



UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555

PDR

June 19, 1984

50-289

Mr. Gene Roberts  
Executive Editor  
The Philadelphia Inquirer  
400 N. Broad Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19101

Dear Mr. Roberts:

The Inquirer's reporting of the recently-released transcripts of closed Commission meetings on the restart of Three Mile Island Unit 1 fails to treat fairly and objectively our deliberations on this important matter.

Selecting isolated quotations from individual Commissioners over two and a half years of meetings in an effort to show that there was a "disdain" for the public's views ignores the fact that approximately 130 days of public hearings were held by an NRC Licensing Board in the Harrisburg area and that several hundred members of the public made limited appearance statements. It also ignores the fact that five Commissioners held a public meeting at Harrisburg, and that I personally found it most helpful to hear the views -- both pro and con -- of the citizens.

No single issue has taken more of my time and occupied more of my thoughts than the difficult decision of whether TMI-1 should be allowed to restart. After all of that, reading Edwin Guthman's simplistic charge on your June 17, 1984 Op Ed page that my work, and that of the other dedicated Commissioners as well, "is a classic example of blind stupidity or invincible ignorance" was very discouraging. This kind of rhetoric does nothing to help resolve the complex problem of whether or not the undamaged reactor should be allowed to resume producing electricity for the people of Pennsylvania.

It is important to understand the issue before us. As I said at the 1982 public meeting in Harrisburg, our task is to ascertain whether or not the conditions remain which prompted the Commission to issue the 1979 immediate shutdown order for TMI-1. If we find that the specified actions have been satisfactorily completed and that our concerns have been adequately resolved, we must by law allow the plant to operate. This is no simple matter. It has been complicated by the Federal indictment of

Metropolitan Edison Company and by a number of NRC investigations into various allegations.

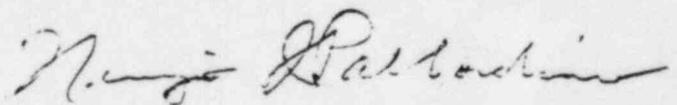
I had hoped that we could reach a decision while Commissioner Victor Gilinsky was still on the Commission, for he is the only present Commissioner who was here at the time of the 1979 accident at TMI-2. However, I recently voted to extend the comment period for parties to address the management issue beyond the June 30 expiration date of Mr. Gilinsky's term because I believed that fairness to the parties called for giving them some more time.

I do not know when the Commission will be able to reach a decision. But when that time comes I assure you that my fellow Commissioners and I will weigh the issues most carefully, with public safety receiving paramount consideration. To do otherwise would constitute a violation of our responsibility and would be an injustice to the citizens of Pennsylvania.

Finally, rather than criticizing the Commission unfairly, it might be constructive for The Inquirer to support my past calls for a concerted effort to get the damaged TMI-2 reactor cleaned up on as prompt a schedule as possible. The expeditious cleanup of Unit 2 is a great concern to me, as I am sure it is to Governor Thornburgh and other officials and citizens of Pennsylvania. It is high time that the necessary funding be made available, either by the nuclear industry or by the Government, to get the job completed.

It also would be helpful for The Inquirer to cool the rhetoric and discuss the issues at Three Mile Island in an objective way.

Sincerely



Nunzio J. Palladino  
Chairman