



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
REGION V

1450 MARIA LANE, SUITE 210
WALNUT CREEK, CALIFORNIA 94596

FEB 27 1985

MEMORANDUM FOR: C. J. Heltemes, Jr., Director, Office for Analysis
and Evaluation of Operational Data

FROM: J. B. Martin, Regional Administrator

SUBJECT: STUDY OF THE NEED FOR AN INDEPENDENT AGENCY TO INVESTIGATE
INCIDENTS AT NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS

Your memorandum of February 15, 1985, subject as above, forwarded the final report by the Brookhaven National Laboratory (BNL) for review and comment.

Our review focused on the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the BNL study together with supporting information relating thereto. We did not dwell upon details of the report in terms of its accuracy.


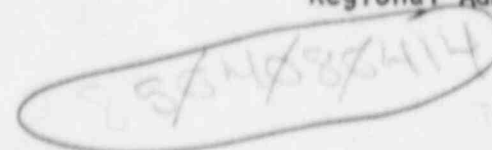
As indicated by BNL, constraints of time necessitated that information gathering be limited principally to interviews with individuals within the NRC, other federal agencies, industry representatives and the public sector. As such, there was little evidence of an independent assessment of the NRC staff's investigations of operational events.

Considering the above approach by BNL, as well as the information presented in the report, a clear and substantive basis is not evident for BNL's recommendation that a new office be established within NRC to investigate operational events. Likewise, a basis for the determination that such an office would conduct investigations of 8-12 "significant events" per year - thus an estimated need for 30 additional technical professionals to carry out such investigations - is not at all clear.

The BNL study does include information to suggest a need for guidance to the staff regarding the types of operational events for which a prompt investigation should be initiated (and by whom such a decision should be made) to better assure consistency of practice within the agency.

If we can provide additional clarification of the above comments, please contact either me or Jess Crews of my staff.


J. B. Martin
Regional Administrator


 XA