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Office of the Secretary
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Washington, D.C. 20585

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Greetings:

The energizing of the nuclear power plants, now complete and those nearing completion appears to be a problem, because many people are talking who should be listening. It is admitted that there are risks in any and every activity--risk is inherent. The province of the engineers and scientists is to minimize that risk and this has been reasonably accomplished in nuclear technology. The cry for a riskless society is raised in ignorance.

At the Bikini tests, which I attended, as the Director of Research at U.C. Berkeley for the Federal Civil Defense Administration, we learned in considerable detail, where and in what strength fallout occurred, as well as the extent of local damage. The risks are now quite well known.

It appears by all experience with nuclear applications that the risk from a contained situation, as opposed to the open detonation, is less by several orders of magnitude. The risks of which many are fearful relate to the prior open tests and the bombs in which every attempt was made to maximize the destructive ability of their use. That being the case, it appears that an immediate process of education about probability and risk is in order.

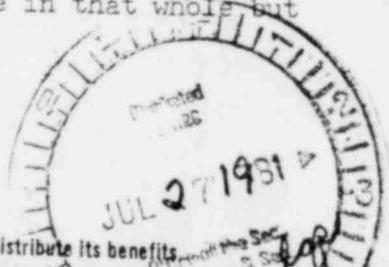
I could not agree more with Professor Norman Rasmussen, when he wrote in Scientific American, "Every new technology has had vocal anti-groups trying to stop it, and we have to expect that on nuclear power." All changes to the status quo from Prometheus and fire, Copernicus to Galileo, Fulton and steam, horses and automobiles, Lawrence and atoms have been opposed, yet they have proved to be useful, though risky, when uncontrolled. But despite this, we have prospered by change and development.

Senator Charles Mathias, Jr., in Public Affairs stated: "Presidents and political thinkers since the Founding Fathers have warned against the politics of factions." It appears that the nuclear anti's are a faction which President Madison described "a united group whose activities are actuated by some common impulse of passion, or of interest adverse to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community."

In our society we cannot dismiss the ideas of these factions arbitrarily. Senator Mathias continues: "our national interest cannot be antithetical to the strong preference of any segment of our population, but the overall requirements of the United States--strategic, economic, political and moral--constitute a whole that is larger than its parts." All preferences "figure in that whole but cannot be permitted to preempt it."

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Page 2

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No one would say that there are not problems associated with the use, conservation and development of energy. But an adequate supply of energy is critical to meeting the economic and social needs, while as nearly as possible preserving the environmental balance. Nuclear power generation is the clear present answer to those needs, and while it entails some minimal risk, its development and activation should be immediate and continuous.

It appears to this writer, just past President of the Los Angeles Council of Engineers and Scientists, the thinking of which has been forwarded to you; and currently President of the Institute for the Advancement of Engineering, that the majority of the technical, scientific community and informed citizenry are in favor of this procedure.

Active development and licensing of the nuclear power plants at San Onofre and Diablo Canyon in California is urgent in the interest of the well being of this part of the United States. We believe the same to be true throughout the country.

Very truly yours,

Paul F. Keim

Paul F. Keim, President

Professor Emeritus, U.C.Berkeley
Captain USN (Ret)