

PVD Opening Statement for 5/13/11 Full Blue Ribbon Commission Meeting

- Thank you Chairmen Hamilton and Scowcroft for allowing my statement to be included in the record. I am sorry I cannot be with you in person today, but please know that I will closely review the testimony and our deliberations. I am very glad that we have a full lineup that provides our first opportunity as a Commission to be formally briefed on the ongoing situation in Japan.
- I know that some Commissioners have been more involved in the US response to Fukushima than others. I hope we can have a frank discussion today so that all of us are on the same page in understanding the potential implications of this situation.
- The country is looking to us to make strategic recommendations that reflect what has just happened. I am confident that our industry and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission will thoroughly evaluate the implications of Fukushima and build on the lessons learned. Indeed, such efforts are already underway. I believe that as we continue our work, we ought to avail ourselves of all the necessary time and expertise to incorporate into our report our best thinking about new facts that are sure to arise.
- This incident could spark tremendous momentum toward moving spent nuclear fuel out of pools and into dry storage, either on site or at a centralized facility. We are already starting to see signs of this. Our report should be adequately responsive to that expression and should channel that momentum in a productive direction for our country. The same goes for developing a repository.

- Before Fukushima this Commission seemed to be leaning toward recommending a very deliberate process and pace for the siting and licensing of both centralized interim storage and a repository. However, my thinking has evolved somewhat over the last two months and I look forward to further discussion on this subject as the Disposal Subcommittee shares its recommendations.
- This incident could also propel the nation, and the world, toward more rapid development of advanced reactor technologies. I hope this is the case.
- Thank you Chairmen Hamilton and Scowcroft for this opportunity to share my remarks. Again, I sincerely regret that I cannot be with you in person today for this very important meeting.