

Nuclear Power and National Security Coalition

Talking Points

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My name is Tom Graham. I was President Clinton's Ambassador for arms control/non-proliferation but before I worked on these subjects for President Clinton, I worked in sensitive positions on similar matters for five previous presidents beginning with President Ford.

In my work in non-proliferation over the years I came to appreciate that the NPT, the centerpiece of international security, is a strategic bargain based on non-proliferation for most of the world and disarmament and sharing the technology and related expertise of peaceful nuclear energy with all NPT members by the five nuclear weapon states. Never was the diplomatic importance of the commitment to peaceful nuclear energy more important than in the campaign for permanent extension of the NPT in 1995. In supporting nuclear power and other peaceful uses one supports the NPT and thereby US national security.

Admiral Mies and I decided to lead the Nuclear Energy and National Security Coalition because we believe that US policy makers do not fully understand the importance of the US civilian nuclear power program to US national security and the imperative of its reinvigoration.

And it should be noted that nuclear power plant service and fuel supply is highly specialized. Thus nuclear cooperation with other nations can help lead to long and constructive relationships based on this cooperation. From the Atoms for Peace creation by President Eisenhower onward US leadership in supplying nuclear technology, equipment and expertise has enabled the US to help establish the highest standards for nuclear safety, security and non-proliferation around the world. A decline in US participation in the international market for nuclear power diminishes those standards.

The next generation of nuclear power reactors (advanced reactors, smaller reactors, reduced capital costs) will bring nuclear power to many new nations. The country that emerges dominant in this field will gain and develop long-lasting influence on nuclear policies for the next generation.

Nations that are planning to meet power and water needs for their people to a large degree with zero emission sources must consider nuclear power which is reliable and demonstrated (has powered cities) to meet their climate goals. Carbon dioxide from other now-dominant forms of electricity production contributes to changes in our climate and a changing climate has been identified by the national security community as a national security risk. A strong nuclear power sector is essential to the national security of our country.