

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON
March 31, 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM:

JACK WATSON *Jack*

SUBJECT:

Status Report -- Three Mile Island
Nuclear Regulatory Report #3

Since my report earlier today, the following developments have occurred:

- (1) I met with the working group representing all appropriate federal agencies for two hours this afternoon.
 - The status of contingency planning for a possible evacuation is satisfactory. We are staying in close and constant touch with the work being done at the state and local levels, and the federal support mechanisms are all coming into place. DOD has appropriate logistical support units on alert. The Red Cross is moving some material into position, and FEMA is coordinating the federal activities in the field.
 - I asked the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (through Commissioners Gillinsky and Bradford who attended the meeting this afternoon) to develop (a) the criteria to be used in determining whether a precautionary evacuation is indicated; and (b) the nature and extent of such an evacuation in light of likely radiation dispersal patterns, anticipated wind direction and velocities, etc.
 - It is clear that the major discretionary decision the Governor and we will face in the next 2 - 3 days is whether to evacuate, as a precaution, before intervening at the reactor site to plug the hydrogen bubble. Current estimates indicate that every intervention option under consideration carries risks to the public health and safety.

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- (2) I have briefed Harold Denton on our contingency planning and have good communications with, and support from, DOE.
- (3) The story which was on the wire tonight based on various named and unnamed sources from the NRC Operations Center in Bethesda has seriously raised public anxiety levels in Pennsylvania. I immediately talked to the Governor about the story who was very concerned about its effects on an already anxious population in the vicinity of the site. Harold Denton briefed the press in Harrisburg in an effort to allay fears and clarify the situation.
- I also talked tonight with Chairman Hendrie and Commissioner Galinsky of the NRC and asked that they tighten and improve control of the NRC public information process out of Washington.
 - I also spoke tonight with Herman Dieckamp, President of General Public Utilities Company, and suggested that the Company discontinue its separate press briefings on the situation at the site, leaving that responsibility to Harold Denton. He agreed to do so.
 - I have alerted the Governor to your planned site visit. He was most gracious and will work to make your visit productive. I said that I would be back in touch with him tomorrow to keep him fully advised of our plans for such a visit.

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