

DISCUSSION

AUDIENCE COMMENT: I'm Eric van Loon, of the Union of Concerned Scientists. I'd like to make one short comment to fill out the record. You suggested at one point that the Rasmussen Report was a pretty good report. I think it's useful for the record to add that the report concludes that if a breach of containment accident were to occur at a representative plant, under normal weather conditions, that the result of that would be 48,000 deaths, a quarter of a million non-fatal cancers and leukemias, and 5,000 birth defects in the first generation. Moreover, an area of fifteen square miles would have to be abandoned for a period up to one hundred years and a fifty square mile area would have to be decontaminated. Those statistics for a representative plant are significantly more serious at other large plants. Those statistics do not apply, for example, to Indian Point, thirty-five miles from where we are now.

Now for my question. Dr. Kouts, if I understood you correctly, you said that some plants now under construction do not have a level of safety technology at them that you believe is required. Could you elaborate a bit about which plants and what aspects?

HERBERT KOUTS: I didn't say that to highlight any particular plants. In fact, rather, I would have a hard time pointing to the plants which have features which ought to be improved. There certainly are plants which have control rooms that should be upgraded in accordance with the findings that the Kemeny Commission issued after Three Mile Island. I think that the level of technology which is embodied in control rooms does not come up to what we are capable of these days. There is one feature of NRC regulations which is called the ALARA concept, meaning "as low as reasonably achievable." According to the ALARA concept, even if things have reached a satisfactory level, if you find you can do better for a reasonable sum of money, do that. It was in line with this concept that I made my point earlier. But I don't find operating plants to have features which would make me want to shut them down. I don't know of any I would want to shut down—at this time.

DAVID KAIRYS: I disagree about some of the conclusions about safety, but I don't want to go into that. What your talk brings up to me is a basic contradiction which the industry faces. To persuade us that we should have nuclear power, the industry says that it is safe. But when you get to a case where the industry is engaged in some kind of activity which many of us feel infringes on civil liberties, such as following people around, taking pictures of people, keeping files, sometimes counterintelligence actions, the justification which the industry offers is that nuclear power is really dangerous. You seem to be saying that it is not dangerous; on the contrary, it is safe. I

wonder if your point would extend to saying that the justification is a phony one.

HERBERT KOUTS: I think the industry's reasoning is a bit wrong. If the industry had some evidence that you were recruiting a number of experts in explosives, then I might think there was some justification to the argument. But, responding generally, I don't really see why people should be put under surveillance at all. I'll take the Jeffersonian view even if I disagree with what you say, I still believe I should defend your right to say it.

AUDIENCE COMMENT: Would you see any justification for a private utility to maintain files on anti-nuclear activists, or to write down or keep track of what they say at speeches?

HERBERT KOUTS: No.