

main business of a scientific meeting is science. There are many brilliant physicists in the Soviet Union and it is nonsense to assert that there is little we can learn from them. It is however important that these brilliant people attend the scientific meetings. Obviously standards, which I need not spell out here, must be rigorously applied.

The freedom of communication between scientists is a right the scientific community has stubbornly defended since Galileo. This is certainly not the moment for us to relax our vigilance.

HERMAN FESHBACH

President

5/12/80

American Physical Society

Women in physics

Thank you for Vera Kistiakowsky's exceptionally fine article on women in physics (February, page 32).

It will be an invaluable resource for all physicists who are concerned with young people and the future of our profession.

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3/18/80

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Nuclear misinformation

The science section of the Italian newspaper *Il Tempo* (Time) of 5 January published a short note entitled "Le Armi Nucleari" (Nuclear Weapons), which had been taken from a letter on "Nuclear Weapons Disposal" published in the August 1979 issue of *PHYSICS TODAY* (page 13). I feel that a few comments on this letter are appropriate.

In the first place the author of the letter, Richard McDonald, refers to the catastrophe that would befall Mankind if the superpowers should unleash their nuclear weapons against one another, and then he adds that, though less catastrophic, the dangers of nuclear reactors are still serious. The message that an uninformed reader gathers from these words is that the hazards of nuclear reactors are somehow comparable to those of a nuclear war, even though less catastrophic.

Such a statement is certainly disconcerting, because I don't think that the risks of a nuclear war have ever been equated to the risks to the population from the operation of nuclear power stations. It is true that the writer admits he is neither an expert in nuclear weapons nor is he familiar with the nuclear fuel cycle (so that one wonders why he should speak out on these matters), but the public opinion has still be impressed because of the authority of the magazine that published the letter.

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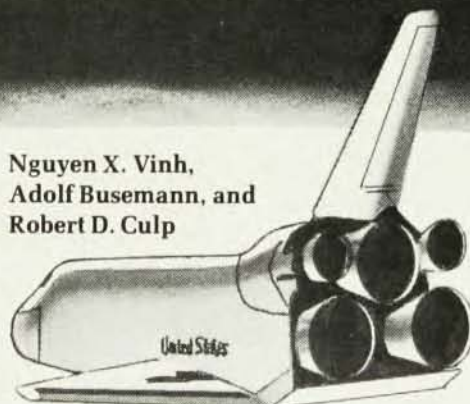


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