

### What happened

Technicians are "baffled"—over how the gas bubble has dissipated so quickly. The bubble has all but disappeared, by the mechanisms begun the previous day. This also *proves* how small the bubble was, in fact.

Further emissions of gas into the atmosphere are effected at little more than "background" levels. It is estimated that total dosages received by any off-site individual is 85 Mrems, little more than in a chest x-ray, in the course of the past four days.

**Situation:** *The incident is over. Reactor remains stable at 280F and cooling, at a pressure of 1,000 psi. The gas bubble, now gone, had never threatened either to provoke a meltdown or a hydrogen explosion, since there was no source or mechanism which could have fed oxygen into the reactor vessel. Had oxygen infiltrated, the amount of hydrogen present would have produced a "blast"—with the force of a hand-swung sledge hammer! That is, there was not even enough hydrogen to threaten an explosion!*

### What press and NRC said

#### April 1

President Carter arrives at Three Mile site saying: "The reactor is stable, but I am afraid that in a few days, important decisions will have to be made on the bubble, and Governor Thornburgh may ask you and others in this area to take appropriate action to insure your safety."

*New York Times* reports: "Officials Say Nuclear Plant Is Cooler But Still in Crisis." *Washington Post* reports: "Risk of Explosion at A-Plant Reported Increasing." "Top Priority Is to Collapse Gas Bubble Safely."

NRC Commissioner Denton repeated "precautionary evacuation" theme. He states that the NRC and Metropolitan Edison have an "unequivocal understanding" that the NRC must approve all actions. Denton also contradicts Metropolitan Edison spokesman who reports fact that gas bubble has grown very small. Denton says gas bubble is still major threat. NRC Commissioners Denton and Hendrie both say they are considering a "precautionary evacuation" of residents within 20-mile radius.

#### April 2

All gas in the vessel and in the primary coolant system is now gone. Radioactive gas releases into the atmosphere have all but stopped. Reactor is now in a mode to be brought to cold shutdown. Officials study optional procedures for doing so.

**Situation:** *Reactor is held at 280F and 1,000 psi with one primary coolant loop and one steam generator secondary coolant loop operating. This is the condition that exists now (April 10, 1979).*

*New York Times* reports: "Precautionary Evacuation Plan Studied for 25-mile Radius." The *Washington Post* reports: "Reactor Core Is Cooling, But Gas Bubble Is Hazard."

*Daily News* reports: "Key Maneuvers Set at A-Plant." "May Evacuate 600,000 If Move Fails."

NRC Commissioner Denton is quoted as saying the hydrogen content in the reactor vessel has increased "from 1.7 to 2.4 percent. At about 4 percent we reach the danger level and at 8 percent the detonable level."

### Soviets: Western press coverage antinuclear

*The following is a brief excerpt of an article by Anatoly P. Aleksandrov, president of the Soviet Academy of Sciences and a nuclear physicist, which appeared in the April 10 issue of the Soviet daily Izvestia. His statement on the Three Mile Island accident included an attack on those Western countries threatening to use military force to obtain scarce oil supplies.*

Coverage by the Western press of the accident at the nuclear reactor in Harrisburg, in which some basically minor unpleasant consequences were described in an extremely exaggerated manner, was an extension of the campaign against atomic power (the development of which) is the only way of avoiding an energy crisis.