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MEDICAL STATEMENT ON NUCLEAR POWER

As physicians we feel it is our responsibility to alert the public to the unprecedented threat to public health posed by nuclear power. Nuclear power once held the promise of being a safe clean source of energy. Time has shown that this is not true. On the contrary, nuclear power now presents humanity with problems that may well be insoluble.

These include:

1. **RADIOACTIVE WASTE.** The containment of radioactive wastes, a majority of which now come from military reactors producing atomic weapons, some toxic for 1,000,000 years, will be a continual problem and a legacy for future generations. These wastes include strontium 90 which causes leukemia and bone cancer, plutonium which even in microscopic amounts causes lung cancer, and scores of other poisonous radioactive compounds. There is no known method for safely disposing of these wastes. This is not just another form of pollution, but one which will cause cancer and birth defects for our children and our children's children.

2. **THE DANGER OF NUCLEAR ACCIDENTS.** A single major accident might cause acutely 3,300 deaths, 45,000 injuries, billions of dollars in property damage, 45,000 cancers over the next several years, and render an area the size of Pennsylvania contaminated and uninhabitable according to Atomic Energy Commission figures.

3. **NUCLEAR WEAPONS PROLIFERATION.** A nuclear reactor produces in excess of 400 lbs. of plutonium per year. Only ten to twenty lbs. of plutonium are needed to make an atomic bomb. The Indian government has already diverted plutonium from its power plant to build nuclear weapons. As other countries acquire nuclear plants, we must expect that they too will produce nuclear weapons. More than 400 lbs. of plutonium are currently missing from US storage facilities. The possibility of nuclear theft and subsequent blackmail by criminal or terrorist organizations is a real threat at this time, and it will grow as more nuclear plants are built.

BECAUSE OF THESE DANGERS WE CALL FOR NUCLEAR WEAPONS DISARMAMENT, A MORATORIUM ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS, A PHASED WITHDRAWAL OF EXISTING PLANTS, AND A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM TO CONSERVE ENERGY AND TO DEVELOP THE ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF ENERGY WHICH DO EXIST.

Signed by *

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And 307 others.

Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR) is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to provide information to the medical community and the general public concerning the hazards of nuclear power and weaponry. We plan to place the above statement in several newspapers and journals and would welcome additional signers, members, and contributions.

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