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No Nukes Asia Forum

IN THIS ISSUE

Although the Japanese government is confident that Japan's plutonium policy does not pose any threat, our Asian neighbors think otherwise. Along with Japanese involvement in PKO in Cambodia, they perceive it as a revival of Japanese militarism in Asia. Delegates from 8 countries from the Asian region (Korea, Taiwan, Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, India, and Japan) gathered in Tokyo, Nagoya and Osaka from the end of June to the beginning of July, for a "No

Nukes Asia Forum" to discuss the issue.

The **Korean** delegates maintained that, while the threat to Korea of nuclear weapons had declined with the end of the Cold War, the threat of the "peaceful use of nuclear energy" was, ironically, on the increase. They stressed the threat of Japanese imperialism carried out during World War II and pointed out that the same thing is going on today in Cambodia, this time under the UN flag.

Taiwan has 6 nuclear reactors generating 40% of the country's electricity output. At present the anti-nuclear movement is engaged in a major struggle against the government's plan for a 4th plant. People have been vigorously opposing nuclear power plants ever since the Chernobyl disaster, with mass demonstrations of 6,000 to 20,000 people. The Yami people of Orchid Island, where a waste dumping site was set up 11 years ago, have also put up a tough and relentless fight against the facility.

The **Philippines'** sole nuclear power plant in Bataan was almost completed in 1985, but has been mothballed by the Aquino government, and the present Ramos government has proposed to convert it into a non-nuclear power plant. On the other hand, however, he has proposed building new nuclear power plants elsewhere.

The people of the Philippines, having learned from their experience of stopping operation of the Bataan plant for 20 years, remain committed to keeping the Philippines nuclear free.

The **Indonesian** government is currently planning to build a nuclear plant at the foot of Muria Mountain in Central Java, and has already begun to carry out infrastructure projects to accommodate it. Feasibility studies are being carried out by New Japan Engineering Consultant Inc. (NEWJEC), a subsidiary of Kansai Electric Company, suggesting the possibility that Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Ltd. will be nominated contractor for the plant. Indonesian anti-nuclear groups are calling for international solidarity in their efforts to stop the government's nuclear program.

Thailand has no nuclear power plants as yet, but the government has announced its hope of having 6 nuclear reactors on line between the years 2006 and 2014. The Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT) claims there will be a great increase in electricity demand, and it needs to build nuclear plants in order to prevent the environmental destruction caused by large dam projects. But it is mainly industry, business, and the urban elites who will benefit from the increased generating capacity, whereas the costs of generating electricity, especially nuclear electricity, will be paid by local and native people. This is a case of the people and

their natural environment subsidizing the private profits of industry and the political dominance of the State.

There was a rumor that a nuclear power plant would be built in **Malaysia**, but the government has denied that there are any concrete plans at the moment. However, the significant nuclear issue in Malaysia today is that of radioactive waste at Bukit Merah. Asian Rare Earth, a joint venture company with Mitsubishi, extracts rare earth metals from monazite for export to Japan. The process is considered too hazardous to be based in Japan, hence it has been transferred to Malaysia. Radiation is emitted in the production process, and radioactive waste has been dumped indiscriminately. This has caused serious health problems including some cases of leukemia and other radiation induced diseases. A supreme court ruling is soon to be handed down.

India's nuclear power program began one year after Independence, and the country exploded its first atomic bomb, developed through the 'peaceful' use of nuclear energy, in 1974. There are currently nine nuclear power plants in operation. The Indian government spends nearly half its research and development budget on nuclear and allied research, thus starving other crucial areas like health care and renewable energy. There have been a number of major anti-nuclear movements, and in several cases they have forced the government to abandon plans. Resistance today is still minimal, but the movement has registered significant growth during the past decade.

The second day was spent discussing how to formulate a network throughout Asia to exchange information. Many people expressed their hopes of using a computer network, establishing a headquarters somewhere, and conducting all-Asia campaigns against the Japanese plutonium program, etc. The discussion is to be continued, with the second Forum likely to be held either in Korea or Taiwan.

The Forum ended with the adoption of a Statement, which was delivered to the Science & Technology Agency the following day. The Statement includes the following paragraphs:

*** We are alarmed that the policy to promote the utilization of plutonium by Japan runs against the world trend, contributes to nuclear proliferation, and heightens existing tensions among Asian countries. It is a great threat to the people of Asia as well as the whole world.**

*** To remove the threat of nuclear weapons from the Korean peninsula, we demand that the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty be indiscriminately applied to all nations including nuclear weapons states, and that North and South Korea be allowed to mutually inspect their nuclear capabilities. (In this regard, Japan's plutonium policy will heighten military tensions in the Korean Peninsula.)**

*** We strongly oppose the nuclear development policy of the governments and nuclear industries of Asia, especially Japan, and in particular the proposals to export nuclear power plants to Indonesia, Taiwan, China, and Thailand. We demand that these policies be changed.**

*** We strongly protest the actions of the Japanese company (Mitsubishi Kasei/Asian Rare Earth) which has carelessly disposed of radioactive waste in Malaysia, causing health damage to the local residents. We demand that ARE and Mitsubishi Kasei admit their culpability, provide compensation to the victims, restore the local environment, and withdraw their court appeal.**

*** At this No Nukes Asia Forum we resolve to further strengthen grassroots citizens' solidarity to prevent nuclear weapons development, radioactive materials mining, and other nuclear related activities in the Asian region, and to cooperate to phase out all nuclear power generation as soon as possible.**

June 27, 1993
Tokyo, Japan

G7 Fails to Declare Strong Non-Proliferation Stand

Japan Wants to Preserve Nuclear Option

Contrary to general expectations the Group of Seven countries failed, in their summit talk "political declaration" issued on July 8 in Tokyo, to make a clear commitment to extend the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) indefinitely. The declaration merely "reiterates the objectives of universal adherence" to the NPT, the Treaty's indefinite extension in 1995, and nuclear arms reduction.

The cause of this failure was Japan's reluctance to commit itself. According to the press, the US and other G7 countries have proposed making the treaty permanent when the signatory nations discuss its extension in 1995. But the Japanese government, citing the potential nuclear threat of North Korea, has failed to agree with the other members over the issue of permanent extension.

Obviously the government is split over the issue, with some people inside the government and ruling Liberal Democratic Party thinking Japan should preserve a nuclear option and not commit itself to a non-nuclear security policy by agreeing to the indefinite extension of the NPT. The government's indecision at the G7 talks shows that this kind of hard-line opinion in favor of the nuclear option is gaining ground inside the government although it is not a majority view as yet.

CNIC Protests Against Government

This new policy trend towards retention of the nuclear option is extremely dangerous, especially when considered together with Japan's ambitious plutonium utilization policy. On July 8 we, CNIC, held a seminar in Tokyo together with Gensuikin (Japan Congress against A- and H-Bombs) to brief the press on our basic attitude to the NPT extension. On July 9, we issued a press release protesting the weakness of the G7 political declaration's non-proliferation stand and urging the G7 countries to take immediate steps to strengthen the NPT regime.

As the excerpt from our press release shows (see column), we think that the current NPT is flawed and inadequate. These defects should be removed in 1995 to establish a strengthened NPT regime as a vital step toward complete denuclearization.

We appeal to the world's citizens' movements and NGOs to join hands in striving for an enhanced NPT regime after 1995, which will serve as a vital step towards realizing a world free of the threat of proliferation. Our tentative proposals for revision of the NPT are given in the press release. We welcome readers' comments.

Press Release, July 9 1993

We Strongly Oppose the G7 Summit's Declaration on NPT

The current NPT is discriminatory in that it strictly controls the nuclear weapons capability of the non-nuclear states, while setting no definite goal for the nuclear states to abolish their own nuclear weapons. In order to create a truly nuclear-free world, this inequality in the present NPT should be removed by setting a clear date

and procedure for the nuclear states to abandon their nuclear weapons. This is the only way to encourage the present non-NPT states to sign the Treaty.

The G7 declaration says nothing about revising the current NPT in this direction. The G7 countries were not able even to declare an indefinite extension of the current treaty because of opposition from the Japanese government which has insisted on retaining the option to build nuclear weapons in view of a "North Korean Threat".

This runs totally counter to post-cold war world trends. Japan, which suffered the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings, should take the lead in creating a nuclear-free world and contribute to the realization of the following goals:

* **Whether for military or civil use, all production of nuclear weapons materials including highly enriched uranium and plutonium should be prohibited.**
* **A comprehensive test ban treaty should be concluded by all nuclear states.**
* **Plutonium from dismantled nuclear warheads and civil reprocessing should be controlled internationally and eventually be treated as high level waste.**
* **The Japanese government should abandon its plutonium utilization program and act in concert with international non-proliferation efforts.**
* **The G7 countries should aid Russia and the East European Countries technically and financially to decommission dangerous nuclear reactors and halt the dumping of nuclear waste at sea.**

Muto Avers Japan Must have "Will"

Alarmed by the level of international concern over the attitude of Japanese government at the G7 talks, Foreign Minister Kabun Muto on July 28 reassured the ministerial meeting of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) in Singapore that "Japan should continue to make efforts to move in the direction of an indefinite extension of the Treaty."

Muto's statement was taken as clear support for the indefinite extension of NPT after 1995 and was quickly hailed by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher. Nevertheless, according to the Nihon Keizai Simbun, Muto said in a news conference held after the three-day ASEAN ministerial meeting,

"If North Korea develops nuclear weapons and that becomes a threat to Japan, first there is the nuclear umbrella of the United States upon which we can rely. But if it comes to the crunch, possessing the will that we can build nuclear weapons is important."

This statement is expected to arouse worldwide concern anew. Already, the International Herald Tribune reported Muto's comment in the July 30 issue under the title: Japan Rattles Nuclear Saber at North Korea.

According to a report in the July 30 issue of the Japan Times, Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa said he had no idea that Muto would indicate Japan's readiness to support an indefinite extension of NPT at the ASEAN conference. Miyazawa told the reporters he planned to question Muto about the remarks when he returned to Tokyo.

These latest developments indicate that there has been a confrontation over the issue of indefinite extension of NPT inside the outgoing Miyazawa cabinet. The attitude of the new Hosokawa coalition administration toward the NPT extension remains to be seen.

Monju Delayed Again Because of Fuel Fabrication Troubles

Initial criticality for the fast breeder prototype reactor Monju (280MW), built in Fukui Prefecture, Tsuruga City by the Power Reactor & Nuclear Fuel Development Corp. (PNC), has apparently been postponed yet again, to six months after the scheduled date of October 1993. The fuel to be loaded into the reactor is being produced by the PNC's Plutonium Development Laboratory in Tokai-Mura, Ibaraki Prefecture, but in early June an accident shut down the manufacturing facility, which has only one line.

On the night of June 6, a plutonium-uranium mixed oxide pellet fell off one of the trays in the sintering furnace that heat-hardens the pellets, causing the line to stop automatically. The operators merely removed this pellet and resumed line operation, but they did not notice that the trays, which had been moving in single file through the furnace, had been pushed from behind, thereby forcing the lined-up trays to buckle upward so they were rubbing against the furnace ceiling. Thus when operation was resumed, the trays as they moved broke the heating element wires strung inside the furnace, then jammed at the furnace exit where the ceiling is lower. This again stopped the line in the predawn hours of June 7. Repairs will mean a 6-month delay in completion of fuel manufacture, which was originally scheduled for late August, and this will also delay Monju's initial criticality.

This is the third time Monju's initial criticality has been delayed in just one year, and even if this recent accident had not happened, there were doubts about the October plan for initial criticality. 198 plutonium fuel assemblies will be loaded into Monju, of which only 137 have been delivered to the reactor site, indicating that fuel delivery is far behind schedule. The reason for this delay is that many of the manufactured pellets have been found to be defective. Manufacture began with the fuel to be loaded into the inner core, but as much as 70 percent was rejected in inspections. The fuel pellets are made by baking plutonium-uranium mixed oxide powder into a pumice-like, porous form in which a foaming agent produces bubbles affording a place to hold the radioactive gas produced when the fuel is burned. These bubbles are quite difficult to produce.

Changing the foaming agent managed to somehow increase the rate of pellets that passed muster, but when fuel manufacture was shifted to that for the outer core, whose pellets contain more plutonium, the number of rejects again increased. Then came the recent accident, just when PNC had acknowledged the delay in fuel production. PNC explained it by saying, "Fuel manufacturing technology has not yet attained a stable level."

The high rate of defective pellets emerging from the fuel manufacturing process makes for increased uncertainty in quantitatively keeping track of plutonium because the many defective pellets account for a large amount of plutonium. PNC says that the plutonium in these defective pellets will be used again in the manufacture of pellets, but detailed information on this matter is totally unavailable.

THORP's Future in the Hands of the Japanese?

- Opinion Ad Put In The Independent -

The decision on whether to start operation of Thorp, the new reprocessing plant in Sellafield, UK, has been postponed again until at least November. Although the UK House of Commons voted by a majority to approve the plant's operation on June 28, the Secretary of State for the Environment and the Minister of Agriculture insisted on further investigation of the project and decided to have a second round of public consultations for a period of 10 weeks after the government gives its official go-ahead at the end of July.

Two weeks before this, Japanese Citizens Concerned about Plutonium placed a full page opinion ad in The Independent on June 15, and the House Magazine on June 14. It was titled, "Why Start Thorp If Japan Has No Use For It Anymore?," and explained how the Japanese plutonium policy, especially fuel fabrication for Monju, has been set back and that the demand for plutonium is fading away. The ad also pointed out that since there is no way all the plutonium to be extracted at Thorp can be consumed, the plutonium, as well as the huge volume of waste, may end up being stockpiled in UK if Thorp starts operation.

In order to fully explain the contents of the ad to a wider public, Aileen Mioko Smith of the Plutonium Action Network Kyoto, Ryutaro Abe from the Consumers Union of Japan, and myself went to London and attended a briefing forum held by MP LLew Smith of the Labour Party for members of Parliament and the media. The Japanese delegates spoke on the plutonium demand & supply situation of Japan, consumer opposition to Japan's plutonium policy, the far higher discharge standards at Sellafield compared to the planned Rokkasho Reprocessing Plant in Aomori, the waste facilities currently planned, and the Japanese government's standpoint on the waste issue.

6 BNFL executives, along with an MP from Cumbria, attended the briefing and contradicted our claims by immediately issuing a press release asserting that "Japanese customers have thrown their full weight of support behind the Company's 1.85 billion pounds Thorp at Sellafield in West Cumbria."

A few days later, a letter written by the general manager of the Federation of Electric Power Companies of Japan appeared in several newspapers, also stating that the Japanese utilities support Thorp.

Then, a week later, a full page ad by the 10 utility companies of Japan appeared in 4 major UK newspapers, stating that our ad was "misleading" and "has to be refuted before they do more damage. Or cause more delay." They did not, in fact, refute our ad but only repeated the hackneyed justification of the Japanese energy policy, claiming that the use of plutonium as an energy source was inevitable.

The mere fact that the press has aired both the arguments of the Japanese citizens and the Japanese utilities within a week or so has brought it to the attention of the British public that Thorp is not only a UK issue but a Japanese issue as well.

The Japanese people have much to do during the public consultation period, since Japan is the biggest foreign investor and customer, and will have the greatest impact on the British environment, as well as its economy, once Thorp starts operation.

Yurika AYUKAWA

Radioactive Contaminated Buildings in Taiwan

It has been revealed that, over the past ten years, radioactively contaminated reinforced steel has been used in major buildings in Taipei, capital of Taiwan.

It all began in March 1983, when the Taiwan Power Company (TPC) purchased 2 tons of 8# steel as construction material. This steel was discovered to be radioactive. An AEC (Atomic Energy Council) investigation found that the steel was contaminated with Cobalt 60 giving off 7 mrem/hr. of radioactivity. The AEC traced the source of the contamination to a steel plant and learned that the same steel had also been sold to the China Bank for their housing project. The 5-story building under construction was found to contain steel on the 4th and 5th floors that was contaminated with Co 60 giving off an average 0.1-0.5 mrem/hr. and a maximum 0.65 mrem/hr. of radioactivity. The 3rd, 4th, and the 5th floors were demolished and 29.2 tons of contaminated steel, measuring 1.284 μCi/kg was scrapped.

In Taiwan, 100% steel products are made from imported steel scrap which is melted down in Taiwan. The AEC, the construction company, and the steel plant agreed not to disclose the matter and the AEC did not respond to this incident in any other way.

In April 1985, the AEC kept another incident from the public, and even from the people directly concerned. One day a dentist was moving his clinic to the 2nd floor of the new Min Seng building in Long Chung Rd, Taipei. When he moved his X-ray machine, AEC staff discovered that something was "wrong" with the machine. It showed that the wall on one side gave a Co 60 reading of 13 mrem/hr. while the opposite wall gave a reading of 28 mrem/-hr. Again the AEC decided not to inform the dentist or the public. All they did was tell the dentist to add 4 mm lead and 6.4 mm cement to the X-ray room walls for increased safety when using his machine, and not to stay too long in the X-ray room. On 30 July 1992, an anonymous letter was mailed to the AEC office in Taipei informing them of the radioactive contamination of a building in Shamen Rd. Taipei. The building was a housing complex for the TPC. The letter indicated the kitchen as the source of the contamination. When AEC staff checked on these details the next day, they found that the kitchen wall did indeed give a Co 60 reading of 20 mrem/-hr. The house had been built in 1983 and at that time the radioactivity must have been 80 mrem/hr. 3 weeks later, on 22 Aug, another anonymous letter was mailed to the Liberty Times. The letter said that the Min Seng building in Taipei was contaminated with radioactivity. The very next day, more than 10 AEC staff surveyed 70 apartments, and found that 34 of them were contaminated (based on a "safe level" of 1.5 rem/y).

The AEC already knew about the contamination after the incident with the dentist. It promised to check all buildings built in 1983 and distributed more than 5,000 TLDs (Thermoluminescence Detectors). When the returned TLDs had been checked, the AEC announced that more than 50 buildings were contaminated, but to date the locations of only 10 buildings have been made public.

So nobody knows where the other 40 contaminated buildings are located and who lives there.

The full extent of the radioactive contamination of buildings in Taiwan must be investigated and made public because of the great amount of radioactivity involved and the large number of people affected.

Nina SATO

NEWS WATCH

Kushima to Accept N-Plant?

The Fishermen's Cooperative of Kushima, Miyazaki Prefecture decided on June 22 to accept a nuclear power plant, if the siting is officially proposed.

Kyushu Electric Co. is currently at the "stage of singling out a site from among several candidates" and has not yet applied to the local government nor the fishermen's coop for formal construction approval. It is fairly unprecedented that the fishermen's coop should adopt an acceptance resolution at such an early stage in the process.

Kyushu Electric is working behind the scenes to make the project look as though it is welcomed by the local government. On March 30 Kushima's Chamber of Commerce & Industry decided to accept the plant but the Agricultural Cooperative had adopted an resolution opposing it on March 24.

National Mayors' Council Alert on Transport of Nuclear Fuel

On June 4, the National Mayors' Council adopted a proposal to demand that the national government inform the local authorities en route of any nuclear transport beforehand. They will also demand the institution of a system to pay the local authorities a subsidy out of the national budget so that they can fully instal proper equipment to cope with any accident that might occur. Currently, information on the transport of nuclear materials is given only to local authorities at the beginning and end of routes which have concluded safety agreements with fuel fabrication plants and the nuclear power plants, while the other local authorities en route are not informed. Their total lack of preparedness for accidents has prompted them to make this demand.

Tohoku Electric Submits Classified Documents to Court

Tohoku Electric Power Co. on June 3 submitted documents, including plans of the internal structure of a reactor vessel, to the Sendai District Court. In an ongoing trial in Sendai, some residents of Onagawa, Miyagi Prefecture, are demanding that the power company suspend operation of Onagawa No.1 reactor and construction of No.2 reactor. The plaintiffs asked the court to order the company to submit these documents, and the court accepted the plaintiffs' demand. Tohoku Electric then appealed the court's order to the Sendai High Court, but the high court rejected the appeal, and the company was obliged to submit the documents. The high court,

however, "excluded some of the documents to protect the manufacturer's corporate secrets."

ABWR Proposed for Shika 2

Hokuriku Electric Power Co. on May 24 applied to Ishikawa Prefecture, the town of Shika, and other concerned parties, for permission to make the planned Shika 2 reactor a ABWR instead of a BWR. Both Tokyo Electric Power and Tohoku Electric Power revealed in early July that they are also planning to adopt ABWR technology for the reactors they are going to build in Higashidori, Aomori Prefecture. They originally planned to build BWRs of a 1,100MW class, but have now decided to opt for ABWRs to reduce construction costs. The output of the reactors will still be 1,100MW.

The ABWR (advanced boiling water reactor) was developed jointly by Tokyo Electric, General Electric of the US, Toshiba and Hitachi. It has been adopted for the Kashiwazaki No.6 and 7 reactors now under construction, which will each have an output of 1,356MW.

Safety of Aged Reactors to be Reviewed

The Nuclear Power Technical Advisory Committee of the Agency of Natural Resources and Energy has formed a Group to Study Measures for Aged Reactors for the purpose of safety measures reviewing for ageing reactors. The group held its first meeting on June 21 and decided to conduct a review of criteria for regular inspections over the next two to three years.

Five of Japan's existing reactors have been operated for more than 20 years, and ten for over 15 years. Ageing of reactors is now becoming a serious problem.

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NUKE INFO TOKYO is a bi-monthly newsletter which aims to provide foreign friends with up-to-date information on the Japanese nuclear industry, as well as on the movements against this industry in Japan. Please write to us for a subscription (subscription rate: supporting subscriber $40/year or ¥5,000/year, subscriber $20/year or ¥3,000/year). The subscription fee should be remitted from a post office to our post office account No:Tokyo 6-185799, HANGENPATU-NEWS by postal money order. We would also appreciate receiving information and newsletters from groups abroad in exchange for this newsletter.

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