

DEMOGRAPHIC POLICY AND POWER PLANT SITING¹Alvin M. WeinbergThis document is
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Date: 10/25/06

I shall consider one small, but I believe important, aspect of the relation between energy policy and national goals. The national goal I shall focus upon is the rational use of land, and the humane development of an acceptable population policy. The aspect of energy policy I shall speak to is the siting of power plants: in my view, these matters are all interrelated. In addressing myself to this relatively narrow aspect of national energy policy, I assume that other speakers in this symposium will consider such important matters as energy and environment, the adequacy of our energy supply, the social cost of production of energy, and the relative balance between different modes of producing energy.

Much is made these days of the idea that the United States is "overpopulated". Under the prodding of such extreme proponents of the doctrine of overpopulation as Paul Ehrlich (who in his widely read book, Population, Resources, Environment,² argues for a U. S. population of 50 million), many have come to believe that, indeed, we have "too many people" in the United States.

This view is anathema to most professional demographers. They point out that there are more acres of woodland in Connecticut today than there were 100 years ago. Anyone who has visited the plains of Kansas or Iowa knows that we have enormous sparsely populated parts of the United States that could accept more people than now live there. On the other hand, there

¹Submitted to the Senate Internal and Insular Affairs Committee for the Symposium on Energy Policy and National Goals, Washington, October 20, 1971.

²W. H. Freeman and Company, San Francisco, 1970.

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