Oliver Stone Pushes Back Against Fears Over Nuclear Power

The Joe Rogan experience I'm really glad how you covered it in this uh documentary about Three Mile Island and Chernobyl and Fukushima We have these ideas in our mind about the dangers of new good power And I love the analogy that you made in the film about how driving a car is not scary but it's dangerous flying in a plane feels scary but it's far safer And this is a great analogy to nuclear power when you went over the the data when you talked about the amount of deaths from coal every year When you talk about the amount of deaths overall ever from nuclear it's it's stunning It's stunning And then when you cut to in the documentary you showed the anti nuclear movement that happened after Three Mile Island and how crazy it was There's all these stars and celebrities and they're doing concerts We've got to stop nuclear power and what a mess that happens And then when the fad I mean becomes fashionable it was very successful movement You're talking about the negatives here and the accidents and uh we we cover all that in the film which is called nuclear Now and the idea that was behind it was because I really was like you I mean I I went along with those things in the seventies and the eighties because I didn't know better I didn't I wasn't educated I I really wanted to know what is nuclear power I want to go back to the source and you gotta go back to the beginning and you gotta go back to Marie Curie and Albert Einstein and World War Two and all how it could how it got developed This nuclear energy is a beautiful incredible almost a miracle that was given to us that we have on earth It's all it's in the earth uranium it's everywhere the planet the earth the sun And we in a sense uh we took it like prometheus and we kind of misinterpreted it misused it which is not which is kind of normal for given that what we do with natural things World War Two was happening just as the uh as the nuclear fission was being understood and that made the bomb they made the bomb with it because it was a war on Uh they they rushed in and they did a they did an amazing job Oppenheimer down in uh the the in Los Alamos but and they got it and they were successful But uh as you know it was misunderstood at that point that nuclear energy was not nuclear bomb In the contrary it was a bomb is very difficult to build and it takes a lot It takes years sometimes it takes scientists and they have to enrich the plutonium and they have to work at it There's all configurations in the bomb that don't exist in nuclear energy

So when people see a nuclear energy plant they subconsciously they cross it with both war and they cross it with horror films that they've seen in the 19 fifties with radioactivity and monsters that come out of that You know spider the spider bites the man and you become Spiderman You know it's incredible the stuff that happens and it's all And Hollywood has done no favors to it It's continued for years and years and years And then of course you had a Three Mile Island Uh the film was coming out at the same time uh China Syndrome and with Jane Fond it was a good film I enjoyed it We all enjoyed it but it really was hysterical and alarmist saying and nothing happened at Three Mile Island except the reactor did melt down but nobody get got hurt because the containment structure worked to keep it in to keep it in So there was no release of ra radiation and uh they continued on Silkwood was another one And then if you remember uh not too long ago there was the HBO thing Chernobyl which was a complete fictionalization of what happened at Chernobyl So we went to Russia and we talked to the scientists there and we wanted to know what happened at Chernobyl and we find out and it's in the film and the same thing is true for Fukushima which is unbelievable because I when you go to the bottom of it it's I was astounded to to find out that that no nobody died there from radiation not one Japanese they checked the whole thing out and it's been done to death But you hear about 15 20,000 people died from the tsunami and the earthquake which is the biggest earthquake Japan ever had I mean really we show the earthquake we show the tsunami the wave was 100 ft tall Uh There was a badly built wall the wall was not a sea wall that was could hold and the generators were flooded beneath uh the the water and and these are these were also not state of the art Um That's right It's like what what they can do now in terms of these power plants you know the uh everything gets better I mean but even tho those those uh nuclear reactors built 6070 years ago are still functioning They're legacy reactors They do work and we mustn't dismiss them Yeah it gets better and technology gets better Like as in any business you and there's another generation and it's better but hopefully better But uh the point was that they can avoid what happened in Fukushima today Oh Fukushima was if you if you look at closely Japan had built uh 20 some reactors at that point and this one is the only the others were exposed to the same earthquake and the same kind of tsunami several of them were on that same coastline But this particular one this uh plant was uh was the only one that was shaken up And even then all the radiation that was released there was a hydrogen explosion All the exploit the that radiation released in the air you heard about

it It was supposed to be another term Well they we have shots in the film showing they're taking tests on all the Japanese citizens and nobody can you know it's low level what they call low level radiation which is we can sustain it We have a we have DNA in our body that fixes repairs our body as each day goes by But it's also you point out very well in the film that there's a lot of radiation that you don't even take into consideration that you encounter constantly We have this idea of radiation as being a net negative It's a terrible thing but it's just a thing You get it from being outside you get it from rocks you get it from all sorts of things There's radiation in this room it's it's it's uh you get radiation from eating a banana I think what you said is so it's so true that films and um and and comic books and are fictions of radiation That's part of the problem that started early That's a problem because comic books and all that it plays to the worst aspects of human nature which is we just love to get terrified about headlines So we don't read into the devil of the details Exactly That's what was confusing to me And I really you know we're miseducated Uh uh and there is still a bias against nuclear if you mention it to anybody instantly It's yeah but the the point is we can live with it and we have to because we're facing arm we're facing a very difficult situation a a cliff that we're gonna go over and it seems that no one's really getting it So that's why I felt like the film I wanted to know I need to educate myself So in doing the film I think I was able to bring out these things you talk about what is wrong with nuclear energy It can work It is a miracle We should use it and we should use it abundantly The Chinese have and the Russians are way ahead of us They've built this they built it and they built it with government backing not like the US where we kind of back it but we don't really back it So as a result well China is really cutting out now because they have about 70 reactors Uh approximately 70 reactors Yeah about 74 I think Anyway they're building And I heard uh I can't I don't remember the source but I did hear that they're putting another 100 and $40 billion into this thing which means that they're going to build 100 and 50 some reactors o over the next uh by 2038 That is a serious investment Serious investment That's a serious investment That would take a long time for us to catch up to Oh it's not about competing It's but if we wanted to do what they're doing right now well we have even if it's not competing just to do just to be current So they're the leader right now in that Well no uh we're the biggest country in the world We still have 90 some reactors online So China's climate goals hinge on a $440 billion nuclear build out That's interesting So we have we still have more even with all the negative stereotypes about nuclear reactors planning at least

100 and 50 new reactors in the next 15 years more than the rest of the world has built in the past 35 I'm surprised you remember it says it right there J just had it pulled up China has well you got a system worked out Jamie's a wizard Look at him over there He's the best Know what the film is about this uh this uh article that you just pull up Jamie this is from uh Bloomberg Jesus Christ Well you see you got the source right away and this is from 2021 Um It's this this whole thing It's it is exactly how you lay it out in the film It's almost like we have to cure ourselves of these misconceptions And if we don't we're screwed China's building man They don't fuck around now They have a lot of coal They still they're still building coal plants because they have a huge demand and they have to get off the coal that is crucial because they are completely contaminating the atmosphere as well The more nuclear they build the better it will be The contamination from coal is terrifying We we showed a um a documentary that had been done Do you remember the documentary But I remember it was it was a documentary It was all about um one of the things it was highlighting is all the people that live around these plants and the air quality that they saw for It's insane Their cars are covered with like a thin film of you know all the particulates in the in the atmosphere It's horrible They estimate from air pollution alone I've read figures of 4 million deaths a year It's just so you need so many cases of you know respiratory illnesses and that's horrible I wanna say 4 million a year from air pollution but 1 million at least from coal a year That's what I've seen but there could be more coal in the so and who knows what the the health negatives are on top of that Like how many people are suffering with illnesses and ailments because of those partake especially around those reactors or or the the plants rather it's horrible But we still have coal in the US No this was in the US this was in Indiana Correct Oh yo they have coal everywhere I mean President Trump said Trump digs coal I dig coal He said clean coal once It was just like what the fuck are you saying What the fuck are you saying Cleaner than what the uh other lighting tires Now the other uh truth that we miss is gas Uh we know how ugly the oil thing is I mean there's the waste and all the oil and this fossil fuel itself is destroying the universe because we're putting carbon into the atmosphere co2 But uh gas is considered they're using gas everywhere Uh Even it seems like a modern thing they say well renewables which is solar and wind Those are we're all for that I want wind we want solar but they don't work all the time They run out in winter at night Is it also a problem with battery technology when it comes to that part of it too But the point is when they run out what they need

is gas backup It's backup You see nuclear doesn't need storage and it doesn't need backup What's the beauty of it It's a real clean energy and the gas does I mean uh uh renewables do need backup and that backup is gas So it's not 100% like the one of the one of the issues is about uh storage the waste And when you talked about just the the size of the amount of storage it's not nearly as much as a lot of people think it is of the amount of we all the waste that we America has used up to now in the last since the 1958 whenever shipping port was built has amounts to about the size of Walmart Frankly you could put it in a Walmart In other words people make a big deal about waste but they don't realize that it's so intensive Uh an energy huge amount of energy that it's it's uh how do you say compact as a result So it fits into it if uh waste itself uh is is is a positive about nuclear because first of all there's been no harm done So it's been buried in casks And first of all it goes in the water for maybe 23 years And that's a conductor that takes takes the radioactivity down and then it gets put into casks that are 12 to 14 ft They build these casks in the United States They're concrete and steel concrete uh is a great uh does not conduct uh radioactivity concrete stops it So concrete and and steel casks work they can go for 100 years and then you can go another 100 years and then eventually eventually you realize that radioactivity drops each time at f in four or five years it's way down It tops to almost if you I I don't have all the figures but you can see that it's it's a ridiculous fear given compared to what given that climate change is so dangerous and compared to the deaths that are already occurring every year just from you using the methods we have Now in in comparison to the amount of people that died from nuclear it's very very small