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# Trends. Nuclear Power Plants and Homeland Security and Defense: The Views of Representative Markey

Editor

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United States (US) Representative Edward J. Markey has long engaged a public discourse on the safety and security of the nuclear power industry. In a news release of March 25, 2002, he has usefully identified a number of specific behaviors as suggesting safety and security shortfalls. These behavioral markers usefully anchor public discourse onto the realm of what should and should not be done as opposed to abstract rhetoric and platitudes. However, at least some of the behavioral markers may not be suggestive of shortfalls or even of safety and security relevance. Moreover, some may border the propagandistic.

On the positive side, he has pointed out that an aircraft can help cause a full-scale core meltdown in ways other than impact on a nuclear reactor's containment structure. He has pointed out that more security attention has been given to containment structures than to areas containing spent nuclear fuel. Also, he has pointed out that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) does not responsively monitor the number of security guards employed at various reactors.

However, he has attacked the NRC for not requiring "adequate background checks of nuclear reactor employees that would determine whether an employee was a member of a terrorist organization"--as if any such checks can now do this with acceptable degrees of accuracy. He has attacked the NRC for not keeping track of foreign nationals employed at nuclear reactors--when there aren't adequately analyzed data to suggest that foreign nationals are more of a safety/security threat than US citizens even as there are plenty of negative stereotypical attitudes intimating that foreign nationals are more of a threat. He also disapprovingly asserts that security exercises are failed about 50% of the time--without noting that a case can be made that the statistic is meaningless without concurrently noting the type, difficulty, and purpose of the various exercises.

Most of all, Representative Markey treats security as a discrete, tangible asset that can be added and subtracted in a componential fashion. How else to interpret his complaints that the NRC "does not know what its licensees spend on security" and that it took "6 months after 9/11 to require enhanced security at nuclear reactors?" In actuality, any activity and process within (and outside of) an organization and influencing that organization have security implications and form part of "security." These include all aspects of human resource management and plant management.

In the post-9/11 environment, concern for security has both positive and negative aspects. To prime oneself to deal with a very real terrorist threat and other security threats is positive. To constrain what is security and to demand what can never be is negative. In fairness to Representative Markey, his approach mirrors the state-of-the-art among most public officials. Hopefully, the Representative will help lead the way to the next level of excellence for security discourse and for a more secure future. (See Markey releases report on security gaps at nuclear reactor sites. <http://www.house.gov/markey>; Moray, N. P., & Huey, B. M., (Eds.). (1988). Human factors research and nuclear safety. National Research Council, Commission on Behavioral & Social Sciences & Education, Committee on Human Factors. National Academy Press; Rognin, L., Salembier, P., & Zouinar, M. (2000). Cooperation, reliability

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of socio-technical systems and allocation of function. *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies*, 52, 357-379; Sebok, A. (2000). Team performance in process control: Influences of interface design and staffing levels. *Ergonomics*, 43, 1210-1236.) (Keywords: Markey, National Security, Nuclear Power, Nuclear Regulatory Commission.)