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POLICY ISSUE (Information)

February 18, 1999

SECY-99-051

FOR: The Commissioners

FROM: Janice Dunn Lee, Acting Director
Office of International Programs

SUBJECT: STATUS OF IAEA OPERATIONAL SAFETY REVIEW TEAM (OSART)
MISSION TO BE CONDUCTED AT THE NORTH ANNA NPP

PURPOSE:

To inform the Commission of the status of preparations for an IAEA OSART Mission to the North Anna Nuclear Power Plant early next year.

BACKGROUND:

In SECY-98-116, OIP informed the Commission of plans to invite the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to send an Operational Safety Review Team (OSART) to a U.S. nuclear power plant. The OSART missions offer a means, outside the normal NRC regulatory process, of improving licensee performance and of reinforcing plant self-assessments through an independent assessment process. OSARTs focus on the safety and reliability of plant operation. They review the operation of the plant and the performance of the plant's management and staff rather than the adequacy of a plant's design. The U.S. has previously hosted three OSARTs: Calvert Cliffs in 1987, Byron in 1989, and Grand Gulf in 1992.

DISCUSSION:

NRC staff and management met with Jose Diaz Francisco and Ken Talbot of the IAEA on February 3 at headquarters to discuss preparations for the upcoming OSART mission to the North Anna nuclear power plant. During the Preparatory Meeting, NRC and IAEA discussed

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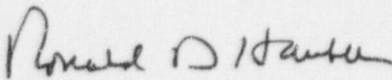
matters relating to scheduling of the OSART, final report preparation and release, media coverage and financial arrangements. NRC and IAEA staff also discussed the appropriate role of the regulator in an OSART, and team and observer composition. Consideration is currently being given to including observers from China, Mexico and Russia, and a mission member from South Africa. IAEA staff noted that the NRC (most likely the Resident Inspector at North Anna) would be briefed at least twice during the course of the three-week OSART mission. NRC staff also gave a brief overview of NRC organizational and regulatory structure and its interface with licensees.

On February 4 and 5, meetings took place at North Anna with the IAEA staff members and North Anna management and staff. The IAEA provided an overview of the structure of an OSART mission and what the plant might expect. North Anna management, in turn, provided an overview of the plant's technical specifications and areas of interest. The visit concluded

with a plant tour and debriefing by the IAEA. There was agreement on January 24 - February 10, 2000, as the dates for the OSART mission. The team will likely consist of 14 team members, composed of team leader, assistant team leader, 9 operational safety reviewers and 3 observers.

A financial MOU between the NRC and IAEA is in preparation to clearly delineate all costs for which NRC will be responsible during the OSART. Funding is currently included in the FY2000 budget. OIP will coordinate with North Anna regarding possible press releases before, during and after the completion of the mission. North Anna staff will draw up an advance information package which contains details about the plant and other relevant information for use by the OSART team members.

OIP will continue to keep the Commission informed as Mission details continue to develop.


for Janice Dunn Lee, Acting Director
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