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From: "Robert A. Mertz" <ramertz@mountain.net>
 To: <SECY@nrc.gov>
 Date: Wed, Jan 19, 2005 6:10 PM
 Subject: NUCLEAR POWER INSECURITY

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Nuclear Regulatory Agency,

OFFICE OF SECRETARY
RULEMAKINGS AND
ADJUDICATIONS STAFF

As a Biology, Wildlife Management and Environmental Earth Science teacher working in the public school systems of several states, for over twenty years I have been teaching students the importance of a sustainable life style. I want them to learn to live within the ecological budget of Earth. The quality of life for the present and future generations depends on keeping the life sustaining diversity of our complex life systems healthy. Although there are some impressive self-maintaining dynamics at work to stabilize these systems, there are limits to their ability to correct for continued stress. The geological record is full of evidence showing sudden drastic upheavals and ecological disasters. We have no valid reason to believe that we humans with our huge powers to alter the climate and ecosystems will not trigger another watershed shift in the world's balance that will result in condition that renders the Earth unsuitable for human life, or that degrades the quality of our existence to a much lower level. It is our duty as the most powerful species to exist on this planet to use our might to protect the integrity of our life support systems for the benefit of all living things, to do anything is the extreme in narrow minded, short sighted self indulgent stupidity.

The American Airlines flight that struck the North Tower of the World Trade Center could just as readily have hit the Indian Point nuclear power plant, forth miles north of Times Square . . . The consequences of an attack on a nuclear plant would depend largely on where the plane hit. If the aircraft penetrated the containment dome, the attack could cause the reactor to melt down, releasing hundreds of millions of curies of radioactivity into the surrounding environment, hundreds of times that released by the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs. We already know what such an incident would look like. In April 1986, an accident explosion inside the Soviet nuclear reactor at Chernobyl ignited a powerful fire that raged for ten days. The resulting radiation forced the evacuation and resettlement of over 350,000 people and caused an estimated \$300 billion of economic damage, and is likely to lead ultimately to tens of thousands of excess cancer deaths among those exposed to the fallout.

An even more vulnerable target at a nuclear plant is the building that houses the spent fuel rods, which are stored in pools of water to prevent the heat from their residual radioactivity from melting them. Designed to remain intact in case of an earthquake, these structures are open to the air in some instances and housed in only light-duty buildings in others, which means that a plane attacking from above might drain the pool, destroy backup safety systems, and ignite the fuel. The resulting fire would spew radioactivity into the environment in amounts that could reach three or four Chernobyls.

Such threats are real possibilities. In November 1972, three Americans with pistols and hand grenades commandeered a Southern Airlines Flight 49, and ordered the plane to fly to Oak Ridge, Tennessee, and threatened to plow the plane into a reactor unless their ransom was met. And on February 7, 1993, a distraught intruder drove his station wagon onto Three Mile Island nuclear power station property, crashing through gates in the "protected" area of the nuclear facility before wrecking the vehicle into the turbine building. He evaded security for several hours before being arrested. Fortunately, he carried no explosives.

The two sons my wife and I have produced are the most important things in my world. We have done everything to raise them to be strong and healthy. We have tried to equip them to enjoy their lives to the fullest extent while making a substantial contribution to the quality of life of others. They are sons to make us proud. Now it is my job to do my part to see that they, and their future children, and all their children's children have a quality existence as well. The love I feel for my sons demands that I do nothing less than

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give this effort my full persistent attention. I am asking you to consider, do you have people in your life that mean this much to you? Will you do your part to make sure that all our children will have a future full of interesting creatures, clean water and pure air? Please help me for the sake of all of our children.

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Subject: NUCLEAR POWER INSECURITY
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