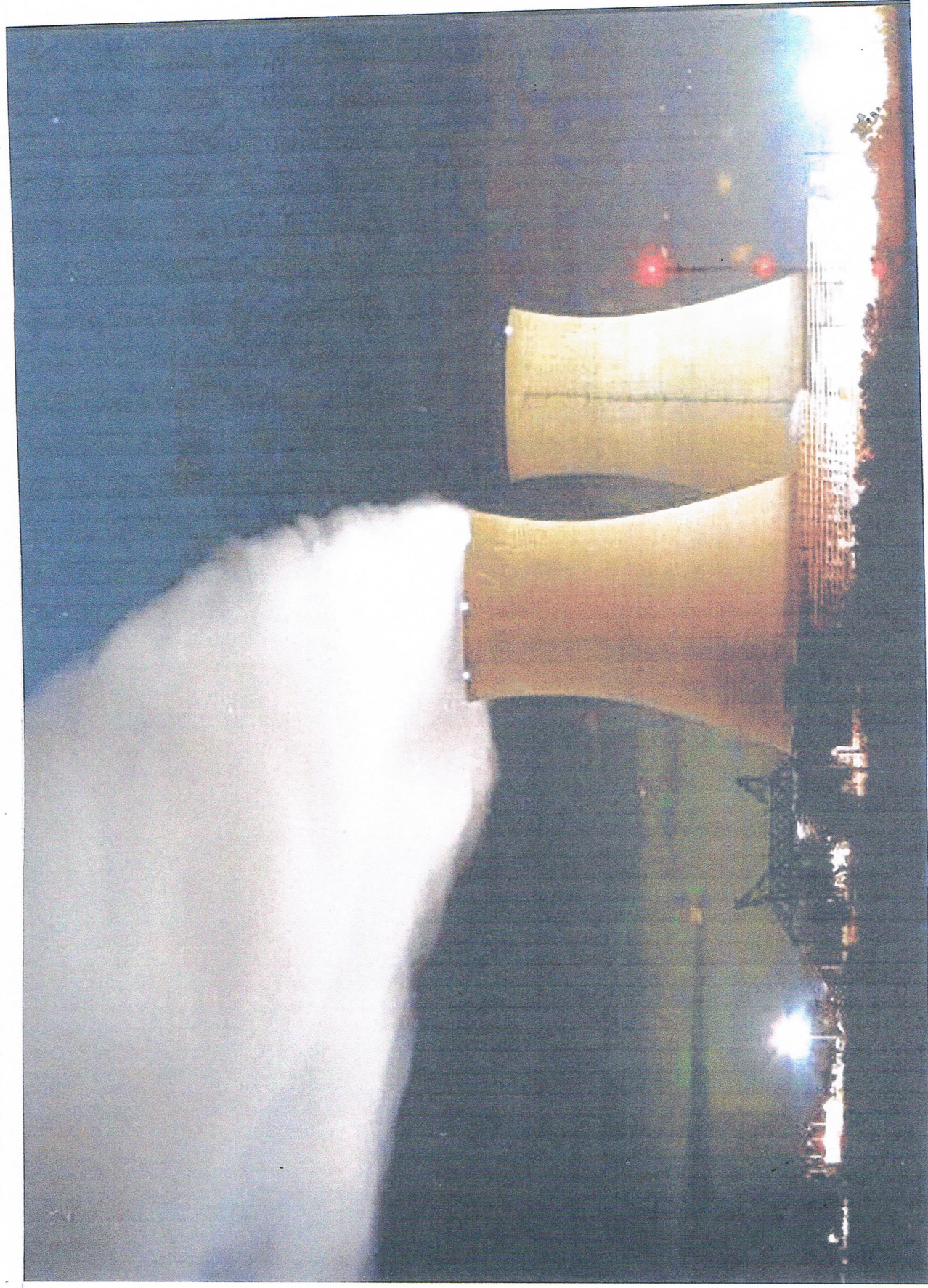


FIRE AT LIMERICK

DURING BACK-UP GENERATOR TEST (1997)



Clouds spew from a cooling tower at PECO's nuclear generating station in Limerick, Pa., in this Feb. 14, 1997, file photo. A fire did minor damage to a non-nuclear section of the Limerick nuclear plant during a test of the backup generators, Thursday, Oct. 9, 1997. (AP Photo/George Widman, file)

GAO faults nukes over fire safety

WASHINGTON — Operators of nuclear power plants have yet to comply with some of the government's fire-safety rules three decades after they were issued, a congressional report said yesterday.

The Government Accountability Office said 125 fires were reported at 54 plants since 1995, an average of nearly 10 a year, though none threatened safe emergency-reactor shutdown or posed significant safety threats. The fires were mostly electrical or maintenance-related.

But the GAO study said the Nuclear Regulatory Commission had been unable to resolve "several long-standing issues" with the industry over fire safety, including full compliance with NRC rules put in place in 1976 and 1980 as a result of the fire at the Browns Ferry plant in Alabama in 1975, the worst fire ever at an American nuclear plant. The nuclear industry had no immediate comment.

— AP

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