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Subject: Comments PRM 73-12

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This petition is wrong because of the unstated assumption it makes.

The assumption is:

1. Plant staff alone must repel an attack, BECAUSE

2. Attackers can physically do something in a short amount of time to cause physical harm to the public.

Assumption 2 is wrong because nothing credible can be done in a short amount of time to affect the public. The only thing that can be done in a moderate amount of time to affect the public physically is to bring in a large amount of high explosives and blow the containment open, blow open the reactor vessel, and shatter fuel so that it becomes airborne particles. Then, the weather must cooperate to not dilute the particles, and carry them to the public. (It should be remembered that we have a large amount of experience with fallout, from weapons testing.)

Any other release from a core takes time because it depends on fuel melting.

Assumption 1 is wrong because one of the first actions of the plant staff is to notify the outside world. This will bring into operation the Emergency Plan. Even if it is only a Guard at the outer gate contacting the local police by radio- or cell phone - help will be on the way in minutes. Therefore to succeed, a terrorist attack would have to disable all the different communication links within a few minutes at most. In this era of cell phones alone, this is impossible.

In the post 9-11 era a military response to a large group attack will not take very long. Remember that on 9-11 the last hijacked plane was only minutes away from being shot down.

Also from 9-11, the plane crash into the Pentagon provides another good data point for the strength of reinforced concrete - and it was just an office building, reportedly designed to with stand a truck bomb in the street.

The petitioners should be asked to justify the availability and capability of the weapons they suppose. After 9-11 the Nuclear Control Institute immediately proposed protecting nuclear power plants with antiaircraft guns. When it was revealed that our forces no longer have antiaircraft guns and instead use missiles, the press did not give the Nuclear Control Institute the criticism it deserved.

Finally, the anti nuclear film "Imagining the Unimaginable" depicts the hijacked plane flying down the Hudson river, past the Indian Point nuclear power plant to the World Trade Center. The film goes on to

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assert that nuclear power plants are good terrorist targets.

So, why didn't the 9-11 hijackers crash into the Indian Point plant, or any others the four planes flew near in the Northeast? Were they so ignorant that they didn't know where the plants were? Did they not recognize Indian Point plant when they saw it?

I think the "ball is in the court of the anti nukes" to explain this contradiction.

There is another possibility that the antis don't want to talk about. That is that the terrorists had studied nuclear power plants as possible targets and concluded that they are not good targets. Weren't plant plans found in caves in Afganistan?

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