



Nuclear Report from Taiwan

A Joint Publication of
The Anti-Nuclear Coalition for Taiwan
and The Asian Ecological Society

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Fourth Nuclear Plant Budget Passes *KMT Marshals Enough Votes to Keep No. 4 Project Alive*

Following weeks of intense and occasionally violent debate the Legislature decided on July 9 not to review or freeze last year's initial budget for construction of Taiwan's fourth nuclear plant. The decision will allow the construction bidding process to continue. The Taiwan Power Company (Taipower) is to select the construction contractor by the end of this year.

The July 9 open-ballot vote was the second vote in three weeks of bitterly divided and often chaotic debate both in and outside the legislature. The issue was initially debated and voted upon on June 23 by the Legislature's Budget, Economic, Interior Affairs and National Defense Committees. The legitimacy of that vote, which was held in an uproar after hundreds of protesters stormed into the Legislature's meeting hall, was disputed vehemently by legislators of the opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). The opposition forced the ruling party to submit the issue to an open ballot of the full legislature on July 9. The final tally in the voting was 76 to 57 opposed to reviewing last year's passage of the budget. In other words, the budget will stand and the project will continue for at least one more year.

Demonstrators from anti-nuclear groups and the Yen Liao area where the nuclear plant is to be built had been camped out-

side the legislature building in downtown Taipei in protest since early June. By June 23, their numbers had swelled to over a thousand. During the afternoon discussions, the Yen Liao protesters stormed through police barricades and broke down the doors of the Legislature Building to get into the meeting hall. Chaos ensued in the packed hall and continued during the voting. A scuffle between two legislators over the voting process ended with both in the hospital. When the legislature reconvened two days later, supporters of the two injured lawmakers clashed outside the hall as legislators inside argued the validity of the previous meeting's vote count and committee process.

The outcome of the votes reflects the control the ruling party (the Kuomintang, or KMT) still maintains over the legislative process. As the decision approached, the KMT leadership devoted their full efforts to supporting Taipower's plan to build the No. 4 plant. On July 7, President Lee Teng-hui, who also is chairman of the KMT, warned that any KMT legislator who voted in opposition to the fourth nuclear plant would be punished by the party. (Even so, three KMT legislators voted against the project.)

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The No Nukes Asia Forum: Bringing Nations Together

The first conference of the No Nukes Asia Forum, held over ten days in June/July in Japan, represents an important step in coordinating and strengthening the efforts of anti-nuclear organizations in the region. Delegates from Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia and India discussed regional and domestic nuclear issues and toured Japanese nuclear facilities. The group also filed formal protests with the Japanese government over Japan's plans to develop a nuclear fuel reprocessing industry and its transport of highly-dangerous plutonium. Mr. Kuo Jian-ping of the Yami tribe on Orchid Island and Professor Lin Pi-yao from Tunghai University represented the Anti-Nuclear Coalition for Taiwan. The Taiwan Environmental Protection Union and representatives from the radioactively-contaminated Min Sheng Villa apartments in Taipei also participated in the Forum.

After several days of discussions, the conference divided into eight groups to visit various nuclear sites in Japan. The ANCT representatives visited the nuclear waste site at Rokkasho village in Aomori at the north end of Japan's main island.

The nuclear complex at Rokkasho is enormous, extending over 750 hectares. It contains a nuclear waste terminal disposal

site, a reprocessing facility to convert spent uranium into plutonium, and a uranium enriching station. The delegates from Taiwan noticed many similarities between Rokkasho and Orchid Island.

Where the Yami of Orchid Island were deceived about the purpose of the waste site (they were told it was to be a fish cannery), the residents in the Rokkasho area were deceived by a land-acquisition scheme. The land around the complex was purchased over a period of years by companies under different names. After all the necessary land had been acquired, the land was brought together under one parent company, which then announced its plan to build a nuclear complex, infuriating the local farmers and fishermen.

Other parallels exist in the pressures the local populations face from the nuclear companies. In both Rokkasho and Orchid Island, the nuclear companies use financial rewards and benefits to try to break the strength of opposition forces. In the hotel where delegates stayed in Rokkasho, the wall calendar was a gift from the power company which operates the nuclear plant. (The Taiwan Power Company had also distributed calendars in the

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MESSAGE FROM THE PUBLISHER

Politics vs. the Environment

by Jun-yi Lin, ANCT President

In this issue, we report the sad story of the National Legislature's consideration and passage of the initial budget for the fourth nuclear plant. It is not the news that we had hoped to write.

Despite the mobilization of Taiwan's anti-nuclear forces to a degree never seen before, and the increasingly widespread anti-nuclear sentiment among the people, and the support from fellow anti-nuclear activists in other countries, the project will continue, at least until next year's budget review, when it no doubt again will face fierce opposition.

Taiwan's anti-nuclear movement has accomplished a great deal this year in terms of bringing awareness of nuclear issues both in Taiwan and abroad, but we find that all our efforts to freeze the No. 4 project have come to naught. The reality we face is that the KMT still retains domination over Taiwan's politics, even in the legislature. Policies, as in this case, are set by a small group at the top of the party hierarchy. KMT legislators who do not vote the party line on key issues are threatened with punishment by the party. (As of this writing, KMT leaders were negotiating over what punishment would be meted out to the three KMT legislators who dared to vote against the plant project.) What kind of democracy is it in which the ruling party does not allow its legislators to vote by their conscience?

The theme that the KMT leadership has used to support the fourth nuclear plant is that another nuclear power plant is necessary to continue the economic growth of Taiwan. There is ample evidence to refute this claim. Newspapers and magazines have been full of analyses by economists, scientists, and politicians in recent months demonstrating that a reformed energy policy, greater emphasis on efficiency and conservation, development of renewable energy sources, and use of fuels such as natural gas will solve Taiwan's energy needs far more efficiently and cheaply than a new nuclear plant. When safety factors are taken in, the logical choice becomes even more obvious.

Why, then, does the KMT support nuclearization when public opinion is against it and there are demonstrably cheaper and safer alternatives?

No Nukes Asia Forum (continued from page 1)

Yen Liao area near the site of the fourth nuclear plant in Taiwan, but the residents there collected all the calendars which had been handed out and burned them in protest.)

Another peculiar similarity is that, like Orchid Island, Rokkasho is home to an air force bombing target range not far from the nuclear facility.

Nuclear Report from Taiwan

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The real reason behind the KMT's support of the nuclear plant is the corruption that pervades Taiwan's government monopolies and public works projects. Private and governmental ties are magnified by the enormous expense of the nuclear plant contracts. Pressure exerted on Taiwan by the multinational corporations vying for the nuclear bids and the governments that support them is enormous. The final selection by Taiwan of a bidder will undoubtedly take into account inter-governmental relations, especially considering that both France and the U.S., have recently concluded large sales of weapons to Taiwan, and are using this as bargaining power. Make no mistake: the decision to continue the fourth nuclear plant project is motivated by both corrupt financial practices for personal gain and hardball political maneuvering.

Until the political balance changes - and it will, probably sooner than later - the citizens anti-nuclear movement faces great obstacles. As *Nuclear Report from Taiwan* continues to publish and the anti-nuclear movement gains in strength, the nuclearization push from the government and the international nuclear community continues to increase as well.

In this light, the recently-convened No Nukes Asia Forum will play an important role. The highly successful first meeting held last month brought together representatives from eight nations to discuss regional issues. This regional cooperation is essential and yet is only a beginning. The pressure NNAF can exert on its respective governments is limited because of the lack of political power accorded to citizens in most Asian countries. So it's absolutely essential that NNAF receives the backing of Western and global anti-nuclear organizations.

We can and will do our best to stop the spread of nuclearization but we need the support of all nations. The uniting of the international anti-nuclear movement remains of supreme importance.

Struck by the parallels between the nuclear waste sites in Taiwan and other countries, Professor Lin Pi-yao commented, "It's very funny to know that the struggle against the nuclear industry is almost the same, no matter whether the country is "democratic" or not. That's why the anti-nuclear groups have to get together, to share the information, the experience, to fight the same enemy."

The people of Aomori are relatively isolated from the population centers to the south. Politically they also feel isolated. When shown a videotape of the fights which occurred recently in Taiwan's legislature over construction of another nuclear plant, the people in Rokkasho exclaimed, "You're so lucky. At least your congressmen support you."

When the full meeting reconvened in Nagoya on July 3, delegates shared experiences from the different tours they had attended. In Osaka, Mr. Wang Yu-ling, representative off Taipei's Min Sheng Villa, also discussed with nuclear medicine doctors the health effects of living in the radioactively-contaminated buildings. The next day, doctors in Osaka revealed that comparisons with nuclear radiation studies in Chernobyl showed that the residents of Min Sheng Villa had been exposed to yearly dosages of radiation up to thirteen times higher than the highest acceptable limits imposed at the Chernobyl accident.

Min Sheng Villa: Yearly Radiation Is 13 Times Greater than Chernobyl Evacuation Levels

According to Professor Murata Saburo of Hanan Central Hospital in Osaka, Japan, residents of Taipei's radiation-contaminated Min Sheng Villa apartments have been exposed to annual dosages of radiation thirteen times higher than the highest allowed limit before evacuation from the disaster area following the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear plant in the Soviet Union in 1986. In other words, by living in the Min Sheng Villa for one year, residents are exposed to radiation levels comparable to living through thirteen Chernobyl disasters. Professor Murata warned the residents still living in Min Sheng Villa to move out as soon as possible.

Professor Murata, using measurements taken by Taiwan's Atomic Energy Council, found that the highest yearly radiation dosage for 1993 in the Min Sheng Villa was 6.7 REMs. In the Chernobyl disaster area, the highest acceptable level was 0.5 REMs before the area would be evacuated. The contamination at the Min Sheng Villa exceeds that evacuation level by thirteen times! Professor Murata, quoting information provided by Mr. Wang Yu-ling, representative of the Min Sheng Villa Victims Association, noted that of the residences exposed to this kind of radioactivity, 15 units are still occupied, while an additional 25 families are exposed to radiation from public-use facilities in the building. Professor Murata expressed disbelief that the authorities have allowed these families to continue living in such dangerous conditions.

Professor Murata pointed out that, like the Chernobyl radioactive fallout which resulted in pollution of the land, Min Sheng Villa's radioactively-contaminated steel rebar is a permanent type of contamination. The exposure dosage to the residents is not only over ten times higher than in the Chernobyl fallout area, the residents have been living in the midst of it day after day, year

after year, which make the health effects of it even more difficult to estimate.

In researching the health effects on the population of Hiroshima for forty years following the atomic bomb explosion, the Hanan Central Hospital has found that of every 1000 people exposed to one REM of radioactivity, 3.3 people will contract cancer. Using that standard, by conservative estimate, the accumulated radiation dosages of up to 120 REMs over nine years in the Min Sheng Villa will cause an increase of at least 50% in the cancer rate of residents during the next few years, according to Dr. Murata.

Information provided by the Hanan Central Hospital indicates that any person exposed to an accumulation of ten REMs of radiation will experience obvious pathological changes in their blood. Furthermore, the changes caused in gene and chromosome structure will be passed on to following generations. Cancer rates will increase, and immunities, intelligence, and fertility all will be lowered. The rates of miscarriages and birth defects will rise dramatically.

Meanwhile, Min Sheng Villa representative Wang Yu-ling said that the original medical examinations of Min Sheng Villa residents were incomplete, including only standard health and chromosome examinations, and that the blood test results of the children were deliberately not released. Mr. Wang said that Min Sheng Villa residents are currently arranging for their children to be sent to Osaka, Japan for full examinations. The Japan test results will be compared with those taken at Taipei's Veteran's General Hospital, said Mr. Wang. If it is discovered that there was a cover-up of the original test results, Min Sheng Villa will press charges against the hospital and the AEC.

(translated from the Taiwan Times, July 5, 1993)

Fourth Nuclear Plant Budget Passes

(continued from page 1)

The debate which was raging in the media and society on the need and consequences of building a fourth nuclear plant was rendered irrelevant by the KMT's pressuring of its legislators. The public debate was turned into a purely political issue in which the majority party held control, and the public's doubts about nuclear power had no impact on the decision.

The focus of anti-nuclear groups turns toward next year, when the budget will again be up for review. If there is no visible improvement in Taipower's safety management, opposition to the fourth nuclear plant project is likely to grow even stronger. Many observers are predicting annual clashes over the budget as long as the project exists. If a contract is signed with a bidder this year, however, blocking the project may be more difficult in the future.

On the positive side, the debate over nuclear power escalated to a level never before seen in Taiwan. Opposition to building another nuclear plant has grown in force with every scare and accident at the nuclear plants. The media's standpoint has been increasingly skeptical of nuclear power. And had the KMT not exerted strong pressure on its legislators, the opposition would likely have succeeded in freezing the project's budget. There is hope!

The media in Taiwan, responding to the unceasing string of incidents at the nuclear plants, began reporting on nuclear issues with greater frankness and skepticism than ever before. In the legislature itself, the opposition parties formed a solid bloc to force freezing of the budget, and a few legislators of the ruling Kuomintang (KMT) party even dared to risk the wrath of their party by not supporting the fourth nuclear plant project.

Globalizing the Anti-Nuclear Movement: How You Can Help

In this, our fourth issue, ANCT has reached the end of the initial generous donations which have allowed us to publish *Nuclear Report from Taiwan*.

Without additional donations, we cannot continue to cover the costs of publishing *Nuclear Report from Taiwan*. To support our efforts to expand the international information network on nuclear issues, and to ensure that your organization continues to receive *Nuclear Report from Taiwan*, we humbly ask our subscribers to each contribute a small gift. A contribution of US\$20 or more (or equivalent) will grant your organization a subscription for one year. Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee that we can continue to send *Nuclear Report* to organizations which don't contribute.

Due to the controversial nature of our publication, it is difficult for us to establish an organizational bank account. Therefore we ask that personal checks be made out to Jun-yi Lin or Edgar Lin. All funds received will be used exclusively to support the research, publishing and distribution costs of *Nuclear Report from Taiwan*.

One organization has written to us to request that we take them off our subscription list, explaining that they receive too many publications already and don't have time to read ours. If you also find that you are not able to use *NRT*, we urge you to similarly let us know.

ORCHID ISLAND'S ANTI-NUCLEAR PROCLAMATION

As the conclusion of our profile of the Yami people of Orchid Island and their struggle against the nuclear waste dumpsite which the government has located on their unique and beautiful island, we present the issue in the Yami's own words. The following statement was used by the Yami during their anti-nuclear campaign in 1991 and the words herein are no less true today. We print it here with permission.

(We are pleased to note that the Yami have achieved a minor triumph in that the National Legislature recently cancelled the budget proposed by Taipower for expansion of the Orchid Island radioactive waste disposal site. The Yami, however, with ANCT beside them, will still continue their efforts to ensure that all the nuclear waste stored on Orchid Island is removed as the government has promised.)

"The Lies Can Be Told Only Once"

During the development of Taiwan's environmental protection movement, Orchid Island has remained an overlooked and forgotten outer island. Meanwhile, hundreds and thousands of containers of nuclear waste continue to be sent here.

Can we call this fairness? To make a people who are unable to enjoy the benefits of nuclear power take the burden of its garbage!

Can we call this humanity? To take away from a minority people who have no say in the matter their fundamental environmental rights!

Can we call this justice? To impose on the pure and simple Yami tribe the eternal poison of modern scientific technology!

From today, we Yami youths will unite with our elders, our brothers, our sisters to together oppose the Orchid Island nuclear waste site and ceaselessly fight until this unfair, unjust, immoral nuclear waste policy is terminated once and for all.

We will begin to study, and we will proceed to save ourselves.

The three principles on which we firmly oppose nuclear waste are as follows:

1) Universally acknowledged as "permanent poison," radioactive nuclear waste until today has left scientists unable to find suitable solutions for its disposal. Today, the AEC not only wants to change the Orchid Island nuclear waste storage site from "temporary" to "permanent," the Taiwan Power Company also plans to build a fourth nuclear power plant. Looking at the future, our Yami homeland will gradually be swallowed inch by inch by nuclear waste, until the time when the whole island becomes known as "Nuclear Dumpsite Island." At that time we will no longer be able to save ourselves; on that day, we will forever lose the roots of our fate.

2) When a nuclear waste storage site was being planned, options included burying the waste in the mountains, in old mine shafts, on uninhabited islands, and other methods of disposal. But Orchid Island was chosen because of its convenience. When construction began, the AEC told the Yami people the site was to become a military harbor and a fish cannery, and in the future it would become a prosperous area. Not until the truth became clear did we know it was for nuclear waste. Afterwards, in an attempt to mitigate the opposition, the government allocated money for building up the island's infrastructure, provided tours abroad for certain Yami people, and granted other special favors as means of placating the local population. This nuclear waste policy of construction under fundamental lies, of bestowing special privileges to divide opposition forces, how could it not alienate the people?

3) Due to the Yami people's lack of knowledge about nuclear waste, and the lack of medical facilities on Orchid Island, people usually must travel by airplane to Taitung (the nearest city) for treatment of serious illnesses. In the case of serious harm resulting from nuclear waste exposure, ask yourself, who will diagnose the illness? Who will treat it? If nuclear waste results in the slow deaths of the Orchid Island residents, who will assume responsibility? For our fundamental rights to existence, we will



Ready to fight "until the last breath": a Yami protest march in 1991

photo: (Guan Hsiao-rong)

fight this until the end.

The lies must stop! Regardless of whether they are "technological lies," or "political lies," they all should stop. Let us face the truth together. We firmly demand two things:

1) The transport of nuclear waste to Orchid Island must stop immediately; afterward, there should be no more expansion of the storage site. We suggest, as soon as possible to construct a storage site on another small uninhabited island. The Spratly Islands (in the South China Sea) are possible alternatives. This would avoid harming fundamental human rights, and avoid turning beautiful Orchid Island into a "people-less garbage dumpsite."

2) Immediately provide complete health examinations and full health insurance coverage for Orchid Island residents. The effects from exposure to radiation do not appear immediately, but often take five, ten, even twenty years before they are discovered. If we don't have complete health insurance, today's exposure will be the cause of tomorrow's deaths. Who would take the blame?

Until these two requests are met, we swear in the name of our ancestors and for the sake of our children and grandchildren to resolutely oppose the nuclear waste on Orchid Island, to fight against it until the last breath.

The Yami Youth Friendship League, 1991

Taiwan's Compensation Limit for Nuclear Disasters Is 890 Times Lower than in the U.S.

At a seminar in early July on "Construction of the No. 4 Nuclear Plant and Nuclear Policy," nuclear experts criticized current legal limits for compensation to victims of nuclear accidents, pointing out that they are far below compensation limits in other countries.

National Taiwan University law professor Yeh Jun-rong brought up the issue, pointing out that Taiwan's "Nuclear Disaster Compensation Act" had not been changed since its passage in 1971. The act provides for a maximum compensation liability of NT\$210 million (US\$8 million). This amount is 890 times less than the amount of US\$7.25 billion specified in the 1988 update of the Price/Anderson Act used for compensation law in the U.S. Furthermore, the time limit for filing claims is only ten years, whereas it is thirty years in the U.S. Professor Yeh and others called for immediate review and reform of the laws. Anti-nuclear activists have long felt that the low nuclear compensation limits are representative of Taiwan's general neglect of safety issues, and that one of the reasons the government claims nuclear power is a

cheaper alternative than other energy sources is that safety concerns and costs are not adequately addressed.

Prof. Yeh also pointed out that non-nuclear industrial accidents in recent years had resulted in compensation amounts well exceeding Taiwan's present nuclear accident limit.

Atomic Energy Council (AEC) General Planning Division chief Chiou Si-tsung replied that the AEC was currently in the process of reforming the compensation provisions, and would submit a proposal to the administration by October 25. Chiou said the AEC will propose to increase the current compensation limit by twenty times to NT\$4.2 billion, and extend the time limit for filing compensation claims to thirty years.

Scholars at the seminar also criticized the Atomic Energy Act because it designates the AEC to take the responsibility for both development of nuclear energy uses, and their supervision and control. The result is that the AEC has the roles of both player and referee in the same ballgame. Other nuclearized countries such as Japan and the U.S. have split these two responsibilities, pointed out National Taiwan University professor Shih Hsin-min.

Taiwan's AEC: Ballplayer or Referee?

Responding to repeated accusations by legislators and environmentalists of conflict of interest, the Atomic Energy Council (AEC) has agreed to more clearly define the role of its subsidiary Nuclear Research Institute (NRI).

For years, critics have accused the AEC of playing both roles of player and referee in the game of nuclear development and control, and have pointed to the research into development of nuclear power by the NRI as evidence of this conflict of interest. Under pressure over the quality of its safety management, the AEC will urge that the role of the NRI be clearly defined in the Nuclear Energy Act - currently under reform - so that the NRI is not allowed to carry out research into development of nuclear power.

At the same time, AEC officials pointed out that the NRI is essential to the AEC's carrying out of safety control. At present, the NRI employs 50% of all the AEC's technical personnel. According to AEC control division chief Huang Ching-tung, nuclear safety control cannot be carried out without the technological support of the NRI.

The need to define the NRI role is partly due to annual legislative questioning of the AEC research budget, and partly to mismanagement of the Institute's changing role in the last five years. Until 1988, the Nuclear Research Institute belonged to the Chung Shan Science Academy, and was primarily involved with development of nuclear weapons. Because of their top-secret nature, budgets were not required to be approved in detail by the legislature. But after the Chang Hsien-yi Incident in 1988, when the U.S. government forced Taiwan to shut down nuclear weapons research, the NRI was formally transferred to the AEC's management. The change in organizational structure and focus from a production center to a research and development center has in some cases been quite reluctant, however, and it has created many problems - and much waste of human and financial resources.

Most of the NRI's research personnel are occupied on nuclear plant operations research. But the NRI is hamstrung by uncertainty over the future of Taiwan's nuclear policy. While the AEC maintains that the NRI is essential to its safety management, in reality the NRI is grabbing for research projects, and is fast coming to rely on the Taiwan Power Company for its survival. Yet while the NRI remains under AEC management, such research further increases the conflict of interest within the AEC, and in

turn decreases the effectiveness of the AEC as an independent regulator of nuclear power.

Budget Games at the AEC and NRI

In budget review sessions earlier this year, the national legislature found numerous suspicious areas in the budgets of the Atomic Energy Council and its subsidiary, the Nuclear Research Institute.

Legislators questioned the legitimacy of certain research undertaken by the Atomic Energy Council. One example was a NT\$5 million (US\$200,000) report entitled "Nuclear Power Propaganda Policy Planning and Effectiveness Estimates". Legislators wondered if the AEC was conducting research or spreading propaganda.

Other faults found in the AEC's management of research were that several projects are often given to the same scholar at the same time, raising questions of favoritism.

Of the NT\$2 billion (US\$ 80 million) total budget for the Nuclear Research Institute (NRI), fully half goes to salaries for personnel, while only NT\$450 million - less than 25% - is allocated to research expenses. Not only does this appear extremely disproportionate for a research laboratory, but it raised the legislature's ire, because the NT\$450 million is too small to support the research work of over 1000 people employed by NRI, indicating an obvious excess of personnel.

Nuclear Waste from the Sung Dynasty?

The numerous accidents at Taiwan's three existing nuclear power plants had increased public opposition to the fourth plant. On the eve of the July 9 vote, opposition groups held a press conference. The groups presented a petition signed by nearly 1000 professors at universities in Taiwan. In one telling comparison, Ching Hua University professor Wang Jun-Hsiu, using 1000 years as the average half-life of nuclear waste, pointed out that the future effects of nuclear waste we create can be appreciated by imagining that we today had to deal with nuclear waste created by nuclear plants during the Sung Dynasty (960-1250 A.D.)

IN THE NEWS

Budget Slashed for Orchid Island Dumpsite Expansion

On July 1, the National Legislature cut Taipower's entire budget of NT\$200 million (US\$8 million) for the expansion of the Orchid Island radioactive waste site, in a major triumph for the Yami people and the anti-nuclear movement.

In further budget discussions, opposition legislator Chen Wan-chen pointed out that the numerous Taipower advertisements carried on television and in print advertising nuclear power as clean and inexpensive were completely misleading. Miss Chen requested that Taipower's \$100 million-plus advertising budget be eliminated.

Nuclear Waste Dumps To Be Located On-Site at Nuclear Plants?

The Atomic Energy Council (AEC) has suggested that low-level radioactive nuclear waste disposal sites could be located within the grounds of each of the four nuclear plants, using caves or underwater sea trenches for storage. This, says the AEC, would eliminate a major concern in the anti-nuclear movement's criticism of Taiwan's nuclear policy, and could avoid future conflict over nuclear issues.

AEC officials stated that the anti-nuclear movement's concern about a low-level radwaste permanent storage site would continue whether or not the fourth nuclear plant is built, and that pressure from anti-nuclear groups to find a suitable disposal method for radioactive waste was behind their suggestion. In recent months, anti-nuclear activists have been pointing out that only one square kilometer of area is required to build a disposal site and that each of the nuclear plants has ample space for such a site within its grounds. This would reduce the risks of transportation and unnecessary exposure to more people, and it would avoid the inherent local opposition that would follow the selection of any new disposal site.

To select an appropriate location for the permanent low-level radwaste disposal site, Taipower set up a committee earlier this year. Chien Bei-chen, chief of the Taipower division responsible for nuclear waste disposal, stated that Taipower would not influence the selection committee's decision, and that as soon as a site is selected Taipower will commence environmental impact assessment.

High-Level AEC Officials to Visit China

Atomic Energy Council (AEC) General Planning Division director Chiou Si-tsung will visit China at the end of August to attend the Two Coasts Radiation Applications Conference in Beijing. The trip has already raised eyebrows because it is Mr. Chiou's second visit to China this year. Mr. Chiou also attended a conference in China in March, the first time ever high-level officials had met to discuss nuclear issues between the two countries.

The AEC has been openly pursuing discussions with China in an attempt to find a solution to Taiwan's problem of disposal of nuclear waste. But AEC officials state that the AEC hopes to develop relationships with China regarding all aspects of peaceful nuclear energy uses, including nuclear power safety, radiation protection, nuclear waste disposal, etc.

AEC chairman Hsu Yi-yun stated that the first stage of nuclear energy exchanges across the Taiwan Strait has been one-way: "Taiwan's nuclear experts have gone to China, but China's scholars have not yet been to Taiwan, and don't yet understand Taiwan's nuclear capability. Therefore, the AEC will host an International Thermo-nuclear and Power Plant Operating Expe-

rience Conference" in April of next year, and will invite mainland scholars to participate, and tour Taiwan's nuclear facilities."

Talks Continue on Shipment of High-Level Radwaste to Mainland China

Vice Minister of Economic Affairs Yang Shih-jian announced on July 14 that the Taiwan Power Company (Taipower) has established indirect relations with Beijing on the possibility of sending nuclear waste from Taiwan to China for disposal.

Taiwan is searching for permanent disposal sites for both high and low-level radioactive waste. Mr. Yang said that because the low-level radwaste storage facility on Orchid Island is only temporary, the waste there would still be removed. Therefore Taipower is actively looking into the possibility of sending radwaste to other countries.

Yang said that the shipment of low-level radioactive nuclear waste such as gloves, protective clothing, etc., to other countries need not be limited to China, but if Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council and the Atomic Energy Council (AEC) agree, then shipment to China remains a possibility.

"Underground" X-ray Machines: Radiation Hazards

The AEC has reported that there are many illegal dental and Chinese medicine clinics in Taiwan which are using privately-imported x-ray machines without license and legal maintenance, endangering the health of both patients and operators.

The AEC's deputy chairman Wang Man-chi said "under normal operating conditions, the radiation danger can be controlled, but some operators have not undergone appropriate training, and may overexpose both their patients and themselves, which could have significant harmful health effects."

The AEC has notified customs authorities to watch out for such smuggled x-ray machines, and has also requested the public to report any illegal x-ray machines they know of.

AEC To Set Up Local Supervising Groups

To counter the lack of public confidence in the Taiwan Power Company's and the Atomic Energy Council (AEC)'s control of nuclear safety, the AEC has announced that it plans to set up local "Environmental Protection Supervising Committees" at each of the three existing nuclear plant locations. Chairman Hsu said that the AEC hopes that environmental groups will encourage neutral observers to join the committees, which will supervise the operations of each respective nuclear plant, and the impact on the surrounding environment.

No. 1 Plant Shut Down Again for Repairs

Taipower shut down the first reactor at the No. 1 nuclear plant in mid-July for inspection of its generator turbine blades. The inspection, which is required every four months due to structural defects discovered last November, is to be completed in August.

Scram at No. 2 Nuclear Plant

On the eve of the final legislative vote on the fourth nuclear plant, the second reactor at the No. 2 nuclear plant experienced a scram (emergency reactor shutdown) on July 7. This, according to Taipower, is the tenth scram this year. This far exceeds Taipower's original goal of just six scrams for the entire year, according to news reports.

A fault in the high-speed protection system of the generator caused the scram.

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