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nuclear reactors are efficiently able to

Then, in March, the near disaster at Three Mile Island emphasized the emptiness of the nuclear establishment's statements on reactor safety. One of the top technicians in the NCR just about said it all in a telephone call to the Commission from the scene of the Three Mile Island accident: "It's a failure mode that's never been studied," he claimed. "It's just unbelievable!"

Finally, in April, the controversy surrounding the "Inhaber report" began to attract public attention in the United States. Though much less dramatic than the Pennsylvania meltdown scare, this document may play an even greater role in our future energy choices.

The "Inhaber report" is a study entitled Risk of Energy Production-written by Herbert Inhaber, Associate Scientific Advisor to the Atomic Energy Control Board of Canada (AECB). Only a few copies of the 150-page document (officially numbered AECB-1119) were circulated within the technical community, but a summary of the report was published by Inhaber in the New Scientist (a top British magazine) in May 1978 . . . and in Science (the most important North American scientific journal) in February 1979. The essence of those summaries appeared in such diverse places as the Wall Street Journal, the Washington Post, Nuclear News, the Stanford Daily, and a major speech (for the British Broadcasting Corporation) by the prominent English scientist-politician, Lord Rothschild.

Why did Inhaber's message attract so much attention? Quite simply, because he and the AECB were saying that nonconventional energy sources-such as solar power-present as great a hazard to human health as do conventional sources! Risk of

both major studies of the risks of nuclear power that are underway in the U.S. National Academy of Sciences.

In fact, Inhaber himself cited Holdren's writings on the risks of nuclear (and other conventional) energy technologies in AECB.1119, claiming that-by relying on the work of a "well-known nuclear critic"-he was bending over backward to avoid accusations of pro-nuclear bias. This purported reliance on Holdren's work, combined with Inhaber's surprising conclusions, prompted the Berkeley professor-and some of

roughly a factor of three-with this elementary mistake. He proudly wrote in Nuclear News that the correction "lowered the methanol risk, but did not change its overall ranking". He did not, however, mention that other errors -which pervade his entire methanol section-result in a more than 10-fold inflation of the risks involved in producing this renewable liquid fuel.

In summary, the Inhaber report is not just marred by a few failures of multiplication and addition, but rather is a complex skein of mistakes, booboos, and botches. Some of these are glaring . . . some are subtle . . . some require expertise in the energy field to detect . . . some are obvious to anyone with an ounce of technical sophistication . . . some are mutually canceling . . . and some compound each other. But every competent scientist who has examined the report in detail agrees that it should never have been issued and that its summaries should never have been published. In spite of such criticism, however, the AECB and Inhaber push on! What, then, has given this monstrosity such wide acceptance in the scientific and popular literature? The trail leads directly back to the door of the AECB. The involvement of this Canadian government board has given the Inhaber report an aura of respectability. Perhaps the original release of AECB-1119 could have been written off as bureaucratic bungling, but the Board's subsequent "stonewalling" behavior is a classic illustration of the kinds of stupidity and dishonesty that have long permeated the nuclear establishment.

The principal response of the AECB when faced with the unvarnished truth about the Inhaber report-has been to dodge the substantive issue and accuse Holdren and other critics of mounting "a concerted program of vilification". It's a "Catch-22": If criticism is restrained and "scholarly", it's ignored . . . if it's frank, the critic is accused of vilification and his or her comments are still ignored. The AECB apparently has no interest in the truth. It has even steadfastly refused to