

**From remarks made by Commission Chairman Nils Diaz of the NRC on November 19, 2001, as reported by the NRC Office of Public Affairs, Vol. 21, No. 48 (Week ending 11/30/2001)**

## **Predictability and Balance**

*“Chernobyl was much more than a catastrophic reactor failure and release of an enormous quantity of radioactivity to the environment. **Chernobyl’s failure was the failure of a totalitarian society to protect and care for its people after a disaster...and this horrific mishandling of public health and safety cannot—and is not—going to happen in America.** We will take care of our people, promptly and passionately....Make no mistake, America will deliver the necessary response to protect public health and safety...there will be no “American Chernobyl.””*

*““One major, established delayed health effect [from Chernobyl] that is especially bad because it was avoidable: about eighteen hundred children with thyroid cancer, with fewer than a dozen reported fatalities, **due to the callous disregard by the former Soviet Union for its people.** There are no other latent cancers attributed to Chernobyl. The 2000 UNSCEAR report states that “apart from this [thyroid cancer] increase, there is no evidence of a major public health impact attributable to radiation exposure 14 years after the accident. There is no scientific evidence of increases in overall cancer incidence or mortality or in non-malignant disorders that could be related to radiation exposure.”*

*“Although thyroid cancer is usually treatable, it can have serious consequences and can be life-threatening if untreated. **Evacuation and the use of potassium iodide pills would have significantly reduced the incidence of thyroid cancer.** Leukemia has been expected to be among the early primary latent health effects seen among those exposed to significant amounts of radiation, yet excess cases of leukemia that can be attributed to Chernobyl have not been detected.”*

*...“Our reactors are better [than theirs]...and so is our society...**the failure of the former Soviet Union to do what was needed to mitigate the accident significantly contributed to its consequences.***