

Title:

Security Heightened at Glen Rose, Texas, Nuclear Plant Dallas Morning News, The (TX), Nov 01, 2001

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Nov. 1--GLEN ROSE, Texas--Security at the Comanche Peak nuclear power plant was visibly heightened Wednesday, but life pattered along routinely for those who live and work in the shadows of its concrete and steel containment domes.

With air traffic above the nation's 86 nuclear facilities restricted, the entrance to the plant was guarded by a Somervell County sheriff's deputy, a state trooper, and the security guards normally stationed there.

A Department of Public Safety helicopter circled above the twin domes during the lunch hour. Officials with TXU, which operates the plant, said they spent the day giving law enforcement officials an aerial tour of the facility.

TXU spokesman Jerry Lee stressed, however, that the company had no reason to think the plant had been targeted.

"Absolutely nothing specific about Comanche Peak," he said.

Less than a mile from the plant, Shirley Wood was grooming a dog at her business, Woodhauser Pet Resort and Grooming Salon. She said she's more concerned about anthrax than she is an attack on the power plant.

"Am I worried? Everybody's worried," she said. "But I turned it over to God, and he'll sort it out."

On U.S. Highway 67, which cuts through this town of about 2,300, pharmacist Milton Schultz said a few of his customers have voiced concerns about terrorism, but he's had no run on the anthrax-fighting drug Cipro or potassium iodide tablets, which offer limited protection from some radiation exposures.

"We keep it [potassium] in stock, but we really haven't had any calls for it," he said.

Federal officials have earmarked \$400,000 to help local communities pay for potassium iodide tablets. The government has yet to determine how to distribute the money.

The Federal Aviation Administration on Tuesday shut down airports within 11 miles of nuclear facilities. In Texas, the order stopped flights at four public and 11 private fields near Comanche Peak, the South Texas Nuclear Project near Matagorda, and a nuclear weapons facility in the Panhandle.

Federal officials also told nuclear power plant operators this week to increase security but said there has been no specific threat against the plants.

At Granbury Municipal Airport, about nine miles from Comanche Peak, airport manager John Holt spent much of his day answering questions from journalists around the state instead of dealing with incoming private planes.

Though the nearby nuclear plant was built to withstand accidents and the worst of nature's spasms, it was designed years before terrorists turned fully fueled jetliners into flying bombs.

R.S. Neal, a retired electrical foreman, spent Wednesday afternoon rebuilding a front porch on his house about a mile from the plant he helped build 20 years ago. He's confident the 4-foot-thick concrete and steel containment buildings he saw go up are strong enough to withstand whatever might be thrown at it.

"I don't see how they could hurt it," he said. "It might make a dent in it, but that's about it."

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