

NUCLEAR MONITOR

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ONTARIO: NUCLEAR BIDS TOO EXPENSIVE

The government in the Canadian province of Ontario is suspending its plans to build new nuclear reactors, saying that the competitive bidding process has not provided the province with a "suitable" option that would allow it to proceed with the project. The announcement marks a huge shift in policy for the McGuinty government, which had planned to spend Cdn\$26-billion expanding and refurbishing its fleet of reactors.

(691.5964) WISE Amsterdam - On June 29, the government in Ontario announced that it has suspended the procurement of two new reactors for the Darlington nuclear site. In 2005, the nuclear lobby promised its new reactor design would be cheap enough to revive

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Bids "Shockingly high".

More became known about the bids by AECL and Areva NP on July 14. Sources close to the bidding, said that adding two next-generation Candu reactors at Darlington would have cost around Cdn\$26 billion. AECL's bid was based on the construction of two 1,200 MWt Advanced Candu Reactors, working out to Cdn\$ 10,800 per kilowatt of power capacity. By comparison, in 2007 the Ontario Power Authority had assumed for planning purposes a price of Cdn\$2,900 per kilowatt, which works out to about Cdn\$ 7 bn for the Darlington expansion. During Ontario Energy Board hearings last summer, the power authority indicated that anything higher than Cdn\$3,600 per kilowatt would be uneconomical compared to alternatives, primarily natural gas.

The bid from France's Areva NP for two 1,600 MW EPR's also blew past expectations, sources said. Areva's bid came in at Cdn\$ 23.6 bn, with the two reactors costing Cdn\$ 7.8 bn and the rest of the plant costing Cdn\$ 15.8 bn. "These would be all-in costs, including building a new overpass and highway expansion to get the equipment in," a source was quoted. It works out to Cdn\$ 7,375 per kilowatt, and was based on a similar cost estimate Areva had submitted for a plant proposed in Maryland, U.S.

(1 Cdn\$ is 0.62 Euro or 0.87 US\$)

**The Toronto Star (Canada),
14 July 2009**

the moribund nuclear industry. The June 29, announcement by Ontario Energy Minister George Smitherman is yet another sign that the so-called nuclear revival is more media spin than reality. At his press conference, Smitherman reportedly said that the bids he received were 'billions' of dollars too high.

Earlier in June, Greenpeace and 12 more of Canada's largest environmental organizations asked Ontario Premier McGuinty to take down a next barrier to expanding green power by replacing Pickering nuclear station with green power when it closes in 2014 - well before any new nuclear plant could ever come online. The Pickering decision will be the next test of where the government is going on green energy. In an open-letter, the environmental groups also told the Premier that the biggest barrier standing in the way of developing green power in Ontario is his government's decision to reserve 50 per cent of the electricity grid for nuclear generation, which robs green energy of the space and support it needs to grow.

The McGuinty's government's recently passed Green Energy Act could spur a green energy revolution if the government says 'no' to buying new nuclear reactors.

Sources: Greenpeace Canada, 29 June and 2 July / Ontario Globe and Mail, 29 June 2009

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ROSATOM IS PLANNING BALTIC NPP ON E.U. BORDER

The remote Russian region of Kaliningrad, located between Poland and Lithuania--both EU countries--may become home for a two-unit nuclear power plant. The State-owned corporation Rosatom (formerly Minatom) is planning to start construction next year and to put the first reactor on-line by 2016. But opposition in the region is growing and the federal government so far has not granted permission for the construction.

(691.5965) **WISE Kaliningrad** - On July 11 in Sovetsk, a small town on the Russian-Lithuanian border, more than 500 local citizens took part in a protest against the construction of Baltic Nuclear Power Plant (NPP). Over two weeks, activists collected more than 1,000 signatures in an appeal to the Russian President against construction of the nuclear reactors.

Protests

The nuclear power plant is proposed to be built 18-km from Sovetsk and activists asked Rosatom to organize public hearings in this city, but nuclear officials rejected this possibility. Organizers for the protest campaign, including the national group Ecodefense and a local citizen's group (uniting activists from several small cities around the Baltic NPP' construction site), said there will be more protests in July and August.

Earlier this year, various protests were staged by environmentalists in Kaliningrad city, the regional administrative center located approximately 120 km from the proposed construction site.

EIA and first local victory of activists

In June, Rosatom announced a public hearing on July 24, as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) procedure in Neman, the closest city to the proposed construction site. It was also announced that the EIA of Baltic NPP will be publicly available for 30 days. But Rosatom and local authorities of Neman placed an unofficial 11-page copy of the EIA on the internet, instead of the official 180-page document with background information on reactor and the entire power plant, environmental conditions in the region, etc.

Environmental activists officially demanded to place "the full EIA on the internet so that all citizens in the Kaliningrad region have equal access to

the document and are able to participate in a public discussion over Baltic NPP". On July 4, Igor Konyshev - director of the Rosatom department responsible for relations with regions and public organizations - announced there will be no access to the full EIA via internet because there is no law demanding that.

Two days later, on July 6, Ecodefense unexpectedly announced it had placed the full 180-page EIA on internet. According to a statement by Ecodefense, "the copy of the EIA was produced without permission from any authority ... an EIA must be available to everyone in order to understand what Rosatom is trying to bring into the region... the decision over a nuclear plant must be taken by citizens living in the area, not by the nuclear industry which always gets the profit and leaves the nuclear waste".

Although Rosatom announced official public hearings only in Neman, a very small city with a high level of jobless people, local activists are putting efforts into organizing more hearings in several cities located in the 30km zone around the nuclear construction site. The first local victory for activists was the July 7 decision of the city parliament in Sovetsk, where local parliamentarians announced their own hearing to be held on August 17. Later this summer, more city parliaments in the 30km zone will discuss the idea of holding their own hearings.

Costs, safety, electricity supply

On July 4, Rosatom organized a roundtable on Baltic NPP in Kaliningrad. Speaking on the financial aspect of the project, the deputy director of Energoatom (the State-owned national company that operates reactors) Sergey Boyarkin stated that the cost of decommissioning will be equal to the cost of construction of Baltic NPP. That will bring the total price of the project to 10-12 billion Euro

(US\$14-17 billion).

Last year Rosatom repeatedly stated the Baltic NPP would cost 5 billion Euro per two units (VVER-1200 design). But on June 25, state-owned news agency RIA Novosti announced the cost of the plant will be Euro 6 billion Euro. At the roundtable in Kaliningrad, it appeared that these numbers related only to construction costs and do not include decommissioning.

Another speaker at the roundtable in Kaliningrad was a chief-engineer of the Baltic NPP, Ivan Grabelnikov, who discussed the technical side of the project. According to Mr. Grabelnikov, there was some modeling done over the sustainability of the VVER-reactor under plane crash (size of a Boeing-747) scenarios and it showed that the reactor can be destroyed if an airplane crashes into a certain (not named) part of the reactor. Grabelnikov also confirmed that the probability of large accident with radioactive release is not excluded, but it's small, he said.

Nuclear industry officials insisted during the roundtable that the Kaliningrad region cannot avoid the nuclear plant because its the only option to guarantee the security of electricity supply. The region is highly dependent on electricity and natural gas supplied by mainland Russia. But information coming from the local government in Kaliningrad paints a completely different picture. It appears that the nuclear power plant is not needed for local supply, but only for export of the electricity to the EU.

In December 2008, the governor of Kaliningrad, Georgy Boos, said a second unit of a power plant burning natural gas will be in operation by the end of 2010. According to a report by the Kaliningrad local government on development of the local economy, released in July 2009, the need for electricity in the region will be covered by 106% when the new unit of the

natural gas plant is online. Presently, the first unit in operation provides 450 MWt.

Various reports in Russian business media suggested that Rosatom's attempts to create closer ties with European companies (including Siemens, EnBW and others) may be targeted at cooperation on the Baltic NPP. The Russian nuclear industry is probably looking for some kind of guarantee that electricity from the nuclear plant would be consumed in the European Union. Otherwise, it doesn't make sense to put billions of Euros into a not-needed nuclear plant

on the Russian-Lithuanian border.

The situation with the Baltic NPP is a unique one - there has been no official decision of the Russian government over the construction of this plant. It has never happened before in Russia that the official assessment process over a nuclear reactor project started before governmental approval. One of the reasons for lack of governmental approval may well be the lack of European guarantees.

According to both Rosatom (Konyshev) and Energoatom (Boyarkin), all documents required for the final

governmental assessment of the Baltic NPP will be submitted by the end of August. In November this year they are planning to receive a positive conclusion. Construction license would then be issued on July 1, 2010, Boyarkin said during the roundtable on July 4.

The full 180-page EIA can be obtained at: <http://antiatom.ru/downloads/baltic-npp-ovos.zip>.

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ELECTIONS IN BULGARIA, FINANCIAL TROUBLES AND RWE CAUSE CONFUSION FOR BELENE

The July 5, parliamentary elections in Bulgaria saw a landslide. The ruling coalition of Socialists, ethnic Turks and the former Bulgarian king Simeon II's party was wiped away by the new party GERB (Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria). GERB, the political child of Sofia mayor Boyko Borisov, won with 39,7% of the vote 120 of the 240 seats in Parliament. Borisov is now creating a minority government that will seek votes for support from the right wing parties in parliament: the extreme-right nationalist Ataka and Order, Lawfulness and Justice parties and the centre right Blue Coalition of the Democrats for a Strong Bulgaria and United Democratic Front.

(691.5966) Jan Haverkamp - The Blue Coalition was the first party to openly speak out against the Belene nuclear power project, and there were hopes that it would be needed for a coalition with GERB. GERB's victory is so large, however, that it does not need to grant too many favours. And GERB itself is not very clear on Belene. Party officials including Borisov had stated over the last months that Belene would not get any financial support any more from the state. The nominee for finance minister, Simeon Djankov, currently working at the World Bank, declared that Bulgaria should invest in energy efficiency instead. On July 13, he announced in the daily Standart that in the preparation of the Belene project around 500 BGN (some 230 million Euro) must have disappeared as the Ministry for Energy and Economy informed him 800 million BGN was used for the deconstruction of the old unfinished nuclear power plant. Djankov claims that in other countries, this would have cost nothing more than 250 million leva.

Party leader Borisov, however, announced in a television interview on 12 July that he still stands firmly behind the project. Rumors are that he has

been contacted intensively in the last weeks by the pro-Belene lobby within and outside his party. Also he, however, expressed doubts about the availability of state funds for the project.

And without state funding, Belene might be dead. Over the last years, 12 different Western banks withdrew initial interest from the project after they found out more details. French top-nuclear-bank BNP Paribas - after Citi the largest nuclear financier in the world and usually not caring about its nuclear image - initially brokered a 250 million Euro bridging loan for 2007, which was extended to 2008. In 2008 it also won the tender for financial adviser of the project. But over time it has virtually withdrawn its interest and declared that the project is too risky. It also stated publicly that it will not invest in Belene itself anymore.

The bridging loan ran out in November 2008 and the outgoing Bulgarian government counted on the freshly chosen strategic investor RWE to cough up some cash to run the program in 2009. RWE, however, did not like the current risks either and demanded that

the Bulgarian side first secure its 51% participation financially before it was going to make any monetary commitments.

In a hasty move, the Bulgarian socialist party turned towards Russia and asked an earlier offer from Prime Minister Putin for a loan of 3,8 billion Euro to be re-opened. The Russian side is now still mulling over the conditions under which it would be willing to do this, and one of them seems to be a full government guarantee. But this would be against EU state aid legislation.

Nevertheless, bills need to be paid. In a bold move, the Bulgarian government injected in the height of the financial crisis 300 million BGN into the Belene project in the form of an increase of shares by the Bulgarian utility NEK, which resides under the energy-giant Bulgarian Energy Holding (BEH EAD). This money was meant to cover ongoing costs and was transferred in December 2008. Standard and Poor's put NEK on CreditWatch and in July downgraded its rating from "developing" to "negative". Greenpeace and the Bulgarian Green Policy Institute directly filed a complaint to the European Commission, because such a

capital injection is only allowed when it is done in a way that would be similar to what a normal operator on the free market would do. They argue that the Bulgarian State is abusing its position as state to give Belene a financial advantage - an advantage that other operators on the electricity market do not have access to. With that, the capital injection would be illegal state aid and would have to be retracted. The European Commission opened an investigation which is still ongoing.

In the mean time, German energy giant RWE, the strategic investor in Belene, is trying to find a way to participate in the project without hurting its image even further. Its reputation already got severely bugged because of shareholder opposition against the participation in Belene as well as several glitches in its German nuclear power plants. It has become clear that RWE will not accept the project as it was - and there continue to be severe doubts whether it will accept the project at all. To hedge

against financial risks, RWE is currently looking for partners. It is in negotiations with Fortum of Finland, and two unnamed Swedish companies of which one is most probably Vattenfall. It also talks with InterRAO from Russia, complicating the picture of Russian control over the project even further. This would mean that not only the design and construction are done by Russia (Atomstroyexport), the fuel will come from Russia (TVEL), the money might come from Russia, but also operation would happen with Russian participation. This picture raises many eyebrows because the Belene project was always sold to the public with the argument of less energy dependence on Russia.

Environmental NGOs in Finland and Sweden are already gearing up to make possible investors aware of the problems surrounding Belene. In Germany, Belene is becoming increasingly the big blotch on the shirt of RWE and actions are in preparation on the side of environmentalists, but also

RWE customers and shareholders.

Pressure is high on the whole project and all partners seem to try to create an image that things go forward - all waiting for an other one to make the first step out. The question does not seem any longer whether the Belene project will be stopped, but rather who will be courageous enough to pull the plug. Borisov has a unique chance to prevent further financial bleeding of his country into megalomania projects, unless he is hit by the virus himself. RWE has a chance to dump the Belene project as a first step towards making the company more sustainable. Your bets, please!

Source: Jan Haverkamp, Greenpeace energy campaigner, EU Unit Brussels, Belgium.

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REGULATORS RAISE QUESTIONS ON EPR DESIGN

Both the Finnish and UK regulators have raised serious questions about the safety of the EPR reactor design. The regulator concerns come on top of already soaring problems in the EPR's currently under construction in Finland and France. Rejection of design approval of the EPR in the UK would be a devastating blow to the French industry plans for nuclear expansion in Britain.

(691.5967) Greenpeace International - On 2 July, the Finnish regulator STUK (Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority) has asked the Finnish operator TVO (Teollisuuden Voima Oyj) for further clarification of the overall design of automation systems (Instrumentation & Control systems, I&C) for the Olkiluoto-3 reactor. The I&C system, sometimes described as the 'cerebral cortex' of a nuclear reactor, governs computers and systems that monitor and control the reactor's performance.

Already in summer last year, STUK demanded that TVO would revise the architecture of the plant's automation systems, because of safety concerns. Their main point of concern was the mutual independence of automation system components that back each other up. TVO has submitted a revised plan, but so far did not answer STUK's worries. For Jukka Laaksonen, director general of STUK, getting the instrumentation and control right is

absolutely critical to the safety of the plant.

In the beginning of July, the UK Nuclear Installations Inspectorate (NII) published a letter from April 2009, sent to Areva and EDF, the French companies that jointly applied for a 'generic design acceptance' (GDA) for the construction of EPR's in the UK. The NII has concerns similar to STUK's, about the instrumentation and control system of the EPR.

According to the regulators, two independent computer-based systems would have a 'high degree of interconnectivity'. Several automation system components, that are supposed to back each other up, are mutually dependent. This compromises the overall safety of the systems. The NII letter to Areva and EDF also highlighted concerns about the absence of safety display systems or manual controls that would allow the reactor to be shut down, either in the station's control

room or at an emergency remote shutdown station.

STUK has required a hardwired backup system for the I&C, but until now has not been satisfied with the hardwired system Areva has proposed. It requires a more complete hardwired safety system, including more functions, more signals and more measurements. But even that hardwired backup will still rely on software whose reliability may be difficult to demonstrate.

The French nuclear safety authority ASN is currently reviewing the EPR I&C design and expects to publish an opinion in September or October of this year. Flamanville-3 does provide for a hardwired reactor shutdown option, but this is less developed than the system STUK is demanding. ASN apparently doubts the need for a more complex hardwired system. According to ASN, I&C systems built for different operators could differ, to comply with the various regulator's views. However, if there are

differences, "we have to understand why", according to ASN Chairman Lacoste.

The UK Health and Safety Executive, which oversees the NII, warned that the EPR design could be rejected for use in Britain if the concerns regarding the automation system could not be satisfactorily addressed. It is likely that the regulatory concerns will cause the design assessment phase to be seriously delayed. The UK design approval is critical to EDF, who wants to build four EPR reactors in Britain. Last year it spent more than BP 12 billion (14 billion Euro or US\$ 20 billion) acquiring British Energy, the UK nuclear generator, to secure access to suitable sites.

In a reaction, Areva stated that the

company is committed to ensuring the safety of the EPR's and is confident to find a solution that will satisfy UK's specific requirements. The French company blames the Finnish regulator for being slow in approving design documents, and hence being partly responsible for the currently 3-year delay in the Olkiluoto-3 project.

Meanwhile, STUK is still awaiting a report from Areva on the causes of cracking in two of three primary coolant piping hot legs, the most important pipes in the reactor from a safety point of view, that were recently welded in France. STUK wants to know the safety implications of a potentially undiscovered crack. Unlike previous French reactor designs, for the EPR the safety of high-pressure main steam lines relies on so-called break

preclusion, meaning the piping needs to be so robust that a break in the main steam line can be excluded as a design-basis accident.

Sources: "UK regulator raises French nuclear concerns", The Times, 1 July 2009 / "Nuclear dawn delayed in Finland", BBC News, 8 July 2009 / "Finnish, UK regulators seek changes in EPR I&C design", Nucleonics Week, 9 July 2009 / "STUK official 'cautiously optimistic' on Olkiluoto-3 I&C design approval", Nucleonics Week, 21 May 2009

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KRUEMMEL: STARTUP AFTER TWO-YEAR SHUTDOWN; AGAIN INCIDENTS

Hundreds of traffic lights in city of Hamburg in northern Germany, stopped working on July 4 after a power cut caused by an incident at the Kruemmel nuclear power station nearby. Around 1,500 of the 1,800 traffic signals in Germany's second biggest city suddenly blacked out and lights at shopping centres also failed. An incident at a transformer of the Kruemmel power station triggered the blackout, said a spokesman from Swedish firm Vattenfall, which runs the plant. The plant only reopened two weeks earlier after a two-year shut down triggered by a fire.

(691.5967) WISE Amsterdam - A few days after the July 4 incident, on July 9, Vattenfall admitted there were additional problems. Vattenfall said it had also discovered that at least one of the fuelrods inside the reactor was "defective". The defect was not connected to the shutdown of the reactor during the electrical transformer fire on July 4. That incident was the second transformer-related shut down in a week for the 1346 MW BWR. It is unlikely the reactor will be restarted until April or May 2010, according to Vattenfall. The company has decided to buy two new transformers and it will take until spring 2010 to receive and install them.

Vattenfall promised a complete review of the management of the station, saying the short-circuit that triggered the fire in a transformer had the same cause as the transformer fire two years ago. A few days later the plant manager was fired.

The shutdown of Kruemmel has

prompted Environment Minister Sigmar Gabriel to call for the immediate closure of the eight oldest plants. According to the IAEA, construction of Kruemmel started in 1974, with grid-connection in September 1983 and start of commercial operation in March 1984. Gabriel also said that Germany needed to introduce a nationwide authority to monitor the power stations. At present, the plants are monitored by regional authorities.

The previous German government of SPD and Greens introduced in 2000 the phaseout program for the 17 nuclear reactors by 2021. But the conservatives argue that nuclear energy must be kept alive to allow renewable industries to catch up as Germany must meet long-term commitments to cut carbon dioxide emissions. According to the phaseout schedule, three reactors have to be shut in 2010 (Biblis A and B and Neckarwestheim 1), with four more in the following two years. (see Nuclear Monitor 686, 2 April 2009)

Meanwhile, it seems that Vattenfall is again losing a lot of customers. After the 2007 accidents in Kruemmel (and Brunsbuettel, which is still off-line) the company lost already some 250,000 customers in Northern-Germany.

Kruemmel operator Vattenfall unwillingly turned nuclear safety into an important election issue in Germany, although many people say that the nuclear issue is not decisive in the question on which party to vote. On September 5, three weeks before the general-elections, a nationwide anti-nuclear demonstration will take place in Berlin.

Sources: The Local, (Brd), 4 July 2009 / Der Spiegel, 7 July 2009 / Nuclear Engineering International 9 July 2009 / EarthTimes, 9 July 2009

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NOT A WASTELAND: NORTHERN TERRITORY NUCLEAR WASTE DUMP CAMPAIGN GROWING STRONGER

July 15, 2009 will mark four years since the Howard government announced plans for a federal radioactive waste dump in the Northern Territory (NT), Australia. Three Department of Defense sites - Mt Everard, Harts Range and Fishers Ridge - were originally named, with Muckaty later added to the short list after being contentiously nominated by the Northern Land Council.

(691.5968) Beyond Nuclear Initiative - The July 15, 2005, announcement was made with no consultation with Traditional Owners or the NT government. It was a decide-announce-defend approach, typical of the previous Howard federal government. Senior Australian Labor Party (ALP) politicians called legislation facilitating the dump, the Commonwealth Radioactive Waste Management Act (CRWMA), 'sordid', 'draconian' and 'arrogant'.

“ Our land is our life. Once our great grandfathers walked this land. This waste dump will destroy our land and animals. We say no. No to the waste dump. ”

Christine Morton, Muckaty Traditional Owner.

However, despite ALP election promises clearly stating that the party would repeal the Commonwealth Radioactive Waste Management Act, the Rudd federal government has continued to push forward with the plan. Resources Minister Martin Ferguson has not indicated any change in policy, despite ALP national policy on radioactive waste management calling for an 'open, transparent process' that 'allows access to appeal mechanisms'. The current process is vastly different from ALP promises and platform, and far out of step with international standards of consultation. (see Nuclear Monitor 686, April 2, 2009: "*Australian Government poised for announcement on controversial waste dump*")

The UK Committee on Radioactive Waste Management report from July 2006 recommends that "Community involvement in any proposals for the siting of long term radioactive waste facilities should be based on the principle of volunteerism, that is, an expressed willingness to participate".

The report acknowledges: "There is a growing recognition that it is not ethically acceptable for a society to impose a radioactive waste facility on an unwilling community".

In contrast, affected people in the Northern Territory found out about the dump proposal through the media. Pastoralist Barry Utley, who runs Yeltu Park station, surrounding the Fishers Ridge site on all four sides, recalls: "... a friend rang us that night and said, 'Did you happen to get the newspaper'? It mentioned that Fishers Ridge is to be one out of three sites chosen for a nuclear waste dump. The news turned our world upside down."

Traditional Owners, the NT government, national environment and health groups have written time and time again to Minister Ferguson asking when the dump laws will be scrapped and the site nominations revoked. The answers received are literally cut and pasted from one reply to the next. The letters say the Minister "will not take piecemeal steps or decisions on radioactive waste management," which has involved taking no decisions and keeping a closed door on this issue for the past 18 months.

Marlene Bennett, a Traditional Owner from the Muckaty Land Trust, one of the targeted sites, summed it up giving evidence at a Senate Inquiry last year: "I would just like to question why Martin Ferguson is sitting on this issue like a hen trying to hatch an egg".

While the letters from Ferguson state that "no decisions will be taken without appropriate stakeholder consultation," he was quoted on ABC on April 30 saying, "I'm not going to go around this country wasting taxpayers dollars having consultations about a potential site that has not been determined." He said that there would be proper consultation after a recommendation

for an 'appropriate site' had been made.

With ALP policy and promises decaying significantly faster than radioactive waste, its no wonder communities are worried that the NT sites will still be targeted. More and more people are starting to speak out and demand action. Traditional Owners and community members from the targeted sites continue to travel around the country, speaking at public meetings and to media, to raise the national profile of the dump campaign.

A letter signed by 58 Traditional Owners of the Muckaty Land Trust was recently sent to Minister Ferguson. The letter reaffirmed opposition to the proposal: "We want you to know that Traditional Owners are waiting to show you that the country means something to them. That is why we want you to come along and to see because we don't want that rubbish dump to be here in Muckaty area".

There has been increasing support from trade unions, which is crucial to building pressure on the government in the lead up to the ALP National Conference at the end of July. On June 4, the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) Congress voted to support NT communities and workers fighting the proposed dump. The motion, which passed uncontested, demanded repeal of the Commonwealth Radioactive Waste Management Act, a scrapping of all site nominations, called for a public inquiry into radioactive waste management and, crucially, vowed to support Traditional Owners and trade unionists refusing to cooperate with implementation of the current dump policy.

Groundwork for this ACTU resolution began in April, when Muckaty Traditional Owners Dianne Stokes,

Mark Lane and Mark Chungaloo spoke at a public meeting in Wollongong, hosted by the Illawarra Aboriginal Land Council. At the meeting, veteran union activist Fred Moore explained the breadth of support for Gurindji people during the Wave Hill station walk off in the late 1960's, recalling how the Seaman's Union had refused to load cattle from NT Stations in solidarity with the striking workers. The potential for similar action was raised by Maritime Union of Australia Illawarra secretary Garry Keane, who proposed that workers refuse to unload radioactive waste returning to Australia if earmarked for any of the Northern Territory sites.

The secretive transport and export of radioactive materials through Wollongong and out of Port Kembla only weeks earlier was strongly condemned by the local community. Everyone spoke about building alliances with people in the NT to collectively oppose government

support for the nuclear industry.

South Coast Labor Council Secretary Arthur Rorris said: "It disappoints me knowing, and I think its shameful, that the lands of the first Australians, the Traditional Owners, are treated in such a way that they are regarded as a waste dump... What was shown with the Lucas Heights [radioactive transport] is that the people of this region still support the nuclear free policy, it is something that the union movement will not change ... it's not going to change."

On July 15 targeted communities in the Territory will be calling on Prime Minister Kevin Rudd to immediately drop the waste dump plan and to remove Martin Ferguson from the radioactive waste portfolio. The campaign opposing the national radioactive waste dump proposed for South Australia was a six-year battle, but was won through community resilience and perseverance. People

from targeted areas, living along potential transport routes and supporters nationally and internationally must maintain unwavering and vocal opposition to the Northern Territory dump plan to achieve the same result. **Source and contact:** Natalie Wasley.

“ This land is not empty - people live right nearby. We hunt and collect bush tucker here and I am the custodian of a sacred site within the boundaries of the defence land. We don't want this poison here. ”

Steven McCormack, Traditional Owner living 4km from Mt Everard

Natalie is a campaigner with the Arid Lands Environment Centre and the Beyond Nuclear Initiative. Email: natwasley@alec.org.au Web: <http://beyondnuclearinitiative.wordpress.com>

BELGIAN NUCLEAR PHASE-OUT LAW COUPLED WITH WINDFALL PROFIT TAX

Federal prime minister Van Rompuy contemplates filling the budget deficit with a tax on the depreciated nuclear power plants. The Belgian nuclear energy production indeed delivers a profit of at least 1 billion Euro a year to Electrabel (GdF/Suez). They have been depreciated quicker in the regulated market, at the expense of the Belgian consumer. Therefore, it is more than legitimate to try to recuperate this windfall profit, something that the environmental movement, the trade unions and the consumer's organizations, have been advocating for over a year now. There is however no reason at all to couple this windfall profit tax with a lifetime extension of the nuclear power plants.

(691.5969) Bond Beter Leefmilieu - The windfall profit tax is a compensation for the faster depreciation of the power plants. It increased the Belgian power prices, and therefore the Belgian consumer has a right to compensation, now that the markets have been deregulated. Electrabel does not need to get something in return. To the contrary, if in return for the tax, the power plant's lifetime would be extended, this would mean an extra bonus for Electrabel. They would thus be able to maintain their domination over the Belgian energy market with their depreciated power plants.

And of course there is no logic to the train of thought of the prime minister,

as he is looking for a solution to the budget deficit today, with a fix that would only enter into force as of 2015, the date the first reactors should shut down.

The energy minister, Paul Magnette, ordered a team of Belgian and international experts to advise him on the ideal energy mix for Belgium. The so-called GEMIX-commission produced their draft report on July 2. The purpose of the report is to help decide the Belgian government what to do with the nuclear power plants.

The primary advice of the commission is to focus much more on energy efficiency. They also advocate strongly in favor of a windfall profit tax on the

nuclear power plants. The commission puts a lot of emphasis on the sub-ideal functioning of the Belgian power market. And of course they discuss at length the possibilities for lifetime extension of the nuclear power plants. The report considers all options as still open, including the maintenance of the phase out as planned. It does however not consider the building of a new nuclear power station as a realistic option at this point, due to uncertainties over the economics and technical aspects of the new generations of nuclear power plants.

The argumentation in connection with the lifetime extension is very weak, however. Notably the feasibility and financial aspects of the extension is

very poorly documented, and omits key aspects. The report now enters a phase of public consultation.

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IN BRIEF

Spain: Zapatero's compromise. As mentioned in issue 690 of the Nuclear Monitor, Spain's Socialist government, had to take a decision before July 5, on the future of Santa María de Garona, the country's oldest nuclear plant, which license expires in 2011. Spain's Nuclear Safety Board (CSN) recommended a new 10-year license. Prime Minister Zapatero, promised in his election campaign to start a phase-out of nuclear energy. So he had to take a clear stand. It became more and more clear that he had not the guts to close the 38-year old plant, which provides 1.3 percent of Spain's electricity, and was looking for a compromise. He decided to grant Garona a new license, but not for a 10 year period, but only for two years, so until 2013. Catch is that 2013 is after the next general elections. No one is pleased with this decision. The conservative Popular Party said it would overturn the government's decision if it wins the 2012 general elections. Environmental organizations and parties to the left - vital to Zapatero's governing coalition in Parliament - attacked the decision to postpone the closure of Garona and questioned the prime minister's credibility and integrity.

Christian Science Monitor, 5 July 2009

IAEA: Board Formally Appoints Yukiya Amano as Director General. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors officially appointed Ambassador Mr. Yukiya Amano of Japan as the next Director General. Amano addressed the Board of Governors on July 3, following his successful bid to become the IAEA's next Director General later this year. "I will dedicate my efforts to the acceleration and enlargement of the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world," he said.

The IAEA Director General is appointed by the Board of Governors with the approval of the General Conference for a term of four years. The General Conference meets in Vienna starting 14 September 2009. Ambassador Amano's term as Director General would begin 1 December 2009.

Ambassador Amano, 62, is the Permanent Representative and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to International Organizations in Vienna, and Governor on the IAEA Board of Governors. Amano is seen as the choice of the western industrialized countries. According to the IAEA he has "extensive experience in disarmament, non-proliferation and nuclear energy policy and has been involved in the negotiation of major international instruments." He has held senior positions in the Japanese Foreign Ministry, notably as Director of the Science Division, Director of the Nuclear Energy Division and Deputy Director General for Arms Control and Scientific Affairs.

IAEA Staff Report, 3 July 2009

USA: no domestic commercial reprocessing; Fatal blow to GNEP? In a notice published in the *Federal Register*, the Department of Energy (DoE) said that it had decided to cancel the GNEP (Global Nuclear Energy Partnership) programmatic environmental impact statement (PEIS) because it is no longer pursuing domestic commercial reprocessing, which was the primary focus of the prior administration's domestic GNEP program. Its decision follows a change in government policy on commercial reprocessing. Domestically, the GNEP program would promote technologies that support "economic, sustained production of nuclear-generated electricity, while reducing the impacts associated with used nuclear fuel disposal and reducing proliferation risks". As yet, DoE has no specific proposed actions for the international component of the GNEP program. Rather, the USA, through the GNEP program, is considering various initiatives to work cooperatively with other countries. So far, 25 countries have joined the GNEP partnership.

Although the future of GNEP looks uncertain, with its budget having been cut to zero, the DoE will continue to study proliferation-resistant fuel cycles and waste management strategies. The Omnibus Appropriations Act of 2009 provides \$145 million (105 million Euro) for such research and development (R&D). As described in the President Obama's 2010 budget request, the DoE's fuel cycle R&D's focus is on "long-term, science-based R&D of technologies with the potential to produce beneficial changes to the manner in which the nuclear fuel cycle and nuclear waste is managed." One outlet for this money is likely to be the Generation IV International Forum, which includes a research program on fast-breeder reactors, which in turn require reprocessing plants.

World Nuclear News, 29 June 2009 / Nuclear Engineering International, 1 July 2009

Greenland: continuation of the zero-tolerance policy towards uranium extraction. The government of Greenland has stated that the country's stance on uranium mining remains clear and unchanged. Following a request from opposition party Atassut, Premier Kuupik Kleist ruled out opening up the possibility of broadening the policy towards the extraction of uranium as a by-product. The government pointed out that whilst it acknowledged the natural presence of uranium in Greenland, the 30-year-old policy of banning mineral extraction from areas with a high level of uranium content would continue to be disallowed. The issue emerged with the recent rejection of a mining proposal for Kvane Mountain, where the uranium content is so high that it is believed to be a potential risk to the residents of the nearby town of Narsaq, western Greenland. However,

despite the zero-tolerance policy, areas where mining would involve extraction of uranium as a by-product within certain defined limitations would be allowed, according to Premier Kuupik Kleist.

Sermitsiaq, 24 June 2009

Sweden: Ringhals under close scrutiny. The Swedish Radiation Safety Authority (SSM) has placed the Ringhals nuclear plant, in the southwest of Sweden, under special supervision after a series (some sources say 60) of incidents, which could endanger the security at the nuclear plant. According to reports, the first incident occurred late in 2008 and involved the failure of an automatic safety system to switch on. The second, at the start of 2009, involved faulty control rods that are designed to regulate nuclear activity. The nuclear watchdog also cited weaknesses in how officials at the nuclear plant (operated by Vattenfall) carried out routines and how instructions were adhered to.

Ringhals' four reactors produce up to one-fifth of Sweden's electricity. It is not the first time that the SSM has placed a Swedish plant under special supervision. In July 2006, officials put the Forsmark nuclear plant under supervision after the shutdown of one of its reactors.

Deutsche Welle, 9 July 2009 / EarthTimes.org, 9 July 2009

NSG Fail to Adopt Standards for Technology Trade. The 46-member Nuclear Suppliers Group failed in its June meeting to adopt stricter rules governing the trade of technologies that can support nuclear-weapon development. According to *Arms Control Today*, NSG-member states had sought to establish specific standards for potential purchasers of equipment or technology that could be used to enrich uranium or reprocess spent reactor fuel. Standards proposed by the U.S. and Canada would address whether a potential state recipient of sensitive nuclear equipment has signed the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and whether it has accepted the Additional Protocol to its safeguards agreement with the IAEA, according to sources familiar with the terms. The Additional Protocol gives U.N. inspectors access to more information about a signatory state's nuclear facilities and enables them to conduct snap inspections of the sites.

But concerns about the proposed criteria have been raised by other NSG members, including Turkey, Brazil, South Korea and South Africa, sources indicated. The proposed standards also include "subjective" criteria, including whether the sale could harm regional stability. Turkey has expressed concern that its nuclear purchases might be restricted if were deemed under the rules to be part of the volatile Middle East.

Arms Control Today, July/August 2009

Sellafield (U.K.): 50 year leak stopped. For about 50 years radioactive liquid has been leaking from a waste tank at Sellafield - but in June the operators, Nuclear Management Partners, said they had finally managed to solve the problem. The leak was from one of four huge effluent tanks which held the waste before it was discharged into the Irish Sea. The leak from a crack in the concrete wall was first noticed in the 1970s and has contaminated not only a large area of ground but has resulted in contamination of the Sellafield beach. NMP said they had managed to empty 95 per cent of the radioactive sludge from the tank and it will now be treated as intermediate level waste. A spokesman said the tank had been a known environmental risk and its emptying was a great achievement.

N-Base Briefing 618, 24 June 2009

France imports power. France has been forced to import electricity from the UK this summer because of problems with its nuclear reactors. Fourteen of France's reactors use river water for cooling, rather than seawater, and there are regulatory limited on the temperature of water than can be discharged back into rivers.

Also the recent summer heat wave increased the river water temperature meaning it could not reduce the heat of reactor casings. The problems forced state-owned EDF to shutdown reactors. The company has encountered similar problems in the past.

Times (UK), 7 July 2009

USEC: "no loan guarantee; no enrichment plant". Usec could halt construction of its American Centrifuge Plant if the US Department of Energy (DOE) doesn't give it a conditional commitment for a loan guarantee by early August. In a statement Philip Sewell, vice president of American Centrifuge and Russian HEU said a DoE decision is expected by early August. "As we have stated in the past, a DOE loan guarantee is our path forward for financing the American Centrifuge Plant. Therefore, we are making contingency plans for project demobilization should we not receive a conditional commitment or should a decision on a conditional commitment be further delayed, Sewell said. Demobilization, which would involve the partial or full halt of ACP activities and plant construction, could begin in August. So far Usec has invested \$1.5 billion in the enrichment plant under construction in Piketon, Ohio. In February, due to the lack of certainty on DoE funding the company initiated cash conservation measures and delayed the ramp-up in hiring. It says it needs a loan guarantee to secure a substantial portion of the remaining financing needed to complete the project.

Nuclear Engineering International, 7 July 2009

Italian Senate passed pro-nuclear law. On July 9, after four readings in the upper house since November last year, the Italian Senate passed a bill which will pave the way for the return of nuclear power. The package, which also greenlights class action suits and the privatisation of state railways, was passed with an almost unanimous vote after the opposition

Democratic Party and Italy of Values left the Senate in the hope that the legal minimum of votes required would not be reached. Under the new law, the government will have six months to choose sites for new nuclear energy plants, define the criteria for the storage of radioactive waste and work out compensatory measures for people who will be affected by the plants. A nuclear security agency will also be set up, although the actual building of the plants is expected to take years. Industry Minister Claudio Scajola said earlier this year that Italy would begin to build its first new generation nuclear power plant by 2013 and start producing energy by 2018. Italy abandoned nuclear energy after a 1987 referendum, one year after the Chernobyl accident.

Opposition politicians meanwhile slammed the new law. Roberto Della Seta, environmental pointman for the Democratic Party, said the cost of building four nuclear plants would be "20-25 billion euros", while they would contribute less than 5% to the country's energy consumption. "This law ignores all the real problems that stand in the way of Italy having a renewable and efficient energy policy, such as closing the gap with other major European countries on renewable sources and promoting research into new technology," he said.

ANSA, 9 July 2009

EU ministers rubber stamp weak nuclear safety rules. On June 25, environment ministers meeting in Luxembourg rubber-stamped a Euratom Directive on Nuclear Safety. The law was meant to improve nuclear safety in Europe by setting EU-wide standards. However, the directive mainly refers to weak principles from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which all EU countries are already bound to as signatories of the Convention on Nuclear Safety. Attempts to improve the independence of nuclear regulators have also been watered down. There is no provision in the directive to guarantee the accountability of nuclear regulators.

"There is nothing new in this law to improve nuclear safety in Europe. We are still faced with a nuclear industry that sees safety as an obstacle, rather than a paramount necessity," said Jan Haverkamp, EU nuclear energy expert for Greenpeace. Greenpeace calls on the EU to base its safety rules on the principles of best available technology and best regulatory practice.

Greenpeace Press release, 25 June 2009

Belgium bans investments in depleted uranium weapons. On July 2, the Belgian Parliament unanimously approved a law forbidding investments in depleted uranium weapons. Belgium is now the first country to prevent the flow of money to producers of uranium weapons. This law complements the country's ban on their manufacture, testing, use, sale and stockpiling which came into force on June 21st last. The use of depleted uranium armour piercing munitions during combat causes the release of chemically toxic and radioactive particles which represent a long term hazard for the environment as well as for human health.

Senator Philippe Mahoux submitted the resolution in the Belgian Senate, where it was unanimously approved on the 2nd of April 2009. Approval in the Chamber of Representatives followed on the 2nd of July. The law forbids banks and investment funds operating on the Belgian market from offering credit to producers of armor and munitions that contain depleted uranium. The purchase of shares and bonds issued by these companies is also prohibited. This law implicates that financial institutions in Belgium must bring their investments in large weapon producers such as Alliant Techsystems (US), BAE Systems (UK) and General Dynamics (US) to an end. Only investments made via index funds, and the financing of projects of these companies that are clearly unrelated to cluster munitions will be allowed. The law also obliges the government to draw up a "black list" of uranium weapon producers.

Press Release, 3 July 2009, Belgian Coalition 'Stop Uranium Weapons!'

India: National Alliance of Anti-nuclear Movements (NAAM) launched. More than one hundred organizations, peoples' movements and concerned citizens from across the country came together for a National Convention on "The Politics of Nuclear Energy and Resistance" on June 4-6, 2009 at Kanyakumari. They discussed all the different aspects of nuclear power generation and weapons production, the various stages of nuclearization from Uranium mining till waste management, and the commissions and the omissions of the government of India and the Department of Atomic Energy during the three-day-long convention.

Most importantly, nuclearism is a political ideology that cannot stomach any transparency, accountability or popular participation. It snubs dissent, denounces opponents and creates a political climate of fear and retribution. With the India-US nuclear deal, and the deals with Russia and France and likely private participation in nuclear energy generation, the situation is going to get out of hand in our country. The combination of profiteering companies, secretive state apparatuses and repressive nuclear department will be ruthless and this nexus of capitalism, statism and nuclearism does not augur well for the country. These forces gaining an upper hand in our national polity will mean a death knell for the country's democracy, openness, and prospects for sustainable development.

In order to mobilize the Indian citizens against this growing nuclearization, to resist the nuclearization of the country, and to protect our people from nuclear threats and the environment from nuclear waste and radiation, an umbrella organization (tentatively named as the National Alliance of Anti-nuclear Movements) has been founded with eight committees on Documentation, Economic Analysis, Legal, Mass Media, International Liaison, Translation, Health, and Direct Action. Contact for more info: Dr. S. P. Udayakumar, spudayakumar@gmail.com

NAAM Press release, 7 June 2009

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.

Receiving the WISE/NIRS Nuclear Monitor

US and Canada based readers should contact NIRS for details of how to receive the Nuclear Monitor (address see page 11). Others receive the Nuclear Monitor through WISE Amsterdam.

For individuals and NGOs we ask a minimum annual donation of 100 Euros (50 Euros for the email version). Institutions and industry should contact us for details of subscription prices.

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Nuclear Monitor needs more contributors

The Nuclear Monitor exists for more than three decades already. In 1978 the first issue was produced, although it was called "The WISE News Communiqué" at that time.

Since 1978 many things have changed, but to produce 20 issues of the magazine annually is still a struggle. And equally important for that matter. Our readers (you) value both quality and quantity.

The Nuclear Monitor is produced by a very small group of people. We do not pay for articles being written for us, we never did and it's hard to imagine we ever will. But that small group is looking for some help.

In short: we are looking for people, especially in Asia and Africa, but also in Australia and the America's, who are willing to write about local and regional developments concerning (anti-) nuclear issues.

We think that currently the content of the magazine leans too much on West-European sources and contributors. To have a more balanced and global perspective, we need people with knowledge of, and access to, non-English and/or non-German sources and background. There are so many things we are not aware of, even in this digital highway day and age. It is simply not enough to read all the wires from the big agencies, we want the stories from the ground, the grassroots fighting the nuclear industry, the reports of actions and campaigns, the incidents and accidents that not make it to the mainstream media, the analysis no-one wants to make because they are 'too difficult'

So, if you want to contribute - be it regularly or sporadic- to the Nuclear Monitor, or want to become more involved in the (production) of the magazine please contact WISE-Amsterdam at wiseamster@antenna.nl

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