

## **Statement on the “Peaceful” Uses of Nuclear Energy**

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**Global Resource Action Center for the Environment**

We speak to you about the illusory and Faustian bargain you subscribed to in the Non-Proliferation Treaty for the “inalienable right” for non-nuclear weapons states to poison the earth with so called “peaceful” nuclear technology.

Only last week two new studies were released. One, by Dr. Joseph Mangano, finds that infant mortality rates around five nuclear power reactors in the United States declined after the reactors closed. The other, from the Ukraine Health Ministry reports that 2.5 million people, more than a third of them children, have fallen ill as a result of the Chernobyl disaster, while the incidence of some cancers is 10 times the national average. “The health of people affected...is getting worse and worse every year”, the Health Minister reported. And while you were meeting here, yet another worker died from radiation poisoning, assaulted by the “peaceful” use of nuclear power turned violent against more than 400 innocent people and workers in Tokaimura, Japan.

While there may have been some faint ray of hope thirty years ago, when the NPT bargain was made, that there was a “peaceful” benefit from the unleashing of the atom, it cannot be argued rationally today. And while the nuclear industry pushes its destructive product on developing countries, arguing that Chernobyl technology was cruder than other highly developed and “safe” reactors, what can we say about Three Mile Island, the worst accident in the history of commercial nuclear power production? The U.S. Presidential Commission in its proposals to improve nuclear safety after Three Mile Island said, “We have not found a magic formula that would guarantee that there will be no serious future nuclear accidents.” And what of Japan, yet another country with a large investment and commitment to nuclear energy, where two have died at the time of this meeting, and hundreds more have been exposed to radiation released by a nuclear chain reaction at the uranium processing facility at Tokaimura.

While you may have thought at one time that nuclear science and technology was the wave of the future it is now clear that nuclear science and technology is the science of the past. Studies organized by the Nuclear Energy Agency of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), show that over the past decade there have been dramatic declines in the number of students studying nuclear science and education, including in many countries which have made big investments in this field. In the United States, there has been a 60% decrease in undergraduate students enrolled in these subjects compared to 1990.

The science has been done. The evidence is in. Do not be confused by hired guns, rent-a-professors in the employ of industry, pushing their nuclear violence around the world—who try to addle your mind with cost-benefit analyses, epidemiological procedures, dose reconstructions. The other side—there is no other side. There is only the truth. Employ the precautionary principle. The earth is our home. The rules to sustain ourselves were already set when we got here. If we go too far in upsetting the natural balance, the earth will not change its rules to accommodate us.

For all the hypocrisy of the nuclear weapons powers—in pointing to the numbers of weapons they have cut, while clinging to cold war nuclear doctrines that continue to rely on nuclear weapons for their

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national security or contemplate the first use of nuclear weapons to incinerate the world—to these we must add the hypocrisy of the other 36 states who have nuclear capability.

For they too have the bomb—witness South Africa, Brazil, India, Pakistan, Israel. Who will go next? Last fall a Japanese official created a furor in that country when he advocated that Japan build its own nuclear weapons.

Turkey—with its easy access to the abundant gasfields of the Caspian—is now seeking its first nuclear reactor, to be sited in what a previously suppressed report announced was an earthquake zone. The head of their Atomic Energy Commission shamelessly announced in 1998, despite current knowledge of the havoc created in the world by fatal nuclear power plant accidents and growing mountains of intractable nuclear waste which remains lethal for more than 250,000 years, that Turkey needs nuclear power because “[i]t makes the country honorable and powerful”. This year a member of the Turkish cabinet defended the move, saying “having such a bomb in Turkey’s hand is security. It provides deterrence.”

The corporations which reap huge profits from pushing their lethal products are creating disinformation and confusion. Do not be mistaken. The WHO with custody of the very health of our planet’s people, has been gagged and fettered by the IAEA. In a highly unorthodox agreement, WHO acknowledges its close ties to the IAEA and promises by written agreement, not to do any research to determine the dangers of radiation, without prior agreement from the IAEA. It then requires that the WHO must first submit its findings to the IAEA before publication. How can we sit idly by when our very processes of governance are corrupted by these corporate interests? Tainting the process and methodology by which our WHO, charged with protecting the health of humanity, may proceed?

We are still in a paradigm where might makes right—but how long will our Mother Earth survive our undisciplined behavior and abuse of the planet’s wellbeing? We must no longer view ourselves apart—it comes down to the very air we breathe, and water we drink, the soil to grow our food, all under assault from corporate interests, which greedily pursue their profits—pushing toxic nuclear technology and indemnifying themselves from liability at taxpayer expense for the tons of plutonium they generate—without a clue about how to protect us from its poisonous waste—feeding off the swill of government subsidies and corporate welfare.

It’s time to admit that just as the US has a hedge pile of weapons which are not placed on the table when they play their numbers games of how many bombs to cut—nuclear reactors are also a hedge in the nuclear weapons game. No one who is adequately informed could believe they are a benign source of power. The hedge—that’s why Turkey and now Indonesia, with its ample reserves of oil—want nuclear reactors. They want to play in the league with the big boys.

Alternative energy is here. It works. We must drop old thinking and rely on the only nuclear power reactor that works for our earth—our own radiant sun.

We must stop support for extractive industries that rape and plunder Mother Earth—destroying our life support system—taking gold from her bowels, the oil from her heart, and uranium from her deepest recesses—listen to the folk wisdom of the ages—with new lessons for this millenium. Remember the legend of the Australian aboriginal Njama people who spoke of the rainbow serpent—coiled within the earth—we have mined the rainbow serpent—uranium-- and are suffering its curse—increased cancer, birth defects, mutations.

The NPT’s unholy bargain for nuclear power does not serve humanity. Recognize and act on the fact that ending nuclear proliferation and eliminating nuclear weapons, the two major goals of the NPT,

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require the end of nuclear energy. In a safe and sustainable nuclear weapon free world there is no space for the bomb or the reactor.

Demand that the IAEA give up its flawed mandate to promote nuclear power, and serve us without conflict of interest solely to prevent the proliferation of nuclear bombs.

Resolve that NPT parties forswear nuclear power and instead establish a Global Sustainable Energy Agency.

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