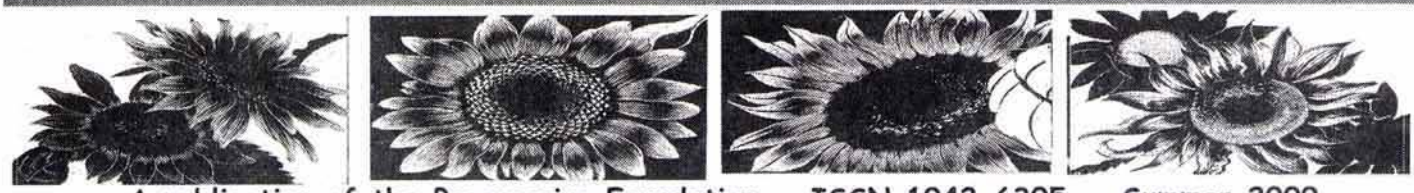
NUKEWATCH QUARTERLY



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News & Information on Nuclear Weapons, Power, Waste & Nonviolent Resistance

Walk for Peace: Camp Williams to Fort McCoy

Camp Williams is headquarters to the 32nd Brigade Combat Team of the Wisconsin National Guard. More than 3,000 Wisconsin National Guard members will be posted to the occupation of Iraq in 2009. The 32nd BCT is currently engaged there, the largest combat deployment of the state's Guard since World War II. Camp Williams is located next to the community of Camp Douglas, Wisconsin.

This summer's Walk for Peace, from Camp Williams to the main gate at Fort McCoy will conclude on August 9 and will include a legal gathering along with another demonstration of nonviolent civil resistance. Nonviolence training will take place August 8 in Tomah.

Fort McCoy plays a key role in preparing Army National Guard and Army Reserve units being sent to war in Iraq and Afghanistan. In the spring and summer of 2009, several units are scheduled for training prior to deployment to the war zones.

Last summer, the Chicago-based Voices for Creative Nonviolence organized "Witness Against War," a peace walk from Chicago to St. Paul, Minnesota and the Republican National Convention. The group's en-route act of nonviolent civil resistance at Fort McCoy, on August 9, was the first at that base since the 1991 Persian Gulf War. That action resulted in the arrest and conviction of 13 people seeking to enter the base to talk with members of the National Guard.

Late in December, another three people, including Nukewatch staffer Bonnie Urfer, were arrested while attempting to walk into Fort McCoy during a protest against the military occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan. Federal District Court proceedings in Madison are ongoing as a result of that action.

A great number of Iraqi civilians have been killed by the U.S.-led bombardment and occupation of Iraq.

IraqBodyCount.org estimates that between 92,126 and 100,580 have been killed. The British medical journal *Lancet* published two reports and estimated that 98,000 civilians were killed by 2004 and that by 2006, at least 654,965 civilians had died. That year the Iraqi Health Ministry reported that at least 151,000 violent deaths had been caused by the war.

A January 2008 survey by Opinion Research Business in London estimated that 1,033,000 total Iraqi deaths had been caused since the 2003 invasion — the largest estimate of innocent victims made by any survey.

Similar to the 35-year anti-nuclear and anti-war campaign that concluded in 2004 when the Navy shut down its nuclear first-strike submarine warfare transmitter Project ELF in northern Wisconsin and Michigan, organizers plan to continue this campaign of nonviolent resistance at Fort McCoy until U.S. aggression in Iraq and Afghanistan is brought to an end.

Plan on joining the peace walk for an afternoon, a day or all three. Reserve your camping space at Mill Bluff State Park with Nukewatch soon.

Walk for Peace

* End U.S. Wars in Iraq & Afghanistan
* Ban Depleted Uranium Munitions
* Keep National Guard Troops Home
* Abolish Nuclear Weapons
* Compensate Victims of War

August 7 to 9

Camp Williams - Volk Field to Fort McCoy, Wisconsin

Aug. 7 - 8:00 a.m Walk begins at Camp Williams-Volk Field and ends at Gillette Park in Tomah.

Aug. 8 - 9:00 a.m. Walk starts from Gillette Park and ends at Tunnel City. 2:00 p.m. Nonviolence workshop and discussion. Place T.B.A.

Aug. 9 - 10:00 a.m. Walk begins at Tunnel City and ends at 12:30 at the main gate of Fort McCoy.

Join us in a rally for peace and an act of nonviolent civil resistance at the main gate of Ft. McCoy upon completion of the walk.

Camping space is limited and will be granted on a first-come-first-served basis. Contact Nukewatch if you want to camp during the walk.

Contact: Nukewatch1@lakeland.ws, (715) 472-4185
Madison Pledge of Resistance, jsfirst@tds.net (608) 238-4327
Wisconsin Network for Peace and Justice, info@wnpj.org, (608) 250-9240
Voices for Creative Nonviolence, (773) 878-3815, info@vcnv.org

Target Practice for Terrorists: Plutonium Fuel On the High Seas

Ocean-going shipments of plutonium-based reactor fuel was renewed March 5 with the departure of *Pacific Pintail* and *Pacific Heron* from the French port of Cherbourg. The "mixed" plutonium and uranium oxide fuel, or MOX, was met with loud protests in Japan after sailing a total of about 12,350 miles down the Atlantic around South Africa, through the Tasman Sea between Australia and New Zealand, and past the islands of the Pacific.

Nuke Info Tokyo (*NIT*), published by the Citizens' Nuclear Information Network, reported in April that the cargo of 1.7 tons of plutonium fuel — the heaviest such shipment ever — was on its way to Japan for experimental use in three power reactors (at Genkai, Ikata and Chubu). However, even after three previous MOX shipments, made in 1992, 1999 and 2001, none of the untested plutonium/MOX fuel from Europe has ever been put to use there. The 2001 shipment was rejected and shipped all the way back from Japan to France under a cloud of scandal, after the Japanese discovered that quality control data on fuel fabrication specifications had been faked.

NIT reports that if, unlike earlier fuel, this load of MOX fuel is loaded into reactors, it could be the first of many such shipments. This is because there are around 38 tons of plutonium in Europe, and the Japanese power companies are obligated to take it all back to Japan.

"At a time when terrorism, including ship hijackings, has reached unprecedented proportions, shipping all this plutonium around the world represents an unacceptable security risk," wrote Philip White, *NIT's* editor.

The plutonium is thermally hot as well as highly radioactive, and the fuel can reach as much a 300° C (572°F) during transport. This heat weakens the fuel assemblies and

Greenpeace activists protesting against the *Pacific Pintail* after its arrival in Cherbourg, France in 1999.

increases the risk of a catastrophic nuclear chain reaction — known as "criticality" — inside the transport casks.

The risk of cask accidents, hijackings and terrorism must be added to the age-old dangers associated with the high seas. The late Paul Leventhal, former President of the Nuclear Control Institute, warned about an earlier MOX shipment in December 1997.

Leventhal wrote: "The hazards of shipping radioactive material by sea are very real. Last month, a container ship carrying highly radioactive cesium was split in two in a storm in the Atlantic Ocean. The fore section went to the bottom with its cesium packages. French regulatory authorities acknowledged the cesium containers would rupture at 3,000 meters, the depth at which the wreckage finally came to rest, but also announced that they would not salvage the radioactive cargo. *Lloyd's List*, a shipping-trade newspaper, editorialized that the sinking of the ship, the *MSC Carla*, is 'a stark reminder of what can be done by the sheer force of the elements upon a ship which, when she was built, was the last word in strength and power.'"

— **Nuke Info Tokyo *is online at http://cnic.jp/english/. Links to older editions can be found at: http://cnic.jp/english/newsletters/index.html***

August is "Nuclear - Free Future Month"

The group Nuclear-Free Future.org has declared August 2009 "Nuclear-Free Future Month," and has urged like-minded organizations to plan an event that will help compel the new administration to follow through on its promise to eliminate nuclear weapons.

The coalition points to a joint statement in April by Presidents Obama and Medvedev calling for a "nuclear free world" and pledging to move rapidly to make deep cuts in their nuclear arsenals which now amount to about 25,000 warheads. The presidential announcement offers new openings for activists to demand the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

In a related development, the January launch in Bonn, Germany of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), with 77 participating nations, will promote and speed the growth of safe alternatives and help facilitate the international phase out of nuclear power thus eliminating the major source of nuclear weapons proliferation.

On April 26, 2002 Germany's federal law on the "structured phase-out of the utilization of nuclear energy" entered into force. The law drastically amended the government's 1959 Atomic Energy Act so instead of promoting nuclear power the act's purpose is now to phase out its use altogether by 2025.

The newly established IRENA reported on April 24, that two thirds (66 percent) of the German public want to continue with the mandated nuclear phase-out and even accelerate it. The survey was carried out by the FORSA polling institute on behalf of the Federal Environment Ministry from April 20 to 22. The 2-to-1 majority constitutes a considerable increase over results of a 2006 poll, when 62 percent of the Germans who were asked said the pace of phase-out should be maintained or increased.

British Subs Spill Rad Coolant in Scottish Waters

Britain's Trident ballistic missile submarines, based in Faslane, Scotland, caused at least three recent radioactive waste leaks into Scottish waters. According to a report obtained by the BBC, the Royal Navy's nuclear powered submarine fleet accidentally spilled an unknown amount of radioactive (reactor) coolant into the Firth of Clyde, a large area of coastal water. The accidents were so serious that the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) declared it would close the base if it had the authority. Under British law, military bases are exempt "for security reasons" from regulations governing nuclear sites, leaving the public without a means of redress.

The BBC reported April 29 that since 1988, in addition to the dumping of reactor coolant, the Navy had suffered 14 submarine collisions and 237 on-board fires in what it called a "recurring theme."

In August 2007, the *HMS Superb* contaminated Gareloch, an extension of the Clyde, with tritium and cobalt-60 when a valve was left open. In February 2008, the *HMS Torbay* overflowed a tank into Gareloch while transferring radioactive waste water. *HMS Trafalgar* was responsible for another release into the Gareloch in 2004. The Navy claimed to not know the volume of coolant that was spilled, yet declared that no environmental consequences were foreseen.

General Hugh Beach, a former Deputy Commander of UK land forces, told the BBC, "It is increasingly obvious that these weapons of mass destruction are more of a danger to the people and environment they are claimed to protect than any enemy."

The report noted that the Navy failed to notify the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency for 6 days after the 2007 leak, leading angered Scottish Parliamentarians to demand further investigation.

Angus Robertson, leader of the Scottish National Party said the report proved the necessity of ridding Scotland of *Trident*, as the SNP has pledged. "We are not talking about a one off incident but a whole catalogue of serious and frankly shocking failures.... It is not good enough to say the [military] is exempt from radioactive safety regulations.... We need an immediate and top level investigation into this scandal."

U.S. Navy Giving Itself Hell in the Gulf

Two U.S. Navy vessels collided March 20 in the narrow Straits of Hormuz between Iran the Arabian Peninsula. The crash came on the heels of a February 3 collision between nuclear-armed British and French submarines in the Atlantic.

The nuclear-powered *USS Hartford*, a *Los Angeles* class fast attack submarine, was submerged and 15 sailors were injured, when it smashed into the amphibious assault ship *USS New Orleans* which carries 1,000 crewmen. The potentially catastrophic accident happened at 1:00 a.m.

The Straits of Hormuz, which span less than 60 miles at its widest, separates Oman from Iran and is the gateway to the oil-rich Persian Gulf.

The price of oil shot up immediately upon news of the crash, although the collision did not at all affect shipping in the straits.

The *New Orleans* suffered a ruptured fuel tank and spilled approximately 25,000 gallons of diesel fuel into shipping lanes. There was no damage to the nuclear reactor powering the *Hartford*, said Navy Lt. Nate Christensen *The London Telegraph* reported.

Illegal Work on German Waste Site Reignites Protest

GORLEBEN, Germany — In May, the 31-year-long citizens' campaign to stop a prospective nuclear waste dump near Gorleben, was rocked by news that the construction of the permanent storage depot began simultaneously with an investigation of the site's suitability. The revelation confirmed what anti-nuclear watchdogs in Germany had suspected for years — that Gorleben's underground salt dome had been chosen, and construction illegally begun, by government officials long before its suitability had been scientifically investigated.

Also in May, a former head of the Federal Physics Technology Agency revealed that top government officials convinced him to alter the findings of a Gorleben dump investigation done in the 1980s. The falsified document might have assured final approval for the Gorleben project, in north central Germany, but years of massive protests moved the government to suspend work in 2000.

News of the official fraud raced through Germany's well-established ecology movement and on May 29, between 350 and 1,000 demonstrators swarmed the waste storage compound with shovels, hammers and wheelbarrows "to flatten the installations," according to an Indy Media report. The police were overwhelmed and had to look on inactively as fences were cut, gates were opened and the compound was occupied by activists and dozens of farm tractors. Climbers got atop the mineshaft tower and hung banners as the others "occupied the grounds of the illegal construction" for about two hours.

Delegates from environmental and anti-nuclear groups will conduct a massive protest Sept. 5 in Berlin involving a farmers' tractor trek traveling all the way from Gorleben. The campaign is working to save the federal nuclear phase-out law and for an end to any further consideration of Gorleben as a waste repository.

Editorial

The Not So Scary North Koreans

Speaking in the Rose Garden May 25, President Obama vowed to "take action" in response to what he called "a blatant violation of international law."

Did the president mean he would direct the Attorney General to bring charges against Bush administration officials and the General Staff for their unprovoked military aggression against Iraq? After all, in 2004 Secretary General Kofi Annan of the UN called the Iraq war "illegal," and in 2007, King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia said publicly that the U.S. occupation of Iraq was illegal. But no, U.S. crimes against peace weren't Mr. Obama's focus.

Did Mr. Obama mean that a special prosecutor would soon investigate the culpability of Bush White House officials who developed, rationalized and directed the worldwide torture of Afghan and Iraqi prisoners of war? The Red Cross, a dozen books, national governments and rights groups around the world have concluded that ghastly tortures committed by U.S. personnel were systematic, widespread and relentless. But unfortunately for the Rule of Law, the President was not condemning the high crimes of the Bush years. No, the target of Obama's finger pointing was North Korea which has conducted its second underground nuclear bomb test.

How perfectly hypocritical and embarrassing can the man be, speaking for a government that still refuses to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

Considering the mountains of self-inflicted cancer-causing contamination that our own government's 1,000 nuclear bomb tests and 50 years of weapons production have produced in the United States (read through any edition of the *Quarterly*), it's clear that if the Pentagon and the White House want to hurt the North Korean dictatorship, they might just leave it to pursue its own self-destruction.

That's what our military advocated, having caused enough cancer and debilitating illness among the American people, that the Energy Department is belatedly paying out millions in individual compensation to victims and their survivors if they can show that their loss was caused by weapons work or fallout. The National Cancer Institute concluded in 1997 that as many as 75,000 thyroid cancers were given to U.S. citizens by our own bomb test fallout. Up to 15,000 of these cancers may have been fatal.

No, North Korea is not a threat to Asia or the U.S. today, any more than Iraq or Afghanistan were in 2001. Weapons contractors, who enjoy the $650 billion military budget, need these foreign phantoms of fear and loathing, so the working class will stay scared enough to hand half of their federal income tax to the Pentagon (the contractors that is) every April.

Consider that the Japanese and the South Koreans, the people actually within missile range of Pyong Yang's missiles, are less concerned about direct attack from the North — something they would never dare — than about North Korea selling its nuclear weapons technology on the black market.

With Pakistan, Obama's good ally, selling H-bomb secrets to Iran, North Korea and Libya; with Bolivia supplying uranium to Iran; with France having sold the same to Israel for its nuclear arsenal; and with the U.S. itself having just signed deals to sell nuclear technology to nuclear-armed India and to the torture state of United Arab Emirates, there is no end of profiteering in the nuclear power and weapons arena.

As Gertrude Stein said, "Considering how dangerous everything is, mothering is really very frightening" — least of all North Korea. — ***John LaForge***

Who Will Pay for America's Chernobyl Roulette?

By Harvey Wasserman

As the U.S. attempts to dig out from economic collapse, a little-known nuclear industry liability could seriously derail Obama's attempt to revive our finances.

It is the federal disaster insurance on 104 rickety atomic reactors. Because the industry cannot get its own insurance, we taxpayers are on the hook.

There is no "rainy day" fund to finance the clean-up after a reactor disaster. No one in government or industry can reasonably explain how we would pay for such a catastrophe.

Chernobyl's lethal cloud began pouring into the atmosphere 23 years ago. Dr. Alexey Yablokov, former environmental advisor to the late President Boris Yeltsin, and president of the Center for Russian Environmental Policy, estimates the death toll at 300,000.

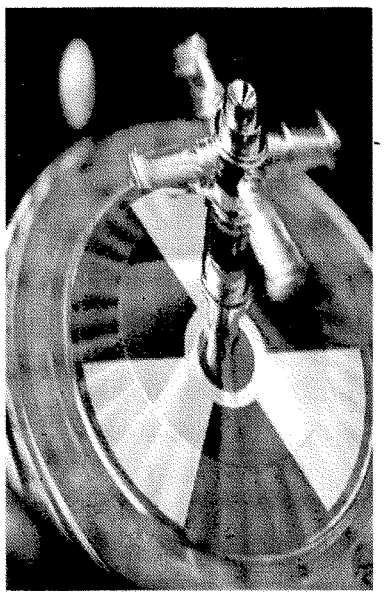
It also gutted the regional economy, and accelerated the Soviet collapse. By conservative accounts Chernobyl's explosion has so far cost a half-trillion dollars, with its financial toll continuing to accrue. A disaster at a U.S. reactor could dwarf that number.

Chernobyl exploded in a remote rural region in an impoverished country. Eighty kilometers away, Kiev was heavily dusted with radiation.

Most American reactors are in what were once considered remote regions. But Indian Point is about half as far from Manhattan as is Chernobyl from Kiev. Likewise San Onofre from Los Angeles, Turkey Point from Miami, Byron from Chicago, Grand Gulf from Baton Rouge, Seabrook and Pilgrim from Boston, Limerick and Peach Bottom from Philadelphia, Calvert Cliffs from Baltimore, Perry from Cleveland, Prairie Island and Monticello from Minneapolis.

All these reactors were designed and built decades ago. Not one has private insurance beyond a tiny percentage of the potential damage.

When the nuke power industry first got going, utility executives refused to invest, citing the insupportable costs of a potential disaster.



Back then, the Sandia Laboratory's WASH-740 report warned that a meltdown at an American reactor could permanently irradiate a land mass the size of Pennsylvania. The fiscal costs, like the potential death toll, were essentially inestimable.

So reactor backers got Congress to pass the 1957 Price-Anderson Act, which protected utilities from all but a tiny portion of the potential damage. The industry assured the public that "within a few years" atomic technology would have advanced so far that private insurers would clamor for the business.

That was 52 years ago. No private insurer has agreed to cover that first generation of reactors (check your homeowners policy for the standard exclusion clause). Neither will they do so for new ones. The entire "new generation" of atomic plants now being so mightily hyped is also to be insured by the federal government, i.e. you and me.

The potential financial impact is beyond comprehension. The cost of abandoning several thousand square miles of the Hudson Valley down to Manhattan, or the Atlantic shore north of and into Boston, or the coastal regions along and into Los Angeles and the California central Valley, simply cannot be calculated. Mere trillions — 2? 5? 20? become meaningless. The collapse of the currency, the utter chaos of the economic system, the burial of health care, the devastating impact on millions of lives ... all defy description.

All will be the responsibility of the federal government. By limiting responsibility of the reactor owners it has forced us to assume liability for the claims of those who survive long enough to sue.

There is no contingency plan for this in the federal budget. No secret reserve. No magic monetary bullet. Should one of these plants melt or explode, American economic life as we have known it could be essentially over.

Thus the re-licensing of rickety old reactors like New Jersey's Oyster Creek, Vermont Yankee and dozens more now exceeding their 40-year design span is a horrifying game of Chernobyl Roulette. Likewise the building of new ones, which also can't get private insurance.

The owners assure us the odds of an accident are "acceptable," but they're not the ones liable. They are betting our everything against their pittance, against which the hundreds of billions in Obama's stimulus plan seem a pitiful penny. Our current fiscal mess pales in comparison to what could come from the irresponsible gamble on these perilous machines.

There are 104 of these radioactive roulette wheels in the U.S. alone. Within weeks Congress may vote to spend *our* money to build still more.

Our money and our lives are being wagered in a game where the house — *our* house — simply cannot win.

— Harvey Wasserman edits* NukeFree.org *and is Senior Editor of* freepress.org, *where this article was first published. His book* Solartopia! Our Green-Powered Earth, *is at http://harveywasserman.com

Leaks Plague New York's Indian Point Reactors

The aged, decrepit Indian Point power reactors 2 & 3, located 35 miles from New York City were hurriedly shut down on April 4 and again May 15 because of steam generator leaks. In February radioactive water leaking from below the steam generators also raised some alarm.

Deconstruction of mainstream news coverage of such emergencies is useful in these circumstances, and researcher Kay Drey of St. Louis, a Board member of the Nuclear Information & Resource Service in Washington, DC, always provides a clear analysis.

The Reuters report of the May event noted that Entergy Corp. said reactor operators shut it down due to a problem "on the non-nuclear side of the plant" that controls the flow of water into one of the unit's four steam generators.

But Drey writes, "Although industry people describe the steam generator as 'non-nuclear,' they shouldn't get away with it. Steam generators have many defects — including leaking circulation tubes. Inside those tubes is the very same radioactively hot water that is inside the reactor core vessel. So, because of leaks of primary coolant into the secondary coolant, the secondary coolant and its steam become radioactive, too."

The Reuters report then says, "There was no release of radiation."

This is the Big Lie of nuclear power operations. Steam cooling water is returned to the lakes, rivers or oceans from which it was taken and is contaminated because of leaks from the secondary cooling loop. For this reason, nuclear reactors release radioactive poisons to the environment continuously.

Drey has a sense of humor about these things. She writes, "Steam generators are my favorite faulty part. Each of the four original Westinghouse steam generators in the Callaway-1 reactor in Missouri had 5,626 tubes inside. So many of the tubes leaked (and had to be plugged, etc.), that in the Fall of 2005, all four steam generators had to be replaced. Callaway had become commercially operable in Dec. 1984. The steam generators were supposed to have operated throughout its full 40-year license — till 2024.

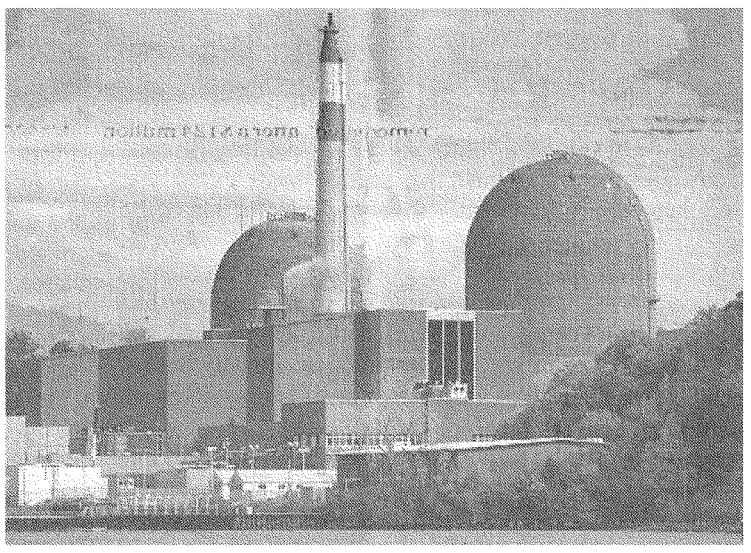
The White Plains *Journal News* said about the February leak of radioactive tritium, "Since that is part of the non-nuclear side of the [reactor], concentrations of tritium are about a tenth of the amount allowed by federal guidelines for drinking water."

In one surprisingly direct reminder that operating reactors legally add radiation to the ecosystem every day, the *Journal News* did acknowledge that "The tritiated water is going into the Indian Point's discharge canal, which drains into the Hudson River under federal permit."

Again Kay Drey helps us see the whole picture of these federally permitted discharges.

Drey writes, "If tritium is leaking, so are dissolved noble gases — krypton-90 that becomes strontium-90 (via rubidium) and xenon-137 that becomes cesium-137 — two of the three most dangerous, most feared radioisotopes in nuclear bomb fallout. Sr-90 and Cs-137 remain dangerous in the environment for 300 years.

"The third most commonly acknowledged radiotoxic fallout-component," Drey notes, "iodine-131, may also have been present in the Indian Point leaks." *-JL*



Indian Point, Buchanan, New York

Funding Ended for Yucca Mt. High-level Waste Dump: NRC Finds 299 License Problems, Excludes Tribes From Hearing Process

On May 11, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission announced that eight parties — including the states of Nevada and California — had won legal "standing" or intervener status in the licensing process for the proposed Yucca Mountain radioactive waste dump in Nevada. The NRC also agreed that the process should consider a staggering 299 separate safety and environmental issues or "contentions" critical of the dump plan.

Native American Tribes and agencies had their application for intervener status denied by the NRC, which has been accused of environmental racism in the past. However, the Timbisha Shoshone Tribe and the Timbisha Shoshone Yucca Mt. Oversight Program (now acting jointly), and the Native Community Action Council may be admitted later following an appeal of their exclusion. The parties were given 10 days to appeal.

Some of the show-stopping contentions include: earthquakes or lava flows that studies indicate are 10 times more likely than earlier estimated (1998); the potential for the hot, tightly compacted waste reactor fuel to actually explode when its containers dissolve (1995); a National Research Council report noting the "scientific impossibility" of making a container last 10,000 years (1990); and the DOE's admission that falsified data was used in gaining Congressional support of the dump plan (2005).

In April, President Obama explicitly called for an end to the Yucca Mountain project and cut all the project's funding beyond what is needed for the DOE to participate in the licensing process.

"We applaud the sincerity of President Obama for ending the Yucca Mt. Project," said Judy Treichel, Executive Director of the Nevada Nuclear Waste Task Force. "This is a victory for those of us that have been in this battle for decades and more importantly, it is an opportunity for us to show our children and grandchildren that if something is wrong, they should oppose it and they can win."

On May 4, Obama received a letter of support for admitting Yucca's failure to meet binding waste isolation standards. Signed by hundreds of organizations and more than 5,000 individuals, the letter also explained why reprocessing of waste fuel is neither appropriate waste management nor a waste "solution."

"The disposal of the unavoidable by-product of the construction of nuclear weapons and the generation of electric power using fission in a site selected by politics rather than science will not stand unexamined," said Mary Olson, of the NIRS Radioactive Waste Project who drafted the letter. "We congratulate the people of Nevada and the Shoshone Nation in their pursuit of sound science, good policy and the protection of this and future generations from a monstrous atomic blunder."

Corrosion Bites Ohio Reactor Containment Building

During an April inspection and refueling shutdown at the Beaver Valley Unit 1 reactor, near East Liverpool, Ohio, a three-inch spot of corrosion was discovered in the steel lining of the containment building.

In 2006, the same problem was discovered during the replacement of the reactor lid and three steam generators. Corrosion was found then in the steel lining of the same containment building and was attributed to moisture trapped between the liner and the 3-foot-thick concrete exterior.

The latest corrosion was attributed by the owner, First Energy Corp., to a piece of wooden 2-by-4 that was accidentally left embedded in the concrete during construction more than 30 years ago. The wood was supposedly in contact with the steel, and the corrosion had worn entirely through the 3/8-inch-thick carbon steel plating.

However, on May 27 the grassroots watchdog group Citizen's Power petitioned the NRC to look deeper into the 2-by-4 story. An expert hired by the group called the explanation too "simplistic," and an NRC officer confirmed that the agency had already determined it needed more information about the corrosion from FirstEnergy.

In May, workers had to cut out the chunk of wood, repair the concrete, cut back the corroded steel and weld on a patch. The lining is a principle safety barrier used to mostly contain gases and radiation in the event of a reactor venting accident. FirstEnergy assured the press that the corrosion caused no radiation to leak since the 4-feet of concrete behind the steel liner was not cracked.

NUCLEAR SHORTS

Spent Food Thrown at Spent Fuel Generators & NRC

BRATTLEBORO, Vermont — People living near the Vermont Yankee reactor in the southwest part of the state were shocked to read that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission had given its owners, Entergy Nuclear, the highest rating — "green" — for its "operation and safety record" for 2008. The reactor had dozens of reported accidents and rule violations during the year.

According to the *Rutland Herald,* residents attending an April 17 public review of the NRC assessment detailed a long list of mishaps at the site — including a dropped 97-ton cask filled with high-level radioactive waste, accidental fires, radioactive leaks and spills from broken cooling water ducts, cracks in reactor components and busted beams inside cooling towers — all last year.

Manchester, Vermont native Sally Shaw was so frustrated and dismayed by the NRC's whitewash, that she threw compost at Vermont Yankee's Vice President Michael Colomb. The Vermont *Reformer* reported that Shaw carried a bag to the front of the conference room and threw a handful of "spent food" at Colomb and then spread handfuls of compost on a table where NRC officials sat. "You folks have no idea what to do with spent fuel or radioactive waste," she told the panelists. Shaw lives in the reactor's emergency evacuation zone. (Nuclear reactors are the only industrial machines in the world that are required to develop disaster evacuation plans before they can be licensed to operate.)

Shaw slammed the NRC for letting Entergy off the hook for its violations of fire safety codes and other lapses. Rather than requiring Entergy to move fire-prone cables farther apart — as other reactor operators have been required to do — Entergy was allowed to leave them as they were, Shaw said, noting that there have been 125 fires at U.S. reactors since 1995.

— *Reformer*, April 17, & *Rutland Herald* April 21, 2009

Florida P&L Fined for Sleeping "Guards"

MIAMI — Florida Power and Light, the state's largest public utility, was fined $130,000 in April for so-called security personnel caught sleeping on duty at the company's Turkey Point reactor, 30 miles south of Miami. A Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) investigation found that six guards at the reactor slept *or served as lookouts for other sleeping guards* while on duty between 2004 and 2006. The now-fired guards were contracted by Wackenhut Corp. Naturally, the NRC's chairman told reporters during a tour in May that Turkey Point was nevertheless safe and secure. FP&L also owns the Point Beach reactors in Wisconsin.

— *Sun-Sentinel* & *Miami Herald*, April 8, 2009

Earthquakes Rattling Hanford Nuclear Reservation

HANFORD, Washington — Seismologists have reported that over 700 minor earthquakes have been rumbling under the DOE's giant Hanford Nuclear Reservation in the southeast part of Washington. The latest tremor on May 17 had a magnitude of 2.1 on the Richter scale. The seismic instability has people worried because of Hanford's 177 underground, 60-year-old storage tanks, most of which are filled with highly radioactive liquid waste and sludge. Only 11 have had their contents transferred to newer tanks. At least 66 of the containers are known to be leaking into the groundwater. The quakes have already caused minor problems with equipment at a sensitive laser research laboratory. The rumblings' epicenters are located about eight miles north of Richland — directly under the laser lab and a former fuel rod manufacturing site — and they have occurred less than two miles underground. — Channel 5 News, Seattle, March 26; *Tri-City Herald*, March 12; *Oregonian*, March 10; U.S. Geological Survey, May 17, 2009

Uranium in Punjab Children at "Pathological" Levels

FARIDKOT, India — Toxicology tests have found that 149 children at the Baba Farid Centre for Special Children are carrying deadly amounts of uranium contamination. "Around 80 percent of the samples, including those from children with cerebral palsy, revealed the presence of uranium in levels that the experts have described as pathological," said the head of the hospital, Prithpal Singh. The results have baffled Indian officials as there are no known sources of uranium in the Punjab region, where Faridkot is located. The Baba Farid Centre is home to more than 300 children suffering from neurological disorders. The results of the tests have led experts to further explore the correlation between exposure to radiation and birth defects, renal failure and several forms of cancer. All of the children affected with uranium poisoning are under the age of 13.

— BBC, April 2, and *Down to Earth*, April 14, 2009

Bankruptcy May Dump Chicago Cleanup on Taxpayers

WARRENVILLE, Illinois — A factory called the Rare Earths Facility in West Chicago began contaminating groundwater with thorium, uranium and radium in 1932. Kerr-McGee Corp. took over the mill in 1967 and ran it until it closed in 1973. The company used the radioactive isotopes to make gaslight mantles and it contaminated both Kress Creek and the West Branch of the DuPage River. In 2006, Kerr-McGee spun-off a new company, Tronox, which inherited the REF's overwhelming pollution liabilities.

The partially cleaned up thorium-laced creek runs through residential neighborhoods where in the past uninformed locals used contaminated mill tailings for fill in their yards. Since the contamination came to light, private wells have been capped and a local prohibition on any new well digging imposed. Tronox has constructed a facility to treat groundwater or water used in "washing" affected materials. If successful, groundwater decontamination will take between 25 and 90 years to complete. The $500 million clean-up project is presently the largest privately-funded cleanup in the U.S., although the cost may be dumped on taxpayers.

Tronox filed for bankruptcy in January and work on the seven-mile-long area of contamination was halted. By inheriting Kerr-McGee's toxic legacy, Tronox was burdened with 120 lawsuits from across the country, including cases of perchlorate poisoning at Henderson, Nevada, creosote pollution in Somerville, New Jersey and radioactive contamination in Cushing, Oklahoma. The company is spending $30-to-$50 million every year on cleanup projects and legal fees, but the convenient bankruptcy may free the culprits of all financial responsibility. — *Chicago Tribune*, April 29; *Las Vegas Review Journal*, Jan. 13; NRC, April 26, *Oklahoma City Journal Record*, Jan. 13, 2009; EPA, July 2008

Get Out on the Highway

WAYNE, New Jersey — One million dollars from the federal stimulus fund has been set aside by New Jersey state lawmakers to pay for the removal of radioactively contaminated soil from beneath Black Oak Ridge Road, 20 miles northwest of New York City. The road runs alongside property once owned by the industrial giant W.R. Grace & Co. The polluting was done from 1948 to 1971 when W.R. Grace processed radioactive thorium for the Atomic Energy Commission intending that it would be used for nuclear reactor fuel. However, thorium fuel experiments, like the one at Elk River in Minnesota, failed, and the toxic and radioactive material left behind became a waste liability. In 1984, the area was named a Superfund Site, and in 2001 the EPA declared it "remediated" after a $124 million clean-up, even though the Army Corps had not remov the soil under Black Oak Ridge Road. Now, with Passaic County planning a road-widening project, the Army will attempt to excavate the contaminated dirt containing uranium, radium and thorium.

— *North Jersey News, The Record* of Bergen County, April 30, 2009

The tragi-comic pin-up Lee Merling, photographed in 1957, was the last Miss Atomic Bomb in the U.S.

PR Bombshells

MOSCOW, Russia — Stooping to old lows in the campaign to sell nuclear power, Nuclear.Ru, Russia's leading internet service covering nuclear topics, held its sixth annual Miss Atom Beauty Contest — for women who work in the nuclear industry. The contest is designated as an industry-wide, web-based project for nuclear belles. More than 160 contestants signed up for this year's competition in hopes of winning such prizes as an all-expense-paid vacation to Cuba or Croatia as well as various furs, diamonds and digital cameras. Whether beauty pageants are by nature sexist is still, in some quarters, open to debate, but the deadly consequences of nuclearism cannot be papered over with photos of fashionable physicists. The accompanying picture is from an earlier attempt to beautify nuclear power in the U.S. Miss Atom Bomb was a 1950's creation of the State of Nevada designed to capitalize on (and distract from) bomb testing and encourage tourism.

— *ABC News, Wired Magazine, Spiegel,* March 7, 2009

Australian Uranium Mine Poisoning National Park

NORTHERN TERRITORY, Australia — News that substantial amounts of radioactively contaminated water is leaking each day from a tailings dam at a uranium mine, located in the Kakadu National Park, a World Heritage Site, has sparked protests in Sydney. About 26,000 gallons of radioactive water are leaking from the dam every day at the Ranger Uranium Mine in Australia's Northern Territory. Both the Ranger and the shuttered Jabiluka uranium mines are located inside Kakadu.

The rush of radioactive liquid is equal to 100 cubic meters, or three gas tankers full of waste a day. The tailings, left over from uranium mining for the nuclear power industry in the U.S. and elsewhere, contain 80 percent of the radioactivity of the original uranium ore.

Ranger owner Energy Resources of Australia (ERA) insists that the leakage has not led to any contamination of Kakadu, but activists remain unconvinced. "We were astonished to learn about the extent of that leak," said Justin Tutty, spokesperson at the Environment Centre Northern Territory, a leading environmental group. About 60 protesters from the Sydney Anti-Nuclear Coalition interrupted a global nuclear conference April 22 telling the participants they weren't welcome.

Over 150 leaks and spills have occurred since 1981. The Jabiluka mine's operations were successfully halted by the protest and resistance of the Mirrar Gundjehmi Aboriginal people, the area's indigenous inhabitants.

— Australian Broadcasting Corp., Mar. 15; *The Age*, Mar. 13 & Inter Press Service, Apr. 4, 2009

British Firm Fined for 14-year Leak

MALDON, Britain — Magnox Electric, Ltd., owners of the Bradwell reactor, have been fined $634,000 after being convicted of allowing radioactive waste to leak out of a decontamination unit and into the ground, undetected, for 14-years. It is the second fine in eight years against Magnox for violating nuclear waste disposal and reactor maintenance law. Tests show that the radioactive waste has seeped into the soil under the facility. In a less-than-reassuring reference to reactor quality control, Chief of Nuclear Safety Directorate Mike Weightman said that it was not possible to "inspect or check every feature of a complex plant." The Bradwell reactor was permanently shutdown in 2002 and is to be decommissioned. Its clean-up plan entails leaving the waste for 100 years and then clearing away the contaminated soil.

— *The Independent, BBC, News & Star* May 14, 2009

Clean, Green Nuclear Power Leaves Wreckage

GORE, Oklahoma — To produce fuel for the clean, green nuclear power you've heard about, Sequoyah Nuclear Fuels Corp. processed uranium oxide into uranium hexafluoride, and hexafluoride into uranium tetrafluoride, until an accident in 1993 shut the place down. The work done at the site contaminated soil and water under the facility, and decontaminating the area will cost an estimated $32 million. The current reclamation plan includes building an above ground cell with a 3-foot base of clay and a layer of high-density polyethylene fabric to hold radioactive garbage, demolished structures and radioactive detritus filtered from surface and groundwater. Contaminants include thorium, radium, arsenic, molybdenum, uranium and other decay-chain products. The volume of contaminated soil that will fill the cell may result in a structure 50-feet high covering 17 acres. About one million pounds of waste depleted uranium U-238 have been moved to EnergySolutions in Utah for disposal. — *Times Record*, Arkansas, Apr. 25, 2009; *Muskogee Phoenix*, June 10, 2008; Federal Register, Oct. 20, 1995.

Potassium Tablets Available Again

WASHINGTON, DC — The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has approved the continued distribution or replenishment of Potassium Iodide (KI) tablets to states that request them. KI can help reduce the risk of thyroid cancer by blocking the thyroid gland's absorption of radioactive iodine-131, which is dispersed massively during reactor accidents. The pills would be used by residents living within 10 miles of nuclear reactors and used in the event of an accident. The move augments a previously authorized onetime distribution of the pills in 2002. Responding to the 2002 program, Pierce County, Minnesota, near the Prairie Island Reactors, officially rejected the free medication after it agreed that residents would be given a "false sense of security" and that they could feel "invincible" to radiation without sufficient educational materials.

— NRC, April 8; *Asbury Park Press*, Apr. 10, 2009

RESOURCES

* **Aliant*ACTION!***, alliantaction@circlevision.org
* **Beyond Nuclear**, 6930 Carroll Ave., # 400, Takoma Park, MD 20912; (301) 270-2209; Email: info@beyondnuclear.org; Web: beyondnuclear.org
* **Citizens' Nuclear Information Center**, Akebonobashi Co-op 2F-B, 8-5 Sumiyoshi-cho, Shijuku-ku, Tokyo, 162-0065 Japan, Web: http://cnic.jp/english; Email: cnic@nifty.com
* **Campaign Against Depleted Uranium & International Coalition to Ban Uranium Weapons,** Bridge 5 Mill, 22a Beswick Street, Ancoats, Manchester, UK, Mr 7HR; Phone: +44 (0) 161273 8293 / 8283; Email: info@cadu.org.uk; Web: cadu.org.uk
* **Global Network Against Nuclear Power & Weapons in Space**, PO Box 652, Brunswick, ME 04011; (207) 443-9502; Email: globalnet@mindspring.com; Web: space4peace.org
* **Institute for Energy & Environmental Research**, 6935 Laurel Ave., # 201, Takoma Park, MD 20912; (310) 270-5500; Email: ieer@ieer.org; Web: www.ieer.org
* **Nuclear Free Future,** (925) 443-7148; (510)-839-5877; Web: www.nuclearfreefuture.org;
* **Nuclear Information & Resource Service**, 6930 Carroll Ave., # 340, Takoma Park, MD 20912; (301) 270-6477; Web: nirs.org; Email: nirsnet@nirs.org
* ***Peace Magazine***, Canadian Disarmament Information Service, P.O. Box 248, Stn P, Toronto, ON M5S 2S7, Canada; Phone: +1 416 588-8748; Email: mspencer@web.ne; Web: peacemagazine.org
* **Radiation and Public Health Project**, PO Box 60, Unionville, NY 10988; Web: radiation. org
* **Voices for Creative Nonviolence**, 1249 W Argyle Street #2, Chicago, IL 60640; Phone: (773) 878-3815; Email: info@vcnv.org; Web: vcnv.org

Ending Nuclear Madness

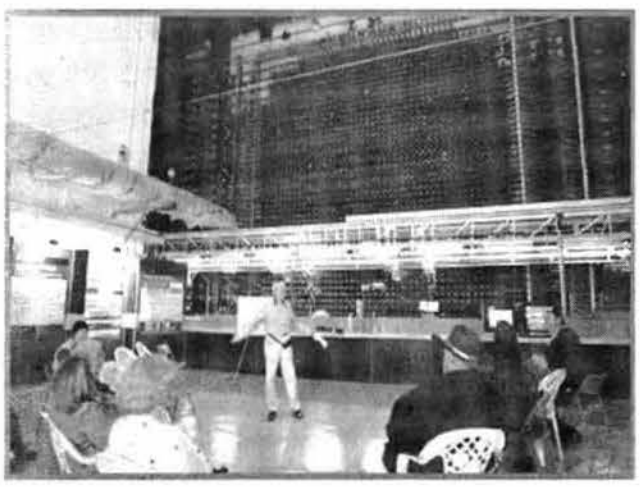
By Dr. Helen Caldicott and Tim Wright

The world's most militarily powerful nation has a new commander-in-chief. Although decidedly less hawkish than his predecessor, Barack Obama mustn't be trusted with the control of 10,000 nuclear weapons. It's mad that any individual has the power to destroy the planet at the press of a button.

Yet the American people, in electing Obama to the top job, empowered him to do precisely that. Any person who supports this extraordinarily dangerous situation is practising psychic numbing.

Thankfully, President Obama — unlike any Oval Office occupant before him — has had the good sense to make the worldwide abolition of nuclear weapons a key foreign policy objective. On the campaign trail last year, he told a crowd of adoring fans that disarmament "is profoundly in America's interest and the world's interest." And already he has begun making good on his promise — sending Cold War heavyweight Henry Kissinger to Moscow for important talks on arms reductions.

But will Obama have the knack to convince Russia's Dmitry Medvedev, and other nuclear-armed leaders, to jump aboard the peace train and aim for zero nuclear weapons? Only time will tell if he has it in him to steer the world towards sanity and survival. But it's unlikely the new American leader will pursue nuclear disarmament with great fervor unless there's public pressure on him to do so.



This is why earth-loving people everywhere must recommit themselves to the campaign for a nuclear-weapon-free world. Abolishing nukes is just as important as averting catastrophic climate change, and yet today only the latter threat gets any air time — and too little at that. It seems we no longer fear nuclear apocalypse as we did in the dim Cold War days. Yet the threat remains and we ignore it at our peril. Unless we take control and ban the bomb soon, a nuclear arsenal will surely be used, and millions — not thousands — will suffer the consequences.

Surely we have the energy to mobilize for abolition? At the height of the anti-nuclear movement, millions took to the streets to demand disarmament. Protesters camped at nuclear storage sites for years on end. Others went on month-long hunger strikes. Schools, hospitals and town shires declared themselves nuclear-weapon-free zones, even in countries which didn't have or intend acquiring the bomb. Sadly, however, those days have long since passed. Our zeal has all but evaporated, when it should only have intensified: the nuclear threat, rather than fading, has worsened.

Today's nukes are on average two hundred times deadlier than the single A-bombs which obliterated Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. The nuclear-armed states are modernizing their arsenals and have expanded their plans to use them, including preemptively against non-nuclear targets. On top of this, the clan of nuclear states has grown and now includes Israel, India, Pakistan and North Korea.

Of course, there have recently been a number of admirable actions for abolition around the globe: strikes at the University of California opposing the Los Alamos laboratory, thousands of Italians petitioning to get rid of U.S. nukes stationed on their soil, medical students demonstrating in troubled Kashmir, mayors mobilizing for the last bomb to be dismantled by 2020. But activism of this kind is all too rare considering the gravity of the nuclear threat. Why is this so?

One reason, we surmise, is that anti-nuclear crusaders of the past have, for various reasons, become today's climate change campaigners. On the face of it, this isn't such a terrible thing: climate change, like the bomb, threatens life on earth. But both menaces must be tackled with equal vigor and passion: indifference and inaction on one front will, ultimately, render efforts on the other pointless. After all, there will be nothing left to fight for on a dead planet.

In an afternoon

There are some notable differences between climate change and nuclear war. For example, both are capable of killing off the human race and all other living organisms, but only nuclear weapons could do it in a day. California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, who is part of a new wave of conservatives championing nuclear disarmament, highlighted this difference in 2007. "A nuclear disaster will not hit at the speed of a glacier melting. It will hit with a blast. It will not hit with the speed of the atmosphere warming but of a city burning. Clearly, the attention focused on nuclear weapons should be as prominent as that of global climate change."

With 26,000 nuclear weapons in the arsenals of nine countries, many of them on hair-trigger alert, the risk they'll be used again — either by accident or design — is terrifyingly high. The 18 Nobel laureates who move the minute hand of the infamous Doomsday Clock backwards and forwards

through peaceful and volatile times believe we're currently just five minutes from midnight. Complacency is not an option. Nuclear disarmament must, once again, cement itself in the public consciousness and move its way to the top of the political agenda. In countries with nuclear weapons, it should become an election-deciding issue: any candidate not promising to work for abolition should stand no chance of victory.

Recent opinion polls show that in every nuclear-weapon nation a majority of citizens support the call for the time-bound elimination of nuclear weapons. But, so far, this overwhelming popular mandate hasn't translated into real action by governments anywhere. Our politicians must listen to their constituents and seize this historic opportunity to cure us of the nuclear madness which afflicts the world.

Otherwise, what will be next? Nuclear weapons pointing at us from outer space, as some U.S. officials are planning? Terrorist groups obtaining the bomb to cause devastation on a scale far greater than on September 11? The only way to guard against such eventualities is to ban these weapons of terror now, or else the escalation towards obliteration will continue. We owe it to succeeding generations to do so.

Acclaimed Indian author Arundhati Roy said it best in an essay she wrote shortly after her country's first nuclear test in 1997. "The nuclear bomb is the most anti-democratic, anti-national, anti-human, outright evil thing that man has ever made.... Look at it this way," she warned, "This world of ours is four thousand, six hundred million years old. It could end in an afternoon."

The price of complacency

Climate change and nuclear war differ in another important respect. While rising global temperatures can be attributed to the actions — and inaction — of many governments, corporations and individuals across the globe (destroying the environment is very much a joint human enterprise), nuclear war could be brought about by one man acting alone. The head of state in most nuclear-armed countries has the sole authority to unleash his entire nuclear arsenal, guaranteeing the death of millions — including his own people. A decision to press the button could well be made in a moment of rage, extreme fear or pure insanity.

Why should Barack Obama, Dmitry Medvedev, France's Nicolas Sarkozy, the UK's Gordon Brown, China's Hu Jintao and Israel's Ehud Olmert, among others, have the power to quite literally move mountains, melt cities and blot out the sun's rays? Who are they to decide the fate of the world we love and intend passing on, intact and unadulterated, to future generations? If we truly cared for the planet, the global disarmament movement would be thriving today. Instead, it has gone quiet, as if awaiting the next bomb.

Although many young people are admirably committed to curbing climate change, very few have adopted disarmament as their raison d'être. Without young people involved in the movement, what hope is there for the future? And, sadly, many older campaigners have become tired and disheartened after years of fighting for little reward. Flower power has wilted away, militarism triumphing.

In recent years, it has been difficult to mobilize people around an issue they think they have no control over. Even with climate change — a problem of monumental proportions which could easily seem overwhelming — most people feel they can make at least some difference. But despite this apparent apathy, the two of us remain hopeful that sooner or later people will notice the elephant in the room, and President Obama's promise of a world free of nuclear weapons will at last be realized. Surely the madness cannot go on forever? The question we must ask ourselves is: Will it take another Hiroshima or Nagasaki for us to wake up and act?

Dr. Helen Caldicott is an author, pediatrician and world-renowned anti-nuclear campaigner. The Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC, has named her one of the most influential women of the 20th century. Tim Wright is President of the Peace Organization of Australia and a board member of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons. This article was published in the April-June edition of Canada's **Peace Magazine.**

Upbeat Version of Mass Destruction, U.S.-Style

For a positive spin on nuclear annihilation you may want to register online for a tour of the Hanford Nuclear Reservation, which produced plutonium used by the U.S. in its atomic bombing of Nagasaki, Japan killing 70,000 people.

Hanford, in Eastern Washington state, has been designated a National Historic Site and opened for public tours last April. After producing plutonium for nearly all U.S. nuclear weapons, it closed in 1989 because of widespread, unaccountable radioactive contamination and the increased danger of a radiation catastrophe involving one of its old Chernobyl-type graphite-cooled reactors.

Pro-nuclear and pro-war historians have been employed to rewrite Hanford's story into a nostalgic, upbeat tale about how the site's notorious B Reactor "ushered in a nuclear age that not only altered the course of World War II but also created an important source of power and made innovations in science and medicine possible."

The bomb fuel production complex once employed over 50,000 people on the banks of the Columbia River, a source of drinking water for Portland, Oregon and dozens of other communities. The Columbia's water will forever be threatened by the high-level liquid radioactive waste leaking from Hanford's giant underground storage tanks. Over 67 of the 144 tanks are known to be leaking, and some of the tanks are said by government scientists to be in danger of literally exploding.

The March 2009 AP report of the newly-opened historic site mentioned nothing about the number of people killed by the U.S. attack on Nagasaki, the hundreds of thousands of nuclear weapons workers who contracted debilitating and sometimes fatal cancers as a result of exposure to workplace radiation, or the hundreds of thousands of tons of high-level radioactive waste that have resulted from the nuclear age "ushered in" by Hanford.

Missing too from the happy-faced spin on Hanford's history was any mention of the 20,000 children who may have received "whopping doses" of the radioactive gas iodine-131deliberately and accidentally released to the atmosphere by Hanford's operators between 1944 and 1953.

In an arguably criminal 1949 experiment called the "Green Run," Hanford managers deliberately vented a huge amount of iodine-131(5,500 curies) into the atmosphere without notifying local residents.

Scientists at the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta reported in 1987 that doses to children downwind from Hanford were even higher than those inflicted upon residents of the Marshall Islands, the Pacific atoll contaminated by U.S. bomb test fallout in the 1950s.

DOE Calls Nuclear Weapon Site "Substandard"

A five-month-long investigation by the Department of Energy's Inspector General has concluded that contractors hired by the Savannah River Site — one of the government's largest nuclear weapons complexes — used construction materials so substandard that it "could have resulted in a spill of up to 15,000 gallons of high-level radioactive waste."

James Rose of the McClatchy Newspapers reported May 4, that the inspector general found that the materials and components that failed to meet safety standards were used "repeatedly."

The DOE's contractors also purchased 9,500 tons of substandard steel reinforcing bars, or rebar, used in the construction of a facility for converting weapons grade plutonium and uranium into mixed-oxide, or MOX, fuel for civilian reactors. The shabby steel was discovered when a piece of it broke during construction of the MOX complex. Replacing the rebar cost $680,000.

Among other unusable components uncovered by the investigation were piping, steel plates, furnace module doors a $12 million "glovebox" used to remotely handle highly radioactive materials, and robots that are used to avoid human exposure to deadly radiological and chemical materials.

While the Inspector General zeroed in on contractor fraud and skimping (some sold standard commercial materials rather than the required military-grade parts which are subjected to tougher testing), it also found the DOE at fault for inadequate supervision and quality control. In their own defense, embarrassed officials at the National Nuclear Security Administration disputed the IG's findings.

60 Years of Bomb Building Poison Oak Ridge, Tenn. for 25 Sq. Miles

By Bonnie Urfer

Sixty years of plutonium and H-bomb production have left 520 radioactive hotspots at the Y-12 site, the Department of Energy's 37,000-acre Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL), 20 miles west of Knoxville, Tennessee. The site's soils and water are poisoned with fluoride, lead, chloride, mercury, aluminum, zinc, PCBs, strontium-90, iodine-131, cesium-137, uranium-235 and other radionuclides including plutonium.

Today, a plume of contaminated groundwater has been detected 100 yards from and heading toward the Clinch River and possibly to off-site drinking water wells. The DOE has begun delivering bottled water to farm families across from Y-12 in Oak Ridge and is going to pay for both the installation of water lines to nearby homes and cover the monthly bills for five years. Several new monitoring wells will be installed for the first time on the opposite side of the Clinch River from the bombplex to track the spread of the toxic and radioactive water.

Fifty million pounds of uranium chips were buried at various places within the complex, along with 12 million cubic feet of low-level radioactive waste. One nightmarish disposal method that haunts current residents began in 1959 when workers mixed 5 million curies of radioactive materials with 5 million gallons of waste grout and injected the waste, on 43 occasions, into underground rock. This so-called "Hydrofracture" disposal continued until 1984.

On March 11, the *Knoxville News* reported that "hazardous waste from DOE's Oak Ridge property on the other side of the Clinch could be ... using cracks or fissures in underground rock formations to travel beneath the waterway."

Some of the waste at ORNL, like the plutonium in a place called "trench 13" cannot be recovered. In 2000, during work intended to remove the plutonium, it spontaneously combusted when the pyrophoric metal was unearthed. Work was immediately suspended. All trench 13 materials were declared to be in a "safe" condition and covered with coke and sand.

A series of 1999 reports show that children born in the area in the early 1950s who drank cow or goat milk ran the increased risk of thyroid cancer due to radiation. They were also exposed to 140 different pollutants, chemicals and toxins. The government issues warnings to avoid eating fish and turtles from area streams and rivers.

Fifteen percent of the Oak Ridge compound was contaminated, from the Watts Bar Reservoir, to the Scarboro neighborhood, to the Clinch River and East Fork Poplar Creek, Oak Ridge Creek and a 25-mile radius around Y-12. Sediment in the Watts Bar Reservoir is so radioactive, it shouldn't be disturbed. Strontium-90 was spilled on numerous occasions.

Radioactive "clean-up" involves collecting soil, concrete and other debris, and shipping it to another location on site, to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in New Mexico, or to the Mound facility in Ohio. Some has gone to a small private waste site south of Knoxville. And some of it is moving under the Clinch River and heading to areas off-site where the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry has warned residents not to eat local fish, turtles, deer, geese, turkeys, etc.

Weapons & Fuel Makers Sued For Deadly Rad Pollution

Babcock & Wilcox recently paid $52.5 million to several hundred victims of its radioactive pollution in Pennsylvania's Kiski Valley, spotlighting the shocking hazards of nuclear power.

The Parks Township Shallow Land Disposal Area (SLDA) radioactive waste dump in Pennsylvania was created between 1961 and 1970 in an open and unfenced field near Highway 66 northeast of Pittsburgh. The waste came from two facilities, one in Apollo and the other in Parks Township, that made uranium fuel for shipboard Navy propulsion reactors and weapons-grade uranium for H-bombs. Nuclear Materials Equipment, Babcock & Wilcox, the Atlantic Richfield Co. and the Atomic Energy Commission are responsible for the dump. U.S. taxpayers have spent more than $56 million trying to contain wastes on the site. The Army Corps of Engineers still has to remove another 50,000 tons of radioactive materials from the SLDA. Contaminants include uranium-238, enriched uranium, plutonium, americium-241 (which decays to plutonium), and thorium.

The two government factories are responsible for contaminating air, water, soil and buildings in surrounding communities. Wastes from both facilities ended up in trenches at the SLDA and were even dumped directly into the Kiskiminetas River, a tributary of the Allegheny.

For 14 years, lawsuits by hundreds of people who lived and worked near the dirty operations demanding compensation for illness, death and property damage, have been underway. Scores of people contracted radiation-related cancers and beryllium-induced illnesses. In Apollo, health officials said 351 out of 1,895 people had some type of cancer. These successful actions have seen Atlantic Richfield Co. and Babcock & Wilcox collectively pay more than $80 million to about 365 claimants. — ***BU***

War Spending Knocking Wind Out of Renewables

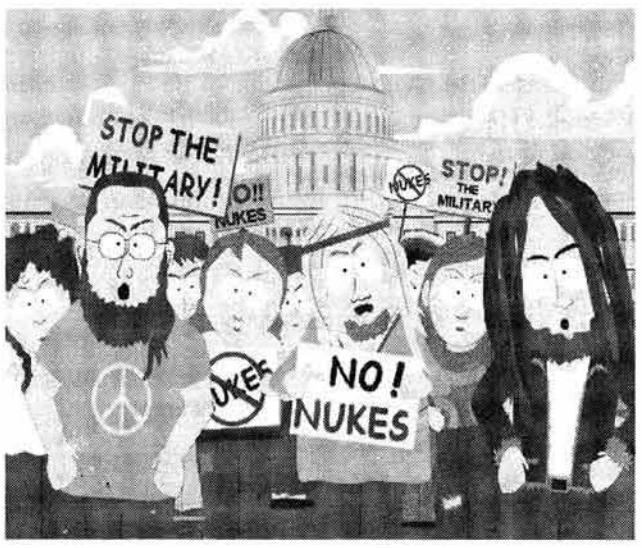
Military spending could be said to cause war by robbing funds from programs that reduce competition for scarce resources. Check out who's getting money for what.

The 2009 Pentagon budget totals $653 billion, when military spending from other departments is included, as well as $162 billion to supplement what the War Resisters' League calls the "misleading and vast underestimate of only $38 billion for the 'war on terror.'" Military spending hidden by Congressional gibberish includes: nuclear weapons, $17 billion; wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, $140 billion; miscellaneous weapons costs, $3.2 billion; Homeland Security, $40 billion; Dept. of Veterans Affairs, $91.3 billion; interest on war debt, $54.5 billion; and military retirement, $12 billion. The military budget does not include the weapons and military aid sent to allies.

Overall U.S. spending on war and war preparations now equals the combined budgets of the world's 15 largest militaries.

This year a mere $93 million is being allotted to wind energy development through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Additionally the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) in Golden, Colorado has been granted $100 million. Funds for wind energy will be split — $10 million for the National Wind Technology Center in Colorado, $24 million for wind power research and development, $14 million for technology development, and $45 million for wind turbine drivetrain research, development and testing. NREL will spend $68 million on a research support facility to create the nation's most energy efficient office building. About $19.2 million will go for renewable energy — which will focus primarily on solar — and $13.5 million will be used for upgrades to the integrated biorefinery research facility enabling the further development of commercial scale bio-fuel projects using wood, grass or nonedible parts of plants.

The military's 2009 budget is 3,383 times the $193 million renewable energy budget. — Department of Energy, April 29, 2009; *New York Times*, Feb. 3, 2009 & War Resisters League pie chart, "Where your income tax money really goes," 2009.



South Park Studios

Billion$ More for Alway$ War

WASHINGTON, DC — The Pentagon has given giant military contractors General Dynamics and Northrop Grumman a deal to build three $5-billion-dollar Navy warships known as the "stealth" Zumwalt-class destroyer. The warship is named for the late Adm. Elmo Zumwalt. A cartoonish depiction of the new battleship appeared in the *New York Times* over a caption that said the ship "will cost $3.3 billion." Upon closer reading, "the average cost could rise to $5 billion or more."

Robert Gates, the Pentagon chief, said that the Navy would produce 10 rather than 11 giant aircraft carriers (no other government in the world has even one), and announced that the Navy could start planning a new "generation" of ballistic missile submarines. Each of the Navy's 14 operational *Trident* submarines now hold up to 24 such missiles with up to eight warheads each.

Secretary Gates wants to end production of Lockheed Martin's F-22 jet fighter after finishing four more. They cost $216.6 million each. The Secretary said in April that he supports plans to build 2,443 of the follow-on F-35 jet bombers, also called the Joint Strike Fighter. Lockheed, the nation's largest military contractor, is charging $266.6 million apiece for the F-35, even if, according the Air Force Association's Doug Birkey, it was "meant to be cheaper" than the F-22.

Celebrating 30 Years

The Nuclear Resister

NUKEWATCH

with *Resistance* for a *Nuclear-Free Future*

July 4th Weekend 2010

At the Y-12 Nuclear Weapons Complex, Oak Ridge, Tennessee

Join us for a national gathering, culminating with nonviolent anti-nuclear direct action, July 3-5, 2010, to declare our independence from nuclear weapons, nuclear power and radioactive waste!

At this critical time in the movement for a nuclear-free future, Nukewatch and the *Nuclear Resister* are marking their 30th anniversaries. The two groups have already begun planning a national gathering to increase awareness and action around nuclear power and weapons and advance the role of nonviolent direct action and civil resistance in the movement. We will also celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Plowshares movement and the inaugural Plowshares Eight direct disarmament action of September 9, 1980.

The gathering of both new and seasoned activists that will take place on the July 4th weekend, 2010, and will include a celebration, discussion, nonviolence training and nonviolent direct action. In partnership with the Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance (OREPA), the convergence will be held in Knoxville, Tennessee, with protest and resistance at the Y-12 nuclear weapons complex in nearby Oak Ridge — where OREPA has sustained a nonviolent campaign for over 20 years.

We will gather two months after the 2010 Nonproliferation Treaty review conference and before the mid-term elections — a time when public attention needs to be focused on nuclear disarmament and a nuclear- and carbon-free energy future. This will be an opportunity to meet with like-minded activists and to learn from and build upon the lessons of past anti-nuclear direct action campaigns as we highlight the need for increasing resistance to nuclear weapons, nuclear power and the entire radioactive cycle.

The celebration also takes place on the eve of the 14th anniversary of the July 8, 1996 World Court advisory opinion which declared first strike weapons to be illegal.

Watch for more information throughout the year. Mark your calendar now and plan to join the celebration.

NUKEWATCH QUARTERLY

Nukewatch is a project of **The Progressive Foundation** a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization founded in 1979 by Samuel H. Day, Jr.

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Uranium Weapons Update —

Norway to Fund ICBUW Research

In April, the Norwegian government agreed to fund three research projects proposed by the Manchester, England-based International Coalition to Ban Uranium Weapons (ICBUW). The studies will increase understanding of the consequences of using uranium weapons, known also as depleted uranium (DU) munitions.

The funding award is an acknowledgment of ICBUW's long years of professional research, diplomacy and organizing. Norway has a long history of supporting human rights, peace building and disarmament programs, and its Ministry of Foreign Affairs is well known for funding the work of the Cluster Munitions Coalition.

The three research areas ICBUW developed into projects are: 1) a Basra epidemiology survey, a long-term study investigating the impact of U.S. and UK uranium munitions on the civilian population of Basra, in southern Iraq; 2) a uranium weapons proliferation, manufacture and trade project, a 3-year research post which will identify which states have uranium weapons, the size of their stocks and assess trade and proliferation routes, consider the environmental impact of alternatives, and study issues of military utility and policy; and 3) the Balkan research survey, a survey trip to the Balkans to document the legacy of NATO's use of uranium weapons during the 1990s.

"This [funding] is a reflection of the rapidly changing political climate surrounding this issue," said ICBUW staffer Doug Weir. "Governments the world over are reassessing the effects these weapons have on civilian populations," he said.

Charges Dismissed Against Shareholders Arrested at ATK

EDEN PRAIRIE, Minnesota — Alliant*Action*, the grass roots campaign to demilitarize AlliantTechsystems (ATK) — the country's number one uranium munition manufacturer — won yet another court victory in February.

The case involved trespass charges against five campaigners who purchased a few ATK shares in order to attend and influence stockholder meetings. The five were kept out of the August 2008 annual meeting and were arrested after demanding their rightful place. At the start of the long-delayed trial, even before the jury was selected, Eden Prairie prosecutor Jennifer Inz asked Judge Lloyd Zimmerman of Hennepin County District Court to spell out his final jury instructions.

Jury instructions are the orders issued by the judge to the jury about what law to apply to the case. They are the last words jurors hear before they begin their deliberations.

The defendants presented their own "Proposed Jury Instructions," to the judge citing State Supreme Court rulings on how "claim of right" is defined and can be used as a defense. In Minnesota law it is a reasonable belief, based on a rule, regulation or law, that you are allowed on the property in question. The defendants also provided three sets of previously-issued jury instructions from similar cases, all of which resulted in "not guilty" verdicts. (See the Nukewatch *Pathfinder* from Spring '05 and Winter '03/'04.)

Judge Zimmerman ruled that the jury would benefit from an explanation of the trespass law's concept of "claim of right." And after the Judge's decision to follow precedent, which in these cases favors the defendants, the prosecutor dismissed the charges calling them "unprosecutable."

Two weeks after the dismissal, the city of Eden Prairie, evidently irked, notified the company that in the future, they would neither detain nor arrest legal shareholders for attempting to attend the company's annual meetings.

Hiroshima Uncensored

Photographs of the U.S. atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were censored for decades by the U.S. government under a decree issued on Sept. 18, 1945 that read in part, "nothing shall be printed which might, directly or by inference, disturb public tranquility." So the discovery in Massachusetts of 701 long-lost and previously unseen photos of the effects of the U.S. atomic bombing decades after the attack can have a shocking impact.

Adam Levy, writing about the photos in *The Guardian* said, "This suppression of visual evidence ... helped ... to inhibit any questioning of the decision to use the bomb in the first place," and has helped us to forget. The photos belonged to a member of the Physical Damage Division which photographed and recorded the Hiroshima blast's effects on inanimate objects for the Pentagon's Strategic Bombing Survey.

Robert Jay Lifton, a research psychiatrist at Yale and author of *Hiroshima in America: 50 Years of Denial*, has called them the "imagery of extinction." The only other extensive photographic record of the immediate aftermath of the atom bombings was made by Japanese photographer Yosuke Yamahata who entered Nagasaki on Aug. 10, 1945. He died of cancer in 1966.

Likewise, a series of dispatches written by U.S. journalist George Weller during his secret visit to Hiroshima in September 1945 was censored and hidden for 60 years until they were found and published in Japan in 2005. Weller had snuck past U.S. occupation forces and into Hiroshima by posing as an Army colonel and wrote 25,000 words about what he saw. He called the then-unknown effects of radiation exposure "this mysterious disease X" which was slowly sickening and killing many Japanese.

Feds Ignore Risks of Dumping Tons of DU in Trenches

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) voted March 18 to declare that depleted uranium from uranium enrichment factories is a "Class A" low-level radioactive waste — the least dangerous kind that supposedly consists mainly of short-lived radionuclides. The 3-to-1 commission vote drew outrage from scientists and congressional representatives who called the decision an "arbitrary and capricious mischaracterization" of the waste.

The Institute for Energy and Environmental Research (IEER) said in condemning the decision that it ignores sound science, contradicts the NRC's own prior analysis and disregards radiological safety. The decision could allow almost one million tons of DU to be disposed of in rural Utah and Texas at private dump sites.

Depleted uranium is different from other low-level radioactive waste because it becomes more radioactive over time for up to a million years. The radioactivity of DU grows with time because of the in-growth of uranium-238's decay products, such as thorium-230 and radium-226. The NRC's action could also allow other radioactive wastes to be classified in the least hazardous category — Class A — the IEER said. NRC Chairman Gregory Jaczko cast the only negative vote and urged the Commission to follow the agency's normal rule-making process and properly determine DU's classification.

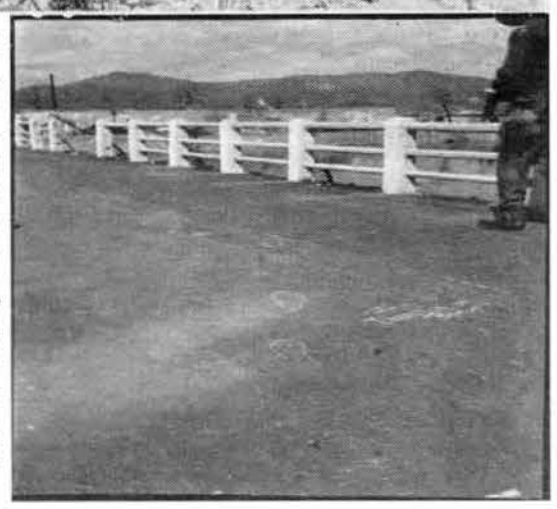
"With the exception of Commissioner Jaczko's vote, the NRC today bypassed scientific integrity, its own prior analysis ... and the simple facts about the characteristics of depleted uranium," said Dr. Arjun Makhijani, President of the IEER, who has studied the issue of DU disposal and testified in NRC enrichment facility licensing proceedings. "This will make DU disposal cheap for the enrichment companies. The NRC seems eager to please the uranium enrichment industry, but it has compromised sound science and public health protection," Makhijani said.

Extensive studies by IEER show that DU disposal in large amounts in shallow trenches would greatly exceed the dose limits of current NRC low-level waste regulations DU from uranium enrichment sites has a concentration that is over 10 times greater than what the NRC itself recommended in its 1981 Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the low-level waste.

The IEER reports that there are now over 740,000 tons of DU in unstable hexafluoride form stockpiled at DOE sites in Paducah, Kentucky, Portsmouth, Ohio and Oak Ridge, Tennessee. One company, LES, is currently building an enrichment machine in New Mexico, which will generate well over 100,000 metric tons of DU.

EnergySolutions, Inc., which has a low-level waste dump site in Utah, is most likely to gain an advantage from the NRC ruling, since it is licensed to dispose of Class-A low-level waste only.

A newly licensed low-level waste disposal site in West Texas may also "benefit." U.S. Representatives Jim Matheson, D-Utah, and Edward Markey, D-Mass., also blasted the decision and demanded to see all communications between EnergySolutions and the NRC.



The 400-year-old city of Hiroshima, August 1945, above. About 250,000 people died outright from the U.S. atomic bombings of Hiroshima & Nagasaki. Negative images or "shadows" of victims were seared into surfaces by the bombs' flash-like fireballs. At right, one person's shadow and footprints.

Do It For Peace

The following remarks were made by Bonnie Urfer at The Progressive *magazine's 100th anniversary conference in Madison, Wisconsin, May 1.*

The first day I walked in to work at *The Progressive* I knew I was in trouble. Between 1983 and 1986, I became a peace activist and nonviolent resister at the magazine. Everyone should work at *The Progressive*. We at home call it a life of high adventure. Civil resistance is my passion in this collective struggle we're in to save ourselves.

Did you hear about the five congress people arrested in May while drawing attention to the dire situation in Darfur? Good for them. They figured out how to put pressure on a murderous government and educate all of us in the process. No harm in nonviolent resistance. I have been arrested fewer than 100 times — I swear — to draw attention to the deadly nuclear industry and to senseless on-going war.

I know you can and do write letters, sign petitions, pass out literature, call into radio programs, write songs, do dances, create art and videos. I know you plaster your car with bumper stickers. You may belong to an organization that purchased a billboard for peace, painted a mural and had a discussion about community justice. Look at all of the people who support *The Progressive*. The local cable access station is here. Perhaps you've joined a march or vigil, organized a Run for Freedom, and maybe you even recycled your TV. There are so many things to do. Buy responsibly, picket, strike and divest from harmful industries. Why, you could refuse to pay war taxes, help blockade the entrance of a weapons manufacturer, sit in a tree to prevent clear cutting and save old growth trees, occupy a nuclear missile silo, even do a citizen's arrest of George Bush. My dream is that one day, we'll be so huge, we'll walk up to the White House and simply ask for the keys.

In the meantime, our water is being poisoned, food supply altered, people tortured and everyone — today and into the future — radioactively contaminated. And then there's drive, drive, drive. You know the story. Each of us is responsible.

For almost three decades, 28 years to be exact, I have resisted the nuclear industry and the war system and I know that what I do is not enough and I know we are not enough, yet. And I know this is no time to stop. As people have turned their focus to climate change, the reality of nuclear war and the danger of nuclear reactors have been minimized in the media and industry. Don't believe the nuclear utilities that nuclear power is green or, more importantly, safe. Don't.

When it comes to nuclear weapons, the law is on our side. The Nuremburg Principles, the Geneva Conventions, the Hague Conventions, the International Court of Justice at the Hague, the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, UN General Assembly Resolutions, humanitarian law, Article Six of the U.S. Constitution making treaties part of the supreme law of the land, the Fifth Commandment, the Golden Rule, Sam Day my mentor, and I all agree that the mere possession of nuclear weapons is immoral, illegal and a crime against humanity.

Our situation is serious. And nuclear weapons make it grave. The flight-to-impact time for your average nuclear weapon is 12 minutes. That's it. And what if it's a computer accident? Shit happens, then you die. The fact that nuclear weapons sit on hair-trigger alert deserves nonviolent civil resistance and more. And the more people we are the more change happens.

The Nuclear Freeze movement of the '80s would not have been complete or as effective without nonviolent disobedience: Greenham Common and the Seneca Women's Peace Camp were part of an influential bunch of people and the list is endless.

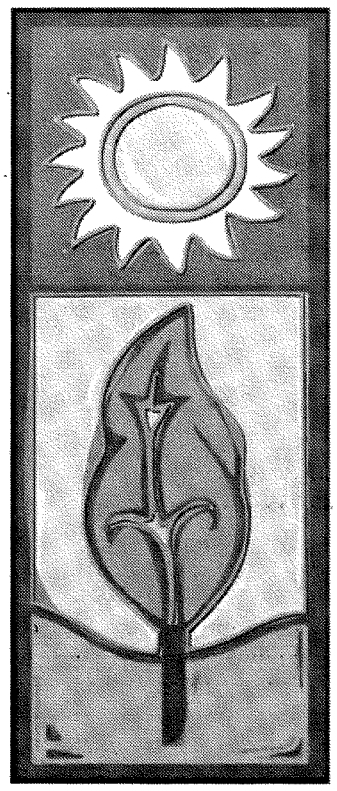
Plowshares disarmament activists rounded out the movement and pulled hard to move us along. People were arrested by the thousands in opposition to nuclear testing.

Think of the assets to getting arrested. A new experience. Meet people you would never have the chance to meet, come face to face with our soldiers, their guns and tanks, meet the police, get a ride, go to court, be silenced, found guilty, get another ride, go to jail, have your picture taken, wear funny clothes and used, but clean, underwear, watch TV all day, play cards, live in solidarity with the poor, meet more new people, and celebrate the day, like never before, when you get out.

Furthermore, the jails and prisons deserve us. Who else, except Anne-Marie Cusac of *The Progressive*, of course, speaks for the millions and millions of people in our jails and prisons. People in jails are hungry and rehabilitation is an illusion fed to the people outside. And I can guarantee it's great studio time even if toilet paper is the only resource.

I've been asked if civil disobedience or resistance works. I don't know. I know it can't hurt and I'm a firm believer in trying everything.

Just in case you don't know how to cross a line for peace, a few of us will be at Fort McCoy in central Wisconsin on August 9 in another attempt to stop the wars. Join us in the adventure of your life.



On the Bright Side

FERC Chair Slams Nuclear Power, Says U.S. Could Cut Energy Use 50%

The new Chairman of the U.S. Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), John Wellinghoff, told a press conference April 22 that new coal plants and nuclear reactors are "too expensive" and could be unnecessary. At a press conference sponsored by the U.S. Energy Association, Wellinghoff said "renewables like wind, solar and biomass would be able to provide enough energy to meet baseload capacity and future demands."

"We may not need any, ever," he said of new coal and nuclear generators.

As reported by the *New York Times*, Wellinghoff said that building nuclear reactors is cost-prohibitive, and that the last price he saw was more than $7,000 a kilowatt. "Until [reactor] costs get to some reasonable cost, I don't think anybody's going to [take nuclear] seriously," he said.

There's enough renewable energy to meet energy demand, Wellinghoff said. "There are 500 to 700 gigawatts of developable wind throughout the Midwest, all the way to Texas. There's probably another 200 to 300 gigawatts in Montana and Wyoming that can go west." Problems with unsteady electricity generation from wind powered turbines will be overcome, he said.

"We are going to have to go to a smart grid to get to this point I'm talking about. But if we don't go to that digital grid, we're not going to be able to move these renewables, anyway. So it's all going to be an integral part of operating that grid efficiently," he said.

Wellinghoff pointed out that the U.S. can reduce energy usage by 50 percent. "You combine all those things together ... I think we have great resources in this country, and we just need to start using them," he said. The Obama appointee also cited tremendous solar power in the Southwest and hydrokinetic and biomass energy.

Wellinghoff's statement — if it reflects Obama administration policy — would be a huge blow to the U.S. nuclear power industry, which has been hoping for a nuclear "renaissance."

Minnesota House Retains Reactor Construction Moritorium

Those not paying attention to the radiation releases, contaminated groundwater, corroded pipes and containment steel, and who have bought into the "green and cheap" hype from the Nuclear Energy Institute, were disappointed with the Minnesota House vote on April 2. The lawmakers retained the state's moratorium on new reactor construction. In March, the state Senate had voted to lift the moratorium. High on the list of legislators' concerns is the million year legacy of nuclear waste and the poor state of reactor safety oversight. Minnesota has three reactors currently storing waste fuel in dry casks on site near the Mississippi — Prairie Island's two units and one at Monticello.

A House-Senate conference committee is working on a final energy bill, so the moratorium controversy isn't over. Republican Representative Laura Brod proposed a constitutional amendment that would allow voters to decide the question of new reactor construction.— Minneapolis *Star Tribune*, April 2; Minnesota Public Radio, Apr. 30; AP, Mar. 27, Apr. 30 & May 9, 2009

Missouri Ratepayers Saved from New Reactor Costs

One reactor plan down, dozens more to go.... The AmerenUE Corp. proposal to construct a new Callaway 2 reactor has been scrapped. The utility simply could not come up with enough financing to pay for the $6 billion project even if ratepayers had been forced to chip-in construction costs. A bill was making its way through the state legislature to allow charging utility customers for electricity that may not have been provided for at least 10 years. The utility intended to spend $400 million of ratepayer funds in pre-construction expenses that would not have been returned if the plan failed.

AmerenUE had been fighting hard to win public approval. The company failed in an attempt, in federal court, to ban anti-nuclear ads and billboards while paying for ads promoting its pay-up-front proposal.

In spite of the utility's announcement to suspend plans for Callaway 2, the application to the NRC has not been withdrawn and the NRC is continuing to work on it. Seventeen companies have filed applications to build 26 reactors in the U.S. — *New York Times*, April 24; Nuclear Information and Resource Service, March 5; Associated Press, March 29; *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, April 4; & *Columbia Tribune*, Jan. 15, 2009.

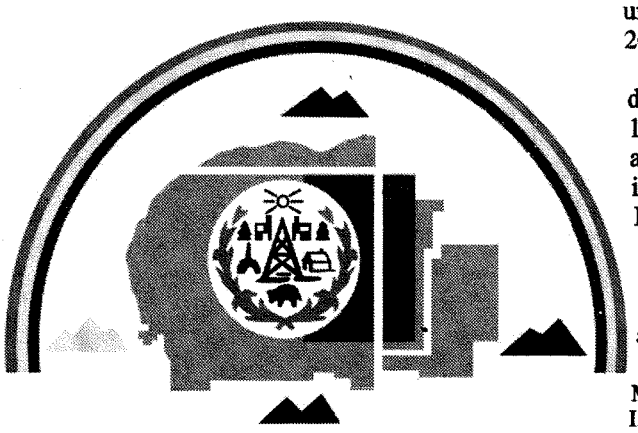
Money Well Spent, Finally

Four years after Congress authorized $40 billion in loan guarantees for alternative energy, a $535 million loan guarantee is finally going to Solyndra Inc., in Fremont, California. The company will use the money to expand production of photovoltaic (solar) panels. The expansion will create thousands of jobs in construction, manufacturing and installation. The panels will have the capacity to generate 15 gigawatts of electricity and save 300 million metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions.

Court: NM Mine Site is in Indian Country

Texas-based HRI, a subsidiary of Uranium Resources, Inc., suffered a major legal setback to its plan to open and operate a pollution-intensive deep injection or "in-situ" leach uranium mine near Church Rock, New Mexico, the site of one of the nation's worst radioactive waste disasters.

On April 17, the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Denver upheld a 2007 Environmental Protection Agency decision that found the company's Section 8 mine site is located "in Indian Country." The ruling requires the mining firm to obtain an underground injection control permit from the EPA, rather than the New Mexico Environment Department, before it can move forward with its plans for leach mining.



The flag of the Navajo Nation

If the mining project is eventually approved by the feds, it would still face the hurdle of indigenous prohibitions. The mine would violate a Reservation-wide ban on uranium mining recently adopted by the Navajo Nation.

In the case of in-situ leaching (ISL), or solution mining, the uranium ore is not removed from underground in the traditional sense, but a leaching liquid — usually sulfuric acid — is injected through wells into the ore deposit, and the uranium-bearing liquid is pumped from other wells to the surface where it is processed. The method leaves behind millions of gallons of radioactively contaminated tailings.

The Navajo Nation has made it clear for several years that it is opposed to companies that continue to seek to mine uranium on Navajo Nation lands, enacting a ban on uranium mining and milling in April 2005.

On July 16, 1979, a mine refuse dam at Church Rock burst, sending 1,100 tons of radioactive mill wastes and 90 million gallons of contaminated liquid into the Rio Puerco River. The spill contaminated the river with radioactive uranium, thorium, radium, and polonium, as well as a dozen toxic heavy metals for at least 70 miles.

— *Indian Country Today*, May 19; Mineweb.com, April 20; Gallop-Independent.com, April 4, 2009; & *Killing Our Own* (1982), p.177.

The High Cost of Wasting Your Time

Surprisingly, the average U.S. family spends 10 percent of its electric budget on *television*. California has proposed new efficiency standards that would require TVs sold there to use 50 percent less electricity by 2013. In the short run, your TV's electric consumption can be reduced by as much as 25 percent by adjusting brightness and contrast settings which are left at top levels by the manufacturers. Four million TVs are sold in California each year and the new plasma models use 30 percent *more* energy per square inch than liquid crystal displays. LED sets are the most popular while the old cathode-ray-tubes are the most efficient. — *The New York Times*, Apr. 15, 2009

UN and Obama Raise Disarmament Treaty Hopes

President Obama said in Prague in April, "The United States will seek a new treaty that verifiably ends the production of fissile materials [enriched uranium and plutonium] intended for use in state nuclear weapons."

Obama spoke out again May 29 in support of a "work plan" on halting the production of fissile materials — newly adopted by the 65-nation UN Conference on Disarmament — saying such a plan is an essential element of his vision for a world free of nuclear weapons.

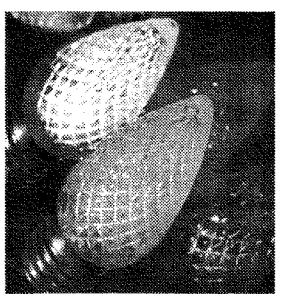
The UN body has been stalemated since it drafted the still-unverified Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty in 1996. Military hawks in Congress and the Bush administration rejected the test ban's verification measures, arguing in error that sophisticated inspections and monitoring were insufficient.

Earlier in May, the UN conference delegates agreed on an agenda for next year's Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference, which may now make progress toward compliance with its mandate, binding on the United States, to pursue the abolition of nuclear weapons "in good faith." Even North Korea, which recently tested its second nuclear bomb, endorsed the program of work.

The Conference also set up a working group on the "prevention of an arms race in outer space," a favorite proposal of Russia and China, which have criticized the United States' militarization of its space program.

Highly Efficient LEDs to Replace Traditional Bulbs

"In the U.S., 78 percent of the public is completely unaware that traditional light bulbs will be phased out in 2012," the President of Osram Sylvania Charles Jerabek told the *New York Times*. Lamps using light emitting diodes, or LEDs, use far less energy than present day incandescent bulbs and less even than compact fluorescent bulbs. For cutting pollution, reducing base-load demand and shrinking electric bills, they are the wave of the future in electric lighting. Under the 2007 Energy Bill, all traditional 100 watt light bulbs will be phased out in the United States in favor of the more efficient LEDs by 2012. By 2014 the 60 watt incandescent will be phased out. Over the next 15 years, higher and higher efficiency is to be phased in until LEDs replace all the wasteful bulbs. LEDs also last longer — up to 25,000 hours — than the traditional bulbs and use half the energy. Another advantage LEDs have over the compact fluorescents is they contain no mercury. They also work well in cold weather. General Electric is currently spending a whopping one-half of its research and development dollars on LEDs. Increased sales and distribution will also help bring their price down. — *New York Times*, May 11, 2009, WorldNetDaily.com, Dec. 19, 2007



Through the Prism of Nonviolence

"Which Side Are You On?"

By John Heid

Before I built a wall I'd ask to know
What I was walling in or walling out,
And to whom I was like to give offense.
Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That wants it down.
— Mending Wall, Robert Frost

I think borders are one of humankind's worst inventions.
— Bonnie Urfer

If you turn this wall on its side, it becomes a bridge.
— Graffiti written on Mexico's side of the border wall, Nogales.

"Border Crosser's Body Found," read a back page headline in a recent edition of *The Arizona Daily Star*. The unnamed individual was simply identified as a "26-year-old Mexican man." His was the 73rd body recovered from the Sonoran desert this fiscal year.

Days later the same newspaper ran a front page headline: "Budget Plans Will Affect Border Issues." The article read much like a Department of Homeland Security press release. Construction of a new "virtual fence" along the U.S.-Mexico border will begin within weeks, not far from the site where the unnamed Mexican man's body was found. These giant towers full of electronics will span nearly the entire 1,952 mile border.

Walls are the quintessential architecture of the nation-state. They make tangible a nation's perimeters which were once the boot prints of soldiers. Walls are the gloves on the fists of these borders; virtual fences, the velvet gloves. While being testament to our immemorial quest for security, they are ultimately a weapon, no less lethal than a loaded gun as evidenced by the over 4,000 bodies that have been recovered in the U.S. borderland since the mid '90s when border walls were expanded.

"... the boundary is one between life and death in that on what side one is born, and works and resides profoundly shapes one's life circumstances ...." (*Dying To Live*, Joseph Nevins)

Government rationalizations for the enhanced boundary enforcement have shifted with the seasons. Deterrence to terrorism was a post 9/11 theme. In the stark absence of border-crossing terrorists, drug and gun trafficking took center stage. Never mind that the Drug Enforcement Agency reports about 85 percent of illegal drugs entering the U.S. arrive through official ports of entry. Militarization of the border has directly exacerbated regional violence.

How does one walk the path of nonviolence in these borderlands?

First, by listening to the voices of the oppressed — on both sides of the wall — and by getting to know our neighbors, their struggle, their dreams.

By "presence." As the adage goes, the power of presence in the presence of power.

By crossing lines. By recognizing that no human being is illegal thus deconstructing the biggest wall of all. The one between our ears.

By addressing structures of violence: physical and ideological; the wall, virtual and concrete; the I.C.E. (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) raids; the panoply of new state and municipal laws which criminalize our neighbors; the serial incarceration of people without due process.

By recognizing that humanitarian aid is never a crime. In fact, to deny humanitarian aid is criminal. Current law turns what was once simply a kind gesture into an act of civil resistance.

One does not have to come to the U.S.-Mexico border to become engaged. The borders are now everywhere.

Don't you want a piece of that wall
When it comes down?
Don't you want to live to see it fall,
When it comes round?
No matter which side you were on
Can you say you took a piece of that wall down?
Charlie King, The Wall

In the 1930s, during the heat of the labor struggle in the Kentucky coal fields, Florence Reece wrote: "Which side are you on?"

There is no neutral ground in the border and immigration struggle because we're all standing somewhere. Which side are you on?

Water Is Life

Walk & Rally for the Lake

A 2.2-mile walk through downtown Duluth, followed by a rally & music at Endion Beach near the Lakewalk to confront official inaction on 400 tons of toxic military waste dumped in Lake Superior.

*** 11:00 a.m.: Walk starts** (bring noisemakers)
*** 1:00 p.m.: Lunch and Rally at Endion Beach**

Sponsors * Beyond Nuclear (Maryland) * Great Northern Solar * Lake Superior Greens * Loaves & Fishes Community (Duluth) * Northland Anti-War Coalition * Nuclear Energy Information Service (Chicago) * Nukewatch * *Reader* Weekly * Smart Set, Inc. * Unitarian Congregation of Duluth, Green Sanctuary Committee * Vets for Peace, Chap. 80 * **Endorsers** * Coalition for a Nuclear-Free Great Lakes (Indianapolis, Ind.) * Earth Protector (Mpls.) * Grandmother's for Peace (Superior) * North American Water Office (Lake Elmo, MN) * Northern Sun Merchandising * *The Nuclear Resister*

Sunday July 19, 2009
Lake Superior Day

10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Duluth, Minnesota

Get Corporate Military Waste Out of Lake Superior!

Speakers: Al Hunter, John LaForge

Music: Robi Meyerson & Rachel Kilgour