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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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TRANSCRIPTION
PRESS CONFERENCE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR WILLIAM W. SCRANTON, 3d
INCIDENT AT THREE-MILE ISLAND
MARCH 28, 1979
4:30 P.M.

Following is Lt. Governor Scranton's opening statement:

Answering questions with Lt. Governor Scranton are:

William Dornsife, Nuclear Engineer, Bureau of Radiation Protection, DER
Colonel Oran Henderson, Director, Civil Defense
Thomas Gerusky, Director of DER's bureau of radiological protection

THIS IS AN UPDATE ON THE INCIDENT AT THREE MILE ISLAND NUCLEAR POWER PLANT TODAY.

THIS SITUATION IS MORE COMPLEX THAN THE COMPANY FIRST LED US TO BELIEVE. WE ARE TAKING MORE TESTS. AND AT THIS POINT, WE BELIEVE THERE IS STILL NO DANGER TO PUBLIC HEALTH.

METROPOLITAN EDISON HAS GIVEN YOU AND US CONFLICTING INFORMATION. WE JUST CONCLUDED A MEETING WITH COMPANY OFFICIALS AND HOPE THIS BRIEFING WILL CLEAR UP MOST OF YOUR QUESTIONS.

THERE HAS BEEN A RELEASE OF RADIOACTIVITY INTO THE ENVIRONMENT. THE MAGNITUDE OF THE RELEASE IS STILL BEING DETERMINED, BUT THERE IS NO EVIDENCE YET THAT IT HAS RESULTED IN THE PRESENCE OF DANGEROUS LEVELS.

THE COMPANY HAS INFORMED US THAT FROM ABOUT 11 A.M. UNTIL ABOUT 1:30 P.M., THREE MILE ISLAND DISCHARGED INTO THE AIR, STEAM THAT CONTAINED DETECTABLE AMOUNTS OF RADIATION.

THE DISCHARGE WAS A PART OF THE NORMAL REACTOR EMERGENCY COOLING PROCESS. IT WAS DONE TO RELIEVE POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS PRESSURE IN THE REACTOR CHAMBER.

BECAUSE OF AN APPARENT LEAK IN THE PRIMARY COOLING SYSTEM, RADIOACTIVE MATERIAL WAS DISCHARGED INTO THE AIR ALONG WITH THE STEAM.

THE PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES WAS NOT NOTIFIED OF THE RELEASE UNTIL ABOUT THE TIME THAT IT WAS HALTED.

THE COMPANY HAS SAID THAT FURTHER DISCHARGES MAY BE NECESSARY AND HAS PROMISED TO NOTIFY US IN THAT EVENT.

THE LEVELS THAT WERE DETECTED WERE BELOW ANY EXISTING OR PROPOSED EMERGENCY ACTION LEVELS. BUT WE ARE CONCERNED BECAUSE ANY INCREASED EXPOSURE CARRIES WITH IT SOME INCREASED HEALTH RISKS.

THE FULL IMPACT ON PUBLIC HEALTH IS BEING EVALUATED AS ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLES ARE ANALYZED. WE ARE CONCERNED MOST ABOUT RADIOACTIVE IODINE, WHICH CAN ACCUMULATE IN THE THYROID, EITHER THROUGH BREATHING OR THROUGH DRINKING MILK. FORTUNATELY, WE DON'T BELIEVE THE RISK IS SIGNIFICANT BECAUSE MOST DAIRY COWS ARE ON STORED FEED AT THIS TIME OF YEAR.

TEAMS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES, THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION, AND THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY ARE IN THE AREA CONDUCTING TESTS.

THE MOST RECENT REPORTS INDICATE THAT THE LEVELS HAVE BEEN DECREASING THROUGHOUT THE AFTERNOON.

WE WILL KEEP YOU ADVISED OF ANY FURTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS.

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REPORTER: Mr. Scranton, the officials of the utility this morning and again early this afternoon, the initial, the first thing that triggered this event today as the failure of a valve in a pump in a cooling system. Yet, the people who built the plant, Babcock and Wilcox say that's not true. They say it was not the failure of a valve, it was not the failure of a pump nor pipe." Could you resolve this apparent discrepancy?

LT. GOV: I think that is an apparent dispute between the company and the builders and I am certainly not of a position to get into the middle of that. The company has told us that it was a failure of a valve due to the normal emergency cooling down system. We have to take them at their word at this time for today's purposes, but this will be investigated, no doubt about it.

PANYARD: Isn't it true that you have to take them at their word most of the time?

LT. GOV: No, it isn't. We currently have teams from the federal government from the Department of Energy, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission in, we have talked to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission in Washington, they have promised to notify us of any readings that they get on their environmental standards.

PANYARD: They're here because of this crisis. They're not here on a regular basis.

LT. GOV: Absolutely not. But we asked them to come to it.

STAROBIN: Governor, we were told that some of the people working there were contaminated. Can you tell us how many and to what extent?

LT. GOV: No, I cannot. There were, the company told us and this we have not substantiated, the company told us that there were some contaminants in clothing, contaminents that have been discarded and they are going through the normal health procedures. As far as we know there is no substantiated evidence yet, as far as we know, of any permanent health damage, but I think we will have to get that from the company as soon as they make those assessments.

MACLEOD: Why don't you know how many employees were there and what's being done to see if they've been contaminated?

LT. GOV: We have talked to the company about that and that being the company's responsibility, our concern, our immediate concern was to make sure that there is no problem insofar as possible contamination with the general public at large. That was our immediate concern from a governmental standpoint.

AMIC: Which direction was the wind blowing?

LT. GOV: It's been blowing in various directions during the day. In the morning toward the West Shore. In the afternoon, up north.

STAROBIN: Is there any evidence so far of negligence on the part of the company or any workmen?

LT. GOV: Not that I know of Sandy. But that would probably be a very complex legal question and I can't begin to tell you that this afternoon.

LENTZ: How much [redacted] was this afternoon between 11:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.?

LT. GOV: We have no reliable foundation to say how much was, but we do know that the company has told us that the readings that they have taken and the readings that the Department of Environmental Resources have been party to have not shown them to be higher than what the normal, I think the highest reading we have heard of on site is 7 milirems an hour.

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STAROBIN: Why did it take three hours between the time of the accident and the time of the report?

LT. GOV: The officials from Met Ed, I asked them that this afternoon at the meeting. They said that when the first incident occurred, which was outside the nuclear part of the reactor, that began a process which slowed down, and cooled down the reactor and there were no detectable incidences of abnormal radiation leakage within the reactor until 10 minutes of 7. They say when that occurred and they say under normal procedures that is when they are supposed to call the Civil Defense and they contend they did it at that time.

STAROBIN: Doesn't that indicate some kind of failure in the design, some kind of negligence in the design of the system, at least the alarm system?

LT. GOV: If the alarm system were formed to detect radiation and radiation did not begin to leak until 10 minutes of 7, it does not. But I am not a nuclear engineer, Sandy and I can't tell you.

STAROBIN: But the point of it is if that there was an inevitability of leakage of nuclear radiation at the time that the system. . .

LT. GOV: Apparently not. According to the people at Met Ed, there was not an inevitability. The inevitability occurred due to a malfunction and later on after the first stoppage of the turbine.

AMIC: Can you give us an example of what 7 miRirems per hour is as related to. . .

LT. GOV: When you have a chest X-ray you get about anywhere from 20-100 millirems an hour.

AMIC: So, it's still very low then?

LT. GOV: Very low. Concern. But not one of tremendous urgency.

SPUTTO: The government officials who are over there who are doing the monitoring around the test, around the site of the tests, where are they, are they in the plant? Are they in Goldsboro? Or are they on the island, where are they?

GERUSKY: The DOE team which we requested come in will be taking samples around the plant and doing analysis outside for us, they are assisting us. Our team went down around noon and were ————just radiation measurements. That's how we found out that there were some releases from this radiation measurement.

BRUTTO: What did you detect?

GERUSKY: They were detected all the way down to three-mile island.

PANYARD: And Met Ed did not volunteer that information?

GERUSKY: We had received information at 11:00 that there were some off site radiation levels of 2½ mr per hour, directly east of the plant, and we went down to verify and to get more information.

PANYARD: I want the geography of this plant.?

AMIC: From several miles down, where does it start from?

GERUSKY: From Harrisburg.

BRUTTO: Tom, I want the geography. Where physically are your people taking the samples? On the island?

GERUSKY: They're taking it off the island. We're taking it in the environment around the plant. Outside of the plant site. The Department of Agriculture, for example is now going out and trying to get the first milk samples from the general area, so we can determine if any iodine is being picked up by the cattle that are out.

BRUTTO: Are you talking about York County? The general area. .

GERUSKY: York, the four county area. York, Lancaster, Dauphin, Cumberland.

BRUTTO: Was there anybody inside the plant while this leak occurred to determine whether there is more radiation wherever it is?

GERUSKY: There are still people in the plant, operating the plant. Both unit 1 and 2.

BRUTTO: Are there government officials in there who are. . .

GERUSKY: Yes. NRC people are inside.

BRUTTO: Is there anymore leakage?

GERUSKY: We don't know at this time. I don't have the information. I know it has been decreased since they stop venting steam at about 1:30 and what the level is at this point, I don't know.

WIGGINS: ----------indicate in the statement that there is still more steam or some material in there that conceivably could. . .

GERUSKY: Yes. There is going to be probablay some small amounts of radioactivity going to be released. In addition, if you get close enough to that reactor, you're probably going to see radiation just from the reactor itself because it's a big source of radiation right now. There is a lot of radioactivity inside the containment.

FERRICK: Where was the 7 millirems per hour measured?

GERUSKY: That was at the boundary at the fenceline.

FERRICK: That was up on the island itself?

GERUSKY: At the fenceline.

FERRICK: Was the company suppose to inform you. .

GERUSKY: They did.

FERRICK: When did you find out that they were venting this radioactive steam?

GERUSKY: They were venting from the moment they shut the reactor down. It's a normal procedure to vent. They did not detect any increased radiation until about 11:00 when they informed us that they found radiaiton levels. There's a question concerning where that radiation was coming from. Apparently, from our readings, it was coming from that steam vent. We don't know how yet. But, it's possible that something else broke in that reactor steam system that caused cross contamination.

LIVINGOOD: Where is that steam vent? Is that in the primary containment?

DORNSIFE: No, secondary.

DORNSIFE: It's actually, the steam —— goes right into the environment.

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LIVINGOOD: Whereas normally that secondary water is not contaminated?

WIGGINGS: This is steam from secondary water?

DORNSIFE: Yes.

LIVINGOOD: I have a couple of questions. Number one, has the company given you any indication that they had found any evidence of fuel element rupture?

DORNSIFE: Yes. They have said there has been some evidence of I'm not sure if it's technically fuel element rupture, but some element of fuel decay which they, cladding damage, which they say is something that is under control. It's a zirconium medal that encapsulates the ————————.

LIVINGOOD: So, it is a breakdown in one of the encasement rods, right? So that radioactive particles that were encased in those rods are escaping into the primary cooler. The primary coolant somehow or other is getting into the secondary system. Isn't that true? The presence of iodine. The presence of first of all, where did you detect the iodine ————this morning? Was that at Goldsboro?

DORNSIFE. Yes.

LIVINGOOD: Was that in the form of ————matter or ————?

DORNSIFE: Well, iodine can be either.

LIVINGOOD: Which one was it?

DORNSIFE: There is no way to tell. It's————————————so you get both.

LIVINGOOD: You don't know whether it was ————————
Anyway, that would suggest, would it not that there was a release of primary coolant, right?

DORNSIFE: Yes. To get any activity out, it had to be primary coolant.

LIVINGOOD: How did that primary coolant get out of the primary containment building and into the secondary ————coolant system which is where the steam venting is right?

LIVINGOOD: How did that secondary system get contaminated?

LT. GOV: According to the company and I think that in these kinds of questions you are going to have to ask the company because we didn't have somebody there.

FERRICK: The company won't answer the questions.

LT. GOV: According to the company as they told us is that it is a normal procedure for there is a normal and I don't know the technical term for it, a normal release of water from the primary system into a tank in an auxiliary building. That tank, one of the faults occurred when that tank overflowed and it was vented from there. The release of that water from the primaries and this is what the company told us, from the primary building into the auxiliary building was not abnormal. What was abnormal was the overflow and the subsequent venting.

LENTZ: That was the major venting————. The overflow of that tank?

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LT. GOV.: That is what they have indicated to us. Now you will have to check with them because I am not a nuclear engineer and you'll have to get the story ...

REPORTER: Does that mean, was that operative an hour ago, or will it be operative right this moment. I mean are there going to be ventings overnight, or...

LT. GOV.: There will not be ventings unless we are informed of them and from the company's standpoint, the ventings will be ventings which are to relieve the pressure from the primary area and will be below the danger level of nuclear radiation.

PANYARD: Are ventings anticipated throughout the next 24 hours? 48 hours?

LT. GOV.: Not by us.

CAT: What is the condition down there, is this thing under control or not? Do they know what they are doing? Are they cleaning it up?

LT. GOV.: Yes, I think it is fair to say that they are in the process of cleaning it up but whether they know what they are doing or not, I would, not having been down there, I could not tell you.

SEXTON: What is the alternative to venting?

LT. GOV.: The alternative in the company's words, to the original venting, was a build-up of heat and pressure in the primary area which according to them would be intolerable.

SEXTON: What does that mean?

LT. GOV.: You would have to ask them.

REPORTER: There would be an explosion, is that what you mean?

LT. GOV.: Not an explosion..

WIGGINS: Did you ask anyone from the company to come to this news conference.

LT. GOV.: No I did not.

WIGGINS: OK, why not, because they are the ones who have all the answers, you can't answer our questions, is it not the responsibility...

LT. GOV.: The responsibility as a government official is to speak to the company people and to try to get what we feel is their story and to discern what they may or may not have done. Mr. Herbine who met with me indicated that ... he had spent a half hour before talking with us with the press. We had assumed that he had made a public statement, and had made himself available.

AMIC: Do you see any need to start to evacuate people out of that area?

LT. GOV.: No we do not.

AMIC: How are you going to keep them calmed down so they won't want to leave?

LT. GOV.: Because there have been no indications so far of any high level nuclear radiation in the environment.

REPORTER: Is there a potential for it?

LT. GOV.: We do not see a potential for it.

LENTZ: Governor, I am a little confused on what is wrong with that plant.

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Tell me where I am wrong please, first of all you are saying that there is some damage to the ---------- which would surround the uranium core; second that there was a valve, because of the pressure that was built in the primary cooling system, that a valve went off in that primary cooling system; third that there is an ----------, there are three things that are wrong, is that correct?

LT. GOV.: I said an auxiliary building.

LENTZ: Were all those things wrong?

DORNSIFE: The normal cool-down mode when the plant shuts down is to dump steam to get down to a point of pressure and temperature where an internal circulating system can take over to remove the —— heat from the plant. Now normally this steam is not contaminated. They think there is a possibility it may have been which could be one of the problems. But in addition to that, there was the steam condensing or the steam or the water that was coming out of the primary using the cool-down mode they were in at one point before they went into the steam generator cool-down mode - the water was going into the drain tank in the primary containment and it was being taken out of the reactor building into the auxiliary building.

LENTZ: That was radioactive water?

DORNSIFE: Yes, that was radioactive water.

FERRICK: We have a schematic drawing of this, of Met Ed's three-mile island and we all have copies of it, would you explain it to us on the drawing?

DORNSIFE: I don't think that is really detailed enough to get into that. These are not the main systems, the problems that occurred were not....

BRUTTO: What was the relationship between the rupture of the fuel element and the valve failure.

DORNSIFE: I really don't know.

BRUTTO: Are they realted?

DORNSIFE: There is a possibility that they could be.

LENTZ: How did the steam become radioactive? Is that a mistake. That is not supposed to happen.

DORNSIFE: The information that I had gotten was there may, they believe there may have been some rupture in the steam generator which caused primary water to get into the secondery. They haven't confirmed that.

PANYARD: Do you know if radioactivity has ever been released into the atmosphere by accident by a nuclear generating station in the U.S. prior to this?

DORENSIFE: There have been incidents where small amounts of primarily noble gas had been released but not to this magnitude as far as we know.

FERRICK: What type of radiation is this? Do you have the technical name. I understand that there are different names?

DORNSIFE: Well, there is gamma, which is the kind that you would see you know would be external denger essentially. You would have a gamma source and you could be exposed to it just by walking next to it.

FERRICK: What type is this do you know?

DORNSIFE: It is a combination of all types. The iodine is primarily beta. In other words it is not a problem unless you get it internally.

LENTZ: How does iodine come out of this?

DORNSIFE: Iodine is a fission product. When the uranium fissions a whole series of fission products are produced of which iodine is one.

JENSEN: You say this was the largest we have ever had. In terms of what?

DORNSIFE: Amount of activity. From the primary indications we have now, we think that is the case.

GERUSKY: I think that there have been releases from other installations that were of greater amounts than this release.

FERRICK: How do you know if the companies are not giving you all the information?

GERUSKY: Well, there was a few years ago, in South Carolina, a release from the plant down there and it went out to sea. There have been releases from a variety of plants over a period of time. This is not, this is large but I would hesitate saying its the worst.

REPORTER: Mr. Gerusky, the company has only mentioned iodine once as being released. There was an inferential reference to other isotopes. Have they told you if other isotopes have been found?

GERUSKY: Well, let's hope it wasn't only iodine 131 that was released, because if we found those levels of radioactivity in the environment and it was only iodine 131 we would be in trouble.

REPORTER: What else was found?

GERUSKY: There should be a lot of noble radioactive, gases in the environment and that is what is giving us the radiation.

REPORTER: Radon?

GERUSKY: Not radon, but... ——and krypton.

REPORTER: How will we know ——inqudible————?

GERUSKY: Samples are being analyzed right now to determine the quantities of radioactive iodine that were in the environment and we will be checking milk and other materials to see if it is being picked up and if we can also check people.

REPORTER: Mr. Gerusky, is it possible that that secondary system has been contaminated over a period of time?

GERUSKY: I doubt it.

REPORTER: Or was this just one incident?

GERUSKY: There is a possibility that both sides of, their two sides, there are two boilers, two sides, both could have been contaminated as a result of this incident.

BRUTTO: The contamination may have jumped, that is that it could have come out of the plant and skipped a few miles down-wind before it came down, that it wouldn't be contaminated near the plant, but further on down?

GERUSKY: Yes, if you got a high enough release point, there is going to be a point at which it is not going to touch down and once it hits ground it will spread out.

BRUTTO: Are you checking down-wind. How far down-wind are you checking for contamination?

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GERUSKY: We are going to be spreading out around the plant, starting with the plant and go as far out as we need to go until find nothing. We are going to go out 10,20,30 miles at this point.

AMIG: What do you tell people that were outside, near there during 11 and 1 today?

GERUSKY: We didn't know between 11 and 1 that anything was really happening except for one radiation reading and at 1:00 when we got some information that we had from our trip from Harrisburg, down back to us, and called the plant at that point they were shutting the steam system down which would stop the exposure.

AMIG: What do you tell them at this point, I mean they were out, nobody knew it, should they go to their doctor?

GERUSKY: No, at this point, until we can determine what the maximum possible exposure could have been and that will be shortly. I expect it in the next day or two. We will know what the worst case would have been and I think we can then make a determination. It could be very,very small and it looks like it might be very, very, small— Our iodine information, of iodine, the release of iodine which is the critical isotope. The information we have got from our lab so far, indicates that iodine levels are well below what one would allow in the environment normally.

FERRICK: This morning you gave us a theory of what you heard happened. Did you get any further indications from the Met Ed officials as to how this began? And if so, could you tell us?

DORNSIFE: Well I wasn't at the meeting that just occurred between the company officials. I was in the office keeping updated with the situation.

FERRICK: Did they explain to you what happened. Why this happened.

DORNSIFE: That information was the latest I had gotten before I came over to the press conference.

LT. GOV.: I think we have explained everything that they have told us about how it happened on an non-technical basis. Our concern in the meeting was to determine, what I think your concern was this morning, and I think ours, why it took so long to report it when, and I don't know if even they know why the turbines shut down. I think this is going to take some detective work.

JENSEN: What happened on Jan. 14, Governor? I understand that on Jan. 14, the plant was closed down due to a faulty part in the turbine, and remained closed down for two weeks. What happened then?

DORNSIFE: You may be talking about a heater drain pump replacement.

FERRICK: Atmospheric Steam Release valve ruptured and it was closed down for two weeks. This happened on Jan. 15 - turbine trip test. Were you aware of that?

DORNSIFE: We get press releases. Right off I wasn't aware of that.

FERRICK: Are these the steam release valves that are now releasing the ...

DORNSIFE: That were, they were used for the normal cool-down —

PANYARD: You were not aware of the Jan. 15 incident?

DORNSIFE: We get press releases from, NRC and reports, I don't recall at the moment.

PANYARD: Is it not true that the plant started up a testing procedure last March and over the past 12 months it has been down for at least five months for safety reasons?

DORNSIFE: Well, it didn't go commercial until December. During that testing period it was down a few times because of problems that they did find. I don't know the exact amount of time. But that is normal until all the bugs are worked out of the systems. Most plants are like that in the testing period and the first few months they are commercial they do have some breaking in problems.

REPORTER: What caused ———inaudible———?

DORNSIFE: Overheating of the fuel, lack of cooling and the overheating of the fuel, typically.

WIGGINS: Does that pose a threat to radioactive releases?

DORNSIFE: Definitely, if the cladding isn't there more activity will get out.

LENTZ: Is it because of the cladding that steam became radioactive?

DORNSIFE: Not primarily, that allowed more activity to get into the primary system than would normally happen if that didn't occur. That didn't lead directly to the release of the secondary.

PANYARD: Governor, can you explain one more time the call at about 10 minutes of 7:00; that is when they felt that they should call.

LT. GOV.: Yes, that is when they began to detect abnormal amounts of radiation.

PANYARD: As far as the venting, are they required by law, regulation, or what have you, to inform DER or any state agency about when they are going to vent?

LT. GOV.: They are not required by law, correct me if I'm wrong Tom, but there is an understanding between DER and Met Ed that they would, but they did not.

FERRICK: Do you know if they informed the NRC?

LT. GOV.: I do not know if they informed the NRC?

LIVINGOOD: Mr. Dornsife, when that turbine tripped this morning somewhere around 4 or 4:30, did that automatically activate the shutdown of the reactor or did that activation have to be accomplished manually?

DORNSIFE: No, it part of the system's design so that if the turban trips the reactor will also trip.

LIVINGOOD: Now one of the few things that some of us apparently have been able ——— from Met Ed, is that the turbine tripped at 4:30 a.m. and that the emergency procedure at the plant began at 6:40. That is two hours and ten minutes. Why?

DORNSIFE: Well, I don't know what happened in the meantime but it could have been that, all the indications may have been normal up to that time, I don't know.

LIVINGOOD: What is the company saying about that?

LT. GOV.: The company is saying that the indications were normal up to that time that the normal safety functions were occurring and they didn't begin to see radiation until about that time. That is what they are saying, we have no way to verify that or not.

LIVINGOOD: They got alerted, didn't they, when they found water on the floor of the containment area?

LT. GOV.: They got alarmed when they began to detect radiation in the atmosphere, from our meeting with them.

LIVINGOOD: When did they see the water? Was that after?

LT. GOV.: I don't know.

SEXTON: Governor, they told you that they were detecting, this morning when we talked to you, they told you that they had detected radiation in the atmosphere. Was there ever a point today at which they told you no, we're sorry we are wroog, there is no radiation in the atmosphere?

LT. GOV.: No, although there were press reports that they had said so. But they had never told me that directly.

CZARNIAK: Did they contact you when they detected radiation outside the plant or within the primary...

LT. GOV.: Within the plant. Then according to them they went immediately and began to take onsite readings at the peripheral of the plant.

WIGGINS: Governor Scranton you said in your statement that the situation is more complex than the company first led us to believe...are you saying the company misled you on this?

LT. GOV.: I think there is a great deal of disappointment from our side that the company did not tell us that they were venting radioactivity, particularly when statements were represented that they made, that they said there was no radioactivity being put out in the atmosphere.

REPORTER: All day long, Governor, public officials like yourself and Met Ed people have been saying that there is not an immediate danger, but now ——————————saying that could lead to an increase in birth defects and cancer, is that a distinct possibility?

LT. GOV.: I don't know and I am not qualified to speculate on that.

REPORTER: Mr. Gerusky?

GERUSKY: Well, as was in the statement any increase in radiation exposure could cause an increased risk of biological effects, we don't know what the extent of that exposure is yet, so ...

REPORTER: Is there any chance that it contaminated the river?

GERUSKY: No I don't believe so, unless the amount that is in the air is washed to the ground and into the river and it, the concentration, it would be diluted.

FERRICK: It seems like there are so many things failing in that plant, could you get a list of what is not working right now, other than the plant itself, because it multiplies everytime we come up...

LT. GOV.: I think you would probably have to ask the NRC for that because that is generally there business and I am sure they will take an inventory of it.

PANYARD: Governor, is there any control that the state has over this Met Ed or is there anybody in the state who is qualified to determine if they are telling the truth which they have not put off notifying us of ther emergency this morning, they ———insaudible———— they could vent all night long, possible unless there are federal agents out there,

LT. GOV.: There are federal agents there. I think the control that the state

has if there is not indication that the amounts of radioactivity are above, at the level at which they are considered dangerous, then there is very little control that the state has. I think what we have to do is monitor and what we have to do is be prepared to evacuate and call in the federal government for outside examination and confirmation of exactly what the levels of radiation are

MACLEOD: Are you aware of any lawsuits pending against Met Ed right now charging that- ———— illegally?

LT. GOV.: No I am not, but that doesn't mean they are not.

CZARNIAK: Governor, did the company indicate to you after the ———was no longer being pumped into the generating station, what the pressure was inside the containment tower per square inch?

LT. GOV.: No they didn't...

DORNSIFE: We were asking all morning because that was a primary concern, because the amount of leakage through the containment is dependent upon the pressure and all morning they were saying that it was less than one lb. differential pressure.

PANYARD: What does that mean?

DORNSIFE: The pressure inside the containment was very very low.

CZARNIAK: How does it compare ————inaudible————

DORNSIFE: Well I am talking about differential pressure, above 14.7 lbs. per square inch, psi gauge pressure, which is differential pressure.

LT. GOV.: I think it is fair to say that the company did indicate to us that at the time when they met with us which was about a couple of hours ago, that within a few hours of that time, the whole cooling down system of that reactor would have been complete and there would be no further necessity for venting. Whether that is actually what has come to pass or nor, I can't attest to but we do have a promise from them that they will notify us to any venting.

SCOTZIN: Is this company shut down insofar as producing electricity.

LT. GOV.: Yes. it is

SCOTZIN: Is it shut down operationally?

LT. GOV.: Yes it is.

SCOTZIN: How long is it going to be shut down?

LT. GOV.: It depends upon the extent of the damage, it depends upon the extent of the safety problems. It will certainly not be a matter of days, it will be a matter of weeks.

REPORTER: There are a lot of people in the area and you talked about evacuation do you have plans for evacuation and are they all set to go?

LT. GOV.: Yes we do, Colonel Henderson is in charge of that operation and he has given me every assurance that, they were alerted first thing this morning, it was the first thing he did — alert evacuation personnel in all the surrounding counties and they have been ready to go since that time.

PANYARD: Why didn't the mayor of Middletown know until 9:00 in the morning about it?

LT. GOV.: I don't know, he has a civil defense representative who ought to be aware of that.

MACLEOD: Where are these people going to go if evacuated?

HENDERSON: All of these counties have evacuation plans predesignated school buildings, and so forth, this morning when we notified them, when we had received the general alert from three-mile island that there was a possibility of contamination outside of the plant gates we verified with the county civil defense directors, they in turn notified and alerted the school officials who, where the mass care centers and elsewhere where they are located, they notified the American Red Cross and their other agencies that would be involved in any evacuation to be prepared for evacuation. This was not a general notification to the public, this was merely the organization to lean forward, if you will, in the foxholes, to be prepared for this.

MACLEOD: How many people are we talking about?

HENDERSON: Well, we didn't know until we got a further reading as to where the unsafe conditions were.

MACLEOD: What is your estimate if there is an evacuation, how many people?

HENDERSON: I have none, if the wind is blowing toward Harrisburg it could get pretty heavy. If it is going down the river, down Route 441, there aren't a lot of people right along the river so...

MACLEOD: Is Harrisburg in danger of possible evacuation?

HENDERSON: Harrisburg is within the 10 mile range, not the five mile range. Basically our plans are based on the five mile range.

PANYARD: Where will they be evacuated to?

HENDERSON: Each county has predesignated locations.

PANYARD: Schools within the area?

HENDERSON: Schools are in the scheme.

PANYARD: I am not sure what they are being ——— from if they are going to stay in the area and go to a school.

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HENDERSON: Outside of the danger area, in the schools outside the danger area.

PANYARD: How likely is an evacuation?

HENDERSON: Right now, it's almost zero.

SWIFT: How many calls have you gotten from the public on this today?

HENDERSON: Very few. Most of ours have been from the press. As far away as California, and New York, Florida. I talked to Kevin Molloy at 1:00 this afternoon and he had had twelve calls in his office from citizens.

KIRKPATRICK: How far away from the plant has increased radiation levels been detected?

GERUSKY: Our surveys indicate that we saw increased radiation levels right here in the middle of Harrisburg for a very short period of time. Just slightly, but they were there.

REPORTER: Governor, was there any type of an explosion during the ———

LT. GOV: No.

PANYARD: Is there any danger of explosion now?

REPORTER: Governor, ———————————putting out reports that there was 8 times the lethal dose of radiation inside the reactor housing. If that is true then I'm asking if you can confirm that number one and number two, if that was true, was there anybody in the area of that housing or inside the housing itself that. . .

LT. GOV: First of all, I can't tell you if it was true. I assume what they're talking about is inside the primary housing which is built to house more than a lethal dose of radioactivity. But I don't intend to be an apologist for this situation. They don't have personnel within that primary area. If that's what he is referring to it could very well be. But there have been no indications from our talks with anybody or from the DER's monitoring that there has been an lethal dose of radiation anywhere on site, off site or anywhere in the area and I think that's the reason why we fell confident that we're not going to h have to evacuate.

LIVINGOOD: Have they told you what the level of radiation is or was inside that primary chamber? During the cooling down period?

LT. GOV: No, they have not.

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