



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Office of Public Affairs Telephone: 301/415-8200

Washington, D.C. 20555-0001

E-mail: opa_resource@nrc.gov Site: www.nrc.gov

Blog: <http://public-blog.nrc-gateway.gov>

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OPENING REMARKS OF NRC CHAIRMAN GREGORY B. JACZKO AT TODAY'S COMMISSION MEETING ON THE EVENTS IN JAPAN

Good morning. The Commission meets today to discuss the tragic events in Japan and consider possible actions we may take to verify the safety of the nuclear facilities that we regulate in the United States. This meeting will—without a doubt—be one of the most heavily watched meetings in the history of this agency.

People across the country and around the world who have been touched by the magnitude and scale of this disaster are closely following the events in Japan, and the repercussions in this country and in many other countries. I would first like to offer my condolences to all those who have been affected by the earthquake and tsunami in Japan. Our hearts go out to all who have been dealing with the aftermath of these natural disasters, and we are mindful of the long and difficult road they will face in recovering. We know that the people of Japan are resilient and strong, and we have every confidence that they will come through this difficult time and move forward, with resolve, to rebuild their vibrant country.

I believe I speak for all Americans when I say that we stand together with the people of Japan at this most difficult and challenging time. The NRC is a relatively small agency, with approximately 4000 staff, but we play a critical role in protecting the American people and the environment. We have inspectors who work full-time at every nuclear plant in the country, and we are proud to have world-class scientists, engineers and professionals representing nearly every discipline.

Since Friday, March 11, when the earthquake and tsunami struck, the NRC's headquarters Operations Center has been operating on a 24-hour basis to monitor and analyze events at nuclear power plants in Japan. At the request of the Japanese government, and through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the NRC sent a team of its technical experts to provide on-the-ground support, and we have been in continual contact with them. And, within the United States, the NRC has been working closely with other Federal agencies as part of our government's response to the situation.

We have a responsibility to the American people to undertake a systematic and methodical review of the safety of our own domestic nuclear facilities, in light of the natural disaster and the resulting nuclear emergency in Japan. Beginning to examine all available

information is an essential part of our effort to analyze the event and understand its impact on Japan and implications for the United States. Our focus is always on keeping plants and radioactive materials in this country safe and secure.

As this immediate crisis in Japan comes to an end, we will look at any information we can gain from the event and see if there are changes we need to make, to further protect the public. Together with my colleagues on the Commission, we will review the current status and identify the steps we will take to conduct that review. In the meantime, we will continue to oversee and monitor plants to ensure that U. S. reactors remain safe.

On behalf of the Commission, I want to thank all of our staff for maintaining their focus on our essential safety and security mission throughout these difficult days. I want to acknowledge their tireless efforts and their critical contributions to the U.S. response to assist Japan. In spite of the evolving situation, the long hours, and the intensity of efforts over the past week, staff has approached their responsibilities with dedication, determination and professionalism, and I am incredibly proud of their efforts.

The American people also can be proud of the commitment and dedication within the Federal workforce, which is exemplified by our staff every day. Before we begin our meeting with Mr. Borchardt's presentation, would any of my fellow Commissioners like to make opening comments?

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