

# United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission

## *Protocol on Cooperation in Nuclear Safety Matters*

In 1981, the protocol was signed between the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the State Science and Technology Commission of the PRC on Cooperation in Nuclear Safety Matters. This protocol was renewed twice. With the implementation of the U.S.-China Agreement for Cooperation on the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Technology on March 19, 1998, the NRC and its Chinese counterpart, the National Nuclear Safety Administration (NNSA) signed an expanded Protocol on Cooperation in Nuclear Safety Matters in September 1998. This protocol was renewed during the visit of NRC Chairman Diaz to Beijing in April 2004. This Protocol is outside of the U.S.-China S&T Agreement. However, cooperation in nuclear safety matters is carried out in the spirit of the original S&T Agreement, as illustrated below.

The safety documents, lectures, and on-the-job training opportunities provided by the NRC have assisted the Chinese nuclear regulatory body to develop a clearer picture of nuclear safety (culture) as it is practiced in the U.S. The protocol has facilitated close contact between the nuclear safety personnel in the U.S. and China, and provided a dialogue with China at times when relations between our two nations were under strain.

During the years 2004 and 2005, safety exchanges took place under the terms of the Protocol at a minimal cost to NRC. The activities included providing technical reports on power reactor design review, construction and operation inspection, plant operation, radiation protection and nuclear materials safety and providing regulatory guides and standards, training information and other publicly available safety information.

NRC also has an active Assignee Program that places fellow regulators at NRC on a temporary 6-12 month basis for hands-on training. Three Chinese regulators trained at NRC in 2004 on regulatory requirements for digital instrumentation and control systems, regulation and inspection of material licensees and source registration and tracking, and the decommissioning process.

The NRC and the NNSA are currently exploring the possibility of NNSA participation in the NRC Code Applications and Maintenance Program (CAMP) and Cooperative Severe Accident Research Program (CSARP). In 2005 NNSA proposed a joint NRC-NNSA Steering Committee on the licensing of the AP 1000. NRC has agreed to consider the proposal in the event the Chinese purchase the AP 1000 nuclear reactor design.