

IRPA 10

TOPICAL SESSIONS Reports of Co-Chairmen for Highlight Sessions

T-2: Radiological Protection in Decommissioning and Disarmament *Monday, 15 May 2000*

Chair and Keynote: M. Goldman

Co-Chair: D. Pomfret

Besides Prof. Goldman's keynote address, four papers were planned for this session. Unfortunately, Prof. Leonid Ilyin from the Institute of Biophysics in Moscow, who was to present a paper entitled "The Problems of Providing Radiological Protection Under Large-Scale Reduction of Nuclear Arsenal", was unable to attend the Congress because of illness. This meant that, despite Prof. Goldman best efforts in the USA, the subject of radiological protection during disarmament was not covered in the session apart from in the keynote address.

The **keynote** speaker, **Prof. Goldman**, noted that while many nations are making progress to accelerate nuclear disarmament, he did not foresee a nuclear weapon-free society for many decades to come. He noted that international standards for radiation safety have yet to be fully adapted to address the problems of disarmament in a cost-effective manner and integrated with ideals for environmental protection and safety. In most nations, separate agencies control civilian nuclear energy, medical radiation issues and military nuclear activities with minimal interagency communication and cooperation.

Prof. Goldman praised the work of the IAEA for their efforts in the fields of reduction of accident probabilities, improving the secure and safe handling of nuclear materials and for their work in inspecting facilities throughout the world, but noted that not only were there problems in answering unrealistic public demands for zero release, zero dose disposal, but the existence of highly enriched material raised questions of security and freedom of information. As safety professionals, Prof. Goldman urged the audience to debate those matters and to offer some beginnings of answers. He asked that the meeting participants and IRPA encourage and sponsor an integrated series of workshops that offer cooperation at a regional and global level.

IRPA congresses such as this one provide a venue to update members and contacts made can be reinforced via e-mail, bulletin boards and web sites such as RADSAFE and a possible IRPA site. Those new means of communication can also be utilized to improve the public's perception and concerns regarding the safety of disarmament and decommissioning. The safety professionals united in this hall have a large part to play in this public education.

The other papers presented during this session covered:

- the decommissioning of a fire-damaged nuclear reactor;
- the development of decommissioning techniques for nuclear power plants in NUPEC;
- the unrestricted release of a thorium-contaminated building.

It became clear that very difficult engineering problems are now being solved in a way which is safe for the workers carrying out the work, members of the public and in an environmentally benign manner. The sharing of these achievements and technologies during meetings such as this reinforce Prof. Goldman's view that international cooperation in these matters is vital.