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Atoms for Peace: Now what?

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Atoms for peace: Now what?

Huntsman Post

Atoms for peace: Now what?

Editor's note: William F. Shughart II is a professor of economics and finance at the Huntsman School of Business and the J. Fish Smith Professor in Public Choice at Utah State University. This column, posted below, has been published in news outlets across the nation including The Anchorage Daily News, The Merced Sun Star, and The Bradenton Herald.

The Kansas City Star

By WILLIAM F. SHUGHART II

Sixty years ago this December, President Dwight D. Eisenhower turned a dangerous situation around. In an address to the U.N. General Assembly at the height of the Cold War, he made a commitment to the peaceful use of nuclear energy. That commitment is now being threatened: by activists who oppose building a storage depository for nuclear waste and by energy policies that favor any alternative to fossil fuels except a nuclear one.

The goal of Eisenhower's "Atoms for Peace" vision should be evident. Currently, 68 nuclear power plants are being built around the world, according to the World Nuclear Association. An additional 150 are in the planning stage, and an additional 340 have been proposed.

All of this is in addition to the 437 nuclear plants currently in operation, including 104 in the United States. Overall, nuclear power supplies 12.3 percent of the world's electricity and it's the largest source of carbon-free energy.