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INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN CANADA RESISTS URANIUM EXPLORATION

Since 28 June, the Algonquin First Nations, along with non-natives, have occupied a proposed mining site at Robertsville. The site is located north of Sarbot Lake in Northern Frontenac County in eastern Ontario and is targeted in order to prevent the Frontenac Ventures Corporation from carrying on operations that have been underway for a year.

(658.5815) **Laka Foundation** - The Robertsville site includes an ore processing mill and some other buildings, which were cordoned off by the First Nations, who have established a camp in the area behind the front gate. From 29 June to 2 July the information picket remained in place, and the area behind the gate gradually developed into a more organized camp, with several tents and trailers in place, a parking area, and two cooking and food storage canopies. On the afternoon of 8 July, nearly 300 protesters held a march against uranium mining in the Crotch Lake region.

Frontenac Ventures Corporation (Frontec) has been renting a building on the site as their base of operations and have been improving and using an access road that runs west from the mine site to explore a uranium deposit on 30,000 acres of land that they have staked in the region. The majority of staked land is Crown land, and the rest is private land. The corporation has put its operations on hold in Northern Frontenac County, leaving residents with mixed feelings. On 7 July, the uranium mining company left North Frontenac Township after local First Nations threatened to hold a day or multiple days of protest. The land is part of the territory traditionally claimed by the Sharbot Lake and Ardoch Algonquins. A map of the area that will be most affected by the mining is found on the website of the Ardoch Algonquin First Nation (<http://www.aafna.ca/>). The area is part of a huge territory that is covered by Royal Proclamation from

1763 which reserves the Ottawa Valley for Algonquin use, a royal proclamation that has never been rescinded. A land claims process over the land has been underway between two levels of government and Algonquin representatives since 1992.

Both the Sharbot Lake Algonquin First Nation and the Ardoch Algonquin First Nation say they are opposed to the Frontenac plans to develop uranium deposits in the area. They consider the area as their "Sacred Territory". In statements on their website they refer to own experiences: "Indigenous people have been disproportionately affected by the international nuclear weapon and fuel industry. The Nuclear fuel chain poisons our people, land, air and waters. It threatens our very existence and our future generations." And give some facts: "The Environmental effects of Uranium mining include the contamination of ground water with dissolved metals and radioactive materials, dispersal of radioactive dusts, and releases of radioactive gas into the air. When uranium ore is processed, 85% of the radioactivity is left behind in the tailings, and must be managed safely for hundreds of thousands of years."

Sources: Ottawa Citizen 8 July, 2007; Ottawa Sun 9 July, 2007 / CBC 25 June, 2007
Six days at the Robertsville mine: anti-uranium action could last indefinitely / http://www.newsweb.ca/2007/July_5/Six_Days_at_Robertsville_Mine.html
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GERMANY: FIRE DID AFFECT NUCLEAR REACTOR; PHASE-OUT PLANS TO STAY

After a fire at the Kruemmel nuclear power plant late June, energy company Vattenfall had been quick to reassure the public that the reactor was not affected. But later, the news has been revealed that the fire did in fact have an effect on the reactor. The news came at a time the German government was debating the future of nuclear power.

(658.5816) WISE Amsterdam -

Contrary to previous reports, a fire at the Kruemmel nuclear power plant in Germany on June 28, did in fact affect the reactor. First officials said that the fire only affected a transformer in the plant but not the reactor itself and that there was no risk of a radioactivity leak. No one was injured in the fire which started when coolant in a large electric power transformer substation ignited due to a short circuit.

However experts who are investigating the cause of the fire have discovered that the reactor was in fact affected. In a statement released on July 3 by the Health Ministry in the state of Schleswig-Holstein, which is responsible for nuclear safety, it reported that the authorities had checked "several incidents caused by the shutdown of the reactor."

The experts had found that one of the pumps which supply water to the reactor had shut down unexpectedly, and two safety and relief valves had opened accidentally. The result was that the water level and the pressure in the reactor fell quickly. However the drop in water level and pressure could be "balanced out by switching on a reserve supply system," the ministry said, adding: "Despite these incidents, the safety of the facilities was guaranteed."

Immediately after the fire, Vattenfall, the utility company which operates the nuclear plant, had claimed that the reactor was not affected by the fire. Now politicians are asking why the seriousness of the problem wasn't made public earlier.

Experts have been studying the scene of the fire in Kruemmel. They were only able to get into the interior of the transformer hall on July 2, where they found the transformer has been so severely damaged that it cannot be repaired and will have to be replaced. The cable which connects the power station and the transformer may also

have to be replaced, Vattenfall said.

The reactor at Kruemmel came into operation in 1983 and is one of the oldest types of reactors still working in Germany.

A second nuclear power plant at nearby Brunsbuettel was shut down only a few hours before the Kruemmel fire after a short-circuit. There is speculation that the problem at Brunsbuettel may have caused the fire at Kruemmel due to a change in voltage in the network after Brunsbuettel was shut down.

The German branch of environmental group, Friends of the Earth, BUND, demanded "full transparency in the investigation of the causes of the fire and possible dangers" from the plant's operator, European energy group, Vattenfall. BUND demanded the immediate closure of both plants.

Greenpeace also accused Vattenfall and the local government in Kiel of withholding important information on the consequences of the incident. According to the environmental organization, this was an obvious attempt to avoid conflict at Germany's third annual energy summit in Berlin which was focusing on exploring ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and curb global warming.

At that meeting, German chancellor Angela Merkel called the battle against climate change the "greatest challenge of the 21st century" - and says there will be no change to the government's plan to phase out nuclear power. Merkel unveiled plans to cut carbon emissions by up to 40% by 2020. She disappointed the (nuclear) industry heads at a Berlin summit by reiterating that the government does not expect to agree any change to its nuclear energy policy before 2009, when the current legislative period ends.

Germany's nuclear power plants generate about 26% of its electricity

and are due to close by 2021 under an agreement reached by the previous administration and ratified by Merkel's coalition government. Utility chiefs want to operate nuclear plants for longer, and industrial leaders had hoped the debate about the nuclear phase-out could be reopened as a result of the Berlin meeting. Many members of Merkel's Conservative party would also like to see the phase-out dropped, but the plan remains strongly supported by the Social Democrats, who form half of the coalition government.

Merkel said the government wants to achieve the carbon cuts by improving energy efficiency by 3% per year, an amount many energy industry experts have called unrealistic. The July 3 discussions are to form the basis of a national energy plan, with the German government to produce a package of legislative measures. Decisions are expected at a cabinet meeting in August.

Klaus Toepfer, a leading conservative (and Party Member of Merkel) and former German environment minister, who until last year headed the United Nations Environment Program, was quoted in the Sunday Telegraph saying: "We need a future without nuclear power and we must do everything to develop renewable energy sources and increase energy efficiency to achieve this."

Sources: Spiegel Online, 4 July 2007 / Deutsche Welle, 5 July 2007 / WNN, 3 July 2007 / Sunday Telegraph, 8 July 2007

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SCOTLAND OPTS OUT OF NEW WASTE CONSULTATION

The UK Government and the Welsh and Northern Ireland administrations launched a new consultation on 'Managing Radioactive Waste Safely: A framework for implementing geological disposal'. However the Scottish Executive has refused to take part, arguing that it rejects building a deep underground waste repository.

(658.5817) NENIG - The UK Government says the consultation is based on the recommendations of the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM) for a deep repository - however critics say the Government is ignoring CoRWM's reservations about a repository, its call for much greater research, for consideration of interim storage and its statements that it was only considering the management of existing wastes, not wastes from any new reactors. The consultation also looks at the concept of 'voluntarism' - where communities express an interest in housing a possible repository rather than having one forced upon them - and the technical aspects of developing an underground repository. The details of a possible repository given in the consultation documents are very similar to those produced by Nirex in the 1990s for Sellafield.

Scottish Executive says no

The Scottish Executive has refused to take part in the consultation - rejecting any idea of a deep underground repository in Scotland. Environment secretary Richard Lochhead said he recognized the challenge of dealing with radioactive waste but they did not accept "that geological disposal is the right way forward. This is a matter of principle for us and I have no doubt that public opinion in Scotland supports our view." He said they supported CoRWM's recommendations for interim storage and further research on long-term waste management. "This out of sight out of mind policy should not extend to Scotland." Mr Lochhead said

the executive would work with the UK government and other devolved administrations on waste management issues where they had shared objectives. The LibDem environment spokesman, Mike Rumbles, commented that the executive now had "a duty to tell the people of Scotland what proposals they have for dealing with Scotland's share of the nuclear waste burden."

Cumbria says 'no' to Scottish wastes

Following the Scottish Executive's withdrawal from the consultation Cumbria County Councillors have said they will oppose taking Scottish radioactive wastes to Sellafield. The Hunterston and Torness reactors send spent fuel to Sellafield for reprocessing and while Dounreay manages its own wastes, there are proposals to send spent fuel from the site to Sellafield. Timothy Heslop, executive member on the county council for nuclear issues, said the Scottish Executive had taken its stand and "let them accept that their waste is not coming across the border." Although it has agreed to take part in the consultation the Welsh administration in Cardiff made it clear they have not agreed in any way to a repository being built in Wales. The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority welcomed the Government's consultation and noted the response from the Scottish Government. The NDA said it would have to "carefully consider" this news.

No choices yet

Environment minister Ian Pearson this week denied that Sellafield had already

been chosen by the Government as the site for a deep underground waste repository. Mr Pearson said they had not started the site selection process and still needed to decide how site selection will be made.

The Nuclear Free Local Authorities gave a cautious welcome to the consultation. NFLA chair Mike Rumney said the Government's plan for new reactors was driving the timetable for radioactive waste management and this could lead to a loss of public confidence. The inspector on the 1995 planning inquiry into Nirex plans for a deep repository at Sellafield has said the site is unsuitable for such a development. Mr Chris McDonald said the site selection process at the time was flawed, not taking safety as the most important factor and the irrational desire to build a repository as close as possible to Sellafield. The site is not suitable for a repository "and investigations should be moved elsewhere".

Full details of the consultation, that ends on 2nd November 2007, are available at:
www.defra.gov.uk/environment/radioactivity/waste/hilw/index.htm

Source: N-Base Briefing 532, 1 July 2007

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No decision yet on nuclear power, but go-ahead to 4 nuclear reactor designs.

The U.K. government Thursday gave the preliminary go-ahead to the design of four nuclear reactors, even though it has yet to decide whether to formally support nuclear power. Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd., Areva, GE Energy, and Westinghouse Electric Co. have all submitted individual designs for the four reactors. Before the generic designs of the nuclear power plants are completely approved or pre-licensed, the government's new Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform, established by new Prime Minister Gordon Brown, must consider the designs more carefully.

The initial stages of pre-licensing are taking place at the

same time and are subject to the outcome of a nuclear consultation, which is expected to close in October. The U.K. government previously gave its support for nuclear power after a public consultation, and claimed new nuclear reactors were needed in order to meet the U.K.'s climate change objectives, while at the same time securing reliable energy supplies. But the government had to launch a further consultation after environmental group Greenpeace won a legal challenge in February which found that the government's initial consultation was "legally flawed".

Dow Jones, 5 July 2007

EURATOM: COUNTRIES FREE TO STEP OUT

Governments of non-nuclear EU member states proved unable, or unwilling, to push for a reform of the European Atomic Community (Euratom) during the EU constitutional process (2001-2004), when even a single country could have made a Euratom revision conference a condition for its approval of the constitution treaty. This opportunity having passed away, what a non-nuclear country can now do on its own without having to wait for the approval of all 26 other Euratom member states is to withdraw from the Euratom treaty and community. Austrian NGOs have been waging a campaign aimed at just such a withdrawal since the beginning of this year in which the European Atomic Community became 50 years old.

(658.5818) **PLAGE** - In a press conference three months ahead of the 50th anniversary of the Euratom Treaty, on January 17, 2007, the five main Austrian antinuclear NGOs launched a campaign to get the Austrian parliament and government to decide that the country will step out of the Atomic Community and terminate the Treaty. Even before Austria submitted its

application for membership in the European Communities including Euratom to the Commission in 1989, the no nukes movement warned of the consequences and demanded an open debate, which the "big coalition" government of Social and Christian Democrats (SPOE/OEVP) refused throughout the negotiation period and in the run-up to the June 1994

referendum on accession. With ups and downs, ever after accession on January 1, 1995, the nuclear-critical stance of Austria's policy within the Union has become less vigorous. The impression now is increasingly one of Euratom holding non-nuclear member states in its grip rather than these influencing Euratom decisions, let alone structures. One of the more recent examples is

The vices in Euratom

1. The Euratom Treaty (ET) is an anachronism: The very fact that it has remained unchanged since it was signed in 1957 as one of the then three legal pillars of the European Community shows that it is a relic from another age. It is completely incompatible with scientific and economic experience and public opinion as they have evolved since that date. Not even the Chernobyl nuclear catastrophe has led to the slightest change in the Treaty. On top of all that, while the European Coal and Steel Treaty expired after 50 years in 2002, no expiration date was laid down in the ET. Obviously, Euratom was meant to be for eternity. And its fathers were not even aware of nuclear's eternity problem: no explicit provisions for nuclear waste in the ET!

2. Treaty for Special Treatment: no other branch of the energy industry is warranted by such a high-ranking treaty. In fact, no single other economic activity is! This is in glaring contradiction with what the great majority of the people want: if for any, there would be consensus in favor of a treaty for renewables in European society today (EURENEW instead of EURATOM). In a breath-taking analogy, there has been global backing for nuclear energy for more than 50 years through the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), while the creation of a UN Agency for Renewable Energies (IRENA) is overdue.

3. Competition distortion & violation of the EU's supreme free-market rule: This special treaty has in fact established a special economic zone for nuclear energy within the European Community and Union. It is the most massive obstacle to (coming anywhere near creating) a level playing-field for all forms of energy and all actors in the energy field. For 50 years now, the ET has been the legal basis for the Euratom loans system, which provides subsidized credit for developing nuclear projects - for instance even in a rich country itself fostering nuclear energy in all possible ways like France. Privileges for nuclear energy under Euratom extend into the field of research: again, no other branch of energy has a research program of its own, with a budget of its own. And in all EU framework research programs over the past decades, nuclear energy has totaled bigger funds than all other forms of energy (conventional, renewable, efficiency) taken together.

4. Democracy deficit: The European Parliament can talk, but it has no say in matters nuclear. Which gives a large margin of manoeuvre to the non-elected Commission and to the Councils of ministers and of the heads of state whose meetings and decisions take place far away from the public eye.

More generally, keeping up Euratom flies in the face of public opinion and public will as ascertained by the pro-nuclear EU Commission itself: over the past two decades at least, the regular EU opinion poll "Eurobarometer" has shown a majority against continued development of nuclear power, even in the "nuclear country par excellence", France.

5. Military intentions behind? The ET does not include any provisions on the military use of nuclear power. It would be astonishing, however, if the strategic minds on top EU level and especially within the EU's two military nuclear powers France and Great Britain were not aware of the perfect civil screen Euratom provides for maintaining or expanding a nuclear infrastructure parts of which can easily be put to military use (e.g. plutonium production in civil reactors and reprocessing plants). Cp. French Admiral Pierre Lacoste's foreword to the book *30 Years Experience with Euratom - The Birth of a Nuclear Europe*, by Olivier Pirotte et al.: "Will Europe (...) on its path to unification, advance toward complete mastery of nuclear energy? In its military form, it is undoubtedly bound to play an irreplaceable role for years (...). Its industrial use can guarantee our access to never-ending energy, the supreme condition for development and well-being and, thus, for peace." See Iran, see Chernobyl.

approval of the vastest singular nuclear investment ever, the nuclear fusion experimental reactor ITER. In light of this, the antinuclear platforms of the Upper Austria and Salzburg regions (atomstopp_oberoesterreich and PLAGE), Global 2000 (Friends of the Earth Austria), Greenpeace Austria and Umweltdachverband (the umbrella for a great number of conservationist organizations) find increasingly paradoxical that a country explicitly declared non-nuclear should stay within, and keep paying for, what is the most massive legal and bureaucratic stronghold of the nuclear industry worldwide. In a way, while Austrian membership may at times have influenced EU nuclear policy, it gives additional credit to pro-nuclear decisions: How could one doubt such decisions indeed, when "even the most inveterate non-nuclear country has voted for them"?

The industry's survival warrant - after Chernobyl

No local or national antinuclear achievement, no successful resistance against any single nuclear project or program has changed a comma about the Euratom Treaty. Nor has Chernobyl. On the contrary, rather. To give but one example: In the wake of the biggest disaster of the nuclear industry so far, radioactive contamination limits that were far more restrictive in several countries were "harmonized" to higher levels under the Euratom cap. Thus, at similar radioactivity levels, should big-surface contamination occur in the future, salads and other vegetables, milk and meat would not have to be kept out of the German, Austrian or other markets as they had to in 1986-87, but would simply be "fit for human consumption". (See, e.g., *Nuclearized country, second try? - Austria's civil and military integration into the European Atomic Community*, ed. Anti Atom International, Vienna, 1993, chapter 8.)

Revision conference for EURATOM reform?

The process leading up to the EU constitutional treaty raised new awareness among the antinuclear movement of just what a fortress of guarantees and privileges the Euratom Treaty is for the nuclear players. Thus, from 2002 to 2004 in particular, numerous European NGOs tried to make Euratom a topic. Exposing its glaring contradictions with such supreme principles of the European Union as democratic rule and undistorted competition, they demanded that Euratom be abolished

or, at least, thoroughly reformed. A number of delegates to the Convention drafting the Constitution, mostly Greens and some Social Democrats, tried to put reform proposals on the agenda, which the Convention's presidency under French ex-president Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, himself a man of the nuclear lobby, superbly ignored. No national government made a real move for a change of the Euratom Treaty. The best that could be achieved was to prevent the worst: then German vice chancellor Joschka Fischer and Austrian member of the European Parliament and delegate to the Convention, Johannes Voggenhuber, both from the Greens, managed to keep Euratom out of the Constitutional Treaty, as a stand-alone treaty.⁽¹⁾ At that moment of history, when approval of the EU Constitution hinged on each single member government's signature, Austria - and/or others - could at least have made their signature dependent on the promise of all member states to hold a Euratom revision conference within a given time limit. This occasion is gone. In a declaration attached to the Constitutional Treaty, Austria, Germany, Hungary, Ireland and Sweden did express their support for an inter-governmental conference (IGC) on updating Euratom. But with no time limit set and with no formal promise from the other states, this has not changed the status quo at all. There might be another occasion when some kind of substitute EU reform treaty is to be signed in 2008-2009, as intended by many EU leaders. At present, in order not to just sit there and wait for another such occasion which may never come, and in order to make pressure for at least some fundamental changes in the Euratom Treaty, the best we can do is take the offensive: if we cannot abolish or reform Euratom, let us abolish our membership there.

Leave Euratom, stay in EU: it's possible, 2 legal expertises say

When atomstopp_oberoesterreich, Greenpeace Austria, Global 2000, PLAGE-Salzburg and Umweltdachverband launched their Step Out Campaign early this year, they had confirmation for this strategy from two expert opinions (see box). In two entirely separate expertises, professors of international law Manfred Rotter, Linz University, and Michael Geistlinger, Salzburg University, came to the same basic conclusion: "according to international customary law underlying art. 56 of the Vienna Convention on the

Legal expertises on a single country's withdrawal from Euratom (Two Austrian expertises, and one done in Germany. Each was done completely independently from the others.)

1. Manfred ROTTER: Rechtlich geordneter Austritt aus der Europäischen Atomgemeinschaft vor und nach Inkrafttreten des Verfassungsvertrages (*Orderly Withdrawal from the European Atomic Community, before and after the Coming into Force of the Constitutional Treaty*), Dec. 2003. A 22-page expertise commissioned by the Regional Government of Upper Austria. - M. Rotter is professor of international law, international relations and European law at the Johannes Kepler University in Linz, Austria.

2. Michael GEISTLINGER: Some Ideas on the Possibility of Unilateral Withdrawal from the Euratom Treaty, prepared for the conference on "Energy Intelligence for Europe - The Euratom Treaty and future energy options", Copenhagen, Sept. 23, 2005. A 3-page fast expertise commissioned by the Danish environmental NGO NOAH. Also available in German. - M. Geistlinger is professor of international law at the Paris Lodron University in Salzburg, Austria.

3. Bernhard WEGENER: Die Kündigung des Vertrages zur Gründung der Europäischen Atomgemeinschaft (Euratom) (*The Termination of the Founding Treaty of the European Atomic Community*), March 2007. A 70-page expertise commissioned by The Greens in the German Bundestag (Parliament). - B. Wegener is professor of public law, comparative law and European law at the Friedrich Alexander University in Erlangen-Nuremberg.

(Complete versions of 1 & 2 from info@plage.cc, 3 from versand@gruene-bundestag.de)

Law of Treaties, there is a right to unilateral withdrawal from the Euratom Treaty." Both also conclude that such a withdrawal is legally possible whether or not the Constitutional Treaty signed in 2004 is in force. And, very importantly, since the Euratom Treaty, though being linked to the other EC/EU

treaties, is an individual, separate treaty, it is perfectly possible to step out of it while staying within the Union as a whole. The step, of course, would be unheard-of. It would cause turmoil in Europe's - and in fact the world's - nuclear establishment. Even its mere announcement is likely to be a formidable lever for opening that public and inter-state debate on Euratom that has so long been overdue.

And a third expertise!

It was more than just an agreeable surprise when in February 2007 one of the leading figures of the Green Party in the Bundestag, MoP Hans-Josef Fell, told PLAGE that an expertise on withdrawal from Euratom was forthcoming in Germany, too. With a view to the 50th anniversary of the Euratom Treaty, ever unreformed, the German Greens had commissioned professor of public and European law, Bernhard Wegener, from the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg to look into the question of *Terminating the Founding Treaty of the European Atomic*

Community (EURATOM). Not only does Prof. Wegener, like Rotter and Geistlinger, conclude to the legal possibility and feasibility of the termination of the Euratom Treaty by individual member countries; with its 70 pages, his expertise is the most extensive of the three and examines the question under a number of additional, related aspects. So there are now three entirely separate scientific investigations into the matter that corroborate one another. Not a single written expert statement has been put forward contradicting the three legal opinions that are on the table. The only obstacle to implementation of the steps thus clearly indicated: the lack of political will and courage. NGOs in Austria are determined to move along on the long and winding road toward the point where government and parliament will pluck up that courage. Support from the outside for this struggle inside Austria will be welcome. (End of Part 1)

*1 - Standing apart from the Constitution, the Euratom Treaty can be changed by a "simple" inter-governmental conference (IGC). Tackling Euratom provisions integrated into the Constitution, however, would have meant to put the whole Constitutional Treaty back on the table - a horror picture to most EU governments and leading figures, since discussion and wrestling about provisions other than those on nuclear energy could then easily start all over again.

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Political step	Effect on scope of action against Euratom		
Treaty abolition & revision conference	= no movement, locked in status quo, repeating same demands	= being at the mercy of the nuclearized states (e.g. France)	= Impotency
Unilateral withdrawal	= new dynamics	= autonomous action possible	= Empowerment

NOMADIC REBELS IN NIGER ATTACKED URANIUM MINING FIRMS

Niger is currently hitting the international headlines. Nomadic rebels carried out a series of raids on military targets and mining interests in the northern region of Niger and have killed 15 soldiers. According to market analysts their fight against the exploration of uranium could be a potential squeeze on world uranium supply.

(658.5819) **Laka Foundation** - Nomadic rebels in Niger have warned all foreign uranium and oil companies to end their operations unless a deal is struck with the central government under President Mamadou Tandja to give the rebels a larger share in revenues. If these demands are not met soon, the rebels have threatened to target international operations and possibly kidnap operators. Statements made by representatives of the Niger Movement for Justice (MNJ), made up largely of Tuareg and other nomadic tribes indicated that main targets will be Chinese and Western firms. In the past months the MNJ has carried out a series of raids on military targets and

mining interests in the northern region around Agadez. Late June it killed 15 soldiers and took dozens hostage during a raid on a remote army outpost. In the latest attack, on 4 July, the rebels attacked a compound 22 miles (35 km) northwest of Agadez of state-controlled coal mining and power company SONICHAR, which powers Niger's two uranium firms. The MNJ says it launched its campaign in retaliation for arbitrary arrests and killings of civilians in the north of Niger, where it says 253 civilians have disappeared after a wave of detentions by government forces.

Since 2006, a number of Chinese companies have been operating in

Niger, awarded licenses to explore for uranium. The Chinese group is being led by a uranium prospecting company floated in Niger by China Nuclear Engineering & Construction (Group) Corporation, called Sino-U, currently searching for uranium at two sites, Madaouela and Teguidda, in the Agadez region, about 600 miles (1,000 kilometers) northeast of the capital Niamey. The MNJ accuses Chinese companies of arming the Niger government in their fight against the rebels. Official warnings have been made and Sino-U deputy general manager Zhang Guohua have already been kidnapped and was set free in the night from 10 to 11 July.

Uranium price

For the first time since May 2001, the spot uranium price dropped twice in two consecutive weeks.

The TradeTech's Spot Price Indicator dropped to US\$133 per pound U3O8, a decrease of US\$2.00 (1.5 euro) from the June 30th Exchange Value. *Nuclear Market Review* (NMR) reported current active spot supply rose to more than 3.2 million pounds U3O8 equivalent. The active supply/demand ratio also rose - to 3.5 to the advantage of future uranium buyers. This confirms a reversal of the supply/demand ratio which favored sellers in late 2006 and early 2007. Last October, Cameco Corp's (CCJ) Cigar Lake flooding drove a rush of buyers to the spot uranium market. After a relatively quiet period, this past winter, Energy Resources of Australia announced part of their Ranger uranium operations had been flooded by a cyclone. Both events triggered a buying frenzy. Market analysts are now speculating that the next potential squeeze on uranium supply is not caused by nature, but caused by "terrorism". The world's seventh and eighth uranium producing mines are found in the Republic of Niger: the underground Akouta and the open pit Arlit. Together, they produced 3434 tons of uranium in 2006, according to the World Nuclear Association. This accounted for more than eight percent of the world's mining production last year.

In March 2006, Canadian companies Northwestern Mineral Ventures and North Atlantic Resources, also were awarded three uranium prospecting concessions. Other uranium mining operations are controlled by Compagnie Miniere d'Akouta (COMINAK) and the remainder by the French-controlled Societe des Mines et de l'Air (SOMAIR). AREVA owns 34 percent of Cominak. Other foreign companies holding interests are Japan's Overseas Uranium Resource Development Company (25 percent) and Spain's Enusa (10 percent). Mining is currently performed by Areva and its subsidiaries only, all others are prospecting or possibly constructing mines.

The former French colony's desert

north has long been a hotbed of dissent, largely beyond government control, full of disillusioned, unemployed youths and awash with arms left over from an uprising by Tuareg, Arab and Toubou nomads in the 1990s. Niger remains one of the poorest nations on earth, ranking bottom of the U.N. Human Development Index. Most of the nomadic groups involved in the uprising in the 1990s accepted peace deals in 1995. But the MNJ says the government has not lived up to its promises, leaving the north economically marginalized and rife with insecurity.

The government of president Mamadou Tandja is hoping to cash in on rising world uranium demand, particularly

from China, by granting dozens of new exploration permits. Tandja's administration refuses to recognize the MNJ, saying the recent attacks have nothing to do with the insurgency of the 1990s and dismissing them as acts of banditry carried out by drug traffickers and common criminals.

Sources: ResourceInvestor.com 9 July, 2007. *Niger's Uranium and Oil Sector Threatened by Rebels* / Canada.com 9 July, 2007. *Uranium prices fall again, conflict in Niger* / The Conservative Voice 9 July 2007. *Niger Rebels Pressure Uranium Miners* / Reuters 5 July, 2007. *Niger rebels attack power plant in uranium area* / Reuters 27 June, 2007. *Niger rebels want greater stake in uranium, oil*

IN BRIEF

IAEA celebrating it's 50th birthday: budget "far from adequate". Budget constraints are jeopardizing the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) ability to perform vital parts of its mission, particularly those most closely related to preventing the spread of nuclear weapons, Director-General Mohamed ElBaradei has warned in recent months. Requirements for IAEA safeguards and inspections are expected to increase dramatically over time" because more countries are likely to increase their reliance on nuclear power. Based on a UN formula, each member-state contributes a certain amount of funds to the IAEA's "regular budget." The agency's total regular budget for fiscal year 2007 is approximately US\$211 million. The IAEA also receives voluntary contributions from member states. The agency's fiscal year 2007 verification budget, which includes the implementation of safeguards, is less than \$83 million. The budget for nuclear safety and security, which includes measures to secure nuclear materials, is approximately \$17 million.

Starting in the mid-1980s, a group of wealthy countries imposed a "zero real-growth" budget on the IAEA. Beginning in 2003, however, the agency has received modest budget increases.

On July 9, the Fiscal Year 2008-2009 Budget has been adopted [by the Board of Governors] with a 4.2% increase. ElBaradei: "However, I made it clear to the Board that this is far from adequate to meet our increasing responsibilities in the area of verification, safety, security and development." He installed a high-level panel of experts which have to look at programmatic and financial requirements for the next decade. His expectation is that the panel will come with a recommendation for a major increase in the budget, maybe even doubling the budget.

Arms Control Today, July/August 2007 / IAEA: DG speaks on budget, 9 July 2007

UK: Bombers had Sizewell B plans. Documents including "detailed plans" of Sizewell B were found in a car connected to the failed bomb attacks on the London transport system of 21 July 2005. An unidentified expert told the BBC that he had distributed the notes at a series of university lectures, and that they originated from the Sizewell B public enquiry. The expert said that the bombers had held the documents for "at least two years". Police could release the information only after the conviction of the four. They were each sentenced to life imprisonment to serve a minimum of 40 years on 9 July.

WNN, 11 July 2007

Canada: 32 Radioactive Devices Missing. The Canadian government agency tracking radioactive devices gave four different answers in late June when asked how many are missing until finally settling on July 7, on 32. The confusion has raised questions about how closely the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission is keeping tabs on items that experts say could be used to make a dirty bomb. Some 3,200 Canadian license holders, from engineering firms to blood banks, use tens of thousands of sealed radioactive devices in their work. Of the 32 devices they say are still missing, the commission classified 10 as posing a medium safety risk at the time they were lost. The others were considered low risk.

The Canadian Press news agency first challenged the commission's initial responses after compiling its own database of more than six dozen items - from measuring gauges to electron-capture detectors - that have been lost or stolen, according to the commission's library of incident reports. Those documents were obtained under Canada's Access to Information Act. The varying figures emerged as anti-terrorism experts and emergency responders warned that even low-level nuclear materials found in gauges, dials and other equipment could be turned into a crude radiological device or dirty bomb.

Associated Press, 7 July 2007

Australia: opened Howard the door to nuke dump? Radical measures announced by Prime Minister Howard elate June to crackdown child sexual abuse in indigenous communities, include welfare restrictions, compulsory health checks for children, bans on alcohol and pornography, abolition of the Aboriginal lands permit system and extra police and defence forces to restore order.

Dr Helen Caldicott, an anti-nuclear activist of more than 20 years, said she feared Howard would turn Australia into the dumping ground for the world's nuclear waste. She said the takeover of Aboriginal land titles, part of the Government's crackdown of child sexual abuse, was a ruse to clear the way for the dumping of waste in remote areas. "The land grab from the Aborigines is actually about uranium and nuclear waste. It is obvious - you don't take land away from people just because their children are being sexually abused." Dr Caldicott said Australia should reject nuclear power, ban uranium mining and concentrate on developing renewable energies such as wind, solar and hot rocks. "They (the Government) are being pushed by the economy and wealthy corporations, like Western Mining and BHP Billiton, who seem to have no regard for the health and well-being of this generation and all future generations."

Meanwhile, feminist writer Germaine Greer says Howard's emergency measures to deal with child abuse are a land grab which he knows will be a certain vote-winner. Ms Greer said the move was a mask to remove native title rights to allow freer access to mining companies. "Howard has never been happy with the fact that small groups of illiterate hunter-gatherers can still hamper and delay exploitation of Australia's mineral wealth for as long as they did in the case of the Ranger uranium mine and Jabiluka," Ms Greer says, she believes the suspension of the permit system by which outsiders' movements to and from communities was the worst aspect of the intervention...

Howard has refused to guarantee that Aboriginal land leased for five years by the Commonwealth will be handed back to the communities. In the meantime, it may be sub-leased to a mining company or any other company. Mining operations could be up and running within five years and by then the damage will have been done. The Howard Government has always been an enthusiastic servant of these corporations.

Indymedia Perth, 4 July 2007

Waste coming back from Peru to Dounreay. The UKAEA at Dounreay is preparing to receive 2.9 tons of radioactive thorium from Peru. The thorium was secretly sent to Kukala, a company in Lima that makes gas mantles, in 1998 when the UKAEA was desperate for new business. But not only was the company incapable of using the thorium because it lacked the technology to purify it, but there was also no waste management option in Peru.

Nine years after the thorium was shipped to Peru, the UKAEA has now agreed to take it back. No details have been given on when the shipment will be made. Dounreay applied to the Scottish Environment Protection Agency for permission to return the waste earlier this year. No consultation on the application has yet been held. The thorium was produced as a by-product of a German fuel contract in 1991 and it will now join another ton of radioactive thorium from Germany already in store at Dounreay. All the thorium will be mixed with cement and kept in the site's intermediate waste store.

Several other shipments of radioactive waste have yet to be sent to Dounreay. Radioactive sodium at the UKAEA's site in Winfrith is due to be returned to Dounreay along with 1.5 tons of sodium from the French site at Cadarache. The material will be put through the site's sodium treatment plant. In addition there is 946 kg of plutonium and nearly 7.5 tons of uranium still at Cadarache that is due to be transported back to Dounreay. All the material in France is owned by the UKAEA and was sent there as part of the fast reactor research program.

N-Base Briefing 531, 23 June 2007

No agreement on Lithuania-3. The Baltic states and Poland failed on July 6 to sign a formal agreement to proceed with a joint US\$9 billion (6.7 bn euro) nuclear power plant in Lithuania and instead charged their energy companies to negotiate a shareholder deal. A meeting of prime ministers in Vilnius had been expected to rubber stamp the deal, but Poland's Jaroslaw Kaczynski failed to attend, due to "domestic political reasons." Poland, with Latvia and Estonia, has disagreed with a law passed by Lithuania's parliament, under which Vilnius is to have 34 percent of the project and other partners 22 percent each. The talks will focus on how the plant is run, shareholdings and on the size of the reactor, the prime ministers said. The plant will replace Lithuania's ageing Ignalina facility, which has to be shut for safety reasons under a deal with the European Union, and is seen as a key instrument in helping the participating countries reduce their reliance on Russian gas.

Environmentalists said they were glad a final deal to build a new nuclear plant had not been signed and they criticized the governments for failing to consider renewable energy sources. "The new Baltic nuclear power plant has no economic or environmental justification," the Green movements of Poland, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia said in a joint statement.

Reuters, 6 July 2007

Indonesians say 'No' to nuclear plant. On June 12, 3,000 people took to the streets in Kudus regency, Central Java, to reject the central government's plan to build a nuclear power plant in nearby Jepara regency. The protests are supported by the Kudus local officials. "I reject the plans to develop a nuclear-based power plant. People have rejected the plan. I'll send a letter on the Kudus people's rejection of the plan to the central government," Kudus regent Muhammad Tamzil said. He said the plan was made without agreement from residents. Protest coordinator Mochammad As'ad said the nuclear power plant could have disastrous consequences. An activist from the Indonesian Forum for the Environment, Arif Zayyn, said people were protesting against the plan for several reasons, such as the country's already abundant natural resources. "Moreover, the technology to be used in this nuclear power plant is a pressurized water reactor, old reactor technology whose safety is questionable," Arif said. He said that a 1,000 megawatt-capacity nuclear power plant would need four million liters of water to cool it every minute, a demand that could threaten local marine life and the fishing industry. The central government is planning to construct the nuclear power plant in stages, to eventually produce 4,000 megawatts. The first phase of the power plant is expected to be completed in 2016 and produces 1,000 megawatts to supply Java, Bali and Madura. Apart from the massive protests in the heart of Kudus city, a similar protest was also held outside the Kudus Legislative Council building.

The Jakarta Post, 13 June 2007

LANL Plutonium Reported in Santa Fe Drinking Water. The Santa Fe Water Quality Report for 2006 was delivered with the June water bills. The report stated that there was a "qualified detection of plutonium 238" in Buckman Well Number 1. This means that plutonium from the development and production of nuclear weapons at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) was detected in Santa Fe drinking water supplies. However, the actual amount of plutonium contamination could not be determined by the test performed. The Water Quality Report is issued each year as required by the federal Safe Drinking Water Act. In 2006, all contamination detections were below federal and state drinking water quality limits.

Plutonium is the main ingredient in the core or trigger of a nuclear weapon, known as a plutonium pit. At the same time that the detection of plutonium is being reported, LANL is celebrating the certification of the first plutonium pit accepted by the government for use in the nation's nuclear-weapons stockpile since 1989, when Rocky Flats was raided by the FBI for environmental crimes. According to Nuclear Watch New Mexico, a Santa Fe based NGO, this new pit cost approximately US\$2.2 billion (1.6 bn euro).

Approximately 12,000 cubic meters of plutonium contaminated waste remains in unlined burial areas on the LANL site, which is a source of the groundwater contamination. LANL is located above the regional aquifer, which flows towards the Buckman Well Field, where the City of Santa Fe gets 40% of its drinking water.

Registered Geologist, Robert H. Gilkeson, said that intermittent and low level detections can be an early indication of an approaching contaminant plume. In addition, a recent independent study of the area surrounding LANL found elevated and potentially harmful levels of radioactivity in materials which humans are routinely exposed to, such as dusts and plant life. The Government Accountability Project performed the study, with technical assistance from Boston Chemical Data, Inc.

Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety News Update, 6 July 2007

Turkey: first set back to nuclear renaissance in Middle East

On May 24, the President of the Turkish Republic vetoed a law providing the legal and financial framework for the construction and operation of nuclear plants in Turkey. Currently there are no nuclear plants in Turkey. This is a huge success in the long campaign to stop the law.

Early May the President had asked Greenpeace for a file, in which they argued how the law violates the Constitution. Motivating his veto, the President now uses Greenpeace arguments. Two of those may be noteworthy here. Greenpeace Mediterranean (GP Med) pointed out that not the plant operator but the State would pay all cost of plant decommissioning and nuclear waste disposal. Furthermore, GP Med provided evidence that the law had in fact been drafted by the Canadian nuclear plant operator AECL, as proof of an unhealthy level of control of public decision making by a private (and foreign) company. The President emphasized that involved articles indeed violate Constitution and public good. Other Greenpeace arguments weren't explicitly used in the veto. GP warned that in case of an accident, the Paris Convention would not cover all liability. They also pointed out that the feed in tariff system for nuclear energy that the law creates is unacceptable: don't subsidize death, bring about an energy revolution. This is the first victory, having worked on this law for nearly one year. But it is not over yet. Turkey faces general election in July and it is expected the government will resent the law to the President and the President to go to the Supreme Court. If the President doesn't, opposition parties have to do so.

E-mail from GP Med, 25 May 2007

New Book: "Updating International Nuclear Law"

One month after this year's Chernobyl anniversary, in May, PLAGS brought out "Updating International Nuclear Law" at NWV Publishers, Vienna, with BWV (Germany) and Intersentia (Belgium) as co-distributors. The 24 papers assembled in this omnibus volume derive from the 1st conference ever to bring together experts in international environmental law, law practitioners with

experience in legal action against nuclear threats or damages (both transboundary and domestic), radiation scientists with experience in court action, and NGO representatives - from 5 continents. The 3-day conference was held in Salzburg, Austria, in October 2005 - delay due to the obvious material limitations of a small regional NGO, not necessarily a disadvantage, though: the papers have been updated on relevant developments since.

Nuclear research and nuclear industry have managed to grow, and survive, because of highly favorable structures found in international law and institutions. This book explores the necessities and ways to adjust the law to the dimensions of risks and real costs of nuclear energy, with its legacy of waste for posterity in mind. Nuclear energy is often touted as "cheap", but it is "cheap" only if one ignores the costs and challenges for present and future communities with regard to potential accidents, uranium mining, the disposal and transportation of radioactive materials and wastes and their long-term effects on health and the environment, and the decommissioning of nuclear plants.

This book exposes the inadequacies in transgenerational equity, competition rules, international and national liability and compensation regimes and other legal dispositions governing nuclear activities. Twenty-four distinguished scholars, scientists, lawyers, nuclear experts and leading NGO figures have contributed essays covering a wide range of aspects of this important topic. Through their papers, private, state and university jurists will participate in a fascinating legal debate. Those living near nuclear facilities or routes of transportation, law practitioners and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) will benefit from the lessons of exemplary actions in court. Policy and decision-makers will know how to better protect the health of people and the environment affected by nuclear activities and will evaluate better the real costs of nuclear energy when choosing among energy alternatives. Nuclear operators will get a look of what may be "in the pipeline" in terms of the law and legal action. With the fight for and against a nuclear revival getting fiercer, this book is a profound contribution to the debate.

Details of the book: isbn: 978-3-7083-0449-6, 508 pages, paperback, Euro 38,80

Ordering via: Amedia GnbR, Sturzgasse 1a, 1141 Wien, Austria

Tel: +43 1 982 13 22; email: office@amedia.co.at

Conference 'Science or fiction: Is there a future for nuclear?' Friends of the Earth Austria invites you to attend their conference about the relapse of the nuclear power industry. The aim of this one-day conference is to review and critically assess new concepts for fission and fusion reactors. Proponents of latest nuclear energy generating technologies will present their plans for a nuclear future and critical experts will provide counter arguments. Conference participants will gain overview of the current state of discussions regarding these technologies and will be enabled to form their own informed opinion.

Nuclear power is back on the political agenda, promising to be the answer to the new challenges of securing energy supply and fighting climate change. The problems regarding safety, nuclear waste and proliferation remain unsolved. In addition, the question surrounding the limited availability of uranium as an energy resource remains. The nuclear industry is attempting to respond to these open questions with two strategies: The 'new' reactors of Generation IV and nuclear fusion. Euratom is financing nuclear fusion and Generation IV research. Both projects have very long time horizons (25- 50/70 years) and aim to contribute to a secure and climate-friendly energy supply. Critical analyses of these visions must be carried out now. It is today that we take the decisions about the energy of the future.

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Iran and Russia dispute Bushehr startup. The Bushehr nuclear power plant which Russia is constructing in Iran will be completed in September, according to Mohamed Amiri, head of a group of Iranian nuclear and radiation safety agencies. He said that Iran planned to start operating the plant shortly after. "Construction will be completed in two months, and we should receive nuclear fuel for the launch of the reactor in accordance with the contract with the Russian side," Amiri told ITAR-TASS. He added that Iran "expects the delivery of fuel from Russia for the Bushehr plant at any time." However, Irina Yesipova, a spokeswoman for Russian plant constructor AtomStroyExport (ASE), said, "Construction cannot be finished in September." She also pointed out that Russia has stated that it will not ship the fuel to Iran until six months before the plant's start-up. In addition, Sergei Kislyak, a Russian deputy foreign minister, said, "It would be too ambitious, I think, to say that it can be commissioned within two months." He added, "That is unachievable physically." Sergei Kiriienko, head of Russia's Federal Atomic Energy Agency (Rosatom), said that it was "unrealistic" the plant would start-up in 2007. He said, "It's perfectly clear... that the launch can happen no earlier than 2008." The US\$1 billion project has been hit with repeated delays, most recently in a dispute between Moscow and Tehran over payment.

At least this clarifies the report in the last Nuclear monitor issue about the fuel already being shipped to Busher.

WNN, 6 July 2007

Chernobyl shelter completed

A consortium, led by Atomstroyexport CJSC, has completed the three-year stabilization project at Chernobyl nuclear power plant in Ukraine, and as a result, the stability of the "sarcophagus" has been significantly enhanced, while the life of the plant has been prolonged for 10-15 years. This project is a temporary measure before the construction of a new safe confinement.

Nuclear Engineering International, 27 May 2007

Australia: 1980's secret enrichment program revealed. Australian Broadcasting Company's Investigative Unit revealed that uranium was secretly being enriched at Sydney's Lucas Heights reactor 20 years ago and that enrichment technology was secretly being developed during the mid-1980s before the program ran out of money. Senior staff at Lucas Heights say that at the time they devised a plan to continue their work even after the then-Hawke government moved to shut down the enrichment program. According to the 2004 Greenpeace Report "Secrets, Lies and Uranium Enrichment" most research about enrichment at Lucas Heights was on the classified Laser Isotope Separation. "I don't think anyone at the really high level in the Government understood what we were trying to do, to preserve this technology for the good of the country," said Dr. Clarence Hardy who worked for 20 years at Lucas Heights. Another nuclear scientist Don Mercer, who worked on the program says the research was conducted for 'Australia's benefit'. Well, doesn't that sound familiar: "Nobody but we, understand what's good for the country".

Dr Hardy is now a director of the company Nuclear Fuel Australia Ltd (NFAL) and is planning to put a proposal to the Federal Government to build an enrichment plant in Australia.

Now Hardy thinks Urenco's National Enrichment Facility (NEF) under construction in New Mexico, USA, made a "very good reference model" for the potential future plant. NFAL is essentially repeating an exercise undertaken in 1982 by the Uranium Enrichment Group of Australia (UEGA) consortium, which Hardy was also involved in. UEGA also submitted a plan to government concerning an enrichment plant, but a change of government the next year meant an end to the project, well, officially at least.

According to ABC possible sites have already been earmarked near Brisbane and near Port Pirie in South Australia. Federal Resources Minister Ian Macfarlane says he has not been approached about plans to build a commercial nuclear enrichment site in Australia, but would not rule out discussing such a proposal.

ABC News Online, 14 June 2007 / World Nuclear News, 14 June 2007

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WISE/NIRS NUCLEAR MONITOR

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