



Friends of the Earth

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BUSH NUCLEAR TRIP TO INDIA: BAD NEWS FOR CLEAN ENERGY AND GLOBAL SECURITY

Statement by Brent Blackwelder, President, Friends of the Earth

With his offer of new nuclear aid to India's ailing nuclear industry, President Bush is compounding a polluted history of US foreign aid for energy over the past decade and a half. During this time the U.S. Export-Import Bank and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, have poured more than \$32 billion in loans and loan guarantees into fossil fuel projects—dramatically increasing greenhouse gas emissions and local pollution.

Now Bush proposes an even more dramatically misguided energy aid project for nuclear power, while casually throwing the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty on the dust heap of history.

As in the United States, nuclear proponents have wildly exaggerated the role that nuclear power can play. In 1969, the head of India's nuclear program predicted there would be 20,000 megawatts of nuclear by the year 2000. This year India has 3,000 megawatts of installed nuclear capacity, barely 3% of the country's electricity supply. Even if India built 30 new nuclear plants by 2020, India would still only get 5% of its electricity and 2% of its total energy from nuclear power.

Nuclear power is not clean energy because it leaves a toxic legacy of radioactive waste. Investments in more efficient use of energy in industry would reduce greenhouse gases seven times more per rupee than nuclear power investments and would do so quickly.

Since India is beset with serious air pollution that kills tens of thousands of its people each year, President Bush ought to be providing loans for wind, solar, and biomass. India already is the 4th largest wind power producer in the world, with more wind energy than nuclear. India's renewable energy sources can produce the greatest health benefits for the most Indians. The \$250 million in the President's proposed Global Nuclear Energy Partnership could better be spent providing solar electrification for 50,000 rural schools in India.

Bush is misleading us when he says we can successfully maintain a barrier between the peaceful and military uses of nuclear technology. When India exploded its first nuclear weapon in 1974, we should have learned that the so-called Peaceful Atom created a false distinction between atoms for peace and atoms for war. And if that's too long ago for the president to remember, then Iran and North Korea ought to suffice.

Bush is actually doing India's bomb makers a great big favor with this deal.

India does not have large supplies of uranium, and is facing a supply squeeze that could force it to choose between using its domestic supplies to fuel power reactors, or building weapons.

Bush's offer gets India off this supply hook. By signing this deal, India can increase its production of nuclear weapons. India can import uranium and burn it in the reactors it has chosen to put under IAEA safeguards. Then India can divert its domestic uranium, which is not covered by this deal, and feed it into weapons production.

Building more nuclear power plants creates major problems. But by allowing India to continue refusing to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, Bush is throwing away one of our best weapons against nuclear terrorism and the spread of nuclear weapons.

Instead of doing everything he can do to reduce the danger of nuclear terrorism, George Bush is abandoning nearly 30 years of U.S. nonproliferation policy and practice toward India.

Bush says he wants an exception for India. But other non-nuclear nations can see right through this flim-flam. This is an exception that kills the decades-long effort to contain the number of countries with nuclear weapons.

By funding more nuclear plants and ripping up the Nonproliferation Treaty, Bush is giving us a world in which more and more countries will have the bomb; more and more plutonium will be circulating through the global economy, ripe for plucking by terrorists. Thus, the probability increases that someone, whether a nation state or a terrorist group, will unleash this terrible destruction on millions of innocent people.

The Congress should refuse to make the changes in U.S. law that would allow this deceitful proposal to become a reality.