

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION
ACT REQUEST

BEFORE THE COMMISSION

FOIA-85-395
rec'd 5/28/85

In the Matter of :
METROPOLITAN EDISON COMPANY et al. :
(Three Mile Island Nuclear :
Generating Station, Unit 1) :

Docket 50-289
320

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION UNDER F.O.I.A.

NUREG-0600, The Report of the President's Commission on the Accident at Three Mile Island, and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission Special Inquiry Group all reported that the reactor "scram" was timely and complete in the reactor "trip" which occurred early in the TMI-2 accident of March 28, 1979. However, we have heard rumors over the past several years that, contrary to official accounts of the accident, several of the control rods did not fall. Recently, we came into the possession of information which supports the validity of those rumors.

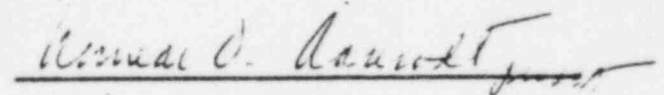
On May 19, 1985, we met for the first time with Randall C. Thompson who served as a health physics technician at TMI-2 during April 1979 to discuss alpha radiation measurements in plant during the accident. Mr. Thompson volunteered information he derived from conversations with plant operations personnel which confirmed these rumors of an incomplete scram. He also provided us with an Associated Press release from the Oklahoma Times of Saturday, June 26, 1982 which detailed licensee's attempt "to remove eight control rods into the reactor core". This release and Mr. Thompson's resume' are attached.

The absence of eight control rods would, obviously, have caused the fission reaction to have continued unabated during the crucial period when shutdown was being attempted. Conclusions drawn by investigators concerning the relevance of the open PORV (pilot operated relief valve) would be largely invalidated. Conclusions drawn with regard to the importance of the block valves being closed would also be largely invalidated. Perhaps most importantly, the reliability of control rod functioning is seriously challenged.

We request the Commission to provide us with all information in the possession of the Staff with regard to their knowledge of this matter. We would move for a reopening of the record if we find evidence that there is basis to assert that this matter would lead to change in outcome of the ASLB conclusions regarding licensee's competency or integrity and Unit 1 plant design. Clearly, for the reasons stated above, the timeliness and relevancy standards have been met.

The request is made under the Freedom of Information Act.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Norman O. Aamodt", is written over a horizontal line.

Norman O. Aamodt

May 23, 1985

Randall C. Thompson

U.S. Navy nuclear power training system

Nuclear Power School, Bainbridge, MD

Nuclear Submarine service 2½ years

Commercial nuclear power experience

Virginia Electric & Power Company

North Anna Power Station, Mineral, VA

Health Physics training, Argon National Labs Radiation Safety Technician course. Radiological chemistry training and "cold" chemistry application. Established environmental background monitoring system prior to plant start-up.

Surry Nuclear Power Plant, Surry, VA

Pressurized water reactor refueling and outage maintainance. Health Physics coverage in high dose areas. Reactor chemistry and resin research.

RAD Services, Inc. (a radiological service company)

Peach Bottom Atomic Power Station, Delta, PA

Sr. Health Physics and Chemistry technician

Sr. Plant Chemist

Three Mile Island Nuclear Power Plant, Middletown, PA

Sr. Health Physics technician at final radiological control point at Unit II. One of the ranking technicians on site during the month of April, 1979. Radiological control as well as "release" stack monitoring and special Containment status sampling. Worked closely with NRC and Utility management employees.

Status of Nuclear Plant Unclear

MIDDLETOWN, Pa. (AP) — Officials at Three Mile Island nuclear power plant said Friday that although testing has gone well so far, it is still too soon to say what shape the plant's crippled reactor is in.

"We have a lot of good vibes, but we're not ready to draw any overall conclusions on the condition of the reactor and we may not from these tests alone," TMI spokesman Doug Bedell said.

Technicians are hoping that they will be able to move eight control rods into the reactor core one at a time. So far, they have moved four of them to different depths inside the reactor.

Scientists are moving the rods hoping to get solid evidence of how badly the reactor is damaged. If there is debris in the rods' tubes, it would give scientists an indication of the extent of damage.

Up to now, they have been relying solely on temperature readings, soundings and theory.

The tests, costing about \$2.8 million, mark the first movement inside the Unit 2 reactor since it was shut down on March 28, 1979. In the nation's worst commercial nuclear accident, Neither of the two units at the plant on the Susquehanna River has operated since then.

When the reactor was operating properly,

each 12-foot rod — actually a bundle of 16 pencil-thin metal rods — was used to be sure that the nuclear fuel was spent evenly during the fission reaction. They were in a raised position when the accident occurred, and have stayed there until the tests started.

Sixty-one other rods, used to stop and start fission within the 40-foot reactor, were dropped into the core to shut down the reactor during the accident.

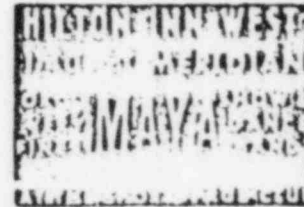
Tests began Wednesday night when technicians inserted the first rod into the core. It stopped after going 95 percent of the way in it, leaving about seven inches outside the core. Workers tried to com-

plete the insertion Thursday afternoon, but it refused to budge, Bedell said.

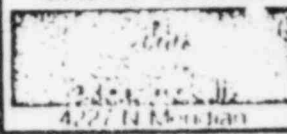
Three other rods were lowered through tubing into the core on Thursday. Bedell said the second rod went 96 percent of the way in the third all the way and the fourth was inserted 81 percent.

If testing goes as planned, scientists hope to remove the 160-ton reactor dome next year.

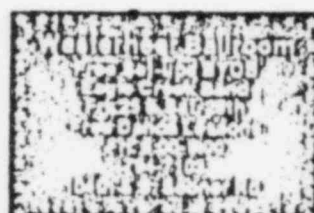
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