



**NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION
PREVENTION PROJECT**

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Veteran U.S. National Security Officials Urge Biden to Block Plutonium Plant

AUSTIN – A recently proposed civilian nuclear plant would extract enough plutonium for at least 100 nuclear weapons each year – making it so controversial that officials of five preceding presidential administrations, Democratic and Republican, have united in opposition.

Writing in a [letter](#) to President Joe Biden on April 4, the former U.S. officials warn that Wisconsin-based nuclear company SHINE’s proposal would increase “risks of proliferation and nuclear terrorism.” They urge him not to “support federal funding (including loan guarantees) or licensing for SHINE’s proposed reprocessing plant or any other non-weapons facility that would increase the production and/or use of nuclear weapons-usable material.”

According to Professor Alan J. Kuperman, who organized the letter and leads the Nuclear Proliferation Prevention Project (NPPP) at the University of Texas at Austin, the controversy reflects an ongoing battle within the Biden Administration between nuclear-energy and national-security authorities. “The logical compromise would be for the Biden Administration to support only the type of nuclear energy that is proliferation-resistant,” he said, “but some nuclear evangelists at the Department of Energy want to fund all the proposals – regardless of security risk.”

Former U.S. officials who signed the letter include the following:

Obama Administration

- Susan F. Burk, Special Representative of the President for Nuclear Nonproliferation (2009-2012)
- Thomas M. Countryman, Assistant Secretary of State for International Security and Nonproliferation (2011-2017)
- Allison Macfarlane, Chairman, US Nuclear Regulatory Commission (2013-2018)
- Steve Fetter, Principal Assistant Director for National Security and International Affairs, White House OSTP (2015-17)

Clinton Administration

- Robert Einhorn, Assistant Secretary of State for Nonproliferation (1999-2001)
- Frank N. von Hippel, Assistant Director of National Security, White House OSTP (1993-1994)

Bush (41) Administration

- Robert L. Gallucci, Assistant Secretary of State for Politico-Military Affairs (1992-1993)
- Henry Sokolski, Deputy for Nonproliferation Policy, US Secretary of Defense (1989-1993)

Carter Administration

- Joseph Nye, Chair, National Security Council Group on Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons (1977-1979)
- Jessica T. Mathews, Director of the Office of Global Issues, National Security Council (1977-1979)

Ford Administration

- Peter Bradford, Chairman, US Nuclear Regulatory Commission (1974-1975)

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