

must end; we cannot afford the risks: The most likely cause of our doom might be the irrationality which now guides our nuclear weapons policy.

NUCLEAR REACTOR ACCIDENTS

A meltdown accident at a conventional nuclear reactor, according to the official government estimate performed by the Brookhaven National Laboratory, would result in 45,000 immediate deaths, 100,000 cases of acute radiation sickness (sloughing of skin and mucosa, hair loss, nausea, vomiting of blood, bleeding from the rectum, anemia, impaired blood clotting, death of white blood cells, and delayed healing), 45,000 cancers, 240,000 thyroid tumors, \$17 billion of property damage (1964 dollars; does not include costs of medical care), and the permanent contamination of an area the size of Pennsylvania which could no longer be used for habitation or food production. These figures do not include the effects of genetic damage.

The planned plutonium breeder reactor can undergo both a meltdown and a nuclear explosion. Because of the larger quantities of plutonium in the breeder, the consequences of either accident would be much more severe than those described above for a conventional reactor.

Attempts to minimize the toll of death and injury at the time of an accident will be hampered by (1) the proven lack of honesty between the nuclear industry and the government and between the government and medical personnel (the AEC illegally withheld the Brookhaven Report from the medical community for 9 years), (2) the lack of a pre-existing communications network involving medical personnel, (3) the nonexistence of meaningful evacuation plans especially for those immobilized by acute and chronic illness, (4) profound public ignorance as to the nature of the danger, (5) lack of medical personnel trained in treating contaminated patients, (6) absence of appropriate treatment facilities, and (7) unavailability