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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20565

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MAY 29 1992

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Chairman
Commissioner Rogers
Commissioner Curtiss
Commissioner Remick
Commissioner de Planque

FROM: Harold R. Denton, Director *HR Denton*
Office of International Programs

SUBJECT: STAFF REQUIREMENTS MEMORANDUM M920422 - FOLLOW-UP TO THE BRIEFING ON NRC ACTIVITIES REGARDING NUCLEAR SAFETY AND SAFEGUARDS IN THE FORMER SOVIET UNION AND EASTERN EUROPE 10:00 A.M., WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 1992, COMMISSIONERS' CONFERENCE ROOM, ONE WHITE FLINT NORTH, ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND (OPEN TO PUBLIC ATTENDANCE)

This memorandum responds to the staff requirements memorandum M920422 in which the Commission requested further information in three specific areas discussed below.

- (1) How has the break-up of the Soviet Union affected their participation in WANO?

To date there has been no perceived effect on participation in WANO by the former USSR republics due to the break-up of the Soviet Union. WANO is an association for the exchange of information among nuclear operators, and is not government-owned. The Moscow Center has traditionally involved utilities from several countries, and the disintegration of the USSR has devolved into WANO memberships for the relevant republics. Among other continuing activities, WANO will hold an inter-regional workshop in late May in the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic (CSFR) and a number of WANO-sponsored visits are taking place in May at several reactor sites throughout the former Soviet Union, including Lithuania.

- (2) What is the current status of the nuclear power plants being constructed in Cuba?

Classified information on this topic has been provided to the Commission through NRC security channels. In addition, the Department of State said that the external building of Unit 1 of the Juragua complex is essentially complete although construction is at a virtual standstill, and that approximately 150 Russian technicians are still on site. Also, at the May 6, 1992 hearing of the Senate Subcommittee on Nuclear Regulation, Russian legislators testified that Cuba had been officially informed that Russia would not provide continuing support for the Juragua nuclear power

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plants unless Russia was paid in hard currency. Negotiations between Cuba and Russia are proceeding, and Cuba has contacted other countries, although not the U.S., for construction, technical, and safety assistance.

- (3) What is the NRC doing to encourage, and assist in, establishing or strengthening nuclear regulatory bodies and processes in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe?

As noted in the staff briefings for the Commission on March 31 and April 22, 1992, the NRC has actively helped Eastern Europe and the FSU to strengthen their nuclear regulatory bodies.

In Eastern Europe the NRC has nuclear safety agreements with the regulatory authorities of the CSFR and Hungary, which include activities aimed at assisting these countries to strengthen their regulatory organizations. This was discussed during the CSFR/Hungarian/NRC meetings in December, and an NRC delegation, including representatives from OGC and NRR, will travel to Prague and Budapest in June for discussions on a range of regulatory issues. Additionally, NRC has invited the Chairman of Bulgaria's regulatory agency to visit Washington for the purpose of exploring specific areas in which NRC can offer assistance. USAID has made funding available to pay the expenses for Eastern European regulatory officials to come to the U.S. for technical discussions and training.

Since the breakup of the USSR, NRC, through the mechanism of the JCCCNRS, has sought to ensure that the results of our efforts to strengthen the then-central regulatory body are carried forward to help establish and improve the new nuclear regulatory bodies in the individual republics, especially Russia and Ukraine. In this connection, NRC has transferred virtually all relevant regulatory documentation to the Russian and Ukrainian regulatory bodies. The latest Working Group 1 meeting which was concluded in May, concentrated in part on NRC legal comments on the nuclear legislation being proposed in the two republics' Supreme Soviets, which would legitimize the independence of their respective regulatory bodies. NRC personnel have made a number of high-level contacts in both organizations, and there is a strong willingness to regulate in a way similar to that in the U.S. However, the absence of financial backing by the respective countries is a substantial inhibition on the effectiveness of these bodies.

In addition to the above, the NRC staff has worked to ensure that improvement of nuclear safety regulation is a key element of the international action program being developed to assist the FSU and EE to improve the safety of their nuclear power programs.

cc: SECY
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