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Remarks by
Dr. Shirley Ann Jackson, Chairman
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
before
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It is a great privilege to be here tonight as one of the honorees in the "Strong Men and Women: Excellence in Leadership" program. I have been asked to offer, very briefly, my views on the subject of leadership.

What does leadership require? It requires many things, of course, but I would start by rephrasing a line from a recent film, "Leadership is as leadership does." If leaders do not set an example of vision, hard work, commitment to mission, willingness to take responsibility, creative thinking, and scrupulous adherence to ethical standards, they cannot expect those who work for them to meet those tests.

Second, leaders need to be able to motivate those they lead. In my view, when it comes to motivating people, giving them a sense that their work is recognized and valued is more effective in the long run than monetary rewards. Leaders must give all members of their organizations the sense that they are part of a team, and that their contributions are appreciated. When people feel ignored or belittled, it is soon reflected in their work; but when they feel that their work matters, they will give their all. It is the leader's task to create the environment in which those who are led do their best because they want to do so. Ronald H. Brown, the late Secretary of Commerce, accomplished this with his team.

Third, leaders must understand that it is not enough to have good ideas and a position of authority. It is often necessary to persuade others to agree with you. In the case of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, which consists of five members, with a

collegial process for policy formulation, the need to win adherents and to build consensus is obvious, but even in organizations with all decision-making vested in a single person, persuasion has its place. It is difficult to get people to implement policies effectively if they do not believe in them.

Fourth, leaders need to recognize that they cannot run every aspects of an organization on their own. They need to delegate responsibility, and allow subordinates to develop and exercise their own leadership skills. The long-term health of any organization depends on there being competent managers, able to assume positions of increasing responsibility over the course of time. Among other things, that means encouraging independent thinkers, willing to say what they think, rather than yes-men and yes-women. Of course, it is a universal human trait that people prefer praise to criticism, and agreement to disagreement, but it is one that prudent leaders guard against. The person who speaks up to point out the vulnerability of a proposed course of action may help to accomplish much more than ten people nodding their heads in agreement.

Finally, an essential characteristic of leadership is decisiveness. Leaders must have adequate information on which to base decisions, and that may take time to develop. But at some point, leaders must resist the temptation to order one more study or to set up one more committee, and must instead resolve an issue, one way or the other. Will the outcome always be right? Of course not. We cannot ask and should not ask our leaders to be infallible. What can we ask of leaders? That they not shrink from responsibility, but instead be willing to make the hard decisions that go with their positions.

Thank you.