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March 9, 2001

Mr. Kevin Burke
International Relations Specialist,
Division of Bilateral Cooperation and Assistance,
Office of International Programs,
Commission Staff Office, NRC,
Washington, D.C. 20555-0001, U.S.A

Dear Mr. Kevin Burke:

My name is Shigeaki Shiraishi and I am a deputy director for the Secretariat of the Nuclear Safety Committee (NSC) of Japan. Currently, with the Government of Japan's decision to introduce "policy evaluation" into the works of governmental ministries and agencies, we are conducting a study for the purpose of designing a policy evaluation framework for the NSC. Since we believe that other governments' experiences give us useful insights, we try to learn the practices of other countries including the US. I am writing to you to do some inquiries on your practices, and I would very much appreciate it if you could spare some of your time to help us.

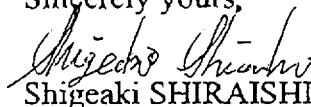
One of the intriguing issues we face in our study is the question of "numerical measurement". While numerical measurement guarantees objective evaluation in a very visible form, the setting of metrical targets can always be a very controversial process. I have an impression that your approach to this question is to try to set numerical measures where it is reasonably possible to secure better objectivity in policy evaluation.

For example, in the NRC's FY 2000-2005 Strategic Plan, you set some metrical targets to assess the results of your efforts to achieve the Performance Goal of "maintaining safety, protection of the environment, and the common defense and security" in the area of nuclear reactor safety: e.g., no more than 1 event per year identified as a significant precursor of a nuclear accident, and, no more than 3 releases per year to the environment of radioactive material from nuclear reactors that exceed the regulatory limits.

I would like to know whether you have any established processes or methods for the setting of these metrical targets. I also appreciate it if you could share with us your opinions and possibly some experiences regarding this issue.

Thank you very much for your time.

Sincerely yours,


Shigeaki SHIRAISHI

Deputy Director,
Secretariat for the Nuclear
Safety Commission (NSC)