



**UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001**

August 25, 2010

FOR THE RECORD

**RESPONSE TO THE ANDRES/LOUDERMILK
AUG. 23, 2010, OPINION PIECE ON GLOBAL SECURITY.ORG**

In response to Andres and Loudermilk's commentary, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission would like to provide Global Security's readers some facts regarding current efforts to license commercial nuclear power plants.

While the commentary implies a lack of activity after the Three Mile Island accident, the NRC granted operating licenses to roughly half of today's 104 U.S. commercial reactors in the years following the accident, concluding with the Watts Bar Unit 1 reactor in 1996. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is currently overseeing the Tennessee Valley Authority's efforts to complete Watts Bar Unit 2 and license the reactor for operation.

The NRC has worked with Congress since 2005 to prepare for new reactor application activity. Since that time, Congress has consistently provided the NRC sufficient resources to properly staff its Office of New Reactors to review the current 13 applications for licenses to build and operate 21 new large commercial reactors. We have a strong track record of conducting efficient, predictable licensing reviews (completing approximately 1,500 licensing actions every year) while always focusing on maintaining public health and safety. The NRC has incorporated anticipated modular reactor activity into its budget requests going forward, and we expect applications for the first small reactor designs in fiscal 2012.

The Atomic Energy Act gives the NRC the sole authority for licensing civilian uses of nuclear materials. The NRC currently oversees material licenses for every branch of the armed services, and we are currently engaged with the Departments of Defense and Energy regarding the issues of small reactors on military bases. It is expected the NRC would retain authority over an electricity-generating reactor anywhere in the United States and its territories; the Atomic Energy Act states only the President may exempt a DOD or DOE entity from the NRC's requirements.