

In the news...March 27, 2000

Compiled by NRC Office of Public Affairs

Consolidated Edison is defending its 1997 inspection of its Indian Point 2 nuclear power plant, which the Nuclear Regulatory Commission has said was weak and incomplete. In memoranda released Thursday, the Commission cited Con Edison's "particularly inadequate" assessment of the tubes in the plant's steam generators, one of which cracked last month, leading to a minor release of radioactive steam. Associated Press, 3/26.

LONDON -- With an international outcry building for the closing of Britain's Sellafield nuclear fuel processing plant, operators acknowledged Sunday that a saboteur had severed cables controlling robotic operations in a radioactive area of the installation. The admission added to a growing catalog of safety-related problems at the plant. New York Times (p. A7), 3/27. Police hunting the saboteur are focusing on about 25 employees who were in the area at the time. Electronic Telegraph, 3/27.

WASHINGTON -- An air pollution law enacted a decade ago to reduce acid rain has failed to slow the acidification of lakes and streams in the Adirondacks, many of which are rapidly losing the ability to sustain life, according to a new study by the General Accounting Office. The report raises sharp questions about the effectiveness of the Clean Air Act amendments of 1990. New York Times, 3/27.

Juno Beach-based FPL Group and Spain's second-largest power company are in talks that could lead to the Madrid company buying FPL, the Spanish newspaper Expansion reported Thursday. Joe Garcia, chairman of the Florida Public Service Commission, said the NRC would get a say in any deal for FPL because of the company's nuclear power plants in St. Lucie and Miami-Dade counties. Palm Beach Post (p. A1), 3/24.

U.S. jets fired radioactive ammunition throughout Kosovo during NATO's 1999 war against Yugoslavia, a top NATO official has acknowledged. Depleted uranium rounds were used whenever U.S. Air Force A10 planes engaged armour during Operation Allied Force, the official said in a recent letter to the United Nations. Augusta Chronicle, 3/23.

The unusual lawsuit that prompted an investigation into secret

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financial dealings between a state regulator and a Utah businessman was dismissed this week. Larry F. Anderson, a former director of the Utah Division of Radiation Control, filed a civil suit in 1996 that claimed that Khosrow Semnani, owner of Envirocare of Utah, had violated a secret consulting contract by refusing to pay him \$5 million. Semnani acknowledged making about \$600,000 in under-the table payments to Anderson, but in a countersuit he alleged the money was extorted from him by Anderson, who controlled the fate of Semnani's business. Judge Glenn Iwasaki ruled on Wednesday that the purported consulting contract between Anderson and Semnani was illegal because it violated the Utah Public Officers' and Employees' Ethics Act. Salt Lake Tribune, 3/24.