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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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RIC 2014

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26th ANNUAL REGULATORY INFORMATION CONFERENCE

COMMISSIONER KRISTINE SVINICKI PLENARY

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TUESDAY

MARCH 11, 2014

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The Regulatory Information Conference convened in the Grand Ballroom of the Marriott Bethesda North, 5701 Marinelli Road, Rockville, Maryland, at 10:30 a.m., Eric Leeds, NRR Director, moderator.

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P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

(10:30 a.m.)

1
2
3 MR. LEEDS: Welcome back, everyone. I
4 would like to introduce to you Commissioner Kristine
5 Svinicki. Commissioner Svinicki was sworn in for a
6 second term as a Commissioner on the U.S. Nuclear
7 Regulatory Commission on June 29, 2012. Her first term
8 began in March of 2008. She came to the Commission from
9 a position on the staff of the Senate Armed Services
10 Committee, where she worked on issues such as nuclear
11 defense programs, nuclear security, and environmental
12 management.

13 Prior to her work in the Senate, Commissioner
14 Svinicki worked as a nuclear engineer in various
15 positions within the U.S. Department of Energy, both
16 in Washington, D.C. and in Idaho. Before that, she was
17 an energy engineer for the Wisconsin Public Service
18 Commission.

19 Please join me in welcoming Commissioner
20 Svinicki.

21 (Applause.)

22 COMMISSIONER SVINICKI: Good morning.
23 Thank you, Eric, for that introduction. I'm very
24 pleased to take part in this year's Regulatory
25 Information Conference. Thank you to each of you for

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1 attending this session, and also to those of you tuning
2 in to our webcast. Again, these plenary sessions are
3 all webcast.

4 I want to add my thanks to that of other
5 speakers and Chairman Macfarlane to all of the many NRC
6 employees who make the conference possible. As I note
7 each year that I come up here, the success of this event
8 is fueled by their hard work and dedication, both of
9 the NRR and Research staff, and then the many NRC
10 volunteers. And it is why it is a successful
11 conference every year.

12 I would also like to acknowledge our many
13 colleagues in attendance joining us from across the
14 country and around the world. Thank you for traveling
15 the distances required to join us here today.

16 To those of you who have welcomed me into your
17 power plants and other facilities at home and abroad
18 over the course of the year, I want to thank you for
19 adding to my journey of continuous learning and for
20 sharing your experiences with me. I find such
21 opportunities invaluable.

22 I would also like to acknowledge the presence
23 of our important partners from other federal and state
24 agencies. NRC's many critical relationships with
25 other government entities are essential to the

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1 accomplishment of our mission. Thank you for taking
2 the time to be here and in some cases for agreeing to
3 speak in one of our technical breakout sessions.

4 In addition, as I have done in years past,
5 I would like to acknowledge the presence of some of the
6 members of our Advisory Committee on Reactor
7 Safeguards, as well as the Advisory Committee on the
8 Medical Uses of Isotopes. I want to thank the members
9 who are present and all members of both of those
10 committees for their input and their technical
11 contributions to the Commission's deliberations on
12 many complex matters, not only this year but over the
13 years on which I've served on this Commission.

14 I would also like to raise to your attention
15 the presence here of some of our legal and technical
16 administrative judges of the NRC's Atomic Safety and
17 Licensing Board Panel, and to take this opportunity to
18 mourn the passing of a long-serving member of that body,
19 Dr. Kenneth Mossman. While serving on the Licensing
20 Board Panel, Dr. Mossman was nominated by President
21 Obama to a term of service on the Defense Nuclear
22 Facilities Safety Board.

23 Having patiently waited through the
24 confirmation process, however, in what was shocking
25 news to his colleagues and friends, Ken passed away

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1 unexpectedly only weeks after being sworn in as a board
2 member. Ken's work to me was a living expression of
3 the precept of service before self. All of us who knew
4 him, including the many students that he mentored over
5 the years, remember him fondly and are saddened by his
6 passing.

7 Finally, I want to acknowledge the members
8 of my own staff who are here today and thank them for
9 their contributions to the work I do each day.

10 Now, as I have commented in years past, I
11 struggle with preparing remarks for this conference,
12 and I have tried to explain to people why it's difficult
13 and they don't -- it is counterintuitive, I
14 acknowledge, but because the topic area is so general,
15 it is actually a little bit more daunting. At many of
16 the technical conferences that I appear, I am assigned
17 a much narrower topic, and I think it is easier to assess
18 what would be of use to the audience because there is
19 a much clearer technical purpose for which they have
20 gathered.

21 So I must say, this is my sixth RIC speech.
22 I know if you're doing the mathematics, Eric just stated
23 that I came in March of 2008, but I really didn't want
24 to get sworn in and two days later have to go a RIC
25 speech, so I waited, I think very wisely, until the end

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1 of the month to be -- arrive as an NRC Commissioner.

2 So I was thinking creatively to myself that
3 if the difficulty that I had this year is any gauge,
4 if I get up to RIC speeches like eight, nine, and ten,
5 I was joking with myself, you know, what possibly could
6 I do? And I was thinking I could maybe play the violin
7 or I could do an interpretive dance of the 10 CFR.

8 (Laughter.)

9 That was a thought I had, neither of
10 which -- or it could be an interpretive dance to
11 Commissioner Apostolakis' favorite NUREG. We could
12 ask him what NUREG he would like interpreted through
13 movement.

14 (Laughter.)

15 But none of those things would be very
16 pretty, so I hope it doesn't come to that.

17 Now, I'm told that Commissioner McGaffigan,
18 perhaps as he progressed through the later years of his
19 service on the Commission -- and he was the
20 longest-serving member of the Commission, if I have the
21 history right -- he would sometimes pen his remarks for
22 this conference on a notepad as he sat listening to the
23 presenters who came before him.

24 And people who know us both have made
25 comparisons between our work styles, which is very

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1 flattering to me and probably a profound injustice to
2 Commissioner McGaffigan. But I really would just
3 laugh. That's a very nervy thing, to be able to go,
4 "Oh, I'm just going to write some notes down and go up
5 there."

6 I wish you all could see the view from up
7 here. It is really impressive to have this many of you
8 come these distances to be a part of this conference,
9 but -- so I cut it a little bit close this year. I am
10 not all the way to the McGaffigan style. I wasn't
11 penning it as Allison was talking earlier, but I do -- I
12 have had all my life a little bit of a difficulty with
13 procrastination.

14 I do -- maybe I'm -- people who procrastinate
15 say, "I'm just one of those people, you know. Really,
16 I'm good under the crunch time and in a pressure
17 cooker." But one of my favorite monologues about
18 procrastination came from the comedian Ellen
19 DeGeneres, and I've talked about her humor other times.
20 I think she has really got a wonderful sense of humor.

21 But she described in a standup act she had
22 one time about that feeling you get when you sit at your
23 computer, you know you need to work on writing a
24 creative work product, and the sudden irresistible urge
25 you feel to do things like alphabetizing your compact

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1 discs or --

2 (Laughter.)

3 -- you know, then you decide you are going
4 to go downstairs for a little bit, so you encounter your
5 cut on the staircase, and then your cat leans over and
6 wants a belly rub, and so you do that, and about 45
7 minutes later then you go downstairs and, you know, then
8 you go, well, okay, I am getting a drink of water, I'm
9 going to get back at it, I'm going right up there and
10 getting back on the computer.

11 And you have that drink of water -- you have
12 the drink of water and you're in your kitchen and you
13 look around and you go, "I need to paint this kitchen."

14 (Laughter.)

15 So I didn't paint the kitchen on Sunday, but
16 let me -- I want to give you some flavor of the things
17 I felt compelled to do on Sunday while I was really
18 serious about preparing these remarks.

19 I have lived in my current home for over 12
20 years now. On Sunday -- this is a true story -- I'm
21 giving you a real feeling for my issue with
22 procrastination. I felt compelled to take some wall
23 hangings and decorative items that I have for 12 years
24 not had the commitment to place and hang on the wall
25 in various locations where they go, I hung them on

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1 Sunday.

2 (Laughter.)

3 At least I think that stands as a seminal act
4 of procrastination. If there were a Hall of Fame of
5 procrastinators, I would put this story up there. I
6 would include it with whoever sent in a nomination for
7 me in that Hall of Fame.

8 I prepared and filed my taxes as an act of
9 procrastination against preparing these remarks.

10 (Laughter.)

11 My taxes are not due for some time, and so
12 I was actually overcoming tax season procrastination
13 just to -- I couldn't bust through my procrastination
14 on this thing. But, I mean, what does that say when
15 your guilty pleasure that you are -- the intervening
16 thing that you are not working on what you're supposed
17 to be working on is that you did your taxes. So I think
18 if anyone can top that.

19 So it gets to be 11:00 at night on Sunday,
20 and I have taken time out of course to watch The Walking
21 Dead, followed by The Talking Dead, which is a one-hour
22 show that analyzes The Walking Dead episode that you
23 have just watched.

24 (Laughter.)

25 And so I finally broke down and called my

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1 brother and said, "I am so behind on this thing. I just
2 really need to get this done." And he's a very sage
3 older brother, was dumb, he said to me, "Tuesday?
4 Well, you still have 24 hours, Kristine. You can pull
5 that out."

6 (Laughter.)

7 He also found my description of my writer's
8 block so interesting that he goes, "You should talk
9 about that." And so that's what I've done, so I want
10 to say --

11 (Laughter.)

12] -- thanks to my brother. And in an
13 interesting sidebar, on the point of -- I was joking
14 with him about maybe I should do an interpretive dance.
15 I kind of ran that by him. He reminded me -- I thought
16 I was making a joke, and I thought it was the most
17 ridiculous thing, and I thought he'd get a laugh, which
18 he did.

19 But then he listened to me and he paused and
20 he said, "Didn't you once do an interpretive dance at
21 a family Thanksgiving?" And I had forgotten I did it.
22 One of my nephews had had to write a school essay on
23 gratitude, and in order -- his mother, my
24 sister-in-law, wanted him to read it, so to make it a
25 little more interesting I agreed to interpret his essay

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1 as he was reading it though movement. And it was really
2 an enjoyable Thanksgiving memory for a lot of people.

3 (Laughter.)

4 I'm glad there was -- nobody videotaped it,
5 thank goodness. So our families are really great for
6 this type of wisdom, at least in my experience. They
7 know us well. And having known us for a long time, they
8 look past, you know, not only what we think we are and
9 all the trappings of that, but, you know, any kind of
10 illusions we have about ourselves.

11 And I say "wisdom" there because wisdom is
12 very different than knowledge. And I draw a
13 distinction and I am worried that wisdom is considered
14 kind of a folksy thing that is undervalued.

15 I have heard the distinction between the two
16 described in a way I like. It says, "Knowledge is
17 knowing that a tomato is a fruit. Wisdom is not putting
18 it in a fruit salad."

19 (Laughter.)

20 So at this point, having talked about wisdom,
21 I should apply some wisdom and resist telling a science
22 joke. I mean, a lot of you were hitting me up, even
23 this morning, and I think one of the benefits of serving
24 this long on the Commission is that I have crystalized
25 now on the piece of advice that I would give a new

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1 Commissioner. And maybe I didn't really come to this
2 until last year, or this year for sure, but I would tell
3 them, "Don't ever tell a joke at the Regulatory
4 Information Conference, or it is something that will
5 just plague you for the rest of your time."

6 However, for me, I would have to say there
7 is no turning back. So to those of you, and I am not
8 sure you're a majority, but I am going to indulge you,
9 I do get submittals all year long -- that's another fun
10 thing -- about telling a joke at the RIC, and I
11 appreciate the submittals. The judging process is
12 highly subjective, because it is just whatever I think
13 is funny.

14 And I do get overlap in the submittals, but
15 I am going to credit this one to the man sitting up on
16 the stage with me, Eric Leeds. I don't know if you
17 recall this -- it's good to get extra credit points with
18 your moderator, because he is going through those
19 notecards like a riverboat gambler over there. He is
20 just loading it up for me.

21 (Laughter.)

22 But, Eric, you sent me this in July of last
23 year, because I have the email. Here goes. A photon
24 checks into a hotel and the bellman asks him if he has
25 any luggage. "No," the photon replies, "I'm traveling

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1 light."

2 (Laughter.)

3 Why are you groaning, Eric? You sent it to
4 me.

5 (Laughter.)

6 That's not right.

7 Now, I have been told that joke-telling is
8 fundamentally storytelling, and I really think that's
9 the source of its power. In her TED talk, the Nigerian
10 author, Chimamanda Adichie, says that stories are how
11 we make meaning of our lives. She says that stories
12 are necessary, just as necessary as food or love. And
13 she says, "While stories have the power to dispossess
14 and malign, they also have the power to repair broken
15 dignity."

16 But she cautions that if we want to
17 understand a person or event, we cannot know just one
18 thing, something she terms "the danger of the single
19 story." She explains it this way. Adichie grew up in
20 Nigeria reading a lot of British children's books, and
21 when she was old enough to write stories of her own they
22 were, as she describes it, full of children who were
23 white and blue-eyed, who played in the snow, who ate
24 apples, and who talked a lot about the weather and how
25 wonderful it would be that the sun was shining, because,

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1 as she puts it, "Stories had to be about things with
2 which I could not personally identify."

3 When she started reading African stories,
4 she learned that girls like her could also exist in
5 literature. She says, "It saved me from having a
6 single story." And when we reject the falseness of the
7 single story, we regain a kind of paradise.

8 In the course of my journeys this year, I met
9 someone whose work is also attempting to defy the myth
10 of the single story. At the World Nuclear Association
11 Conference in London this past September, I heard a
12 woman speak as part of a panel on public communications.
13 Her name is Suzie Hobbs Baker, and she has talked about
14 the work she is doing both individually and as part of
15 the Nuclear Literacy Project, which can be found at
16 nuclearliteracy.org, through which she is using her
17 unique voice to reclaim and reframe a public policy
18 dialogue about nuclear issues.

19 To do this, she uses her training in the
20 disciplines of the visual arts, as well as the prism
21 of her own experiences. Whether or not you agree with
22 her viewpoint, if you visit her website I think you
23 would find her voice unique. She and her peers in the
24 project seem to have as their aim engaging their own
25 generation on existing topics in unique ways with the

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1 goal of raising basic literacy and the underlying
2 science and technology concepts.

3 I have seen something similar when I have
4 spoken with the young generation and nuclear groups at
5 some of the power plants I have visited during the last
6 year. The incoming generation of nuclear
7 professionals is bringing new energy to issues that
8 their predecessors have long decided are simply too
9 entrenched and too stale for continued fruitful
10 dialogue.

11 Like many in their generation, they are not
12 content to take our word for it. So I ask this
13 question: as the current generation of leaders in this
14 profession, what is the value to us of this new
15 dialogue? And if we think it has value, should we be
16 working to empower the next generation in their
17 undertaking?

18 Today is of course the three-year
19 anniversary of the tragic tsunami and earthquake in
20 Japan. Our hearts still break for our colleagues, our
21 friends, and their families. And our minds still
22 struggle to find meaning in the face of the suffering
23 created by this natural disaster, the nuclear portion
24 of which was only one element.

25 In the Sunday Review of The New York Times

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1 in September of last year, there was published an
2 opinion piece by Pico Iyer, who is a distinguished
3 Presidential Fellow at Chapman University, but he is
4 also an acclaimed travel writer who has lived and
5 traveled around the world.

6 In describing his work, it has been said that
7 he began his career documenting a neglected aspect of
8 travel -- the sometimes surreal disconnect between
9 local tradition and imported global pop culture.
10 Since then, he has written 10 books exploring, among
11 other topics, the cultural consequences of isolation.

12 Iyer's latest focus is on yet another
13 overlooked aspect of travel. How can it help us gain
14 our sense of stillness and focus in a world where our
15 devices and digital networks increasingly distract us?
16 About this he writes the following. "Almost everybody
17 I know has this sense of overdosing on information and
18 getting dizzy living at post-human speeds. Nearly
19 everybody I know does something to try to remove
20 herself, to clear her head, and to have enough time and
21 space to think. All of us instinctively feel that
22 something inside us is crying out for more spaciousness
23 and stillness to offset the exhilarations of this
24 movement and the fun and diversion of the modern world."

25 In a very different vein from that work,

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1 however, the piece that drew my attention to this author
2 was entitled The Value of Suffering. In it Iyer
3 writes, "Wise men in every tradition tell us that
4 suffering brings clarity, illumination. For the
5 Buddha, suffering is the first rule of life. And
6 insofar as some of it arises from our own
7 wrongheadedness, our cherishing of self, we have the
8 cure for it within. I once met," he says, "a
9 Zen-trained painter in Japan in his nineties who told
10 me that suffering is a privilege. It moves us towards
11 thinking about essential things and shakes us out of
12 short-sighted complacency." When he was a boy, he said
13 it was believed that you should pay for suffering. It
14 proves such a hidden blessing.

15 Iyer goes on to write, "As Kobayashi Issa,
16 a Haiku master in the 18th century put it, the world
17 of do is a world of do, and yet, and yet." Known for
18 his words of constant affirmation, this Haiku master
19 had seen his mother die when he was two, his first son
20 die, his father contract typhoid fever, his next son
21 and a beloved daughter die. He knew that impermanence
22 is our home and loss the law of the world.

23 Iyer writes that, "My neighbors in Japan live
24 in a culture that is based at some invisible level on
25 the Buddhist precepts that Issa knew, that suffering

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1 is reality, even if unhappiness need not be our response
2 to it." This makes for what comes across to us as
3 uncomplaining hard work, stoicism, and a constant sense
4 of the way's difficulty binds us together.

5 "I will do my best" and "I will stick it out"
6 and "It can't be helped" are the phrases you hear every
7 hour in Japan, he writes. When a tsunami claimed
8 thousands of lives north of Tokyo, now three years ago,
9 I heard much more lamentation and panic in California
10 than among my neighbors in Kyoto.

11 My neighbors aren't formal philosophers, but
12 much more in the texture of the lives they are used to
13 is the national worship of things falling away in
14 autumn, the blaze of cherry blossoms followed by their
15 very quick departure, the Haiku poems on which they are
16 schooled. These things speak volumes for an old
17 culture's training in saying good-bye to things and
18 putting delight and beauty within a frame. Death
19 undoes us less sometimes than the hope that it will
20 never come.

21 Almost eight months after the Japanese
22 tsunami he writes, "I accompanied the Dalai Lama to a
23 fishing village that had been laid waste by the natural
24 disaster. Grave stones lay tilted at crazy angles
25 where they had not collapsed altogether. What once a

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1 year before had been a thriving network of schools and
2 homes was now just rubble.

3 "Three orphans barely out of kindergarten
4 stood in their blue school uniforms to greet him outside
5 of a temple that had miraculously survived the
6 catastrophe. Inside the wooden building by its altar
7 were dozens of colored boxes containing the remains of
8 those who had no surviving relatives to claim them, all
9 lined up perfectly in a row behind framed photographs
10 of young and old.

11 "As the Dalai Lama got out of his car he saw
12 hundreds of citizens who had gathered on the street
13 behind ropes to greet him. He went over and asked them
14 and how they were doing. Many collapsed into sobs.
15 Please change your hearts. Be brave, he said, while
16 holding some and blessing others. Please help
17 everyone else and work hard. That is the best offering
18 you can make to the dead. When he turned around,
19 however, I saw him brush away a tear himself."

20 The piece concludes as follows, "The only
21 thing worse than suffering -- the only thing worse than
22 assuming you could get the better of suffering, I began
23 to think, though I am no Buddhist, is imaging you could
24 do nothing in its wake. And the tear I had witnessed
25 made me think that you could be strong enough to witness

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1 suffering and yet human enough not to pretend to be the
2 master of it."

3 Sometimes it is those things we least
4 understand that deserve our deepest trust. The most
5 powerful line there to me is the one that says, "The
6 only thing worse than assuming you could get the better
7 of suffering is imaging you could do nothing in its
8 wake."

9 It was the author Elisabeth Kubler-Ross who
10 wrote, "The most beautiful people we have known are
11 those who have known defeat, known suffering, known
12 struggle, known loss, and have found their way out of
13 the depths. These persons have an appreciation, a
14 sensitivity, and an understanding that fills them with
15 compassion, gentleness, and a deep loving concern.
16 Beautiful people," she writes, "do not just happen."

17 The events at Fukushima have called forth
18 acts of genuine heroism, and we have been witness to
19 great victories of the human spirit. I have witnessed
20 the same in other contexts around the world in the
21 actions of emergency responders, military personnel,
22 and law enforcement officers. Women and men who, with
23 the proper training and indoctrination, overcome every
24 human instinct, and when duty calls they run into that
25 burning building saving lives when their every instinct

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1 should tell them to move away.

2 In a more traditional Western paradigm, this
3 idea brings to mind the words of Admiral Rickover who
4 wrote, "Responsibility is a unique concept. It can
5 only reside and adhere in a single individual. You may
6 share it with others, but your portion is not
7 diminished. You may delegate it, but it is still with
8 you. You may disclaim it, but you cannot divest
9 yourself of it. Even if you do not recognize it, or
10 admit its presence, you cannot escape it.

11 "If responsibility is rightfully yours, no
12 evasion or ignorance or passing the blame can shift the
13 burden onto someone else. Unless you can point your
14 finger at the person who is responsible when something
15 goes wrong, then you have never had anyone really
16 responsible."

17 I appreciate your kind attention and wish you
18 a productive conference.

19 Thank you.

20 (Applause.)

21 MR. LEEDS: Thank you very much,
22 Commissioner. We have time for just a few questions.

23 COMMISSIONER SVINICKI: Thank you.

24 MR. LEEDS: The first, what is your position
25 or opinion on shutdown plants opting for the safe store

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1 method versus an immediate decontamination method?
2 And the focus of this question is, do we owe the public
3 a more expeditious cleanup of our facilities?

4 COMMISSIONER SVINICKI: Well, our
5 regulations right now are structured to leave the
6 choice amongst the regulatory options to the operators
7 of those plants, and those who will be conducting the
8 decommissioning. I think I would answer very
9 generally to say that I am not aware of any flaw in the
10 current regulatory construct.

11 I have tried in my time as a Commissioner to
12 visit a number of shutdown sites, some of which have
13 been shut down for a very long time and are well into
14 the decommissioning process, such as Rancho Seco or
15 Humboldt Bay. And so I think I have tried -- and as
16 well as those more recently entering in a very active
17 decommissioning like Zion. So I think I have attempted
18 to expose myself to the full panoply of the approaches,
19 and I think it is something that the situation -- is
20 driven by the situation.

21 MR. LEEDS: Thank you. The next question,
22 in Japan there are still a lot of uncertainties in
23 restarting their nuclear power plants and restarting
24 that industry. Is there NRC providing support to
25 Japan's nuclear activities, or how can the NRC provide

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1 support to the Japanese with a focus on safety?

2 COMMISSIONER SVINICKI: Although I can't
3 speak to all of the activities, I would first begin by
4 noting that it is the U.S. Government that is very
5 involved with the government of Japan I think on a very
6 large scope of activities related to the earthquake,
7 tsunami, and the nuclear events that occurred there.

8 NRC's engagement with the JNRA, the
9 regulatory body in Japan, is but one element of the U.S.
10 Government's cooperative work. I know also that the
11 Department of Energy has ongoing activities, not
12 something I can speak to in an expert sense. But I
13 think that we are trying to bring to bear any capability
14 and resource we have for our friends in Japan, our ally,
15 and I think that the fruits of that just continue to
16 bear and will continue to bear as the circumstances
17 evolve and we move forward.

18 MR. LEEDS: Thank you. The next question,
19 NRC retirements will mean a loss of knowledge and
20 expertise, and these provide very difficult holes to
21 fill. Does the NRC recruit engineers from other
22 government agencies? Or do they recruit engineers
23 from industry with the necessary specific expertise to
24 help resolve the issues before it?

25 COMMISSIONER SVINICKI: My understanding of

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1 NRC's recruitment process, most especially in recent
2 years where we have been under some budget pressures,
3 has been that I think we do it in a very informed and
4 targeted way. We do ask that the regulated community
5 submit to us projections of licensing actions and
6 matters that they intend to bring before the agency in
7 the coming years. One of the uses that we put that to
8 is looking at our human resource and how we need to be
9 equipped to carry out that work in the future.

10 I know that we make targeted mid-career
11 hires, which I think are a wonderful complement to
12 recruiting people fresh out of school. I can't speak
13 too specifically to what kind of mid-career hires we
14 might be targeting right now, but I think that having
15 experienced people is an important component of being
16 adequately resourced.

17 And although it is beneficial to do those
18 targeted mid-career hires, as I think I have
19 acknowledged, and many of you know all too well, is
20 there isn't a lot that trains you for regulatory types
21 of work in terms of your academic preparation. So it
22 is something that we need to mentor and create. That
23 capability is something that we need to build in-house.
24 So whatever skills and capabilities people bring to
25 NRC, we do have to have a mentoring process in what is

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1 the regulatory framework, and how do we go about doing
2 what we do so the really crippling loss of some of our
3 retirements that we have is that those people walk out
4 the door with decades, in many cases, of not just
5 experience but regulatory experience. And they know
6 why the regulations look the way they do, and things
7 that have been tried and were not successful in the
8 past.

9 And we do have a vibrant knowledge management
10 program. I know that there are -- I passed posters
11 related to that on the way in. And we don't just do
12 that because it is something that looks pretty; we do
13 it because it is really, really important to us. We
14 have to capture that knowledge.

15 MR. LEEDS: Thank you. Thank you. One
16 final question. Obviously, you have visited a number
17 of nuclear power plants since coming to the Commission.
18 Are there any specific insights or observations that
19 you'd like to share with this audience or that you would
20 share with the public that you found, you know, through
21 all of these visits to nuclear power plants?

22 COMMISSIONER SVINICKI: I have an immediate
23 something I would note, but it sounds kind of
24 superficial so I want to think about it for a minute.
25 I think what's interesting is that -- the superficial

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1 thing is that it reminds you how much it's about the
2 people at the end of the day who are operating these
3 facilities.

4 And I always feel like it's a privilege to
5 enter a control room or other areas in these plants,
6 and I am always keenly remembering that I'm a visitor
7 there, because the people who are really responsible
8 for what happens are those licensee personnel that I'm
9 talking to, and they take it as the very sober
10 responsibility that it is.

11 What is interesting is you would think
12 perhaps that visiting U.S. power plants, given the
13 rigor and discipline of, if nothing else, the
14 regulatory framework, but licensees, through INPO, you
15 know, there is a lot of standardized approaches -- not
16 standardized in terms of all using the same procedures,
17 but the concepts are accepted throughout the U.S.
18 operating fleet.

19 And you would think that you wouldn't really
20 see kind of what I'll call atmospheric differences, but
21 you still do, and of course you see that in other
22 countries. You see that there are aspects of the
23 culture which simply are reflected in the way the
24 facilities are operated. At the same time and sounding
25 a little bit in conflict with what I just said is that

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1 you can go to places, power plants, and see that it might
2 be in South Africa, but they have INPO documents there
3 on the shelf. So that a lot of, again, these
4 principles, particularly about safety culture, which
5 is always very reassuring to see, are global concepts.

6 So it's interesting to see the differences
7 across the U.S., around the world, but see that a lot
8 of the core fundamentals are agreed to and adopted. So
9 in that way it is probably a good news/good news
10 scenario, because you want the different cultures which
11 bring to bear I think various strengths also to be
12 complemented by an across-the-board commitment to the
13 fundamentals. That just makes sense no matter where
14 you are.

15 And before I finish this answer, because you
16 are going to kick me off the stage, I wanted to talk
17 about Twana, who sang our national anthem this morning.
18 I don't know if she is still in the room, but she and
19 I have chatted over the years. I think she is amazing,
20 and I was just going to say, Twana, wherever you are
21 in the building, that she knows -- I think half the
22 reason I keep showing up at NRC is because I might get
23 to hear Twana sing us something. She is so incredible.
24 So, anyway, I wanted to say that about Twana.

25 (Applause.)

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1 MR. LEEDS: She's over there.

2 COMMISSIONER SVINICKI: I can't --

3 (Applause.)

4 I can't see because the lights are really
5 bright. Eric is going to cut my mike off now, aren't
6 you?

7 MR. LEEDS: Excuse me?

8 COMMISSIONER SVINICKI: Are you going to cut
9 my mike off now?

10 MR. LEEDS: No, ma'am.

11 (Laughter.)

12 I wouldn't dare. Was there anything else
13 you wanted to say?

14 COMMISSIONER SVINICKI: I don't think so.
15 I've sent a shout out to Twana. I'm done.

16 (Laughter.)

17 MR. LEEDS: Very good. Please join me in
18 thanking Commissioner Svinicki.

19 (Applause.)

20 (Whereupon, the proceedings went off the
21 record at 11:15 a.m.)

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