

Statement to the Blue Ribbon Commission On America's Nuclear Future
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January 7, 2011
Augusta, Georgia

I thank the Blue Ribbon Commissioners for giving me this opportunity to express my concerns.

For the past 30 years I have been working non-stop for global nuclear disarmament. I began from a concern for the safety of all our grandchildren. Clearly the existence of nuclear weapons has not, as was once hoped, brought an end to war. Clearly the potential of nuclear weapons is to destroy life on the planet. While I share many people's desires to stop all wars, philosophically and practically this seems, for now, pretty hard to do. But we CAN, and SHOULD, abolish nuclear weapons worldwide. It's the logical thing to do, it is practical, and it is possible.

I know that is not necessarily the Blue Ribbon Commission's charge. However, you ARE charged to decide about the pre-nuclear-weapons radioactive chain, which has caused so much damage in our beautiful country already. We must not allow any further damage to occur.

In 2009, I traveled the country visiting radioactive sites along the nuclear chain, from uranium mines and unburied tailings, to nuclear power plants producing weaponizable materials, to former nuclear weapons facilities such as Rocky Flats and Hanford, to the still-active Oak Ridge and Savannah River Plants, which are intended for "reprocessing," "MOX," and other schemes.

In the process, I've met downwinders and uranium miners, nuclear power plant workers and nuclear bomb builders, whose colleagues have died young, or who have suffered themselves from cancers.

I've seen the scarcity of water in the west, and been appalled by uranium tailings blowing for 50 years into the Colorado River in Moab, Utah, and by recent plans, amazingly, to create NEW uranium mines in the Grand Canyon.

I'm appalled by the existing nuclear power plants which edge water sources all over the country, "cooling towers" on lakes, rivers, and oceans. In my home state, North Carolina, during a hurricane some years ago, a nuclear power plant on the coast was flooded and released an untold quantity of radioactivity onto nearby farms.

I also have learned about the nuclear waste transport system which spreads across the country. I have both seen and heard about truck accidents and railroad accidents. As population and traffic increase, so do accidents. I beg you to recognize, our shrinking environment cannot afford even ONE radioactive accident.

There are two highways a few miles from my house in Western North Carolina which are used to transport nuclear waste to, from, and between Oak Ridge, Tennessee and

Savannah River, South Carolina: I-26 and (newly enlarged) Route 25. I-26 in particular winds through glorious mountain passes and across bridges that drop to small rivers which feed reservoirs and dams which provide clean, drinkable water, perhaps our most truly valuable, and shrinking, resource.

I came here today with a group of people from Western North Carolina who join in begging you not to allow the transport of radioactive waste through the precious mountains.

Of course, to be able to stop this transport, you will need to endorse the following policies:

First - Keep all existing radioactive waste on-site where it is produced. The safest way to do this is to create hardened on-site storage near each nuclear power plant, far enough away from any lake, river or ocean. to protect the waterways.

Second - Stop building new nuclear power plants, and phase out existing nuclear power plants as truly clean and renewable alternatives are actively developed in each community. We have the know-how to use wind, sun, tides, rivers, and geothermal taps to replace nuclear and fossil fuels; we merely need the commitment and the resources. It is obvious that truly renewable energy would be immensely more competitive if the Department of Energy (and the tax code) subsidized renewables to the same degree that they now support nuclear energy and fossil fuels. And if we used the money currently going into new nuclear power plants, nuclear weapons, and war, we could solve this problem quickly.

Third - Continue to research ways to neutralize radiation. Perhaps this will happen someday.

Meanwhile, for now, we have NO right to continue with the very bad policies of nuclear expansion which endanger not only ourselves but ALL future generations.

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