

October 12, 2005

Mr. Brian Ross
ABC Investigative Unit
143 Columbus Ave.
New York, New York 10023

Dear Mr. Ross:

Thank you for sharing your observations pertaining to research and test reactor (RTR) security and the opportunity on September 26 to review a portion of your videotape. Public input is helpful to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) in overseeing the safety and security of civilian RTRs. The NRC staff reviewed each of the observations that you shared with us to ensure that safety and security continue to be maintained at these facilities.

NRC inspectors periodically assess safety and security at these facilities to ensure that the public is adequately protected. Our routine assessments include evaluations of the current threat environment in coordination with the Department of Homeland Security, the FBI, the intelligence community, and State and local law enforcement agencies. Based on our review of your observations, our continuing review of site-specific security enhancements, and our knowledge of the potential risks, we continue to believe that the Nation's RTRs remain safe and secure. Furthermore, we recently issued letters to each RTR licensee to obtain additional information and emphasize our expectations for maintaining effective RTR security in the current threat environment. In these letters, we requested each RTR to verify its implementation of the previous site-specific security measures and provide additional details. The NRC will review these measures.

Moreover, the radiological consequences of an attack on RTRs would be low due to the small quantities of radioactive material present, the reactor structure and shielding designs, and the safety and security measures in place. Also, attempts to sabotage the facility or steal the nuclear material would trigger an armed response and activate pre-established emergency response plans. Even if a sabotage attack were attempted against an RTR, we are convinced that the potential for significant radiation-related health effects to the public is highly unlikely.

I again want to express my appreciation for sharing your observations with the NRC. I want to assure you that the NRC will take whatever steps are necessary to protect the public.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Roy P. Zimmerman, Director
Office of Nuclear Security and Incident Response

cc: Mr. John Zucker, Corporate Counsel, ABC