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Monday, September 5, 2011 • Pottstown PA / 75¢

9/11 Ten Years Later



Former Pa. Gov. Mark Schweiker speaks outside the Limerick power plant just a few months after Sept. 11, 2001. Schweiker, who took over when Tom Ridge was picked to lead the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, was there to thank the National Guard troops who had been protecting the site.

John Strickler/The Mercury

PREVENTING THE UNTHINKABLE

Sept. 11 forever
changed mindset
at Limerick plant

U.S. warns of small airplane terror threats

9-5-11

By Eileen Sullivan
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The FBI and Homeland Security have issued a nationwide warning about al-Qaida threats to small airplanes, just days before the anniversary of the 2001 terrorist attacks.

Authorities say there is no specific or credible terrorist threat for the 10-year anniversary of the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon. But they have stepped up national security a precaution.

According to a five-page law enforcement bulletin issued Friday, as recently as early this year, al-Qaida was considering ways to attack airplanes.

The alert, issued ahead of the summer's last busy travel weekend, said terrorists have considered renting private planes and loading them with explosives.

"Al-Qaida and its affiliates have maintained an interest in obtaining aviation training, particularly on small aircraft, and in recruiting Western individuals for training in Europe or the United States, although we do not have current, credible information or intelligence of an imminent attack being planned," according to the bulletin obtained by The Associated Press.

The bulletin also says al-Qaida would like to use sympathetic Westerners to get flight training, then get them to become flight instructors.

Matthew Chandler, a spokesman for the Department of Homeland Security, described the bulletin as routine.

"We shared this information with our partners to highlight the need for continued awareness and vigilance," he said.

Aviation security is much tighter than it was a decade ago, but al-Qaida remains keenly interested in launching attacks on airplanes, believing large attacks with high body counts are more likely to grab headlines.

Threats to small airplanes are nothing new. After the 2001 attacks, the government grounded thousands of crop dusters amid fears the planes could be used in an attack.

In 2002, U.S. officials said they uncovered an al-Qaida plot to fly a small plane into a U.S. warship in the Gulf. And in 2003, U.S. officials uncovered an al-Qaida plot to crash an explosives-laden small aircraft into the American consulate in Karachi, Pakistan.



MERCURY

Wednesday, August 17, 2011 • Pottstown PA

Rumors fly

Plane sighted near Limerick nuke plant

By Evan Brandt
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LIMERICK — The sight of a large aircraft flying repeatedly through the area had phones ringing at area airports and The Mercury mid-day Tuesday.

According to Philadelphia Airport Air Traffic Control, the flight was for a “funeral fly-by” of a “high-ranking military officer” who was buried Tuesday in Holy Cross Cemetery.

The nearest Holy Cross Cemetery identified by The Mercury is in Pennsburg.

The phones at both Pottstown Municipal and Pottstown-Limerick Airport were ringing and those answering the phone knew immediately why people were calling.

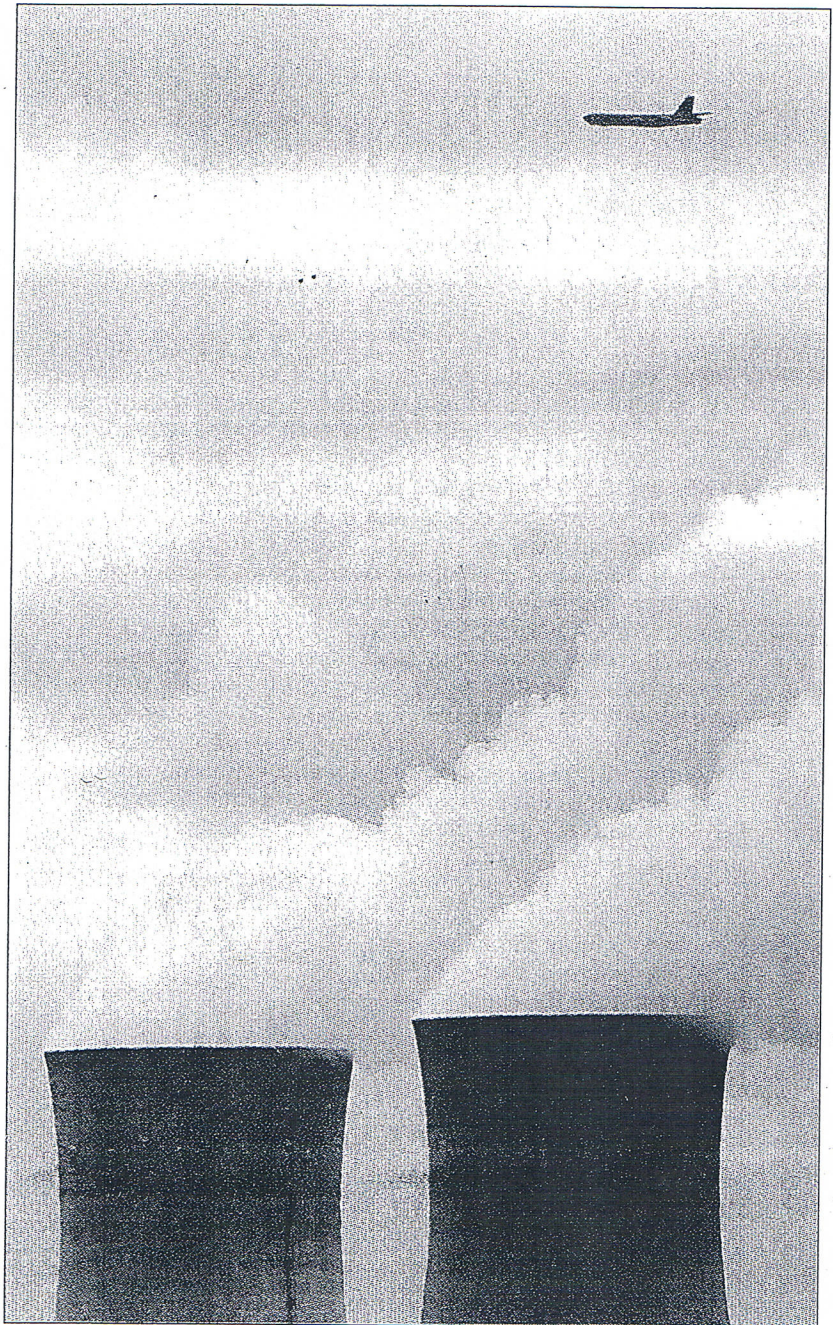
Theories varied from practice for the Atlantic City Air Show to military training.

“They’re flying some sort of pattern, but it’s definitely a B-52,” said Joe Judge, who answered the phone, not for the first time, at TNT Air Inc. at the Pottstown Municipal Airport.

“It’s pretty interesting and it sure got people’s attention,” he said.

It also got the attention of the folks at Exelon Nuclear’s Limerick Generating Station.

Joseph Szafran, a spokesman for the plant, said security personnel contacted air traffic control as well and determined the plane “had nothing to do with us and did not pose a risk.”

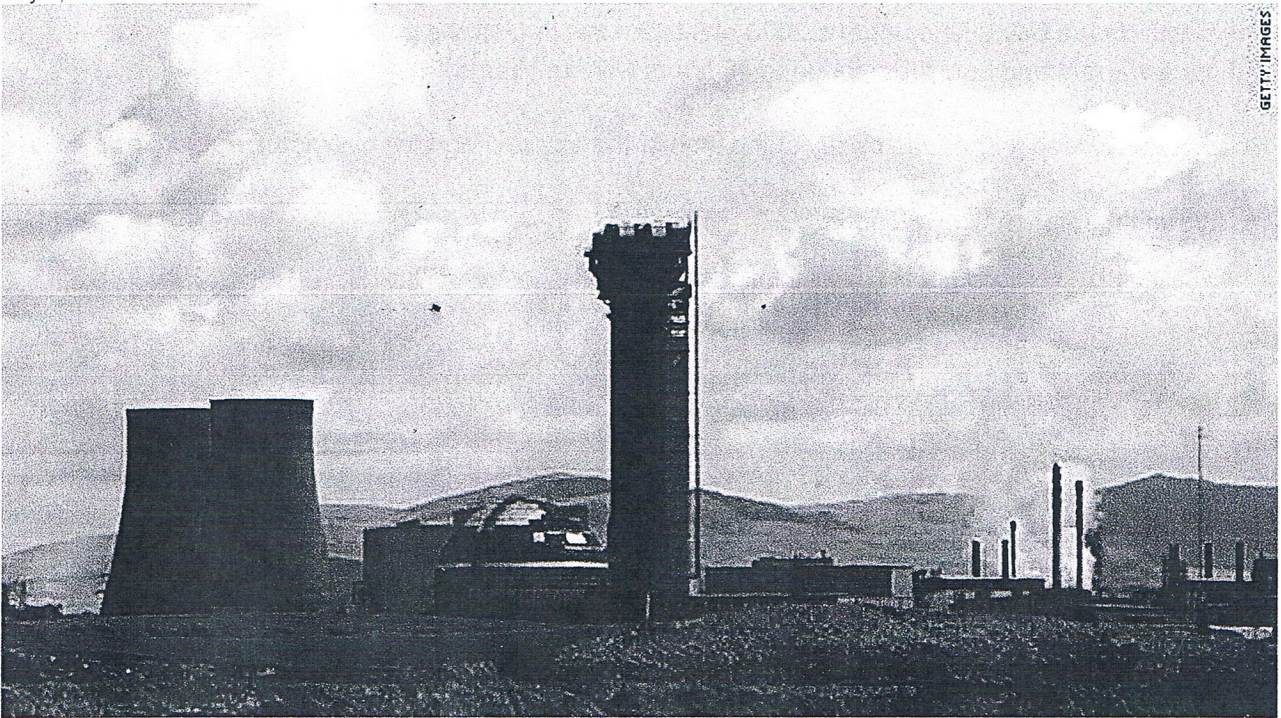


John Strickler/The Mercury

A low-flying jet was seen over the Pottstown and Limerick area and circled several times, pictured here with the Exelon Nuclear Power station cooling towers in the foreground.

5 Arrested Under Terror Law Near British Nuclear Plant

By the **CNN Wire Staff**
May 3, 2011 10:49 a.m. EDT



The arrests were made near the Sellafield nuclear facility in West Cumbria, here photographed in April 2007.

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- **NEW:** Police search homes in east London after the arrests
- Authorities are not aware of a link to Osama bin Laden, they say
- The five men are in their 20s and from London
- The vehicle was stopped by the Civil Nuclear Constabulary

RELATED TOPICS

- Terrorism
- Nuclear Energy

London (CNN) -- British police arrested five men on suspicion of terrorism near a nuclear power plant in northeastern England, they announced Tuesday.

The men, all in their 20s and from London, were arrested Monday close to the Sellafield nuclear facility after police officers from the Civil Nuclear Constabulary conducted a "stop check" on their vehicle, Cumbria Constabulary said. Cumbria Constabulary officers arrested the men.

NRC issues finding on Limerick plant security measures

By Evan Brandt

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LIMERICK – The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has issued a minor finding to Exelon Nuclear's Limerick Generating Station as it relates to the plant's security measures.

However, because of strict regulations about revealing the nature of security measures at nuclear power plants, neither the NRC nor Exelon is permitted to reveal the nature of the finding because of what it might reveal about security there.

According to a Sept. 30 letter issued by the NRC, the "greater than green" finding is one that is "preliminarily determined to be greater than very low security significance."

The NRC issues findings by color code for safety issues with white being the least significant and red being the most significant.

However the "greater than green" finding seems to be limited to security issues according to a review of NRC guidelines.

Both Limerick spokesman Joseph Szafran and the NRC indicated that the undisclosed security problem was immediately resolved.

(See NRC on B2)

10-8-10

B2m
Sider

NRC issues finding on Limerick plant security

(NRC from B1)

10-8-10

"The plant was in compliance with applicable physical protection and security requirements within the scope of this inspection before the team departed the site," Darrell J. Roberts, director

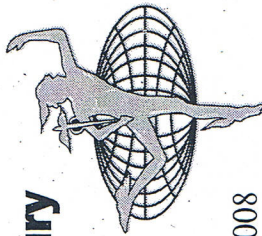
of NRC's division of reactor safety, wrote in the Sept. 30 letter.

According to NRC procedure, Exelon has 30 days to appeal the finding before a "final significance decision" about the matter is made, however Szafran said Ex-

elon will not contest the finding.

The NRC letter indicates that final decision "may be considered for escalated enforcement action."

Szafran said the inspection was completed in August.



Tuesday, August 12, 2008

NRC: Nuclear plant guard altered license to hide arrests

By Evan Brandt
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LIMERICK — About a year after a security guard at Exelon's Limerick Nuclear Generating Station was fired for sleeping on the job, another was fired for altering his driver's license to hide the fact that he had been charged by police with three separate offenses.

The guard fired for sleeping in July 2006 and the one fired in 2007 both worked for Wackenhut Corp., a private security company which previously provided security for all Exelon nuclear power plants but lost the contract in December in the wake of the release of a videotape showing guards sleeping at Peach Bottom nuclear plant in York County.

Currently, Exelon employees guard all 10 of its nuclear power plants, including Limerick Generating Station.

Exelon spokesman David Petersen confirmed the

incident, first revealed in an Aug. 1 Nuclear Regulatory Commission letter to Exelon's Chief Nuclear Officer Charles G. "Chip" Pardee.

He said Exelon discovered the problem "one year ago when we learned about a discrepancy with one of the guards."

Petersen said the guard was fired "close to one year ago as a Wackenhut employee."

According to the NRC letter, after learning of the discrepancy, Exelon then performed an audit of all guard driver's licenses and "one security guard's license was found to be altered. During a follow-up of the discovery, it was determined that the security officer had not reported arrests as required by the LGS Security Plan," the letter read.

NRC spokesman Neil Sheehan said the guard, whose name was not released, had been cited by police for driving with a suspended or revoked license, driving without a valid inspection and disorderly conduct.

Sheehan said they all occurred as separate incidents between July 2004 and December, 2006, although he said he had no information to indicate the jurisdiction where the infractions took place.

"The company has a program where they are supposed to screen employees and potential employees for criminal backgrounds and the employees are told when they get arrested, they are supposed to self-report and that failure to do so is grounds for discipline or dismissal," Sheehan said.

According to the NRC letter, the guard's attempts to hide the arrests "may have had an impact on his trustworthiness or reliability, thereby causing LGS to be in violation of its security plan."

The letter said the guard had "unescorted access to vital areas of the plant."

During the course of the NRC investigation, which took nearly a year, "the security officer admitted that he did not report the arrests for fear that he would lose his job. The NRC determined that the

officer was familiar with the requirements for working in a nuclear power plant and he had signed ar dated forms indicating that he had not been arrested even though he was aware of the prior offenses ar that such information was required to be reported. Although the NRC considered handing Exelon "notice of violation" for the incident, several mitigating circumstances reduced the penalty to a "no cited violation."

The fact that Exelon found the problem, took action and immediately notified the NRC; and the fact that it was an isolated incident that took place "without management involvement" all convinced the NRC to levy the lesser punishment against the utility.

"Their program worked," Sheehan said of Exelon's investigation into the incident and subsequent actions. "They were doing what they're supposed to do."

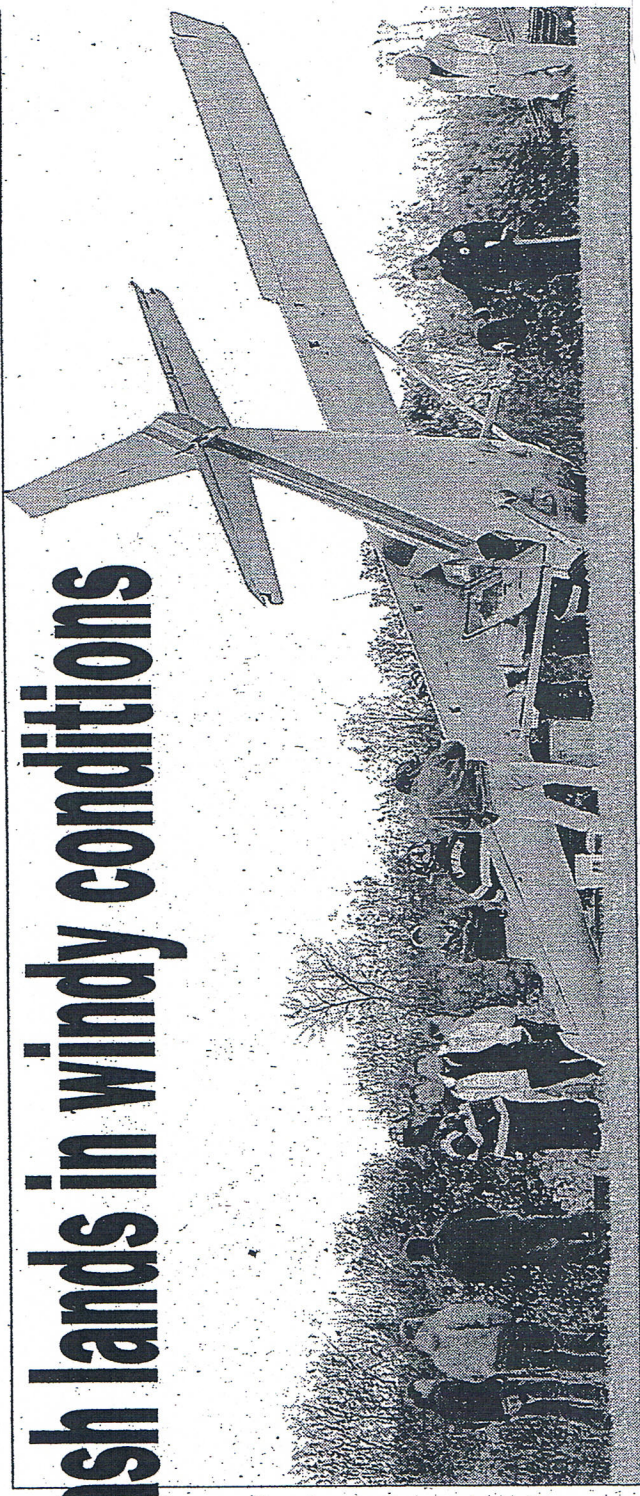
What If These Were Terrorists?

January 15, 2004

Drunken Pilot Buzzed Limerick Nuclear Power Plant

- **Within 1/4 mile from Limerick Nuclear Power Plant**
- **Flew into forbidden airspace as low as 100 feet - official acknowledged:**
“There was little they could do to bring the plane down.”

Student pilot crash lands in windy conditions



About 1 Mile From Limerick Nuclear Power Plant – Nov. 4, 2007

Bomb scare at power plant

By ERIK SCHWARTZ
Mercury Staff Writer

LIMERICK — An extensive eight-hour search of the Limerick Generating Station failed to turn up anything suspicious Thursday after someone called 911 claiming an explosive device had been placed at the nuclear plant.

Bomb-sniffing dogs, along with a team of local, county and federal authorities and corporate security staff took part in the search.

The "unusual event" ended at 11:24 a.m. after "the entire plant property and building were combed," said Michael Wood, spokesman for PECO Energy Co. "We sufficiently checked all the property that could be accessed and feel confident the threat no longer was credible."

An individual called in the bomb threat from a public phone on Shoemaker Road in

Pottstown just after 2:30 a.m. Thursday, police said.

Officers began searching the site by 3:35 a.m. as PECO declared an "unusual event" at the plant — the lowest of four emergency classifications of U.S. nuclear power plants. It is defined as an event that does not immediately affect the plant or public safety.

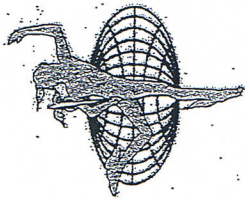
No evacuations were ordered at the plant or around the area, authorities said.

Workers, who had gathered at the facility's training center, returned to normal schedules by 11:30 a.m., Wood said. Limerick Unit 1 continued to operate at full power and Unit 2 was turned off due to maintenance work this week, Wood said.

Limerick Township police were joined by FBI agents from Philadelphia, the Montgomery County Sheriff's Department

(See BOMB SCARE on A4)

An individual called in the bomb threat from a public phone on Shoemaker Road in Pottstown just after 2:30 a.m. Thursday, police said.



The Mercury

Monday, June 11, 2007 ★

www.pottsmmerc.com

Pottstown, Pennsylvania

Terrorist risk for spent fuel not available for Limerick

By Evan Brandt
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Residents living near a nuclear power plant in California now have something available to them that no other neighbor of a U.S. nuclear plant has access to -- a better idea of the risks faced if terrorists attack a spent-fuel storage facility.

A federal court decision spurred the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to assess the threat of a terrorist attack on a proposed storage facility for spent nuclear fuel rods at the Diablo Canyon nuclear plant, outside San Luis Obispo, about halfway between Los Angeles and San Francisco.

A similar storage project is under way at Exelon Nuclear's Limerick

Generating Station, but no such assessment of the terrorist threat can be expected there any time soon. That's because the NRC interpreted the 2006 decision by the U.S. Court of Appeals 9th Circuit in a very narrow way.

That decision was issued after the San Luis Obispo Mothers for Peace sued the NRC for its failure to take into account the effect a terrorist attack

would have on a spent fuel storage facility proposed for the site in its environmental assessment.

After the U.S. Supreme Court declined to hear the NRC's appeal last year, the 9th Circuit Appeals Court decision stood. But the NRC decided

the decision applied only to the Diablo Canyon project, not to similar fuel storage projects now proliferating at

nuclear power plants across the country.

Although the physical aspects of California project may seem similar to their face to the project under construction in Limerick, there are administrative differences. The most significant is that the permit the NRC is considering for the California spent

(See NUCLEAR FUEL on A3)

High-Level Radioactive Waste Storage Above Ground Gives Terrorists A Large Easy Target

A U.S. Court Forced NRC To Do A Risk Assessment At A California Nuclear Plant

BUT NRC REFUSED

To Do A Terrorist Assessment At Limerick Nuclear Plant Despite:

- Railroad Through Site
- Schuykill River Extensive Border
- 2 Airports Too Close To Limerick Nuclear Plant - About 1 to 5 Miles
- High-Level Radioactive Waste Housing Can Be Penetrated With Terrorist Missiles
- Heavily Populated Region Around Limerick

A4 / Monday, August 7, 2006



OUR VIEW

Sleeping guards at nuclear plants raise serious questions

A "sleeping guard problem" has reared its ugly head.

On July 26, Exelon Nuclear, which owns and operates the Limerick Generating Station, announced a guard had been relieved of duty after she had been found to be "inattentive" the day before.

Exelon spokeswoman Beth Rapczynski confirmed the guard had been found sleeping and said later that the guard is no longer in the employ of Wackenhut, which conducted the investigation of the incident and disciplined the guard.

Wackenhut is a Palm Beach Gardens, Fla.-based security company with a division that specializes in nuclear power plant security and provides security at 30 plants across the nation, including all of Exelon's nuclear plants.

According to stories in The Patriot-News of Harrisburg, a total of five incidents of employees sleeping, including a supervisor in the control room, were investigated at Three Mile Island during a two-year period. Wackenhut is the security provider at TMI, as well. In each case, as occurred at Limerick, the sleeping personnel were reported by other workers at the plant.

In January of this year, The Patriot-News reported that an Oct. 17, 2005, memo sent to security supervisors from Wackenhut's head of security at Three Mile Island complained that veteran guards at the plant were "informing new hires of all the locations that they can hide and catch a quick nap."

The newspaper also reported that sources had said the "inattentiveness could be linked to two factors — long hours and boredom."

Seventy-eight workers at Three Mile Island filed a federal lawsuit against Wackenhut in January, alleging that for more than two years, the company had failed to pay them for overtime and other time owed them. By the end of February, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission had begun an investigation into the sleeping incidents at Three Mile Island, but in March, NRC officials refused to release the results, citing the need to protect security procedures.

A national watchdog group, the Project for Government Oversight, recently told the Nuclear Regulatory Commission that new work rules for nuclear plant security guards being considered by the NRC are worrisome. It warned that the NRC's consideration of using calculations of "group hours" as a way of monitoring how long guards work and allowing them to "self declare that they are too fatigued to work" could lead to problems.

The group said it had found examples of guards who declare themselves too tired to work being fired, thus discouraging guards from pulling themselves from duty when they are.

Also, allowing "group hours" could lead to nuclear plant operators being "able to fudge how many armed security officers they have on shift by sneaking the unarmed officers, trainers and, in some cases, clerical and managerial staff into the group with the armed responders."

The Project on Government Oversight also informed the NRC that its investigation at Beaver Valley Nuclear Plant in Pennsylvania indicated a "high percentage" of security officers "worked between 60 and 72 hours per week."

At Limerick, Rapczynski said the discovery of the sleeping guard was "an isolated incident."

Troubling is the fact that the umbrella of security concerns keeps the results of the TMI investigation from being disclosed.

Of greater security concern must be the question of how many hours guards are being required to work. What is the training and what are the procedures for guards to use to remain alert and capable of detecting and handling a threatened breach of security?

Since 2001, the public has been assured time and again that security measures have been heightened and that precautions against breaches of security are in place at the nation's nuclear plants. But because of security, the public is not privy to the details.

In the name of security, instead of in spite of it, some answers are needed.