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Perspectives

To the Graduates

by David Krieger

Congratulations on completing this phase of your life. I'm sure you have learned many things in your studies. Let me mention a few things about the world you are entering - things you may already feel but don't yet fully understand. It is a world in which human life is devalued for many, and greed is often rewarded.

Each hour, 500 children die in Africa: 12,000 each day. They die of starvation and preventable diseases, not because there is not enough food or medicine, but because these are not distributed to those who need them.

Our world is not particularly kind to children, but it is very kind to the military-industrial complex. Global spending on the world's militaries now tops $1 trillion. Of this, the United States spends nearly half, more than the combined totals of the next 32 countries. For just one percent of global military spending, every child on the planet could receive an education, but these are not the values we choose to espouse.

To read the full article, please visit: http://www.waging-peace.org/articles/2005/06/00_krieger_to-the-graduates.htm.

Statement of Richard Falk at Press Conference for the World Tribunal on Iraq

23 June 2005

The World Tribunal on Iraq is an undertaking of historic importance. It is the culmination of a process of tribunal sessions on the legal dimensions of the Iraq War that have been held in all parts of the world. This kind of spontaneous initiative of concerned people around the world has never taken place before. It represents an expression of what might be called "moral globalization," acting on the belief that no state and no leader is above the law when it comes to matters of war and peace. And it expresses the overwhelming sentiments of peoples throughout the world that the Iraq War was against international law and morality. This initiative here in Istanbul has a quality of urgency as people are dying and suffering every day in Iraq as we speak. This is not an academic gathering of experts to find out the relevance of law. It is primarily an expression of popular democracy, of ethical conscience about what is right and wrong in world politics, and an expression of resistance to what is understood around the world as an American project to achieve world domination. The Iraq War is the eye of the storm at the moment. But the wider concern of the WTI is with America's hegemonic global ambitions that is bringing danger, violence, and exploitation to many parts of the world at present.

To read the full article, please visit: http://www.waging-peace.org/articles/2005/06/26_falk_wti-statement.htm.

Take Action

No More Hiroshimas! No More Nagasakis! August 6 and 9 National Days of Remembrance and Action 1945-2005

August 2005 marks the 60th anniversaries of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the United States. On 6 August, join with tens of thousands of people at four central US nuclear weapons sites to call for an end to the development and production of nuclear bombs. On 9 August, participate at an event in your community to remember Nagasaki.

Here is how you can get involved:

Attend a major action on August 6 at one of the core nuclear weapons sites in California, Nevada, New Mexico and Tennessee. Be sure to share the information and bring others with you! For more information, visit: http://www.abolition-now.org/augustactions.

Attend an event in your community commemorating the 60th anniversaries of the US atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. To view a listing of community events across the US, please visit: http://www.chej.org/. If you are organizing an event in your community and would like to list it on the calendar, please contact Carah Ong at cong@napf.org and request an event listing form.

Organize a candlelight vigil at the City Hall in your community on August 9. For more information, contact Jackie Cabasso, Western States Legal Foundation, by email at wslf@earthlink.net or call (510) 839-5877.

Download, copy and distribute the August 6 and 9 National Days of Remembrance and Action flyer to your friends, family, networks and/or members of your organization and encourage them to get involved! To download the flyer, visit: http://www.wagingpeace.org/menu/resources/calendar/2005/event-information/national-days-remembrance.pdf.

Send an email alert to friends or members of your organization, or include an article or announcement in your organization's newsletter. For a sample email alert, article or announcement, please contact Carah Ong at cong@napf.org.

Disarmament and Non-Proliferation

PSI Concludes 16th WMD Interdiction Simulation

On 8 June 2005, the US-led Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) concluded its 16th WMD interdiction simulation off the coast of Spain. The two-day simulation consisted of a dual-phase fictional scenario involving an aircraft illicitly carrying centrifuge technology from Eurasia to South America. First, simulation participants exchanged information about the aircraft and tracked its flight over Europe. New intelligence then revealed that the aircraft was carrying radioactive materials and scheduled to land in an African country with ties to terrorists. The Spanish Air Force was to intercept and divert the plane to a base in Spain.

This simulation was part of a series of exercises that take place in different regions of the world under the auspices of PSI.

Source: "Spain Hosts PSI Exercise 'Blue Action,'" Global Security Newswire, 8 June 2005.

IAEA Director-General ElBaradei Successfully Wins Third Term

On 13 June 2005, Mohammed ElBaradei was re-appointed as head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) after the United States dropped its opposition to his candidacy. ElBaradei will serve as the IAEA Director-General for the next four years.

The US has criticized ElBaradei for being too soft in dealing with Iran and its nuclear program. The US contends that Iran is using its nuclear energy program to conceal nuclear weapons ambitions. However, ElBaradei has not made such a claim, despite Iran's earlier safeguards breaches. In regards to these disagreements, ElBaradei stated, "We might once in a while disagree on tactics, but on many objectives, we share the same common view that we need to stem the proliferation of nuclear weapons, we need to ensure the authority of the agency in terms of verification, we need to have better control over the sensitive fuel cycle and we need to have a more efficient compliance mechanism."

ElBaradei expressed his gratefulness to the United States for its support, but at the same time refused to step up pressure on Iran.

Sources: Webb, Greg, "ElBaradei Wins Third Term as IAEA Chief," Global Security Newswire, 13 June 2005; Jahn, George, "ElBaradei Reappointed to U.N. Nuclear Post," Associated Press, 13 June 2005.

Nuclear Proliferation

A.Q. Khan Network Still Not Completely Shut Down

On 9 June 2005, the Guardian newspaper reported that some of the enrichment centrifuge and possibly nuclear weapons designs sold by A.Q. Khan are still unaccounted for.

When Libya denounced its nuclear weapons program in December 2003, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) seized the information Libya had acquired on the nuclear black market.

The IAEA believes that more blueprints in electronic form are circulating. An IAEA official remarked, "We have no evidence they were destroyed. One possibility is another client. We just don't know where they are."

Source: "Centrifuge, Warhead Designs Still at Large," Global Security Newswire, 9 June 2005.

New IAEA Revelations Cast Doubtful Light on Iranian Nuclear Program

On 16 June 2005, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director-General ElBaradei announced Iran's failure to fully disclose information regarding its plutonium activities. Iran had stated earlier that its plutonium experiments ended in 1993. IAEA investigations revealed however that these experiments carried on until 1998.

ElBaradei also criticized Iran for refusing the IAEA access to two nuclear facilities suspected to house weaponization activities.

On a more positive note, on 9 June 2005, the IAEA announced that Iran's claim regarding the source of uranium contamination on its centrifuges appears correct. On 11 June 2005, the IAEA verified the freeze of uranium enrichment activities at Natanz.

Iran claims its nuclear program serves peaceful purposes only and intends to end the 2-year IAEA inspection process of its nuclear facilities and materials.

Sources: "IAEA Tests Back Iranian Claim on Source of Nuclear Material," Global Security Newswire, 9 June 2005; "Nuclear site in Iran passes UN inspection," Reuters, 11 June 2005; "Iran has failed to provide crucial nuclear information - ElBaradei," AFP, 14 June 2005; "Iran 'misled UN on nuclear work,'" BBC News, 15 June 2005.

Nuclear Insanity

Nuclear War Advocate Replaces John Bolton as Undersecretary of State

Right-wing "counter-proliferation" advocate and hard-line militarist Robert G. Joseph has assumed John Bolton's former role as the US State Department's Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Affairs.

Among his policy positions, Joseph is a proponent of preemptive war, increased military spending as a would-be answer to potential terrorist assaults, and the development of new and "usable" nuclear weapons.

Joseph's credentials include founding and serving as director of the Counterproliferation Center at National Defense University, as well as working closely with the National Institute for Public Policy (NIIP) and the Center for Security Policy (CSP). Both the NIIP and CSP focus primarily on formulating policy proposals aimed at increasing the use of high-technology, high-priced space weapons, "missile defense" systems, and nuclear weapons development.

Joseph has said that his "starting point and first conclusion" in devising national security strategy is the fact that "nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons are a permanent feature of the international environment." His second conclusion is that nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons "have substantial utility," and an arsenal of "usable" nuclear weapons is necessary "to deny an enemy of these weapons" because "the threat of retaliation or punishment that formed the basis for our deterrent policy in the Cold War is not likely to be sufficient."

Joseph helped craft an influential NIIP proposal in 2001 titled "Rationale and Requirement for US Nuclear Forces and Arms Control," which is considered a veritable blueprint for Bush's current Nuclear Posture Review (NPR). The NPR locates "usable" bunker-busting nukes at the center of US security policy, while trumpeting the importance of upgrading the US' existing nuclear arsenal.

Although Joseph has avoided being a high-profile militarist like Bolton, his political positions are closely aligned with those of his predecessor.

Source: Barry, Tom, "Nuclear Warrior Replaces Bolton as Arms Control Chief," International Relations Center, 10 June 2005, http://www.irc-online.org

IAEA Exempts Saudi Arabia from Nuke Inspections

On 16 June 2005, members of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) approved a deal in Vienna, Austria that exempts Saudi Arabia from nuclear inspections.

The country was exempted under what is known as the Small Quantities Agreement, which permits countries whose nuclear activities and supplies are deemed below a minimum level to forego nuclear inspections, in exchange for submitting a written declaration of their nuclear activities.

The Small Quantities Agreement currently applies to 75 nations, most of which are located in "politically stable" parts of the world.

While the Saudi government insists it has no intention of developing nuclear weapons, it has received significant pressure from the United States, European Union, and Australia to open its doors to inspections. The Saudi agreement is particularly controversial given diplomatic tensions in the Middle East, based on allegations that Iran is pursuing a nuclear weapons program.

Source: "Saudi Arabia Exempt from Nuke Inspections," Associated Press, 16 June 2005.

Enola Gay Crew Cancels Tinian Anniversary Appearance

Shortly after the Tinian government announced the participation of survivors of the US atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in a peace ceremony to mark the end of World War II, the pilot and crew of the Enola Gay plane canceled plans to participate in the ceremony, citing "health reasons."

Enola Gay is the plane from which the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima on 6 August 1945.

The crew members in question are Enola Gay pilot General Paul W. Tibbets, navigator Theodore Van Kirk, and weaponeer Morris Jeppson. Van Kirk and Jeppson both participated in a 60th anniversary celebration of the Battles of Saipan and Tinian in those cities in June 2004. The decision not to participate was heralded by an e-mail from Tibbets' grandson, Paul W. Tibbetts IV, himself a lieutenant colonel with the US Air Force.

Two hibakusha from Hiroshima and one hibakusha from Nagasaki have confirmed their participation in four different portions of the event, which is called "Hibakusha Experience."

Tinian Municipal Council executive director James M. Mendiola told the Saipan Tribune he has received a fair amount of criticism for the decision to feature the hibakusha (atomic bomb survivors) in the ceremony. Mendiola says it was never the council's intention "to stir up bad feelings among the US veterans." According to Mendiola, "We just want to show a kind of solidarity with Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Their main message, which we really believe, is the idea that no longer would there be any city and people on the face of the earth that should be subjected to an atomic bomb."

Mendiola is a member of the Mayors for Peace campaign, which is headed by the Hiroshima Mayor Tadatoshi Akiba and Nagasaki Mayor Iccho Itoh.

Source: Dones, Liberby, "Engola Gay Crew Cancel Tinian Anniversary," Pacific Islands Report, 27 June, 2005.

Nuclear Insecurity

Intruders Attempted Break-in at Russian Nuclear Military Facilities

According to a Russian Defense Ministry official, authorities have thwarted two attempts to break into Russian military nuclear facilities since the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union. Colonel General Igor Valynkin, chief of the Russian Defense Ministry's 12th Main Department, which is in charge of atomic weapons, said that although there have been no terrorist attacks on the facilities, civilians have twice tried unsuccessfully to gain illegal access.

Valynkin said the attempts to penetrate military nuclear installations occurred in 2002 and 2003, both in the European part of Russia. In both cases, the attempts involved one intruder. He said the attempts "were averted by our mobile units and security at the facilities," asserting they were reliably protected from penetration by intruders and potential terrorist attacks. Valynkin said, "Our system is good, it works and it provides nuclear security."

However, Valynkin acknowledged that "there are problems with nuclear security" and said it is being improved with help from the US and other foreign donors, including the installation of security systems that eliminate the need for human guards. Valynkin stated, "The human factor plays a role everywhere. If you place a guard at an installation, he is doubtless a protector, but he also can be an individual who either violates or aids in the violation or penetration of the facility."

Valynkin also said the main source of a potential terrorist threat to the Kremlin's nuclear weapons facilities is "Chechen terrorist groups," which have warned that they will target Russian facilities of all kinds. He suggested there had been warnings from the Federal Security Service, or FSB, indicating potential terrorist threats to specific installations, but he would not discuss the issue in detail.

Source: Gutterman, Steve, "Russia: Intruders Targeted Nuclear Site," Associated Press, 22 June 2005.

Personal Computer Leaks Top-Secret Japanese Nuclear Data to Internet

In an incident that has sparked a public relations scramble by Japanese officials, top-secret information on Japan's nuclear plants was leaked to the Internet via a virus on a personal computer in mid-June. The information included interior photographs of the plants, names of workers, and details of inspections and repair work.

The computer belonged to an employee of a subsidiary of Mitsubishi Electric Corp. The employee in question is in charge of inspecting the plants. The leak contained information about seven Japanese electric power companies and five independent firms.

Mitsubishi Electric released a statement saying, "We deeply apologize for causing trouble to many people, including electric power companies. We will do our utmost to prevent the recurrence of such an incident."

Japan's top government spokesman vowed that Japanese officials would take measures to ensure more effective protection of sensitive information in the future.

Source: "Japan Nuclear Data Leak Raises Security Concerns," Reuters, 23 June 2005.

Missiles and Missile Defense

China Successfully Tests New Submarine Launched Ballistic Missile

On 16 June 2005, China test-fired the Ju Lang-2, a new, nuclear capable long-range submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM). The Ju Lang-2 is a modified version of the Dong Feng-31, an intercontinental ballistic missile that has a range of about 8,000 kilometers (5,000 miles).

US intelligence agencies tracked the missile as it was launched near the port of Quingao and traveled several thousand miles before impact in China's western desert. US officials say this test marks a major advance in Beijing's long-range nuclear program.

It remains unclear whether the new Type 094 nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine was used as the platform to test the Ju Lang-2. China has steadily increased its submarine forces over the past years. It appears the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) will command more than 80 submarines in the near term.

Top US defense contractors have begun developing a similar missile for the US arsenal. Alliant Techsystems and Lockheed are working on an intermediate-range submarine-launched ballistic missile capable of delivering a 1,000-pound payload 1,200 miles (2,000 kilometers) within 15 minutes of launch.

Sources: "China test-fires new submarine-launched missile," The Yomiuri Shimbun, 18 June 2005; "Alliant, Lockheed designing missile," Bizjournals.com, 21 June 2005; Bill Gertz, "China advances missile program," The Washington Times, 22 June 2005.

Son of Star Wars Unveiled

On 7 June 2005, US military officials and Raytheon military contractors unveiled a $815 million sea-based X-band radar system - an early warning system designed to track in-coming enemy missiles. The sea-based radar stands more than 250 feet high and will be installed on Adak, an Aleutian Island in Alaska. The radar must first be shipped from the US east-coast around South America. During its voyage, officials will give the radar its first complete test when it passes through Hawaii.

The X-band radar uses high frequency signals to identify the type of incoming missile, its size, speed and trajectory. It is also supposedly capable of distinguishing incoming warheads from decoys. The system has proven unsuccessful in previous missile interception tests.

Sources: "Missile defense radar nearing completion in Texas," Reuters, 7 June 2005; "Missile detection system unveiled," Associated Press, 8 June 2005.

Raytheon to Supply Components for Taiwan's Missile and Air Defense System

On 23 June 2005, Pentagon officials announced that a US Air Force contract worth as much as $750 million was awarded to Raytheon Company to supply components for Taiwan's missile and air defense system. Under the contract, Raytheon will develop key components for Taiwan's Air Forces Early Warning Surveillance Radar system.

The system will allow Taiwan to detect and track long and short-range ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, aircraft and sea vessels. The system can be integrated with the US Patriot Advanced Capability 3 (PAC-3) anti-missile systems, which the US has already offered to sell Taiwan.

Source: "Taiwan to get US missile defense radar," Reuters, 24 June 2005.

Japan Bolstering Missile Defenses

On 14 June 2005, the lower house in Japan's parliament passed a bill that creates the legal basis for intercepting incoming ballistic missiles. The bill also authorizes Japan's armed forces to intercept incoming missiles without approval from the prime minister or the Cabinet. Defense hawks argue the authority to shoot down incoming missiles without explicit executive consent is necessary because missiles fired from North Korea, for example, would strike Tokyo within minutes of launch. Only if time permits, Japanese defense forces would seek consent of the Prime Minister. The bill must pass the upper house to become law.

To further bolster Japan's defenses, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency, a Pentagon agency that handles US government arms sales, announced on 29 June the possible sale of upgrades to Japan's AEGIS Destroyer fleet. The proposed $387 million sale would include SM-3 interceptor missiles, numerous ballistic missile defense components, spare parts and services to bolster Japan's AEGIS missile defense platform. The sale has not been finalized and the US Congress retains the right to block the sale.

US officials claim US arms sales policy prevents the introduction of high-level military technology to a region where the new technology might lead to an arms race. Although it appears this sale of advanced missile defense technology and equipment would lead to the increased offensive capabilities in adjacent nations, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency disagrees. The agency said that "although comparable weapons are not currently deployed in Northwest Asia, the proposed sale of SM-3 missiles and upgrades to the AEGIS Weapon System will not significantly alter the existing military balance in the region as the proposed sale enhances only defensive capabilities."

In related missile defense developments, the US has asked Japan for more than $500 million to offset costs on a joint advanced missile defense system. Japan has already spent roughly half that amount over the last six years on the project. Nevertheless US officials are asking for the $500 million to match the funds the US expects to pay in the upcoming years on the joint project. Japanese officials appear reluctant to share the costs and are negotiating a reduced bill.

Sources: "Japanese lawmakers seek to streamline missile defenses," Associated Press, 14 June 2005; "US asks Japan for 545 million dollars for missile defense," Agence France Presse, 20 June 2005; Axel Berkofsky, "Japan shows some muscle," Asia Times, 21 June 2005; "US moves to boost Japan's missile shield," Reuters, 30 June 2005; "More SM-3 block IA standard missiles for Japanese navy," US Defense Security Cooperation Agency, 30 June 2005.

US, India Sign 10-Year Weapons Production and Missile Defense Pact

On 28 June 2005, US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and Indian Defense Minister Pranab Mukherjee signed a 10-year agreement to cooperate in the production of weapons, missile defenses, and military technology and energy resources. India's defense hawks hope the US will relax arms export controls that restrict the transfer of technology.

The agreement centers on the expansion of defense trade and establishes the foundation for a defense procurement and production group to facilitate greater cooperation in defense technology and equipment development.

While speaking before a luncheon at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Mukherjee said, "India can prove to be an excellent base for the US defense industry, for the provision of repair, overhaul, maintenance and servicing facilities."

Pakistan has reacted with alarm. In a statement, the Pakistan Foreign Ministry said, "The induction of advanced weapons systems in the region is matter of concern for Pakistan, as it could destabilize the strategic balance in the region…While Pakistan is opposed to an arms race, we are committed to maintaining credible minimum deterrence in both conventional and non-conventional area."

Sources: "US, India sign defense pact," Agence France Presse, 28 June 2005; "US, India sign 10-year defense pact," Al-Jazeera, 29 July 2005; Seema Mustafa, "Arms pact: US Dream, India Nightmare," International Herald Tribune, 1 July 2005; "Pakistan concerned over U.S.-India defense pact," Al-Jazeera, 1 July 2005.

Nuclear Energy

Is Energy from Fusion "The Way"?

ITER, the acronym for the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor, is Latin for "the way". ITER is an experimental fusion reactor that will be the world's first large-scale nuclear fusion reactor, a platform for testing fusion technologies and the feasibility of widespread energy production from commercial fusion reactors.

During the 28 June 2005 ITER ministerial meeting in Moscow, authorities representing each partner agreed on Cadarache, France as the host site for the experimental fusion reactor. For years Japanese and French officials have competed to host the reactor. In mid-June Japanese officials withdrew their bid after negotiating a number of concessions from the Europeans. It is also quite possible that Japan abandoned its ITER bid in hopes of winning France's support of the Japanese effort to gain a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council.

ITER is expected to cost more than $10 billion over the next 20 years. Scientists estimate commercial fusion reactors can be available in 45 years. The ITER project began in 1988 and today is a partnership between the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom), China, Japan, South Korea, Russia and the US.

Fusion energy advocates push the technology as the answer to the world's energy demands. Proponents say deuterium and lithium, the fuel used in a fusion reactor, are practically inexhaustible resources and fusion is an environmentally friendly process that produces no greenhouse gases and no long-lived radioactive by-products.

Actually, fusion energy will likely only exacerbate the world's looming energy crisis. The funding of massive industrial projects, such as ITER, prevents the financing of "little science" - individual researchers who have historically produced the world's most significant scientific breakthroughs. Additionally,

the waste from the fusion process will remain radioactive for at least 200,000 years, until which time it becomes safe for direct human contact. The ITER consortium calls for "a long term repository where [the waste] can be safely forgotten." The ITER project alone will produce at least 6,000 tons of such waste. Finally, the experimental reactor will be a zero net power reactor, meaning it will make only as much energy as it consumes and no more. This makes for an extremely wasteful use of resources in that the reactor will be a significant drain on financial resources and require the expenditure of untold amounts of greenhouse gasses during construction and transportation of materials.

Sources: Peter Starck, "G8 Decision on fusion would herald nuclear future," Reuters, 22 June 2005; Robert Aymar, "Whatever became of nuclear fusion?" presentation made at the Alfred Nobel Symposium - Energy in Cosmos, Molecules and Life, 22 June 2005; "Japan to formally abandon bid to host nuclear energy project," Agence France Presse, 27 June 2005; "France will get fusion reactor to seek a future energy source," New York Times, 28 June 2005; ITER.org.

Fire Shuts Down Florida Nuclear Reactor

On 27 June 2005 at 3:15 am, a fire broke out at the Turkey Point nuclear power plant in south Miami-Dade county. Officials say no radioactivity was released. The fire was contained to non-nuclear areas of the site and no one was hurt during the early morning emergency.

On 28 June, Florida Power & Light (FPL), the electric utility that operates Turkey Point, shut down one of two reactors at the plant to allow inspectors access to the affected area. The fire caused a leak that spilled 30 to 40 gallons of cooling oil used in Unit Four's transformer. The US Nuclear Regulatory Commission has yet to determine the exact cause of the fire.

Although the automatic fire-extinguishing sprinkler system successfully doused the flames, local fire and rescue personnel were deployed to the scene. Lieutenant Eric Baum, spokesman for Miami-Dade Fire-Rescue, expressed trepidation in responding to emergencies at the nuclear plant, "When you hear on your radio, `Attention: Structure fire at Turkey Point,' it gives you pause."

Sources: "Fire at Florida plant causes minor leak," Associated Press, 27 June 2005; Yanez, Luisa, "Plant's nuclear reactor is shut down after blaze," The Miami Herald, 28 June 2005.

Fire Breaks Out in Japan Nuclear Plant

On 30 June 2005 at 9:10 pm, fire broke out at the Hamaoka nuclear power plant in Omaezaki, Shizuoka Prefecture, Japan. Officials have reassured the public that no radioactivity has been leaked outside the plant and no injuries have been reported.

The fire occurred in the basement of a low-level radioactive waste treatment facility about 100 miles west of Tokyo. Officials reported the nuclear reactors were online and operating normally and there was no need to suspend operations.

Sources: "Fire at Japan nuclear plant, no radiation leak," Reuters, 30 June 2005; "Fire breaks out at Hamaoka nuclear plant facility, no leakage seen," Kyodo News Agency, 30 June 2005.

China Leading Global Push for New Nuclear Reactors

Chinese officials are making good on their promise to double the percentage of energy produced from nuclear plants by the year 2020, which translates into some 30 new nuclear reactors. Under current projections, the Chinese will spend more than $48 billion on new nuclear projects in the next 15 years.

In latest developments, the China National Nuclear Corporation (CNNC), China's largest nuclear reactor constructor, is moving forward with a $4.3 billion project at the Quishan plant. CNNC will begin construction of four Chinese-designed nuclear reactors in March 2006. The new reactors at Quishan will increase that plant's generating capacity to 6,200 megawatts.

Seeking a larger share of the global nuclear industry, Russian officials are seeking an expanded partnership with Iran. Alexander Rumyantsev, head of Russia's Federal Agency for Nuclear Power stated, "Tehran intends to build another six nuclear reactors. When Iran announces new tenders to construct nuclear reactors, we'll take part in them."

President George W. Bush is also pushing for more nuclear power plants in the US. During a 22 June 2005 speech at the Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Plant in Maryland, President Bush said, "It's time for this country to start building nuclear power plants again." Bush made calls for an energy bill ready for signature before 1 August 2005 saying, "The energy bill will help us

expand our use of the one energy source that is completely domestic, plentiful in quantity, environmentally friendly and able to generate massive amounts of electricity. And that's nuclear power."

Both chambers of Congress have passed their own energy bills, both versions supporting the nuclear industry in similar ways. In April 2005, the US House of Representatives passed an $8 billion energy bill loaded with taxpayer gifts to the nuclear, coal, and gas industries, complete with rollbacks of environmental protections. On 28 June 2005, the US Senate passed a pricier version of the bill that includes incentives to encourage the construction of new nuclear power plants, and raise the nuclear power plant operator's liability from just $63 million to $95.8 million. Differences in the bills will be worked out in the House-Senate conference later this year.

President Bush has expressed greater support for the House version but nevertheless commended the Senate for passing an energy bill. Since 2001, the House has passed an energy bill three times, the Senate twice, and every time both chambers have failed to produce a final bill for the President.

Sources: "CNNC boosts nuclear power output," China Daily, 14 June 2005; "China to build four new nuclear reactors at Quinshan plant," Agence France Presse, 14 June 2005; "Bush: nuclear power plants needed," Associated Press, 22 June 2006; Ron Hutchenson, "Bush wants more nuclear power plants built in the US," Knight Ridder News Service, 23 June 2005; "Russia wants to build more nuke reactors for iran," Reuters, 28 June 2006; Mary Curtius and Richard Simon, "Energy bill passes senate with bipartisan support," Los Angeles Times, 29 June 2005.

Nuclear Waste

Israel Dumping Nuclear Waste in Neighboring Territories

Dr Zihni al-Wiheidi, Palestinian Minister of Health, accused Israeli authorities of dumping more than 80 tons of Israeli nuclear waste in Palestinian towns. Wiheidi said Israel was burying waste 300 meters from Nablus, and within Hebron. The health minister warned the radiation will poison the groundwater and contaminate the environment for decades to come. Israel has previously been accused by Syria of burying nuclear waste in the Golan Heights.

Source: "Israel buried 80 tons of nuclear waste in the Palestinian territories, says health minister," International Press Center, 16 May 2005.

Radioactive Shipments from Ohio to Texas Delayed

Dozens of waste shipments from a uranium processing plant in Ohio to a temporary storage location in west Texas were delayed because contractor Fluor Fernald was unsatisfied with the composition of the waste for the shipments.

The shipments include a mixture of radioactive waste, cement and fly ash, which are scheduled to be stored in roughly 4,000 different half-inch-thick carbon steel containers. According to Fluor Fernald spokesman Jeff Wagner, it will take until mid to late July to mix the blend into the necessary constitution for a safe shipment.

Fluor Fernald had hoped to be sending out 15 trucks a day, each carrying two 20,000-pound containers of waste, until it discovered the unsatisfactory condition of the waste. To date, it has only sent four total shipments.

Wagner stated, "Any time you start a facility, it's just going to take a little while until you can actually ramp up to your optimal output."

Fluor Fernald still hopes to have all of the waste in Texas by the end of the year.

Meanwhile, the Texas chapter of the Sierra Club has appealed the court ruling that permits the shipments to take place. The hearing for that appeal is scheduled for 11 July 2005.

Source: Holland, Elizabethe, "Radioactive Shipments Pick Up Pace," St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 30 June 2005.

Global Warming May Lay Waste to UK Nuclear Waste Dump

A recent study by British scientists revealed that in as few as 500 years, rising sea levels caused by global warming might destroy the United Kingdom's only major nuclear waste dump.

The report, concerning the one-million cubic meters of low-level radioactive waste stored at Drigg on the Cumbrian coast, was issued by the UK Environment Agency. The flooding of the site would cause the cancer risk among local people to rise by a factor of 100.

Scientists have also speculated that nuclear waste sites in Japan and Taiwan face similar dangers.

If current plans hold, 750,000 more cubic meters of low-level radioactive waste will be disposed of at Drigg before it closes in 2050.

However, prompted by its recent findings, the Environmental Agency has begun a public consultation on plans for further development of the site. It has also requested that British Nuclear Group (BNG), which manages the site, investigate the possibility of digging and removing some of the long-lived waste buried at the site, including uranium-234, which has a half-life of 245,000 years.

Source: Edwards, Rob, "Rising Sea Levels May Destroy Nuclear Dump," NewScientist.com, 28 June 2005.

US Geological Chief Resigns Amidst Yucca Investigation

On 9 June 2005, US Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton announced the resignation of Charles Groat, the director of the US Geological Survey (USGS). USGS spokesperson A.B. Wade denied any association between Groat's resignation and the ongoing flap over falsified Yucca Mountain documents.

According to US Secretary of Energy Samuel Bodman, employees of the USGS and Department of the Interior appeared to have deliberately miscalculated the amount of water that will infiltrate storage areas in the proposed Yucca Mountain nuclear waste repository. Bodman disclosed a number of email messages written by USGS specialists between 1998 and 2000 discussing the research they did for the Yucca Mountain project and the falsification of their research. Goat was criticized during the joint FBI-Energy-Interior investigation for not turning over all the requested documentary evidence and for not taking disciplinary action against the USGS specialists.

Joseph Hevesi, a USGS specialist who sent a number of the email messages that prompted the investigation, testified before the House Government Reform Committee on 29 June 2005. Hevesi denied any wrongdoing and stated during the hearing, "I have never falsified any documents regarding Yucca Mountain or any other project." Hevesi explained some of his emails as jokes, calling them "water cooler talk," while claiming that other emails were "raw emotional responses" that reflected work frustration.

Norton appointed Dr. P. Patrick Leahy as the interim USGS director. A permanent replacement must be nominated by President George W. Bush and confirmed by the Senate.

Sources: "Chief of US geological survey resigning amid flap over yucca mountain documents," Reno Gazette-Journal, 10 June 2005; US Department of the Interior; Steve Tetreault, "Scientist denies falsifying yucca mountain data," Las Vegas Review-Journal, 30 June 2005.

Nuclear Legacy

US Air Force Fails to Recover Lost Nuclear Weapon

On 17 June 2005, the US Air Force (USAF) abandoned its search for a nuclear weapon that was lost off the coast of Georgia in 1958. Just after midnight on 5 February 1958, two US Air Force jets, each traveling 500 mph, collided 35,000 feet over the Georgia countryside. Improbably, all four crew members survived, but a 7,600 pound thermonuclear weapon was lost in the accident. The Air Force searched the area again recently following claims by a retired general that high levels of radiation were found in the area.

The USAF advisor who led the search, Billy Mullins, commented, "We still think it's irretrievably lost. We don't know where to look for it."

Source: "U.S. Air Force Ends Search for Lost Nuke," Global Security Newswire, 20 June 2005.

US Government Eschews Responsibility for Radiation Contamination in South Pacific

On 19 June 2005, the Japanese Yomiuri Shimbun newspaper reported on a US cover-up of a radiation contamination incident in the South Pacific in 1954. The cover-up came to light with the declassification of a document that shows the US government pressured Japan to stop its research into radiation contamination.

On 1 March 1954, the US conducted a hydrogen bomb test at the Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands. Immediate investigations led by the Japanese government revealed the contamination of the tuna freighter Lucky Dragon and the tuna fish it caught. The Japanese Health and Welfare Ministry further declared the area surrounding the Bikini Atoll as heavily contaminated as a result of the hydrogen bomb test.

However, a month later, the Ministry stopped its research into the contamination and altered its conclusion of earlier findings regarding the radioactive contamination. The Ministry then asserted that even though the tuna was contaminated, its organs were still safe to eat.

This change in rhetoric came after a secret Japanese-US conference on nuclear testing and radiation was held in November 1954. A letter, referring to this conference, and written to the US Atomic Energy Commission reveals that the US exerted pressure on the Japanese government to stop its research of the tuna contamination. The US offered Japan compensation in the form of $2 million, but did not take responsibility for the negative health and environmental impact of its nuclear tests in the South Pacific.

Osamu Ishii, a Japanese expert on the history of international relations, stated, "For the United States, the research into radioactive contamination of tuna could have raised anti-U.S. sentiment in its ally Japan, and the United States feared that Japan would leak the data on radiation to the Eastern bloc in the fierce competition with the then Soviet Union for nuclear development. The document showed that the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission prevented these possibilities."

Source: "U.S. made Japan drop Lucky Dragon probe," The Yomiuri Shimbun, 19 June 2005.

New Report Links Low Radiation and Cancer Risks

A new report released on 29 June 2005 from a National Academy of Sciences' panel discloses that even very low doses of radiation pose a risk of cancer over a person's lifetime. It rejected some scientists' arguments that tiny doses are harmless or may in fact be beneficial. According to the scientists on the panel, "It is unlikely that there is a threshold (of radiation exposure) below which cancers are not induced."

The findings could influence the maximum radiation levels that are allowed at abandoned reactors and other nuclear sites and raises warnings about excessive exposure to radiation for medical purposes such as repeated whole-body CT scans. The experts said that while at low doses "the number of radiation-induced cancers will be small ... as the overall lifetime exposure increases, so does the risk."

The scientists found that even common X-rays pose some risk of adverse health effects, although the panel said there was not enough information available to accurately estimate the cancer risk from X-rays. Nevertheless, there is evidence that per unit of absorbed radiation, X-rays may be more dangerous than other radiation. The panel also said that approximately one person out of 1,000 would develop cancer from exposure to the amount of radiation from a single, average whole body CT-scan.

For years, scientists have debated how extremely low doses of radiation affect human health.
Pro-nuclear advocates, as well as some independent scientists, have maintained that the current risk models for low-level radiation have produced more stringent requirements than is necessary to protect public health.

The new findings may be an issue in determining decontamination requirements at abandoned reactors and at federal weapons sites. Some anti-nuclear advocates said the study reaffirms that stringent regulations are needed when cleaning up abandoned nuclear sites or considering health risks near nuclear power plants.

Richard R. Monson, the panel's chairman said, "The scientific research base shows that there is no threshold of exposure below which low levels of ionized radiation can be demonstrated to be harmless or beneficial." Monson is a professor of epidemiology at Harvard's School of Public Health.

Daniel Hirsch, president of Committee to Bridge the Gap, a Los Angeles-based nuclear watchdog group said, "The NAS panel puts to rest once and for all claims that low doses of radiation aren't dangerous ... nuclear advocates have been making this claim for years." Meanwhile, Mitchell Singer, a spokesman for the Nuclear Energy Institute, the industry's lobbying arm, said the report "is a positive finding. It shows there is very little risk of exposure from low levels of radiation."

Source: "Panel Affirms Low Radiation a Cancer Risk," Associated Press, 29 June 2005.

Nuclear Lab Officials Condemn US Nuclear Policy

An internal report issued by senior officials at the United States' three primary nuclear weapons labs - Sandia, Los Alamos, and Lawrence Livermore - blasted the country's efforts to maintain its nuclear arsenal, labeling it "increasingly unsustainable."

The report specifically cites the exorbitant future cost of the country's nuclear weapons programs, which outstrip available funds. It also blasts the US' fixation on maintaining aging warheads, which is causing the US' nuclear arsenal to be "much larger than otherwise needed."

The labs' report was written by four senior nuclear weapons scientists and endorsed by the weapons programs chiefs at the three labs. It largely mirrors a report issued by the House of Representatives Energy and Water Appropriations subcommittee in May, which proposed an across-the-board overhaul of the US nuclear weapons complex.

The House Subcommittee, chaired by Representative David Hobson (R-OH), maintains that the US needs to design a new "Reliable Replacement Warhead" that is easier to maintain in the long run. Hobson's 2006 budget report says the new warhead would be "designed for ease of manufacturing, maintenance, dismantlement, and certification without nuclear testing."

According to Hobson's proposal, the federal government would come up with the funds for the RRW by cutting spending on maintaining aging warheads, lab supercomputers, and preparations for future underground nuclear tests at the Nevada Test Site.

Under the "Stockpile Stewardship" program, the US allocates billions of dollars annually to preserving its existing nuclear weapons stockpile, although the majority of "Stockpile Stewardship" funding actually goes toward upgrading existing weapons and designing new ones.

According to the best available estimates (official totals are classified), there are currently 10,300 nuclear weapons in the US stockpile. Of these, roughly 2,000 are poised on "hair-trigger alert," ready to be fired at a moment's notice.

Source: Fleck, John, "3 Labs Rip U.S. Nuclear Complex," Albuquerque Journal, 14 June 2005.

Southeastern University Officials Want Savannah River Reactor

In a plan submitted to the US Department of Energy (DOE), officials from 16 universities in the Southeast have requested that a nuclear research reactor be created at the Savannah River Site (SRS) in South Carolina as a means of training future engineers to run commercial nuclear reactors.

The proposal was a response to a DOE call to various universities for new nuclear research ideas. The consortium of universities, called Southeast Universities Nuclear Reactor Institute for Science and Education (SUNRISE), wants $450,000 to design the proposed SRS facility.

While there are research reactors at SUNRISE member schools (North Carolina State University, the University of Florida, and University of Maryland), the proposed SRS reactor would be accessible to students at all 16 SUNRISE schools.

The DOE has yet to endorse the proposal, but it has strong backing from US Representative Gresham Barrett (R-SC), who said he expected "to get a yes" to a proposed energy park at the Savannah River Site, which he said would be a "perfect fit" with the proposed research reactor.

The new research reactor would presumably increase the number of nuclear engineers-in-training in the US. After hitting a low of 500 nuclear engineers in 1998, the number of US students enrolled in nuclear engineering classes has climbed to 1,500, matching the amount reached in 1992.

The Savannah River Site is also one of six sites being considered by NuStart, a group of four large power companies, for a new commercial nuclear reactor. There is little connection between the prospective commercial reactor and the research facility proposed by SUNRISE, according to SUNRISE members.

Source: Gelinas, Josh, "Group Wants Reactor for SRS," Augusta Chronicle, 13 June 2005.

Los Alamos Lab May Be Contaminating Los Alamos Drinking Water

The New Mexico Environmental Department (NMED) reports that Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) may be contaminating Los Alamos County drinking water. According to NMED scientists, the municipal drinking water wells that supply Los Alamos County can influence the flow of subterranean contaminants from LANL and that the wells may potentially capture some of the pollutants. LANL scientists concurred with the assessment issued by the NMED.

NMED Secretary Ron Curry said this information should not be considered unduly alarming. According to Curry, "This order will allow us to understand and act on this pollution before it threatens public health."

Recent tests of the four active municipal wells in the area revealed no contamination by the labs. However, one municipal lab was discontinued in 2000 after it was discovered to be contaminated by heightened levels of perchlorate. A team of Los Alamos scientists are preparing to issue their own report on these findings.

Also, in 2004, a report by Texas hydrologist George Rice found that low concentrations of explosives and perchlorate suspected to be from the lab have reached the Rio Grande within the last 60 years.

LANL officials, the US Department of Energy, and the NMED signed an agreement in March 2005 on an investigation and clean-up of Los Alamos waste to be completed by 2015.

Sources: Rankin, Adam, "Los Alamos Wells May Draw Pollutants," Albuquerque Journal, 30 June 2005; "Los Alamos lab waste reportedly found in the Rio Grande, says report," Associated Press, 24 August 2004.

UC-LANL Contract Extended by Eight Months

The Department of Energy (DOE) has given the University of California until 31 May 2006 to operate the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), extending the existing contract by eight months. According to the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), the division of the DOE that deals with nuclear-related issues, the extension will allow LANL employees more time to examine their employment options.

Currently, these three options are:
To become an employee under the new contractor and roll their existing benefits into the new benefit plan;
To retire and try to seek employment from the new contractor; or
To freeze their UC benefits and roll their vacation time and sick leave into the new plan.

The NNSA has an option to extend the contract until 30 September 2006, but NNSA officials do not think that will be necessary.

Source: "UC Given 8-month Contract Extension To Manage LANL," Associated Press, 11 June 2005.

Bomb-Testing Livermore Supercomputer Ranked as World's Fastest

The IBM Blue Gene/L system, located at the Lawrence Livermore Lab, was named the world's most powerful computer at the International Supercomputer Conference in Heidelberg, Germany on 22 June 2005. The computer is capable of 136.8 teraflops, or trillions of calculations per second.

One of the primary purposes of the computer is to simulate tests of nuclear weapons. Known more commonly as "Super Blue," it has long been criticized by anti-nuclear activists for corrupting the spirit of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, which was signed in 1992 but has not yet been ratified by the US.

Source: Yi, Matthew, "Livermore Supercomputer Ranked as World's Fastest," San Francisco Chronicle, 22 June, 2005.

DOE May Resume Plutonium Production at Idaho National Lab

The Department of Energy (DOE) released a draft environmental impact study on 28 June 2005 that endorses its long-discussed decision to resume production of Plutonium-238 (Pu-238) at the Idaho National Laboratory (INL). In addition to Pu-238 production, INL would also become the new home for processes of Pu-238 manufacture and purification that previously took place at the Los Alamos, New Mexico, and Oak Ridge, Tennessee, National Laboratories.

The Pu-238 produced at INL would be used to create space batteries, ostensibly for "national security" purposes and to power NASA space crafts. Construction of a new Pu-238 complex to accommodate the consolidation would, if approved, be finished by 2009 and cost up to $300 million.

Proponents of consolidating the plutonium battery production at INL say the move would significantly increase the safety of dealing with radioactive nuclear materials. If the processes of plutonium isolation and its manufacture into pellets are moved from Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) to INL, the materials would not have to be transported across the country.

Although it discontinued Pu-238 production in the late '80s, the DOE has planned to resume production for many years due to an expected shortfall that will occur in 2010. The DOE is also proposing to build a second, smaller Pu-238 production facility at Oak Ridge laboratory.

Pu-238 has a half-life of 88 years, which is much shorter than the 24,000-year half-life of Plutonium-239 used in the manufacture of nuclear weapons, but it is much more radioactive than Pu-239. In August 2003, a Pu-238 spill

took place at the LANL's Plutonium facility, which the DOE has been trying unsuccessfully to decontaminate ever since. Employees have accidentally been exposed to plutonium on three different occasions at LANL

The final decision on whether the INL will take on the program will take place later in the summer. A DOE public hearing concerning the decision will likely be held in Idaho in late July. Public comments to the DOE will be accepted at consolidationeis@nuclear.energy.gov.

According to Jeremy Maxand, Executive Director of the Snake River Alliance, it is highly probable that the new Pu-238 production would be used as part of the US' ongoing drive to weaponize space. According to Maxand, "Though we've been told the plutonium batteries aren't used in nuclear weapons, missile defense, or earth-orbiting satellites, we've also been told that the national security mission could change. We'd never know, of course. It would be a secret change to a secret."

In addition, the INL's Naval Reactors Facility may soon be outfitted to design and ultimately manufacture nuclear reactors for space missions - including a possible manned mission to Mars - that need more energy than that provided by the batteries.

Sources: O'Neil, Kathleen, "Idaho Could Be Hub for Plutonium, Space Work," Idaho Register, 11 June 2005; Maxand, Jeremy, "Proposed Plutonium Factory Has High Potential for Harm to Idahoans," Idaho Statesman, 28 June 2005; "Idaho lab may begin plutonium production," Idaho State Journal, 28 June 2005.

Foundation Activities

Foundation to Hold National Youth Conference on Nuclear Issues

In an effort to broaden its Youth Outreach Initiative on a national basis, the Foundation will host a week-long national youth conference focusing on nuclear organizing and activism from 15-21 August at the University of California at Santa Barbara. The conference will bring together some 35 to 40 young people to educate and empower them to become more effective leaders in their work to oppose nuclear weapons. The conference will serve to leverage the passion of these young people in working separately and together, and the Foundation will be a support structure for these efforts following the conference. For more information or to fill out the online application, please visit: http://www.wagingpeace.org/menu/programs/youth-outreach/index.htm#youth-conference.

11th Annual Sadako Peace Day

On 9 August 2005, the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation will hold its 11th Annual Sadako Peace Day, a day to remember and pay tribute to the victims of the US atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, as well as all victims of war. The event will include music, poetry and reflection at Sadako Peace Garden at La Casa de Maria Retreat Center in Montecito, CA . For more information, contact the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation at (805) 965-3443.

Are you holding a commemoration in your area? We want to hear about it. Please send a message with details of your event to the Foundation's Advocacy and Research Director Carah Ong at cong@napf.org.

Foundation Represented at World Tribunal on Iraq

Foundation Board Chair Richard Falk and President David Krieger participated in the final session of the World Tribunal on Iraq which took place in Istanbul from 23-26 June. The Istanbul session was the culmination of a series of 20 hearings held in different cities of the world that focused upon the illegal invasion and occupation of Iraq. Richard Falk provided opening remarks and David Krieger served on the Jury of Conscience.

The World Tribunal on Iraq is a global citizens' initiative which seeks its legitimacy in the collective conscience of humanity. For this purpose a jury of conscience was established for the Istanbul session comprising 15 members from 10 different countries. It received 54 testimonies from a panel of advocates and witnesses who came from a number of countries, including Iraq, the USA and the UK.

To view a draft of the final statement of the WTI, visit http://www.wagingpeace.org/articles/2005/06/27_draft-wti-final-statement.htm.

Educators' Section

Nuclear Information Clearinghouse Announces New Resource Commemorating 60th Anniversary of the Trinity Nuclear Test

Nuclear Pathways and its member sites are pleased to announce the launch of a new website to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the Trinity nuclear test. Trinity Remembered.com is a comprehensive site that weaves together the story of the Trinity test with historical documents, eyewitness accounts, biographies of key players, photos and videos of the world's first nuclear explosion.

On 16 July 1945, the world changed with the explosion of the first atomic bomb when a plutonium implosion device was tested at a site located 210 miles south of Los Alamos on the barren plains of the Alamogordo Bombing Range, known as the Jornada del Muerto. Inspired by the poetry of John Donne, J. Robert Oppenheimer code-named the test Trinity.

Hoisted atop a 100-foot tower, the plutonium device, or Gadget, detonated at precisely 5:29:45 am Mountain War Time over the New Mexico desert, releasing nearly 21 kilotons of energy, instantly vaporizing the tower and melting the surrounding desert sand and turning it into a green glassy substance, now known as Trinitite. An enormous blast came seconds after the explosion, sending searing heat across the desert and knocking observers to the ground. Physicist Kenneth Bainbridge, an eyewitness of the Trinity test, stated, "No one who saw it could forget it, a foul and awesome display." The success of the Trinity test meant that an atomic bomb using plutonium could be readied for use by the US military.

Nuclear Pathways Project Director Dr. Frank Settle of Washington and Lee University states, "This year marks the 60th anniversary of the Trinity Test, which signified the dawn of the Atomic Age. Trinity Remembered.com provides important resources to the public on this defining moment in nuclear history."

Trinity Remembered.com is a project of Nuclear Pathways (http://nuclearpathways.org), a nuclear information clearinghouse, and its member sites. For more information visit http://www.TrinityRemembered.com, or contact Carah Ong at (202) 543-4100 ext. 105; cong@napf.org.

Resources

Diversion of Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Weapons Expertise from the Former Soviet Union

Diversion of Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Weapons Expertise from the Former Soviet Union, is a RAND report that was published for the US Department of Energy. The report explores the threat that nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons and information from the former Soviet Union have fallen into the wrong hands.

The complete report is available from RAND at: http://www.rand.org/pubs/documented_briefings/2005/RAND_DB457.pdf

National Energy Policy: Inventory of Major Federal Energy Programs and Status of Policy Recommendations

In June 2005, the US Government Accountability Office (GAO) released the latest National Energy Policy report. Unlike the May 2001 National Energy Policy report where the GAO was tasked with providing recommendations for a national energy plan, this 2005 report identifies major federal energy programs and a review of the efforts to implement the 2001 recommendations.

The report is available as a PDF download from: http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d05379.pdf

US Options in Iraq

Oxford Research Group Global Security Consultant Paul Rogers has released monthly briefings on events in Iraq and Afghanistan. Rogers' monthly briefings focus on the implications of US foreign policy since the "end of major combat operations" in Iraq was announced by President Bush in May 2003. To read the current briefing entitled US Operations in Iraq, as well as previous briefings, please visit: http://www.oxfordresearchgroup.org.uk/paulrogers.htm

The Lugar Survey on Proliferation Threats and Responses

The Lugar Survey on Proliferation Threats and Responses was commissioned by US Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Richard Lugar. The report surveys over 80 non-proliferation and national security experts and assesses current non-proliferation and counter-proliferation efforts and identifies key areas of concern.

The report is available as a PDF download from: http://lugar.senate.gov/reports/NPSurvey.pdf

Combating Nuclear Smuggling: Efforts to Deploy Radiation Detection Equipment in the US and in Other Countries

Combating Nuclear Smuggling is Gene Aloise's testimony as the Government Accountability Office Director of Natural Resources and Environment before the House of Representative's Subcommittees on the Prevention of Nuclear and Biological Attack and on Emergency Preparedness, Science, and Technology, and the Committee on Homeland Security. Aloise's testimony summarizes the results of past US efforts to combat nuclear smuggling around the world, the different US agencies involved, problems coordinating their efforts, and the effectiveness of radiation detection equipment.

The study is available as a PDF download from: http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d05840t.pdf

Cooperative Threat Reduction: DOD Has Improved Its Management and Internal Controls, but Challenges Remain

Cooperative Threat Reduction: DOD Has Improved Its Management and Internal Controls, but Challenges Remain is a Government Accountability Office assessment of the Department of Defense's internal controls for the Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) program. The assessment finds the Cooperative Threat Reduction program faltered in 2003 with the failure of two projects, costing the Department of Defense nearly $200 million. The complete assessment recommends the Secretary of Defense conduct performance reviews of completed CTR projects to document lessons learned to make improvements on future projects.

The report is available as a PDF download from: http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d05329.pdf

Thorium fuel cycle - Potential benefits and challenges

In May 2005, the International Atomic Energy Agency published Thorium fuel cycle - Potential benefits and challenges. The report assesses fuel fabrication, reprocessing, and waste management issues and includes a section on proliferation resistance.

The report is available as a PDF download from: http://www-pub.iaea.org/MTCD/publications/PDF/TE_1450_web.pdf

Quotable

"We're No. 1 in the world in military capabilities. But on the business side, the Defense Department gets a D - giving them the benefit of the doubt. If they were a business, they wouldn't be in business."

David M. Walker, Comptroller General of the United States
Quoted from a New York Times article, speaking on Pentagon weapons spending.
8 June 2005

"There are not going to be any timetables. Why would you say to the enemy, you know, 'Here's a timetable; just go ahead and wait us out? It doesn't make any sense to have a timetable.'"

George W. Bush, US President
Responding to calls for withdrawal from Iraq during a joint press briefing with Iraqi Prime Minister Ibrahim Jafari
24 June 2005

"The time has come for this Senate to send a clear and unambiguous message to the White House and the Pentagon: we will not support funding for programs that will only re-open the nuclear door."

Diane Feinstein, US Senator from California
Speaking on the Senate floor
30 June 2005
Feinstein's complete remarks are available at: http://feinstein.senate.gov/05releases/r-nukes.htm

"The energy bill will help us expand our use of the one energy source that is completely domestic, plentiful in quantity, environmentally friendly and able to generate massive amounts of electricity. And that's nuclear power."

George W. Bush, US President
Remarks made during a speech at the Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Plant in Maryland
22 June 2005

Editorial Team