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wise

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JAPANESE GOVERNMENT ENDORSES NEW NUCLEAR ENERGY POLICY

From time to time NGOs are invited to send representatives to government policy committees and the like. Frequently, they do so knowing full well that they will be marginalized and that their proposals will not be adopted.

(637.5726) CNIC - Citizens' Nuclear Information Center (CNIC) joined the Atomic Energy Commission's (AEC) New Nuclear Policy-Planning Council (the Council) fully aware that this was the way it was likely to turn out, so we were not surprised that we were not allowed to exert substantial influence.

Draft Nuclear Energy Policy Outline

On July 29, the AEC released the Council's Draft Nuclear Energy Policy Outline. After a four-week public comment period, the Council met to consider the comments that were submitted. As predicted, the Draft Outline was rapidly endorsed with minimal amendments. AEC approved it on October 11 and Cabinet adopted it as official policy on October 14.

In the past the equivalent document was referred to as the Long-term Program for Research, Development, and Utilization of Nuclear Energy. The change in name relates to administrative changes in the government, under which the post of chairman of AEC is no longer held by a government minister. It also reflects the view that the role of the AEC is only to determine basic policy, while it is up to the various government departments and agencies to fill in the details. Further, the wording makes it clear that the Outline is not seen as binding on private enterprise. It speaks throughout of expectations in regard to the decisions of private companies, although in practice they have little room to deviate from official policy. This is particularly true in regard to the backend of the nuclear fuel cycle (reprocessing, plutonium use and disposal of radioactive waste). However, the government cannot force them to meet its goals for nuclear power generation, or to build new nuclear reactors if they perceive nuclear power to be uneconomic.

The Outline is the culmination of deliberations that began in June 2004. The Council issued ten interim reports and discussion documents prior to the Draft Outline, which was based on the contents of these earlier documents.

According to the Outline, Japan's policy is to use nuclear energy for strictly peaceful purposes and to ensure that it is used safely. The aim is to provide a secure supply of energy, to contribute to social welfare and to raise the standard of living of the citizens. The Outline also takes the view that nuclear energy contributes towards the battle against climate change. The scope of the Outline is not restricted to nuclear energy. It also covers the research, industrial and medical use of radiation, but nuclear energy is the main focus. It claims to be a plan for the next ten years, but in fact it sets objectives for the next half century.

MONITORED THIS ISSUE:

Major features of the policy are as follows:

i. The historical policy of "reprocessing spent fuel and effectively using the plutonium and uranium recovered" is reconfirmed.
ii. For the time being, spent fuel will be reprocessed up to the limit of the capacity of the Rokkasho Reprocessing Plant. The remainder will be stored. From 2010 consideration will be given to the question of what to do with the excess spent uranium fuel and with spent MOX fuel. A decision will be made well before the Rokkasho Reprocessing Plant is closed down.
iii. Research should be conducted into technology for the direct disposal of spent fuel to ensure policy flexibility.
iv. After 2030, nuclear power will at least maintain its present percentage of around 30-40% of electric power.
v. From around 2030, existing reactors will be replaced by improved light water reactors.
vi. Fast breeder reactors will be commercialized around 2050.
vii. The pluthermal program (use of MOX fuel in light water reactors) will go ahead.
viii. The aim is to have an operational site for the geological disposal of high-level waste by around 2030.
ix. It is expected that geological disposal will be used for some trans-uranium wastes. This may be at the same site as the high-level waste site.

International Review of Reprocessing Policy

Because Japan's policy regarding reprocessing and the use of plutonium is not simply a domestic issue, but one with serious international implications, an independent international panel was established to conduct a review of the Interim Report Concerning the Nuclear Fuel Cycle (Interim Report) issued last November. The International Chokei (1) Review Commission's (ICRC) four overseas and five Japanese members were very critical of the methodology and the conclusions of the Interim Report. Their report was submitted before the New Nuclear Policy-Planning Council finalized the Outline, but the direction laid out in the Interim Report was incorporated into the Outline unchanged.

The major defect with the methodology was that no clear system was established for prioritizing and weighing the individual items for assessment. Rather, a de facto weighing system was applied on the following basis. Those perspectives that where advantageous for the reprocessing option were emphasized, while the disadvantageous were either were played down or not taken into consideration. The reverse approach was applied to the direct disposal option. Whereas the real weaknesses of reprocessing were considered to be of no significance, imagination was employed to the utmost when identifying the weaknesses of direct disposal. In this way, the Interim Report was able to reach the conclusion that the reprocessing option was superior to the direct disposal option.

The biased approach taken in the Interim Report led to some quite bizarre conclusions. For example, it concluded, without analysis, that there was no significant difference between the reprocessing option and the direct disposal option in regard to the risk of nuclear proliferation. It reached this counter-intuitive conclusion by conflating the clear and present risk presented by aboveground separated plutonium with the risk, hundreds to tens of thousands of years hence, of plutonium buried with the spent fuel in geological repositories. This, it implied, could become a mine for weapons-usable plutonium. That assumes, of course, that human beings will still be capable of and interested in mining plutonium for nuclear weapons that far in the future.

This is just one example of the obvious bias of the Interim Report. Many more could be given if space allowed. But the purpose of the Interim Report was not to provide rational analysis. It was never intended to be anything other than a political exercise to clear the way for reprocessing. In this it was very successful. Although the Interim Report was just that - interim - both policy and praxis have been moving ahead at a rapid pace. Japan Nuclear Fuel Ltd. and the Ministry for Economy Trade and Industry immediately took action following the release of the Interim Report with uranium commissioning of the Rokkasho Reprocessing Plant commencing in December 2004. Then, in May 2005, the Reprocessing Fund Law (2) was passed and became law. In this way, even before the finalization of the Nuclear Energy Policy Outline, major decisions were taken based on the conclusions of the Interim Report.

More recently, several power companies have announced plans to use MOX fuel. These developments are intended to clear the way for the commencement of 'active trials' (using spent fuel) at the Rokkasho Reprocessing Plant. These are scheduled to begin in December this year, but as things now stand it is inconceivable that this schedule will be achieved.

Another recent development is that the

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With **contributions** from CNIC and WISE Sweden

The next issue (638) will be mailed out on November 18, 2005.

New look

As with all periodicals, there comes a time when the presentation needs to be reassessed and refreshed. We feel that time has come for the Nuclear Monitor and are thus happy to bring you a new look, and hopefully improved, Monitor. The changes made are mostly aesthetic for now however, we do have plans to introduce new features over the coming months. We would like to reassure you that the content of the Monitor will always remain the same - firmly anti-nuclear - and would like to invite you to send any views you have on the new layout or the Monitor in general.

As ever, we hope you find it a good read and trust we have informed you well.

Best wishes,
WISE

Japanese government has expressed interest in participating in international moves to provide nuclear fuel cycle services to countries that agree to abstain from these activities themselves. As discussed in *Nuclear Monitor* #624 ("Proposals for a moratorium on reprocessing: the case of Japan"), Japan was unsupportive of Mohamed ElBaradei's proposal to internationalize the nuclear fuel cycle in return for a moratorium on new facilities. ElBaradei's proposal carried the risk that Rokkasho might become subject to the moratorium. Now the government is concerned that if it does not make a concrete proposal of its own, it might end up being lumped in with all the other non-nuclear weapon states and thus subject to the same restrictions as them in regard to uranium enrichment and reprocessing. However, it is not difficult to see through this cunning ploy. There is no prospect in the foreseeable future that Japan will be able to meet the enrichment and reprocessing demand envisaged for its own nuclear program, let alone provide these services to other countries.

Future Prospects

Although implementation of the policy laid out in the new Nuclear Energy Policy Outline has already begun, there are still major obstacles to be overcome. With regard to reprocessing and plutonium use, it is far from clear that these will progress smoothly given that both present major unsolved technical and economic challenges. Where electric power generation targets are concerned, utilities' decisions about construction of new reactors will be based on commercial judgments - international evidence suggests that nuclear is not the preferred choice in a competitive energy market. The Outline is vague about how far the government will go to provide incentives for new nuclear power plants, but it indicates a clear preference for private enterprise to invest its own resources.

A major theme running through the Outline is restoring public trust in nuclear energy. It acknowledges that accidents and scandals over the last decade have greatly damaged public perception of nuclear energy. The solutions proposed are a commitment to a safety culture and prioritization of transparency, consultation, developing public understanding and so on. These are all fine sentiments but the problem is whether an inherently insular and secretive industry can deliver when

25 YEARS AGO

What happened 25 years ago? We go back to news from our 1980 WISE Bulletin, comparing anti-nuclear news then and since

THEN

In *WISE Bulletin* vol. 2 nr. 4 we wrote about Belau (Palau): "The people of the Micronesian island of Palau face a cut-off in American aid, after a new legislature re-affirmed the peoples' original anti-nuclear stand." *WISE Bulletin* 4, May/June 1980

SINCE

The Republic of Belau supposedly gained its "independence" from the United States in 1994 after almost five decades as part of the US administered UN Trust Territory of the Pacific (TTPI).
http://www.asiapac.org.fj/cafepacific/resources/profiles/belau.html

Having become the first nuclear-free nation in the world when it adopted a nuclear-free constitution in 1981, the small Pacific island chain of some 16,500 people (in 1994) finally succumbed to overwhelming pressure to sign a Compact of Free Association with the United States that saw it renounce its nuclear-free constitution previously ratified by its peoples in twelve separate referendums. http://www.abolition2000.org/press/palau_resolution/

In 1985 the popular and staunchly anti-nuclear president Haruo Remeliik was assassinated and his successor died from gunshot wounds under mysterious circumstances, though it was widely accepted that he committed suicide. The next president negotiated the Compact with the American government but in order for the treaty to come into effect, the constitution would have to be changed.

Between 1983 and 1987, the government of Belau spent US$1.7 million on Compact considerations and further public funds were spent on campaigning for its approval while no funds were made available for campaigns against it. Presidential aides also sanctioned violence against Compacts opponents in broadcast statements. *WISE News Communique* 323-324, December 22 1989

During the 1992 presidential elections, a referendum was held and voters agreed to allow the Compact to be approved by simple majority as opposed to the 75% of the vote required under the anti-nuclear provisions of the constitution. *WISE News Communique* 392, June 11 1993

Palau was forced to acquiesce to US military requirements in return for limited economic aid to repay foreign debts and for new development. The aid was to last for 15 years while the US would be responsible for defense for 50 years.

After 15 years of popular opposition and seven 'no' votes, the might of the US military and political machine finally won out. For all its bleating about spreading democracy across the globe, the US proved yet again that it has no respect for the democratic rights of other nations and peoples to express their common wishes, in this instance for a nuclear-free island nation, when those wishes are not in the interests of the United States and its seemingly insatiable military and political ambitions.
http://www.wagingpeace.org/articles/1999/08/00_salvador_micronesia.htm

accidents and scandals of one sort or another keep popping up. It is very doubtful whether the nuclear industry can establish a clean track record for long enough to allow public distrust to subside. However, unless it does subside it will be exceedingly difficult to find candidate sites for new power plants or radioactive waste disposal facilities.

CNIC Participation

Over the last few years CNIC has challenged the AEC to public debates about its nuclear energy policy, particularly concerning the nuclear fuel cycle. Given that background, there was logic in CNIC joining the New Nuclear Policy-Planning Council and although it was a very vexed decision at the time, it was decided that Co-Director, Hideyuki Ban, should represent CNIC on the Council.

He submitted written and verbal statements to almost all the sessions and these, although unfortunately only available in Japanese, are in themselves a valuable resource. It was also a valuable learning experience for many of our staff.

However, there was one particular defect in the process that makes CNIC's future involvement problematic. Mid-way through the process, AEC's chairman stated that AEC was legally bound to promote nuclear energy and that it could not consider the option of phasing out nuclear energy. He based this claim on the wording of the Atomic Energy Basic Law and we believe that consideration should be given to changing this law, but even as it now stands, we disagree with this rigid interpretation. CNIC strongly believes that nuclear policy reviews must consider the option of a nuclear phase-out.

Despite our criticisms of the process and the conclusions of the New Nuclear Policy-Planning Council, we believe that our participation has been worthwhile. There were aspects of the deliberations that were different from previous Long-Term Nuclear Programs and which could lay the ground for future changes. Despite all its failings, the Interim Report for the first time ever gave credence to alternatives to reprocessing. Also, never before has so much attention been given to the loss of public trust caused by nuclear industry failures and to the need to ensure safety. CNIC was probably invited to participate to help give voice to these new perspectives. It will be very interesting to see whether future reviews build on these positive developments.

1. Chokei refers to the Long-term Nuclear Program, as it was previously called.

2. Our abbreviated translation

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CHORNOBYL+20: REMEMBRANCE FOR THE FUTURE

International Conference in Kyiv, Ukraine, April 23-25, 2005

An international conference to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Chornobyl catastrophe will be held at the House of the Teacher in Kyiv, Ukraine from April 23-25, 2006.

The conference will bring together independent scientists, environmentalists, NGO organizations, sustainable energy experts and a broad public audience for a new examination of the 1986 Chornobyl accident's continuing health, social and economic consequences and to draw new attention to the promise and need to implement sustainable energy technologies.

The conference will begin on April 23, Orthodox Easter, with a cultural program. The conference will continue on April 24 and 25 with a focus on three areas: First, the ongoing catastrophe of Chornobyl and its continuing consequences; second, the continuing safety, economic, proliferation and other problems posed by nuclear power generally; third, the development of a roadmap to a sustainable energy future. The issues will be addressed in a mixture of plenary sessions and workshops. Evening events will air issues of broad public concern.

A gallery hall inside the House of the Teacher will include a photo exhibition, while another hall will host displays of sustainable energy technology and provide information from international and Ukrainian organizations.

The conference is being sponsored by the Heinrich Böll Stiftung (Berlin), The Greens/EFA in the European Parliament, the Nuclear Information and Resource Service (Washington, DC), World Information Service on Energy (Amsterdam), and Ecoclub (Rivne, Ukraine) and is being supported by numerous NGOs across the globe. Nearly 40 NGO representatives participated in an initial planning meeting in Kyiv September 30-October 2, 2005.

Information on speakers and other specifics will be announced soon. A website (www.ch20.org) is being developed and will soon be available for pre-registration and other information.

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SWEDISH UPRATE GO-AHEAD RAISES DOUBTS

In May, a Swedish Environmental Court in Vänersborg on Sweden's western coast rebuffed an application from Ringhals NPP to increase the thermal effect of two reactors by 420 MW (see *WISE/NIRS Nuclear Monitor* 628.5692 "Sweden: Environmental Court hard on nuclear energy").

(637.5727) WISE Sweden - The Court subsequently referred the decision to the Government - a course of action provided for in the relatively new Environmental Code - in recognition of the fact that more than environmental considerations were considered to be at stake. Sweden recently shut down the second small reactor at Barsebäck and is about to enter its first winter with decreased nuclear capacity following years of heavy reliance on electricity for heating caused by chronic overcapacity.

On October 20, the Government approved Ringhals' application to increase output by raising the thermal effect of two reactors by 200 MW. The decision was both expected and yet surprising. Expected because the Swedish Government has a rather poor track record when it comes to energy policy and despite repeatedly stating its commitment to a total reform of the energy sector to attain environmental sustainability, it has taken very little action to meet these stated objectives. A controversial decision so close to an election year was clearly too much to hope for. (See aforementioned article in *Nuclear Monitor* #628 for political context).

Surprising because, according to press reports, the decision came without warning; the matter was not even listed on the Cabinet's agenda. Also, just one day before the announcement came, WISE Sweden had been granted an appointment to discuss the issue with the Minister in November!

The Minister for the Environment is seeking to duck responsibility, making no attempt to defend the decision as a matter of policy. According to the Conservative newspaper, *Svenska Dagbladet* (October 21) the minister considers the "upgrading" of Ringhals 1 and 3 as a purely administrative decision. The minister, Ms. Sommestad said, "We issue permits if the application complies with the law," and later added, "We can't go enforcing phase-out policy in a permit decision like this."

One may well wonder in what situations Ms. Sommestad does feel that the phase-out policy can be pursued, if not in a case that decides the share of electricity to be produced by nuclear plants! What is more, her statements directly contradict the findings of the Environmental Court in May when the Court argued for the rejection of the application because the proposed measure did not comply with the Environmental Code and then when it referred the matter to the Cabinet precisely because a political decision was deemed necessary.

The Environmental Court had three complaints regarding the matter: firstly the high level of risk, then the unsolved problem of nuclear waste management and lastly the large amounts of wasted energy (heat) in effluents from the plants. The Court found that any one of these complaints would disqualify the plants according to the terms of the Environmental Code - heightened effect or no, the reactors would not comply with the code.

Square One?

Although empowered, the Government failed to specify any terms or criteria to be met before authorising the upgrade but instead referred the case back to the Environmental Court. Does that mean we are back to Square One? Not exactly. The Government decided that the application was in compliance with the Code, contradicting the judgement made by the Court last spring although technically it should not have overridden the Court's findings but instead should have considered other factors such as the supply of electricity. What the Government has done is to, in effect, reduce the Court to merely specifying the terms under which the upgrading should take place.

In May the Court declared that political and economic considerations were outside the scope of its mandate, claiming instead to be solely charged with the consideration of environmental consequences. Can we hope that it will stick to this, and other, principles and demand the best of available technology (BAT) as required by the Code, regardless of the cost to the operators?

Ringhals, used to being judged against the provisions of the less stringent Law on Nuclear Technology, had taken approval for granted. However, the Court's lengthy deliberation of the case led to a delay that has cost up to SEK 250 000 (around US$31,500) a day since June, according to the reactors' owners.

How much longer Ringhals will have to wait now is unclear. The matter is further complicated by the fact that the owner, Oskarshamns Kraftgrupp, has submitted a parallel application for upgrading to the Environmental Court in Växjö. In this later case the Swedish Radiation Protection Institute imposed stricter limits on the amounts of radioactive effluents released from the Oskarshamn reactors into the Baltic Sea than it imposed on Ringhals (which faces the Kattegat Sea). The interpretation of the environmental code with respect to nuclear is new and therefore the Court in Vänersborg is naturally interested in what happens in Växjö.

It looks as though Ringhals may have to wait some time for the Court's terms.

Furthermore, all decisions are subject to appeal.

Sources: Ministry for the Environment and Sustainable Development, press release October 20, 2005 (in Swedish); the Cabinet decision of October 20, 2005; *Svenska Dagbladet*, October 21, 2005; *Hallands-Nyheter*, October 21, 2005.

Note: all sources are in the Swedish language.

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UK TO REDEFINE NUCLEAR ENERGY AS RENEWABLE?

Following a debate on energy security in the House of Lords on October 27, Science and Innovation Minister, Lord Sainsbury, declared that nuclear energy should be reclassified as a renewable source of energy.

(637.5728) WISE Amsterdam - Should the Minister's views become policy - and it is likely they will next year - the consequence would be that nuclear power would be exempted from the Climate Change Levy as previously argued by the nuclear lobby including utility British Energy. It would also force a rethink of the renewables obligation, which currently stipulates that utilities must purchase ten percent of electricity from renewable sources by 2010.

Given the numerous signs given by Tony Blair that new nuclear could be built in the UK - supposedly to assist the country in reaching its targets on carbon dioxide emissions despite that fact that the nuclear fuel cycle is significantly energy intensive - it should not be a surprise that his government are seeking to finds ways of encouraging private investors to put money into new reactor construction. Up till now, analysts believed it unlikely that investors would back new nuclear projects without government subsidies and/or guarantees given the poor economics of the industry and the long term risks involved.

And just a few years ago it had seemed that the government was unlikely to invest public funds in nuclear. The Cabinet office's Performance and Innovation Unit (PIU) had concluded in the 2002 energy policy review that although the option for nuclear should be kept open, it did not support the use of public money nor did it suggest that nuclear be exempted from the Climate Change Levy. But what a difference a few years make.

Keith Parker of the Nuclear Industry Association said that such reclassification would certainly restore investor confidence and "… demonstrate a degree of government commitment to nuclear, which private investors could need to invest in new generators."

A Whiter Paper?

Energy minister, Malcolm Wicks backed up Lord Sainbury's comments telling the *Financial Times* that the government would not rule out using next years energy policy review to extend the renewables obligation to nuclear and other lower carbon sources of energy, such as clean coal. The Blair government is world renowned for not ruling things out, which generally tends to mean that the decision is already taken but they are not yet ready to confirm it publicly in case it causes an unpleasant fuss.

Civil servants are already working on a new energy policy review although the Energy White Paper was just published in 2003. That document proposed a major increase in renewable energy, assumed a 60% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2050 and criticized nuclear energy, stating that "its current economics make it an unattractive option… and there are also important issues of nuclear waste to be resolved." It did not, however, completely rule out the possibility of new nuclear.

Since that time we have seen almost weekly reports in the media urging us to accept nuclear power as the savior to our planet where climate change is concerned. (See also *WISE/NIRS Nuclear Monitor* 628.5693 "New Nuclear Plants for Blair's Britain?")

The new review is reportedly sparked by consumer protests over increasing gas and power bills, which has in turn led to the issue climbing further up the political agenda because Blair's is after all a can-do government that responds immediately to the concerns of its people…

Domestic abuse

Latest projections suggest that Britain will miss its domestic target for slashing CO2 emissions by 2010 - the aim was to reduce levels by 20% compared to 1990 - though it is still expected to meet the targets set by Kyoto. Although emissions fell in the 1990s when cleaner gas-fired plants were being operated, levels have again been increasing since 2003 when power generators switched back to cheap dirty coal. Despite this, the greatest growth in emissions has been from cars and the domestic sector and this is expected to remain the case unless tough government action is taken to curb them. Research by Cambridge Econometrics shows that pollution from cars and households are the greatest threats with domestic emissions projected to increase by 18.5 percent up on 1990 levels by 2010.

Jonathan Stern of the Oxford Institute of Energy Studies said that the government would need to take draconian decisions in order to curb consumption if it is really serious about

reducing CO2 levels. Stricter policies would need to be introduced banning electrical devices that fall below certain targets or on cars emitting too much CO2. Unfortunately Britain has a leader who lacks the courage to take decisions that could be unpopular so if Downing Street does decide to make any moves in this area, we can expect the usual fudge. It's inconceivable that Blair would actually take action against the urban 4x4 drivers and Jacuzzi owners that seem to be spreading like a bad rash all over the UK.

Scientific spinner

Since his - according to some, ill advised - article in *Science* magazine last year, the government's chief scientific adviser, Sir David King, has been working hard to toe the party line where comments on nuclear power are concerned. Now well schooled by government spin doctors, King no longer condemns the Bush administration for its lack of action to the global problem of climate control but now proclaims that that there are economic and environmental reasons for new nuclear.

Instead of reiterating earlier statements on how climate change is a more serious threat than terrorism, he talks of security of energy supply and dangers on reliance on imported gas. In an interview with *the Guardian*, Professor King said that public debate on nuclear power needed to focus on environmental benefits - presumably as opposed to the facts, such as the dangers of radiation and the unsolvable problem of nuclear waste. "It is important to take the public with us on the environmental debate. That is why I'm trying to sell it…" Take the public with us? Which us would that be? Are these the words of a man of science or politics?

Guardian columnist, George Monbiot accuses Prof. King of having lost his nerve. At a meeting of climate change specialists in September, King is reported to have told specialists that it would be "politically unrealistic" to demand lower targets for stabilizing CO2 in the atmosphere, claiming that it would lose him credibility with the government! Research carried out at the Institute for Public Policy Research states that there is only a 10-20% chance of preventing two degrees of global warming when targets are set at 550 parts CO2 gas per million parts air but at 400 parts those odds increase to 80%. This is the news Prof. King feels is best to keep from the UK government.

Monbiot also reported that a disc, dropped by King's private secretary and found by a journalist, contained mock interviews King conducted with government heavies which reveal him learning to recite the government line. Also that a memo sent by Blair's private secretary earlier this year clearly instructed King to refrain from further criticism of the Bush administration because it "does not held us achieve our wider policy aim". Well, that's all right then…

Reasoned rebuttals

Despite all the positive coverage in the media on nuclear power, some room has been spared for at least one voice of reason. Both *the Guardian* and *Financial Times* published letters from Dr. David Lowry, scientist and nuclear issues coordinator for Labour's environment campaign, Sera, which made some inroads into dispelling the commonly quoted yet very incorrect view that nuclear energy is emissions free. Quoting studies on the CO2 emissions of the nuclear lifecycle by Professors Smith and Van Leeuwen at the University of Groningen, Netherlands, Dr. Lowry made it clear that the production of nuclear electricity cannot be considered carbon free because the production of the nuclear fuel used in reactors is energy intensive.

The emissions from the fuel chain are close to those of natural gas and significantly higher than emissions from renewable energy sources and efficiency technologies. It is also the case that nuclear power does not work in warming climates. Europe's 2004 summer heat wave saw many reactors, particularly in France, being forced to reduce power levels and even shut down completely because of reduced river levels - since reactors require vast amounts of water to keep the core cool, changes in temperature and water levels greatly affect reactor operations.

So, for all the talk of shortfalls in capacity when the current crop of ageing reactors are shut down - which is nonsense because energy efficiency could make a great contribution - and boasts of nuclear power saving us from climate change - also nonsense as described earlier - the fact that it would take almost ten years at the earliest before any new plants are built. It is likely that by that time, should we continue to behave as we do now, temperatures could have risen to irreparable levels so whichever way you look at it, nuclear power cannot help us, end of story.

Sources: Times Online, October 31, 2005; *The Guardian*, October 20, 21 & 25, 2005; *Financial Times*, October 26 & 30, 2005; Reuters, October 19, 2005; NIRS by email, October 11, 2005; *WISE/NIRS Nuclear Monitor* #584, March 7, 2003 & #524, March 8 2002

Contact: WISE Amsterdam

BRIEFLY

"No matter how much we have improved over the years, an accident is always possible. To think and act as if it were not only increases the likelihood of it occurring."
William Cavanaugh, Chairman of WANO (World Association of Nuclear Operators), October 11, 2005

"We have weak links, it makes me very worried. If we were to have a nuclear accident anywhere, it would simply have a crippling effect on nuclear energy all over the world."
Mohamed ElBaradei, Secretary General, IAEA, Nobel Peace Prize 2005, October 11, 2005

Source: Nucleonics Week, October 13, 2005

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Two of the three nuclear reactors at Palo Verde (Phoenix, USA) are back online since October 22 after a 10-day shutdown period. NRC inspectors closed the stations after the discovery of found a problem with the cooling system that had been undetected for 19 years. Palo Verde is the largest nuclear plant in the US with three

EPR ALERT

Join the international support committee for the rally against the EPR nuclear reactor at Cherbourg from April 15-16, 2006 with demonstration to be held on Saturday April 15 at 2pm at Quai Lawton Collins, Cherbourg.

NGOs, groups, artists, trade unions, political parties are urged to sign on to the below text by e-mail to contact@stop-epr.org or signature@stop-epr.org and by fax to +33 4 7207 7004

Despite a huge nuclear overcapacity - and with energy consumption management and renewable energy development being so urgent - the French Government has asked EDF to build a new nuclear reactor, an EPR [1], in Flamanville (Manche/ Normandy).

The lobby aims to present us with a fait accompli and replace existing capacities with EPRs in the future.

The construction of the EPR is the wrong decision from many viewpoints:

o Energy: France does not need any big centralized electrical production capacity for decades. Nuclear only represents 15% of French final energy consumption and 3% around the world. It is also not a solution to climate change.

o Economics: this project, worth billions of Euros, will delay the necessary redeployment of the French industry without addressing its difficulties.

o Social: Renewable energy and demand side management are creating far more jobs and more adapted to the future. For the same investment, a wind power program would lead to two times more electricity production and create close to five times more jobs. [2]

o Environment: EPR will not provide any response to the safety, security and waste management burden that will continue to threat future generations.

Because we refuse the perpetuation of nuclear threat; Because we refuse to let the nuclear lobby to impose a new reactor on us; Because we refuse the confusion between public service and nuclear lobby; Because we know this useless investment will end up as a burden to consumers and future generations; Because we want a future made of clean and renewable energies;

Together, we say NO to the EPR!

We sign the call for the Cherbourg anti-EPR rally of April 15th - 16th, 2006. This rally will also be an opportunity to commemorate the 20th anniversary of Chernobyl together.

[1] EPR = European Pressurized Reactor, reactor design developed by Framatome and Siemens in the 1990s

[2] According to the "Eole ou Pluton? 2003" Détente's study.

reactors producing 4,000 megawatts of electricity.

Source: AP, October 22, 2005

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A Chinese government proposal for national economy and social development over the next 5 years (till 2010) released on October 18 calls for stepping up development of nuclear, wind and solar energies. According to the document, increasing nuclear capacity should accompany the improvement and enlargement of the power grid systems so that electricity can be transmitted from the western parts of China in order to the economically-developed east with base-load capacity.

Source: Rednova News, October 18, 2005

On October 24 the latest Chinese nuclear power station, Tianwan, north of Shanghai, went online with two PWR reactors capable of producing 1,000 megawatts of electricity each. Built with Russian assistance, the station is part of a planned eight-block plant at this location. Nuclear power accounts for approximately 2.3 percent of electricity generated in the country.

Source: The Canada Press, October 25, 2005

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Russia will provide the Libyan research reactor, Tajoura, with low enriched nuclear fuel. The deliveries will be carried out within the frame-work of a Russian-American program to switch research reactors worldwide to fuel with a lower degree of enrichment. Russia will take back the fuel assemblies from stations it provided high enriched fuel to in the past with lower enriched uranium.

Source: MosNews, October 20, 2005

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Yemen to go nuclear? The IAEA, possibly still drunk after the party celebrating its Nobel prize, has decide to grant Yemen with almost US$1 million to be used "for the development of atomic energy for peaceful purposes".

Source: Yemen Observer, October 21, 2005

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GLOBAL CALL AGAINST FOOD IRRADIATION

The following is an international statement opposing the irradiation of food (European version also available) and is being supported by around 50 organizations from around the world, including WISE. To add your organization to the signatories, please see contact details below.

We, the undersigned, declare that the world must be safe from the questionable and unnecessary technologies of food irradiation.

Food irradiation is another tool to increase the corporate control and monopoly of the world's food supply, thus exacerbating the already unsustainable global food and agriculture trading system that prioritizes profits over people.

Food irradiation puts at risk the health and safety of unsuspecting consumers.
Irradiation destroys vitamins - up to 90% of vitamin A in chicken, 86% of vitamin B in oats and 70% of vitamin C in fruit juice. As shelf life increases, more nutrients are lost. Irradiation produces new compounds in food that have been linked to cancer development and genetic damage. Fifty years of research has shown serious health problems in lab animals that ate irradiated foods, including premature death, mutations, nutritional deficiencies, reproductive problems, fatal internal bleeding, suppressed immune systems and stunted growth.

Food irradiation is linked to several environmental problems.
First, irradiation facilities that function with radioactive cobalt-60 or cesium-137 threaten workers and communities with radioactive leaks and accidents. Second, radioactive materials used in these facilities are transported long distances, increasing the risk of radioactive accidents that would damage the local ecosystem and threaten public health. The material in nuclear food irradiators is also widely considered as a potential source for dirty bombs. Food irradiation sacrifices ecological sustainability by encouraging delocalisation of production, wasteful and costly transportation of food and mass production.

Thus we demand the following:

o National legislation to be passed, banning food irradiation;

o Labelling of all irradiated products until such time as a ban has been passed. People have the right to know whether their food has been exposed to irradiation;

o A global halt to construction of new irradiation facilities (and a decommissioning of those that currently exist);

o Sustainable food production, which involves both ecological and social sustainability, i.e., conservation of environments and diverse ecosystems, respect for indigenous and local land management and food production systems, promotion of local consumption of local produce, promotion of energy minimalisation in food production. Sustainable production affirms that access to healthy and wholesome food is the right of all people and of future generations.

The European statement contains different demands, some specific to the European Union alone.

o The European Council should consider the list of foods that can be irradiated, which was voted by the European Parliament in December 2002, as closed (limited to spices and dried herbs). This harmonised list should apply in all member-states and current national exceptions should be abrogated;

o The European Commission should allocate more research funding on the toxicity and the carcinogenic effects linked to irradiated food. This research should be conducted by fully independent researchers and the results should be made public;

o The European Commission and member-state authorities should give no new approval for irradiation facilities;

o The European Commission and the member-state authorities should develop control programs to prevent fraudulent irradiated food to be sold and to guarantee that all irradiated food are labelled according to the EU directive; and,

o The World Health Organization (WHO) should withdraw its endorsement of food irradiation at any dose and to proceed with new research independent from the International Agency on Atomic Energy (IAAE).

For more information, visit www.irradiation.info

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IN BRIEF

Nuclear dump chosen for South Korea. Gyeongju, one of the oldest cities in South Korea and home to several UNESCO designated World Heritage Sites has 'won' the right to host the country's first nuclear dump following voting on November 2. Almost 90 percent of the residents voted in favor of the dump according to the National Election Commission. Four cities competed to host the nuclear waste site with the successful region requiring turnout from at least one third of eligible voters, over 50 percent voting in favor and the highest majority of support. The winning city is to receive subsidies of 300 billion South-Korean Won/KRW (US$288 million) and an annual income of 5-10 billion KRW (US$4.8-9.6 million) from the central government. The country currently operates 20 nuclear power plants and plans to add another 10 by 2015. The vote seemingly ends the South Korean government's near 20-year search for a dumpsite but given the resistance from environmental groups and citizens at previous chosen sites, this may not be the end of the story.
***The Korean Herald*, November 3, 2005; *The Korean Times*, November 3, 2005**

France halts privatization of Areva. Plans to sell of part of Areva, the world's largest nuclear power plant builder, in 2006 were scrapped by the French government in a surprise move on the eve of the sale of shares in utility EDF. Unions and left-wing opponents have attacked the 7 billion euro (US$8.5 billion) sell off of EDF on safety plans and it is thought that Conservative Prime Minister, Dominique de Villepin, has cancelled the plans for Areva to avoid further protests. The sale of EDF shares is due to begin on November 4 and two unions had planned strikes for November 8 over the matter. The sale of Areva of between 30-40 percent of shares was been expected to raise up to 3.6 billion euros (US$4.4 billion) and had already been postponed from 2005. Villepin said that such a strategic matter as the supply of nuclear material, enrichment and the treatment of nuclear waste should remain under state control.
Reuters, October 27, 2005

Physicists petition against U.S. nuclear attack policy. Seven Nobel laureates are amongst over 470 physicists who have signed a petition opposing a new U.S. proposal that would permit the use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states. The petition will be delivered to members of Congress and was initiated by twp physics professors at the University of California, San Diego. The proposed policy would allow the United States to use nuclear weapons against adversaries to ensure the success of U.S. forces, to facilitate a rapid end to a conflict on its terms among other reasons.
University of California, San Diego news release, October 25, 2005

U.S. cancels 'mini-nukes'. Republican Senator Pete Domenici has stated that U.S. plans to develop a nuclear "bunker- buster" warhead have been abandoned following a request from the Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration, which oversees nuclear weapons programmes, to drop a request for funding. The Senate had previously approved US$4 million for the project but the House of Representatives later blocked it. The issue has fueled intense debate in Congress where opponents argued against the development of new nuclear arms.
BBC News online, October 26, 2005

Aomori (Japan) accepts waste store. Governor of Aomori, Shingo Mimuri, announced on October 19 that his prefecture would allow the construction of an interim storage facility for spent nuclear fuel. The facility, the first of its kind in Japan, will be built by Tokyo Electric Power Co. and Japan Atomic Power Co. in Mutsu, Aomori Prefecture. The two-wing facility will be capable of storing 5,000 tons of waste and is scheduled to start operations by 2010. The village of Rokkasho, also in the same prefecture, is already the home of a reprocessing plant and center for the management of high-level radioactive waste.
***The Asahi Shimbun*, October 20, 2005**

U.S. states appeal global warming case. Eight states (California, Connecticut, Iowa, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont and Wisconsin) and the city of New York have appealed against the September dismissal of their suit against five of the largest US utilities. The lawsuit was filed in July 2004 against American Electric Power Co. Inc., Southern Co., Xcel Energy Inc., Cinergy Corp., and the Tennessee Valley Authority public power system. The claimants argued that the greenhouse gas emissions from their plants were a public nuisance, would cause irreparable harm to property and asked the US District Court for the Southern District of New York to force the utilities to cut their CO2 emissions. However, Judge Loretta Preska dismissed the suit, saying the issue was a political one for Congress of the President to decide as opposed to the judiciary. Connecticut Attorney General Richard Blumenthal said, "We're going to continue to fight as long and as hard as is necessary to protect out citizens".
Reuters, October 20, 2005

SEPA report. The Scottish Environment Protection Agency has published the 2004 Radioactivity in Food and the Environment Report (RIFE). As in previous years the highest doses of radiation were found in the group of people in Cumbria who are high users of fish and shellfish.
N-Base Briefing, October 29, 2005

DU activists arrested. Forty-one anti uranium weapons activists were arrested at the offices of Alliant Techsystems in Minnesota, USA, on October 24. Alliant has machined millions of the armour-piercing uranium shells for the US Department of Defense (DOD). Organised by Nukewatch, the action celebrated United Nations Day (October 24), the 50th anniversary of the adoption of the UN Charter outlawing wars of aggression. All activists were released within a few hours.
Nukewatch press release, October 24, 2005

MEPs vote for nuclear. In an initiative facilitated by the European nuclear industry association Foratom, 25 members of the European Parliament stated that the EU should "return to nuclear power and support its expansion overseas if its serious about tackling climate change". The 25 members were representatives of 11 of the EU-25 countries and un-surprisingly mainly from nuclear minded countries as France, Finland, Czech Republic and the UK.
Environment Daily, October 20, 2005

Amec gets Canadian contract. UK based engineering group, Amec was awarded a £250m (US$444m) contract on October 18 to oversee the expansion of one of the world's largest nuclear power stations, the Canadian giant Bruce. The contract, which involves investment of £2bn (US$3.55bn) to bring two reactors back into service in order to increase Bruce's capacity to 6,200 megawatts, is taken as another clear sign of renewed interest in nuclear power in both the UK and Canada. The reactors are based on the Candu design, assumed to be one of the candidates for use in the UK should the government sanction a new generation of reactors. Bruce, with a total of eight reactors including the two to be brought back into service, was formerly owned by British Energy but was sold to a consortium of Canadian companies in 2003 after the UK nuclear generator went bankrupt.
***The Independent*, October 18, 2005**

THORP (UK) restart delayed. British Nuclear group's (BNG) lame-duck reprocessing plant THORP is likely to remain closed until March next year. The re-start date, contained in documents received from BNG by Cumbrians Opposed to a Radioactive Environment (CORE), is several months later than that suggested in June when it was said that it could open around December 2005.
CORE press release, October 3, 2005

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WISE/NIRS NUCLEAR MONITOR

The Nuclear Information & Resource Service was founded in 1978 and is based in Washington, US. The World Information Service on Energy was set up in the same year and houses in Amsterdam, Netherlands. NIRS and WISE Amsterdam joined forces in 2000, creating a worldwide network of information and resource centers for citizens and environmental organizations concerned about nuclear power, radioactive waste, radiation, and sustainable energy issues.

The *WISE/NIRS Nuclear Monitor* publishes international information in English 20 times a year. A Spanish translation of this newsletter is available on the WISE Amsterdam website (www.antenna.nl/wise/esp). A Russian version is published by WISE Russia and a Ukrainian version is published by WISE Ukraine. The *WISE/NIRS Nuclear Monitor* can be obtained both on paper and in an email version (pdf format). Old issues are (after two months) available through the WISE Amsterdam homepage: www.antenna.nl/wise.

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