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GOVERNOR'S PRESS OFFICE
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TRANSCRIPT
PRESS CONFERENCE
MARCH 29, 1979
10:20 p.m.

GOV. DJCK THORNBURGH
LT. GOV. WILLIAM SCRANTON, III
TOM GERUSKY, DIRECTOR, DER BUREAU OF RADIOLOGICAL PROTECTION
JIM HIGGINS, NRC INVESTIGATOR
CHARLES GALLINA, NRC INVESTIGATOR
COL. ORAN HENDERSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY-

GOVERNOR: Good afternoon. I'd like to address my initial remarks to the people of Central Pennsylvania. I believe at this point that there is no cause for alarm, nor any reason to disrupt your daily routine, nor any reason to feel that public health has been affected by the events on Three Mile Island. This applies to pregnant women, this applies to small children and this applies to our food supplies. I realize that you are being subjected to a conflicting array of information from a wide variety of sources. So am I. I spent virtually the entire last 36 hours trying to separate fact from fiction about this situation. I feel that we have succeeded on the more important questions. Since I was first apprised of this problem early yesterday we have implemented our own Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency, activated state health and environmental experts and called immediately upon technicians from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, United States Department of Energy, as well as other private sources. Earlier today in order to supplement the information supplied to us by various experts, I asked Lt. Gov. Scranton to tour the plant, view the reactor in question and give me at least one layman's impression. He has done so and he has informed me of his impression of calm competence at work at the facility. Parenthetically, I want to pay particular credit to Lt. Gov. Scranton, who has from the moment of his notice of this occurrence given of his time and effort around the clock as my delegate in fact gathering and in seeing that we had every resource available called upon to deal with a difficult situation. While we believe that the danger is under control at this time, we recognize that it is very important that all of us remain alert and informed.

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REPORTER: I think Paul said that that alarm is to notify people to take cover. Are people being informed that if they get a long siren that they should head for cover if it would be reactivated? Are people being informed that if they get a long....

WILLIAMSON: The meaning of the take cover signal is not generally known by the population and would not be used under these circumstances to, for that purpose.

REPORTER: What city employee made the decision to set off the alarm? Wasn't it Kevin Malloy?

GOVERNOR: I don't know what his name is. It was set off by a low-level employee.

REPORTER: It wasn't a civil defense employee?

GOVERNOR: It wasn't an ordered, planned siren.

MACLEOD: Did he just bump into it or did he deliberately trip it off?

GOVERNOR: I don't know I wasn't there, and I really am not terribly concerned with assessing responsibility for setting off alarms at this time.

REPORTER: -----was ordered by the county officials?

WILLIAMSON: That is not correct.

GOVERNOR: That is not correct.

ROSS: The emissions that are still coming from the reactor, are they less now than they were before and as each emission goes they are decreasing?

GERUSKY: I don't know, the second one that occurred was very small.

CRITCHLOW: These gentlemen have to get back to the command post in the Governor's Office. That will conclude the press conference. We'll keep you briefed either through informal briefings by myself or further briefings here.

We will continue to do so and to do everything that we can to see that the public is similarly situated. Thank you.

REPORTER: Did you feel that you were in any danger being that close to that plant today?

LT. GOV: There's certainly a risk. I went, first of all, you probably ought to know exactly what I did. I went to the plant, was taken on-site, went to the number one control room, looked at their method by which they are monitoring off-site radiation. They're using that room for that. Went from there to the number one turbine and from there to the number two control room, where of course they're controlling the problem in the number two reactor. From there I went to the auxiliary building where the radiation currently is. I was there for about 5 minutes, we measured about 3500 millirems of radiation.

LENTZ: Were you inside the building?

LT. GOV. Yes. From visual observation there is currently water in that building, but not very much. If it was in your basement, you wouldn't worry about it. But it is covered with plastic. There is high radiation. It is being ventilated as the company and as the Dept. of Environmental Resources says. There is obviously ~~some~~ risk at that point. I was suited up in extraordinary suit. Had a respirator on, checked before I went in, checked when I came out. When I left the plant I had been exposed to for the time that I had been in there, which was about, on site, we were there for about 2 and a half hours. I was exposed to about 80 millirems. And I feel fine.

JENSEN: Could I ask Mr. Higgins, what is being done at the present time at the plant and does there continue to be a fallout of some degree.

HIGGINS: The plant at the present time has ~~proceeded~~ from where it was last night, last night the reactor was in essentially a stable condition. They have ~~proceeded~~ to cool it down further from last night. The steam bubbles that existed in the loop, the high points of the loops, which existed yesterday have all been collapsed and it's now a solid water system throughout both primary coolant loops. They have flow through the primary coolant loops, with the reactor coolant pump. The plant has been cooled down very slowly throughout the day, the temperature in the plant is now approaching the cold shut-down region, which we'd like to have it in. The temperature is approximately 280° now in the plant, as of about an hour or two ago. The plant pressure is about 900 psig and control is normal pressure control with their pressurizer.

REPORTER: What is the shut-down level?

HIGGINS: Normally, for cold shut-down we bring it into the range of 100 to 200 degrees. The final system which will be used to bring it to the cold shut-down condition and to maintain it in that condition is a decay heat removal system. That system has been inspected and evaluated and appears to be fully operational. The plant is waiting to initiate that system to make sure that it is the proper and the safe thing to do, to take the plant down the rest of the way to the cold shut-down condition.

HIGGINS: The reactor is now in a stable condition and evaluation is going on by both Met Ed and by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to determine that that is the proper thing to do, to bring it down and we're evaluating this step of this situation.

REPORTER: inaudible.

HIGGINS: There are still some emissions from the auxiliary building as there were yesterday.

REPORTER: At what level?

HIGGINS: And Mr. Gallina can talk about the radiological aspects of this.

REPORTER: Tell us about the emissions?

GALLINA: Yesterday, when we spoke we had variable release rates, but when it came down to measuring the plume off-site, and Mr. Freis who is here did say that they could measure it as far as 16 miles. We had several flights since then and one this morning measured a dose rate of approximately 0.2 mr per hour in the plume downwind. They took a flight out to about 10 miles and they still seem very very low levels. This is a great reduction from what we saw yesterday.

REPORTER: 10 miles in what direction?

GALLINA: North. This is the main direction that the plume has gone, north, northwest basically since the time of the release. They flew below the plume in order to ascertain how much radioactivity had actually been deposited on the ground and found it below their minimum detectable activity. Which means that ground deposition has been negligible.

REPORTER: When will the radiation stop and -----?

GALLINA: We assumed last night or had evaluated the situation to such an extent that we thought that the primary source of radiation was this water that had been transferred to the auxiliary building. They stopped ventilation for a short time last night to confirm this, they found that the on-site and off-site releases did drop. However, radiation levels inside unit 1 started to climb. So they did put ventilation back on because the people still have to work inside these reactors to bring them to a safe condition. This morning they began transferring the liquid back into solid tanks in the ----system of unit number 2. A majority of that water has been removed that way. The release rates have dropped dramatically. I can't give you an exact number because the number will vary with time and vary from where you are measuring it. But essentially off-site releases have decreased even further than we saw last night. On-site releases where yesterday we were talking about dose levels in the area of 50-70 mr, various places on-site at one point today we're seeing levels from 3 to 1/2 of an mr per hour. This situation varies, of course with meteorology, it varies with time and conditions and various pockets of air that get picked up by the ventilation system, so we may see one high reading and then it will drop down again.

REPORTER: We were told today that some readings as high as 20 millirems in and around the community.

GERUSKY: Pennsylvania Department of Health did report to us one location I believe in Goldsboro. . .

REPORTER: Environmental Resources.

REPORTER: Was that today?

GERUSKY: That was this morning, I believe and that was reading 20 mr per hour.

REPORTER: You're saying that now this afternoon it has decreased or is it still possible it could go up that high again?

REPORTER: What time was that?

GERUSKY: 6:30 this morning versus 2:00 this afternoon.

REPORTER: Is any radiation still leaking ----- coming out of the containment building?

GALLINA: There is direct radiation coming out of the containment building because the basic situation that occurred yesterday has not changed. The reactor coolant water is in containment and will be there until it can be processed and the situation evaluated. The radiation that we are reading outside of containment is basically the same. Radiation levels from the auxiliary building have decreased significantly from yesterday. They are still high, they are still significant, but they have decreased substantially from what we saw yesterday.

REPORTER: How much radioactive water is still behind the containment building?

HIGGINS: Approximately 25,000 gallons.

REPORTER: Inaudible

REPORTER: How much is still left?

HIGGINS: That was the initial amount.

GALLINA: 250,000 gallons was the initial amount. That was in the reactor building.

HIGGINS : Not the auxiliary building.

GALLINA: Right. The auxiliary building we never really had a gallon figure. The people who did go down there yesterday were saying there were puddles at all of the floor drains ranging from 6 to 8 inches. If you can assume a floor drain this would spread out to cover a good size amount of the floor. The pumping operation has stopped temporarily but at this point all the floors are now just wet. They're some minor puddles where the sloping of the concrete is not 100% perfect.

REPORTER: inaudible.

GALLINA: Auxiliary building, Containment building has not changed. The condition of containment is as it was yesterday.

REPORTER: Is there still 250,000 gallons in there?

GALLINA: If that was the amount of the release 250,000 gallons are still in there.

REPORTER: How much was pumped out into the auxiliary building?

GALLINA: That we have no idea?

REPORTER: Of contaminated water?

GALLINA: Is inside containment, yes.

REPORTER: The NRC in Washington said 8-12,000 gallons were pumped out -----

GALLINA: That's possible. I did not get an exact number on the gallons that were released.

REPORTER: They also said there were readings as high as 30 rems in Goldsboro,-----do you know anything about that?

GALLINA: No.

GERUSKY: I can answer the question. The 30 rems was an open window beta gamma reading. 20 millirems was a gamma reading. We're trying to keep everything in perspective instead of -----one number to another number 20 is in gamma and 30 was in beta gamma.

REPORTER: -----could you put this in perspective for somebody who is living there? What is the effect of all of this radiation on people?

GALLINA: Primarily at this point in time, the basic problem that is being experienced at Three Mile Island is an on-site problem. In other words, the releases are of such a nature that dilution by atmosphere, by atmosphere by the time it reaches the off-site levels, areas are negligible. So somebody living at the site is no longer an off-site problem, it's primarily an on-site near containment inside the auxiliary building type of a problem.

REPORTER: What is the effect of radiation that was released yesterday? -----off-site?

GALLINA: Well, that is kind of hard to ascertain. No accident of this type carries no risk with it. However, the assessment of that risk is made by other agencies and Pa. Dept. of Health has looked at it very carefully and as far as I know they see no problem with respect to public health at this time. Based on -----.

REPORTER: According to what was said up here, at 6:30 this morning there were 20 millirems per hour and at 2:00 it was down 1. Is this some sort of a fluctuating thing? How did it become decontaminated?

GALLINA: Ok. If you could bear with me, assume a pocket of air is up in the corner of the auxiliary building and the fans are constantly ventilating it. So, eventually this small pocket will work its way through the filters and radiation will drop to a significant amount and go out through a filtered vent.

GALLINA: (con't) And the wind will carry it. Now depending on the conditions if it is a very stable condition your wind is not blowing very hard or not meandering over the countryside, this puff of radiation you'd say will go more or less contain, and when they're there measuring it, they can measure this puff of radiation. When they come back at 1:00, the wind could have changed, the conditions could have changed, this now is dispersed and no longer a 20 mR per hour source.

BRUTTO: Well, could it be somewhere else?

GALLINA: Well it never goes back the other way. In other words if it goes from 20 to 1...

BRUTTO: My question is do we have some sort of a cloud moving through that merely moves through an area and leaves something behind and while it wasn't 20 millirems in Goldsboro, it could be 20 millirems somewhere down the road?

GALLINA: No, it probably would be a lot less down the road. In other words, it would disperse from that point. If you could picture it being carried and then it could come close to the earth, be detected, it's dispersing at all times. As I mentioned before, the -----flights, the flights that we make with detectors in airplanes, flew below the plume, to detect what actually was being deposited on the ground.

REPORTER: Well this is not then -----of contamination that takes a period of time to become decontaminated?

GALLINA: No. This takes a period of time depending wind and meteorology to be dissipated.

REPORTER: We're talking about hours rather than years?

GALLINA: Right. Very few hours.

JENSEN: In your investigation you discovered a substantiation for a report that human error caused the accident?

GALLINA: We looked into this on a preliminary level. I hope you can realize that our primary concern now, is to make sure that the entire system, the reactor, the whole plant is put into a stable condition. We are not doing a very detailed investigation as far as going through all computer records and interviewing operators because they're busy doing their job at present. But, a preliminary evaluation has indicated that no operator error occurred. That is preliminary at this time. But we have seen no indications to substantiate what was said in the newspapers.

REPORTER: I understand that from CBS news reports this morning that that statement was attributed to what they call the senior NRC official in Washington, who said that there was for some unknown reason, for a brief period shortly after the first incident occurred at 4 o'clock that there was a shut-down in the emergency injection system.

HIGGINS: My sources within the NRC, I talk to some people as to why that was said and what the thoughts are and what we should be doing here as part of our inspection program. Certainly what we always do whenever we have any type of incident is to investigate it, inspect it to see what happened? What caused it, whether it be equipment failure, personnel failure, whatever.

HIGGINS: (con't) It was my understanding that the intent of the original statement that was made was that the NRC would consider that as a possibility as we do in any investigation and we would investigate to see if there was a problem to see if personal error could have contributed to this accident or perhaps made it worse. We do want to explore all possibilities. That's my understanding of the source of that.

REPORTER: --- inaudible ---

HIGGINS: We have not identified any operator error yet. There have been equipment failures. Which we have identified and we intend to inspect further to determine what more equipment failures there are, if any, what operator errors there are, if any, and what other causes, if any, contributed to the incident at hand.

REPORTER: --- inaudible ---

HIGGINS: The initial one that seems to have caused the problem - there was an initial problem in some ----- units which resulted in the initial trip of the condensate pumps, booster pumps, and so on, finally to the reactor trip. There was an initial problem after the reactor trip and the pressure was going up a relief valve which opened properly on increasing pressure, however then that relief valve did not -----, did not shut as it should have as the pressure came down, and that contributed to the blow down into the containment of the reactor coolant and also contributed to the lowering of the pressure which caused the reactor coolant pumps to be secured. So those are two problems that we know of right now.

REPORTER: When do you expect the core to come to a cold shut down?

HIGGINS: Neither the NRC nor Met-Ed can give you a time for that. As I said before we are evaluating right now each step before it is taken to make sure the proper step is taken and that it is safe and when those evaluations are complete we will proceed on with the process. As long as the actual mechanical steps to bring it to the cold shut-down condition can be done within a day. As I said before, the reactor is in a stable condition now. And we are, we that is the NRC, and Met-Ed are evaluating each step along the situation along the course of action that has been taken to make sure that the proper steps are taken.

REPORTER: Governor Thornburgh, I understand Dr. Gallina to say that there is radiation emanating from the containment building itself.

GALLINA: Well, with 250,000 gallons of reactor coolant inside the containment you are going to get radiation, radiation - no contamination or leakage, in a physical sense, but radiation that can be detected outside the containment.

REPORTER: How much of a problem is that to you right now?

GALLINA: Off site it is no problem. On site if someone was to work next to the containment wall for a sustained period of time there would be a problem in that as exposure would approach regulatory limits.

SCOTTIN: Have there been reports back made from the state?

GOVERNOR: I think Tom you might...

GERUSKY: Of seven samples taken yesterday we saw one that might of had very slight quantities of radioactive iodine in it. 20 picocuries per liter. In yesterday's rain fall there was slightly detectible radio-iodine in rain fall if was the positive on the ground and the cow was out in pasture, ate the grass, the level would be 30 picocuries. Insignificant compared to the '76 fall-out or any routine operation.

REPORTER: How many farms did you test?

GERUSKY: We tested seven yesterday - we were testing as many as we could this morning, I don't have the results back from the lab this afternoon.

SCOTTIN: Where were these farms?

GERUSKY: Surrounding the plant but the ones that we were particularly interested in were ones in the Goldsboro area because of the high radiation level we found there this morning and north and northwest of the plant

REPORTER: What was the Chinese fall-out-----.

GERUSKY: It was iodine. 100's of picocuries in some samples.

REPORTER: Far greater than this.

GERUSKY: Far greater than this and spread over a much larger area and this was only one cow. Other samples of air born radactivity which we detect we could not find any significant quantities or radioactive iodine. What we are seeing in the environment is Xenon - radioactive Xenon, and it is a noble gas and we can see it on our detection equipment in our laboratory in Harrisburg. The background levels in Harrisburg.

REPORTER: -----inaudible-----

GERUSKY: Well the danger for the people at the plant is something that will continue for a time. However, it is not a danger in the sense that most people think of danger. Most of the people who work there, as most of the people who work for the commission have a thorough knowledge of radiation and and we respect it - we don't fear it. So we don't look upon it as a danger, we act accordingly - we take the precautions we have to take, we monitor our stay times in these areas and do the job as the job is suppose to be done.

REPORTER: Walter ----- was on national television at 7:00 this morning saying that the temperature inside the ----- was 280° - we now found out that 10 hours after he has made this statement it is still 280°.

HIGGINS: Yes, the temperature as I was saying before, the containment, it has been brought to essentially a stable condition and the additional cooldown will have to be done by the decay heat removal system. That decay heat removal system has not been put on yet and evaluations are still going on to assure that putting this system on is the proper thing to do at the proper time, and when those evaluations are through with to assure that we do want to do this then we will continue the cool down.

REPORTER: ---inaudible---

REPORTER: Alright now, when you are talking about this gradual process of ventilating the auxiliary and you got radiation still emanating from the reactor containment building itself can you give us any idea - any time frame when this radiation is going to stop.

GALLINA: On site it would be very difficult to estimate on site when the radiation problem would be totally eliminated.

REPORTER: Can you give us an idea - a week, a day, a month, a year?

GALLINA: All I can say is that between yesterday and today the radiation levels have been reduced significantly and as each day progresses they continue to go down. There are levels there now which would allow people to operate normal functions, however we would like to see the doses as low as possible. So it is a benefit-risk type of situation that you have an operator go in and perform an operation now or do you wait two days until the radiation goes lower?

REPORTER: I am thinking about the person living across the river from that plant or the person who lives 10 miles down. What do you tell them? Do you have any idea when this is going to stop.

GALLINA: There is no off-site consequences of this. Another words for the person living next to the site boundary. There is no more danger today than there will be from a week from now or a week ago. Another words it is not affecting anybody off site at all. It is a logistics problem for the people working on site. OK - that is true. But basically, the off site problem, the off site potential has decreased significantly since yesterday.

REPORTER: Are you saying the danger is over?

GALLINA: Based on what we have been able to see so far the danger is over for people off site.

REPORTER: Was there a danger at one time.

GALLINA: Well whenever there is a release off site there is a potential danger.

REPORTER: Speaking of danger, Governor you said in your opening statement, you said fairly categorically that the people of central Pennsylvania are not in danger. They have no worries. I am interested in what you based that on, particularly since there does not seem to be any agreement in the scientific communities to the effects of low level radiation exposure.

GOVERNOR: I base it on the people that we have asked to advise us from the agencies that are charged with the responsibility of making these assessments, that is the Nuclear Regulatory Agency, our own department of environmental resources, department of health, department of energy and those private agencies that are involved with them in the assessment of what the consequences of the incident were. I am not an expert and I must acknowledge the advice that I seek and pass on is that which comes from those people who have been on site for the last 36 hours and evaluating what is happening.

SCOTZIN: Have you seen or you have any reports of any environmental samples in the area to justify your assurance that all is well.

GOVERNOR: Only the reports that these gentlemen have referred to.

HIGGINS: It is does not involve any additional venting or ventilating what it does do, is take the coolant from primary system with pumps which are located outside the reactor building and heat exchangers which are outside the reactor building in the auxiliary circulates the water and cools it. And so we are bringing water from outside the reactor building into the auxiliary building for cooling and this is a normal thing which is done for a long term cool down. The coolant however, is contained within pipes and within pumps and it is a completely closed system.

FERRICK: What has 250,000 gallons of radioactive water in the reactor how does one get rid of it?

HIGGINS: The plants do not get rid of it. They recycle the water and they reuse it. It is cleaned it and purified with filters and resins and it is reused.

FERRICK: Will there be radioactive or left over radioactive material once this process is completed.

HIGGINS: There is always radioactive waste which the plant generates in its own course of operation. There is more, naturally, as a result of this incident that happened..

FERRICK: Who is responsible for disposing that and how will they do and will it be done in any way that will differ from their current procedures..

GALLINA: No. Disposal of radioactive waste. as you mention it in cleaning up the 250,000 gallons of water will proceed by established procedural methods of ionic exchange, filtering etc. These filters and demineralizer and these resins that become contaminated from cleaning up the water will be disposed of the way they are always disposed of by solidification and transport off-site of nuclear waste as is done during normal operations.

REPORTER: Dr. Gallina we were told by the NRC that the exposure to the eight workers varied between one-half and one rem and that later today the NRC and the utility company briefed some congressman and told them that one worker got more than a quarter dosage. are you familiar with that?

GALLINA: I did not understand one part of that - they said that one worker exceeded the dosage.

REPORTER: they said that one worker exceeded the dosage for three months. 3.1 rems.

GALLINA: well I have no report to me of any individual being over-exposed to 3.1 rems. These evaluations are going on and I think one thing we have be bear in mind - on a real time basis the worker entering one of these areas, wanting to know how much he is being exposed to - will read a pocket docimeter. I think most of you are familiar with these. These give you an indication of how much you have been exposed to. Once he feels that he has gone over and established administrative limit then his film badge will be pulled and read and the film badge becomes the actual record it is much more exact than a pocket docimeter. This is more of a guidance. At this point no one has informed us that a worker was over-exposed 3.1 per quarter. It could be upon evaluation that a worker went in and picked up one rem and looking back since we are in the end of March, which is the end of quarter. It would be possible that his previous could have added up to more than 2, say it was 2.1, then yesterday he received one which would make it 3.1

REPORTER: (cont'd) for the quarter. At this point in time I have received no indication that this has occurred. And if, does, or course, we will find it in the course of our evaluation.

REPORTER: Is the fall-out we are seeing like the fall-out from a bomb. It is like bomb like fall-out.

GALLINA: Well fall-out is fall-out. However, the source of the fall-out is very important. As we mentioned today in the case of Goldsboro, we went back within hours and found that the dose-rate went from 20 MR down to one. Basically, because the material that is "falling-out" if you will, in this case may not even be fall-out because it has not left a deposit on the ground, had dissipated within hours. "Fall-out from a nuclear weapons test is very long-lying material" you will see it for a long period of time. It will be deposited on the ground. So any comparison between this type of fall-out and a fall-out from a bomb other than the name itself is totally erroneous.

REPORTER: This fall-out dissipates itself.

GALLINA: Yes.

SCOTZIN: What period of time?

GALLINA: Well, it dissipates itself in two ways - it has a relatively short decay time in itself plus the wind has been dissipating it as it travels along its path. The fall-out that we see from a nuclear weapons test, although it is carried by the air, basically deposits on the ground and we can detect it there for a long time. We find in the milk chain in vegetation samples and as Mr. Gerushi has said, when we start looking for deposited material or we go back and try to find the radiation again it isn't there because it's type is very short-lived and easily dispersable.

REPORTER: How has this accident Governor affected the nuclear program of the United States? Has it set it back?

GOVERNOR: WELL I think anytime that you have an incident that indicates that our systems are not infallible it causes a review process that is very important to assure the safety of the particular system in question. In this case I and fellow Pennsylvanian's and people across the nation are going to want to be assured by careful and thorough and dispassionate investigation that what occurred here is not some basic fault in the mechanism that has been devised for the generation of energy by using a nuclear power. We must await that evaluation when the effects of this incident have been dissipated enough so that that thorough kind of investigation can be undertaken. I don't think it necessarily tolls the use of nuclear power in this country. On the other hand, I think it is an important reminder that we can not rush pall-mall into an over reliance on a form of energy which we obviously don't have a complete handle on. And that certainly is the attitude the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania will take with regard to this facility and other facilities in this state.

(SEE PART 2)

-more-

REPORTER: Governor how do you feel about the three to four hour delay from the time that the incident began occurring to the time that state agencies were notified. Something was wrong.

GOVERNOR: I simply don't know. That is something that will have to be looked at in some detail and not on ——. I don't know whether the delay was proper or whether it was a delay at all in terms of the requirements of the terms to report and I think it would be irresponsible of me to speculate in mid-stream about that. We will naturally carry out a thorough review processes that state government and our agencies were involved in from the beginning of the incident.

REPORTER: Are you aware that the NRC said today in a testimony before the congress that there could have been tragic happenings since the delay was so long between the notifications?

GOVERNOR: Perhaps they are wiser then I, Jim. I want a chance to review all the facts and have the chance to review all the facts and have the opportunity to carry out...

REPORTER: In all seriousness how did you find out which facts were true and which facts were not - especially given the ...

GOVERNOR: I'm not infallible. This is my best estimate based on peoples whose judgement of have come to respect over the last 36 hours. And I am satisfied. My belief is, that at this point, there is really no reason be he alarmed or for people to disrupt their daily routines or to be concerned about any threat to their health. I'm not and I am a resident of this area.

REPORTER: Does that group include Met-Ed when you are talking...

GOVERNOR: I haven't talked to anybody from Met-Fd. We have state and federal agencies who are charged with the responsibility in these areas. And these are the people to whom I look for guidance.

REPORTER: Governor, was it your idea or Governor Scranton's idea to visit the plant or was it the company's invitation.

GOVERNOR: He visited at my request. I thought it was important for me to have the benefit of his onsite appraisal of what was going on, not as an expert, but as I say...

REPORTER: -----that you are obviously not an expert in nuclear power,

LT. GOV.: I didn't go down there as a technological expert. I went down there as a layman to first of all, get a first hand knowledge of what the actual setup was like. It is very difficult to sit here and talk to you in abstraction -- I had never toured a nuclear plant before, I wanted to see it, I wanted to have a feeling for the attitude of the people working there -- I wanted to see the building which housed the water, to see exactly how much water there was and see a reading for myself and report that to the Governor. That I could do and any layman could do it. I am obviously not a technological expert. I can't tell you why it broke down, or any of the questions you might want to ask the experts, but I think it is a situation that takes a matter of judgement. The greatest feel that you can bet for a situation, the better and I think that it served the Governor very well that I did that.

REPORTER: If supposedly the offsite danger is over and somebody answer this, that knows what they are talking about ---- inaudible---

GALLINA: The reactor now is in a much more stable condition than it was when any reactor was operating. All the safety systems work properly the rods are inserted. The aystem is coming

GALLINA CONTINUED: down to a normal cold shutdown mode. One of the reasons why the NRC is there at this time is to insure that every possible evaluation is being made by the Licensee as the system is brought to a cold safe shutdown mode. In other words, so that decision is made that doesn't involve evaluation of other alternatives, other possibilities, consequences, benefits, so that the most beneficial information is gathered from this incident and also so that no actions are taken which may in turn, put the reactor in a less stable or more dangerous condition. That is our primary function at this time. That is why I said, our detailed investigation has not really begun at this time -- because we are now, have at least five inspectors on the site almost 24 hours a day. There are three eight hour shifts, for monitoring all aspects of operation, health physics, offsite releases if any -- there haven't been any today. Onsite operations, health physics within the plant, as far as radiation exposure to workers, and it is our job now, to see that this is done faithfully. Therefore, we are going to make sure, if you will, another added defense in depth to the whole system, to make sure that it is safe.

REPORTER: You are indicating that although there is radiation still emanating from the reactor housing and still emanating because of this continual ventilation, correct me if I am wrong, you don't know when that is going to end -- there is absolutely no danger to anyone beyond the plant site nor will there be.

GALLINA: At the present time, as I said before, the radiation emanating from containment is contained-- it is going to be there if the plant did absolutely nothing to it for a hundred years, it would just decay away. It is not going to get worse, it is not going to get better, except by natural decay. We have no real concern in that particular area other than the exposures of workers who may be working around it. There is nothing that can happen at this point, that would with any degree of possibility allow that to get to the environment or offsite. With respect to the auxiliary building, the majority of the water which was causing the offsite problem has been now pumped and contained in solid tanks, in other words, it is no longer a water evaporation problem, it is a sealed contained problem. Again, now one of these tanks could break. Any tank could break at any plant at any type of power plant, not necessarily nuclear and as that turns out you will probably find these tanks are a lot safer than at a non-nuclear plant, but that is where our evaluation comes in. We are evaluating every step that is being taken so that we assure ourselves that the possibility or the probability of this occurring is very small.

REPORTER: This morning at the Met Ed press conference, their vice president -----indicated that he had identified at least three, possibly four may be more, leaks in the auxiliary building itself, exclusive of the ventilation -- are you confident and satisfied that those leaks, have been indeed, identified, and are they leaks, will they continue to be leaks, or what?

GALLINA: Well, once they are identified, some leaks can be closed up to some degree, some cannot. As the overall activity is removed from the floors, and bottled up in tanks, all these leaks in their own proportion start to decrease as far as the amount of activity being released. Some could be involving simple things such as open doors or different vent paths that air can get out of the building, exclusive of the plant ventilation and filtering system. To say that it is all coming from a point source, a hole in the ground, or a vent in side of the building, is not the truth. The majority of it is, that there are, as Mr. -----said, probably more than one I wouldn't say three or four or one -- at this point I have no idea of the exact number. There are several potential paths out of that building -- the primary one being the ventilation.

REPORTER: inaudible- -----

GALLINA: Well, it is a two part thing -- we do not tell them what to do. They have come to us and they have been in certain casesy have said, look we realize that you are here to inspect us and make sure we are doing everything right. If you see something that you don't feel is the right thing to do or you haven't looked at every possibility please let us know so that we can. What we do in other areas, is verify the work that they do. We don't do the work for them. We don't work hand in hand with them. If they go into an area and say we have come up with these, types of readings. This is the problem we have -- we will have an inspector go in and confirm that this is the problem that really exists. It works on various levels depending on the phase of the investigations going on. There are reactor personnel who are looking at the mechanical part of it, if you will, like Jim Higgins. There are people looking at the health physics part of it, as I am doing right now. So we are looking at it in many ways, in many levels. At no time do we actually do the work -----inaudible-----they may want to review it with us. We have experts that have been on the line yesterday, almost the entire day from Washington, these are people that are actually licensed and the experts in the field of nuclear engineering. This data base if you will, is available to the licensee. We don't push it on them. It is part of our, if you will, stable of expertise that we use in evaluating what they are doing.

REPORTER: Can you explain, why in your opinion, people like Dr. Sternglass and other people who deal with nuclear energy and genetics, ----- come out and issue statements saying that the effects of this accident could be harmful especially to newborns, fetuses, and young children. If what you say is true, the man is totally irresponsible. Am I correct?

GALLINA: I cannot speak for Dr. Sternglass. I cannot tell you why Dr. Sternglass says the things that he does. His motives...

REPORTER: He is not the only one...

GALLINA: Well, there are several. There are several experts on the other hand, that totally disagree. I think it is up to the scientific community on that level, to evaluate what Dr. Sternglass and others have said. It is not my place to say what he says is irresponsible, true or false. The experts that we have at present do not agree with Dr. Sternglass but why he says what he says is up to him it is not for us to judge.

REPORTER: -----inaudible-----

GALLINA: Right

REPORTER: Are you saying that there is no abnormal offsite radiation is ...

GALLINA: There is radiation in the environment that would not be there if this incident had not occurred, at least there was yesterday.

REPORTER: What about today?

GALLINA: Today there ere much lower levels than there was yesterday, as a matter of fact as I mentioned before, the offsite problem seems to be over.

REPORTER: Have you determined what the total maximum body dose, residents of the communities outside -----

GALLINA: At this point in time, no we have not.

REPORTER: -----10 mr per hour is that an average or is it a

REPORTER CONTINUED: fluctuating one. What is the...

GALLINA: 10 mr per hour was the dose rate measured at one point in time for one given period of time.

REPORTER: What about the average -----inaudible-----

GALLINA: Well, this is something that I guess Tom will be working on in the NRC to evaluate. We have to admit there was radiation released to the environment. With any type of incident like this there is a greater than normal...

REPORTER: -----reading at the airport is about 12 mr per hour - about 10 to 20 is a dental x-ray approximately right, which means about 20 x-rays per day? So what I wanted to find out from you, what, have you determined approximately how many times a normal dental x-ray that residents of surrounding communities have gotten.

GALLINA: The problem that we face is this: if for example in Goldsboro today, we measured 20 mr per hour in the morning, 1 mr per hour in the afternoon, how would you compute an average?

REPORTER: Could you take an hourly reading?

GALLINA: If you were at the same place, yes, but that takes a lot of manpower and there are so many other places that have to be analyzed. All we have to do, we determine the amount and the risk is put into proper perspective after everything has been evaluated. To make any type of assessment at this time would be very premature.

REPORTER: The question is really, how we would determine what the average is -----the question is how the state and company officials and government officials would determine what the average is.

GALLINA: Well I am asking the gentlemen to sort of pose the problem as we have to face it.

REPORTER: Can Mr. Gerusky respond as to the average doseage per person?

GERUSKY: We really don't know. We have educated guesses. Our guess is that noone has received an exposure in excess of 100 mrs as a result of this accident.

REPORTERS: one hundred?

GERUSKY: Probably a lot lower.

REPORTERS: 10 percent of the yearly dose in one 24 hour period?

REPORTERS: Is this -----

GERUSKY: No, this is people offsite and again, it could be a factor of -----lower...

REPORTERS: -----how many miles?

GERUSKY: This is within five to 10 miles of the plant.

REPORTER: Within 10 miles in every direction?

GERUSKY: You see that is the problem, this is an individual I am talking about and I am taking the worst case. I am taking the readings at the worst times and having the person be there at that time. So it is a very number, we are talking very conservatively when I say 100.

REPORTER: Up til now, in the past tense

GERUSKY: Up to now.

REPORTER: -----exposures beyond this over the next two or three weeks -----

GERUSKY: Very, very small.

REPORTER: 10,25,50?

GERUSKY: In the one range.

CRITCHLOW: Could we just have one or two more question. It is very hot in here.

REPORTER: A statement was made that normal background exposure is about 100 mrs a year.

GERUSKY: Yes, the average x-ray exposure in Pennsylvania is 100...

REPORTER: Is that anywhere in Pennsylvania, 100 mrs is that just in Goldsboro?

GERUSKY: No it is anywhere. It is higher in some spots and lower in some spots.

REPORTER: -----inaudible-----

HIGGINS: Currently, there have been no additional actions to my knowledge, however, I am not privy to what is going on in Washington with the NRC along those lines. I have been involved with this incident so I really couldn't comment on that.

REPORTER: -----inaudible-----

HIGGINS: I don't know that.
There are some indications that there was perhaps some fuel damage as a result of this.

REPORTER: What is the difference between fuel damage and meltdown?

HIGGINS: OK, very quickly, fuel assembly in a nuclear reactor has a stainless steel or various different types of cladding on it. The cladding around the fuel, sometimes they could develop if they where overstressed, if they went to too high of a temperature, they could develop hairline cracks, or perhaps gaps, or perhaps in the worst case, a meltdown, fuel damage is a crack, possibly a hairline crack which you couldn't even see through. A meltdown is exactly what it sounds like.

REPORTER: Mr. Gallina, you said that the danger is over for people offsite, if I have your -----

GALLINA: At this point in time, based on our evaluation of what the condition of the plant is, the danger is over for the people offsite.

REPORTER: Was there ever any danger offsite. That is, were the people living near this, ever in any danger at all?

GALLINA: In my personal opinion, all the safety systems work probably, and of course, any incident involves some danger, but there was no, in my opinion, significant danger to the people offsite during the course of this incident.

REPORTER: -----your assessment that the radiation levels are higher on-site are higher than what you would like to see, is that based on -----test or -----tests or . . .

GALLINA: We're not talking about any concentration numbers we're talking about -----measured dose rates. In other words we have radiation levels outside of containment that we consider higher than normal, if these same levels existed under normal conditions in an auxiliary building we'd be overjoyed because they're so low. Now we have radiation areas on-site that we didn't have before. They're still low, but higher than normal for those areas.

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