

NUKEWATCH

PATHFINDER

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Los Alamos, City of Fire

By Bonnie Urfer

LOS ALAMOS, NM—Over 30 percent of the land at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), including some buildings, burned in “Cerro Grande,” the largest fire in New Mexico. Greg Mello of the Los Alamos Study Group said in an interview with Pacifica Radio’s Amy Goodman that the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) immediately classified all information regarding airborne particulate from the fires in and around LANL.

Media reports echoed DOE vagary on the subject of surface contamination while saying again and again that nothing was released from the concrete and steel storage bunkers.

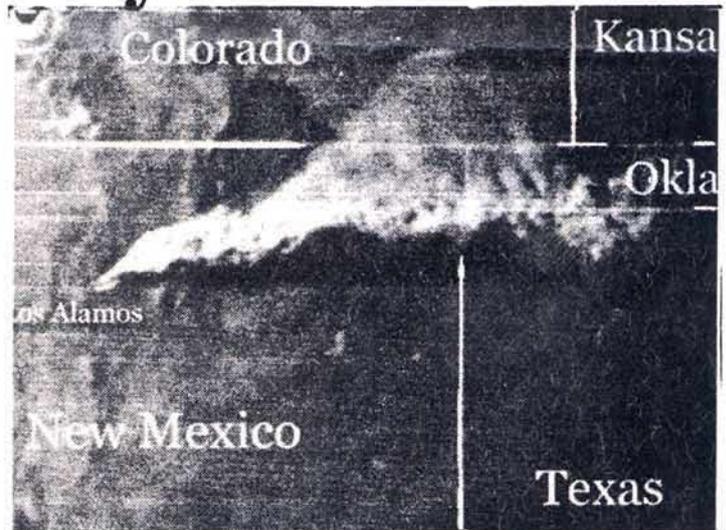
Los Alamos is heavily contaminated with radioactive waste. The fire swept areas contaminated with PCBs, dioxins and radioactive isotopes, and the DOE continues to deny that the poisons became airborne. Since the 1940’s, radioactive waste and other toxins have been buried and dumped throughout the 43-square-mile compound leaving an estimated 2,000 “potential release sites.”

LANL has disposed of at least 17,500,000 cubic ft. of hazardous and radioactive wastes on-site at 24 dumps. Sixteen are thought to pose “moderate” to “high” risks of long-term groundwater contamination. “The fire torched three canyons on the lip of LANL where liberal supplies of radioactive waste were dumped during the Manhattan Project,” said Lee McAtee, deputy division director of environmental safety and health at the lab.

Lab officials said May 17 that its weapons-engineering tritium facility at Technical Area 16 “was swept by fire, but the masonry building was left intact.” Ground water contamination has already occurred in Technical Area 16. Acid Canyon, near the town of Los Alamos, burned. It was the site of radioactive waste dumping during the 1940’s and 50’s although the lab says it has been “environmentally restored.” Some 610 kilograms of plutonium-239 is *missing* at LANL. PU-239 has a half-life of 24,100 years.

The May 12 *New York Times* reported, “The flames were spewing burning chunks of wood thousands of feet in the air, where they were being blown as far as a mile and starting new fires.” The gigantic plume, 17,000 to 20,000 feet high, stretched into Oklahoma, Colorado, Kansas and Texas. Local groups have called for independent analysis of air quality data by international scientists.

Lab Director John Browne is concerned about soil erosion of contaminated areas. If radioactive soil erodes, the Rio Grande becomes the dumping ground. Some heavily burned land from past fires lost 100 tons of soil per acre or more. Browne is trying to assure residents that LANL will do all it can to prevent defiled dirt from leaving government property.



Liar, Liar, Plant’s on Fire—This photo of the smoke plume rising from the New Mexico wildfire was taken May 11 by NASA’s Terra Satellite. The fire burned more than 30% of the land at the Los Alamos National Lab. Residents reported radiation levels 2 to 10 times higher than normal. The DOE says increased levels are normal when vegetation burns, but concerned citizens want independent analysis and monitoring.

Russian nuclear and atmospheric scientist Sergei Pashchenko, a consultant to a non-governmental group working to ban depleted uranium weapons, said he analyzed the limited data available on the LANL’s internet site and determined that elevated radiation counts could not be dismissed as naturally occurring effects of the fires.

Ten percent of LANL’s 12,000 employees were expected back at work by May 22.

1,290 firefighters were exposed to unknown levels of contaminants. LANL representatives claimed they collected the clothes of firefighters for proper disposal. Firefighters, who wore no radiation badges, say they still have the clothes they wore. State and federal health authorities are making plans for voluntary urine tests for persistent toxic metals possibly absorbed by firefighters and residents exposed to fumes.

The prize for the most ironic mixed metaphor goes to a local grocer who returned to his Los Alamos market to find \$20,000 worth of frozen food—spoiled. “We got rid of the chicken first,” he said. “That’s like a time bomb sitting around.”

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Ten Tons of Plutonium-contaminated DU Poisoning Kosovo

By John LaForge

Perhaps you've seen the quaint, pale blue U.S. postage stamp honoring NATO's 50th anniversary. It features a dove of peace bearing an olive branch. A realistic depiction might show NATO's A-10 "Warthogs" and "Apache" helicopters shooting radioactive waste into Yugoslavia—at 3,900 rounds a minute.

NATO has confirmed that it fired at least ten tons of radioactive depleted uranium (DU) munitions during the U.S.-led bombing experiment over Yugoslavia.

DU is uranium-238, a toxic, radioactive waste left from the production of H-bombs and reactor fuel. Because it's extremely hard, it's used for munitions that burn through tank armor. DU is a toxic heavy metal with a radioactive half-life of 4.5 billion years.

On Feb. 7, 2000 the Rt. Hon. Lord George Robertson, NATO Secretary General, wrote to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, five months after Annan had asked for confirmation that the controversial weapons were used. "DU rounds were used whenever the A-10 engaged armor during Operation Allied Force," Robertson wrote. "Therefore, it was used throughout Kosovo, during approximately 100 missions.

The letter said that U.S. jets fired "A total of approximately 31,000 rounds of DU ammunition." This translates to about 21,000 pounds, or ten tons of uranium-238 "penetrators" used by the Air Force to smash tank armor. Lord Robertson named four large areas where DU shells were exploded, but added, "However, many missions using DU also took place outside these areas."

The BBC reports that the UN Balkan Task Force (BTF) has criticized the vagueness of Robertson's letter. BTF experts said the letter provided insufficient information to allow "an accurate field assessment of the environmental and human health consequences." The experts—who believe the potential risk from the DU is as serious for civilians as for combatants—are from the UN World Health Organization, the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Swedish Radiation Protection Institute. The BTF said the NATO letter "...does not tell us anything of substance. It means we are able to do a little bit more than nothing about DU."

The Pentagon claims that it is not obligated to decontaminate Kosovo. Author Dan Fahey, with the Military Toxics Project, told the *San Francisco Examiner*, "It is NATO's responsibility and specifically the responsibility of the U.S., to go in there and start doing a cleanup, especially considering the fact we were fighting the war to protect the civilian populations."

British personnel in Kosovo have been warned to stay clear of DU contaminated areas, like Vrajine in southern Serbia where a Swiss-led international team found "serious radioactivity" when it dug up DU rounds near a radio tower. But no warnings are given to refugees returning to DU-bombed areas.

Minnesota DU Defendants Convicted

On April 4, 63 anti-war activists were convicted of trespass against DU profiteer Alliant Techsystems of Minnetonka, following a two-and-a-half-hour bench trial. Except for ten who'd spent more than eight hours in custody, all were fined \$25.

The defendants, including this Nukewatch staffer, walked onto Alliant's property last Nov. 1 to protest the company's as-

sembly of more than 15 million DU munitions for the Air Force's "tankbusting" Warthogs and Apaches.

Sr. Char Madigan, a longtime peace activist and advocate for the homeless in Minneapolis, said the group had "won the lowest fine ever" in the long series of protests at the company's gates.

Hennepin County District Court Judge Gary Larson slept through only part of the defense case, which was based on a "claim of right." Trespass is permitted in Minnesota law if the defendant can show that some higher authority allows the intrusion.

I presented testimony regarding international and U.S. military laws that prohibit the government from using "poison gas and all analogous materials, liquids or devices," or weapons that "kill or wound treacherously" or that "cause serious or long-term damage to the natural environment."

ELF resister and disarmament activist Donna Howard reminded the court that the Flick Corporation in Nazi Germany, which delivered prussic acid for the gas chambers, was convicted at Nuremberg. Flick officials argued their acid had beneficial as well as genocidal uses—a claim Alliant Tech' cannot make about its DU.

Kathy Kelly Nominated for Peace Prize

BALTIMORE—Kathy Kelly, a N u k e w a t c h friend, ELF/Trident resister and founder of the sanctions-busting Voices in the Wilderness, has been nominated for a joint Nobel Peace Prize, along with Denis Halliday, a former UN Assistant Secretary General. The nomination letter submitted by the American Friends Service Committee says in part, "Taken together, the work of Kathleen Kelly and Denis Halliday represents a comprehensive approach to the problem of economic sanctions against Iraq and the devastation wrought on the population of that country, particularly the children." In 1995, Kelly and other activists conducted a 450-mile, 5-week peace walk from Chicago, IL to the Clam Lake, WI ELF/Trident site. purpose of the "Walk for Peace" was to demonstrate that disarmament can happen through peoples' commitment to the principles of truth, love and nonviolence.



Kathy Kelly (L) and Ellen Barfield chat during a break at the 1990 Missouri Missile Silo Peace School.

DU Weapons Tainted with Plutonium

Pentagon records show that internal exposure to DU particles is toxic to the liver and kidneys and can cause cancer. Now the Military Toxics Project has unearthed confirmation that the uranium-238 used in DU munitions is contaminated with plutonium-239, the most toxic material known to science. In a Jan. 20, 2000 letter to the Maine-based group, the DOE's David Michaels says, "One may normally expect that depleted uranium contains a trace amount of plutonium." DOE claims to be investigating the DU's additional plutonium hazard and Michaels said its report is due out in June.

DU Plowshares Denied Defense

TOWSON, MD—Elizabeth Walz, Fr. Stephen Kelly, Susan Crane and Philip Berrigan went on trial March 20 for their disarmament of two A-10 Thunderbolts or "Warthogs," the warplane responsible for firing 95% of the poisonous depleted uranium munitions in Iraq and Kosovo. The action took place at the Warfield Air National Guard facility in Essex, Maryland, Dec. 19, 1999. The four hammered on the Gatling gun and pylons under the wings.

Judge James T. Smith granted the prosecutor's pretrial motion prohibiting any defense that mentioned depleted uranium, international law or the defense of necessity.

During the trial the prosecutor questioned Crane about who drove the defendants to the site. Crane refused to answer but one woman in the gallery stood and shouted "I drove the van," after which about 100 activists followed suit: "I drove the van..."

Dr. Doug Rokke, a Jacksonville State University professor and victim of DU, took the stand but was not allowed to answer any questions about depleted uranium.

Following Rokke's silencing by the court, the defendants stood and turned their backs to the bench and Crane read a statement: "We cannot put on a defense about the dangers of depleted uranium and our rights and duties under international law. We have been denied our right to testify about these topics. We have been denied our expert witnesses. Therefore, we can't go forward. We will not participate in what amounts to a legal gag order." The defendants refused to participate in the trial from then on, and were absent from the courtroom during sentencing.

All four were found guilty. Judge Smith's sentences vastly exceeded federal guidelines, with Elizabeth Walz given 18 months, Susan Crane and Rev. Stephen Kelly each imprisoned for 27 months, and Philip Berrigan sentenced to 30 months. —BU

Talk is Cheap Nuclear Powers Pledge "Unequivocal, Total, Elimination" — Later

NEW YORK—A UN conference reviewing roadblocks to nuclear disarmament ended May 22, with the seven declared nuclear powers never allowing consideration of how to implement the treaty-mandated "total elimination of their nuclear arsenals."

The Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) includes the signatory's promise to "eventually" or "ultimately" abolish nuclear arsenals. The NPT review conference managed, over objections from the U.S., France and Russia, to drop the qualifiers and replace them with the phrase "unequivocal." All 187 UN members agreed.

The New Agenda Coalition—an alliance of non-nuclear Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and Sweden—forged the new language and brokered its adoption. By consenting to new phraseology, the U.S. managed to remove from the conference's final communiqué any criticism of U.S. plans for a Treaty-busting anti-ballistic missile system.

The U.S. and other declared nuclear powers stonewalled the direction of the conference which was intended to implement the NPT's 30-year-old disarmament promise. Acting like rogues, the nuclear states never considered setting a timetable or deadline for meeting the goal. The rogues also prevented conferees from including a pledge of No First Use of nuclear weapons, and a promise to separate warheads from missiles.

The U.S. has never promised No First Use (see p. 4), a position that contradicts its public justification for nuclear weapons as a "deterrent" to their use by others.

The New Agenda Coalition did manage to persuade the rogue nuclearists to agree to several new promises—again without a timetable or deadline. The new NPT promises a suspension of nuclear weapons tests, reductions in the number of tactical nuclear weapons, removal of warheads from "hair-trigger" alert status, and the eventual negotiation of a treaty banning the production of weapons-grade materials.

In 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King charged that the "gradualists" advising him to wait a bit longer for desegregation, meant, in reality, never. After 32 years of cheap talk, perhaps the nuclear powers intend the same. —JL

Too Expensive, Too Fraudulent; Gov't Fires BNFL

By Bonnie Urfer

HANFORD, WA—The Department of Energy (DOE) recently shuffled much of the responsibility for "cleanup" of its nuclear weapons sites to British Nuclear Fuels Limited, Inc. (BNFL, Inc.), because, for the right price, BNFL, Inc. was willing to tackle mission impossible.

At the Hanford Reservation in eastern Washington, BNFL, Inc.'s original estimate to design, build, manage and operate a prototype vitrification facility (solidifying plutonium wastes in "glass") was \$6.9 billion. Then the cost rose to \$15.2 billion. Cost overruns along with safety lapses, fraud and mounting concerns over the company's oversight capability, led the DOE to sack BNFL, Inc., a U.S. subsidiary of BNFL (British Nuclear Fuels, Ltd.).

U.S. nuclear weapons sites are bulging with growing accumulations of radioactive waste. After 50 years of trial and error, the DOE hasn't figured out how not to make it's dilemma worse. Hanford's 177 underground storage tanks hold 2/3 of all the high-level, plutonium-contaminated radioactive waste in the country and much of it has leaked or solidified into salt cakes and sludge. Anyone exposed to the tanks could be killed in seconds.

BNFL, Inc. still holds the "cleanup" or "waste management" contracts for numerous other U.S. facilities, sometimes in conjunction with other corporations. BNFL, Inc. is managing Savannah River, SC, Oak Ridge, TN, Rocky Flats, CO, Idaho Falls, ID and the Hanford Res. in Wash. BNFL, Inc. shares projects with Morrison Knudsen at West Valley in NY and the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in New Mexico.

Industry pundits are angry with BNFL for a 1999 data-falsifying scandal. Plutonium fuel pellets were sent to Japan, from Sellafield in Britain, with fudged safety figures. The pellets,

according to BNFL, were properly manufactured but employees didn't bother to collect the quality control data and instead used old figures on current documents. Japan and Germany both want compensation for faulty fuel pellets delivered with falsified data and have temporarily cancelled contracts. German, Swedish and Swiss authorities also suspended contracts with BNFL at Sellafield.

BNFL issued an 8-page report defending itself against harsh criticism from activists, the *New York Times* and the U.S. Government. BNFL said the pellet incident was an isolated problem.

The company has a notorious contamination record in Britain. In response to criticism over its dumping of radioactive waste into the Irish Sea for decades, the company says it's cleaned up its act considerably and now releases less than 1% of the radionuclides it used to, well below "allowable limits." The firm did not explain what it's currently doing with the other 99%.

During the last 7-years, the U.S. has spent \$9 billion in "cleanup" attempts at Hanford without much success. BNFL, Inc. was hired to relieve the federal government of fiscal responsibility, to foster a competitive, free-market atmosphere and to reduce costs. Last month however, the DOE, deftly ignoring the MOX fuel scandal, complained that BNFL, Inc. is just too expensive.

On March 15, 1995 the *New York Times* reported that the Senate Energy Committee declared cleanup of the Hanford site "impossible." The committee said no plan could achieve it goals under any conceivable budget or timetable. This is the nuclear industry's legacy in microcosm, and it's only made worse by continuing to produce more radioactive trash.

Trident & ELF Opponents Reclaim Mothers' Day for Peace



Photo by Steve Pearson

Singer-songwriter Dar Williams performed a delightful benefit concert for the Loaves and Fishes Community in Duluth and the Anathoth Community Farm in Luck. Williams attended the Mothers' Day event at Project ELF and again offered her gift of song. Above, she shows off her Nukewatch t-shirt.

By Michael Sprong

Over Mothers' Day weekend, several hundred people from the Northland participated in activities organized to protest the U.S. Navy's nuclear war trigger, Project ELF, and to celebrate Mothers' Day as a peace holiday. Dubbed "Don't Shock Your Mother," the weekend of events was sponsored by Anathoth Community Farm (Luck, WI), Loaves and Fishes Community (Duluth, MN) and Nukewatch. It was the 13th consecutive year that activists sponsored events and protests in opposition to nuclear weapons in general and Project ELF in particular.

On Friday, May 12, singer-songwriter Dar Williams packed the Mitchell Auditorium on the campus of the College of St. Scholastica in Duluth, for a concert that informed as well as entertained. Proceeds from the concert went to Anathoth Community Farm and Loaves and Fishes Community. Ms. Williams donated her time and talent without accepting even plane fare for her trip from Massachusetts.

About 35 folks attended the nonviolence training offered by event organizers on Saturday in Duluth. First-time line-crossers and experienced activists studied historical nonviolence, role-played, and shared stories of the ways nonviolence has impacted their personal lives.

The weekend culminated in a protest and line-crossing at the Project ELF transmitter, located in a remote part of the Chequamegon National Forest in northern Wisconsin. A festive mood helped enthuse the gathering of nearly 120 peace-makers. After several rousing presentations by prominent women in attendance—most of them mothers and activists—



Photo by Steve Pearson

Eleanor Otterness spoke to the crowd of over 100 at Project ELF. Otterness has been on the peace train for most of her 81 years working with Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

the entire group blocked the gates of the facility by spinning a quarter-acre yarn "web of life."

As the web of life was constructed, eight people "crossed the line" into Project ELF in an act of civil disobedience. They carried a petition on the illegality of nuclear weapons that they attempted to deliver to ELF personnel. Each of the eight was cited for trespass and released. One other person, Kurt Greenhalgh of the Loaves and Fishes Community in Duluth,



Photo by John LaForge

Matthew Schaaf, Lincoln Rice, Scott Griffiths and Scott Mathern-Jacobson, on trial April 4 in Ashland County court, defended themselves against ELF trespass charges. They were convicted and sentenced to either pay \$210.00 or face 60 days in jail.

was taken into custody at the site and transported to Ashland County jail to begin a 60-day sentence for refusing to pay a fine from a previous ELF protest.

The others cited at ELF and scheduled for a June 20 court appearance are: Mike Miles, of Luck, WI; Jerry Berrigan, and Russ Miller, both of Duluth, MN; Dan Buchanan, and Rachel Caster, both of St. Joseph, MN; Lincoln Rice, Milwaukee, WI; Gail Vaughn, Ferryville, WI; and Mark Messer, Des Moines, IA.

Petition to Abolish Illegal Weapon's System

The new Trident Resistance Network-Midwest, a branch of the national Trident Resistance Network, formed in opposition to the Navy's Trident submarines, is seeking signatures on a petition calling for the shutdown of Project ELF and the illegal Trident submarine system. The petition reads in part:

We, the undersigned, believe that: according to international law, as well as humanitarian and domestic law, nuclear weapons and their support systems, including the Trident and Project ELF, are clearly illegal.

We believe: The United Nations International Court of Justice was correct in ruling unanimously (July 8, 1996) that there "exists no authorization for the threat or use of nuclear weapons and that a threat or use of force by means of nuclear weapons is contrary to Article 2 of the United Nations Charter."

Rules of humanitarian law prohibit the use of any weapon that: 1. is likely to cause unnecessary suffering to combatants; 2. is incapable of distinguishing between civilian and military targets; 3. kills people in a neutral state; 4. produces effects that are not a proportional response to an attack; 5. does permanent damage to the environment. No nuclear weapon can meet these requirements.

According to the U.S. Constitution, U.S. citizens and courts are bound by international law.



Photo by Circlevision.org

Kurt Greenhalgh started a 60-day jail term on Mothers' Day for his resistance to ELF last October. His release date is July 12. Cards and letters can be sent c/o Ashland County Jail, 220 6th St. E., Ashland, WI 54806.

Enforcement of these laws lies with individual governments and ultimately with their citizens. People must require their heads of state to read and study the law, publicize it and obey it.

Criminal Complaint Filed Against ELF and Trident

The Trident Resistance Network - Midwest, has filed a criminal complaint in Ashland County and the State of Wisconsin against Project ELF and the Trident system. The complaint demands that either state or federal prosecutors investigate the ELF/Trident complex. It alleges that the operation of Project ELF and Trident is a criminal conspiracy, in violation of international and domestic laws, to plan and commit murder. The 87-page document is an adapted and updated version of another filed in 1991 in Michigan against Williams International Corp. and Wurtsmith Air Force Base.

The criminal complaint says in part, "The term 'deterrence' no longer masks the actual terrorism and extortion inherent in the threat and willingness to use poisonous weapons. War is not peace. Nor can inevitable and vast civilian deaths be absolved by terms such as 'collateral damage,' because the certain result of the use of nuclear weapons is wanton destruction." For 30 years, students, teachers, homesteaders, legislators and others have been fighting Project ELF and the Trident weapon system. Filing a criminal complaint is yet another attempt to end the threat of submarine launched nuclear war.

Michael Sprong is a Catholic Worker from South Dakota currently volunteering with Nukewatch and Anathoth Community Farm.

Calendar

July

July 1—Aug. 9 People's Campaign for Nonviolence. One month of daily vigils, rallies and non-violent direct action at the White House, Capitol and Pentagon. Evening events, nonviolence training sessions throughout the summer campaign. Contact: Fellowship of Reconciliation; Phone: (914) 358-4601.

6-9 International Conference on war tax issues in Washington, D.C. Hosted by the National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund on the campus of Catholic University. Contact: NCPTF, 2121 Decatur Pl. NW, Washington, DC 20008; Phone: (202) 483-3751; Email: peacetaxfund@ign.org; Web: www.nonviolence.org/peacetax

31 Nonviolent witness at 10:00 a.m. at the Yorktown naval Weapons Station in Virginia, where the Navy keeps W-88 nuclear warheads ready to be fitted onto Tomahawk cruise missiles. Witness to take place in conjunction with the Pax Christi National Assembly. Contact: Norfolk Catholic Worker, 1321 W 38th St. Norfolk, VA 23508; Phone: (757) 423-5420.

23-31 Actions at the Republican National Convention, Philadelphia PA. Contact: web: www.ruckus.org

July 31—August 4 Actions at the Republican Convention. Action alerts by email. Contact: Email: philly2000-subscribe@list.bot.com

August

5-7 Actions to demand an end to Iraq sanctions. Contact: Voices in the Wilderness at web: www.nonviolence.org/vitw

6-9 Nukewatch is joining the Fellowship of Reconciliation's efforts in its People's Campaign for Nonviolence in Washington, D.C. Contact: Nukewatch at (715) 472-4185 or Barbara Hoffman (920) 722-7657.

9 Nagasaki Day & Peace Action's Los Alamos National Lab 2000. Contact: Phone: (505) 989-4812.

13-20 The Nuclear Free Great Lakes camp in southwest Michigan. Includes a nonviolent direct action at the Cook nuclear power plant. Contact: Nuclear Energy Information Service, Phone: (847) 869-7650; Web: www.neis.org

The Nuclear Information and Resource Service initiated the action camp idea and will help anti-nuclear power groups organize camps that can include training for nonviolent direct action, organizational skills development, and issues workshops. Contact: Michael Marriott, Phone: (202) 328-0002; Web: www.nirs.org

18-22 The Nuclear Free Northeast camp, Dummerston, Vermont. Concludes with an action at the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant headquarters. Contact: Citizens Awareness Network, Phone: (413) 339-8768; Web: www.nukebusters.org

September

1-4 Walk to Shut WIPP, Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, the nation's first permanent nuclear waste dump located near Carlsbad, New Mexico. The Walk begins in Roswell, NM. Contact: CARD, Citizens for Alternatives to Radioactive Dumping, 144 Harvard SE, Albuquerque, NM 87106; Phone: (505) 266-2663; Email: cardnm@hotmail.com

NUCLEAR SHORTS

Here Come Irradiated Burgers: Labeled or Not

MINNEAPOLIS—Irradiated hamburger patties hit the shelves of area grocers May 16, despite a complete lack of information on the effects of long-term consumption—especially by children. Supporters of meat irradiation expect the process to reduce (but not eliminate) E. Coli and extend shelf life by up to 35 days. Irradiation destroys essential vitamins, minerals, amino acids and good bacteria that ward off botulism. The process alters foods' chemical composition, creating carcinogenic compounds like benzene. Food industry giants backing irradiation—like Wal-Mart, Kraft and Tyson—are fighting all labeling requirements for irradiated foods. Presently, food services such as restaurants, jails & prisons, hospitals, nursing homes, childcare centers and schools are not required to inform their consumers that the food they're eating is irradiated. —*The Daily Telegram*, Superior, WI, May 16, 2000; Food and Water, Inc.

DOE: We Killed Our Own

WASHINGTON—The DOE has formally admitted that nuclear weapons factories caused radiation-related illness, cancers and death. The government has denied for 50 years there was proof that exposure to radiation caused illnesses. The wall of deceit began to crumble in the 1980's when the Senate uncovered records of a 1948 meeting of the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC). The records show that enough was known then about radiation to warn workers, but precautions were ruled out. Later that year, a nuclear weapons site manager told the AEC that workers leaving his employ should be informed if they had exceeded official radiation exposure limits and given medical care for radiation-induced illness. The AEC refused. Another AEC committee said in 1951, "Cancer is a significant industrial hazard of the atomic energy business. The Committee recommends the cancer program be pursued as a humanitarian duty to the nation." Again the plea was denied. Some 600,000 civilians worked in the H-bomb biz, but the DOE's "compensation" proposal would help at most 3,000.

—*Citizen's Watch*, May 2000; *Mtwk Journal Sentinel*, Apr. 13, 2000; *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, May/June 2000; "N-plant workers not told of risks," *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, Dec. 19, 1989.

Mobile Chernobyl Bill Down, but not Out

WASHINGTON—The President's veto of the reckless "Mobile Chernobyl" bill—a rewrite of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act that would have high-level radioactive waste traveling the highways for decades—survived an attempted override vote in the Senate. However, Majority Leader Trent Lott retained his power to attempt another override and will presumably try to buy or extort the votes needed, and try again.

—Nuclear Information and Resource Service, May 10, 2000.

Deadly Nuclear Medicine in Thailand

BANGKOK, Thailand—Hundreds of residents of Bangkok were tested by Thai health authorities after having been exposed to radioactive cobalt found in a suburban parking lot and a local junk yard. Five people who initially tried to dismantle the radioactive canisters were hospitalized with gamma radiation burns and radiation poisoning. The waste canisters, which contained cobalt-60, were possibly discarded from an industrial plant or a hospital. The substance is used as a source of high-energy radiation in the treatment of cancer, food irradiation and to color glass. —*Los Angeles Times & Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, Feb. 28, 2000.

Tokaimura Victims Still Dying

JAPAN—Masato Shinohara, 40, died of multiple organ failure April 27, the second official death to result from a uranium fuel "criticality" disaster that spewed deadly neutron radiation across suburban Tokaimura, northeast of Tokyo. Another worker, Hisashi Ouchi, 35, died Dec. 21 also from multiple organ failure. Thousands of nearby residents were exposed to deadly bursts of neutrons—which pass through the body, lead, concrete & steel—from the Sept. 30th disaster at a government nuclear fuel factory. The Japanese government says only 439 workers and residents were exposed, but it refused to conduct simple blood tests that would have confirmed whether neutrons had damaged blood cells. Radiation levels were 15,000 times higher than normal two kilometers away from the factory. —*Reuters & AP*, Apr. 27, 2000 & *New York Times*, Apr. 28, 2000.

Bomb Waste Breaking the Bank

WASHINGTON—Radioactive contamination at 113 nuclear weapons sites in the U.S. will require "perpetual surveillance," but that cost is not included in the DOE's estimated \$212 billion cleanup bill. The latest numbers ignore other enormous costs, like disposing of radioactive wastes and decontaminating old reactors—programs the Office of Management and Budget estimated to cost \$265 billion. The DOE's estimate also presumes that it will retain its exemption from the radioactive contamination limits governing civilian reactor sites. The DOE standard is 20 times less rigorous than the civilian requirement, which means

areas adjacent to Rocky Flats, CO, Hanford, WA, Savannah River, SC and elsewhere may simply be abandoned. This may be true as well for another 45,000 potentially radioactive sites identified in the U.S. in 1992. —*Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, May/June 2000, p.27; *Mpls. Star Tribune & New York Times*, Apr. 20, 2000; *New York Times*, Mar. 15, 1995; Apr. 9, 1992; July 2 & 14, 1988.

50,000 More Chernobyl Cancers & Counting

LYON, France—World Health Organization (WHO) researchers have concluded that 50,000 new cases of thyroid cancer will afflict young people who lived in areas worst-affected by the 1986 Chernobyl explosions and fire. In Gomel, Belarus, 36.4% of children who were under four at the time can expect to develop thyroid cancer, according to the International Agency for Research on Cancer—part of the WHO. "The thyroid paper clearly shocked the 12 researchers involved," reports Paul Brown. Of 141,068 children under four, six cases of thyroid cancer would have been expected in ten years, but there were 131. UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, in a forward to the report, said the worst is yet to come for more than 7 million people affected by the disaster. The minister of health for the Ukraine has estimated that 125,000 deaths attributable to the disaster have occurred since 1990.

—*The Guardian/The Observer*, Apr. 26, 2000.

Homeless Used as Radiation Sponges

JAPAN—As unemployment grows, the nuclear industry is creating new job opportunities for nuclear "sponges." Hundreds of homeless people have been hired as janitors at the country's nuclear reactors. Lured by high wages, about 5,000 part-time workers have been hired. Supervision is lax: some workers complain that they were told to keep on working even after their radiation detectors started beeping. Some workers travel from reactor to reactor—piling up more radiation exposure. (Just as in the U.S., there is no cumulative tab kept for radiation doses received from one reactor job to the next—thus the nickname "sponge.") There is no compensation for workers who fall ill and many fear speaking out because the recruiters have been linked to Japan's criminal mobs. —*Earth Island Journal*, Summer 2000.

Public Uproar Over Idaho Burner Absent in Utah

IDAHO/UTAH—The DOE has buckled under intense public pressure to cancel its plan to "incinerate" plutonium-contaminated wastes at its Idaho National Lab. The waste burner threatened to spread 2,000 pounds of wind-borne plutonium-239 into Yellowstone National Park and Jackson, WY. Some 65,000 cubic meters of waste was destined for the foiled burner. Unfortunately, no such uproar has been raised over plans by a consortium of eight nuclear utilities to get rid of its irradiated reactor fuel rods on the Goshute Indian Reservation in western Utah. In late May, commissioners in nearby Toole County signed a contract with Private Fuel Storage, Inc. (PFS), to allow up to 4,000 steel canisters filled with the irradiated fuel rods to be placed on Goshute land. As Green Party Vice Presidential candidate Winona LaDuke said, "This is what the best and brightest minds in science suggest we do with the most dangerous material on earth: send it 19 miles down a dirt road on one of the poorest reservations on the continent." In the next few weeks, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission will hold hearings in Utah on the PFS license application. —*New York Times*, Mar. 28, 2000; *The Salt Lake Tribune*, May 25, 2000.

Plutonium Container Flunks Easy Test

AIKEN, SC—A prototype plutonium shipping container failed a 30-foot drop test last month at the Savannah River Site. The

test proves again that designers' claims regarding nuclear waste containers are not what they're cracked-up to be. The Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board reported on the testing and it said one of the two 9975-type containers "showed a large separation between the outer container and its lid." The 4 by 9/16-inch gap exceeded the arbitrary but officially "allowable" test gash of less than 3.25 inches. Two design upgrades are being considered at Savannah River. The containers are for Rocky Flats and its movement of plutonium across the facility from one storage area to another.

—*WISE News Communiqué*, May 4, 2000.

RESOURCES

- *American Friends Service Committee, AFSC, 4806 York Rd., Baltimore, MD 21212; Phone: (410) 323-7200.
- **The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 6042 S. Kimbark Ave., Chicago, IL 60637; Phone: (773) 702-2555.
- **Citizen's Watch*, newsletter of Tri-Valley CAREs, 2582 Old 1st St., Livermore, CA 94550; Phone: (925) 443-0177.
- *Citizen's Against Radioactive Dumping, 107 Cienega, Santa Fe, NM 97501; Phone: (505) 986-1973; Fax: (505) 986-0997; Email: ccns@nets.com.
- **Earth Island Journal*, quarterly magazine of Earth Island Institute, 300 Broadway, #28, San Francisco, CA 94133; Phone: (415) 788-3666.
- *Food & Water, Inc. 389 Vermont, Rt. 215, Walden, VT 05873; Phone: (802) 563-3300; Fax: (802) 563-3310.
- *Loaves & Fishes Catholic Worker Community, 1712 Jefferson E., Duluth, MN 55812; Phone: (218) 724-2054.
- *Los Alamos Study Group, 212 E. Marcy St., Suite 7, Santa Fe, NM 87501; Phone: (505) 982-7747; Fax: (505) 982-8520; Email: gmello@lasg.org.
- *Military Toxics Project, PO Box 558, Lewiston, ME 04243-0558; Phone: (207) 783-5091; Fax: (207) 783-5096; Email: miltoxpr@ime.net; Web: www.miltoxproj.org.
- *Nuclear Information & Resource Service, 1424 16 St. NW, Washington, DC 20036; Phone: (212) 328-0002.
- **Science for Democratic Action*, quarterly magazine of Institute for Energy and Environmental Research, 6935 Laurel Ave., #204, Takoma Park, MD 20912; Phone: (301) 270-5500.
- *Trident Resistance Network-Midwest, P.O. Box 373, Luck, WI 54853; Phone & Fax: (715) 472-4184.
- **WISE News Communiqué*, bi-monthly from World Information Service on Energy, P.O. Box 59636 - 1040 LC Amsterdam, The Netherlands; Email: wiseamster@antenna.nl.

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 promote an environment free of the nuclear industry and weapons of mass destruction.

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Nukewatch

P.O. Box 649, Luck, WI 54853

phone: (715) 472-4185, fax: (715) 472-4184

email: nukewatch@win.bright.net

web: www.nukewatch.com



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Retired Nuclear Triggermen Demand Abolition

By John LaForge

I see no compelling reason why we should not unilaterally get rid of our nuclear weapons. To maintain them...adds nothing to our security. I can think of no circumstances under which it would be wise for the United States to use nuclear weapons, even in retaliation for their prior use against us.

These are not the words of pacifists, anarchists or monks. And they're not part of a 40-year-old speech by Albert Einstein or the Dalai Lama. They are from Paul Nitze, former Reagan administration national security advisor, writing Oct. 28 in the *New York Times*. And he is only the latest in a long line of nuclear war turncoats.

Nuclear weapons designers, strategists, apologists and triggermen all over the world are deserting the trenches. Luckily, many have issued coherent and explicit denunciations of nuclear policy—calmly denouncing their lifelong advocacy of nuclear weapons' production, deployment and threats. The reversals add fuel, not just irony, to the antinuclear fire.

Momma, Put My Guns in the Ground

Leading the call to abandon ship was **Adm. Hyman Rickover**, the late "father of America's nuclear Navy" who installed nuclear power reactors and weapons on ships and subs. In a 1982 statement to the U.S. Senate, Rickover said, "I'm not proud of the part I played," and "I think we'll probably destroy ourselves."

Rickover said he "probably knows more about this and has thought more about it than anybody in the world," and suggested a halt to the spread of radiation. He concluded that "the most important thing we could do is...outlaw nuclear weapons to start with, then we outlaw nuclear reactors too."

Soon to follow was **Robert McNamara**, the Secretary of Defense from 1961 to 1968 and architect of the U.S.'s Indochina war. Presumably in-the-loop for President Nixon's threat to use nuclear weapons against North Vietnam, McNamara said in 1983, "nuclear weapons serve no military purpose whatsoever." McNamara then suggested that NATO and the U.S. renounce first-use of nuclear weapons in Europe—something it has yet to do. NATO's plan to use nuclear weapons against conventional troops, he said, would ultimately destroy Europe and the United States. The first-use threat "looks to the people of the [NATO] alliance like ... a suicide pact."

Gen. Andrew Goodpaster was Supreme Allied Commander in Europe (SACE) and managed the short-range warheads that McNamara called suicidal. In 1994, as Co-Chair of the prestigious Atlantic Council of the United States, he proposed a 4-step process for "the complete abolition and elimination of nuclear weapons worldwide," including an international no-first-use treaty.

In 1996, Goodpaster and retired SACE Gen. John Galvin organized 60 retired generals and admirals—from the U.S., Russia, China, England, France and 12 other countries—who called for "complete and irrevocable elimination" of nuclear weapons—the big stick they used to wave at each other.

Gen. Charles A. Horner also made headlines in 1994 declaring, "I just don't think nuclear weapons are usable. I want to get rid of them all."

Horner made his plea while still head of the U.S. Space Command and the North American Aerospace Defense Command. Horner ridiculed the Pentagon's fear-mongering over tiny Third World states, saying, "It's kind of hard for us to say to North Korea, 'You are terrible people; you're developing a nuclear weapon,' when the U.S. has thousands of them."

As a Commander of the U.S. Strategic Air Command, **Gen. George L. Butler** "had to," in his own words, "be prepared to advise the President to sign the death warrant of 250 million people living in the Soviet Union." Since his retirement from the top of the nuclear arsenal's hierarchy, Butler's been out denouncing nuclearism. He said in March 1999, "Nuclear weapons are not weapons at all. They are insanely destructive agents of physical and genetic terror. They're some species of biological time bombs whose effects transcend time and space, poisoning the earth and its inhabitants for generations to come."

Adm. Stansfield Turner was CIA director under Jimmy Carter, the President who leaked the preposterous directive on "limited, winnable" nuclear war. Turner said April 10, 1997, "the U.S. should take the lead" and remove thousands of warheads from missiles and bombers. Turner and others say this would speed the process of disarmament by encouraging Russia to follow suit.

Dr. Hans Bethe headed the team at Los Alamos that designed and built the world's first atom bombs. Ever since his math added up to mass destruction in Japan, the Nobel Prize winner has been working to undo his handiwork. In a 1997 letter to President Clinton, Bethe recommended something startling for a theoretical scientist: an end to all nuclear weapons research. "The time has come," Bethe wrote, "for our nation to declare that it is not working, in any way, to develop further weapons of mass destruction."

President Jimmy Carter was a submarine commander and nuclear brinksman. He used his 1980 State of the Union address to cock the trigger on the U.S. nuclear arsenal and aim it at the Middle East. He said, "Any attempt by an outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the interests of the United States and will be repelled by the use of any means necessary." His administration leaked Carter's Presidential Directive 59—the U.S. first strike plan to hit Soviet nuclear weapons before they were launched.

Today, Carter condemns the war plans he broadcasted. In a Feb. 23, 2000 op-ed for the *Washington Post*, Carter charges, "Instead of moving away from reliance on nuclear arsenals since the end of the cold war...both the United States and NATO have reemphasized that they will not comply with a 'no first use' policy." He went on to complain, "I believe that the general public would be extremely concerned if these facts were widely known."

Paul Nitze's nuclear awakening is even more surprising. He's a lifelong nuclear threat strategist, anti-Soviet propagandist and founder of the Committee on the Present Danger, a group once called "the most effective organ of cold war revivalism." In the *Times*, he wrote, "It is impossible" to use nuclear weapons "without large-scale destruction of many innocent people ... not to mention incalculable damage to our natural environment."

A first strike "suicide pact" with "insanely destructive," "agents of terror" that "serve no military purpose whatsoever" and only "destroy the innocent" ought to be abolished. Even Paul Nitze says there is no good reason why unilateral disarmament "should not be carried out now."

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