

NUCLEAR MONITOR

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THREATS TO BELENE OPPONENT SIMEONOVA CONTINUE IN SPITE OF GOVERNMENT PROTECTION MEASURES

The strategy of the people threatening Belene opponent Albena Simeonova has shifted towards her company, one of the largest organic enterprises in Bulgaria, and are now put into practice. This is in spite of the fact that a criminal investigation has been started into the death threats and measures have been taken by the Bulgarian authorities to secure Simeonova's safety.

(625.5672) WISE/NIRS Brno - On 23 February, Albena Simeonova received the first of three death threats that were personally delivered by the director of a nearby wine company. The man said he spoke in the name of the TIM company, a large conglomerate of enterprises that, among other functions, delivers chemicals and electronic equipment to the Kozloduy nuclear power station and is mentioned as the most likely candidate for security work and supplies for a potential Belene reactor. TIM directors have so far not been available for comment.

Before this, Simeonova was already threatened several times anonymously over telephone since the time she helped involve the international organizations WISE/NIRS and

Greenpeace in the opposition against Belene.

Greenpeace, WISE/NIRS, Bankwatch, Friends of the Earth, ELAW and the Goldman Foundation called for a solidarity campaign (see also: Nuclear Monitor 624: "Death threats against Belene opponent"), which resulted in over a thousand emails and letters to the Bulgarian Prime Minister, the Ministers of Interior and Energy and the President of the Bulgarian Parliament. Simeonova then received a certain degree of protection from the side of the authorities.

She herself is satisfied with the response from the Ministry of Interior and the police: "The local and national police are helping me wherever they can," she told the *Nuclear Monitor*.

The public prosecutor furthermore started criminal investigations into the threat.

The perpetrators, however, changed their tactics and started targeting Simeonova's organic company. They forced several wine production companies into refusing contracts for Simeonova's grapes. They are also said to be behind an illegal occupation of some of Simeonova's land by workers from a nearby collective, who started plowing the land and sowing.

After the local prosecutor supported Simeonova's attempts to have them removed, he was halted by the regional prosecutor in Pleven, who started a campaign of dragging out procedures, even after Simeonova won an appeal to the appellate prosecutor that should have speeded up protection.

The ongoing intimidations have left Simeonova under a constant concern for her safety and that of her 70+ employees. She can count on a large local, national and international solidarity, but the everyday harassments leave their marks.

..... and more Belene news

In the meantime, the Bulgarian Government started with a lobby campaign to improve its chances for

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getting support for a prolongation of the lifetime of the Kozloduy reactors 3 and 4, that according to accession agreements with the European Union (EU) need to be closed in 2006.

Although the US company AES already is building replacement capacity in the form of coal power plants that are planned to be ready when Kozloduy 3 and 4 go off-line, a delegation of pro-nuclear Members of the European Parliament recently visited Kozloduy and pleaded to keep units 3 and 4 open until Belene would go on-line. They argued that without this capacity somewhere in the Balkans the lights might go out. Bulgaria is the largest exporter of electricity in the region of South Eastern Europe.

Earlier, Bulgarian ministers requested a positive opinion from the IAEA about the Belene project, as well as from the local IMF delegation.

NGOs, however, booked a first victory in court complaints against the approval of the Environmental Impact Assessment of the Belene project. The court hearing date was not set as soon as possible, as the Bulgarian Ministry of Environment was seeking, but only in October of this year. This means that, until that time at least, the EIA procedure cannot be closed and a final decision on the Belene project cannot

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The next issue (626) will be mailed out on 22 April 2005

As you may notice no chapter of the long running bestseller **'25 years ago in the WISE News Communiqué'** appears in this issue. It will be back in number 626!

be taken. The Supreme Court, meanwhile, expelled Greenpeace from these court procedures. The reasons for this move are unclear, as Greenpeace fulfilled all the formal requirements that the court had set, even though some of them were quite draconian. Greenpeace lawyer Alexander Kodjabashev commented, "The fact that the court did not even mention the papers it had requested itself and did not come with any other reason, shows that this is a case of malpractice, only directed to removing Greenpeace as an organization from the procedures." Greenpeace is currently contemplating further steps.

Other judges from the Supreme Administrative Court had earlier returned a case to a lower court in which Greenpeace was also not accepted as standing partner, together with WISE/NIRS and Greenpeace and WISE representative Jan Haverkamp. This court complaint, filed together with Bulgarian Friends of the Earth member Ekoglasnost, will for the second time be heard on 4 April. It was started to get clarity about the status of an April 29, 2004 decision by the Bulgarian Government to build Belene.

On 4 April 2005 the Supreme Administrative Court refused standing to Greenpeace and WISE/NIRS. This is yet another attempt from Bulgarian authorities to avoid the real content debate on Belene with the use of Kafkaesque formalities, reacted Jan Haverkamp, representative for Greenpeace and WISE/NIRS. The court argued in its decision that Greenpeace and WISE do not have a legal interest in the 29 April 2004 decision of the Bulgarian Government, yet in the same sentence it decided that in case Ekoglasnost will win the case, Greenpeace and WISE's interests will be satisfied. This case illustrates clearly why the European Union recently criticized Bulgarian's court system. Petar Penchev, vice president of Ekoglasnost reacted: "Greenpeace and WISE joined the complaint on our invitation. I feel this incoherent court decision as a personal embarrassment towards my guests."

JUST A CAR PROBLEM?

At the beginning of January, Mr. Daniel Dinca, NGO activist from Alexandria, Romania, near the Bulgarian border, discovered a problem with his car direction system. A car mechanic that examined the vehicle said that only another servicing intervention may have led to the car problem (a missing nut). Mr. Dinca had no enemies he was aware of and didn't make a connection to the Belene reactor until Bulgarian activist Albena Simeoneova received a death threat in February this year from promoters of the nuclear project. Mr. Dinca had manifested its opposition to the Belene project construction during the public consultation organized in Turnu Magurele according to the Espoo Convention. Mr. Dinca took special efforts in informing the population and local administration in the county of Teleorman (which would be directly affected by the construction of the nuclear plant) and managed to get the message through to project promoters - Romanians say NO to Belene nuclear power plant..

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.....still more: position IMF...

While there is yet no concrete economic and financial data on the table, the Bulgarian government made another surprising statement on the Belene project. "The state will be owner of at least 51% of the capital of the second nuclear power plant at Belene, but in the same time it will look for minimal financial participation in the project" - Minister Sevlievski informed Bulgarian media in mid-March. The information also shows that IMF has agreed with the government-driven development of today's biggest 'Bulgarian dream'.

A few days later, the head of the IMF mission to Bulgaria, Mr. Hans

Flikenschild, said it in a bit different way. Answering a question why Bulgaria shouldn't engage in Belene he said: "Because it is an additional debt. ... Each guarantee, however, which the government would issue for the duties of this company, would be a part of the public debt. The decision for Belene is obviously a political one." – Mr. Flikenschild continued. "You will lose part of the capacities at Kozloduy and they should be replaced. It is not necessary to be done with other nuclear capacities. It makes an impression that the capacity of Belene is bigger than the ones of the reactors to be closed. So, this is a political decision."

"... (T)he government doesn't even need to be a major owner, because if the project is profitable, then the private capital (most probably foreign because we are talking about a huge amount of money) would be happy to make this investment. ... We don't see a reason why the government would like to create a new ownership in the field of energy generation and in the same time sell similar ownership through privatization. For us this is a contradiction. But if the government still decides to build up "Belene," we

will insist on a decrease of its own financial obligations to the minimum possible." – Hans Flikenschild ended.

If the Bulgarian government would follow the IMF recommendations there would be not too many options. Perhaps the most controversial one would be to merge Belene and Kozloduy 5 and 6 in one company. This option came on the table some 1 ½ years half ago and appears frequently in Bulgarian media.

But the opponents state that such an approach would make the economy of the country's nuclear sector even more complicated and hidden. "It would be almost impossible to follow the papers of such a company," said Petko Kovatchev from CEIE, a Bulgarian member group of CEE Bankwatch Network. "Such a merger would allow potential private investors and operator to play various games around the prices and costs of the company. It is not the same to own two different nuclear power plants or one company with units in two separate plants." The merging of the two power plants would also require a clear decision on who will pay back the loans from Euratom, US EximBank and Russia,

received by Bulgaria to upgrade Kozloduy 5 and 6.

Meanwhile the Foreign Affairs Committee (AFET) of the European Parliament voted for Mr. Geoffrey Van Orden's draft report on the Bulgaria's application to become an EU member. The proposal opens the door for potential Euratom funding for Belene by insisting the Commission "closely monitor developments and provide every assistance in this regard" [guaranteeing the security supply in SEE region and achieving Kyoto targets – PK]. The EP plenary should vote the resolution on April 13, less than two weeks before the signing of the Accession Treaty between the Commission and Bulgaria.

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IRAN – AN EXERCISE IN DOUBLE STANDARDS

The possible development of nuclear weapons by Iran has become a measuring stick for the success or failure of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. As a signatory to the NPT Iran is obliged under article II to refrain from receiving any nuclear weapons related technology. At the same time article IV guarantees that country unconditional access to all the technology for developing nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Unfortunately, this happens to be precisely the same technology as that required to develop nuclear weapons.

(625.5673) PENN-N - The crucial question is whether Iran has in fact undertaken some or all of the necessary steps to produce nuclear weapons. In his 'Introductory Statement to the Board of Governors' on 28 February 2005, IAEA Director General Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei said: "As I mentioned at the last Board meeting, in view of the past undeclared nature of significant aspects of Iran's nuclear programme, a confidence deficit has been created, and it is therefore essential that Iran

works closely with the Agency in a proactive manner in order for us to build the necessary confidence and achieve the required degree of assurance."

This is an open-ended conclusion. It implies that Iran will continue to be defined as a possible nuclear proliferation risk. Elsewhere, far-reaching statements concerning past nuclear deliveries to Iran have been made by key players. For example, Pakistani Federal Information

Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed stated the following in March about the nuclear technology smuggler Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan: "He had given centrifuges to Iran in his individual capacity and the government of Pakistan had nothing to do with it," (Dawn, 11 March 2005)

Such new facts are regularly produced as proof that Iran has other intentions than peaceful ones. So far, however, no decisive proof has been produced indicating that Iran has nuclear

weapons, or even the means of deploying them. Furthermore, developing a usable nuclear weapon is not the same as being able to deploy it on the types of missiles operated by Iran - this weaponisation requires another substantial technological programme of development.

In response to questions on the Iranian missile programme weaponisation issue in the Dutch parliament (28 Oct 2004), foreign minister Bot stated that "The IAEA investigation ... has not produced any facts showing a relationship with the Iranian missile programme"

However, for the neo-conservative

US RECOMMENDED IRAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM

According to declassified US documents, top officials in the President Gerald Ford's administration - including then-Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, current Vice President Dick Cheney and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld - recommended Iran's uranium enrichment program. The Washington Post reported that the newly declassified documents also reveal that the Ford administration "at one point suggested joint Pakistani-Iranian reprocessing as a way of promoting non-proliferation in the region 'because it would cut down on the need for additional reprocessing facilities.'"

Cheney, Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz now are refusing to talk about policy adopted by the Ford administration. However, Kissinger said, "They (Iranians) were then an allied country (under the Shah) and this was a commercial transaction."

The newly declassified documents reveal that US companies, led by Westinghouse, stood to gain US\$6.4 billion from the sale of six to eight nuclear reactors and parts to Iran. Iran was also willing to pay an additional US\$1 billion for a 20 per cent stake in a private uranium enrichment facility in the US.

Washington Post, 27 March 2005

political forces in the US and their Israeli allies, no further proof is needed. Planned military operations against Iranian nuclear installations in one form or another have repeatedly been leaked to the media recently.

The last spectacular report (Sunday Times, 13 March 2005) had Israeli special forces exercising for a ground-based attack, combined with bombing from the air. A special Israeli order of 500 deep-penetration conventional bombs in the US in June 2004 (AP 28 Sept 2004) was a political signal suggesting that such a military operation was an option.

Suspicious motives

The developments leading up to the war against Iraq make any evidence produced by US or allied intelligence suspect. The so-called proof of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction turned out to be based on a network of lies and fabrications. There is an obvious parallel with the Iranian situation. Amazingly, US intelligence -sourced information appears to again be taken seriously by the international media as the basis for analyses of the actual Iranian situation.

Equally amazingly, this is being repeated in various official statements, which include allegations about the political aims of the Iranian government. That is, assumptions are made about Iranian political aims that are not based on any published fact. Instead, it is accepted as given that the Iranian government wants to develop nuclear weapons.

Of course, given the specific geopolitical situation of Iran, such an assumption is not without logic. After all, a nuclear armed state - Israel - is within striking distance of Iran, while another, the most powerful country in the world, is present in force in the surrounding countries and the coastal waters of Iran.

Given what happened to Iraq, fears of another American attack are perfectly rational. That is, however, not the same as adopting a policy for developing a nuclear strike force. The

best estimate at present would be that parts of the Iranian governing elite want to keep the option for 'break-out' (from the NPT) open.

Negotiations with the EU3+

The lack of a smoking gun gives the negotiating process entered into by the three most important states of the EU (France, Germany and the United Kingdom), probably backed discreetly by the rest of the Union - the 'three-plus' - special importance. The deal as envisaged in 2004 was to persuade Iran to freeze its enrichment program, while offering it economic incentives in the area of trade and technology.

The Iranian government has repeatedly stated that it will not give up the right that it has under the NPT to all nuclear technology, including uranium enrichment, provided it is used for peaceful purposes. That specific formulation offers a way out of the impasse, since it is possible to acknowledge Iran's rights while at the same putting in place a freeze, controlled by international inspections.

Unfortunately, this option seems to have been dropped by the EU, perhaps under US pressure. The sequence of events last winter seems to indicate that new revelations (for example based on Malaysian sources - 'Fresh clues could lift lid on Tehran's N programme' - Financial Times 12 March 2005) regarding deliveries of nuclear technology to Iran resulted in the Pakistani declaration above which recognises the role played by the Khan network.

One can speculate that the change in the EU3+ negotiating position early March was influenced by these developments. In those negotiations the US and EU3+ positions appear to have been aligned more closely, probably in line with agreements reached during President Bush's visit to Europe in February.

This co-ordination of positions can be summarised as offering marginal economic concessions to Iran (the US has agreed to possible WTO

membership and some provisional trading concessions) in exchange for a total stop of uranium enrichment activities. The media in the Netherlands have emphasised the closer co-ordination of the EU3+ with the US without closely examining the position that was being agreed on. The change in the negotiating stance was described in three articles in the New York Times/International Herald Tribune and Die Tageszeitung (Germany)

An article in the IHT of 12 March 2005 mentions the following (italics are mine – KK):

“Iran’s senior negotiator, Hassan Rowhani, said at a news conference in Tehran last weekend that the country would never agree to a permanent cessation of enrichment. But the senior American official involved in the administration’s negotiations with Europe said, after some heated internal debate, *“the Europeans are now with us in the view that we could never monitor their enrichment activity reliably enough”* to ensure that Iran was not producing bomb-grade uranium.

Some European diplomats have argued that point in recent weeks, *saying that Iran could not be prohibited from enrichment while other signers of the treaty were permitted to produce nuclear fuel.* But the American official insisted “that argument is now over.” Some officials in the Bush administration have said they believe that Iran would not agree to give up enrichment, no matter what incentives Bush offered.

They see the president’s decision to dangle what amount to modest American economic incentives as part of an effort to speed along the negotiating process so that Iran’s intentions become clear.

At that point, in the view of hawks on the issue inside the White House and the Pentagon, the Europeans would be bound to take the issue to the Security Council. These officials would only speak anonymously because such

delicate negotiations hang in the balance.”

The anonymous US negotiator is therefore telling us that the Europeans have left their former position, which would have allowed Iran to maintain its enrichment program, as is also allowed by the Non-Proliferation Treaty. There was a possible area of agreement with Iran’s position, which insists on the right of access to the enrichment process as guaranteed by the NPT.

A possible compromise would then have allowed this under strict international controls, so as to guarantee that the enrichment process was not used to manufacture bomb-grade enriched uranium. Another obvious complication there is that, as was the case in Iraq, such international inspectors may include members of various intelligence agencies whose task it would be to collect intelligence which could be used as targeting data for an air strike.

The information from the US source, that the EU3+ had abandoned this position, is similar to that given to Andreas Zumach, the UN Geneva correspondent of the German daily Die Tageszeitung (12 March 2005, translation: “EU shift to US position – In the battle for the Iranian nuclear program, the EU negotiating trio have given up some crucial positions.”)

NGO dilemma’s

The sombre developments in the negotiating process make it necessary for the anti-nuclear ngo community to think carefully about its response. An enthusiastic endorsement of the present course being followed by the EU3+ -US seems to be the height of folly.

It would quite obviously contribute to a political climate in which the matter would be taken from the IAEA to the Security Council where escalatory steps like resolutions threatening sanctions or ultimatums would run into Russian or Chinese vetoes. US officials would then argue that as the international community would be

IAEA: EL BARADEI’S MORATORIUM APPLIES TO "ALL NEW BUILDS"

The IAEA is now saying that the five-year moratorium on enrichment and Pu-facilities proposed by Director General ElBaradei in January, is for all new build SWU and Pu facilities.

At first IAEA spokesperson Gwozlecky claimed that the constraint applied only to countries that were launching new enrichment or reprocessing programs, not to those that already had such programs in place and were simply adding facilities. But the statements from ElBaradei didn’t indicate that.: “There is no compelling reason to build more of these facilities, the nuclear industry has more than enough capacity to fuel its power plants and research centers”, he was saying in the Financial Times Feb. 2.

Now Gwozlecky claimed he had originally “misunderstood” the proposal. If accepted the plan would force the deferral of planned enrichment plants in countries like USA and France.

Nuclear Fuel, 28 March 2005

blocking effective action, they would be justified in acting unilaterally, or more probably bilaterally together with a number of EU states.

While obviously any developments towards the creation of a new nuclear weapon state should be condemned it is painfully obvious that a unilateral process based on making demands which are bound to draw a negative response would be very welcome amongst those politicians who want to start a war (as with Iraq, wanting to force a regime change under a false flag). Hence a negotiated solution should be pushed at all times, while keeping careful distance from commitments made by the US or its allies which will predictably lead to war.

The alternative is to swim into a

course of action with a progressively decreasing number of options, until only war remains.

This is also the bottom line: the ngo community should decide whether it will at some point endorse a 'counter-proliferation' war or reject it as a

strategy which will simply multiply the number of possible confrontations with other 'proliferators'. In such a situation the nuclear arsenals of the eight nuclear weapon states would remain outside any debate or argument for their abolition. In short, the ngo world would be buying into

the 'nuclear haves' world. That seems to me the last place we should be.

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A FIELDTRIP TO THE GORLEBEN WASTE DISPOSAL SITE

In Germany, the government has planned for years to use a salt dome as the final disposal site for high-level radioactive waste, at Gorleben. The characterization of the site is now about half-finished, and the government expects that in 2030 the first waste-container can be stored. But opposition to the site remains strong and still may prevent the entire project.

(625.5674) Herman Damveld – Eight hundred and forty meters below surface the elevator stops its 10 meter-per-second journey. This is Schacht Eins (Shaft 1). We enter a large space, with nets under the ceiling to prevent pieces of salt from falling.

Shaft 2 is 400 meters from Shaft 1. Between both shafts a system of horizontal galleries (7.5 meters wide and 5 meters high) is constructed to allow natural air circulation. (One meter equals approx. 3 feet).

Joachim Kutowski is head of the Department of Geology Gorleben of the DBE (the German Company for Construction and Operation of Final Waste Disposal). He brings us to a place where it is 37 degrees Celsius and shows us measuring apparatus in side-walls, floor and ceiling to measure the convergence: the movement of salt.

During the last 3.5 years the convergence was 60 centimeters. Therefore employees have to scrape the galleries to keep them at the necessary height. Such convergence measurements take place at 72 spots in the shafts and will be for at least the coming decade.

Kutowski points out that salt domes are not very suitable for retrievable storage of radioactive waste, because in time the galleries will get silted up. Furthermore the radioactive waste produces heat and the containers can

sink away in warmer salt layers and it would then not be easy to locate them if necessary for retrieval.

The fact that salt will flow around the casks, gives problems with disposal of low- and intermediate-level waste. The waste produces gasses which have to be able to escape the casks into the environment. But because they are encapsulated by the salt, the gasses can't leave, pressure is building inside the casks and that can lead to damage of the casks, Kutowski explains. (The U.S. rejected salt domes decades ago for similar reasons and also because salt is corrosive and could compromise storage casks.)

In 1977 the Gorleben salt dome was assigned as the location for the disposal of high-level radioactive waste. The highest point of the salt dome is 250 meters below the surface level. During construction the DBE located several carnallite-layers (hydrated potassium-magnesium-chloride) which had to be sidestepped.

Therefore the actual disposal will, according to Kutowski, be at a different location at the dome than originally foreseen. Because the high level waste produces heat, the casks have to be stored 50 meters from each other. Given the amount of waste, twice as much space is needed as available now. From the galleries and shafts separated holes must be dug out to store the waste in.

So far, 1.3 billion Euro has been spent on Gorleben, and DBE expects that before the mine is finished in 2030, it will have to spent another 500 million....However, this amount is very unsure, it could well be 2-3 times as much. Unless of course, the entire project is canceled by the ongoing opposition.

One of the reasons for the opposition to believe the salt dome is not suitable is that it does not even meet its own standards: there should be a layer of impermeable clay over the salt dome, but it is missing for a few square kilometers.

So the question is why Gorleben was chosen in the first place? Kutowski states that the decision to see Gorleben as the prime location might not have been taken on geological grounds but for political reasons: unemployment, located near the East-German border (but after the reunification in 1990 it was suddenly located in the heart of Germany). Kutowski says: "So there was no pile of scientific evidence in favor of Gorleben. It was about finding a suitable location, not the best available one". As a matter of fact according to the qualification criteria for nuclear waste in a salt formation, Gorleben had been included in the third category only.

Opposition

The (regional) opposition remains very strong. This was shown by one of

the lawyers of the local opposition-groups. As mentioned, the underground galleries are 7.5 meters wide (about 25 feet). This fits in the plan for Gorleben as a disposal mine.

But officially Gorleben is a research location; although everything seems to be aimed at disposal and not at research. If the mine is aimed at research (and that is the official point of view), it would have to fall under the Nuclear Energy Law, but it does not. Now the disposal facility is constructed under the Mine Law, which is meant for getting something out of a mine, not putting something in it.

From the start, poor farmers have been bribed and bought to sell their land to DBE. This led to many conflicts in the villages—as does the annual transport to the interim storage facility. Weeks before the planned transport (early November) 20,000 police-officers are located at the region in which 50,000 people live.

During the days of the transport people are not free to move, schools and public buildings are confiscated: it

is the atomic-state in practice. Protests have been massive and effective, with hundreds of farmers joining in and placing their tractors as metal shields to prevent the movement of radioactive waste casks.

Politicians were and are bribed. The village of Gartow for instance, close to Gorleben, receives annually 736,000 euro, but only to support people or organizations advocating the storage of nuclear waste at Gorleben.

Opponents developed alternative ways of fighting the facility: to mine salt and sell it for household. They use the Law which states that what is underground is owned by the one who owns the ground. Earl Andreas von Bernstorff owns a large part of the area above the salt dome. "Over 300 years my forefathers have said that we should not sell the land, but instead use it well. That is an important part of my upbringing. That's why, for me, from the start in 1977 it was difficult to agree with the storage of radioactive waste, which has lasting consequences." The German government tried by special regulations to

expropriate the land of the Earl, but did not succeed.

Now Von Bernstorff and others established Salinas Salt Company. They plan to conduct a drilling 1,600 meters from Shaft-1 to a depth of 850 meters. If this test has a positive result, mining of salt will begin.

These plans have been met with fierce opposition by the nuclear industry, but in early February 2005, a ruling by the Court at Lueneburg, wiped away the demands of the nuclear industry and gave green light for Salinas. This means that below the land owned by Salinas (Von Bernstorff) storage of nuclear waste is not allowed.

Salinas' lawyer is convinced that in this way the entire Gorleben disposal project can be stopped.

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IAEA: CESSATION OF NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY PROMOTION "NAÏVE AND INHUMANE"

On 28 February, 150 environmental organizations from many countries asked the UN Secretary General and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in an open letter to exclude the promotion of nuclear technology from the IAEA's mandate. In late March the IAEA replied with an astonishing letter that makes clear in no uncertain terms that it is merely an adjunct to the nuclear power industry.

(625.5675) WISE Amsterdam - The letter to the IAEA was drafted during the symposium "The lie of the peaceful use of atomic energy—nuclear weapons and nuclear power plants—two sides of the same coin" held in Linz, Austria, on October 1-2, 2004.

Some excerpts from the letter to the UN/IAEA:

"Today, many countries can obtain nuclear weapons because of the undeniable and inevitable connection between nuclear power and nuclear

weapons. The existing system of non-proliferation treaties and IAEA safeguard systems have failed to put a halt to proliferation since their conception.

"The fact that the concepts of "atoms for peace" and "atoms for war" are indistinguishable from one another has led to the current crisis situation where the nuclear programs of countries such as Iran and North Korea are causing such concern among the international community....

:Our aim is a world free of nuclear

technology and to achieve this we suggest that the existing IAEA be substituted with an agency for the efficient control of all nuclear facilities (military and civilian) and materials, and that excludes the promotion of nuclear technology from its mandate...."

On 29 March IAEA director Mark Gwozdecky, replied:

"....But to propose that IAEA Member States alter the IAEA Statute and to cease "the promotion of nuclear technology" as your letter has done is

both a naïve and inherently inhumane suggestion. Rolling back the hands of time and denying millions of people around the world the logical benefits of nuclear science and technology is patently absurd.

"We agree that renewable energy sources need to be encouraged wherever possible. But most well-

informed observers agree that the world's ever expanding thirst for energy will not be satisfied by renewable energy sources any time in the near future no matter how much renewables are multiplied. They simply cannot meet the demands....

We would kindly suggest that you and your organization focus your political

lobbying on areas where more positive benefits for humanity and peace can be achieved...."

No further comments. We rest our case.

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AFTER CHERNOBYL: HEALTH AND FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES

As we approach the 19th anniversary of the Chernobyl catastrophe on April 26, the accident continues as it will for millennia. As a tool for the coming commemorations, we now publish reports on two of the many consequences: the increase of cancer incidence in Belarus, and on the financial consequences for Ukraine, Belarus and Russia.

(625.5676) WISE Amsterdam – In late October, the Swiss Medical Weekly published a paper by the Clinical Institute of Radiation Medicine and Endocrinology Research, Minsk, Belarus on the incidence of cancers before and after the Chernobyl accident. The National Cancer Registry in Belarus has been operational since 1973: information on all new cases of malignant tumors is registered. The authors of the study (Okeanov AE, Sosnovskaya EY, Priatkina OP.) compared findings before the Chernobyl accident of April 26, 1986 (1973-1986) and findings between 1990 and 2000. The overall comparison on the changes in the incidence of cancer morbidity in Belarus is presented.

A comparative analysis of the incidence of cancer morbidity in the population of two regions, selected for the greatest difference in their radioactive contamination following Chernobyl is presented. The highest contamination occurred in the Gomel region and is mainly due to high levels of Cesium (137Cs) in the soil and in the alimentary chain, especially in rural areas. A relatively low radioactive fallout was noticed in the Vitebsk region, considered here as the "control" area. The authors compare the situation before and after Chernobyl in the two regions.

A statistically significant increase in the morbidity was observed in all

region of Belarus, but it was most pronounced in the Gomel region, where it increased by 55.9%. From 1976-1985, the morbidity rate in the Gomel region was lower than the mean level throughout the country. In 1990-2000, it exceeded the national level, due to the more rapid growth in the morbidity rates as compared to other regions.

In populations living in two areas with high 137Cs contamination (Gomel and Mogilev regions), the peak incidence rates of breast cancer were already reached between the ages of 45–49 years, 15 years earlier than in the Vitebsk region. The authors note that increases in breast cancer are happening earlier in populations in the more highly contaminated regions (Gomel and Mogilev) than in less contaminated Vitebsk. This dose-related difference in the time lag for radiation-induced cancers is known from other studies and is most marked for breast cancer.

Although a great number of publications after Chernobyl deal with thyroid cancer in children, this well-recognized malignant solid tumor does not represent more than 0.4% of the total of cancers described here. But the increase among children is indisputable. The unparalleled increase of more than 100x is considered to be due to radioactive iodine in the first two weeks following

Chernobyl. The incidence of thyroid cancer among adults also increased. Before Chernobyl thyroid cancer was rather a rare malignant disease among adults in Belarus. After 1990, the incidence sharply increased and reached the highest world rates recorded in recent years. Children whose age at the time of the accident was 0-14 years, moved up to the age group of 15-29 years by 2000, and therefore were not included in the group of adults (starting at 30 years).

Belarussian "liquidators" who were mobilized to clean up the most contaminated territory and build the sarcophagus around the destroyed atomic plant, received the highest radiation doses. They had a significant excess of incidence of cancers of colon, urinary bladder, and thyroid gland, when compared with a corresponding adult population of the Vitebsk region.

Average incidence (all cancers).
Increases in the various regions in Belarus:

Brest 33%	Vitebsk 38%
Gomel 55%	Grodno 44%,
Minsk 49%	Mogilev 32%
Minsk city 18%	All Belarus 40%

The study "A national cancer registry to assess trends after the Chernobyl accident" can be found at: <http://www.smw.ch/archive200x/2004/2004-43.html>

Financial consequences

The nuclear disaster in Chernobyl damaged the economies of Belarus and Ukraine, and the local economies of the Russian regions affected, in a wide variety of ways. The total economic damage for the three countries can only be approximately estimated, according to UNDP and UNICEF. No figures have been recorded for all three countries using the same method. The losses suffered by the economy are also closely linked with the losses and costs incurred by the state.

The Institute of Economics of the Belarussian National Academy of Sciences estimates that the country's economy will suffer losses of USD 43.3 billion in the first 30 years after the accident. The total damage

(economical, social, health, environmental, etc) is projected to be USD 235 billion over this period. This is 32 times the national budget for 1985.

Chernobyl-related costs accounted for 16.8 per cent of the country's national budget in 1991, and in 1996 it was still 10.9 per cent. Currently the republic is investing about 6 percent of its budget in the official Chernobyl program.

What the nuclear accident means for the economy in the countries affected is spelled out by the Belarussian government's Chernobyl Committee. Among the negative consequences of the accident for the economy, it lists: the disuse or loss of value of agricultural land and loss of mineral resources, lost production and the loss of labor in the contaminated

territories, as well as the loss of value of products from these areas.

In the contaminated territories of Belarus, according to the survey by UNDP and UNICEF, 54 large agricultural and forestry enterprises, together with 9 industrial enterprises, had to be closed. 22 raw material deposits could no longer be used. In the contaminated territories of Ukraine, 20 collective farms and 13 companies had to be abandoned.

The companies that remain in the still inhabited contaminated territories are unable to recruit professional staff, since young and well-trained inhabitants move away. Even mildly contaminated areas are no longer attractive to investors. This downward spiral can only be broken by

CALL FOR ACTION: HOMAGE TO THE LIQUIDATORS

Sortir du Nucleaire, the French federation of 700 anti nuclear groups, is calling for an homage to the Chernobyl 'liquidators'.

Here are several extracts from a letter Professor Vasily Nesterenko (corresponding member of the Belarussian Academy of Sciences) wrote to Sortir on 15 January 2005:

(...) On 28 and 29 April, 1986, the researchers of the Physics of Reactors Department of the Institute of Atomic Energy at the Academy of Sciences of Belarus made some calculations which showed that 1,300 – 1,400 kg of a mixture of uranium, graphite and water made up a critical mass for an atomic explosion, capable of producing a force of 3-5 megatons (this is 50 – 80 times greater than the force of the explosion at Hiroshima). An explosion of this magnitude would cause massive radiation burns in the population within a radius of 300 – 320 km centred on the town of Minsk, resulting in the whole of Europe being exposed to an enormous radioactive contamination, making normal life impossible....

It was estimated that this explosion could occur on 8 or 9 May 1986. For

this reason, all possible measures were taken to extinguish the burning graphite in the reactor. Tens of thousands of coal-miners were urgently dispatched from around Moscow and Donbass to Chernobyl, in order to dig a tunnel under the reactor and to install a cooling coil for cooling the concrete base of the reactor and to remove all possibility of cracks appearing in the slab.

The miners had to work in dreadful conditions (in high temperatures and very high levels of radiation) in order to prevent the block from disintegrating. It is impossible to overstate the fact that the total self-sacrifice of these men prevented a highly likely nuclear explosion. The majority of these young people became invalids and a number of them died between the ages of 30 – 40....

It is known that on 7 May 1986, the fire, which had been raging in block 4, was put out. The intervention of these hundreds of thousands of young people – firemen, soldiers, miners – the 'liquidators' of this terrible accident, is unparalleled....

In my opinion we missed a nuclear explosion at Chernobyl by a hair's

breadth. If it had happened, Europe would have become uninhabitable.

The people of Europe should be eternally grateful to the hundreds of thousands of liquidators who, at the risk of their lives, saved Europe from an extremely serious nuclear catastrophe.

According to the announcement made by the head of the 'Chernobyl Union' association in 1996, more than 20,000 men of between 30 and 40 years of age, who took part in the operation in the aftermath of Chernobyl, had died at this time.

Sortir du nucleaire invites all citizens to pay homage to the liquidators. It is thanks to them that we did not suffer this nightmare. The plan is to place flowers for them in front of town halls (or embassies or other symbolic places, for that matter), between 23 and 30 April. The act will also be dedicated to Yuri Bandajevsky (sentenced to 8 years in prison, after revealing the terrible state of health of hundreds of thousands of Belarussian and Ukrainian children) and to all victims who suffer and die from radioactive pollution.

government investment programs, for which Belarus and Ukraine in particular lack the money.

Ukrainian experts estimate the economic damage to their country at USD 201 billion from 1986-2015. By comparison, the national income of Ukraine was about USD 37 billion in 2001. In 1992 Ukraine spent about 15 per cent of its national budget on managing the effects of the disaster, and in 1996 it was still 6 per cent.

Today the proportion is 5 per cent. Costs incurred by the Russian state as a result of the nuclear disaster totaled about USD 3.8 billion between 1992 and 1998. Of this sum, USD 3 billion was paid in compensation to the helpers and victims.

Aldermaston: Thames waste stops.

The 18 km long radioactive waste pipeline from the AWE Aldermaston weapons factory in Berkshire (some 80 km north of London, UK) to the river Thames at Pangbourne has been shutdown. For 50 years the pipeline has been used to discharge uranium, plutonium, tritium and other wastes that are now to be treated on-site and encased in concrete for eventual disposal. In 1994 research by George Reeves (geologist at Newcastle University) concluded that the likelihood of drinking water contamination was 'high'. There were also indications that radioactive emissions penetrated both shallow and deep groundwater supplies
N-Base Briefing 448, 4 April 2005 / The Times, 24 March 1994

US: MOX plant gets green light. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has authorized construction of a facility at the Savannah River Site in South Carolina to manufacture mixed plutonium and uranium oxide (MOX) fuel for use in commercial nuclear power plants. The MOX fuel fabrication facility will be the first to be built in the US. Although the NRC has issued the construction authorization, the adjudicatory process on certain issues remains open. The facility, which will

Belarus and Ukraine levied an emergency tax, or Chernobyl tax, for dealing with the disaster. Initially, all companies, except for those in the agricultural sector, had to pay 18 or 19 per cent of their salary costs to the State. This tax is still levied in both countries, but has now dropped to only 4 per cent in Belarus. Russia never levied a Chernobyl tax. There, the State's costs were funded by government borrowing.

The major proportion of government funds in Belarus went first to the resettlement and infrastructure programs, which accounted for 70 percent of the Chernobyl tax up to 1993. In Belarus, 131,200 people had been resettled by 1996; since the accident 64,836 new houses and flats

IN BRIEF

be owned by the Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration, is part of a bilateral effort between the US and Russia to make supplies of surplus weapons-grade plutonium into forms that are more resistant to proliferation. The NRC must authorize reactors to use MOX fuel, but to date no nuclear operating company has applied to use the fuel. On March 3, NRC granted a license amendment to Duke Energy Corp., allowing it to test four MOX fuel assemblies at its Catawba nuclear plant in South Carolina. Those test assemblies were manufactured in France using surplus US weapons grade plutonium.

ENS, 31 March 2005

Attempt to silence whistleblower: charges served against Vanunu. On March 17, Mordechai Vanunu, the Israeli nuclear whistleblower who spent 18 years in prison for exposing Israel's secret nuclear program, was served with official notice, that he is to be brought to trial for speaking to the international media. Vanunu, receiving sanctuary at St. George's Cathedral in East Jerusalem since his release from prison last April, has been charged with violating the restrictions that were imposed against him upon his release from prison on

have been built for them. Since 1995 the focus has shifted, and now most of the government money goes to social and medical aid programs.

In Ukraine and Russia, on the other hand, social benefits were accorded priority from the outset. They include monthly allowances, free or subsidized medication, free meals for children and students at school and university, and the right to an annual free respite holiday. For financial reasons, however, only some of these measures have been put into practice.

Source: <http://www.chernobyl.info/index.php?userhash=6281491&navID=34&lID=2>

Contact: WISE Amsterdam

21 April 2004. The restrictions, based on the British Mandate State of Emergency Regulations of 1945, prohibit Vanunu from making any contact with foreign nationals, speaking to the media, leaving Israel, coming within 300 meters of a foreign embassy or international borders and even changing his place of residence without approval from Israeli security agencies. Vanunu is also charged of "attempting to leave the country," for his bid to attend Christmas Eve Mass in Bethlehem, in December 2004. Vanunu is not being charged with any security breaches or divulging information concerning Israel's nuclear program, rather, simply for the fact that he granted interviews to international media. The restrictions against Vanunu will expire in April but may be renewed indefinitely.

International Campaign to Free Vanunu, Press Release 17 March 2005

Activists fined after blockading Spanish reactor. After a trial in Villarcayo (Spain) on March 15, 18 Greenpeace activists have been fined with 120 euros each. They have been found guilty of disobedience and resistance to a public authority.. Greenpeace lawyer was asking for the activists to be set free of any charge or fine since it was to his understanding

that they were only exercising their civil right of freedom of speech and thus were exposing the great environmental problem Garoña nuclear power plant is.

On the 19th of October last year, the 18 activists took part of a protest against the nuclear power plant in Garoña. They wanted to alert public opinion of the dangerous situation of this power plant and ask for its closure. During the action, 6 activists chained themselves to the upper part of the nuclear power plant's main gate and displayed a banner that read "*Garoña falla: ¡cierra ya!*". This banner pertained to its many functioning problems. At the same time the rest of the activists blocked the main gate in its lower part and had banners that read "*Zapatero: Nuclear Phase Out now!*" y "*Zapatero: ¡cierra las nucleares ya!*", in reference to the promise the Spanish President José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, had made to abandon nuclear energy.

Greenpeace is asking the governing party to shut down Garoña, as a first step to fulfill its commitment to abandon nuclear energy. Garoña's energy contribution to the Spanish Peninsula electrical system is less than 1.6%. This means that there is no need for it, specially given the excess of power installed. This can not be an excuse to perpetuate the life of Garoña.

Carlos Bravo, Nuclear energy campaigner, Greenpeace Spain

Venezuela: missing Iridium capsules cause alert. Venezuelan authorities have launched a nationwide hunt for two capsules of radioactive material, which were being used in equipment to check oil industry pipes for faults, that went missing and which could kill people exposed to them. One of the two missing capsules of radioactive Iridium-192 disappeared from a barge on March 15 in Lake Maracaibo,

Venezuela's western oil producing hub. The other went missing after apparently falling off the back of a workers' truck on March 21 in the eastern oil producing state of Monagas. Iridium-192 emits powerful gamma radiation. It is often used in treating prostate cancer and in detecting faults in underground industrial pipes. Angel Diaz, Director of Nuclear Affairs at Venezuela's Energy Ministry said if they were opened everyone within a range of at least 4-5 meters would be exposed to harmful radiation. "The health and lives of people around would be at risk," he said. "Since they're quite heavy, people might think they have something valuable inside." National Guard, Civil Defense Service and police were also involved in the hunt for the capsules, which were encased in protective containers of depleted uranium about the size of a lunchbox.
Reuters, 1 April 2005

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WISE/NIRS NUCLEAR MONITOR

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