

NUKEWATCH

FALL, 1999

PATHFINDER

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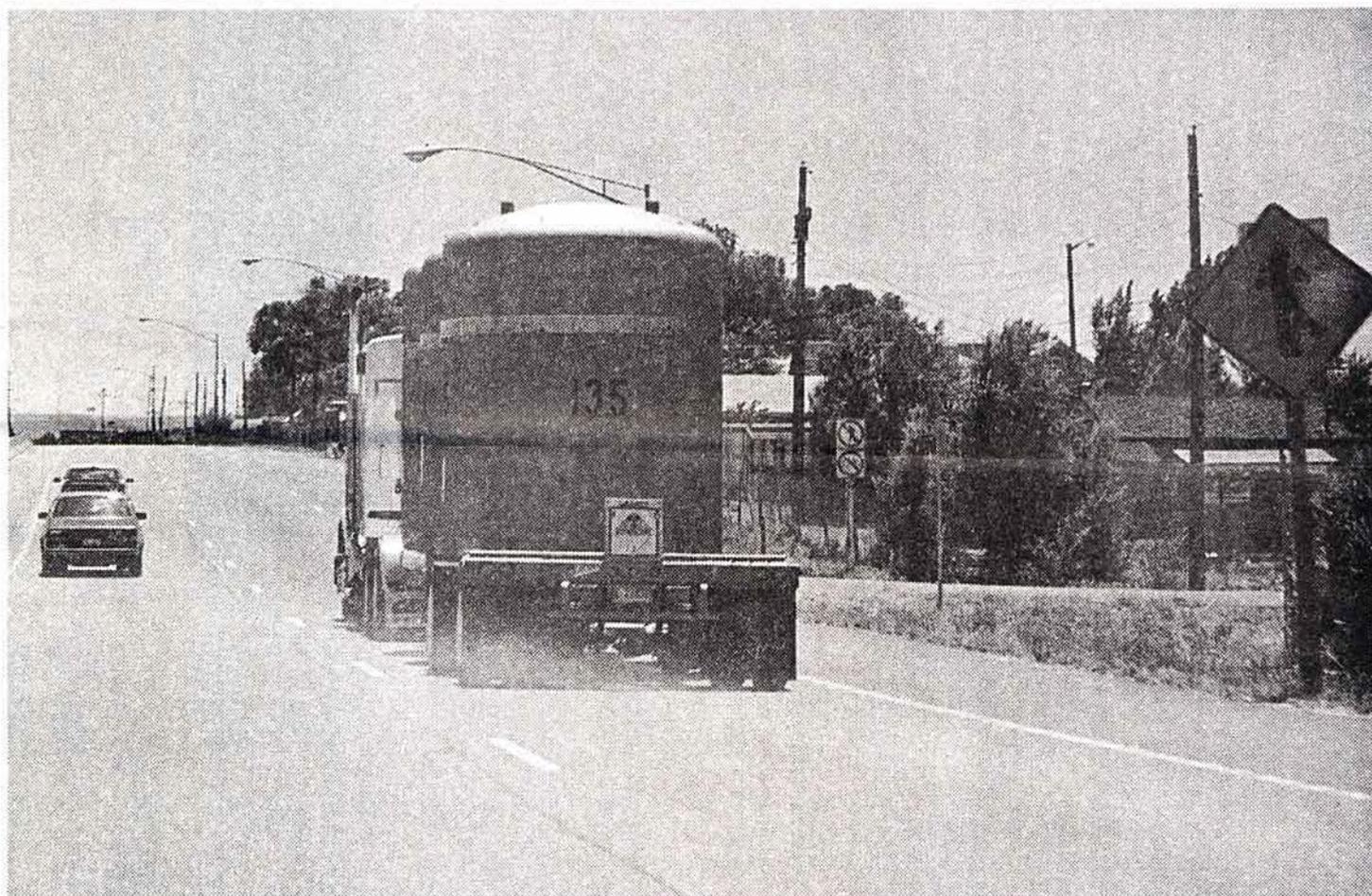


Photo by Bonnie Urfer

A truck carrying plutonium dust from "clean-up" efforts at the Rocky Flats nuclear weapons complex travels through Colorado Springs on its way to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) in SE New Mexico. More than 40,000 radioactive waste shipments bound for WIPP are planned over the next 35 years. The trucks will be carrying transuranic and plutonium-contaminated waste from nuclear weapons production sites across the United States.

The waste shipments could grow to more than 80,000 if the Department of Energy opens the Yucca Mountain site in Nevada, slated to receive irradiated fuel rods from commercial nuclear reactors. The waste at both sites will remain radioactive for hundreds of thousands of years. Nukewatch staffer Bonnie Urfer and volunteer Yvonne Mills traveled to Denver to help in tracking the load (above) along Interstate 25. (See story on page 1.)

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Year 2000 Call to Shut-down and Dismantle

Nukewatch, along with individuals and organizations around the world, is calling for a complete shut-down of all nuclear reactors and an unplugging of all nuclear weapons in preparation for possible Y2K computer problems.

Of all potential Y2K failures, the worst scenario involves the nuclear industry. One nuclear reactor or H-bomb accident is unthinkable and the risk of any nuclear catastrophe is completely unnecessary. With nuclear reactors and weapons, there is no margin for error.

The Nuclear Information and Resource Service (NIRS) in Washington gave the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's Y2K program failing grades, based on the agency's admission that 35 nuclear reactors still haven't resolved their problems with the Y2K bug. Several of the reactors aren't even scheduled to complete their fixes until November 1999, or later, and no reactor operator claims to be "Y2K compliant."

In July, the NRC claimed that all 103 U.S. reactors are free of Y2K software problems that could cause radiation leaks on Jan. 1st. However, the NRC conducted only 12 utility audits! In New Hampshire, the Seabrook reactor alone contains 1,304 separate software items and embedded chips that may be affected by the Y2K bug.

Backup power systems for U.S. reactors are not up to the task of keeping cool the storage pools filled with irradiated fuel rods. "The NRC does not even require that these fuel pools have backup power," says Mary Olson of NIRS. Some of the rods are so hot that without cooling it would take less than 48 hours for them to melt down.

Unplugging the Nuclear Arsenal

A "De-Alerting Coalition" of over 250 groups led by Physicians for Social Responsibility, is working to get nuclear weapons off line before December 31, and has urged the Clinton White House to assure that missiles do not accidentally launch. Removing the warheads would eliminate the danger of detonation in a Y2K-related accident.

The Defense Special Weapons Agency (DSWA), responsible for managing the nation's nuclear weapons stockpile, claimed last Nov. it had no Y2K problems. But a Defense Department inspector-general's audit found that no testing had been done at all, nor had the agency bothered to develop contingency plans in case of a mission-critical nuclear launch system failure. The DSWA said it was not required under Pentagon rules to do so.

Robert J. Lieberman, Assistant Inspector General for the Pentagon said six months ago, "By waiting so long to really get into high gear, we have made this a much higher-risk proposition...Right now it's difficult to say whether we have managed to make the problem unmanageable or not." He divulged that his agency accepted assurances from software vendors about their products, rather than conducting direct tests.

Military early warning systems may fail and lead to false alarms of missile attacks. In fact, the U.S. military has the largest computer network in the world, with 1.5 million computers, 28,000 automated systems, 70 different computer languages (some so obscure no one can read them), and the whole network is riddled with date-sensitive computer chips.

A report by the British American Security Information Council says, "The Pentagon has already announced the existence of 'high risk' systems that may not be repaired or tested in time, and for which repairs may ultimately be impossible."

The Navy Department says Y2K problems are likely to cause total failure of some utilities in approximately 1/3 of the 500 cities it studied. Expected failures involve water, sewer, electric and gas utilities. A June, 1999 Navy report, entitled "Master Utility List" rates metropolitan areas according to their ability to survive the millennium date change. The once secret Navy report states that more than 26 million American citizens in 125 cities can expect to be without electricity, water, gas or sewer services in January.

President Clinton's top Y2K adviser, John Koskinen, confirmed the authenticity of the Navy report—an assessment more dire than any other made by the government. This is a complete contradiction to the government's August 1999 conclusion that, "It is highly unlikely that there will be national disruptions in electric power service on Jan. 1, 2000." The government said that any gas disruptions that occur will have minimal impact on consumers and it is increasingly unlikely that the date change will create disruption in water service.

While individual oil and gas companies are confronting possible problems, there is no national approach to deal with shortages or disruption in the nation's oil and gas supplies, according to a May 25 *New York Times* article.

The Navy isn't the only agency worried though. Many municipalities are conducting drills to prepare for worst-case scenarios. The nation's health care system lags significantly, as do millions of small businesses and state and local governments. Global communications, nursing homes, schools, banks, hospitals and airlines are all likely to experience problems.

The State Department is focused on foreign failures since many Americans will be abroad. The Department's Inspector General Jacquelyn Williams-Bridgers says she expects "vary-

ing degrees of Y2K-related failures in every sector, in every region and at every economic level." In assessing foreign preparedness she said, "there is a clear risk that electricity, communications and other key systems will fail, perhaps creating economic havoc and social unrest."

Major corporations, some foreign countries and even the U.S. Treasury have begun to raise enormous amounts of cash just in case something goes wrong somewhere as computer calendars flip to 2000.

The American Banking Association issued a five-page manual for Y2K that reads, "So in preparing for Jan. 1, 2000, do what you can. Trust God. Trust those you love. Be informed. And take a few practical steps. Save copies of your financial records. Keep a few days worth of cash on you. Have a little extra food and water around the house if that makes you feel better. Keep an adequate supply of medicines and over-the-counter drugs on hand. If it's a prescription medicine that you're

required to take, put aside enough for a few weeks. Make sure there are fresh batteries in your flashlights. Keep some candles on hand. If you have a fireplace, put some dry wood aside."

Y2K preparations are boosting U.S. interest rates across the board according to analysts. Lloyd's of London predicts worldwide legal costs could reach \$1 trillion and the House and Senate passed legislation limiting litigation, attorney fees and damage awards.

In poll results distributed by CIO Communications, Inc., 56% of high-tech company executives said millennium bugs will not be fixed by Dec. 31; 60% said they would not fly on a commercial airline on January 1, and 80% are documenting financial records.

Call the White House (202) 456-1111, and your Representatives and demand they shut-down the reactors and unplug the nuclear weapons. Not only is it the socially responsible thing to do, but quite simply, our future may depend on it.

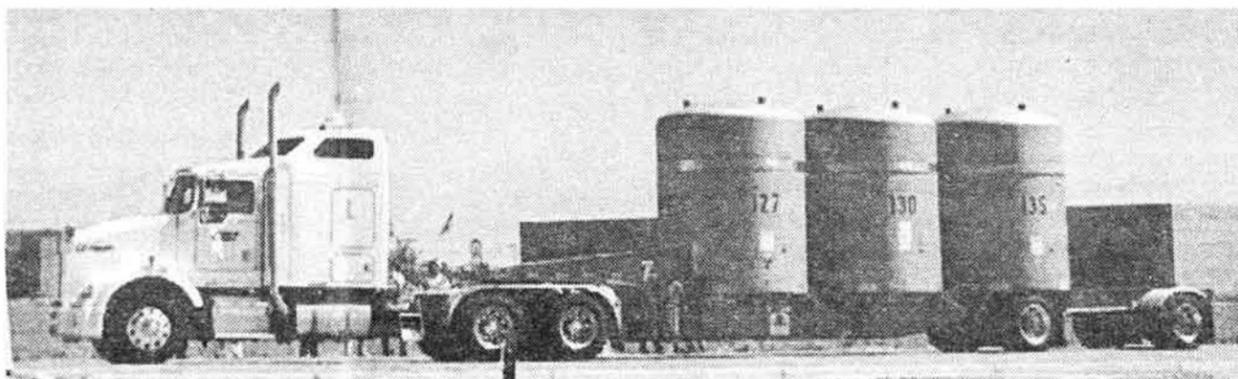


Photo by Bonnie Urfer

Nukewatch was on the scene when a hot load of plutonium-contaminated waste left the Rocky Flats nuclear weapons complex (above), 16 miles from Denver, headed for the WIPP site in New Mexico. WIPP is the first non-retrievable underground nuclear waste dump ever opened by the federal government. The 10-foot tall "Trupact-II" canisters, weighing up to 19,250 pounds, are said by the Energy Department to have passed three sorts of highway accident tests.

Hot On the Trail

By Yvonne Mills & Bonnie Urfer

An email came in on Monday night, June 28, saying a truck carrying plutonium ash from Rocky Flats "clean-up" would leave the site on Thursday morning headed for the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) near Carlsbad, New Mexico. If we wanted to follow it, we needed to leave Tuesday morning.

Tracking the trucks and trains carrying radioactive wastes offers a look at the routes, rest stops and routines of the carriers, and provides opportunities for public education and media coverage. Many organizations along the WIPP truck routes are working to increase awareness in the effort to end radioactive waste production.

The Department of Energy is planning to ship over 40,000 loads of plutonium-laden radioactive waste to the WIPP site over the next 40 years. The waste was—and continues to be—generated at nuclear bomb production sites in Illinois, Tennessee, Colorado, Idaho, Washington, South Carolina, New Mexico, California, Nevada and Ohio.

After traveling for two days, we made it to Boulder, CO, home of the Rocky Mountain Peace Center, and joined area activists to prepare for Thursday's rally at the gates of Rocky Flats just south of town. Folks at the Peace Center produced banners, pulled out song sheets, discussed the site for the legal rally and related information about the first shipment of WIPP waste sent the month before.

The first truckload was not without incident. Upon reaching the WIPP site, employees discovered that one of the Trupact-II containers had exterior radioactive contamination as well as a missing vent cover. Officials said of the lost cover that since it wasn't really necessary, it wasn't really missing. No one knows how the outside of the Trupact-II became contaminated although the DOE claims it was naturally occurring radiation picked up en route.

The following morning about 35 people gathered at Rocky Flats to await the passing of the truck carrying three radioactive waste canisters. Signs and banners helped to alert people in passing vehicles.

The truck left the site on schedule, after a four-hour inspection, just a few minutes after 10:00 a.m. on June 30. Others who attempted to follow the previous shipment were stopped by police. To avoid being detained when the truck pulled out, we looped around Denver another way.

By the time we reached the center of Denver the stop-and-go traffic was so thick that it took an hour to reach the southern boundary. The radioactive waste shipment was behind us in the same southbound I-25 noon rush-hour jam. Ironically the truck was not allowed to travel through Denver during the morning or afternoon rush-hours.

At the first rest area south of Denver we pulled off, made phone calls and waited for the WIPP cargo to pass. When it did, we followed it through the highly populated tourist area of Colorado Springs. We weren't at all sure the police wouldn't stop us if we stayed with the truck so we took some photos, passed and went on ahead.

According to DOE regulations, the WIPP trucks and containers must be inspected every 100 miles or 2 hours. Since the truck had a four hour inspection at Rocky Flats, it was "empty" from the first check.

Down the road, we scratched our heads and made calculations. According to the regulations governing time and mileage, the truck was due for a check-up. We chose an exit and decided to wait for it. Our calculations were right! The truck pulled off at the same exit, number 67, but chose to hide behind the Total gas station just across the overpass. At this point we spied the expected courier vans—white, unmarked, with darkened windows. Two of the vans left the Total station and headed back toward Denver while one traveled with the shipment all the way to New Mexico.

The inspection took all of 15 minutes behind the gas station where no one could see the canisters. We had a perfect photo opportunity when the load reentered the interstate and passed directly in front of us.

Once again, we pulled out behind the truck. When we crossed the New Mexico border we waited at another likely inspection site without considering the Port of Entry (where all trucks must stop) in our calculations. After an hour of watching traffic on the interstate with no hot cargo in sight, we decided to go ahead to Santa Fe.

We met the group of people with Concerned Citizen's for Nuclear Safety in Santa Fe, waiting on the roadside with signs, banners and leaflets. We waited at the roadside for hours but by 10:30 p.m., 3½ hours beyond the anticipated arrival time, the shipment had not arrived. Phone calls to police and State officials revealed that the truck had been stopped at the New Mexico border.

A leak in an air-hose and a missing "radioactive" placard led state police to detain the shipment. The driver was ticketed for the missing warning label, had to wait for a replacement and fix the hose. The truck didn't arrive at the WIPP site until the following morning.

It seemed impossible to comprehend the magnitude of the danger as we traveled close to a truck carrying one of the most deadly substances on Earth. The canisters were an eerie and oppressive presence, yet the common mode of transportation promoted a false sense of safety and security.

From Rocky Flats, through the heart of Denver and down Interstate-25, everyone should know exactly what's on these trucks—affecting them and the next 12,000 generations.

NUCLEAR SHORTS

U.S. Using Food as Weapon Against North Korea

WASHINGTON—North Korea's severe and lengthy food shortage has now been called one of the great famines of the 20th century and may have caused two million deaths. "We now know that more than 10 percent of the population starved to death," says Andrew Natsios, a researcher for the U.S. Institute of Peace. The U.S. promised last May to provide more aid. The pledge of 200,000 tons of food and seed potatoes came one week after North Korea agreed to allow inspections of a site long claimed by U.S. officials to involve secret nuclear weapons development. The site has turned out to be empty. The country still needs more food.

Criticism of the food relief effort is being directed at Japan, South Korea and the White House by U.S. Rep. Tony Hall (D-OH). "We shouldn't wait for them," he said of the allies in 1997. "In my opinion, they are using food as a weapon. We should step up and lead." But this August, according to Rep. Hall, the U.S. threatened to end its famine relief if a test missile is fired. Japan and S. Korea have made similar threats.

For years the U.S. State Department has hyped fears over alleged North Korean H-bomb and missile development. The ballyhooed missile test would not violate any international treaty or agreement with the United States. The fear mongering over the North's nuclear program continues without any evidence that the country has even one nuclear weapon. None has emerged since *Time* declared Jan. 10, 1994 that "the U.S. has no hard evidence that Pyongyang's elaborate nuclear facilities have produced any bombs."

—*New York Times*, Aug. 26, 20, 5 & May 28, 1999, March 3, 1998; *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, May 23, 1999.

Radioactive Trojan Horse Buried at Hanford

RICHLAND, WA—The Trojan Horse of ancient history was loaded with dangerous killers that poured out of an oversized spectacle. With the shallow burial of the defunct Trojan reactor core near the Columbia River, the NRC has committed a deadly copycat crime. In time, the radioactive isotopes inside Trojan's core—and those of 79 other reactors buried at the government's Hanford site—will leak into the aquifer. Nevertheless, the shipment of the two-million-pound time bomb through the heart of metropolitan Portland and up river was hailed as "safe," "gentle" and "smooth"—perhaps because it was shrink-wrapped in blue plastic. In fact, Trojan was an abysmal failure of engineering and economics, shut down 20 years early because of radiation accidents, an inoperable safety system, earthquake danger and cracked steam tubes too costly to replace. Opponents of the burial had demanded that the NRC wait 100 years for the hottest radioactive isotopes to cool before moving the core through population centers on a barge.

—*The Oregonian*, Aug. 4, 1999; *New York Times*, Aug. 7, 1999; *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel*, Aug. 9, 1999.

Radioactive Scrap Metal in Your Mouth?

NASHVILLE, TN—Tennessee's Dept. of Environment and Conservation (DEC) has approved an experimental process to reuse radioactive waste metals at the state's Oak Ridge nuclear weapons complex and sell the metal for use in consumer goods. The State's action allowing so-called "recycling" of radioactive metals "may well be a violation of federal law," according to two U.S. Reps. who have protested to Energy Secretary Bill Richardson. Reps. John Dingle (D-MI) and Ron Klink (D-PA) charged that the DOE deliberately used Tennessee's DEC to avoid public scrutiny and to skirt federal rules that would forbid the project. A May 1998 accident at a Spanish smelter sent a cloud of radioactive Cesium-137 across Europe. More than 200 groups have protested to the White House demanding a halt to the scheme. "This is not a done deal," says Diane D'Arrigo at NIRS. While the scientific community agrees that no level of radiation exposure is known to be harmless, the Tennessee DEC trotted out the old yarn that the radiation exposure from the hot metals "would be so low it would pose no danger." If the plan goes ahead, the metals could find their way into forks, frying pans, toys, teeth braces, false teeth, even hip joint replacements. (See Spring '98 *Pathfinder*)

—*Nashville Tennessean*, Aug. 11 & 13 1999; Nuclear Information & Resource Service press release, Aug. 12, 1999.

Hydrogen Fires Still Plague Rad Waste Dry Casks

KALAMAZOO, Michigan—At the Palisades nuclear reactors near here, "dry cask" storage for waste reactor fuel has caused controversy. Problems with cracking welds on the casks were aggravated in 1996 by a pair of hydrogen gas explosions that jarred the lid off a similar cask being welded in Wisconsin. Use of the faulty "VSC-24" cask was halted for a time. Then on June 10 of this year, welders at Palisades had to snuff out two hydrogen fires they ignited while welding on another VSC-24. A NRC inspection team that rushed to the scene declared that

"This hydrogen burning was of minor safety significance."

—Notification of Unusual Occurrence, NRC, June 10, 1999.

No Safety Guarantees at U.S. Power Reactors

WASHINGTON—Public Citizen's Critical Mass Energy Project has issued a scathing indictment of the nuclear power industry, concluding that safety systems may not work in an emergency at 102 of 111 commercial reactors. The 102 reactors reported over 500 cases of operating "outside design basis." That's legal jargon for how the government monitors reactor safety. The study's author James Riccio, says, "If a reactor is operating 'outside design basis' it is impossible for the NRC or the utility to determine whether the reactor is 'safe' or whether its operation poses an undue risk to public health and safety."

—"Amnesty Irrational: How the NRC Fails to Hold Nuclear Reactors Accountable for Violations of its Own Safety Regs.," Public Citizen, August 1999; *New York Times*, Aug. 11, 1999.

Russia Suggests Cutting Nuclear Arsenals in Half

MOSCOW—Russia recommended to the Clinton White House that the Start III nuclear weapons negotiations cut the maximum number of warheads in both countries to 1,500 or fewer—half the number allowed under Start II. The *Washington Post* reports that the proposal "is likely to meet with resistance in the Pentagon and among Republicans." —*St. Paul Pioneer Press*, Aug. 20, 1999, p. A12.

Illegal & Secret Pentagon Actions

WASHINGTON—Pentagon officials denied that they deliberately violated the law by spending hundreds of millions of dollars without authorization. A report by the House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee says the DOD defied congressional instructions and violated subcommittee regulations, possibly even the Constitution. The Constitution allows only the spending of authorized funds. But sub-committee Chair Jerry Lewis charged in a report accompanying the military appropriations bill that Pentagon officials started one secret project without any congressional knowledge at all. In that case, National Public Radio said, "officials" even refused to describe the program, citing cold war rules that still give the military and the CIA freedom to spend billions without public debate. When asked about the case, White House spokesman Ken Bacon claimed the Pentagon "forgot" to inform Congress and then apologized. In another case, one of the dozens of controversial multi-billion-dollar Star Wars weapons under development was cancelled by Congress. The Pentagon knew this missile system should be dead, the report says, then illegally diverted \$2 million from another program and even awarded a contract for the program to Lockheed-Martin. No criminal charges were mentioned.

—Steve Inskeep, NPR's *All Things Considered*, July 22, 1999.

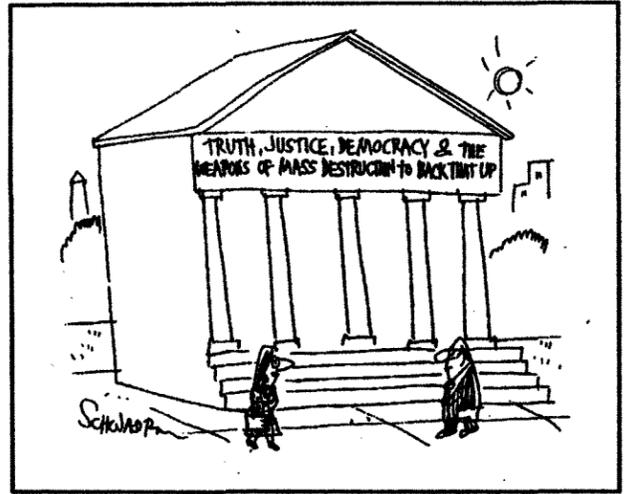
Yucca Mt. Dump Plan Still Unworkable

JACKASS FLATS, NV—The DOE's Aug. 6 draft environmental impact statement admits that major issues are not understood well enough to allow Yucca Mt. to be used for deep underground dumping of irradiated (spent) fuel rods from nuclear reactors. Claiming "very little radiation would leak from the site," DOE dump advocates don't inspire much confidence. Sr. engineer Michael Voegelé said, "We think we can handle the uncertainty." The question is, can the public handle it? The DOE report claims that using Yucca Mt. would be "as safe as, and much cheaper" than monitoring the wastes where they are now accumulating—at 72 commercial and five federal sites across the country. Critics flatly deny these claims. Dr. Arjun Makhijani, Pres. of the Institute for Energy & Environmental Research, says the Yucca Mt. project is "driven not by environmental protection but by politics and artificial legal deadlines." IEER proposes monitored on-site storage in order to address more urgent waste problems. "For instance, the most environmentally threatening transuranic [heavier than uranium] waste was dumped in shallow landfills prior to 1970 at various DOE sites. These leaking waste dumps have contaminated large volumes of soil and are threatening important water resources." —*New York Times*, Aug. 7 & 10, 1999; "Considering the Alternatives" IEER's *Science for Democratic Action*, May 1999.

Anchovies Shut Down Nuclear Reactor

SOUTHPORT, NC—A school of anchovies shut down a N. Carolina nuclear power plant. Brunswick Unit 2, on the Atlantic coast near the S. Carolina border, shut itself down automatically after all four of its water intake screens were clogged with the tiny fish, and its coolant pumps lost suction.

The pumps take water directly from the ocean through a canal to cool the plant's nuclear reactor. The plant uses moving screens, called traveling screens, that normally brush fish off of the intake areas. Fish saving devices move the fish away from



the screens and send them back down the canal toward the ocean. "From time to time, there are fish impingements [sic] on these traveling screens that are more than the system can handle," said NRC spokesman Ken Clark. The run of anchovies that overwhelmed the plant has now subsided and the plant, which was not damaged, is being restarted.

—Environment News Service, June 29, 1999.

Nuclear Waste Aboard? Railroad Crashes USA

WASHINGTON—With irradiated (spent) fuel rods from Navy ship reactors on the rails statistics on railroad crashes take on a new significance. The Federal Railway Administration reports that last year there were 3,500 collisions at highway rail crossings. In the U.S. about every 100 minutes a train collides with a person or a vehicle. Locomotive engineer, Ken Gillsdorf, told National Public Radio, "you could probably have a grade crossing crash or hit a trespasser every trip. We have a lot of close calls every trip." No records are kept of close calls, but over 50% of crashes at public grade crossings occur where active warning devices exist.

Rail workers say there are two kinds of people that operate trains: "those that have been in a collision and those that are gonna to be in one." One engineer said, "I've hit everything from an airplane, to a truck, bus, snow mobile, a four-wheeler, a three-wheeler, a bicycle, and a snowplow, and also a tanker." —Michael Ivey, for NPR's *All Things Considered*, July 5, 1999.

Nuclear Weapons Convention Needs Support

NEW YORK, NY—This autumn, the United Nations will consider a General Assembly resolution calling for negotiations that will bring about a Nuclear Weapons Convention, banning the possession and any use of nuclear weapons. Similar UNGA resolutions have been adopted by large majorities in 1996, 1997 and 1998.

U.S. Rep. Lynn Woolsey (D-CA) has introduced a House Resolution (HR 82) that calls on the government to support the Convention. The Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy has details about how to support and promote the NWC. Ask your U.S. Rep. to co-sponsor by calling the Capital switchboard: (202) 224-3121. For the text and details, see LCNP's web pages in *Resources*.

—*Bombs Away!* Newsletter of the Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy, Fall, 1998.

RESOURCES

BBC News Online; web: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/home/today>
Campaign Against Depleted Uranium, One World Center, 6 Mount St., Manchester, M2 5NS, England; phone: 0161-834-8301; email: gmdcnd@gn.apc.org
Critical Mass Energy Project, Public Citizen, 215 Pennsylvania Ave. SE, Washington, DC 20003; phone: (202) 546-4996.
Environment News Service; web: www.ens.lycos.com
Ganesayer, P.O. Box 8574, Atlanta, GA 30306; phone: (404) 378-4263.
Laka Foundation, Ketelhuisplein 43, 1054 RD Amsterdam, The Netherlands; phone: 31-20-616-8294; email: laka@laka.antenna.nl
Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy, 211 E 43 ST., New York, NY 10012; phone: (212) 818-1861; email: lcnp@aol.com; web: www.lcnp.org; Newsletter: *Bombs Away!*
Nuclear Information & Resource Service, 1424 16th St. NW, #404, Washington, DC 20036; phone: (202) 328-0002; email: nirnet@nirs.org
Peace Action, Peace Action International, 866 UN Plaza, # 4053, New York, NY 10017; phone: (212) 750-5795; web: www.webcom.com/peaceact
Physicians for Social Responsibility (De-Alerting Coalition), 1101 14th Street NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20005; phone: (202) 898-0150; web: www.psr.org
Rachel's Environmental & Health Weekly, Environmental Research Foundation, P.O. Box 5036, Annapolis, MD 21403; phone: (888) 272-2435; email: erf@rachel.org
Science for Democratic Action, Institute for Energy & Environmental Research, 6935 Laurel Ave., Takoma Park, MD 20912; phone: (301) 270-5500; email: ieer@ieer.org
Trident Ploughshares 2000, 42-46 Bethel Street, Norwich, Norfolk, NR2 1NR, UK; phone: (01603) 611953; email: tp2000@gn.apc.org; web: <http://www.gn.apc.org/tp2000>
Wisc. Network for Peace & Justice, P.O. Box 1174, Madison, WI 53701; phone: (608) 249-5979; email: greenlance@aol.com

Paducah...Hanford...Rocky Flats...Savannah River...Idaho National Lab

WASHINGTON—Paducah, Kentucky becomes the latest chapter in the grim history of the nuclear age. “What goes around comes around,” was never truer than in the business of nuclear weapons. Threatening to poison and kill millions of fellow human beings with particularly horrible weapons, has, it turns out, poisoned and killed thousands of the North Americans who worked building the bombs.

Across the country areas the size of whole states—Hanford, Savannah River, Oak Ridge, Rocky Flats and now Paducah—have been contaminated with highly radioactive wastes that will really threaten national security for thousands or millions of years.

In response to revelations about the Paducah factory, as if money could compensate for the induced cancers, immune system disorders and genetic damage that will haunt multiple generations, the DOE now talks about taking care of the workers it so ruthlessly lied to and abused.

In an unusually harsh tone, the *Washington Post* reported August 8 that the government and military contractors kept secret their severe and prolonged radiation contamination of workers at the Paducah, KY nuclear weapons factory—“even as employees began to notice a string of cancers.” One health physicist who warned of the dangers was told, “this is Paducah—it doesn’t matter here.” The *Post* said that contamination continued well into the 1990s.

The *Post* called its analysis, “the still-unfolding story of radioactive contamination and concealment in the chain of factories.” Still-unfolding. You can say that again, since the plutonium and other highly radioactive metals involved are so long-

lasting and because radiation-induced genetic damage is passed from generation to generation.

The DOE has promised more study and said it will try to add the Paducah workers to its ever-expanding list of employees it made sick and to whom it owes compensation.

“Unsuspecting workers inhaled plutonium-laced dust brought into the plant for 23 years,” the *Post* reported. “One 20-year veteran worker who died in 1980 compiled a list of 50 employees he worked with who had died of cancer.”

Al Puckett, a retired shop steward told the *Post*, “They told us you could eat this stuff and it wouldn’t hurt you.” At lunchtime, workers brushed black powder or green uranium dust off their food, the *Post* reported.

While the DOE still claims that exposures were minimal, plutonium can cause cancer if even a single particle (one millionth of an ounce) is ingested or inhaled. In addition, the government kept no records of internal radiation exposures, so it has no basis from which to estimate. It is no accident that the government lacks exposure data, as it has a vested liability interest in not knowing.

A worker lawsuit against operators Lockheed Martin and Martin Marietta charges that radiation contamination is still a problem. Crude fences mark hundreds of radioactive “hot spots” throughout the complex, and new ones are found every year.

In yet another installment of the Vietnam-era carpet bombing defense “We had to destroy the village to save it,” Energy Secretary Bill Richardson told the *Post* that the DOE’s “national security goals had ‘sent many of our workers into harm’s way’ in the past.” He claimed that no workers are at risk today.

poisons the air, water and soil and can be inhaled or ingested where it lodges in the lungs or kidneys. It is an alpha emitter and has a radioactive half-life of 4.5 billion years.

The use of DU during the 1991 Persian Gulf experiment is reported to be responsible for increased numbers of cancers, still births, birth defects, leukemias and rare illnesses in southern Iraq. In 1991 the U.S. and Britain fired more than 320 tons of the material over Iraq, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Over 90,000 U.S. veterans of the Gulf action report undiagnosed illnesses that are often associated with radiation exposure.

NATO and the Pentagon claim that U-238 is only mildly radioactive and poses no special danger. But the BBC reports that British military personnel in Kosovo have been warned to stay away from areas affected by DU. The BBC also reported that the U.S. Army’s Environmental Policy Institute found in 1995: “If DU enters the body, it has the potential to generate significant medical consequences.” The Institute said “The risks associated with DU are both chemical and radiological.”

August 13, the United Nations Environment Program announced that it is investigating the potential harm to human health from the DU explosions in the Balkans. Its report is expected in October.

Now, Canadian researchers have found “unequivocal evidence” of long-term DU contamination of Persian Gulf veterans. Dr. Hari Sharma at the Univ. of Waterloo in Ontario, Patricia Horan at the Memorial Univ. of Newfoundland and Malcolm Hooper at the Univ. of Sunderland say that veterans have been shown to be passing U-238 in urine eight years after the Gulf war. “U.S. forces used DU in Kosovo,” Hooper told BBC News Online, “and that is disturbing.” He says the new studies show “significant exposure to DU, exposure which the [British] Ministry of Defense and the Pentagon have always maintained did not happen.”

The U.S. Army has quietly admitted the danger of DU weapons by asking medical doctors with the National Academy of Sciences for advice on radiation protection for troops.

On May 6, in the midst of the DU bombing of Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo, the NAS reported that “military planners are preparing for [radiation] exposure that could occur during...the use of radioactive materials in conventional explosives... These exposures could increase the risk of leukemia and certain cancers later in life.” (It is worth noting here that Department of the Air Force law prohibits the use of poison and forbids the use of weapons that have delayed effects.) The NAS also suggests that Commanders balance “radiation-related risks against risks from alternative actions.” The scientists also directed the DOD to provide “training to all soldiers and inform them of actual or suspected radiation exposure.”

SOURCES: WISE *News Communiqué*, May 21, 1999, & June 4, 1999; BBC News, Aug. 27 & July 30, 1999; Pacifica Network News, Aug. 23, 1999; Campaign Against Depleted Uranium, Manchester, UK; “Depleted Uranium: A Post-War Disaster for Environment and Health,” May 1999, The Laka Foundation, Amsterdam; “Radiation Threats in Post-Cold War Era Bring New Strategy for Protecting Troops,” National Academy of Sciences press release, May 6, 1999; “International Law: The Conduct of Armed Conflict and Air Operations,” USAF Pamphlet, No. 110-31, November 19, 1976.

Disregarded History

New York Times Reports on H-bomb Worker Contamination and Cover-ups, 1988-89

News of the radiation poisoning of workers at the Paducah H-bomb factories has rightfully outraged the public.

Still, today’s reports of the abuse of employees by corporate managers and government overseers in the nuclear weapons complex often ignore the history of the Pentagon’s radioactive pollution and the contractors’ elaborate cover-ups.

Helen Caldicott reported in the 1995 edition of *Nuclear Madness*: “In October 1988, the *New York Times* published twenty full-page stories revealing shocking contamination at 15 major DOE weapons-producing facilities in 13 states. By 1989, it was discovered that there are 3,200 sites in one hundred locations owned by the DOE that have contaminated soil, ground water, or both; but actually there are 45,000 potentially radioactive sites around the United States and twenty thousand of them are government owned.”*

Most of the nation’s weapons production reactors were closed after these and other news reports brought some fleeting attention to the vast pollution of the nuclear weapons industry. Nukewatch has the records, but without the abolition of nuclearism this history will be repeated:

Oct. 1, 1988, “Accidents At a U.S. Nuclear Plant Were Kept Secret Up to 31 Years: Energy Dept. Asserts It Didn’t Know of Events at Weapons Fuel Site.”

Oct. 3, 1988, “Du Pont Rejects Contentions It Hid Reactor Problems: Senator Asserts Information on 30 Plant Accidents Was Withheld From Aides.”

Oct. 4, 1988, “Energy Dept. Says It Kept Secret Mishaps at Nuclear Weapon Plant: Admission Exonerates Du Pont, Operator of Site.”

Oct. 5, 1988, “Ex-Nuclear Aides Deny Being Told of Plant Mishaps: Former AEC Officials Hint That Colleagues Withheld Reports on Accidents.”

Oct. 7, 1988, “Inquiry Ordered at Nuclear Arms Site.”

Oct. 9, 1988, “Reactor Shutdown Could Impede Nuclear Deterrent, Officials Say.”

Oct. 9, 1988, “Panel Is Critical of Nuclear Agency: Congressmen Assail a Plan to Leave Safeguard on Abuse of Alcohol to Utilities.”

Oct. 12, 1988, “Energy Secretary Vows Fast Action on Arms Reactor.”

Oct. 14, 1988, “Candor on Nuclear Peril: Finances and the Fear of Serious Accident Prompt Rare Openness on Weapon Plants.”

Oct. 15, 1988, “U.S. For Decades, Let Uranium Leak At Weapons Plant: Risk to Thousands: Documents Indicate a Decision Not to Act on Major Cleanup.”

Oct. 16, 1988, “Du Pont Disputes Charges On Safety At Nuclear Plant: Terms Issue ‘Political.’”

Oct. 16, 1988, “After 40 Years, the Silence Is Broken On a Troubled Nuclear Arms Industry.”

Oct. 19, 1988, “Bitter Neighborhood Adjoins U.S. Uranium Plant in Ohio.”

Oct. 19, 1988, “White House Is Pressed on Safety At Nation’s Nuclear Arms Plants.”

Oct. 20, 1988, “Problems At Weapon Plants Conceded.”

Oct. 20, 1988, “Training Is Cited At Atomic Agency: Human Errors Are Blamed for Civilian Reactor Mishaps.”

Oct. 21, 1988, “Dispute on Wastes Poses Threat to Weapons Plant.”

Oct. 26, 1988, “Operators Got Millions in Bonuses Despite Hazards at Atom Plants.”

Oct. 31, 1988, “Nuclear Plants’ Deaths: The Birth of New Problems.”

Nov. 7, 1988, “Defects in Nuclear Arms Industry Minimized in Early Reagan Years.”

Nov. 9, 1988, “Waste Danger Reported At Nuclear Weapons Plant.”

Nov. 10, 1988, “Report for Congress Says Atom Agency Mishandles Licenses.”

Nov. 18, 1988, “Government Had Edge In Weapon Plant Suits.”

Nov. 28, 1988, “Trouble at Atomic Bomb Plants: How Lawmakers Missed the Signs.”

Dec. 7, 1988, “Wide Threat Seen In Contamination At Nuclear Units: U.S. Cites 155 Instances.”

Dec. 8, 1988, “Waste Dumping That U.S. Banned Went On at Its Own Atom Plants.”

Dec. 11, 1988, “Fear Is Corroding Faith At Nuclear Bomb Plants.”

*April 9, 1992, “Report Lists 45,000 Potential Radioactive Sites.”

Back Door Nuclear War

U.S. and British Warplanes, Submarines and Tanks All Fired Radioactive DU in the Balkans

By John LaForge

Dr. Rosalie Bertell, Ph.D., author of *No Immediate Danger*, has issued this warning regarding depleted uranium weapons:

It is imperative that we all denounce this radiation and toxic chemical warfare. The damage being done will not only cause incredible and unending suffering to today’s victims, but the genetic damage [DU] may cause can be passed on to their offspring. Such weapons need to be condemned as utter barbarism. [DU] has been condemned by the United Nations Human Rights Tribunal (August 1996 Session of the UN Commission on Human Rights, Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities).

In the face of international pleas for a ban on their use, U.S. and British forces used so-called depleted uranium (DU) weapons in the NATO bombardment of the Balkans. In view of the dreadful health affects attributed to DU weapons by some scientists, these so-called “tankbusters” might better be called “genebusters.”

On May 3, 1999 Maj. Gen. Charles F. Wald acknowledged that DU munitions were used but the Pentagon will not say where they exploded. DU rounds were fired from the AV-8B and A-10 “warthog” warplanes, and the A-10s are known for firing 3,900 rounds a minute. In addition, U.S. and British tanks fired thousands of DU rounds.

A week earlier, on April 26, NATO’s German spokesman Col. Konrad Freytag said during a Washington press briefing, “We use ammunition against tanks...and...there is depleted uranium we use to harden this ammunition.” Col. Freytag even said, “It’s not radioactive at all.”

United Nations documents also confirm that DU is used in the U.S. cluster bombs and as a stabilizer (ballast) in the hundreds of Cruise missiles used in the assault. The Laka Foundation reports that U.S. Tomahawk cruise missiles each have 30 kilograms of DU. Although the actual number is classified, at least 450 Cruise missiles, carrying about 13,500 kilograms of DU, were fired during the 78-day bombardment.

British research biologist Roger Coghill, interviewed by the BBC, has calculated that NATO forces fired more than 500,000 DU rounds, half of which detonated. Coghill estimates that as many as 10,000 extra cancer deaths may result from this use of DU. He cites Greek and Bulgarian evidence of increased radiation levels in Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and northern Greece. The BBC declared: “Depleted uranium ‘threatens Balkan cancer epidemic.’”

DU is uranium-238, a chemically toxic and radioactive heavy metal left from the refining of uranium. DU is essentially radioactive waste “depleted” of most of its U-235, which is separated for use in H-bombs and reactor fuel. Because U-238 is 1.7 times as dense as lead the military likes it for armor-piercing ammunition and tank armor.

DU shells are incendiaries—they explode, burn and aerosolize on impact—and cast uranium oxide dust to the four directions. On impact about 70% of the DU dissolves in a burning spray of uranium dust. Once dispersed, the uranium-238

Action for a Nuclear Free Great Lakes

By Bonnie Urfer

The Nuclear Free Great Lakes Action Camp moved us a step away from the Nuclear Age and a step closer to the "Age of Energy Common Sense." The first action camp, sponsored by seven environmental and peace organizations, drew hundreds of people to Camp Soni Springs, south of Three Oaks, Michigan, August 13 through 19. The focus of the campaign was to shut down all 37 nuclear reactors in the Great Lakes basin while implementing a widespread renewable energy program.

Thirty-seven commercial nuclear reactors, six uranium mining and production sites, nine radioactive waste dumps and the continued generation of deadly radioactive waste all threaten a precious and unique ecosystem—an ecosystem that houses over 40 million people and 20% of the world's fresh surface water. Federal regulators in both the U.S. and Canada have been systematically "reducing the regulatory burden" on the nuclear industry by weakening or selectively enforcing standards and regulations. They have been progressively removing or constraining the public's ability to scrutinize and intervene on nuclear safety issues.

The nuclear reactor industry claims nuclear power is safe, clean and the answer to global warming. The history of the dangers and deceit were brought to the surface during the six days of rallies and action camp workshops by numerous renowned presenters who came from all across the country and Canada—each with enough knowledge to leave participants in a state of shock, fear and amazement that any reactors operate at all.

Ann Harris worked for Tennessee Valley Authority. As a former employee she assured her audience that what the public knows about reactor failings pales in comparison with what those who work inside know. Some of the other experts included Ernest Sternglass, David Lochbaum, Diane D'Arrigo, Arjun Makhijani, Judith Johnsrud and Karl Grossman.

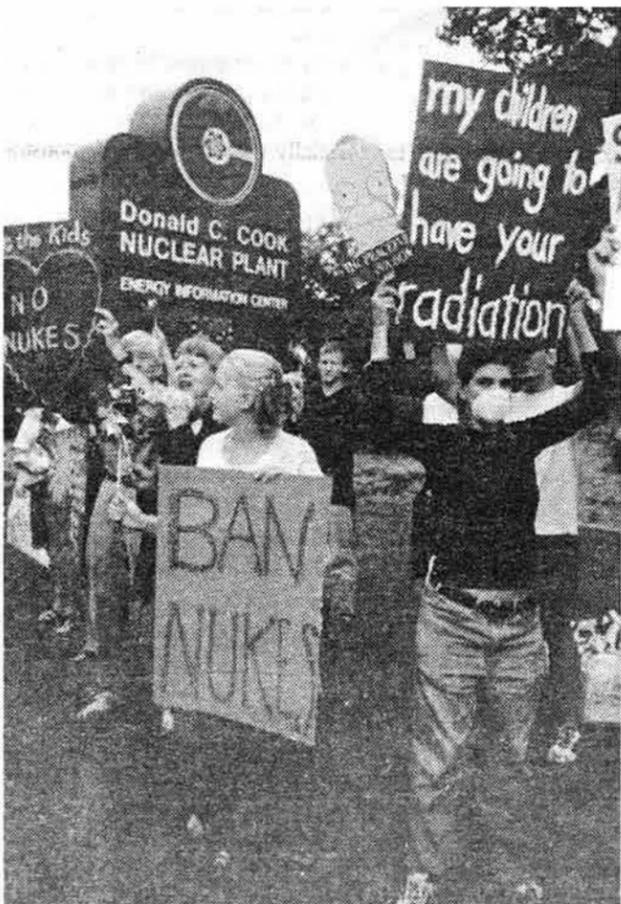
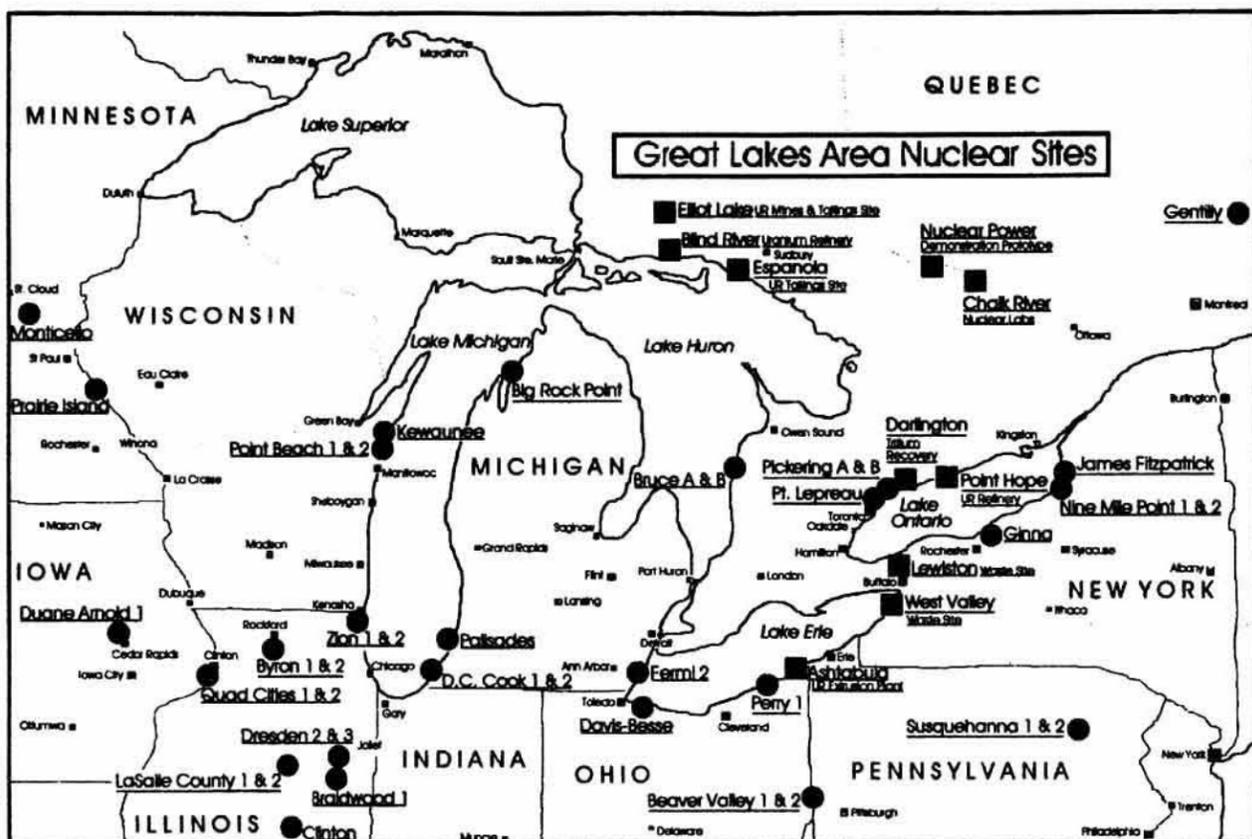


Photo by Carrie Benzschawel

More than 100 people gathered at the entrance to the D.C. Cook nuclear reactors in southwestern Michigan on August 13 demanding "no restart." The reactors have been shut-down for two years due to problems with the back-up cooling systems, the latest involving inadequate operation of the ice condensers.

Seventeen activists "crossed the line" and were charged with trespass. The misdemeanor carries a possible 90 day jail sentence and \$500 fine. Ten of the 17 pleaded "not guilty" to the charges and await a trial in Berrien County Court in St. Joseph, MI.



Nukewatch graphic

Thirty-seven nuclear reactors sit directly on the shores of the Great Lakes with an additional 16 reactors close enough to contaminate them with intentional or accidental discharges. The Great Lakes basin contains approximately 20% of the world's fresh surface water and a population of 40 million people.

Camp participants had numerous choices for workshops that covered: radioactivity, nuclear power and decommissioning, the history of social change movements, Y2K, nuclear weapons, nonviolence and direct action, fundraising, the NRC, whistleblowing and legal struggles, radioactive waste storage and problems, and organizing. Workshops on environmental justice addressed U.S. racism as indigenous tribes continue to bear the adverse effects of uranium mining and radioactive waste dumping.

This year's action camp began with a rally in St. Joseph in southwestern Michigan. The rally included a parade along city streets and a visit to the office of U.S. Representative Fred Upton, supporter of the "Mobile Chernobyl Bill." A mock radioactive waste cask traveled the parade route to raise awareness about waste transportation. Giant puppets symbolizing corporate greed (nuclear power is the most expensive form of electricity) and radioactive mutation (all reactors regularly vent radiation into the atmosphere) joined the activist throng.

Throughout the week, students at the camp learned how to organize a campaign to oppose nuclear power. This year's crew will serve both as organizers for local actions on nuclear issues throughout the coming year, and as a source of organizers for next Summer's camp. Effective, ongoing training and the cultivation of environmental activists are the only viable means of opposing the conglomeration of environmentally abusive nuclear power interests.

As part of the action camp, petitions were circulated to begin a legal challenge to federal, state and local legislatures, public officials and the International Joint Commission regarding their support for or indifference toward nuclear reactor operations. The petitions will be filed in an effort to protect the general public from the nuclear industry's economic and ecological risks.

Resistance to D.C. Cook

The action camp focused on the D.C. Cook power reactor hoping to keep it from restarting, given its unacceptable safety shortfalls—including a lack of Y2K preparedness.

Once considered one of the premier nuclear reactors in the U.S., D.C. Cook's twin reactors have now been shut-down for two years. NRC inspectors, during a 1997 token inspection of six of over 100 reactors, discovered that 13,000 pounds of "extraneous materials" clogged the reactor's emergency cooling water flows—workers dragged out everything from insulation, paint, rust, tape and filters, to tools, gloves and condoms.

Federal regulators fined Cook's operators \$500,000. According to NRC's James L. Caldwell, the fine reflected "the particularly poor performance, the duration of the problems, the impact on the emergency core cooling system and containment and the NRC's concerns regarding these violations." Altogether the NRC found 61 safety violations and consolidated them into 37 that needed correcting before the reactors could restart. American Electric Power, which owns the reactors, claimed they were ready to power-up in December of 1997 but another inspection showed that the ice condensers, used to cool the reactor in an emergency, had serious problems. The mandatory shut-down continues.

Every reactor experiences a national average of more than two "hot scrams" or fast shut-downs per year. Cook could have

experienced a melt-down if something had failed during the eight years it operated with a clogged cooling system. Cook's owners and operators wanted to restart the reactor recently, even though backup generators did not work.

Over 100 people gathered at the entrance to Cook on August 19 in protest of utility plans to restart the reactors in the Spring of 2000.

The crowd was treated to a skit with huge puppets—some of which were created at the action camp—music and excellent speakers. Police tape festooned the area, designated the legal rally space and let resisters know where trespass began.

In early Spring, organizers began negotiations with numerous police agencies to secure a place for the legal rally at the reactor's entrance road. Action camp planners, with an attitude of openness, let Cook officials and police know that committed individuals would be trespassing on Cook property. Civil resistance heightens awareness to the dangers of nuclear power in part by grabbing media attention which in turn provides the greatest chance for changing energy policies.

Workshops offered at the camp provided the impetus needed for 17 people to "cross the line." Approximately 30 Michigan State Patrol officers attended the event and 35 County deputies at a cost to Berrien County of at least \$2,000. A pack of reporters showed up to cover the camp, the rally and the civil disobedience.

The trespass action went as planned. Each activist made a statement before entering into forbidden territory. Once across the line, police handcuffed and loaded the individuals into three waiting vans. The Berrien County Sheriff's Department released all 17 activists after each paid a \$50 bail. Ten of the people arrested pleaded "not guilty" at the September 2 arraignment and now await notice of a trial date.

Nukewatch facilitated the action planning, including nine hours of training and affinity group formation to cover peace-keeping, arrest and support, and the planning of the legal rally at the reactor site.

Partners in the Nuclear Free Great Lakes Campaign include: Citizens Action Coalition of Indiana in South Bend; the Coalition for a Nuclear Free Great Lakes in Monroe, MI; Don't Waste Michigan in Grand Rapids; Nuclear Energy Information Service, Evanston, IL; World Tree Peace Center & Chernobyl Children's Project, Kalamazoo, MI; the Nuclear Information and Resource Service in Washington; Nuclear Awareness Project in Uxbridge, Ontario; North American Water Office/Prairie Island Coalition, Lake Elmo, MN and Nukewatch.

There are plenty of reasons for continuing resistance to nuclear power reactors just as there are for opposing nuclear weapons. We must get on with the work of figuring out how to deal with the hundreds of thousands of tons of radioactive waste produced by these hideous steam engines.

The power of forms of resistance like massive blockades stems from the strength of their "affinity groups"—small communities woven into a larger one. In such communities we can learn the true meaning of conspiracy: "breathing together" the Spirit of life and being formed by that spirit into people faithful to the covenant of love—the law written in our hearts.

—Anne Montgomery, R.S.C.J., *Swords Into Plowshares*

Tromp Trident Trek 1999

CLAM LAKE, WI—Twelve peace activists were arrested August 8 for trespassing at the U.S. Navy's "Project ELF" submarine transmitter during a demonstration marking the 54th anniversary of the U.S. atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The August 8 rally came at the end of a four-day, 53-mile long peace walk to the Navy site, that began at the county courthouse in Ashland, WI. Ashland County Courthouse has been the site of dozens of hearings, trials and sentencing of nuclear weapons resisters who have defied local ordinances by conducting sit-ins, citizen inspections, blockades and disarmament actions at the transmitter site.

About 65 demonstrators gathered at the secluded Navy facility that sends Extremely Low Frequency messages to submerged British and U.S. Trident and Fast-Attack submarines around the world.

Civil resistance at the Navy ELF transmitter just since November 1991 (when Nukewatch began keeping records) has resulted in 496 arrests at the remote facility, which is secluded in the Chequamegon National Forest in Northern Wisconsin. More than four years of accumulated jail time have been served in Ashland County by resisters who have refused to pay fines. The system has also been the focus of four Plowshares direct disarmament actions since 1985, for which four resisters have served almost seven years in prison.

More than 30 walkers from eight states participated in this third "Tromp Trident Trek" which was again organized by Nukewatch. All three Treks have taken place in August, commemorating the U.S. atomic bombings of Japan.

The rally coincided with other commemorations in Nagasaki, Japan, Los Alamos, NM (where new H-bomb development has been initiated), Johns Hopkins University's Applied Physics Laboratory in Baltimore, MD (where H-bomb development continues), Livermore Nuclear Weapons Lab in Berkeley, CA (where H-bombs are designed), the Y-12 Plant

in Oak Ridge, TN (where workers are "upgrading" the W87 warheads that top the MX missiles), Bangor Trident Submarine Base, in Bremerton, WA and at the Pentagon.

Those arrested at the ELF transmitter were told to appear Sept. 7 in County Court for arraignment, or pay the \$209 fine. For refusing to pay they risk jail and/or suspension of their driving privileges for up to five years.

The cold war ELF system was designed to "survive" the electromagnetic pulse (EMP) of nuclear bomb blasts in order to maintain communications for submarine-based nuclear warfare.

Walking for Peace, Working on Community

By Jane Hosking

Yvonne Mills, Sydney Baiman and I left Duluth with oodles of granola, bread and bagels from 3rd Street Bakery, bound for the memorial Peace Walk. People arrived at Prentice Park in Ashland from Minnesota, Arizona, Illinois, Iowa, Ohio, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Maryland and nine Wisconsin locales.

Forming community during the walk was, as I have experienced over the last five years at Loaves & Fishes, full of joy and struggle. It happened while we were all busily shuffling gear, organizing support and meals, tents and banners, singing, walking and talking. And that bountiful fresh blueberry patch was too much to pass up!

Only Risking the World

By John LaForge

NEW YORK, NY—"Will Brookhaven Destroy the Universe? Probably Not" ran a recent *New York Times* headline. It seems that risking the destruction of the world for personal gain is still a matter of indifference among scientists at the Brookhaven nuclear weapons laboratory, on Long Island, NY.

The National Laboratory has just finished an atom smasher built for the purpose of creating "a kind of energy soup" called a "plasma" that could then be studied. The scientists at Brookhaven intend to "not only shatter the atoms' nuclei into their constituent protons and neutrons, but...pulverize the protons and neutrons themselves."

According to Malcolm Browne of the *New York Times*, "no one is quite sure what these collisions might spawn, and the uncertainty has encouraged some people so speculate that Brookhaven's new accelerator might turn out to be a doomsday machine."

The *Sunday Times of London* reported that some in the scientific community worry that the collisions planned by Brookhaven might create "strangelets" that annihilate surrounding matter and "end the world as we know it." Another fear is that the subatomic explosions may "nucleate [sic] a tiny black hole that would grow like a cancer, eventually devouring the earth."

The *Times'* Browne reports that "Mainstream physicists have cast cold water on such fears," but the mere possibility of causing a catastrophe should move congress to cancel the program.

Unfortunately, the arrogant recklessness of government physicists, the Space Administration and the bomb makers has a long history in the U.S.

Similar government programs—mostly war related—preceded the irresponsibility of Brookhaven's experiments:

■ The Mother of All End-of-the-World threats came July 16, 1945 in the New Mexico desert. In the hours before the first atomic bomb blast, Dr. Enrico Fermi "offered to take wagers from his fellow scientists on whether or not the bomb would ignite the atmosphere, and if so, whether it would merely destroy New Mexico or destroy the world." Edward Teller also confessed the night before that first A-bomb blast, that "...one could imagine that things might get out of control..."

■ Likewise, in 1951 the U.S. military knew there were serious health risks from the radioactive fallout from its atom bomb testing in Nevada. The government chose to expose the population even though safer sites were available. The President's Advisory Committee on Human Radiation Experiments uncovered documents that show that a planned evacuation of Nevada's downwind civilians was canceled without an explanation.

Stanford University historian Barton Bernstein says that the evacuation was "probably canceled because they feared



Photo by John LaForge

Tromp Trident Trekkers stride through Clam Lake, Wisconsin Aug. 7 on the last day of the 53-mile peace walk. At Navy Project ELF, walkers were joined by 30 more activists for a day-long commemoration of the U.S. atomic bombings of Japan. Twelve were cited for trespass during a nonviolent action at the main gate.

Coming together for six full days, we connected by weaving stories as we walked. We enjoyed mostly sunny days, with ample shade from clouds and the cool relief of afternoon rains. Imagine: it rained on walkers, but not at camp!

Spending time with old and new friends was wonderful. Telling personal stories, windows into each one's world, was an extravagant luxury of time and focused energy. Blessed be the moments of sharing, the trouble and turmoil of community living, the stirrings of the heart, the vulnerability of honestly questioning the group process and learning the power of love and compassion shared by the walkers.

Interpersonal confrontation, apologies, healing and forgiveness are issues with which society does not cope well. Generally, we agreed we are all in need of dealing with one another in loving ways, or we cannot expect grand scale violence to cease. We endured patient moments of dark and buggy evening meetings searching for the courage and vulnerability to repair wounds. Disarmed hearts for a disarmed world? Yes. Even if we were only together six days, we needed to work out personal struggles, attend to bruises and blisters, emotional and physical. Imagine my dismay when we spent more time in meetings while on the walk than when I am living at the Catholic Worker!

The number of walkers soared to the all time high Friday as 33 folks from near and far walked, singing "Neath the Vine & Fig Tree" through Clam Lake, the company town where the local cafe menu includes an "ELF Breakfast."

I was impressed with the focus we shared in preparing for nonviolent conflict resolution. The local VFW left a few pro-war signs at the ELF gate, and the walking community worked on nonviolent responses to potentially volatile counter demonstrators. They didn't show.

Building community may be a challenge, but the rewards of lifted spirits and renewed life are great.

Jane Hosking is a peace activist and a member of the Loaves & Fishes Catholic Worker Community in Duluth, MN.

Larry Dodge: Witness to Hiroshima

No one can understand the 20th century without understanding Hiroshima. This is the truth of Robert J. Lifton's study *Hiroshima In America: Fifty Years of Denial*.

I was in Tokyo with the General Headquarters Signal Corps, in occupied Japan, from late 1946 until late 1947.

We were not allowed to drive into Hiroshima but did visit a hill overlooking the city to observe. Twenty-five percent of the city was destroyed. I was a Staff Sergeant and a member of the Photographic Supply Unit attached to headquarters.

I took film equipment to Hiroshima. In the bombed city, even one year after the attack, shack-like barracks were used as hospitals where hundreds of burn victims—men, women and children—lay with open sores.

Only photographers were allowed inside these hospitals to take photos. My Supply Unit was not allowed. The photographers took millions of feet of film in Japan. The film was suppressed and has never been seen.

Not until 1952 did the people of the U.S. see a photo of the bombed Hiroshima. This was the worst killing of civilians in history. The Peace Park memorial in Hiroshima, Japan today holds 70,000 unidentified victims of the A-bomb—one quarter of the population of Hiroshima.

In addition, 20,000 Korean civilians died in Hiroshima. They were living there as forced laborers.

For an 18-year-old in 1947, I believed the bomb was a sad necessity. I believed the White House line then and for many years. But I don't believe it now.

Long-time social justice activist Larry Dodge, Cumberland, WI, spoke to the peace walkers on the 54th anniversary of the U.S. atomic attack on Hiroshima.



Choice of Evils

**U.S. NAVY FLEET FACES PROPULSION CHOICE:
NUCLEAR REACTORS OR DIESEL**

Note: The United States has twelve giant aircraft carriers with their attendant battle groups which face a total of zero used by the other superpower, China—that Most Favored Nation. The question is begged: Why build more?

By Peter Montague
Rachel's Environmental & Health Weekly

In the U.S., many people think nuclear power is dead because it proved to be too expensive and too unmanageable. In this view, the fuel melt at Three Mile Island March 28, 1979 ended nuclear power in this country.

This picture is incomplete. There is still one sector of the U.S. economy where new nuclear reactors are being built: the Navy. Now the Navy is facing a crucial choice that may well determine the future of civilian nuclear power: Will the next generation of aircraft carriers be powered by nuclear reactors, or by diesel engines?

Currently the Navy maintains 12 aircraft carriers—three diesel-powered and nine nuclear-powered. The Navy plans to build two more nuclear *Nimitz*-class carriers, and then it will introduce a new generation of carriers, called CVX. (*Nimitz*-class carriers are named for the 100,000-ton *U.S.S. Nimitz* which entered service in 1975.)

The question is, will CVX carriers use nuclear propulsion?

The Navy began planning for the new CVX class of aircraft carriers in 1996. CVX carriers will have many new features—a new hull shape, better computer communications, and more killing power.

The Navy intends to begin building the first CVX in 2006 for service starting in 2013. A carrier typically remains in service for 50 years. With construction costs of roughly \$4.6 billion, an aircraft carrier is the nation's most expensive piece of military hardware.

Carrier Battle Groups Mean War

Each aircraft carrier forms the centerpiece of a "battle group," which in turn provides the strategic basis for Naval warfare worldwide. The battle group includes:

1. The carrier itself (with crew numbering between 3,200 and 3,400) with its 80 aircraft (24 for support, 56 for attack, plus the 2,500 people needed to maintain and fly them);

2. Six surface combat ships of which at least three are cruisers or destroyers with Aegis weapons systems and at least four are equipped with vertical launching systems that can fire Tomahawk cruise missiles;

3. A total of ten anti-submarine warfare helicopters embarked on the six combat ships; two attack submarines (one of them equipped with a vertical launch system);

4. And one multi-purpose fast combat support ship (known as an AOE), which resupplies the other ships in the group (with fuel, ammunition, food, etc.) from stocks maintained at 22 supply depots around the world.

These naval "battle groups" have three responsibilities:

a. Maintaining a "forward presence" during peacetime—constantly reminding the world just how powerful and militarily-oriented the U.S. is;

b. Responding to crises;

c. Fighting wars.

Since the end of World War II, the Navy (or a combination of Navy and Marines) has participated in 205 out of 207 international crises, versus 53 for the Air Force and 38 for the Army. Thus, for the past 50 years the Navy has participated in an international crisis every three months, on average.

From the perspective of the Navy and its private-sector industrial partners (which President Eisenhower in 1961 termed the "military-industrial complex"), there are good reasons why CVX carriers should be nuclear-powered:

1. If civilian nuclear power is ever to stage a come-back, the nation must maintain teams of scientists and engineers with up-to-date nuclear skills and expertise. Thus Navy reactors serve to "keep the nuclear design team together" against that future time when Three Mile Island has faded from memory, oil has become costly, solar photo-voltaics have been scuttled by the oil companies that own the relevant patents, and nuclear energy is the only technology being offered to the public. From the viewpoint of the military-industrial complex, nuclear is far

preferable to solar for generating electricity because nuclear plants require huge investment and are highly complex, thus demanding centralized control. Solar panels can be much smaller, simpler, and more widely dispersed, thus making centralized control impossible.

2. Nuclear power is modern; diesel is a 19th century technology. The Navy first embraced nuclear power in 1954. If the Navy had its way, every ship over 8,000 tons would be nuclear powered today. Indeed, in 1974 Congress formally set the policy that all surface combat ships must be nuclear-powered. Between 1961 and 1975, nine nuclear-powered surface-combat ships were commissioned (in addition to the nuclear carriers), but it soon became clear that nuclear-powered ones were simply too expensive to maintain. Maintenance would require cuts in other naval operations and so the Navy capitulated to fiscal realities. Since 1975, the only nuclear-powered surface ships built have been carriers. In fiscal year 1993, the Navy scrapped its last nuclear-powered non-carrier surface combat ships. Thus, after only 17 years of service, with more than half of their planned service life remaining, the Navy's non-carrier nuclear-powered combat ships were forced into retirement by excessive costs. Submarines are still being built with nuclear propulsion systems, but by their nature submarines are not highly visible. Thus aircraft carriers are the last highly-visible ships to carry the torch for nuclear power.

3. If the CVX is nuclear-powered, there is only one ship yard equipped to build it: the Newport News Shipbuilding Company (NNS). So the purchase of nuclear-powered carriers occurs without "messy" competitive bidding and further solidifies the tight relationship between the Pentagon and NNS.

4. The Navy is silent on these first three reasons for preferring nuclear-powered carriers, but offers other arguments why they are superior: (a) They can accelerate faster than diesel-powered carriers; (b) They can travel indefinitely without refueling; (c) Because they don't require refueling they can arrive at their destination earlier than diesel-powered carriers; (d) Nuclear carriers can carry more jet fuel and ammunition than a diesel-powered carrier, thus making them less reliant on re-supply ships. These claims have been challenged by Congress.

G.A.O. Slams the Nuclear Propulsion Option

In 1994, Congress ordered the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) to compare the cost-effectiveness of nuclear-powered vs. diesel-powered aircraft carriers. In August 1998 GAO issued its lengthy report, in which it evaluated the Navy's claims of superiority for nuclear propulsion:

(a) It is true that nuclear carriers can accelerate faster because their steam boilers are always operating. A nuclear carrier can accelerate from 10 to 20 knots in 1.5 minutes and from 10 to 30 knots in 3 minutes. With only 4 of their 8 boilers operating, diesel carriers can accelerate from 10 to 20 knots in 2.5 minutes but they need all 8 boilers to achieve 30 knots. If they have to light the 4 additional boilers, they can take 1.5 to 2 hours to reach 30 knots.

(b) It is true that nuclear-powered carriers can voyage indefinitely without refueling. In submarines this confers a military advantage but the situation with carriers is entirely different because their support ships and their airplanes require regular refueling. Therefore, carrier groups remain "tethered to the pump" despite the carrier's nuclear propulsion.

(c) Because nuclear carriers do not require refueling, it is true that they can arrive at their destinations earlier than diesel-powered carriers. On a 12,000-mile voyage from San Diego to the Persian Gulf, a nuclear carrier would arrive in 17.9 days. A diesel carrier would arrive six hours later. On a 4,800-mile voyage from Norfolk, Virginia to the eastern Mediterranean, a nuclear carrier would arrive in 7.1 days, 2 hours earlier than a diesel-powered carrier.

During long voyages, diesel-fueled carriers slow to 14 knots for refueling. However, GAO points out that this can be an advantage. Pilots are required to remain flight-qualified to engage in combat. This requires regular practice. While a carrier is steaming at full speed, planes cannot fly from its decks. Slowing down to refuel gives pilots a chance to fly and remain qualified for combat. Therefore, when a conventional carrier arrives at its destination, its pilots are ready to enter combat immediately. Pilots on a nuclear carrier must delay combat while they requalify.

(d) GAO says diesel-fueled carriers can be designed to

carry the same quantities of jet fuel and ammunition as nuclear-powered carriers. The propulsion system isn't the determining factor.

The GAO finds that diesel-powered carriers have several important advantages:

(a) Because they require much less maintenance, and therefore less down-time, diesel-powered carriers can provide a greater "forward presence" than nuclear powered carriers.

(b) Since 1973, the U.S. has maintained ("homeported" in Navy jargon) a carrier group at Yokosuka, Japan. The Japanese contribute Japanese maintenance personnel worth about \$5 billion (U.S. dollars) each year to defray the annual costs of this group. For obvious reasons, the Japanese people won't tolerate U.S. military nuclear technology within their sovereign territory. If the CVX is nuclear-powered, then Japan must be persuaded to change its policy, or the U.S. will need to employ six U.S.-based carrier groups (on rotating duty) to achieve the same "forward presence" in the Pacific, GAO says.

Even if the Japanese were willing to change their policy, permanently homeporting a nuclear carrier in Japan would require construction of nuclear maintenance facilities which by U.S. law would exclude Japanese personnel.

(c) One of the Navy's stated design goals for the CVX is to reduce carrier costs by 20%. GAO finds that this requires conventional propulsion because nuclear carriers are so costly to operate. GAO concludes that the 50-year lifetime cost of a nuclear-powered carrier (\$22.2 billion) exceeds the lifetime cost of a conventional carrier (\$14.09 billion) by \$8.1 billion, or 58%.

GAO says wars of the future were prefigured in the Gulf War of 1991. Examining the record of both conventional and nuclear-powered carrier groups in that war, the GAO found no difference in military effectiveness.

In sum, the GAO finds that nuclear-powered carriers provide no significant military advantage. The nation has a once-in-a-generation opportunity to stuff an important part of the nuclear genie back into the bottle from which it escaped at Hiroshima in 1945.

For more information, contact Laura Hunter, Environmental Health Coalition, San Diego, CA, (619) 235-0281, email: laurah@environmentalhealth.org.

Peter Montague is Editor of Rachel's Environmental & Health Weekly. This article appeared in REHW, #663, August 12, 1999.

Trident Ploughshares 2000

COULPORT, Scotland—Activists have come from around the world to oppose the British Trident system at Coulport in Scotland, as members of the "Trident Ploughshares 2000." The campaign has pledged to prevent nuclear war crimes through non-violent action.

Peace and justice activists are trying a slew of tactics to garner support and heighten awareness of British nuclear weapons and the outlaw status of governments that harbor them. Hundreds of people have been arrested scaling and cutting fences, swimming to the submarines and damaging equipment, including a submarine conning tower. Activists have used hammers and paint, chains and locks, wire cutters and wetsuits. Gates have been blocked, test stations closed, razor wire undone, and nuclear weapons convoys stopped enroute to the Tridents. In one case activists received theft charges for dumping computers, files, manuals and other equipment into the sea.

During two weeks in August, 102 arrests were made for various actions. Monetary damage estimates run as high as £100,000. Arrest warrants have been issued for unpaid fines and folks have been jailed on a regular basis.

Members of "Trident Ploughshares" have pledged to rid the United Kingdom of its illegal weapons by nonviolent direct disarmament and they're serious!

The next scheduled events will take place November 13 & 14, 1999, although actions at anytime are welcome.

CALENDAR

October

2—Wisconsin Network for Peace & Justice, Annual Fall Assembly, St. Benedict Conference Center Madison, WI starting at 8:30 a.m. Contact: WNPJ at (608) 256-5088.

7—Nationwide Stop the Hate Interfaith Vigils against hate violence. Contact: Fellowship of Reconciliation, (914) 358-4601.

9-10—Blessed are Those Who Hunger and Thirst for Justice. Commemorative peacemaking conference at UCC Peace Church on 11th Ave. E. and 11th St., in Duluth, MN. Noon to 6:00 p.m. Keynote Speaker: Claire Evans from Chicago Peacemaker Team. Oct. 10, 8:00 a.m. send-off at the Unitarian Church, 1802 E. First St. Caravan & demonstrate against nuclear weapons at Project ELF, Noon. Music by Larry Long. Nonviolent Civil Disobedience. Contact: Loaves & Fishes, (218) 724-2054.

29-30-31—Committing to Peace and Justice: History and Future of Non-violent Dissent in America. Uniting long-time, well-known activists with youth. Radisson Hotel, St. Paul, MN. Contact: MIST (612) 698-9352; Website: www.circlevision.org

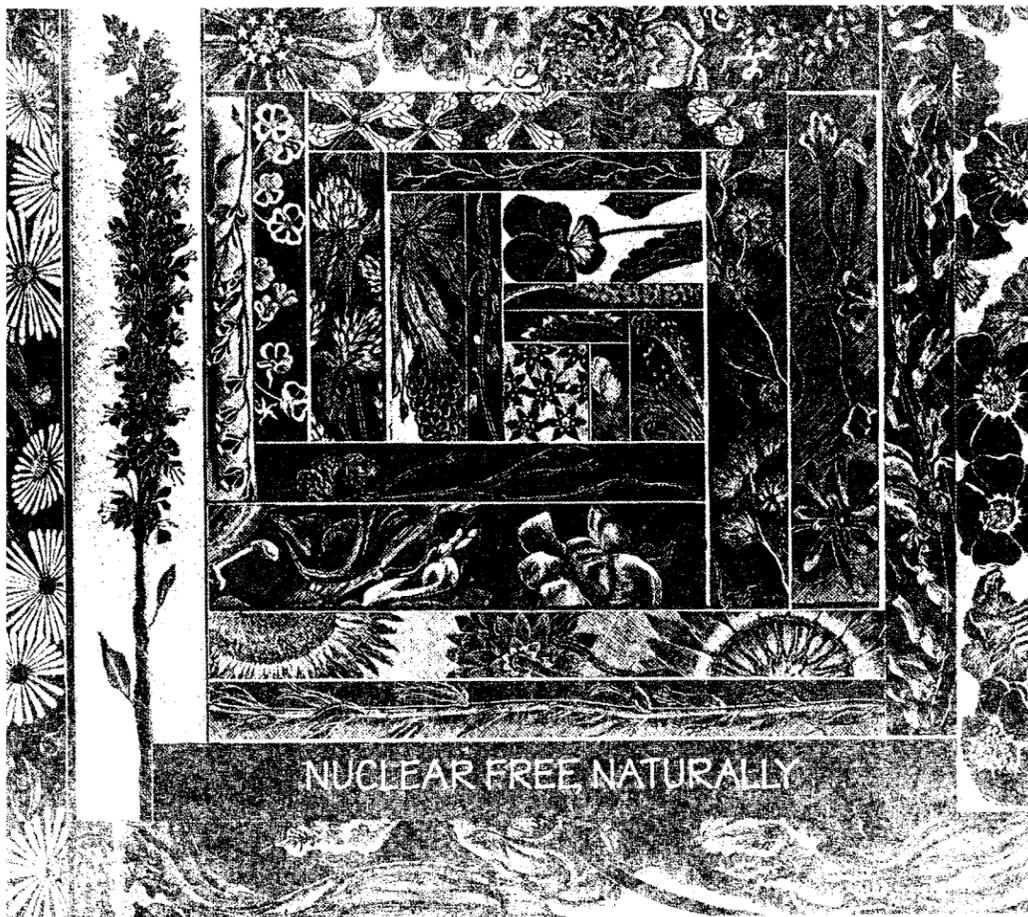
November

13-14—Disarmament Camp at Coulport in Scotland. Contact: Trident Ploughshares 2000, 42-46 Bethel Street, Norwich, Norfolk, NR2 1NR, UK; phone: (01603) 611953; email: tp2000@gn.apc.org

21—Close the School of the Americas: Vigil and nonviolent civil disobedience at the main gate of Fort Benning, GA. SOA Watch is looking for 10,000 to attend the vigil and 5,000 people to cross the line. Contact: SOA Watch, (202) 234-3440.

December

29-January 2—Millennium 2000: Celebrate "Religious Action for Disarmament," over the new year with a weekend of prayer, education and protest at the Nevada Test Site. Contact: NDE: (702) 646-4814; email: <nde@igc.apc.org>



NUKEWATCH T-SHIRTS

Support the peace and justice work of Nukewatch through your purchase of this year's T-shirt. The above "Nuclear Free, Naturally" scratchboard design, by Bonnie Urfer, is printed 10" X 10" on 100% cotton, heavy-weight black shirt with light yellow ink or natural shirt with black ink. Each T-shirt sells for \$18.00 and includes postage.

- Natural w/black ink Black w/white ink
 Small Medium Large
 XLarge XXLarge

Ship to: (Please print clearly)

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Send your order to:

Nukewatch, P.O. Box 649, Luck, WI 54853.

**Nukewatch thanks the
A.J. Muste Memorial Institute for
a grant in the amount of \$2,000
to help with our public education
and outreach efforts to stop
Project ELF.**

DOE & WIPP Truth & Consequences

✂ The Department of Energy intends to ship more than 27,000 loads of contact-handled radioactive waste and 7,957 shipments of remote-handled waste to WIPP. WIPP will hold less than 2% of DOE's existing nuclear weapons waste.

✂ The WIPP site is a 16-square-mile area with a 10,000 acre "secure area."

✂ The waste disposal level is 2,150 feet underground and consists of more than 60 "rooms" spread over 100 acres.

✂ WIPP will contain 6.2 million cubic feet of plutonium-contaminated trash.

✂ Taxpayer cost for WIPP: \$14 to \$15 million per month since the late 1980s, totaling more than \$19 billion to date and no end to the spending.

✂ All three federal environmental impact statements for WIPP state that leaving the wastes where they are, even for a century, will result in less public radiation exposure than moving it to WIPP. (DOE's Sept. 1997 Final Supp. E.I.S.)

✂ The DOE's number of expected accidents involving Trupact-IIs [plutonium waste canisters]: 56; expected traffic injuries: 39; expected traffic deaths: 5; expected cancer deaths from radiation exposures with *no accidents*: 3.

✂ Fifty-five thousand pounds of plutonium is slated for dumping in WIPP. One pound of plutonium contains 454,000,000 human lethal doses.

✂ Trupact-II waste will be sealed in 55-gallon steel drums or steel boxes. Each Trupact-II can hold up to fourteen drums or two boxes.

✂ In a 1995 agreement between the state of Idaho and the U.S. Navy, the Navy agreed to remove 3,100 cubic meters, or about 15,000 drums, of transuranic waste from the Idaho National Laboratory, near Idaho Falls, by the end of 2002.

✂ The half-life of plutonium-239 (a predominant isotope in transuranic waste) is approximately 24,400 years. It takes plutonium-239 more than 240,000 years to decay.

✂ Before the WIPP was opened to accept waste, DOE had to accept "certification" from EPA that the waste could be isolated from the human environment for at least 10,000 years.

✂ Legally, only military transuranic wastes that have been stored for shipment since 1970, and NASA's nuclear waste, can be disposed of at the WIPP site.

The Pathfinder is the quarterly newsletter of Nukewatch, a project of The Progressive Foundation, founded in 1979.

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Nukewatch educates and organizes to nonviolently create an environment free of the nuclear industry and free of weapons of mass destruction.

The Pathfinder submission deadlines:

Nov. 15, Feb. 15, May 15, Aug. 15.

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"D-5 Nine" Found Not Guilty

By Elizabeth Roberts

The trial of the "D-5 Nine" began June 7, 1999 in Kitsap County District Court in Port Orchard, WA. The "D-5" is the newest Trident missile. On August 9, 1998, nine peace activists blocked the road into the Bangor Trident submarine base near Poulsbo, WA. The county charged disorderly conduct.

Deputy Prosecutor Claire Bradley said in her opening remarks, "The fact...is they sat in the road and detained no less than eight cars for approximately eight minutes."

Judge James Riehl allowed into evidence photographs of the action, an edited video of the action, four large posters of excerpts of the Hague Conventions, the Nuremberg Principles, and the 1996 international Court of Justice opinion regarding the illegality of nuclear weapons, and the statement written for the action by the defendants.

Defense attorney Ken Kagan, on cross examination of Deputy John Brossell, asked Brossell to display and describe the patch worn on the shoulders of Kitsap County Sheriff's Deputies. "It says 'sheriff' at the top. There's a yellow star below that." "And what," Mr. Kagan asked, "is below the star?" Brossell replied, "That's a Trident submarine ..."

Defendant Rev. Anne Hall testified, "As a U.S. citizen, it's my right to act to stop my country from doing something illegal. As a mother to protect my children. As a minister, I'm entitled and required to protect God's children and creation."

Defendant Mary Gleysteen said of the D-5: "It's a horror of the nuclear arms race. It appalls me and was forefront in my mind on Aug. 9. \$60 million to refit one missile when there are

homeless people and people without medical care in our own community."

Judge Riehl surprised many in the courtroom with his jury instructions. Instruction #9: "A person acts with 'lawful authority' when he or she acts in reliance upon his or her reasonable interpretation of a relevant state or local ordinance, state or federal statute, treaty, or state or federal court ruling."

Instruction #11: "You are instructed that as a matter of federal Constitutional law, states are bound to respect the terms of treaties entered into by Congress. Congress alone has the power to abrogate a treaty or impose any additional limitations. Thus to the extent there may be a conflict between a law of the state of Washington, and a right granted or an obligation imposed by a treaty of the U.S., the right granted or the obligation imposed by the treaty will govern."

These instructions were a windfall for the defense because the prosecution had to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendants blocked vehicular traffic without lawful authority. After deliberating [four hours] all defendants were found not guilty.

The judge then gave the jurors a chance to speak. Presiding Juror Barbara Johnson choked back tears as she expressed her gratitude to her fellow jurors and then explained the verdict. She said that they had been deeply moved by the defendants' conviction and courage.

Judge Riehl also spoke, saying "I think we all agree that the use of nuclear weapons is unacceptable..."

Juror Leah Merkle came to join a closing circle in the courtroom and related that she had "no doubt" in her mind that the defendants were not guilty. "I'm really glad there are people like this in the world. If the government is making nuclear weapons, then they're committing the bigger crime."

Elizabeth Roberts is a school teacher and a member of the Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action in Poulsbo, Washington.

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