

to supplement and control our water resources and helping us to recycle much of our solid waste, thus preserving our diminishing mineral resources and eliminating many eyesores and environmental blights on our landscape. We will ultimately see this kind of nuclear energy having a remarkable effect on world development, helping to lift billions of energy-starved individuals into the mainstream of the twentieth century.

Perhaps the most disturbing thing about the current reaction to environmental problems is the attitude it is engendering—a fear that is making many look backwards. There are some people whose only reaction to the possibility of future power shortages—and “blackouts” and “brownouts”—should we fail to plan and build now to meet our future needs is that we should reduce our use of electricity, we should turn out our lights. There are others who are so irrational in their fear of nuclear power and so desperate for alternatives that they have seriously advocated harnessing the Gulf Stream, or icebergs, or volcanoes, or hot air balloons. Fortunately, most people are not willing to sit in the dark or to search in the dark for a better life for themselves and their children.

We who are involved in developing nuclear power to provide for future electricity needs are naturally disturbed by public resistance that seeks to halt or slow down such development. However, along with our obligation to safeguard the natural environment, we also have a responsibility to help supply our people with the power to run a technologically sustained society. In the years ahead, today's outcries about the environment will be nothing compared to cries of angry citizens who find that power failures due to a lack of sufficient generating capacity to meet peak loads have plunged them into prolonged blackouts—not mere minutes of inconvenience, but hours, perhaps days, when their health and well-being and that of their families may be seriously endangered. The environment of a city whose life's energy has been cut, whose transportation and communications are dead, in which medical and police help cannot be had, and where food spoils and people stifle or shiver while imprisoned in stalled subways or darkened skyscrapers—all this also represents a dangerous environment that we must anticipate and work to avoid.

Among those who oppose nuclear power on the grounds that we are too affluent in our use of energy and could afford to cut back are many whose motives are sincere but who have not thought things through.