

Message Text

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CIAE-00 COM-04 DODE-00 EB-08 DOE-17 H-02 INR-10
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SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT ON THE REPORT ON THE
THREE MILE ISLAND NUCLEAR ACCIDENT

1. THE PRESIDENT TODAY ISSUED THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT ON
THE REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON THE ACCIDENT
AT THREE MILE ISLAND.

QUOTE: STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

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I HAVE REVIEWED THE REPORT OF THE COMMISSION I ESTABLISHED
TO INVESTIGATE THE ACCIDENT AT THREE MILE ISLAND NUCLEAR
POWER PLANT. THE COMMISSION, CHAIRED BY DR. JOHN KEMENY,
FOUND VERY SERIOUS SHORTCOMINGS IN THE WAY THAT BOTH THE
GOVERNMENT AND THE UTILITY INDUSTRY REGULATE AND MANAGE
NUCLEAR POWER.

THE STEPS I AM TAKING TODAY WILL HELP ENSURE THAT NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS ARE OPERATED SAFELY. SAFETY HAS ALWAYS BEEN, AND WILL REMAIN, MY TOP PRIORITY.

AS I HAVE STATED BEFORE, IN THIS COUNTRY, NUCLEAR POWER IS AN ENERGY SOURCE OF LAST RESORT. BY THIS I MEANT THAT AS WE REACH OUR GOALS FOR CONSERVATION, DIRECT USE OF COAL,

DEVELOPMENT OF SOLAR POWER AND SYNTHETIC FUELS AND ENHANCED PRODUCTION OF AMERICAN OIL AND NATURAL GAS, WE CAN MINIMIZE OUR RELIANCE ON NUCLEAR POWER.

MANY OF OREIGN ALLIES MUST PLACE GREATER RELIANCE THAN DO WE ON NUCLEAR POWER, BECAUSE THEY DO NOT HAVE THE VAST NATURAL RESOURCES THAT GIVE US MANY ALTERNATIVES. WE MUST GET ON WITH THE JOB OF DEVELOPING ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES -- BY PASSING THE LEGISLATION I PROPOSED TO THE CONGRESS, AND BY MAKING AN EFFORT AT EVERY LEVEL OF SOCIETY TO CONSERVE ENERGY.

WE CANNOT SHUT THE DOOR ON NUCLEAR ENERGY.

THE RECENT EVENTS IN IRAN HAVE SHOWN US THE CLEAR, STARK DANGERS THAT EXCESSIVE DEPENDENCE ON IMPORTED OIL HOLDS FOR OUR NATION. WE MUST MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO LEAD THIS COUNTRY TO ENERGY SECURITY.

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EVERY DOMESTIC SOURCE, INCLUDING NUCLEAR POWER, IS CRITICAL IF WE ARE TO FREE OUR COUNTRY FROM ITS OVERDEPENDENCE ON UNSTABLE SOURCES OF HIGH-PRICED FOREIGN OIL. WE DO NOT HAVE THE LUXURY OF ABANDONING NUCLEAR POWER OR IMPOSING A LENGTHY MORATORIUM ON ITS FURTHER USE. A NUCLEAR PLANT CAN DISPLACE UP TO 35,000 BARRELS PER DAY.

WE MUST TAKE EVERY POSSIBLE STEP TO INCREASE THE SAFETY OF NUCLEAR POWER PRODUCTION. I AGREE FULLY WITH THE SPIRIT AND INTENT OF THE KEMENY COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATIONS, SOME OF WHICH ARE WITHIN MY POWER TO IMPLEMENT, OTHERS OF WHICH RELY ON THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION OR THE UTILITY INDUSTRY ITSELF.

TO GET THE GOVERNMENT'S OWN HOUSE IN ORDER I WILL TAKE SEVERAL STEPS. FIRST, I WILL SEND TO CONGRESS A REORGANIZATION PLAN TO STRENGTHEN THE ROLE OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE NRC AND PROVIDE THIS PERSON WITH THE POWER TO ACT ON A DAILY BASIS AS THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, WITH AUTHORITY TO PUT NEEDED SAFETY REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES IN PLACE. THE CHAIRMAN MUST BE ABLE TO SELECT KEY

PERSONNEL, AND ACT ON BEHALF OF THE COMMISSION DURING AN EMERGENCY.

SECOND, I WILL APPOINT A NEW CHAIRMAN OF THE NRC -- SOMEONE FROM OUTSIDE THAT AGENCY, IN THE SPIRIT OF THE KEMENY COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATION. IN TANTIME, I HAVE ASKED COMMISSIONER AHEARNE, NOW ON THE NRC, TO SERVE AS CHAIRMAN. DR. AHEARNE WILL STRESS SAFETY AND THE PROMPT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEEDED REFORMS. IN ADDITION, I WILL

ESTABLISH AN INDEPENDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO HELP KEEP ME INFORMED OF THE PROGRESS THE NRC AND THE INDUSTRY ARE ACHIEVING IN MAKING NUCLEAR ENERGY SAFER.

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THIRD, I AM DIRECTING THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY TO HEAD UP ALL OFF-SITE EMERGENCY ACTIVITIES, AND COMPLETE A THOROUGH REVIEW OF EMERGENCY PLANS IN ALL STATES WITH OPERATING REACTORS BY JUNE.

FOURTH, I HAVE DIRECTED NRC AND OTHER AGENCIES TO ACCELERATE OUR PROGRAM TO PLACE A RESIDENT FEDERAL INSPECTOR AT EVERY REACTOR SITE.

FIFTH, I AM ASKING ALL RELEVANT GOVERNMENT AGENCIES TO IMPLEMENT VIRTUALLY ALL OF THE OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE KEMENY COMMISSION.

A DETAILED FACT SHEET IS BEING ISSUED TO THE PUBLIC, AND A MORE EXTENDED BRIEFING WILL BE GIVEN TO THE PRESS.

WITH CLEAR LEADERSHIP AND IMPROVED ORGANIZATION, THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH AND THE NRC WILL BE BETTER ABLE TO ACT QUICKLY ON THE CRITICAL ISSUES OF IMPROVED TRAINING AND STANDARDS, SAFETY PROCEDURES, AND THE OTHER KEMENY COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS.

BUT RESPONSIBILITY TO MAKE NUCLEAR POWER SAFER DOES NOT STOP WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. IN FACT, THE PRIMARY DAY-TO-DAY RESPONSIBILITY FOR SAFETY RESTS WITH UTILITY COMPANY MANAGEMENT AND SUPPLIERS OF NUCLEAR EQUIPMENT. THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR TECHNICALLY QUALIFIED AND COMMITTED PEOPLE WORKING ON THE CONSTRUCTION, OPERATION AND INSPECTION OF NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS. PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY MUST BE STRESSED. SOME ONE PERSON MUST ALWAYS BE DESIGNATED AS IN CHARGE BOTH AT THE CORPORATE LEVEL AND AT THE PLANT SITE. THE INDUSTRY OWES IT TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE TO STRENGTHEN ITS COMMITMENT TO SAFETY.

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I CALL ON THE UTILITIES TO IMPLEMENT THE FOLLOWING CHANGES:

FIRST, BUILDING ON THE STEPS ALREADY TAKEN, THE INDUSTRY MUST ORGANIZE ITSELF TO DEVELOP ENHANCED STANDARDS FOR

SAFE DESIGN, OPERATION, AND CONSTRUCTION OF PLANTS.

SECOND, THE NUCLEAR INDUSTRY MUST WORK TOGETHER TO DEVELOP AND TO MAINTAIN IN OPERATION A COMPREHENSIVE TRAINING, EXAMINATION AND EVALUATION PROGRAM FOR OPERATORS AND SUPERVISORS. THIS TRAINING PROGRAM MUST

PASS MUSTER WITH THE NRC THROUGH ACCREDITATION OF TRAINING PROGRAMS.

THIRD, CONTROL ROOMS MUST BE MODERNIZED, STANDARDIZED AND SIMPLIFIED AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE TO PERMIT BETTER INFORMED DECISION-MAKING DURING AN EMERGENCY.

I CHALLENGE OUR UTILITY COMPANIES TO BEND EVERY EFFORT TO IMPROVE THE SAFETY OF NUCLEAR POWER.

FINALLY, I WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS HOW WE MANAGE THE TRANSITION PERIOD DURING WHICH THE KEMENY RECOMMENDATIONS ARE BEING IMPLEMENTED. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF NEW NUCLEAR PLANTS NOW AWAITING OPERATING LICENSES OR CONSTRUCTION PERMITS.

LICENSING DECISIONS REST WITH THE NRC AND, AS THE KEMENY COMMISSION NOTED, IT HAS THE AUTHORITY TO PROCEED WITH LICENSING THESE PLANTS ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS, WHICH MAY BE USED AS CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING A PLANT DICTATE. THE NRC HAS INDICATED, HOWEVER, THAT IT WILL PAUSE IN ISSUING NEW LICENSES AND CONSTRUCTION PERMITS IN ORDER TO DEVOTE ITS FULL ATTENTION TO PUTTING ITS HOUSE IN ORDER.

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I ENDORSE THE APPROACH THE NRC HAS ADOPTED, BUT I URGE THE NRC TO COMPLETE ITS WORK AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE, AND IN ANY EVENT NO LATER THAN SIX MONTHS FROM TODAY.

ONCE WE HAVE INSTITUTED THE NECESSARY REFORMS TO ASSURE SAFETY, WE MUST RESUME THE LICENSING PROCESS PROMPTLY SO THAT THE NEW PLANTS WHICH WE NEED TO REDUCE OUR DEPENDENCE ON FOREIGN OIL CAN BE BUILT AND OPERATED.

THE STEPS I AM ANNOUNCING TODAY WILL HELP ASSURE OUR
COUNTRY OF THE FUTURE OF NUCLEAR PLANTS. NUCLEAR POWER
HAS A FUTURE IN THE UNITED STATES -- IT IS AN OPTION
THAT WE MUST KEEP OPEN. I CALL ON THE UTILITIES AND
THEIR SUPPLIERS, THE NRC, THE EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND
AGENCIES, AND THE STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO ASSURE
THAT THE FUTURE IS A SAFE ONE. UNQUOTE.

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