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Las Vegas Area Operations

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29 December 1986

NRD-86-349

Dr. Carl Henry
University of California
Los Alamos National Laboratory
P.O. Box 1663
Los Alamos, NM 87545

Dear Carl:

Norm Bailey asked me to summarize my observations of the working relationships within the FRC and State locations during the recent Mighty Derringer Exercise. I was the DOE/NEST/FRMAC liaison to the FRC during the consequence phase.

The federal players seemed to be quite versed in their roles and appeared to coordinate well with each other. I was particularly impressed with the FEMA officials. Contrary to my past experiences, these FEMA officials seemed to have a good grasp of the situation and managed the operation quite well.

Most of DOE's requests came from the State and not the CFA (FEMA). This was different than in a reactor accident where the NRC is the CFA and usually makes many requests from a FRMAC. However, since FEMA is not a technical agency, the lack of requests is understandable. This brings up a good point that if a radiological accident occurs in a state that has very little expertise and FEMA is the CFA, the DOE (with EPA assistance) will have to supply most, if not all, of the technical expertise in all phases of the assessment and recovery.

My observation of the State and Local players were two fold:

- (1) If the real Governor and Mayor would have been present, they would have had a much stronger influence on how things were handled and the decisions made, particularly during the time period before the consequence phase.
- (2) The State and Local participants did not seem to ask enough information from the FRMAC. This could be because of the lack of knowledge of what the FRMAC was doing, the compressed time, the artificiality of the exercise or the inexperience of the players. I helped generate much of the requests from the FRC/State to the FRMAC by suggesting to the State that we could help them in certain tasks. For example: Notionally there were about 1000 injured people, assumed to be contaminated, that the State and local officials had to deal with. I suggested that the FRMAC could provide some radiation monitors and instruments to help assess the personnel contamination problems. They had not thought about the problem or about asking for help in this regard.

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The DOE should always be prepared to provide technical support to the State and the CFA in anticipation of their needs even before they ask for assistance or information. The assistance, however, should always be in a supporting role and be provided in a format such that reliable decisions can be made from it. For instance, a table of isotopic concentrations in pCi/g would be more useful if it were accompanied with a translation to projected health effects related to protection action guides rather than accompanied by recommendations for action.

Sincerely,

Zolin
Zolin Burson

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cc: N. Bailey, LLNL

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