

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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38TH REGULATORY INFORMATION CONFERENCE (RIC)

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SPECIAL PLENARY - SHAPING A RESILIENT AND
INNOVATIVE FUTURE FOR NUCLEAR SAFETY: A FIRESIDE
CHAT WITH INDUSTRY LEADERS

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WEDNESDAY,

MARCH 11, 2026

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The Special Plenary Session convened at the Bethesda North Marriott Hotel and Conference Center, 5701 Marinelli Road, Rockville, Maryland and via videoconference, at 11:20 a.m. EDT, Michael King, Executive Director for Operations, presiding.

PRESENT:

HO K. NIEH, Chairman, Nuclear Regulatory Commission

MARIA KORSNICK, President and Chief Executive

Office, Nuclear Energy Institute

ADMIRAL ROBERT WILLARD, President and Chief

Executive Officer, Institute of Nuclear Power

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MICHAEL F. KING, Executive Director for Operations,
Office of the Executive Director of Operations,
Nuclear Regulatory Commission

P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

11:20 a.m.

MR. KING: Okay. Welcome back, everybody. It is my pleasure to open up this session titled, Shaping the Resilient and Innovative Future for Nuclear Safety. It is a fireside chat with some key industry leaders.

So we will start here. You know who I am. We just had this session. But today's conversation really brings together leaders from the NRC, NEI and INPO who have different roles but we share some commonalities. And so we want to have a conversation about our shared commitment to safety, operational excellence and readiness for the future.

So I will provide an opportunity for everybody to introduce yourselves and a little bit about what your organization does.

CHAIRMAN NIEH: Okay. Well, good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I am Ho Nieh. I am Chairman of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and we are here for protecting public health and safety and the common defense and security and to enable the safe and secure deployment of new nuclear technologies as well as the expansion of existing ones.

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MR. KING: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MS. KORSNICK: Thank you. I'm Marie Korsnick. And I am the President and CEO of the Nuclear Energy Institute. It is an organization that has over 370 members, 17 different countries. And we represent members across the value chain for nuclear from miners to public utilities to supply chain to new reactors to tech companies. So we sit in a very interesting seat where we can see across all of those different stakeholders. And we work to bring positive change to help the nuclear industry thrive at both the federal level, the state level and internationally as well.

Thanks. Bob?

ADMIRAL WILLARD: Thank you. I'm Bob Willard. I am the President and CEO of the Institute of Nuclear Power Operations. I think on the last panel, Jeff did a really nice job of framing who we are as INPO. And he also mentioned the World Association of Nuclear Operators. I am the Vice Chairman of the WANO Atlanta Center. And I carry the proxy for the U.S. industry into WANO matters worldwide. So the international domain of nuclear is important to us as well.

It was mentioned the complementary nature

of these three organizations, it is more than that. There is a synergy created in the way, I think, that these organizations work together. And while we talk about complementary but independent of one another, there is a level of cooperation that is ongoing and very rich in terms of delivering what our industry needs for its future.

MR. KING: Thanks. Thanks, everyone.

And I know some of you have already answered this question, and we don't have shovels here to show it for. But as we look ahead beyond just the near term, say 2030 and beyond, what does success look like for nuclear safety and operational excellence?

CHAIRMAN NIEH: Yeah, I'll start.

MR. KING: You can't start with the shovel.

CHAIRMAN NIEH: It's the shovel heard around the world. But I actually do want to add some granularity to what success looks like going forward into the future.

Success has to be high levels of safety and security. It always looks like that. Going a little bit further, I will give you a few different horizons into the 2030s, I would say in the very near-

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term, being more granular, success is a lot of what you just saw in the previous panel in the last day and a half.

It is next week when people see that the NRC is really leaning into its safety mission and doing enabling and that people realize that NRC is no longer an impediment to the development and expansion of nuclear energy and that our technologies are safely regulated.

Success also is by the end of this year, we have final Executive Order 14300 major rulemakings that provide flexibility and optionality with the licensing pathways for many different types of reactor designs.

Going into next year, success looks like NRC actively reviewing applications for new nuclear technologies in this country. NRC is open for business. We are waiting to receive applications for review while we are undergoing all this work.

Going further into the future, I think by the 2030s, before the end of this decade, success also is having commercial fuel cycle activities well built up, including the capacity for the United States because that helps the existing reactors as well as new reactors.

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It also looks like construction activities continuing, licensing activities, NRC approvals for construction by the end of -- before the end of the decade.

Micro-reactors in operation to me would look like success through the NRC licensing process. And also I would say that the lead designs of non-light water advanced reactors are approaching commercial operation before the end of this decade.

And the final point I would say on this before turning to Maria and Bob is internally speaking, what success looks like to me is what you have just described in the previous panel where, I would say, the NRC is hiring. We are staffing up to the levels we need to be able to meet this demand.

Our pipelines for critical skill sets are filled up. We are executing with discipline, with a very defined management model and leadership behaviors. And that we are also executing with budget precision in our responsibility for the resources that we are entrusted with.

MR. KING: Thanks, Chairman. Maria?

MS. KORSNICK: You didn't leave a lot of room there, Chairman.

So, yeah, I think we are all going to be

quite busy as we look ahead. And so I guess I would reflect, there is a lot of opportunity out there. But I would say opportunity with responsibility. Let's reflect on that just for a minute.

So opportunity in that there is going to be all kinds of different makes and models that are going to be available for use. And Chairman Nieh just went through, you know, several versions of that, whether it's a plant, whether it's a fuel facility, et cetera. So there is going to be a lot. Just looking at the rulemakings that are happening this year, right, that is also a lot of activity.

But I reflect for a minute on how did we get here to begin with, right? We got here because we have a beautiful fleet that is operating today, a very high performing fleet that is operating today. And how did we get there? We got there with a lot of hard work and building a very strong culture.

And that same culture is going to take us forward to embrace these new opportunities, of which there will be many. And I think it is a beautiful opportunity for this industry. But again, it carries responsibility.

And I will reflect as Bob did that is where organizations like the NRC, like INPO, like

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NEI, where we work very closely with the industry to ensure that what we are doing is high quality work, what we are submitting to the NRC, for example, is high quality work. And we share a lot of lessons learned across the industry so that we can all get better faster.

And it is going to take all of that as we go forward into this new place because as nuclear gets to be different makes and models, so not just large, although large is beautiful, large, medium, small and maybe really small, it really opens the opportunity for nuclear to bring that carbon-free clean energy to all of these different facets because now nuclear can be small so you can use it as part of your solution set.

Nuclear can be medium-sized. Maybe you don't need electricity. Maybe you need steam. It can do that, too. So while we are inventing all this new stuff, it is actually an enabler to all of these people out there looking at their own processes that in the past wouldn't have thought nuclear and now they can.

So I think it is fantastic opportunity across the board to the 2030s, to the 2040s and beyond. And it is not just here in the U.S. It's

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worldwide.

So really fantastic opportunity. And with that opportunity comes responsibility. And I can tell you, our industry is ready for that responsibility.

Bob?

ADMIRAL WILLARD: Well said. We are at a very seminal time, I think, for the United States in particular. We built our industry in the last century in a 25 year period. And it grew to become the largest national nuclear industry in the world. It still is by far.

At the same time, as Maria points out, this large fleet of reactors has grown to become very high performing. In fact, in WANO space, we get an opportunity to look at performance around the world. The United States nuclear states by many objective measures is the highest performing national nuclear industry in the world. And WANO Atlanta Center is the highest performing of the four WANO regions in the world largely because of the United States industry and its remarkable performance.

What we haven't done before is bring 25 years of construction, all of the work that we have to recapitalize the U.S. industry and extract more

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megawatts from it and high performance being maintained altogether at the same time. It has never been done.

So we are confronted right now with challenges across all of our organizations, that an imperative is that this national nuclear industry remains very high performing and that is non-negotiable and that we construct in a way that we may not be as well-equipped to right now as we were in the 20th century. But in the coming five years before 2030, we are going to be retooling and hopefully regaining a degree of momentum in that space. And we have to execute these capital projects whether it is for license extension purposes or major capital projects for upgrades in an expert way.

And so my view of excellence as we cross over 2030 en route to 2050 and all of the aspirations regarding a new generation is that we have a brilliant national legacy industry in the midst of recapitalizing itself, executing excellent projects and that our construction capability in this country retools itself to become world class.

CHAIRMAN NIEH: If I could just add a point on this. You know, having had the unique experience of spending decades at the NRC, spending

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time with a nuclear utility that is high performing and operates a fleet of nuclear reactors and spending time, Admiral, in your organization overseeing this industry. I feel uniquely positioned and confident in the positions and the decisions that I make as a member of the Commission to look at the changes that are happening in the NRC's regulatory programs because of this high level of performance that has been achieved through the efforts of the operating fleet and the companies that operate these important assets in America, as well as an organization like yours, Bob, in making sure that the highest levels of safety and reliability are in the operating fleet and continue to be driven toward excellence in this industry.

So as an American citizen, I thank you for what you are doing in bringing the benefits of these technologies to our society.

ADMIRAL WILLARD: Thank you, Chairman. And we are as optimistic as Jeff described in the last session. And I think as this crowd should feel at this point in time that the NRC is moving in exactly the correct direction now and that we will continue to work as a team, if you will, to move this industry along.

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MR. KING: Great. So let's transition a little bit. You know, Chairman, earlier you made a recognition that NRC's principles of good regulation remind us that independence doesn't mean isolation but instead regulators must openly seek facts and perspectives from a wide range of stakeholders, consider competing interests and base decisions on objective, well-documented assessments.

Given that, how does the NRC's independence guide its approach to safety regulation today, especially as we evaluate new technologies and expectations?

CHAIRMAN NIEH: Thank you, Mike. As I mentioned yesterday in my remarks, the NRC is America's independent nuclear safety regulator. And it is vitally important in this time when our country has a significant need for new energy to be brought to the United States.

And we make and we own our regulatory decisions. I said that yesterday. And I wanted to take that even further to look at the international standards for independence, which are promulgated by the International Atomic Energy Agency. SF-1 is a document, safety fundamentals, where it talks about what independence is.

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And four elements I will highlight. The first is institutional. Institutional separation between the promoter and the regulator. Check, we have that. The Department of Energy is the promoter. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is the independent regulator.

The second component of SF-1 on independence is authority and resources to carry out its regulatory responsibilities. We have those authorities. They are enshrined in the laws, the Atomic Energy Act and others. And we have the resources to do that, to make and own our regulatory decisions.

The third item related to that is the freedom from undue pressure. And I want to get to that one last. But the fourth one, I am just struggling to grab it right now. But the fourth one is -- I wrote it down, let me just get it real quick -- here is --

MR. KING: So you aren't just a robot. It's just --

CHAIRMAN NIEH: No, I heard about the dinner comments last night about that. But basically, it's -- sorry. It's been a long week. But anyway the -- let me go back to the beginning.

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It's the institutional separation, we have that. It's the resources and authorities to do our job. And it's the freedom from undue pressure. Let me just go with that one because this one is really the main point.

And when I think of the questions about NRC's independence that have come up recently, they relate to pressure. And when I think of our interagency coordination to achieve national goals of bringing the energy that America needs, that's not pressure. That's purpose. That is a purpose for this agency. And I think that is the difference in my mind.

Commissioner Marzano this morning talked about the geopolitical urgency, right? America needs gigawatts, like in the hundreds of gigawatts. And then I think of a country like China. You know, when I was working in WANO Atlanta Center, I would, you know, visit China to look at how their programs are performing.

They have 30 plus reactors under construction for the last ten years. At least five reactors have been coming online every single year. And if America wants to meet its energy goals and national goals with artificial intelligence and

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growing our economy to benefit our society, we need more energy.

And if nuclear energy is in the solution set, it goes through the NRC. So to me when I think of how does independence guide us, it's through those things. That's right. Our authorities are established. We are not a promotional agency. And we are free from those undue pressures because it's a purpose we have to serve America. So that's how I see independence.

MR. KING: And I've certainly seen and felt the purpose drive the changes throughout the agency. It has really energized the staff, who have rallied around the purpose we have as an agency. Any thoughts on that?

MS. KORSNICK: And while I'm talking, if it comes back to you, you just jump right in.

So, yeah, I would just -- you know, I would say that I feel like we are very well-positioned right now for this industry to expand.

And, again, if you think about, you know, why we are where we are, it's the high reliability of the assets that we have. And if you look at the work that the NRC has done in, you know, guiding and working with this industry, especially under

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stressful times, as you mentioned, I would say right now when you talk about influence, et cetera, it is stressful. It is stressful because these assets are needed, right? The stress is the demand, right? And the demand is because they are highly reliable and they are clean.

And so as you look at the market and you look at the data centers and you look at other folks that are trying to, you know, electrify their business, as you look at manufacturing that is trying to be brought into the United States, this demand is coming from several different sectors. And so this is really a stress not only for the regulatory agency, it is a stress on the industry itself to perform, right, to get going, to get moving.

And so I think this is a real opportunity, as Bob mentioned earlier, right? We have different swim lanes. But honestly, if you stand back, right, our goal is the same, right? We all want highly reliable, very safe assets that are running very well, and they are producing for the American people.

And so in that way, our goal is the same. We just sit in different seats in order to achieve that. And, you know, as I look ahead, I think this

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year will be actually very telling with a number of rulemakings that you guys are coming out with and an opportunity for the industry to embrace and to comment on those. Yeah, it is going to be stressful for you. It is stressful for us.

At the same token, it is not made up stress. You know, the stress is because we need to perform because we need the assets built, right? And we got to get to build.

It's shovels in the ground. That's what we got to get to. We got to get to shovels in the ground. And we got to get there safely and efficiently.

So, yeah, I think it is challenging and I think we are all up for the challenge.

CHAIRMAN NIEH: I remember the fourth thing.

MS. KORSNICK: I knew you would.

CHAIRMAN NIEH: It just came to me. You know, part of the fourth element in the safety fundamental one, is making your regulatory technical decisions based on evidence. In fact, it is just so ingrained of how NRC does business that I, of course, just overlooked that.

We always make our decisions based on

technical evidence and facts. And that is not going to change. So I think, you know, add that one to the list of things for how we use independence to guide our activities at the agency.

Again, I would love to lift this agency up to really grab that purpose and not feel it as pressure.

This is a purpose. It is a once in a career moment for this entire agency to really deliver what America needs through the solution set of nuclear energy.

MR. KING: Great. Thanks. So as Bob mentioned earlier, some of the changes that we are proposing that the Commission is weighing in on are largely driven in recognition of a long-term trend in proof, performance on the part of industry.

So, Ms. Korsnick, since we are considering some pretty ambitious updates to the oversight process, because of this sustained high level of industry performance, as the Agency evaluates where oversight could be streamlined, what steps are NEI and its member utilities taking to help strengthen public trust that this strong performance will continue even though the NRC adjusts our oversight programs.

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MS. KORSNICK: Yeah, thanks for that. I guess as mentioned, you know, we all want these assets to run well. And we all want these assets to be safe. We work there. We live next to them. I mean, this is in everybody's best interest to have, you know, incredibly well-run assets.

Really in the work that Bob has done and some work that NEI has done looking historically at the industry and appreciating the increasing levels of strong performance, it is really that opportunity to say, well, hey, what do I really need to pay attention to? Let's make sure I am still honing my attention on those things that need my attention, the risk, things that I want to take out of service, the work that needs to get done.

And we think that there are opportunities or their need to be less that the regulator is looking at, but it doesn't mean that it is not going to get looked at. And that is one of the things that the industry does.

If you reflect, you know, before you get into the swim lane of NRC or even the swim lane of INPO, I mean, just think about all the different layers that you have already working at a plant. When you have had a lot of sets of eyes on things before

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working and gets into the field, you have, you know, supervisors that are there to oversee that. You have a quality organization that is doing some independent checks. You are doing self-assessments to make sure that your processes remain strong. You have a lot of oversight, especially if you are a member of a fleet or a combined group of plants if you are not a fleet that provide the same service, that you compare plants against plants.

So there is a lot of activity that goes on at a plant within a fleet to really make sure that you are remaining strong.

And then you have the INPO team that comes in and brings some additional sets of eyes. And then you have a regulator that has, you know, a different perspective.

So I do want to offer that when we say, oh, something over here is being cut back, it doesn't mean that that rigor within the site is not still strong. And that is one of the things, honestly, that we are looking at for the areas that maybe there will be less attention by one swim lane, whether that's you or whether that is you.

We take a look at that and say, well, do we need to do something different. Do we need to do

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more self-assessments in that area? Do we need to, you know, do anything different as well?

So I just wanted to, you know, kind of share that it is a much interconnected machine, if you will, with a lot of sets of eyes. And sometimes when we just hear that the NRC is going to be doing things differently or a little less of something, there is a whole lot that is in this machine that is before you even get into something that has regulator footprints on it and all of that work will remain strong.

ADMIRAL WILLARD: Well said.

MR. KING: Another aspect, and I think a strength of the reactor oversight process is it's a continually learning process. We have our own self-assessments.

MS. KORSNICK: Sure.

MR. KING: And should something unexpected happen, we can adjust --

MS. KORSNICK: Yes.

MR. KING: -- as we go along. So I think there is a lot of elements of defense in depth, working together. It's an entire system, as you said.

CHAIRMAN NIEH: If I can build on what Maria was saying. Again just being uniquely

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positioned to having been on the industry side and seeing the level of activities that industry does on its own through self-assessments, nuclear safety review boards that are, again, part of the licensing basis as well as the oversight -- or the activities that INPO performs, just another quick, quick story.

I remember when I first joined Southern Nuclear when I left the agency, I was reviewing some work in an outage scope that had regulatory attachment to the work. And I started looking at some of the things. And, you know, they were tagged as regulatory and started questioning, well, why are we doing some of these things?

And when I was looking at the level of resources required, they were almost seven figures. And they were basically to address some questions that were raised by inspectors. And I said, well, what was the regulatory violation? Well, there wasn't anything. It was just something that inspectors had asked some questions about. And, you know, it gets into the corrective action program and then it gets into an outage schedule. And, again, nearly seven figures are being diverted to something that was not even a regulatory violation or issue.

And when I think about the work that has

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been done in the industry, particularly through INPO and improving equipment reliability, those resources could have been diverted to improving the performance of systems in the plant or safety systems to increase the level of safety and reliability as opposed to addressing some ambiguous question or observation that came out of the inspection program.

Of course, the way I see it as a regulator, we have to be firmly grounded on what we are driving at in our inspection program to look at the risk significant activities that really do affect safety. And what we bring to the licensee's attention should be something that is worth fixing.

MR. KING: Thanks, Chairman.

So, Admiral Willard, INPO often emphasizes that its five core values, trusting relationships, impeccable integrity, influential people, unwavering standards and continuous learning create a culture of respect, accountability and relentless improvement across the industry.

With those values in mind, how does INPO help operators maintain high performance and reinforce a strong safety culture across the fleet in a very dynamic changing environment?

ADMIRAL WILLARD: INPO executes a

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strategic design. And we have, since about 2013, we are actually in our second iteration of strategy. And it takes us through 2030.

Underpinning that strategy is a culture for the organization to deliver to what the strategy requires. So if you can imagine, if we are going to undertake a great many activities and operations in outreach to the industry, the behaviors of our people, the behaviors -- the depth of knowledge of technical knowledge of INPO's staff have to be commensurate with that responsibility. Those values that you outlined, we believe deliver that.

And when we altered the strategy, when we sunset one in 2020 and erected another in 2021, we went back to the core value to ensure that the core values that we were describing would create a culture of behaviors at INPO that could deliver on that second strategic design. And that is what we are undertaking now.

The way in which we execute that was described a bit in the previous panel --- and frankly, Jeff Place, as our Executive Vice President for Industry Strategy, is the executor of that -- is more continuous than it has ever been. So we execute what we term a continuum of operations.

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And that has INPO not only monitoring performance 24/7 around the -- you know, throughout the year, but interacting with the senior leaders at the stations on a continuous basis as well. So it is not a view every couple of years any longer. Now it is a continuous view of performance.

And we provided -- we were talking transparency earlier in this forum. And we are more transparent than we have ever been in providing INPO's view of performance to our members. So they have the benefit of knowing this organization's view of their performance interacting on a continuous basis with their view of their performance and going about the corrective actions, you know, over time to maintain that very high performance going forward.

I think this is something that we work very closely with industry members to gain their agreement that we would -- you know, we can take a strategic framework like this forward, and they will operate within it. And they have. And they are seeing the benefits.

So it is more just a continuous view into our industry and a continuous collaboration and sharing of performance information and the necessary corrective actions and INPO also provides training in

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the form of the National Academy for Nuclear Training. We also provide operating experience and have for many years to enable our members with lessons learned.

So there is a lot that goes into the fabric of the work that we are doing strategically. But I think the strategic foundation and the culture that we have established to deliver to that are critical.

MR. KING: So more real-time feedback with increased transparency to help react to a really dynamic changing environment. That is great.

ADMIRAL WILLARD: This is the most strategic we have ever -- I mean, the most transparent we have ever been. And, in fact, I would tell you that in my experience over the last 13 or so years at INPO with the NRC, we weren't very transparent with our regulator 13 years ago. We are much more transparent now with regard to INPO's view of industry performance. And I think it benefits both of us to have at least that shared view and source of information.

CHAIRMAN NIEH: You know, just for information for the audience here that may not be very familiar. The NRC and the INPO have a memorandum

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of understanding to support exchange of information, operating experience in what is happening across the operating fleet as well as the activities that support the training programs that Bob Willard had mentioned.

So having this routine engagement between the NRC and IPO, I found over my career has been very helpful. There is an actual meeting that is performed each year between our organization with the senior levels, at the EDO level and with Bob and your leadership team as well.

So I appreciate your sharing the evolution of INPO's activities as well as the increased transparency and the coordination that we have between our organizations.

MR. KING: A key insight for me on the unique role between the NRC and INPO was the opportunity to observe an Oconee evaluation and seeing. And one other thing that stakeholders may not be fully aware of is the discussion on the strike plate and how we are redefining the strike plate.

The strike plate is compliance for NRC. Compliance are regulatory requirements. For INPO, you strive for excellence. And so what I have observed over the years is a complementary role.

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There have been situations in the past where they have met -- a particular licensee has met compliance. And so from the NRC perspective, they are meeting all the requirements.

But because of the striving for excellence and the role INPO plays, you have picked up at times on trends in performance even before we have been able to identify it. So it is a very complementary role. And together it is definitely influencing safety.

So we probably don't have time for another full round of questions. So I will just offer an extended opportunity for your kind of closing thoughts on this session.

CHAIRMAN NIEH: Sure. It won't be extended. I think it is clear our organizations intersect at safety. That is our common interest that we share when it comes to nuclear energy whether it is the operating reactors today or the new reactors of tomorrow, safety is still necessary.

And we will achieve success in safety and nuclear operations when we -- our organizations do what our organizations do through our different missions that we have, where the NRC functions as America's independent nuclear safety regulator, the

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industry performs at high levels of safety in both the Nuclear Energy Institute, your members, and the Institute of Nuclear Power Operations, which has basically the same members, are operating these reactors at really high levels of safety, you know, from the regulatory perspective.

Where NRC has its responsibilities, we, again, are here to protect public health and safety and the common defense and security. And in terms of enabling nuclear energy for the United States, you know, we are here to also offer regulatory frameworks that are clear, that are predictable and offer efficient pathways to a safety decision that maintains what is more important to us, which is safety.

So I think success is when our organizations achieve our mutual objectives in the most effective way possible.

MS. KORSNICK: Yeah, I guess I would just maybe reflect broadly from a closing perspective is that this is a world-wide adventure. I mentioned that earlier. But I do really want us all to feel that.

And, you know, we have some other players out there that maybe don't have the same interests in

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their heart. And so, you know, Russia and China being very much strong proponents of building nuclear. They are building nuclear and more specifically in a race with China, you know, for AI. And so there are some real geopolitical challenges that are out there.

And then I reflect back on the United States. And I would just say, you know, what I love about this country is that we can take on these kinds of challenges. And we have shown in the past, and I am optimistic that we will show it again in the future, of how we are going to sort of bring our whole self into this and come out the other side stronger and not only just for the United States but for our allies as well.

And I think this adventure for commercial nuclear is going to be no different. The stress that we talked about that the regulator feels, that the industry feels right now to perform the changes that we are seeing to regulation, I see a day in the not too distant future where we come out the other side and the other countries are looking to us and saying, wow, how did you do that? You got really efficient with that regulation, and I see it helping you be able to build safely and more efficiently. And we want that for our country. So help me out, Chairman

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Nieh, help me and my country over here figure out what you are doing.

So I get it today. It is stress and challenge. And it is, and it feels that way. But, as we work through it and come out the other side, I believe that you are going to be holding up as a high standard for others to help them also become more efficient still with safety as paramount.

And I think we need this for our country. I think we need this for all of our allies. This is not a short-term thing. This isn't, oh, we are going to pay attention to this for a few years and then our mind is going to go on to something else. This is a long-term build-out of commercial nuclear world-wide.

And for the United States to take a leadership role, we need to have all of these organizations very strong. The oversight organizations, the industry, because we got a lot of work to do and it is not going to be easy. But I absolutely think that we are up to the challenge.

ADMIRAL WILLARD: Thank you. I share that vision of the future that I think Maria just articulated.

I don't want to leave the stage without congratulating Mike and Chairman Nieh for the

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positions that they have gained in the NRC. Thank you for your leadership, and we very much look forward to a long relationship. So congratulations to both of you.

I have had the privilege -- and we have some commissioners and ex-commissioners in the audience that I joined in this. I had the privilege of joining the NRC more than once at the Convention on Nuclear Safety. And for those of you that don't know what this is, this is the assembly of regulators from around the world that occurs every three years in Vienna, Austria, and it is hosted by the IAEA, the International Atomic Energy Agency.

In that forum, I have had the privilege of helping to share the remarks on behalf of the United States industry within our country report. And it is a remarkable forum just to see all of the regulators assembled from, you know, around the globe.

And what I was struck by, and will continue to be struck by, I am sure, in the future, is the regard that is directed at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission of the United States. I mean, it is -- when we say gold standard, we throw those words around, you know, pretty liberally. It is

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regarded as the gold standard among nuclear regulators around the world, often emulated in a country that is new to nuclear. They will try and create what they can in terms of mirroring what the NRC represents.

And we believe in a strong, independent regulator. I mean, it benefits us. But I would tell you that to put yourself in that forum where the rest of the world is taking the U.S. country report from these leaders, it is standing room only. It is in the largest of the conference, you know, center rooms that they can possibly assemble in. And they hang on every word.

And so the importance of our regulator, the stature of our regulator, and the level of cooperation that we all establish within the United States to be able to represent a world class industry that this regulator oversees is so important for this country and its way forward.

So there is a Convention on Nuclear Safety occurring this calendar year. And again, our regulator will be show cased within that forum. And it something that you ought to be very proud of. And it is something that we ought to protect, I guess, would be my final word.

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MR. KING: Great. Well, thank you to all of the panelists. Obviously, we have shared what our distinct roles are. But we obviously share a common goal of safe deployment to meet the moment in this increased energy demand and to work collaboratively with our international partners, many of which are here today.

I had the pleasure of attending a number of bilateral agreements. And it is amazing how we are all faced with similar challenges. So it is a tremendous opportunity for us to work together for a shared goal.

Thank you. Please a round of applause for our panelists.

(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record at 12:03 p.m.)