

## John Holdren's Reply On Nuclear: Words, Words, Words

*Marjorie Mazel Hecht, managing editor of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Science & Technology, made the following comments on the [March 5 reply from John Holdren](#), Presidential Science Advisor, to the [letter sent to him Feb. 1](#) by more than 300 scientists and others:*

John Holdren's March 5 response exemplifies why 321 scientists and others were motivated to send him the very letter to which he is replying: The Administration's nuclear policy is just a lot of words, with no intent behind them to change a policy that ensures that future generations of Americans will be living in deindustrialized poverty at best.

First: While the rest of the world is right now building dozens of new nuclear plants, and 50 non-nuclear countries are making plans to go nuclear, the Obama Administration is issuing words. There are promises of loan guarantees, but nothing substantially is changed to ensure that new conventional nuclear plants will be built, or that advanced nuclear plants will be built. Remember, we are the nation that pioneered civilian nuclear technologies. Now we lag far behind.

Second: The shortage of medical isotopes has been a known problem (really a disgrace) for decades. Every single government study has recommended plans to domestically produce an isotope supply. Now we get more words. An Administration intent on solving this problem would reopen the FFTF to produce isotopes, and stop the burial of the so-called waste from Shippingport and the ORNL breeder, and use this material to make valuable isotopes. Instead, this Administration focusses on avoiding "proliferation"--a bogus issue to cover for anti-nuclear policies.

Third, it does not take a rocket scientist to figure out that setting up a committee, especially one without experienced nuclear scientists on it, to study something that has been studied for decades is simply a public relations effort to avoid taking action.

Words and promises are not what built the TVA or what got us to the Moon. Those programs were funded at the levels necessary to get the job done--even when the

solutions were not yet known. There was a clear recognition that man has the creativity to solve any problem. The funds were allocated because these were national missions that required long-term support, science-drivers to move the entire economy forward.

In 1958, when South Korea was devastated by years of war and its people were literally starving in the dark and cold, American Walker Cisler, a nuclear pioneer, advised Korea's President to invest scarce funds in a science driver--nuclear power--that would not pay off for at least two decades. Dr. Syngman Rhee listened to Cisler, and 20 years later, Korea's first nuclear plant came on line. Now South Korea has 20 nuclear plants, a fast breeder in the works, and is a prosperous nuclear exporter. And Cisler's America? We are pouring billions into so-called "green" projects that will run our economy into the dust.

Cui bono? Not the American people.

What has to be done to achieve the kind of leap that South Korea made, and that this nation has made in the past, is not mysterious. We know what to do. It requires a political will that is entirely absent from John Holdren's letter of words.