

**OPENING STATEMENT OF
NRC COMMISSIONER WILLIAM D. MAGWOOD**

NRC RESPONSE TO EVENTS IN JAPAN

PUBLIC MEETING

MARCH 21, 2011

I have many friends and colleagues in Japan and I have been in touch with several people over the last week and a half. I've heard from friends in Tokyo worried about radiation and others in the north who are dealing with food and gasoline shortages. Everyone in Japan is enduring continuing aftershocks, anxiety about the Fukushima Daiichi plant, difficulties in communications, and uncertainty about what will happen next.

One friend in the Mito area lost all utilities for several days after the earthquake and is still waiting for water to be restored. But in the aftermath of the earthquake, she is making new friends as people bond together to help and comfort one another and make the best of a difficult situation. She even found a kind neighbor who owns a well and has been able to make daily trips to fetch water.

I'm sure there are thousands of examples of people coming together as a community, moving forward with resilience. The scale of the tragedy is truly staggering and the toll in lives and property terrible but Japan will recover. And Japan does not stand alone. We in the U.S. are close friends to the Japanese people and I am very proud of how the American people, their government, and the NRC in particular have risen to the occasion to provide assistance during this crisis. The NRC staff has demonstrated both its expertise and its selflessness over the last 10 days and I applaud their outstanding efforts.

Today, the Commission will receive an update on the nuclear situation in Japan, our response, and our efforts to understand what has happened. There will be important lessons learned from the events at the Fukushima Daiichi plant and it is essential that we identify them and respond to them effectively. This meeting will be, I expect, the first of many as the Commission engages the issues we must address to ensure that the safety of U.S. nuclear power plants can be assured in the face of catastrophic events such as we have seen in Japan.