what we call in this White House the Staff
8 Secretary.

9 The Staff Secretary for President Carter is a man
10 named Rick Hutcheson. His role, briefly stated, is to be
11 the manager of the paper flow into and out of the President's
12 office. It is a function which I do not serve as Cabinet
13 Secretary but which Jim Connors in President Ford's Adminis-
14 tration did serve almost exclusively. As a matter of fact,
15 Jim Connors also performed as Secretary of the Cabinet a
16 function that Hugh Carter also performs in our White House,
17 which is a kind of a administrator of the White House,
18 logistically and otherwise.

19 So the definitions of those roles change quite a
20 lot.

21 Q We won't go too much further into this, but there
22 are two positions; as I understand it were merged for the
23 first time --

24 A That is correct.

25 Q -- although the roles may change within, the two

1 positions remain somewhat consistant when they are merged for
2 the first time in this Administration. Is that --

3 A That is correct. And as you can tell, I hope,
4 from what I have already said, the logic of that is that the
5 President when he conceived of these two responsibilities,
6 Secretary to the Cabinet and Assistant of Intergovernmental
7 Affairs, understood that much of what a Secretary to the
8 Cabinet would do as he conceived of the job, which is to
9 manage interagency execution of Federal policy, would be of
10 tremendous importance and relevance to governors, mayors and
11 other people who lead domestic and state and local govern-
12 ments.

13 That is why he combined the two. The only other
14 thing I would add is that in previous administrations, at
15 least to my knowledge, no President had ever designated
16 someone on his senior White House staff with the responsibil-
17 ity as Assistant for Intergovernmental Affairs. That
18 responsibility had always been subsumed into some other
19 responsibility and therefore was not given the level of
20 priority that President Carter gives it.

21 Q During this particular incident, there was a task
22 force put together, meaning the Three Mile Island incident.
23 It was a task force put together that, although its membership
24 shifted slightly through the weekend of March 30 through the
25 first, there was a task force convened for responding to

1 Three Mile Island crisis, is that correct?

2 A That is correct.

3 Q Has that kind of approach, task force approach,
4 had that been used before in coordinating a Federal response
5 to either a natural disaster or other kind of crisis.

6 A Virtually always.

7 Q So that the convening of the task force under the
8 aegis of the White House is something that has been done
9 before since the time that you have been here.

10 A Yes. Let me elaborate on that a little bit and do
11 so by way of a couple of little illustrations.

12 Illustration number one: In what might be called
13 a routine natural disaster, that is to say the impact of
14 a tornado or flooding or something of that nature; what has
15 been called before in the Federal government the Federal
16 Disaster Assistance Administration, which was a sub-agency
17 within the Department of Housing and Urban Development, would
18 act as the-head agency for receiving the request for assis-
19 tance from the governor, making recommendations as to whether
20 or not there was something that the Federal government
21 statutorily was obliged and permitted to do and then make
22 that recommendation in turn to the President, first to the
23 Secretary of HUD and then to the President of the United
24 States, as to whether or not that assistance should be
25 rendered.

1 In that situation, the FDAA, Federal Disaster
2 Assistance Administration, would operate as the operational
3 arm, assessing the disaster of whatever nature, evaluating
4 whether or not it met the criteria set out in the statute for
5 Federal assistance and so forth; and there would be no need
6 for me on behalf of the President to be involved in that
7 preliminary analysis at all.

8 There would also be no need for the appointment of
9 any kind of working group or task force because that is
10 essentially what FDAA was established to deal with.
11 Incidentally, let me just conclude by saying that that
12 recommendation from the Administrator of FDAA would come first
13 to the Secretary of HUD, then over to the White House where
14 under this Administration it would be reviewed by Stu
15 Eizenstat and myself. A recommendation will then go to the
16 President as to whether or not we concur; and if our concur-
17 rence is there, generally speaking, the President will
18 declare either the situation eligible for emergency assis-
19 tance or for major disaster declaration.

20 Illustration number two: a coal strike. In 1977
21 -- or no, I guess it was early part of 1978; I am sorry that
22 I can't recall specifically. I guess the early part of 1978
23 -- the United Coal Workers went on strike. United Mine
24 Workers. That created a rippling series of impending crises
25 with respect to the generation of electricity, the operation

1 of plants, employment and other implications that began to
2 be very serious.

3 That of course is not a natural disaster. It is,
4 however, a domestic crisis or has the potential for being one
5 depending upon how long the strike continues. That is a
6 situation in which I would step in on behalf of the President
7 and convene whatever agencies were necessary to deal with the
8 situation, to react to it, to try to ameliorate its effects;
9 to try to see, for example in that illustration, that whatever
10 coal we had that could be moved was moved to the places that
11 needed it most.

12 That kind of task force might involve, in fact did
13 involve, the Department of Energy, the Interstate Commerce
14 Commission, the Department of Transportation and other
15 agencies. The FDAA in that situation would have involvement
16 but would not be in that principal role that it would in the
17 other situation.

18 Illustration number three: The purpose of these
19 illustrations is to give you some sense of the range of how
20 this functions in the White House over the last two and a half
21 years. Earlier this year, as everyone knows, we began to
22 experience again a series of rippling effects of energy
23 shortage.

24 In the spring of this year because of a combination
25 of the shortened planting season in the midwest and a shortage

1 of diesel fuel, we were confronting what promised to be a
2 very serious crisis of not being able to get all of our very
3 important crops in the ground, principally corn and soy beans,
4 in the upper midwest.

5 In that situation, cries for help began coming in
6 to the President from governors, from members of the Senate
7 and House and so forth; whereupon the President turned to me
8 and said, "Convene whatever agencies are necessary to deal
9 with that, to do the very best we can under a difficult
10 situation and manage that crisis."

11 In that situation, again, FDAA was not involved.
12 But the three critical agencies that I convened there as a
13 crisis manager were the Department of Energy, which is doing
14 the fuel allocation, the diesel fuel allocation; the United
15 States Department of Agriculture, which has all the informa-
16 tion about planting, who is planting and on what schedule
17 and where the needs are most critical and so forth; and the
18 Department of Transportation, which is also critically
19 involved in the movement of diesel fuel and so forth.

20 That evolved into a more formalized arrangement
21 that the President created called the White House management
22 task force on energy shortages, which I chaired and which
23 dealt through time, over the last six months, with the
24 independent truckers' strike, the independent retail gasoline
25 dealers' strike or threatened strikes in various parts of

1 the country, particularly in the northeast part of the
2 country; the build up of the home heating fuel supply for
3 the country, particularly in the northeastern part of the
4 United States and the midwest; and so on.

5 As chairman of the White House management task
6 force on energy shortage, I was simply performing in the same
7 kind of role that I was performing, although in some
8 obviously different circumstances, in the Three Mile Island
9 incident.

10 I give you these different illustrations to indicate
11 that when the Three Mile Island episode occurred and when it
12 became apparent to the President on the 28th or 29th of
13 March that a coordinated Federal response working very, very
14 closely with the state and local governments was going to be
15 necessary, he turned to me to oversee that.

16 Q Let me ask you one question on the two illustrations
17 you gave, using those as a springboard perhaps if there are
18 other instances. In both of those instances, there was some
19 crisis that was precipitated, and the White House is in
20 something of a reactive mode. In other words, in the energy
21 shortage situation, reacting to the cries for help from the
22 governors and the people in the midwest, for example. And
23 the coal strike obviously precipitated by some other action.

24 The White House also in Three Mile Island was in
25 that situation, reacting to an event and pulling together

1 in effect an ad hoc convention of agencies to react to that
2 situation and manage the crisis.

3 In these other instances, have you found that by
4 the time you get there, if you will, to convene the agencies,
5 they have already acted independently or are beginning to
6 act independently as a general experience?

7 A In most cases that would be true. Again, it is
8 hard to generalize because generally speaking, crises do not
9 replicate themselves. But for example in the coal strike
10 situation, obviously the Department of Labor and the Depart-
11 ment of Energy and the Department of Transportation and
12 others would have been involved in that situation before it
13 became necessary for us at the White House to step in and
14 really to begin coordinating as the situation got more
15 severe.

16 So that the general answer to your question would
17 be "yes," crises generally evolve. Sometimes they happen
18 all of a sudden as in the case of the sudden strike of a
19 tornado, for example. But in many other cases, they evolve
20 over a period of time.

21 And the answer to your question would be determined
22 in large part by which kind of crisis it was.

23 Q But I guess I understand you to say there are
24 situations in which you come in to manage a crisis; and when
25 you get everyone around the table, just to put it into a

1 concrete setting, you find that Agency A has already started
2 off on this track --

3 A Yes.

4 Q -- Agency B has started this activity, and you are
5 in effect pulling together activities that have already begun.

6 A That is correct.

7 Q Perhaps we can go to the Three Mile Island incident.
8 I guess the 28th, Wednesday the 28th, is the starting point.
9 How did you find out there had been an incident?

10 A I found out about the incident through the press.
11 I was not notified through any official channel on the 28th.
12 And in fact, the only notice that I had of the matter until
13 the morning of the 30th, which was a Friday, was just the
14 notice that I had through the press and the radio and
15 television.

16 On Friday morning, I received a call I think
17 sometime after 10:30 from Dr. Brzezinski, saying that he had
18 -- I assumed, I inferred that he had -- just been with the
19 President, describing some of the details about the Three
20 Mile Island episode and that the President had asked him to
21 have me briefed right away so that this process that we have
22 been talking about could be set into motion as appropriate.

23 Dr. Brzezinski said that in that telephone conversa-
24 tion that the President either had talked or was about to
25 talk to the governor, Governor Thornburgh of Pennsylvania;

1 that he had dispatched or was dispatching -- I am sorry that
2 my memory is not precise on the point -- a man named
3 Dr. Harold Denton to the site who would be in charge of the
4 reactor site, to deal with the technical aspect of the
5 situation; that he, the President, was also instructing the
6 White House Communications Agency to set into place in the
7 governor's office, at the reactor site, and of course tied in
8 back to the White House what are called drop lines, which is
9 simply a direct communication link between those three loca-
10 tions; that all this was being done and that he, the President,
11 would like to have me briefed on the situation in general
12 as quickly as possible.

13 I would estimate that within less than half an
14 hour and perhaps even less than 15 minutes, two people came
15 to my office from Dr. Brzezinski's staff: Dr. Jessica
16 Tupnam-Mathews and Colonel Bill Odom. They gave me and my
17 deputy, Gene Eidenberg, a briefing on the information that
18 they had, which was very, very limited.

19 Q You are speaking about technical information?

20 A Mainly technical. At that point, it was virtually
21 all technical information that anybody had because the
22 response capability in terms of evacuation or the meshing of
23 Federal, state and local resources to move population in any
24 sense had not really been triggered to any extent except at
25 the state level.

1 I might note for the record that the principal
2 responsibility for dealing with a situation such as this, as
3 is true of any crisis whether it is a tornado or an
4 hurricane or a fire or a flood, rests not in the first instance
5 with the Federal government and therefore the President; but
6 with the governor of the state.

7 So that the Federal posture in any of these emer-
8 gencies or disasters is one of support, of assistance. And
9 the statute which outlines which situations there are in
10 which the Federal government can give assistance is rather
11 specific. In other words, without being over simple, the
12 statute says that the Federal assets are to be tapped only
13 when dealing with the crisis is above and beyond the capa-
14 bility of the state and local government.

15 If it is not beyond the capability of the state
16 and local government, then the Federal government should not
17 get involved.

18 Q As you were being briefed, what directive had you
19 received concerning Federal assistance? As I understood it,
20 you received from Dr. Brzezinski an indication that this
21 incident had occurred, that it was apparently serious, and
22 that he had been asked by the President to brief you. I take
23 it that the President was in contact with the governor and
24 was going to set up the drop line or dispatch Harold Denton
25 and so forth.

1 At that point, what was your understanding of what
2 the Federal assistance would be required?

3 A I had no understanding at that moment, and I would
4 only question one characterization you made about what
5 Dr. Brzezinski said to me. As best I can recall,
6 Dr. Brzezinski did not attempt to characterize or assess the
7 seriousness of the situation.

8 It was implicit in the fact that the President
9 wanted me briefed that there was a potentially a serious
10 situation. But our discussion, our conversation on the
11 telephone, did not address that issue at all. And beyond
12 the fact that the President had direct Dr. Brzezinski to see
13 that I was briefed immediately, there was no other instruction;
14 nor I think was there any other assumption as to what the
15 follow-up would be.

16 I think again implicit in the President's request
17 that I be briefed was his assumption that I would make con-
18 tact with the governor, that I would make contact with the
19 Federal agencies that were getting information already or
20 that should be getting information, and that I would begin
21 to assess what level of Federal assistance if any was
22 appropriate.

23 But I received no direction or directive from the
24 President specifically at that time.

25 Q Okay.

1 A Other than that I was to be briefed.

2 Q Fine. But I take it that it was, as you say,
3 implicit in the directive that you be briefed, or at least
4 from your understanding at that point; that you might or
5 would be called in to coordinate some kind of Federal
6 response?

7 A Yes, fully so.

8 Q After the briefing from Jessica Mathews and Colonel
9 Odom, what happened next?

10 A Again, I will apologize in advance for any imper-
11 fections in my memory. I remember fairly clearly, however,
12 that the briefing of Gene and me by Jessica Mathews and Bill
13 Odom took less than 20 minutes or so; certainly less than half
14 an hour. I remember that the briefing probably began at
15 about 11:00 o'clock and therefore was over by no later than
16 11:30.

17 I don't know if we decided at that time or if it
18 had already been set into motion, but in any event a meeting
19 for 1:30 that afternoon in the situation room here at the
20 White House was set on. The lead for the situation at that
21 time, that is to say for the convening of the meeting and the
22 inviting of the people to attend the meeting and so forth,
23 rested with Brzezinski.

24 Bill Odom who was acting on his behalf asked me
25 my advice as to who might come, and I am sure I gave it to

1 him. I said, for example, "I am confident, of course, that
2 Bill Wilcox from the FDAA ought to be there." I am sure I
3 said that someone from the Defense Civil Preparedness Agency
4 and from the Federal Preparedness Administration should be
5 there and so forth.

6 But- beyond that, it was already in motion. The
7 invitations to that meeting were issued by Bill Odom, and at
8 1:30, we convened in the situation room with Dr. Brzezinski
9 presiding informally as the chairman of the meeting.

10 Q So that the impetus for this meeting came from
11 Colonel Odom working I guess with Dr. Brzezinski and Jessica
12 Mathews rather than from your office?

13 A Frankly, I can't recall. If it had not already
14 been in motion, I would have said do it. So one of the two
15 things occurred if not in effect both of them. I cannot
16 recall precisely whether or not I said at that 11:00 o'clock
17 meeting, "We must convene this meeting and if so, these are
18 the people that should be invited."

19 Or whether Bill Odom said, "We have already set
20 into motion such a meeting," with which I would have fully
21 concurred. In either event, it was already being done.

22 Q Between the time of the 11:00 o'clock meeting and
23 the 1:30 meeting convened with the agencies, did you have
24 any activities with respect to the crisis?

25 A I am sure I did, but I can't recall specifically

1 whom I might have talked to. As you can tell from the time-
2 frame, there was relatively little time between the 11:30 or
3 quarter of twelve, whatever, and 1:30. I am quite sure that
4 I talked further with Jessica, that I probably called Bill
5 Wilcox to see if he knew anything. I could not swear to
6 that. Perhaps my telephone log would reveal it; I am not
7 sure.

8 I would have spent that time learning as much as
9 I possibly could. I know that, for example, I called
10 Governor Thornburgh from my office that morning, so I --
11 if not while they were in my room, immediately after they
12 left. I suspect while they were still in the room -- I
13 talked to Bill Thornburgh. I would have talked also at that
14 time to J. Waldman, who is his Executive Assistant.

15 I don't at this moment recall anything, anyone
16 else whom I called or anything else that I did; but I would
17 have generally been preparing for that meeting at 1:30.

18 Q Perhaps you could describe the objectives of the
19 meeting at 1:30.

20 A I think they were twofold. First, to get a briefing
21 from the chairman of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Joe
22 Hendrie, as to exactly what the situation was or at least
23 as it was perceived to be; a status report with the latest
24 and best information on the situation at the site.

25 Second, the purpose was to begin assessing

1 immediately in collaboration with the governor's office
2 principally what sort of Federal action needed to be set into
3 motion; what did we need to have the Federal Disaster
4 ASsistance Administration doing or beginning to do; should I
5 dispatch someone to the scene, to Pennsylvania, to work with
6 the governor's office; those kinds of questions were the
7 purpose of the meeting.

8 Immediately following the meeting, I pulled off
9 the three agencies that I was most concerned with at the
10 moment; namely FDAA; FPA, the Federal Preparedness Agency;
11 and the DCPA, the Defense Civil Preparedness Agency. Pulled
12 them into my office and made a couple of assignments
13 instantaneously.

14 One of them was to have the representative of DCPA,
15 who I think was John McConnell -- again the record will speak
16 to that -- go immediately that afternoon to the site;
17 establish contact with the governor's office; and begin to
18 deal with the county governments which have principal
19 responsibility for the preparation and execution of evacuation
20 plans.

21 I also with Bill Wilcox would have discussed
22 immediately with him who should be put in charge at the site
23 in terms of coordination of all the Federal agency efforts.
24 We determined at that moment that it would be a man named
25 Bob Adamcik, who is the Regional Administrator for FDAA out

1 of Philadelphia.

2 Adamcik was dispatched immediately to Harrisburg;
3 again, to establish contact with the governor and to become
4 the coordinator of agency, Federal agency, activity on site.

5 Footnote: When I speak of Federal agency activity
6 and the coordination of that, I am almost invariably unless
7 I say otherwise talking about the response activity off of
8 the site. I am not talking about dealing with the technologi-
9 cal aspects of your reactor situation.

10 The reactor situation and dealing with the reactor
11 situation on site were the responsibilities of Harold Denton.
12 And to the extent that we could drop a curtain between what
13 Dr. Denton was responsible for doing and what I was responsible
14 for doing, both of us on behalf of the President; his ran to
15 dealing with the reactor situation, giving the governor and
16 the President and everyone else involved the best possible
17 advice as to what was occurring there and what needed to be
18 done there at the site.

19 Mine was to coordinate the response to that reactor
20 site situation.

21 Q So everything outside of the black box, as one
22 way to characterize it, everything that didn't have to do with
23 the reactor itself; that is right?

24 Let me show you what I have marked as deposition
25 exhibit number one, which is a memorandum from Colonel Odom;

1 a kind of summary of conclusions.

2 (The document referred to was
3 marked for identification as
4 Watson Deposition Exhibit #1
5 and was received in evidence.)

6 BY MR: HARVEY:

7 Q Does that refer to the 1:30 meeting that you have
8 spoken about?

9 A You handed me a document that is marked Mathews
10 Deposition Exhibit #5.

11 Q It is also entered as Eidenberg and then Watson
12 further down. I might put our stipulation on the record at
13 this point. These are classified documents or documents
14 that are being treated as classified for the purposes of
15 the deposition. They are from the National Security Council.

16 Counsel have agreed to mark and use these documents
17 as exhibits to the deposition although they will not be
18 attached to the deposition until that action has been cleared
19 through the White House or the NSC. It is also our under-
20 standing that the NRC will show these documents to the
21 appropriate personnel with an eye toward declassifying these
22 documents so they can be released to the President's
23 Commission as soon as the earliest opportunity.

24 My understanding is that that process is going on
25 now.

1 MR. HURON: That is correct.

2 MR. HARVEY: So for the moment, we are treating
3 these as classified, and the custody of the documents remains
4 in the White House.

egin T2 5 WITNESS: The document you handed me, which is
6 marked Watson #1, is a memorandum from Brzezinski to the
7 President. And it is a summary of conclusions of the meeting
8 which occurred at 1:30 on the afternoon of Friday, March 30.

9 In looking over it, I think it does fairly summarize
10 the conclusions of that meeting. I might make one point.
11 This correctly states that the responsibility in effect for
12 managing the Federal response was transferred from the
13 National Security Council and from Dr. Brzezinski to me. And
14 though it is not explicit, it also correctly states that I
15 would operate with the FDAA as the chief operational coordinat-
16 ing arm as I would always do in these situations.

17 BY MR. HARVEY:

18 Q Well, that understanding is from other depositions
19 that -- and as I guess implied by the fact that that meeting
20 was convened by Dr. Brzezinski and members of the National
21 Security Council's staff -- that the National Security Council
22 was involved on the 28th and 29th, before Friday in monitoring
23 informally the situation at the Island before the events of
24 Friday morning, which precipitated a more intense Federal
25 activity.

1 And as you say, that responsibility was ultimately
2 shifted to you on Friday. Could you describe how that
3 happened in the context of the meeting?

4 A Yes. It became almost immediately apparent once
5 the meeting was convened, the report was given by Chairman
6 Hendrie and a brief discussion ensued, that we were talking
7 about a domestic response situation in which the capabilities
8 of the Federal government would need to be brought to bear
9 in conjunction with the state and local capabilities to deal
10 with the possible crisis at the Three Mile Island reactor
11 site.

12 When that became apparent, as I say as it immedi-
13 ately did, Dr. Brzezinski simply said, "Jack, I think you
14 need to assume the chair of this or the lead on this."

15 I said, "I agree." Everyone else agreed, and it
16 was done. It was nothing more formal than that.

17 Q As of the time of this meeting, however, you had
18 not received any explicit directive to organize the Federal
19 response to this incident. Is that correct?

20 A From the President? I had not, no. As I said a
21 minute ago, because I had been dealing with this, not with a
22 nuclear accident but with crisis situations over the preceding
23 couple of years, I naturally assumed immediately when the
24 President asked me to be briefed that that was precisely what
25 he had in mind. And it was because of that that we followed

1 up virtually immediately with this 1:30 meeting, and that is
2 what happened.

3 Q In that memorandum, there is a reference to making
4 Harold Denton a single source of information concerning
5 conditions at the site, and you mentioned his role earlier.
6 Does that refer to single source as related to information
7 flow within the government as well as information out through
8 the media to the public?

9 When that phrase is used, I guess my specific
10 question is: What did that mean in the context of that
11 meeting?

12 A I think in the context of this meeting, that meant
13 primarily that all of us, as is said in this second paragraph
14 on page two of the memorandum, all of us at the White House,
15 presumably in the governor's office though obviously we could
16 not speak for the governor, and at the NRC headquarters here
17 in Washington or in Bethesda; would rely on Harold Denton as
18 the principal spokesman of the conditions at the site, con-
19 cerning the conditions at the site; that his authority to be
20 in that role, Presidentially delegated, was clear and
21 unequivocal.

22 I think that is what that means. There was very
23 little discussion of the public information aspects of the
24 situation at this very first meeting. Jody Powell was
25 present, and I am sure that the subject was raised because

1 as is always true in a situation of crisis, the need for
2 accurate information is one of the highest priorities.

3 But we did not focus on that subject at any great
4 length at this first meeting.

5 Q It was to some extent raised on -- as reflected in
6 that memorandum and as you indicate -- and it is suggested
7 that press briefings and public releases be coordinated
8 through Jody Powell and depending on information from,
9 Dr. Denton at the site.

10 Was there a structure set up? What does that
11 suggestion mean to you in the context of this meeting?

12 A Because of our previous experience in similar kinds
13 of matters, all of us understood that the need for accurate,
14 clearly presented information was a high priority need.

15 We had the situation here of having many actors
16 involved; not only Federal actors but state actors and local
17 actors and actors from the utility company. We were simply
18 anticipating here, though we did not discuss it at great
19 length, the need to have some coordinated and orderly process
20 for the conducting of press briefings and the dissemination
21 of public information about what was going on at the site.

22 That is what that is referring to.

23 Q Eventually, the stress laid on having Harold Denton
24 be the principal spokesman for conditions at the site was
25 emphasized throughout the weekend. What was the event that

1 pushed that consideration forward, that made it desirable to
2 coordinate information? Was there a particular event that
3 you were discussing at this meeting to coordinate this?

4 A At the meeting at 1:30 on Friday afternoon, March
5 30th; the answer is "no." As I said a moment ago, though I
6 don't recall the discussion in detail, I am confident that we
7 were primarily anticipating what we knew was going to be a
8 problem without reference to any particular episode that had
9 already occurred to illustrate the problem.

10 That kind of a problem is endemic to a situation
11 like this, and the greater the crisis and the greater the
12 level of uncertainty, the greater the problem about public
13 information is.

14 With respect to the continuing problem of an
15 accurate, orderly, reliable flow of information to the public,
16 particularly the public that was directly affected in
17 Pennsylvania, remained one of the most serious problems of
18 the whole episode in my judgment and in Governor Thornburgh's
19 judgment.

20 So that that issue of how to give the public,
21 specifically the public immediately affected by the Three
22 Mile Island reactor site situation, information on which they
23 could rely, accurate information, information which was not
24 clouded by rumor and speculation and surmise but information
25 which would describe to the limits of our ability to do so

1 exactly what was happening at the site, what was anticipated
2 to happen and so forth; that was in some respects in my
3 judgment the principal responsibility that the governor of
4 Pennsylvania felt and that I as one of his supporters and
5 people rendering, seeking to render, assistance to him felt
6 with him how to make that public information process work at
7 the highest and best level possible.

8 Q But as of the time of this meeting, coordinating
9 information through Dr. Denton was in the context of this
10 meeting anticipatory rather than reactive.

11 A That is right.

12 Q Okay. The FDAA and DCPA and FPA were essentially
13 funneled into one group to work through the FDAA, at least
14 as suggested by memorandum. Is that a correct characteriza-
15 tion?

16 A It is.

17 Q What role was the FDAA to play at the site after
18 that meeting as a result of that meeting?

19 A I instructed Bill Wilcox and in turn Bob Adamcik
20 to be the one point of coordination of all Federal agency
21 response with the governor's office. I wanted Adamcik, as
22 the operational coordinator on site, to be the one pivot
23 point both for the transmittal of instructions from Bill
24 Wilcox or from me to other Federal agencies as well as the
25 pivot point for dealing with the Federal government in

1 Harrisburg by the governor of the state and other state
2 agencies.

3 I wanted to simplify the process so that the
4 governor and his staff and his Cabinet secretaries and others
5 who were dealing with the Federal government would know that
6 when in doubt, Bob Adamcik was the man to go to. And that
7 is the way it operated.

8 Generally speaking, I gave instructions only through
9 that one channel; even though the instructions might pertain
10 to DCPA or FPA or other agencies of the Federal government.
11 In some cases, for example where it was necessary for me to
12 deal directly with the Department of Defense to get helicopter
13 assistance or air lift assistance or whatever, I would do
14 that myself.

15 One thing I might mention for the record is that
16 on Friday at some point, the precise time of which I can't
17 recall, I called the Secretary of Defense, Harold Brown. I
18 told him of the President's delegation of this responsibility
19 to me. I gave him a very brief, lay person's analysis of
20 the situation at the site, which was all I was capable of
21 doing.

22 I said to him that though I did not have anything
23 at the moment, I was sure that I would be calling upon the
24 Office of Military Assistance or Military Support in the
25 Department of Defense for help; that I might have to call

1 the Joint Chiefs of Staff -- what is it called, it is their
2 command center over at the Department of Defense, and the
3 name just escapes me at the moment.

4 Q National Military Command.

5 A National Military Command Center, yes. And I
6 asked Harold, again anticipatorily, how he wanted me to do
7 that when and if it became necessary for me to do so. And
8 he and I discussed that situation and arranged a process that
9 was acceptable to both of us, and that is how it worked.

10 Over the course of the next 48 hours, I did in
11 fact, either personally or through Gene Eidenberg, my deputy,
12 call upon the Defense Department for various kinds of assis-
13 tance; and in every case, that assistance was rendered.

14 Q AS of the time that you were selcting Robert
15 Adamcik and establishing in effect a focal point for the
16 emergency response and planning, what was your perception of
17 what activities had already occurred by those agencies if
18 any?

19 A I don't know that I can recall it all; and in fact,
20 the documents at the time would be higher and better evidence
21 of that than my testimony. But I knew, for example, that
22 radiation monitoring was going on already.

23 Q Let me stop you there. I will clarify my question
24 I guess. At the time that you were setting up Adamcik as
25 the focal point for the emergency response from the Federal

1 side, did you have an understanding whether the emergency
2 response agencies, the FDAA, FPA and DCPA, were already con-
3 ducting activities in the field; or were you perceiving your-
4 self as putting together a Federal response de novo as a
5 result of Friday morning's events?

6 A I think it was more the latter than the former;
7 although again, I am not the highest and best evidence on
8 that point. I do not recall specifically whether Bill Wilcox
9 and the FDAA had already been involved in the situation at
10 Three vile Island prior to my conversations with Bill Wilcox
11 on Friday.

12 It is possible that the Agency was; I simply cannot
13 recall. I would give the same answer with respect to DCPA
14 and FPA. It is my recollection that at least with respect
15 to DCPA and FPA, they were not previously involved and that
16 I was dispatching them to the site to begin their activities
17 for the first time.

18 Q Let me just give you maybe some perspective on my
19 interest in this question. I am trying to understand whether
20 in response to this particular crisis you were perceiving
21 yourself or now recall yourself as doing one of two possible
22 things. I don't mean to limit it to those two, but let me
23 just give you a little background.

24 The Federal agencies, at least some of them that
25 were at that meeting at 1:30 -- the Department of Energy, for

1 example, -- and some of the other Federal agencies like the
2 Disaster, Federal Disaster Assistance Administration and
3 DCPA -- were already somewhat involved at the site; and that
4 was true of other Federal agencies as well. Particularly
5 after the events of Friday morning, other agencies began to
6 express an interest in offering what assistance they could.

7 All of these activities eventually became coordin-
8 ated by the White House at least to a great extent, and what
9 I am trying to understand is your role here; whether or not
10 whether you were on the one hand tying together the
11 activities of independent actors and facilitating those
12 independent actors in doing what they do best or doing what
13 they wanted to do or what they perceived to be necessary;
14 or whether on the other hand, what you were doing was con-
15 structing de novo a Federal response.

16 Do you see the distinction I am trying to --

17 A Yes, I do. I think that the answer is both of the
18 above.

19 Q Okay.

20 A I think it is important to make one point.
21 Agencies have statutory and other roles which are generally
22 very clearly understood by them. That is true of FDAA. It
23 is true of HFW. It is true of the Food and Drug Administra-
24 tion.

25 Those agencies, generally speaking, do not wait

1 on some instructions from the White House in a situation like
2 this or in some other situation to perform their statutory
3 and appropriate duties. Generally speaking, they are involved
4 from the moment it comes to their attention that they have
5 a role to play.

6 So that I think it is important for me to point out
7 that no one in the agencies is sitting around waiting for
8 the White House to give a go ahead for them to perform a
9 role that they know to be their role in a certain situation
10 such as the Three Mile Island episode. That would be true
11 of virtually any agency whose name you might mention.

12 At the same time, there are many cases in which the
13 information simply has not been disseminated fully enough,
14 and though there may be some agencies involved, there are
15 others whose assistance is needed and for whatever reason or
16 reasons, they have not been informed of the need for their
17 service.

18 So that I would be doing both roles. I would be
19 coordinating and integrating the activities of people and
20 agencies already acting in the emergency; and I would be
21 calling in to the process other agencies and departments
22 whose assistance is needed.

23 Q Was that true of this --

24 A It was.

25 Q -- crisis?

1 A It was.

2 Q Because -- let me take an example, perhaps make
3 a comparison -- at this meeting the Federal Disaster Assis-
4 tance Agencies were present, but agencies like HEW and EPA
5 were not present at that particular meeting but were on the
6 following day at the meeting in the situation room on Satur-
7 day.

8 Was there a process at least during the afternoon
9 of trying to discover what agencies might be necessary to
10 put together a Federal response; or were you getting the
11 impetus from the agencies themselves to be involved in the
12 response?

13 In other words, I guess what I am trying to under-
14 stand is whether or not it was one of those two or a combina-
15 tion of the two.

16 A It was both. I was doing exactly what you have
17 suggested. I was seeking to see on the basis of increasing
18 information about the situation coming from multiple sources
19 what other agencies needed to be involved. I was also getting
20 calls, for example, from the Secretary of HEW, Joe Califano,
21 suggesting that HEW and particularly some components of HEW
22 such as the Center for Disease Control out of Atlanta and
23 the Food and Drug Administration out of Washington needed to
24 be involved.

25 The same would be true of EPA. Although I do not

1 recall having received a telephone call from Doug Costle,
2 who is the Administrator of EPA. I think I, in the course of
3 the afternoon, simply came to the conclusion that at the
4 meeting on Saturday EPA needed to be there as did HEW as did
5 any others that I added.

6 I would have to look at a list, which I am not
7 carrying in my mind right now, of the people who were present
8 on Friday and then the people who were present on Saturday
9 to see what changes there were. And I think if I looked at
10 a list, if it is important to you, I could tell you pre-
11 cisely why the changes occurred.

12 Q No, I am just trying to understand the process.

13 A Incidentally, had we not been moving so quickly, I
14 would have invited HEW and EPA to the 1:30 meeting on Friday.
15 I don't think that there was a problem in their not having
16 been there. But had I thought of it, I would have invited
17 them.

18 I noticed when I was reading some materials that
19 the Department of Energy had two people present at the Friday
20 afternoon meeting and that they were not at the Saturday
21 afternoon meeting. I suspect that was a combination of two
22 factors: one, pure oversight and two, they were on stream
23 doing their radiological monitoring and other activities at
24 the site, and I was focusing much more sharply on Saturday
25 on the Federal response capabilities and was more concerned

1 with those agencies that would be dealing with evacuation as
2 so forth.

3 In other words, the DOE role, though it had aspects
4 in both areas, was more technological than it was in my area.
5 But in any event, I suspect that the absence of the people
6 from DOE on the Saturday meeting was an oversight.

7 Q Let me ask you this very specific question. Within
8 the context of DOE's role coming out of the Atomic Energy
9 Commission lineage with the NRC, we have a situation where
10 the NRC and DOE are on scene as of Wednesday afternoon and
11 are the only Federal agencies dealing with the problems of
12 the reactor and public health, with exposure to radiation,
13 until really Saturday morning.

14 And certainly there had been concern as a matter
15 of history prior to this incident -- I am referring specifi-
16 cally to the interagency task forces on ionizing radiation
17 chaired by Labose, from HEW; Secretary Califano's interest --
18 there had been expressions throughout that history of a
19 conflict of interest, of DOE having certain ionizing radia-
20 tion biological effects grants, research grants and so forth,
21 and yet being at the same time an agency charged with
22 developing nuclear energy as an energy source.

23 And there were expressions throughout this, parts
24 of this, incident of getting public health oriented agencies
25 involved. Did you ever hear during the course of response

1 to this incident anyone suggest moving the Department of
2 Energy out and minimizing its role because of a credibility
3 problem with respect to its charge to develop energy and at
4 the same time responding to this crisis?

5 A That would never have been a part of any discus-
6 sions on Friday or Saturday or Sunday. The only thing that
7 I recall where that subject would ever have even arisen --
8 and frankly I don't recall this with any specificity, but I
9 am trying to be fully responsive to your question -- would
10 have been a week or so later when I was called upon to
11 determine what the most appropriate agency lead for environ-
12 mental monitoring was on the site. This was after the crisis,
13 the acute crisis, had past and while we were determining
14 particularly as between HEW, the Environmental Protection
15 Agency, and the Department of Energy and the Nuclear
16 Regulatory Commission, though it is an independent agency and
17 not in the Executive Branch, which among those agencies
18 really as a matter of collecting and collating environmental
19 data would be the most appropriate lead.

20 At that time, I sent a memorandum to the three
21 agency heads that I just mentioned, Doug Costle, Jim
22 Schlesinger and Joe Califano with a copy to the Chairman of
23 the NRC, appointing EPA as the lead for that collection and
24 collation responsibility on environmental data.

25 The subject that you have just raised might have

1 been mentioned to me in that context. I do not recall it,
2 and therefore it was not a very important consideration to
3 me in making the judgment that I made, but it is entirely
4 possible that someone would have mentioned that factor as
5 something to be considered then.

6 Q Let me show you deposition exhibit two. Is that
7 a copy of the memorandum?

8 A It is.

9 (The document referred to was
10 marked for identification as
11 Watson Deposition Exhibit #2
12 and was received in evidence.)

13 BY MR. HARVEY:

14 Q Was that a consideration in the assigning EPA
15 as the long-term monitoring agency

16 A No, it was not.

17 Q It was not, okay.

18 A I assigned EPA the lead responsibility because I
19 thought it most appropriate for them to do this as the agency
20 in the government primarily charged with environmental pro-
21 tection and identified as such in the public mind. I just
22 thought it was most appropriate for that agency to do it.

23 And as a matter of fact, got absolutely no disagree-
24 ment on that point from either the Department of Energy or
25 from HEW.

1 Q So that the question of credibility from the
2 public's point of view, the public credibility, of Department
3 of Energy and of the position that I mentioned before of
4 both for example doing environmental monitoring at this site
5 and at the same time being charged with the development of
6 nuclear energy; that credibility problem did not enter into
7 your decision to assign EPA as the long-term monitoring
8 agency?

9 A No. I will say it again. If that subject was
10 raised, as it is entirely possible that it was, that would
11 have been a factor. I would have thought of that as I
12 reviewed the whole situation.

13 That was not a determining factor in my making the
14 assignment that I made here. I thought that this delegation
15 of responsibility made sense for other reasons and on other
16 grounds and did so.

17 But that factor is not an illegitimate factor to
18 consider, I suppose.

19 Q I am not suggesting it is illegitimate.

20 A No. Yes.

21 Q I am just trying to identify whether it was a --

22 A It was not a determining factor.

23 Q But was it a factor? As you recall?

24 A If by that, you mean did anyone raise that point,
25 I cannot unequivocally say that nobody ever mentioned that.

1 I don't recall specifically anybody ever saying that to me.
2 If they did say it to me, I would have taken that into
3 account and I think legitimately so.

4 I can say unequivocally that that did not form the
5 basis for this decision that is represented in Watson
6 Deposition Exhibit #2.

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1 Q After the 1:30 meeting with Mr. Wilcox, for
2 example, in you office, what was the purpose of that
3 meeting at that point?

4 A I recall that I asked Bill Wilcox and a
5 Mr. McLain, and I think John McConnell, and I believe
6 Joe Mitchell, representing three agencies: DCPA, FDAA
7 and FPA, to come into my office to discuss specifically what
8 delegations we would make of immediate responsibility: who
9 would do on-site and so forth.

10 It was as a result of that meeting that I made
11 the Adamcik appointment with the full concurrence and
12 in fact on the recommendation of Bill Wilcox. Bill Wilcox,
13 for example, had first suggested that he go himself and
14 be the person on site.

15 I did not think that was a good idea because
16 I felt he would be more valuable to me here.

17 Q And what was the reason for not sending Wilcox
18 as opposed to Adamcik?

19 A As just stated, I thought that Wilcox, as the
20 Director of the Agency, would be far more valuable to me
21 here to coordinate things from the Washington side than he
22 would be up there.

23 I asked him about Bob Adamcik, about Bob Adamcik's
24 experience, about his evaluation of Bob Adamcik as an
25 individual. The responses I got from Bill Wilcox were that

1 Adamcik was an exemplary fellow, one of his very best
2 Regional Directors. Therefore, that decided the question
3 for me.

4 Had there been some problem about a highly
5 competent individual to be on site, I might have made--
6 I would have made another decision, but that was not
7 necessary.

8 Q During that meeting or in the previous meeting,
9 was there any discussion about whether the Governor would
10 request a declaration of emergency or disaster or what
11 the Federal response might be in the event of such a
12 request?

13 A I cannot recall precisely when that was first
14 discussed. It is entirely possible that it was discussed
15 at the meeting on Friday afternoon in my office following
16 the 1:30 meeting.

17 That issue remained an open issue throughout
18 the next 48 hours, roughly, or 72 hours. It simply stated
19 one question was whether or not the Governor would want
20 to seek a request for major disaster declaration because
21 of its effects on the public anxiety or the public perception
22 of the situation at Three Mile Island.

23 The Governor's inclination was not to do that
24 as along as he was assured that everything the Federal
25 Government could do in terms of rendering assistance was

1 being done.

2 He called upon me essentially for that judgement.
3 In other words, he said to me, and I cannot recall precisely
4 the first conversation I had with the Governor on this
5 point--

6 Q Was it your sense that it was Friday afternoon?

7 A My sense is that it was Saturday, but it could
8 have been Friday afternoon. I am sorry that I do not
9 recall. I had already, in conversations with Bill Wilcox
10 on Friday, begun assessing whether or not the formal
11 request and granting of a declaration of disaster assistance
12 would make a difference in the level and the amount of
13 Federal assistance that could be rendered.

14 I was satisfied that it did not. Therefore,
15 given the Governor's inclination to not take that step,
16 I concurred with the Governor in that. Had I disagreed
17 with the Governor on the point, I would have told him so.

18 I did not disagree with him, particularly in
19 light of my assessment of the fact that we were doing
20 everything we could do even under a formal declaration.
21 I should point out two things: one, the authority and
22 responsibility for deciding whether to make a request for
23 major disaster assistance rests with the Governor of the
24 state.

25 In fact, the Governor of the state is the only

1 person who can make such a request. A mayor or any
2 other person in the state cannot do so. It is the Governor's
3 responsibility.

4 Obviously, it is not a Presidential decision.
5 The Presidential decision is whether or not to grant it.
6 Second, the primary reason that Bill Wilcox, whose judgement
7 I greatly respect, was suggesting that a declaration be
8 sought and granted, was that it would somewhat ease the
9 bureaucratic operation.

10 It would make it a little bit easier because
11 that is the normal and customary way of doing business
12 in a situation like this. But when I pressed Bill as I
13 did in fact, not only one time but repeatedly over the
14 weekend, of whether or not it was really making a difference
15 or just causing some inconvenience, I continued to be
16 satisfied that we were getting the responses that we needed
17 to get; that it might be causing some sort of bureaucratic
18 inconvenience within the Government, but that it was not
19 making a difference in terms of our performance.

20 Q Was there any suggestion by you or from your
21 office that you know of to the Governor or the Governor's
22 office not to request a declaration of disaster. Was that
23 request ever made?

24 A No, not to my knowledge. Certainly not by me.
25 Not by my deputy. Maybe it is fair to say not by anyone

1 authorized to make such a suggestion. That question
2 was a question really for the Governor to decide.

3 We were doing everything that we would have
4 been doing under a disaster declaration situation, so
5 that as far as the Federal Government was concerned, it
6 made absolutely no difference whatsoever.

7 The concern was a concern addressed to the
8 effect of such a move on the population around the area,
9 and that was, of course, one of the Governor's greatest
10 concerns. His other concern was being assured that he was
11 getting everything that he needed and that we were capable
12 of delivering without the declaration.

13 I assured him that that was being done. Therefore,
14 he continued on the view that he did not choose to make
15 the request.

16 Q So as far as you were concerned and as far as
17 people authorized by you were concerned, there was no
18 request from the Federal Government that the Governor not
19 request a declaration of disast

20 A That is correct. We did not make that statement
21 or make that communication.

22 Q After this meeting in your office was concluded,
23 what were your activities in the afternoon ?

24 A I went out to check the telephone log and the
25 records to refresh my memory. All I know in general is

1 that for the period beginning on Friday morning at about
2 11:00 until the following Wednesday or so, my deputy,
3 Gene Eidenberg and I, were working almost around the
4 clock just in dealing with the situation: talking to
5 people on the telephone, having meetings and conferences
6 with appropriate people, talking to the Governor, to the
7 Federal Agency leads and so forth.

8 It was, as you can imagine, a very work-intensive
9 period of time.

10 Q Let me show you what I have marked as Deposition
11 Exhibit No. 3, which is a memorandum from you dated
12 March 30 to the President. Did you prepare the memorandum?

13 (The document referred to was
14 was marked for identification
15 as Deposition Exhibit No. 3 and
16 was received in evidence)

17 A Yes I did.

18 Q Do you recall the approximate period of time
19 when you might have prepared that?

20 A The first sentence says at the meeting this
21 afternoon in the Situation Room the following decisions
22 were made: that would imply I did this in the later afternoon.
23 I would assume this was prepared between 4:00 and 6:00
24 on Friday, the 30th.

25 Q Under the third paragraph of the memorandum there

1 is a reference to your calling Governor Thornburgh and
2 advising him of your actions.

3 A Yes.

4 Q As of the time this memorandum was prepared,
5 had you received any explicit directive from the President
6 or from anyone else to coordinate this Federal response?

7 A I don't know exactly when I received it. It
8 was pro forma when I received it, whenever it was. But
9 the President did send me a note which I am sure is in
10 your file formally calling upon me to do what I was already
11 doing.

12 That was a totally unnecessary act from the
13 standpoint of functioning, but there was such a document.
14 I don't recall precisely when he sent that up to me.
15 I suspect that it was Friday afternoon following the 1:30
16 meeting, but it could have been later.

17 That is not a matter of any consequence.

18 Q So as of the time of the Friday meeting, perhaps
19 through Friday afternoon, there still had been no explicit
20 directive for you to coordinate this--

21 A Again, I say I don't know exactly when the
22 President signed that. It could have been Friday afternoon.
23 The fact of the matter is, the operational fact of the
24 matter is, is that such a memorandum was totally unnecessary
25 in light of the history of my dealings with these sorts of

1 situations.

2 Again, I say not nuclear accidents in particular
3 but with crises in general that I was frankly somewhat
4 surprised when I got a little note from the President
5 whenever it came that he had done so. I did not prepare
6 that for him, as I recall.

7 It was just an unnecessary act but probably
8 good for a record such as you are creating.

9 Q In the National Archives. As far as Friday
10 afternoon is concerned, had you received any explicit
11 request from the state to coordinate this kind of Federal
12 response?

13 A No. As I recall, though again I would not be
14 the highest and best source of information on this, I
15 think the President, in his conversation with the Governor
16 on Friday morning, mentioned my name. If he did not, then
17 I would have been the one to mention my name when I called
18 the Governor on Friday morning shortly after the President
19 talked to him.

20 I don't recall whether the Governor said anything
21 in our conversation on Friday morning which indicated
22 that the President had already indicated to him that I
23 would be the coordinator, but as of about 11:30 or so
24 on Friday morning, Governor Thornburgh knew it.

25 Q He knew that--

1 A That I would be the Federal coordinator of the
2 Federal Agency response, working with the state government
3 in terms of dealing with possible evacuation and the rendering
4 of all appropriate Federal assistance to him in dealing
5 with the crisis.

6 Q I guess what I am trying to understand is what
7 your understanding was of the request from the state, if
8 any, and the tenure of your request for a Federal response?

9 A I am sorry. I do not understand your question.

10 Q Was there, on Friday afternoon, as far as you
11 understood, an explicit request of--in other words, let me
12 back up perhaps and clarify the question. As of Friday
13 afternoon, you were calling Governor Thornburgh and telling
14 him what kinds of activities had been precipitated in
15 the Federal Government that afternoon.

16 I guess my question is: did you have an under-
17 standing at that point of any explicit request from the
18 state for a specific kind of Federal assistance?

19 A No. To my knowledge, there had been no specific
20 request. I would estimate, though again telephone logs and
21 other documents would be a better reference point for this,
22 that either I or Gene Eidenberg, between noon and midnight
23 on Friday, could have had as many as eight or ten conversations
24 with members of the Governor's staff: the Governor's Press
25 Secretary or Jay Waldman, his Executive Assistant, with the

1 Governor himself and so forth.

2 So, that we were already, on Friday afternoon,
3 virtually as soon as I became involved in it, in a full
4 flow of events and exchange of information with the
5 Governor's office. There was nothing formal that needed
6 to be requested.

7 He knew that we were there. He knew basically
8 what we were doing. Anytime he had a question or members
9 of his staff had a question about the Federal response, we
10 would get a call on the signal line, the drop line, and
11 we would deal with it.

12 So there was no magical moment at which he made
13 some formal request either of me or of the President of
14 which I am aware. He may have said to the President in
15 the telephone conversation on Friday morning I would
16 appreciate knowing who--what principal staff member in
17 the White House I should deal with, but I am surmising that.

18 I do not know that he said that to the President.

19 Q This may be difficult to answer, but maybe you
20 could just give us a sense of how you coordinated these
21 agencies both on Friday and on Saturday, the level of detail
22 in which you became involved in their activities and maybe
23 I can illustrate that to give you an idea of what I am
24 trying to understand.

25 Were you, in effect, asking them to just let you

1 and therefore, through your other agencies, know what
2 their activities were and allowing them to go out and
3 bring to bear on the situation whatever they thought
4 seemed appropriate.

5 Or, were you directing specific actions to be
6 taken by these agencies?

7 A Again, Mr. Harvey, it is a combination of both.
8 But the preponderance of actions taken by the Federal
9 agencies in a situation such as this are ones of which
10 I am never aware.

11 As an Assistant to the President, it is not my
12 responsibility nor is it necessary, given competent agency
13 and departmental operation, for me to be in the flow of
14 every piece of detailed information about response.

15 As a matter of fact, I would have made that
16 clear at the meeting on Friday afternoon at 1:30 to the
17 people who were assembled for that meeting that what I
18 would help do is to establish a process and a set of
19 mechanisms through which they could communicate each other;
20 that I expected them to act on their own initiative; to
21 communicate directly with each other whenever necessary
22 and appropriate to do so; in effect, act with responsibility
23 with respect to their agencies' capabilities.

24 My involvement would be to insure that the
25

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1 processes and the mechanisms were working. If I got a
2 report that indicated that one or more Federal agencies
3 were not connecting with each other, or that one agency
4 was not supporting appropriately the effort, then I would
5 intervene.

6 That in fact was not necessary for me to do with
7 respect to Three Mile Island on Friday or Saturday, and
8 unless my memory was sparked on a particular occasion, I
9 cannot recall that it was ever necessary for me to do that.

10 I, in this situation and in previous and subsequent
11 situations, rely heavily for operational purposes on
12 whomever I designate as the lead. In this case, it was
13 Bill Wilcox in Washington, and Bob Adamcik on the site.

14 I expect them to operate on their own initiative
15 and to do what they think is necessary to deal with the
16 situation, to convene other agencies as they think is
17 appropriate and necessary, and come to me only when they
18 need help in getting something done.

19 My experience in working particularly with
20 Bill Wilcox, which I had done on many many previous occasions
21 was that I could rely on Bill to do exactly that. That
22 when he needed my help he would come to me. And when he
23 didn't need it, he would execute in the manner in which he
24 thought was appropriate.

25 That was the same standard operating procedure

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1 for this. There was a vast array of actions and initiatives
2 and conversations and steps being taken of which I never
3 had any knowledge nor needed to have any knowledge.

4 Q I guess what I am trying to understand is that
5 you were working principally in a role of supplying, in
6 effect, a bridge between these agencies as they took
7 actions that they saw needed to be taken within their own
8 experience and expertise?

9 A As it was necessary. I don't want to overstate
10 that. In many cases, these agencies routinely work with
11 each other without any White House involvement whatsoever.
12 DCPA and FPA and FDAA work with each other.

13 They do not need Jack Watson to bridge between
14 them. It is only under extraordinary circumstances
15 where there is some problem that I would be asked to inter-
16 vene and help. That was the situation here.

17 Q Let me show you what I have marked as Deposition
18 Exhibit No. 4, which is a memorandum from Secretary Califano
19 dated the 31st to you. Do you recall receiving that
20 memorandum?

21 (The document referred to was
22 marked for identification as
23 Deposition Exhibit No. 4 and
24 was received in evidence)

25 A Yes I do.

1 Q If I could direct your attention to page two
2 there is some language that is underlined, the second full
3 paragraph, requesting or recommending in effect that
4 you seek assurances from the NRC that the reactor is
5 cooling safely.

6 In any event, that assurances can't be provided,
7 then consider recommending to the Governor immediate
8 evacuation.

9 A Yes, I see that.

10 Q What was done, if anything, with this recommendation?

11 A I discussed this recommendation with several
12 people in the course of discussions that were on-going
13 about whether or not an evacuation seemed to be called
14 for.

15 Again, I will simply preface by saying that
16 the primary responsibility for that judgement, ultimate
17 responsibility for that judgement, lay with the Governor.
18 Second, this judgement was very much within the province
19 of Harold Denton whom all of us, including myself, regarded
20 as the highest and best source of information about the
21 conditions at the reactor site.

22 Third, I was talking constantly over the whole
23 96-hour period, roughly, from Friday noon until Wednesday
24 or Thursday of the following week, with Harold Denton, with
25 Governor Thornburgh and his staff, principally Jay Waldman,

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1 with Joe Hendrie, with Victor Gilinsky, with Jessica Tuchman-
2 Mathews, with Frank Press and others, assessing the balance
3 of factors about evacuation.

4 That was a subject from which we never moved
5 away. It was always , for that 96-hour period, an
6 eminent possibility. At every point in that 96-hour period
7 I regarded it as my responsibility among others to
8 give Dick Thornburgh the very best advice from my point
9 of view and from the collection of information that I
10 had as to evacuation or no evacuation.

11 I was doing that in conversations that never
12 stopped. Although Dick Thornburgh and I regarded Harold
13 Denton and his assessment of the circumstances at the
14 reactor site as the primary authority on that issue.

15 Therefore, having said that Chuck, I took this
16 into account. I communicated this point of view to
17 several of the people that I mentioned. I continued
18 to illicit their response to it, their own opinion. As
19 the circumstances revealed, concluded that at least in
20 my own judgement, the evacuation should not be called.

21 However, again, I was in a secondary position
22 on that judgement, but I never recommended to the GOVERNOR
23 that I thought he should reverse his decision on not
24 evacuating. I never made that recommendation to him.

25 Q Do I understand correctly that as these evacuation

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1 discussions were taking place over the 96-hour period that
2 the purpose of these discussions was to place yourself
3 in the position of being able to recommend or not recommend
4 as your judgement dictated, evacuation or other protective
5 action to the Governor?

6 A That is correct.

7 Q So that at least from the point of view of
8 these discussions, if the state of the reactor had been
9 different and that in discussions with others within the
10 Federal Government, the people that you have mentioned,
11 let us say that the consensus was unanimous, that the time
12 had come for an evacuation: you perceived your role at
13 the time as being one in which you could take that consensus
14 and communicate to the Governor and in effect recommend
15 that?

16 A That is correct. Let me modify one thing you
17 said. I don't think you needed unanimous in there. In
18 fact, I venture to say that this is a subject that is highly
19 judgemental. People, ultimately the Governor of the state,
20 are having to factor in a lot of tangible and objective
21 pieces of data as well as some intangible judgements about
22 what the better way to go is.

23 I did regard myself throughout this whole affair
24 principally in two or three roles: one, as a coordinator
25 of the way we executed and worked with the state and local

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1 governments to see that the Federal Government was doing
2 everything it could as well as it could; second, as an
3 advisor and assistor to the Governor of the State of
4 Pennsylvania; and of course third, as an advisor and
5 informer of the President in the whole situation as well.

6 In those roles, this piece of information
7 as well as all the other pieces of information that I
8 was getting from all sources would be shared with people
9 for reaction, including the Governor.

10 As I said a moment ago, I never personally
11 reached the conclusion that an evacuation should be ordered,
12 and therefore I never recommended to the Governor that he
13 do that.

14 Q Okay. But had a directive gone out, any kind
15 of perhaps--let me preface this by saying that on one
16 hand you have a problem with public information in that
17 you may have many different people saying many different
18 things and there is an effort to coordinate that.

19 On the other hand you may have, for example, in
20 the state of the situation of the Califano memorandum,
21 many different Federal agencies reaching independent
22 conclusions as to what types of protective actions should
23 be taken.

24 You had three emergency management agencies in
25 the field: Secretary Califano's people, the EPA, and

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1 so forth. Was there any directive going out to those
2 agencies from you or the White House concerning the
3 coordination of recommendations to the State?

4 A No, no such directive ever went out. It would
5 have been entirely appropriate for Joe Califano to talk
6 with the Governor, for the Governor to call Joe Califano
7 and talk with him about something, and in that same stable,
8 it would hold true for any of the other major agency heads
9 or anyone, in fact, to communicate with the Governor.

10 That would have been entirely appropriate, and
11 nothing that I ever said or did would have precluded
12 that or cautioned against it. Our role is to see that the
13 Governor has the best information that we can bring to
14 bear.

15 I might say that in general situations like
16 this it is helpful to the Governor of the state for there
17 to be some one person to whom he can turn for gathering
18 that information, but that by no means forecloses other
19 people from talking with the Governor.

20 As a matter of fact, Chuck, I cannot say of
21 my own knowledge that Secretary Califano did not talk with
22 the Governor. It is entirely possible that he did. I
23 just do not know it.

24 Q Did you ever communicate this particular recom-
25 mendation to the Governor? I don't mean in the form of a

1 recommendation from you, but in the form Secretary Califano
2 has made this recommendation?

3 A I don't recall a specific conversation with
4 Governor Thronburgh on this. In the very large number
5 of conversations that Gene Eidenberg and I were having
6 with Jay Waldman, we would have discussed this.

7 I am looking at page two of the Califano
8 memorandum to me which is marked as Watson's Deposition
9 Exhibit No. 4, in which he says, quote: "Unless the NRC
10 can provide assurances that the reactor is cooling safely
11 and that the occurrence of these events can be ruled
12 out, adequate protection of the public health requires
13 at a minimum that full-scale preparations for an evacuation
14 of the population within ten miles of the plant be
15 undertaken on urgent basis and that the population in
16 that area be officially warned immediately to make all
17 necessary preparations to leave on short notice". (close
18 quote)

19 All of that was being done. Every bit of that
20 was being done in exactly those terms: urgent preparations,
21 full-scale preparations for possible evacuations of
22 various kinds, and so forth and the Governor and his people
23 of course were much aware of all that.

24
25
END OF
TAPE 3

1 Q In the underlying language, if I can characterize
2 it, and you can disagree with the characterization if you
3 feel you should, what Secretary Califano is recommending
4 that you consider doing is seek assurances from the NRC that
5 the reactor is cooling safely; and in the absence of those
6 assurances, he is asking you to consider recommending to the
7 governor an immediate evacuation.

8 A Okay. What I did following the receipt of this
9 memorandum, as I said a moment ago, was to talk to several
10 people about it. Specifically I recall talking to Harold
11 Denton, to Jessica Methews, to Frank Press, to Gene Eidenberg
12 almost immediately before talking to anyone in the governor's
13 office.

14 The consensus of view, in fact as I recall the
15 unanimous view at that moment, was that an evacuation was not
16 called for. In this situation, the one that had more votes
17 than anybody else in my own mind on that point was Harold
18 Denton. And it was a classic situation of where had Harold
19 Denton said, "Yes, I think we need to evacuate," it would
20 not have mattered to me personally if 14 other people had
21 said, "No." I would have gone with Harold Denton.

22 But Harold Denton did not say -- in other words,
23 when I talked with Harold Denton about this, discussed the
24 situation at the reactor site with him, asked him about these
25 kinds of things, concerns that Joe Califano was expressing,

1 asked him whether or not an evacuation in his opinion should
2 be recommended to the governor; the answer to that question
3 was, "No," from Harold Denton.

4 Q I guess my last question on this memorandum is,
5 was the Secretary's explicit recommendation to you, and I
6 characterize it as a point of view on how evacuation should
7 be approached, an evacuation decision should be approached,
8 was that explicit recommendation from the Secretary communi-
9 cated to the governor?

10 A Are you now talking about his suggestion that the
11 population within 20 miles of the plant be notified publically
12 and officially to prepare to evacuate on short notice?

13 Q No. I am referring to his -- let me characterize
14 his recommendation -- his recommendation appears to me to
15 be that assurances be sought from the NRC that the reactor
16 is cooling safely. Now if the NRC responds that those
17 assurances cannot be given, if the NRC cannot provide them,
18 he is asking you to consider recommending an immediate
19 evacuation.

20 A Yes.

21 Q And what I am asking is if that that point of view
22 was communicated to the governor by you.

23 I am saying that did you call Governor Thornburgh ,
24 for example, and say, "I have a memorandum from Secretary
25 Califano, and this is the point of view that he asking me

1 to consider."

2 A No. I do not recall having had that conversation
3 with the Governor. I did, however, do exactly what Secretary
4 Califano recommended to me. I did -- he is saying NRC; I
5 was regarding NRC to be principally Harold Denton for pur-
6 poses of this recommendation -- for me to talk with Harold
7 Denton and get Harold Denton's advice about the situation
8 and then based on that advice, to consider recommending to
9 the governor immediate evacuation. I did exactly that.

10 I talked to Denton and, as I said a minute ago, to
11 others evaluating the situation at the site from people
12 whose knowledge of the situation of course was superior to
13 Secretary Califano's because he was not there. I did exactly
14 that.

15 In the light of those conversation and discussions,
16 I considered recommending to the governor evacuation, and
17 I rejected it.

18 Q But the fact that you had received this memorandum
19 from Secretary Califano was not communicated in those kinds
20 of terms to the governor.

21 A I do not recall calling the governor and saying to
22 him, "I have just gotten a memorandum from Secretary Califano
23 which reads in part as follows and which recommends that
24 we immediately evacuate if the NRC can't promise us that
25 everything is fine." I did not have that kind of a

1 conversation with the governor.

2 Q Let me show you what I have marked as exhibit five,
3 which is a memorandum from you to the President, dated
4 March 31, which is the status report number two on Three
5 Mile Island facility. Did you prepare that memorandum?

6 A I did.

7 (The document referred to was
8 marked for identification as
9 Watson Deposition #5 and was
10 received in evidence.)

11 BY MR. HARVEY:

12 Q In the first bullet of the memorandum, there is
13 a reference to Joe, which I assume is Secretary Califano?

14 A It is.

15 Q In which it is purported he is suggesting convening
16 a high-level meeting. Can you describe what that suggestion
17 was?

18 A Yes. Joe Califano had suggested to the President
19 in a telephone conversation that occurred on Saturday morning,
20 March 31, that the President that afternoon or that evening,
21 that afternoon I think, convene a meeting of the relevant
22 Cabinet Secretaries, which would have been Secretary
23 Schlesinger and Secretary Califano and Doug Costle and others,
24 for the purpose of having a Presidential briefing by those
25 people and of those people on this situation.

1 After the President talked to Secretary Califano
2 on the telephone Saturday morning, he and I spoke -- he, the
3 President and I -- on the telephone; and the President told
4 me of Secretary Califano's recommendation; asked me to discuss
5 it further with Secretary Califano on the telephone, which I
6 did.

7 I don't recall the specific time of the President's
8 departure, but the President on Saturday, March 31, left
9 Washington for a trip, and he left sometime in the afternoon,
10 but I am not sure when.

11 This memorandum which would have been prepared
12 probably in the middle of the afternoon on Saturday simply
13 informs the President that since talking with him on the
14 telephone that morning, I have talked with these other people,
15 and I have done the following things, which include a conver-
16 sation with Joe Califano in which I said to Secretary
17 Califano that I did not think under the circumstances that
18 the kind of meeting he was suggesting to the President was
19 necessary or even advisable.

20 Q What were your reasons for that?

21 A I thought it was unnecessary and inadvisable.

22 Unnecessary because everything was working; the agencies were
23 working very well together. I did not think we needed such
24 a meeting to resolve any problems, any problems of function
25 or performance that were occurring.

1 Therefore, the only other reason for the meeting
2 that I could think of was to have it as a media event, and
3 I did not think we needed a Presidential media event on this
4 subject at this time. And for essentially those two reasons,
5 both of which I explained to Secretary Califano, I thought
6 that a meeting was inadvisable.

7 Q That afternoon or early evening, I guess, there
8 was convened a meeting in the situation room of the White
9 House which you chaired.

10 A Yes.

11 Q Let me show you --

12 A Incidentally, on this meeting, of course, which had
13 been set and which I knew was going to take place that after-
14 noon, I told Secretary Califano about the meeting. I said
15 that we are going to be doing in terms of information
16 exchange and opinion seeking and so forth exactly what you
17 are proposing be done at a highly visible, presidential
18 level. So that what you are asking be done in effect is being
19 done this afternoon.

20 And I don't know that Secretary Califano agreed
21 with me, but he went along with it.

22 Q I am showing you what I have marked as deposition
23 exhibit number five, is it?

24 A Six.

25 Q Six.

1 A Watson Deposition #6.

2 Q Which I can characterize as being minutes or a
3 report of a meeting held in the situation room on March 31.
4 Is that the meeting that you talk about convening?

5 A It is.

6 (The document referred to was
7 marked for identification as
8 Watson Deposition Exhibit #6
9 and was received in evidence.)

10 BY MR. HARVEY:

11 Q How was that invitation list prepared? How was
12 the selection made for the agencies that would have attended?

13 A I would have, in discussions with Gene Eidenberg
14 and Bill Wilcox and Jessica Mathews and others, formulated
15 the list myself and invited the people.

16 What I was seeking to do, of course, was to have
17 everybody at the meeting who had some role to play at that
18 time.

19 Q There is a reference to coordinating press state-
20 ments --

21 A Where is that?

22 Q In the third paragraph on page two. It is not a
23 numbered page, but it is the second page of text. That press
24 statement not be made by the agencies. This report, are you
25 asking that press statements not be made by the agencies but

1 by the White House or state officials only?

2 A First let me just comment briefly on this document.
3 This document was, I believe, prepared by Marcia Thomas in
4 my office who is one of my assistants. It is not a document
5 that I would have signed or even been shown but rather a
6 document simply trying to keep a record of events; and
7 therefore I simply impose the caution that this should not
8 be accepted as something that I would adopt as my own state-
9 ment of what occurred and what was said at that meeting.

10 Having made that --

11 Q Do you recall asking that press statements not be
12 made by the agencies but by the White House or state officials
13 only?

14 A Okay. I would have said that differently at the
15 meeting than is reflected in this sentence here. This is
16 now a meeting on Saturday afternoon, in the late afternoon,
17 5:26 the notes indicate the meeting began.

18 It was already very apparent by that time that the
19 dissemination of public information about the circumstances
20 at the reactor site was very difficult, was causing the
21 governor great problems; the governor far greater problems
22 than anybody else because he was the man on the spot having
23 to interpret the situation to the people of the state.

24 What I cautioned at this meeting was that the
25 agencies should not be speculating about circumstances which

1 they did not have responsibility for overseeing and about
2 facts which they did not know to be true. I can't recall for
3 you right now an example, but I am sure if we went back and
4 looked at the press releases of Saturday, the 31st, it would
5 be easy to find various statements that were reported in the
6 press coming from this agency or that agency about this
7 subject or that subject, the effect of which was to cause
8 great confusion about what in fact the situation was at the
9 reactor site.

10 I would not have said for no agency to speak or
11 not to make any press statements because each agency would
12 of course when asked by the press about something that it had
13 specific knowledge and responsibility of would want to answer.
14 Again, I am hard-pressed to give you an illustration, but if
15 for example someone came to an agency and said, came to the
16 Environmental Protection Agency and said, or to the Food and
17 Drug Administration and said, from the press: What are your
18 findings with respect to the radioactive content of the
19 milk samples that you have been looking at or of the water
20 samples that you have been taking from the stream; that is
21 something that that agency has immediate responsibility for
22 and therefore knowledge of, and they should respond
23 appropriately.

24 But if a member of the press came to someone in
25 EPA who is doing water samples on the river and said,

1 "Describe to me the latest circumstances at the reactor site,"
2 and that person in that agency did so; that could cause and
3 was causing great difficulty for the governor and for others
4 involved in managing the crisis.

5 That is what my caution was about.

6 Q Well, if I can characterize your caution, it was
7 against agencies making public statement concerning events
8 with respect to the incident outside of their own particular
9 activities?

10 A Yes.

11 Q Fine. Why don't you look at the next paragraph,
12 which reads that you illustrated your point by saying that
13 some DOD officials had made press statements regarding the
14 movement of lead bricks which led to speculation as to their
15 purpose.

16 As I understand it, the Department of Defense
17 moved the lead bricks. It was an activity in which they were
18 involved and had made a release concerning the fact that they
19 were involved in that activity.

20 A I would have to look at the press story to see why
21 I cited that as an example. And frankly, I don't recall. I
22 recall having called upon the Defense Department to move
23 lead bricks up there for some insulation purposes because
24 I myself was involved in that request. Obviously, some DOD
25 official had made a report of that which had caused

1 confusion, and I was citing that as an example. But I cannot
2 from memory explain to you how or why I was.

3 Q Was there any directive from the White House to
4 your knowledge during this period of time from Friday let's
5 say to Wednesday, the following Wednesday; from March 30
6 for the next four or five days, requesting Federal agencies
7 not to make public press statements but to coordinate -- and
8 by coordinate I mean release -- all public statement through
9 the White House?

10 A I don't think such a directive was ever issued.
11 I am reasonably certain that nothing like that would have ever
12 gone out in writing, but the record will speak for itself.
13 If you have seen such a memorandum, you could refresh my
14 memory with it. I do not recall having signed any such thing.

15 The caution was, as I have described, that in this
16 situation almost above all others that could be imagined, the
17 need for accurate, factual, reliable and credible information
18 was paramount. The more that people confused the process of
19 informing the public about what the facts were, particularly
20 at the reactor site, the harder it was for the governor as
21 the person chiefly responsible to manage the crisis and deal
22 with the public which was obviously and understandably
23 terribly concerned, terribly worried, about the situation.

24 In every statement that I made verbally to every
25 Federal official or in a conversation that I had later on,

1 sometime on, Saturday with the president of the utility,
2 Mr. Herman Diekamp, and in a conversation that I had on the
3 telephone with Joe Hendrie, the Chairman of the NRC, in
4 which I was talking about this subject; in every one of
5 those statement by me to anyone, I was simply underscoring
6 the critical need for us to assist the governor in being able
7 to put out information which would accurately describe the
8 situation at the site and keep the public informed with a
9 minimum of rumors and a minimum of speculative statements and
10 speculative hypotehticals about what would or would not occur.

11 No directive was ever given to anyone with respect
12 to not speaking to the press or not making press statements
13 except in the context of what I have just said.

14 Now one addendum to that:

15 Q Let me before you -- why don't you go ahead and I
16 can clear it.

17 A It is brief. I think I may be anticipating what
18 you are concerned with; perhaps not.

19 One problem in a situation such as this is a
20 problem illustrated by the old story about the blind man
21 looking at the elephant. And that is why it is important to
22 have some orderly process for the collection of information
23 and the setting of that information in some context relating
24 this piece of information to another piece of information
25 in a way that displays the whole situation accurately.

1 Sometimes, and I am sure if we spent time, if I
2 looked at some documents or some press reports, I could give
3 you some illustrations of this; I can't do it from memory at
4 the moment. Some person in the Nuclear Regulatory Commission
5 or in the company, the utility company or elsewhere, would
6 make a statement to the press which on its own bottom was
7 factually correct but which was relative to other information
8 very misleading or misinterpreted.

9 And that kind of thing was causing the governor
10 of the state constant difficulty. Therefore, the coordination
11 of information became an important point, not the cutting off
12 of sources, not the cutting off of people's commentary on
13 what was going on, but the presentation of all that information
14 which was very voluminous in a way that related the informa-
15 tion one piece to the other.

16 Now again, one illustration that I can make:
17 Forgive me if I am anticipating something wrongly. The
18 company, the utility company, was giving separate press
19 briefings, separate from Dr. Denton. The very fact that
20 separate press briefings on the same subject were being
21 given was causing problems itself simply because of different
22 characterizations.

23 When I called Mr. Diekamp who was the president or
24 chairman of the board of the utility, I suggested to him that
25 that was causing problems, a point with which he fully agreed.

1 And to resolve the problem or at least to alleviate it, I
2 suggested that Harold Denton as the man in charge of the site
3 give the press briefings in the presence of representatives
4 of the company; and that if Dr. Denton said anything with
5 which they had disagreement or which they would characterize
6 in a different way, they could at that press briefing make
7 that point.

8 In other words, it was not that the company was
9 being closed off of opportunity to comment to the press, but
10 rather that their comments about the situation at the reactor
11 site would be made at one time with Harold Denton so that the
12 information could be related to what his perception was and
13 what their perception was if in fact there was a difference.

14 In more cases than not, there was a difference,
15 Chuck. And it was, and once we started that process, which
16 Mr. Diekamp agreed to immediately, the situation was greatly
17 alleviated.

18 Q Let me go back before you added the addendum. So
19 that I am clear, you were saying that you were describing
20 the process and the problems of having multiple sources
21 commenting on the same events. So that I am clear, to your
22 knowledge, there was no directive from the White House or
23 from any central Federal source which would be the White
24 House instructing Federal agencies not to issue press state-
25 ments or to respond to press inquiry even to inquiries

1 concerning areas within their own particular expertise and
2 activities?

3 A I know of no such directive.

4 Q Am I correct that your urging the point of view
5 you describe with respect to the report of this meeting was
6 precipitated in part by events that occurred on Saturday?

7 A Yes.

8 Q Okay, so that you were in effect adding to the
9 structure that had been set up at the meeting on Friday. Is
10 that correct?

11 In other words, my understanding is that you had
12 set up an anticipatory structure of centralizing information

13 A Yes.

14 Q -- at that meeting on Friday and --

15 A To make that work, we set up -- I can't recall my
16 precise words, but I would have said something to this
17 effect. Dr. Harold Denton is the man immediately on site.
18 He is the man therefore who is in most command of the latest
19 information at all times. He is the spokesman about what is
20 going on at the site.

21 Let him be that. Let us not from our other places
22 around the country and in Washington and in Bethesda and every-
23 place else be speculating on what the situation at the site
24 is. I would have said something like that.

25 Q And so those statements concerning activities at

1 the site and the condition of the reactor would come from him
2 at the site.

3 A Correct.

4 Q What role was the White House to have in press
5 releases or press statements responding to inquiries vis-a-vis
6 the other Federal agencies?

7 A I am not sure I understand.

8 Q For purposes of the question, Harold Denton's
9 comments concerning the conditions at the reactor.

10 A Okay.

11 Q In other words, the White House was coordinating
12 all the activities from the boundaries of the site out.

13 A Right.

14 Q He was clearly responsible for the activities from
15 the site into the reactor. Concerning the off-site Federal
16 efforts, what role was the White House to play vis-a-vis the
17 other Federal agencies?

18 A My office would have been and was in fact a point
19 of information about those off-site activities. Inquiries
20 that were coming in from the press about what was being done
21 in terms of formulating the Federal, state and local response
22 -- possible evacuations, the providing of necessary transpor-
23 tation and other assistance and so forth from the Federal
24 government and the state government -- those kinds of informa-
25 tion would have come, could have come, from my office at the

1 White House, and much of it did.

2 Pieces of that information could have come from
3 the agencies that were directly involved. Bill Wilcox, for
4 example, was answering some of that information and so forth.

5 Some of the agencies at both the Friday meeting and
6 the Saturday meeting asked the question what to do about
7 press inquiries which were not within their areas of know-
8 ledge and responsibility; to which I would have said or Jody
9 would have said on Friday: Refer those to the White House,
10 and we will see that, we will try to see that, they are
11 directed to the appropriate place, whether it is Harold
12 Denton or to whomever.

13 But the agencies themselves were expressing concerns
14 on both Friday and Saturday about being deluged with press
15 inquiries on matters affecting the Three Mile Island incident
16 which their own public information offices simply didn't
17 know about, and they were asking what will we do about those.

18 We would have siad refer those to the White House
19 press office, to Rex Granum, who I think was in charge at
20 the time, or to Jody Powell if here was here. Oh, I know
21 why Rex was in charge. It is because Jody was traveling with
22 the President on Saturday. So Rex Granum would have been the
23 press duty officer or Jim Purks in his absence, and I or one
24 of them would have given that instruction.

25 But that was an assisting instruction more than

1 anything else.

2 Q So the White House's role was to take the overflow,
3 to use a characterization, of information, inquiries concern-
4 ing events at the site or elsewhere in the Three Mile Island
5 incident, that was not particularly within the expertise of
6 that agency; those inquiries would be referred to the White
7 House?

8 A Yes.

gin T5
9 Q There is a reference in this report of the meeting
10 to HEW, for example, asking that health professionals be
11 involved in decisions by the NRC to intervene in the reactor;
12 and I think that is raised two or three times, that concern
13 anyway, --

14 A Yes.

15 Q -- is raised two or three times throughout this
16 report. Do you recall that being discussed --

17 A I do.

18 Q -- at the meeting? Do you recall what your reaction
19 or decision was at the meeting concerning that?

20 A Yes, I said let's co-locate the appropriate health
21 professional immediately at the operations center in Bethesda,
22 and it was done.

23 Q Do you view this meeting as being a decisional
24 meeting primarily or informational meeting? What was sought
25 to be accomplished?

1 A Primarily informational; decisional where appropriate.
2 That is a situation in which I made a decision. The recommen-
3 dation came from HEW that it would be extremely helpful from
4 their point of view to have people concerned about the health
5 aspects of the situation sitting right there at the opera-
6 tional center with NRC reviewing data that came in.

7 I agreed immediately. I made the decision that it
8 should be done. I asked that it be done, and it was in fact
9 done virtually instantaneously.

10 Q Shortly after this meeting, I take it, or perhaps
11 contemporaneously there was being discussed the preparation
12 of an analysis by the NRC concerning evacuation scenarios,
13 different hypothetical situations concerning the reactor and
14 the possible response that ought to be undertaken.

15 Do you recall when that was first raised?

16 A I would have to check the record to be sure. I
17 believe that it was first raised on Saturday. And the problem
18 among others was or the concern I should say on my part among
19 others was that I did not want the people who were responsible
20 for formulating the evacuation plans to be doing so in ways
21 that did not fit real scenarios as contemplated by the
22 technicians at the reactor site.

23 For example, I did not want our people working with
24 the county officials to be talking in terms of five-mile
25 evacuations in complete circumference if in fact the best

1 judgment of the NRC people was that you would want to have
2 a two-mile evacuation first, followed by a, I think what
3 some people call a spike or a plume evacuation rather than
4 a circumferential one.

5 I simply wanted to do everything we could to bring
6 those two points of view together because there was some
7 concern that we might be planning to execute something that
8 wouldn't fit the scenario that was most likely.

9 Q So that the impetus for having the NRC prepare its
10 scenarios on paper or to the point where they could be articu-
11 lated came from you.

12 A Yes, it did. And I recall that I communicated that
13 request to Victor Gilinsky who is a Commissioner and to Peter
14 Bradford who is also a Commissioner of the NRC.

15 I also wanted the people at the NRC thinking very,
16 very hard and not abstractly about the practical aspects of
17 an evacuation. I wanted in other words to marry, to connect,
18 practical considerations with theoretical considerations,
19 and I wanted the people on the practical side to have a
20 better grasp of what some of the theoretical possibilities;
21 and I wanted the people thinking about theoretical possibili-
22 ties on the technical side to know what was practically
23 possible.

24 I thought the best way to do that was to give this
25 instruction for the NRC to come up with these schenarios,

1 forcing them to think about it in that context and then to
2 share all that information with the governor and with the
3 people in Pennsylvania who were preparing the evacuation
4 plans. All of that was done.

5 Q Let me show you exhibit six, what I have marked as
6 deposition exhibit six. I am sorry.

7 Are those the scenarios?

8 It has been marked as deposition exhibit seven.
9 This is document dated April 1, --

10 A 1979. This appears to be the document that was
11 prepared and that I discussed with Joe Hendrie and the
12 governor and Victor Gilinsky and others.

13 (The document referred to was
14 marked for identification as
15 Watson Deposition Exhibit #7
16 and was received in evidence.)

17 BY MR. HARVEY:

18 Q Do you recall when the discussions took place?
19 Particularly with Commissioner Gilinsky?

20 A To the best of my recollection at this moment, I
21 could confirm it by reference to documents, is that I asked
22 for this to be done on Saturday afternoon. It was done
23 Saturday night and Sunday morning. And I discussed this
24 document on Sunday afternoon upon my return to Washington
25 from the Three Mile Island site with the President.

1 Q Do you recall the substance of the discussions?

2 A The substance of the discussions generally was
3 simply for them to explain their charts and how they had gone
4 about the process and what their scenarios were. We were
5 very interested in among other things talking about lead
6 time.

7 If event A occurred, how much time would that give
8 us to evacuate? If event B occurred, what would the lead
9 time be and so forth? That was the nature of the discussion.

10 Q Was there any discussion about the mode of evacua-
11 tion that had been selected within these scenarios?

12 A Yes. We did talk about whether or not it was more
13 likely than not to have to do a completely circumferential
14 evacuation or more likely that we would do some plume evacua-
15 tion that would more precisely reflect wind direction and
16 wind velocity and such factors as that.

17 We did discuss that. Those things are very hard
18 to predict, of course.

19 Q What was your awareness of the approach being taken
20 by Sunday afternoon by those at the site?

21 A Generally speaking, the people off-site who were
22 working with the counties on evacuation plans were thinking
23 in terms of circumferential evacuations at five-mile incre-
24 ments; five-mile, 10-mile, 20-mile increments. That is
25 generally what they were doing. That is generally the way the

1 plans had been devised.

2 Q And this document, I take it, speaks in terms of
3 plume evacuations as well.

4 A Well, in part. I am sorry I will have to study
5 to talk to you intelligently and accurately about it. But
6 I do recall that based on the NRC analysis the plume kind of
7 evacuation was at least as likely to be appropriate as the
8 other kind.

9 The plume evacuation, I think it is accurate to
10 say, is an easier one to pull off because you are talking
11 about less people. Obviously if you are having to pull
12 everybody out of a five-mile circumference, you are talking
13 about a lot more people than if you are going for a quadrant
14 that is only five miles long.

15 So generally speaking, the plume theory was some-
16 thing of an improvement in terms of what we had to be able to
17 do, but at the same time, it did not reflect the kinds of
18 evacuation plans that the county governments had. So it
19 would have caused those kinds of practical problems.

20 Q And what did you do or actions did you take with
21 respect to that problem, the problem of meshing what the NRC
22 was coming up with as a hypothetical and what was going on
23 in fact in the field?

24 A I simply assured that this information was communi-
25 cated to the people who were working on the evacuation plans

1 to see what if anything they could do to adjust to it.

2 Q On the previous day, on Saturday, you had given the
3 directive at that situation room meeting that the HEW health
4 officials get in the operations center, consult with the NRC
5 as decisions were being made or at least to be available for
6 consultation.

7 A Yes.

8 Q Was this kind of an evacuation scenario contemplated
9 by you as being an area in which HEW would make a contribution?

10 A Do you mean did I think that the people, the
11 health people, from HEW would, should, be involved in the
12 evacuation planning? Is that your question?

13 Q Yes.

14 A I thought it would be helpful for them to be so,
15 yes. They are not the principal executors of evacuation
16 plans, but to consult with them about it would be appropriate,
17 yes.

18 Q And specifically the NRC in developing evacuation
19 plans with respect to particular kinds of releases and so
20 forth, did you view that as an appropriate --

21 A Yes.

22 Q -- of HEW's role?

23 A Yes.

24 Q Is there any directive for HEW and NRC to get
25 together to consult in the development of this kind of

1 document, deposition #7? That kind of process?

2 A Since the HEW people were physically present at the
3 operations center and since this was being prepared at the
4 operations center, I assumed that they were involved; but I
5 don't know that of my own knowledge.

6 Q Are far as that original directive at the Saturday
7 meeting, that the HEW health officials be placed inside the
8 operations center and available for consultation, --

9 A Yes.

10 Q -- would it be fair to say that that is where your
11 involvement with that paritcular issue ended?

12 A Yes.

13 Q Having made that directive?

14 A Yes. I think that is fair to say. Had I gotten
15 any complaints from HEW or anyone else that the process was
16 not working, I would have intervned again; but I did not
17 get any such complaints.

18 Q Saturday, if I can jog your memory, evening there
19 were two press reports that received a lot of coverage, and
20 certainly were subjects of concern in the state government.
21 One was a statement by Chairman Hendrie concerning the
22 possibility of a precautionary evacuation; and the second was
23 an Associated Press story concerning the bubble and whether
24 or not it might explode.

25 Do you recall those two stories?

1 A I do.

2 Q Would you describe what your involvement was in
3 responding to those kinds of press reports on Saturday after-
4 noon and evening?

5 A The governor was very concerned, very distressed,
6 about Chairman Hendrie's press conference or press briefing
7 that must have occurred on Saturday at which he mentioned this
8 precautionary evacuation of 20 miles, which would have
9 involved as my memory serves me maybe 800,000 people or more.
10 I think more.

11 That all of the information that we had from the
12 reactor site, from Harold Denton in particular and specifi-
13 cally, had by that time indicated that a 20-mile evacuation
14 was highly unlikely, highly unlikely. The fact that Chairman
15 Hendrie mentioned the possibility of a precautionary 20-mile
16 radius evacuation therefore did not conform to the current
17 discussion that was going on or to the latest set of facts
18 and caused chagrin among the population as well as confusion
19 because it conflicted with other statements that were being
20 made in Harrisburg by the governor about possible evacuations.

21 I don't recall specifically the sequence of events.
22 Again, a reference to a telephone log or the other documents
23 might be helpful. But I did have a conversation myself with
24 Joe Hendrie sometime on Saturday at which I pointed out this
25 difficulty being caused and at which I suggested that it

1 would be wise to have this coordination of statements about
2 reactor site and information coordinated better by Harold
3 Denton as far as the reactor site was concerned and by me or
4 with me with respect to evacuation speculations.

5 Joe Hendrie absolutely agreed with that, and I
6 think it was at that point that it was decided -- I don't
7 know that I suggested this or if Joe did; whoever suggested
8 it, the other one concurred -- that the press briefings, the
9 routine press briefings, should not occur down here at the
10 operations center in Bethesda but up there at the reactor
11 site with Harold Denton again being the primary spokesman.

12 That the person most able to accurately reflect
13 the latest facts and considerations and circumstances was
14 somebody on site; that that person was Harold Denton and that
15 therefore that is the way we would do it.

16 And I think from Saturday afternoon forward, that
17 is the way it worked. We did not, there were not routine,
18 separate press briefings down here in Washington, in Bethesda,
19 at the operations center.

20 Q And that was a result of your call to, with,
21 Chairman Hendrie?

22 A Yes.

23 Q All right.

24 A Well, I perhaps speak too quickly. I can't certify
25 that the cause and effect was there. I had the conversation

1 with Chairman Hendrie. We did talk about that subject, and
2 subsequently there were no press briefings here, regular,
3 routine, daily press briefings. The information was coming
4 out of the site. So I assume a cause and effect relationship.
5 The Chairman may have already decided to do that before I
6 ever called. I don't know. I don't think so.

7 Q And the impetus for your call to him was his state-
8 ment concerning the precautionary evacuation of 20 miles.

9 A Well, that was a particular triggering event or
10 problem. But it was representative of just broader problems,
11 and I just, again I thought that the best way for us to give
12 the population around Three Mile Island the best information
13 was to have that information come off the site by the man who
14 was there and responsible for talking to everybody and
15 weighing all the factors.

16 I did not think that it was appropriate in terms of
17 giving the governor of the state and the people of the state
18 the best information for us to be having regular press
19 briefings however many hunder miles we are away from the
20 site down here. And I so suggested to the Chairman.

21 Q Did you ever suggest or order that the press center
22 in Bethesda be closed or --

23 A No, I did not. As a matter of fact, I would not
24 have had the authority to order such a thing. The Nuclear
25 Regulatory Commission is an independent regulatory agency.

1 It is not within the Executive Branch of government. My
2 authority to give directives within the Executive Branch
3 which emanates solely from the delegation of that authority
4 from the President-would not have extended to the NRC.

5 So I would not have attempted to do so, nor in fact
6 did I give such a directive.

7 Q Just to be clear, you did express the view to
8 Chairman Hendrie that separate press briefings were not
9 fruitful?

10 A I did.

11 Q And that press briefings from the NRC should be
12 conducted at the site in conjunction with Denton being the
13 source of information.

14 A That is correct.

15 Q Did you make any other calls concerning public
16 information flow on Saturday? Do you recall?

17 A I recall one very specifically. I recall another
18 one less specifically. The one that I specifically recall
19 was one to Mr. Herman Dieckamp, I believe that is spelled
20 D-I-E-C-K-A-M-P, who is the president or chairman of the
21 board of the utility company. And I have already referred to
22 that in the course of this deposition.

23 I suggested to him that separate press briefings
24 by the company spokesmen was a troublesome thing because of
25 the -- because it presented such a fertile opportunity for

1 misinterpretations and confusion and double tracking informa-
2 tion and so forth.

3 Again, Mr. Dieckamp in that telephone conversation
4 which of course was not directive, I had absolutely no
5 authority to be directive to the utility company or to
6 Mr. Dieckamp. I was calling him -- we had a previous conversa-
7 tion during the day on another subject, so when I called
8 him the second time to talk about this, we had already
9 conferred, very cooperatively I might add, on another subject
10 which had been resolved.

11 The tone of the second conversation was the same
12 as the first one, which was suggestive and he, as he had done
13 in the first conversation, was very supportive and said, "I
14 absolutely agree with you, and that is the way we will do it."

15 Q Was there a particular event that precipitated
16 that call?

17 A Yes. I don't know that it was -- it was not only
18 one event. There had been a series of little things, but
19 the thing that pops to my mind was that a company spokesman
20 in a separate press briefing had referred to a hydrogen
21 bubble and to the fact that the hydrogen bubble had completely
22 or virtually dissipated. So that the problem of the so-
23 called hydrogen bubble explosion was past.

24 Well, in point of fact, -- and of course, that was
25 picked up on the AP and other wires; it became big news in

1 Pennsylvania immediately as you would expect it to -- the
2 company spokesman was referring not to the hydrogen bubble
3 in the containment but to another bubble in a separate
4 facility which had nothing to do with the problem with which
5 everyone was concerned.

6 And it was just another example of how an accurate
7 piece of information not properly related to the whole situa-
8 tion caused great confusion and therefore great distress to
9 the population.

10 I cited that as an example to Mr. Dieckamp of how,
11 if the company man, the company spokesman, whoever he or she
12 was -- he, it happened to be -- had made that same statement
13 in the presence of Harold Denton, the confusion would have
14 been eliminated, would have been nipped in the bud so to
15 speak. Because the clarification between the big hydrogen
16 bubble and the other bubble about which the spokesman was
17 talking could have been handled.

18 But under the circumstances, of the separate briefing,
19 it was not handled and it caused a confusion.

20 Q There was one other call that you said you --

21 A The other call that I made but that I am less clear
22 about in my memory was a call that I made to a person on the
23 staff not in the Commission, not one of the Commissioners,
24 at the NRC regarding a story that also had come off of the
25 Saturday afternoon press briefing following Chairman Hendrie's

1 remark. If you refresh my memory about names, I think I
2 could identify --

3 Q Bouchard?

4 A No.

5 Q Ingraham? Case?

6 A Case.

7 Q Edson Case?

8 A Edson Case, I believe, is the man with whom I
9 spoke. And the name Ingraham is also -- strikes a bell with
10 me.

11 I spoke to one of those gentlemen. I think it was
12 Mr. Case.

13 Q Do you recall what the purpose of your call was?

14 A Mr. Case in his comments had been again in answering
15 press questions explaining certain hypothetical cases about
16 what might happen, what might be the consequences of such and
17 such event occurred. And that immediately got garbled some-
18 what in the press report away from a hypothetical case that
19 was being explained to a report of something that had happened
20 or was threatening to happen.

21 As I say, I am sorry that my memory is not clear.
22 But the article that appeared was a very, very disturbing
23 article and misleading and confusing. And I called Mr. Case
24 to discuss the circumstances of how that had come about.

25 The reason that I am not clear on this, and I am

1 sorry that I am not, is that the person who handled most of
2 those, who handled this episode mostly, was Gene Eidenberg,
3 not me. And although I am reasonably certain that I myself
4 had a conversation with Mr. Case about it, it is possible
5 that I am remembering reports about the whole situation and
6 conversations that Gene had with Mr. Case.

7 In fact, I believe both of us talked to him. I am
8 sorry I can't be more precise.

9 Q Do you recall what the purpose of the call was or
10 the substance of the call?

11 A One purpose of the call was to get clarification.
12 In reading the newspaper article, implications were there
13 which I thought to be wrong, and I wanted to get clarifica-
14 tion of what in fact Mr. Case had said and why; what was the
15 basis of his information and what was the circumstances of
16 his briefings.

17 So from him I wanted to understand the situation
18 better than I was able to simply by reading the article.

19 A second reason for the call was to caution him
20 about these kinds of speculative hypothetical evaluations;
21 that we were talking about a population up there around this
22 site that was tired and on edge and very worried and that
23 while it was one thing for people to talk about theoretical
24 and hypothetical possibilities down here in relatively little
25 danger; that kind of discussion to people up there was

1 probably not helpful and in fact to the contrary, most
2 unhelpful.

3 And it was a cautionary call. I was trying to
4 impress upon him the effects and the impacts of that kind of
5 talking with the press. And I think he understood, but I
6 can't presume to speak for him.

7 Q Did you suggest to him as you had to Chairman
8 Hendrie that separate press briefings shouldn't be conducted?

9 A I don't recall specifically. I would have been
10 dealing on that subject with the man in charge, who would
11 be Chairman Hendrie. Whether or not I would have mentioned
12 that to Case, I don't recall. My inclination would have
13 been to discuss that matter only with the person whose
14 responsibility it was to make that decision, which would be
15 Hendrie.

16 It is entirely possible, however, that I could have
17 made the suggestion or could have made that comment to Case.
18 I don't recall it specifically.

19 Q Let me ask you this because you are obviously
20 involved in other kinds of crises as well as the White
21 House's representative. In this instance, in this particular
22 crisis, there was a direct-- and obvious effort made to cen-
23 tralize information flow, both to Harold Denton at the site;
24 to refer, as you say, press inquiries concerning matters
25 outside a particular agency's expertise to the White House

1 to coordinate there; and also at Harrisburg with the
2 governor. And people to whom we have talked referred to the
3 agreement of having Harold Denton as the central source in
4 the context -- I understand and it is recognized explicitly
5 that I am characterizing statements that you may not be
6 aware of -- but in the context of other depositions, people
7 have referred to some of these stories, for example like the
8 AP story about the bubble, as being a violation of that
9 agreement; of having Harold Denton the single source at the
10 site.

11 Was there an explicit agreement with anyone con-
12 cerning having him as the single source at the site? Is this
13 something that was pursued from the White House?

14 A Chuck, if by agreement you mean some formalized
15 document that folks sign, of course the answer is "no" to that.
16 If you mean was that the suggestion of the White -- of people
17 in the -- White House such as myself and Jody Powell, that
18 that was the best way to handle the information in order to
19 reduce -- there is no way in this kind of situation that you
20 can eliminate -- all kinds of speculations and rumors and
21 even misinformation. But to reduce those possibilities, that
22 recommendation was made.

23 I think it was a recommendation or I would even use
24 the word "directive" inasmuch as we were dealing with people
25 whom we could direct within the Executive Branch that that

1 is the way it should be handled. And I think that once the
2 concerns that we and the governor had about the situation were
3 understood by people, by and large the situation greatly
4 improved.

5 I think, for example, by Sunday, April 1, the public
6 information process I really believe had gotten better;
7 which is to say -- if I went and read press accounts I might
8 revoke this statement, but my recollection at this moment is
9 -- that by Sunday, April 1, our cautions on these points to
10 the players involved and to the agencies and to the public
11 information officers throughout the government and so forth
12 were really having an effect.

13 And there was in fact fewer rumor and less specula-
14 tion and less comment, gratuitous comment, from this source
15 or that source about the circumstances at the site.

16 Now the best person to ask that question of would
17 be Governor Thornburgh because he was the one bearing the
18 brunt of it all. But I believe that what I have just said
19 is true.

20 Q Was the impetus for this kind of -- when I use the
21 word agreement, I mean an explicit consensus or understanding
22 of how this problem should be handled, meaning having Harold
23 Denton as the single source at the site -- was Governor
24 Thornburgh urging you to take action with respect to that
25 kind of approach to public information?

1 A I don't know that I would characterize it exactly
2 as you have, but he was urging me to do something. Dick
3 Thornburgh and I talked about this subject several times.
4 When something would break on the wire or on some television
5 news story or whatever that was confusing or alarming or
6 that was not squaring with the facts that he had, he would
7 frequently call me either to verify the situation, to see if
8 I had facts that he didn't have, or to complain; to say,
9 "Jack, this is not squaring with the facts. This does not
10 reflect what the situation really is here. And yet this
11 Federal official or that person has said something that is
12 really causing me problems. I am just constantly trying to
13 put out fires here." There would have been that kind of a
14 conversation between Dick Thornburgh and me.

15 So that if you want to call that an urging for me
16 to help him with this problem, then I would agree with your
17 statement that he was doing so. He wasn't asking me to do
18 a particular thing. He was simply calling to my attention
19 as the circumstances warranted the problems he was having
20 and the problems that were being caused by that sort of thing.

21 It has been a long time since I did it, but I
22 remember reading the testimony of Dick Thornburgh to the, I
23 think, the Senate Committee. This is after the event had
24 subsided and people were trying to analyze what had happened
25 there and so forth. And again my memory is not precise on

1 this. But I think he said that the biggest single problem
2 he had was public information, and that the management of the
3 public information process in a situation like this where
4 accurate information is so essential to a proper and orderly
5 handling of the situation, not only for the political leaders
6 involved but for the population affected; that the resolution
7 of that problem was one of his greatest problems.

8 Again, the testimony will speak for itself, but
9 that is how important it was.

10 Q Let me ask you this. This is kind of a perspective
11 question. You are involved in managing other crises or have
12 been, other crises from the White House.

13 A Yes.

14 Q And probably will in the future. Had the centrali-
15 zation of information like this been a technique or a mode
16 of operating in other crises in which you have been involved?

17 A Accurate information is always a premium when lots
18 of people are involved, particularly in a crisis situation.
19 It is always hard to achieve. But I dare say that a nuclear
20 accident presents a unique situation in terms of the level
21 of its uncertainty, the level of the insecurity that is felt
22 by the affected population.

23 The mysteriousness, the mystery, of the process and
24 of the possible consequences of a further failure; those
25 things are in no way like the effects of a tornado which can

1 be, as all of us understand, severe, fatal in fact; but which
2 people understand. And you don't get people speculating on
3 how hard the wind is blowing in a tornado nearly as much as
4 you get people speculating on what is going to happen next
5 in the reactor core.

6 So that you have a situation in a nuclear accident
7 or potential accident or episode which presents, I think,
8 extraordinary challenges to the people managing the process
9 about the flow of public information.

10 I can cite you a lot of other examples. But in
11 a coal strike, there will be misinformation; there will be
12 rumor about what someone has done or not done. When I was
13 managing that coal strike, one of the things that I discovered
14 almost immediately was that I really had to develop a
15 capability to verify or deny rumors about what had happened
16 either in terms of violence for example, or in terms of the
17 effects of the strike on a particular population.

18 Because if I didn't have the capability, the process
19 and the mechanism for verifying or denying the rumor; the
20 rumor almost had a tendency to take on a life of its own
21 immediately. You get one story run, and if you can't put the
22 word out preferably before the story gets run, but if you can't
23 nip it in the bud; if after the story gets run you can come
24 back virtually in the wake of the story and say that is just
25 not the fact, here are the facts, you can manage the situation

1 a lot better.

2 All of those problems are magnified by 100 times
3 or 1000 times in a nuclear accident. That is why this subject
4 becomes so important.

end T5

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1 Q But in the context of natural disasters, for example,
2 you may still have the problem of, for example, Chairman
3 Hendrie's statement earlier on Saturday saying there may be
4 a 20-mile evacuation --

5 A Yes.

6 Q -- and people being concerned about that. And I guess
7 my question is, had this occurred in other crises in which
8 you had been involved in which a structure had been set up for
9 the purpose of centralizing information outside of that core
10 as it expands out to other people who might be commenting
11 officially on the incident, suggesting to them that they cen-
12 tralize their information in that one spot?

13 A Well, in the ordinary disaster situation or emergency
14 situation, as we've discussed much earlier in this deposition,
15 the coordinating agency will be FDAA, Federal Disaster
16 Assistance Administration. That also goes not only for coord-
17 ination of the Federal response, but for the coordination of
18 information about what the Federal Government is doing or not
19 doing.

20 The FDAA also serves as a collection point, for
21 example, of information about what is happening. Let me give
22 you a very recent example. Last weekend, I monitored through
23 what is now the Federal Emergency Management Administration or
24 Agency -- FEMA, F-E-M-A -- I monitored the possible effects
25 of Hurricane David. All right?

1 Now. That is the situation in which there was
2 speculation about where it was going to hit and with what
3 force and who was doing what to prepare for the possible strike
4 of the hurricane, and so forth. The agency which collected
5 all the information from the Federal Weather Bureau and from
6 the state folks who were monitoring the situation for me was
7 FEMA.

8 And the one man that I was talking to about the
9 whole situation over the weekend, just monitoring it to make
10 sure that we were as ready as possible to respond to any
11 impact, was John Macy who is the Administrator -- the Director
12 of FEMA.

13 Now, in that situation -- I'm answering your question,
14 Chuck -- in that situation, John Macy, as the head of FEMA, is
15 a collection and public information point. Because, if I'm
16 called upon to give press comments, I'm gathering information
17 about -- from a variety of sources about the situation through
18 John, usually, rather than trying to gather it from all the
19 disparate sources that there are.

20 But again I say, there is nothing in my experience
21 over the last two and a half years which approaches the diffi-
22 culties about public information that were posed in the
23 Three Mile Island incident.

24 Q You mentioned a call with a Mr. Dieckamp on Saturday.
25 What, generally, were your contacts with the utility?

1 A Only to -- I called Mr. -- as I recall and I believe
2 my memory is correct -- I called Mr. Dieckamp on Saturday
3 morning after my conversation with the President because the
4 President had said that in his conversation earlier that
5 morning with Harold Denton, Dr. Denton had expressed concern
6 about the progress that was being made with respect to the
7 aggregation of experts from all over the country from dif-
8 ferent sources, different companies, private companies and
9 research laboratories and academic institutions, and such,
10 to help analyze the situation.

11 And there were some suggestions to the President
12 by Dr. Denton, as I inferred it from my conversation with the
13 President, that the utility company was simply not moving with
14 the sense of urgency that Dr. Denton felt was appropriate in
15 getting these people collected and available; either collected
16 physically on the site or hooked in by virtue of their computer
17 information centers, and so forth, from around the country.

18 The President asked if I would call Mr. Dieckamp and
19 discuss the situation with him. Or, the President may have
20 asked me if I would do something to get that problem resolved
21 if I could. I think that he specifically suggested that I
22 call Mr. Dieckamp, but he might not have.

23 In any event, that's what I did. I expressed the
24 concern to Mr. Dieckamp. I underscored the sense of urgency
25 that Harold Denton felt and asked for the company's cooperation

1 in getting those people assembled as quickly as possible.
2 Mr. Dieckamp pledged his fullest support for his company to
3 get that done. And, in fact, it was done quickly.

4 The second conversation I had with him was the one
5 I had already described.

6 Q To this point, there was some contact, as I have
7 heard anyway, from the White House concerning the Hershey
8 chocolate problem. And to jog your memory, if you have any
9 memory on this at all, Hershey was having trouble with a
10 potential competitor saying that Hershey's products had been
11 affected by the Three Mile Island incident.

12 And the White House was involved in assisting
13 Hershey with putting out a statement to the effect that, indeed,
14 it wasn't. Were you involved in that at all?

15 A I was not nor do I know anything about it. But I
16 like Hershey bars with almonds. And I wish I had one.

17 (Laughter)

18 Q Let me show you what I have marked as Deposition
19 Exhibit number 8 which is a memorandum from you --

20 A Yes.

21 Q -- to Governor Thorburgh, attaching a recommenda-
22 tion to the Secretary of HEW concerning potassium iodide.

23 A Yes.
24
25

1 (Whereupon, the document re-
2 ferred to, was marked for
3 identification as Deposition
4 Exhibit 8.)

5 BY MR. HARVEY

6 Q What was the involvement of your office on the
7 potassium iodide issue?

8 A Well, it was multiple. We were instrumental in
9 getting potassium iodide packaged and delivered to the site
10 in accordance with the requests that were being made out of
11 the Department of HEW. That was one involvement we had. We
12 were instrumental, as is apparent from Watson Deposition
13 Exhibit number 8, in transmitting to the Governor some infor-
14 mation that he had requested from Secretary Califano about
15 the use of the actual administration of doses of potassium
16 iodide.

17 The memorandum that I sent to the Governor on the
18 afternoon of April 3 attached the memorandum from Secretary
19 Califano and an attached memorandum from the Surgeon General
20 to the Secretary of HEW on that subject. I got that memo-
21 randum, this document would indicate, on the afternoon of
22 April 3rd at 1:17 p.m.

23 And my memorandum to the Governor, attaching the
24 two memoranda, went out at 2:28 that same afternoon; 2:28 p.m.
25 That was virtually all I did on this.

1 Q Do you know how the Secretary's recommendations
2 concerning potassium iodide became public?

3 A I do not. I know that they did. But I do not know
4 how.

5 Q During the period of time in which you were coord-
6 inating the Federal response, were you aware of IRAP, the
7 Interagency Radiological Assistance Plan?

8 A I was not until after the fact. I was not aware of
9 IRAP until -- I think until I -- about the time I was pre-
10 paring and then sending the memorandum on the environmental
11 monitoring which would have gone out on --

12 Q The 13th?

13 A -- the 13th of April. To the best of my recollec-
14 tion, it was about that time. Somewhere around the 11th or
15 12th I became aware of IRAP. Before that time, it was not
16 mentioned to me that I recall.

17 Q One question I had wanted to ask you because of
18 your role in court and in Federal agencies is -- I might just
19 characterize IRAP as being, I guess in part, what its name
20 implies which is an interagency plan for assisting states in
21 radiological emergencies and response to radiological incidents
22 and allocate certain roles to various agencies in response
23 to this kind of incident -- I would be interested in your view
24 of the role of this kind of preplanning for this kind of
25 incident based on your experience with this incident and

1 putting together I guess what we could characterize as an
2 ad hoc interagency task force. Is that a fair characterization?

3 A Yes.

4 Q Whether, as a result of having gone through this
5 and the obvious interest in problems of nuclear power, what
6 your view would be on the preplanning that could be done or
7 should be done to coordinate the roles of Federal agencies as
8 they interface with the state in responding to this kind of
9 an incident?

10 A Chuck, I think your question is more than one level.
11 If the question is do I believe in planning for anticipated
12 necessary responses to a nuclear accident, whether it involves
13 radiological testing and monitoring or the setting into effect
14 of better evacuation plans, or whatever, the answer to that
15 question is an unequivocal yes. I do believe in that kind of
16 planning.

17 And, as a matter of fact, in some areas, particu-
18 larly on the evacuation side, I think we can do a better job
19 and need to do a better job specifically with regard to the
20 populations that are around nuclear sites.

21 If you mean -- if you're asking me to comment on
22 the effectiveness of IRAP in this situation or in similar
23 situations, I'm not competent to do that. I do not know and
24 cannot assess the quality of IRAP's planning, number one. And
25 number two, I have no information which would enable me to

1 report to you whether or not IRAP's planning made a difference
2 in the Three Mile Island situation.

3 Other people who are more knowledgeable on that
4 subject would have to answer it. Third, if you're asking or
5 implying a question of whether I think you can absolutely
6 cover every base in planning for these kinds of emergencies
7 or crises and have something that's preexisting, prestructured
8 that would work in every situation, my answer to that question
9 is no.

10 I think, to some extent, there is -- there has to
11 be, needs to be even, an ad hoc flexible response; a flexible
12 response capability to the particular circumstances of a
13 particular episode that you simply cannot institutionally
14 anticipate.

15 I think flexibility in this kind of a situation is
16 one of the primary virtues. It's something that is to be
17 desired. When the President created the Federal Emergency
18 Management Agency under reorganization legislation, in effect,
19 what he was seeking to do was to create an institution and
20 a process which would pull together more of the resources of
21 the Federal Government that are necessary to deal with in
22 emergency or crisis situations.

23 I supported that legislation. And I think that,
24 though it's too early to tell what beneficial effects it will
25 have, that it will have them. At the same time, I also believe

1 that depending upon the nature and the degree of the crisis,
2 there will inevitably be, from time to time, necessity for
3 an ad hoc White House or Presidential presence whether you
4 have FEMA, whether you have plans that have been laid on
5 that have been very well done and that are capable of being
6 executed, and so forth.

7 Q Maybe I can focus my question a little more. Having
8 gone through this experience, if you were going to sit down
9 and write a plan for responding to radiological emergencies,
10 are there particular points that occurred to you as you were
11 going through this on reflection that if you were to sit down
12 now and start drafting the elements of that kind of plan as
13 a result of your experience in this and in other disasters
14 you would say "I want to make sure I have that kind of a
15 provision"?

16 A I don't mean to suggest by my answer, by the answer
17 I'm about to give, that I think we did everything right or
18 that I would do everything the same way again under the same
19 circumstances. However, I was extremely pleased with the
20 capability of the Federal Government, agency by agency, to
21 respond.

22 I was pleased with the quickness with which the
23 relevant agencies reacted both to the crisis, itself, as
24 we were discussing earlier, on their own initiative, and in
25 reacting to requests for help or suggestions for assistance,

1 or whatever, from me as the President's spokesperson.

2 There's not a lot that I think could have been done
3 better in terms of pulling all the resources and the assets
4 together. I think that FEMA, as I've just discussed, will
5 make the process a little bit easier only because it's got
6 some agencies inside it that previously were scattered a bit
7 in other agencies of government.

8 But again, I would frankly say that I did not find
9 the separate placement of those agencies in the Department of
10 Defense, or wherever they were to be found, to be a great
11 problem in this situation or in previous situations.

12 Q You mean DCPA, FPA?

13 A Yes. Exactly. I mean, I did not find that to be
14 an obstacle to be negotiated around or over, or something.
15 I mean, I think that FEMA will help. I think that it, perhaps,
16 will make response times somewhat better. But, again, frankly,
17 I did not really ever have any problem with that in dealing
18 with those agencies where they were to be found before the
19 reorganization.

20 I'm not prepared right now, nor would I therefore
21 start giving advice on the subject, to write that plan that
22 you're asking me to write, verbally. But I would simply make
23 this one observation.

24 Q I'm not asking you to write the plan. I'm just
25 asking you if there's anything that -- if someone, if I were

1 to tell you that I were writing a plan, and I'm not suggesting
2 that I am, but is there something that you think should be
3 an element?

4 A Yes. I'm not prepared to flesh it out right now.
5 But one area in which I think a great deal of attention needs
6 to be focused is the preparation of an anticipatory and
7 alternative, of course, evacuation plans for the populations
8 around nuclear reactor sites.

9 I realize that that is a very sensitive subject.
10 But I believe it is accurate to say -- I'm not a scientist
11 in this area, I'm not a scientist in any respect; so this is
12 not a scientifically formed judgment -- but I think that it's
13 fair to say that the possibilities of risk to a population
14 are greater for the populations that are in the immediate
15 vicinity of a reactor site than they are for those that are
16 not.

17 That is certainly true with respect to nuclear risk,
18 nuclear reactor risk. And therefore, on the basis of that
19 alone, I would be disposed to insist that there -- that for
20 those populations, more planning be done and more preparation
21 of the population, itself, and of the governments -- the county
22 governments, the city governments, state governments -- be
23 done to anticipate a possible formula.

24 It is entirely possible and, in fact, highly prob-
25 able that those plans would never be triggered as was pointed

1 out to me in the course of this episode. This country has
2 experienced 500 years, reactor years, of nuclear plants in
3 the domestic USA without serious nuclear incident. And that's
4 very impressive. And that's a record we want to extend and
5 expand.

6 Nevertheless, I think when you do that kind of
7 planning -- and I would, for one, urge that consideration of
8 exactly what kind of planning be done in that area be sug-
9 gested by the Commission.

10 Q You will be happy to hear that I'm wrapping this
11 up. One other question I had is that in putting together a
12 task force of Federal agencies, different Federal agencies,
13 agencies like FEMA and FPA and DCPA when they were in dif-
14 ferent organizations, they at least had the same orientation.

15 The subject matter of their concern was the same
16 within a broad spectrum. But in this kind of an agency task
17 force or an interagency task force you have, for example,
18 physicians from HEW, health physicists from the EPA and
19 Defense people, the Emergency Preparedness people, and so forth.

20 And each of those agencies seems to bring with it
21 its own institutional concern or institutional orientation,
22 a kind of a bias or, I guess, concern is a better word, of
23 what kinds of issues are important and how those issues should
24 be resolved.

25 Do you agree that agencies have that kind of

1 personality to them?

2 A I do.

3 Q When putting there this kind of a task force, what
4 consideration did you give or have you given in the past to
5 using those biases in a constructive way to achieve a particu-
6 lar result? In other words, cross-pollination among agencies?

7 A That is precisely what I was trying to do in this
8 episode. That is precisely why I thought it was a good idea
9 to place HEW health-oriented personnel at the NRC operations
10 center to evaluate, side by side, the data that were coming
11 in from their different perspectives. I think I might use
12 perspective more than I would use bias. But bias is not an
13 unfair word.

14 I think that the environmental monitoring approaches
15 and concerns and preferences and priorities of the Environmental
16 Protection Agency differ somewhat from those of the Department
17 of Energy; sometimes in significant ways, sometimes in totally
18 inconsequential ways.

19 And think that one of the responsibilities of
20 the decision-makers in any process such as this is to see to
21 it that they are getting those cross-pollinated views, per-
22 spectives, pieces of information, pieces of advice and that
23 they are getting it in an orderly way and in a timely way
24 because good information too late does not help.

25 I said a few minutes ago that I don't think that

1 you can create ahead of the crisis exactly the right insti-
2 tutional mix or institutional structure for every emergency
3 and crisis situation. I believe that. I stand on that
4 statement.

5 I think that the manager, the decision-maker, the
6 person responsible however he or she is called or designated,
7 whether it's the governor of a state or a Presidential
8 assistant, or whomever, has to come to the table quickly and
9 on the basis of the best advice available see what institu-
10 tional mix is most appropriate and most helpful. And then
11 create that mix immediately and set into motion processes
12 that will help that mix work.

13 In those cases where the institutional preferences
14 or biases, to use your word, collide or dictate different
15 results, then the decision-maker must resolve the matter.

16 Q Did you have that problem in this incident?

17 A Not really. That was not a serious problem. An
18 example of that kind of preference or bias would be the
19 Califano memorandum to me in which he was recommending -- and
20 I won't characterize his words precisely -- but he was
21 recommending that I get assurances from the NRC that the
22 reactor was cooling and that there were no risks in effect.

23 And, that failing the giving of those assurances
24 that I consider recommending an evacuation, immediate evacuation
25 to the Governor. Well, that was a perfectly legitimate kind

1 of memorandum for the Secretary of HEW to write. It is not --
2 and as I said earlier in this deposition, I will not reiterate
3 it, I followed his advice. I followed the very process that
4 he asked me to follow.

5 But it was my judgment that the situation was simply
6 not one in which anyone, the NRC or anyone else, could give
7 absolute assurances that there was no risk. Because, in fact,
8 the situation was not that way. So it was gray; it was
9 not black and white. It was not all risk or no risk.

10 And I, among others, had to go to Harold Denton and
11 say, understanding that there are tradeoffs to be made and
12 balances to be struck and judgments to be made, do we evacuate?
13 Do we recommend an evacuation now or not? And that's precisely
14 the process that was working when I received that Califano
15 memorandum.

16 And there's no way you can avoid the responsibility
17 for that kind of decision. You simply must do everything you
18 can to make sure that the information you're getting is
19 accurate. But the advice you're seeking is well-founded and
20 coming from people who know their subjects, even though they
21 may be coming from different perspectives.

22 And then, you must make your decision and you must
23 bear the consequences of your decision.

24 Q In the context of this particular incident, as of
25 Friday morning, the only two agencies on site and heavily

1 involved from the Federal Government point of view were the
2 Department of Energy and the NRC who both are obviously closely
3 associated with nuclear power both in fact and in the mind
4 of the public.

5 Was there any consideration given to bringing in
6 particular agencies or other agencies in particular roles to
7 balance what might be a perception of nuclear-oriented agencies
8 working on a nuclear problem?

9 A Well, in point of fact, Chuck, EPA was dispatched --
10 I can't give you a precise time but the record will disclose
11 it -- was dispatched immediately to Harrisburg into the
12 Three Mile Island site to begin immediately doing its own
13 environmental monitoring, and so forth.

14 And I do recall specifically that we had EPA planes
15 coming in from various places to do that. I think that was
16 occurring as early as Friday. When we began to convene the
17 agencies on site in Harrisburg, which of course began on
18 Friday, to be coordinated by Adamcik, those agencies included
19 HEW and a wide range of others.

20 So that the presence of different agencies was
21 being brought to bear and giving the agencies an opportunity
22 to raise their hand, if you will, figuratively, and say, I
23 think this needs to be done differently, or whatever. One of
24 the things that I would call specifically was, again, getting
25 to Three Mile Island and to Harrisburg people from the Center

1 for Disease Control out of Atlanta, not only to start doing
2 their -- to start helping train people to react to health
3 problems and health monitoring problems but, obviously,
4 bringing those kinds of professionals in from another agency
5 with another perspective, putting them on site, giving them
6 an opportunity to be exposed to the situation and to comment
7 on it.

8 So that, I think we were doing what your question
9 suggests. I don't think that it would be particularly
10 appropriate, although I would have to think about this more
11 before I gave an informed answer, to put the Surgeon General
12 of the United States, the Assistant Secretary for Health in
13 HEW and the Surgeon General, who is one and the same person,
14 side by side with Harold Denton at the reactor site to consult
15 with Harold Denton to make what are overwhelmingly technical
16 and technological assessments of the reactor core.

17 I mean, I think that would not be wise.

18 Q I am aware that, to some extent, there was movement
19 by other agencies toward the incident, certainly as of
20 Friday morning. After the Friday morning flare-up occurred
21 and the incident became a lot more prominent than it had been
22 the previous two days, there was a movement of Federal
23 agencies toward the incident before the White House came in
24 to coordinate the Federal activities.

25 A Right.

1 Q I guess what I'm asking is that given that movement,
2 was there any directive or decision that you made during the
3 course of this incident to move one particular agency into
4 one particular position or to do a particular task because of
5 its institutional orientation or concern and trying to balance
6 it off against another agency?

7 Do you recall any instances?

8 A No. Not if I understand your question correctly.
9 I do not. The circumstance your question seems to be describing
10 is the choice I made on the 13th of April to give the lead
11 on environmental monitoring to EPA for reasons that I thought
12 were sufficient.

13 Q No, no. I wasn't inquiring to that.

14 A I didn't think you were. I can't think of a situation
15 in what we might call an acute crisis stage, the 96-hour
16 period from Friday noon on the 30th forward where I was con-
17 sciously doing that. Particularly in the Saturday meeting
18 where I had expanded the group to include others, HEW, EPA
19 and some others, I was, of course, seeking to bring in other
20 perspectives and to have them tested against the perspectives
21 of the people who had already been at the meeting on Friday.

22 But, we've discussed all that fully. And I don't
23 have anything to add.

End Tape 6

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BEGIN TAPE

7 1

Q There was one instance, throughout the incident CBS News was making a documentary on the incident as a whole and Federal agencies were requested to cooperate with CBS News in making that documentary. What was the genesis of the request that they cooperate and the reason behind it?

7 A Jody Powell called me and said that CBS had requested some time with me just to film what we were doing for purposes of making a documentary of it for the record and did --I think that would interfere with our activities--would I object to their being present to film some of the things we were doing and would I object to giving them a brief interview on the matter?

15 I said no to both questions. I would not object to either. I did not think that it would interfere and I would be happy to give them a few minutes of an interview, which I did.

19 I don't recall anything more about it. I don't recall--I know I myself did not make any requests to agencies to be cooperative, but I am sure they were probably made by the Press Office.

23 I don't know any more about it than that. No other requests of that nature were made of me either directly by media or by Jody.

1 MR. HARVEY: Do you have any questions?

2 MR. HURON: I have one question. There was a
3 question earlier about DoD's press briefing on lead
4 bricks and I wonder if you recall whether the concern
5 at the time was whether defense had confirmed that it
6 was flying in bricks on one hand, or whether defense
7 was speculating on what type of cooperations within the
8 plant would require the use for lead bricks, on the other
9 hand.

10 THE WITNESS: As I said, when I was asked that
11 question, I do not recall the circumstances which caused
12 me to use that illustraiton. I suspect, though it is
13 pure suspician that is subject to checking with the press
14 report, that the person in the Defense Department was
15 speculating about how the bricks were to be used rather
16 than simply reporting the fact of their delivery.

17 However, I do not recall that specifically.

18 MR. HURON: Okay, that is all.

19 MR. HARVEY: Thank you very much.

20 END OF 7. (Whereupon, at 5:01 p.m. o'clock, the
21 deposition was recessed).
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REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

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2
3
4 DOCKET NUMBER:

5 CASE TITLE: Deposition of Jack Watson

6 HEARING DATE: Sept. 6, 1979

7 LOCATION: Washington, D.C.
8

9 I hereby certify that the proceedings and evidence
10 herein are contained fully and accurately in the notes
11 taken by me at the hearing in the above case before the
12 President's Commission on the Accident at Three Mile Island
13 and that this is a true and correct transcript of the
14 same.
15
16

17 Date: Sept. 7, 1979

18 Margorie Bush
19

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