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Summary and Observations of the
Conference for a Nuclear Free 1990s, April 26-27, 1991

On April 26 and 27, 1991, the Nuclear Information Resource Service (NIRS), Safe Energy Communication Council (SECC), and Greenpeace convened the "Conference for a Nuclear Free 1990s - No More Chernobyls" at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Washington, D.C. The conference was attended by over five hundred people, including many representatives of local, regional, and national organizations opposed to nuclear power. Speakers at the conference included: Ralph Nader; Dr. Alice Stewart, Birmingham University, England; Olga Korbut, Chernobyl relief activist and Olympic Gold Medalist; Dr. David Marples, University of Alberta; Dr. Gennady Grushevoy, Deputy to the Parliament of Byelorussia; Dr. Natalia Preobrazhenska, Green World-Ukraine; Lois Gibbs, Citizens Clearinghouse for Hazardous Waste; Dean Tousley, Counsel for the House Interior Committee on Energy and the Environment; and Amory Lovins. The plenary sessions were chaired by Michael Mariotte, Executive Director of NIRS; Scott Denman, Executive Director of SECC; and Peter Bahouth, Executive Director of Greenpeace USA.

The conference commemorated the fifth anniversary of the accident at Chernobyl and focused on developing strategies for legal and political action against existing and future development of nuclear power. Ralph Nader delivered the most poignant challenge to the conference attendees to phase out nuclear power and deal with the "professional insanity" that has allowed the nuclear industry to flourish. The enclosure to this report provides the conference schedule. This note summarizes the main points and strategies discussed during the conference in terms of issues affecting NRC.

Antinuclear Strategies for the 1990s

- Label the Johnston-Wallop Energy Strategy bill as a tax increase; claim that higher taxes will be needed to help subsidize the nuclear industry
- Don't let the American people forget about Chernobyl
- Develop a strategy now to take advantage of the next severe nuclear accident to kill nuclear power
- Develop a Rogue's gallery of "who's who in nuclear power," including members of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, CEOs of the vendor corporations, CEOs of the utilities, and members of Congress, with the object of making them personally accountable for their decisions and increasing visibility of the process

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- Work for procurement legislation that requires governmental agencies to purchase items that counter the need for nuclear power (e.g., enhanced efficiency appliances and lightbulbs, solar power)
 - Target specific controversial issues that appeal to the American public: evacuation planning and the size of the EPZ (5 vs. 40 miles), seismic protection, declining nuclear expertise, and release of INPO reports
 - Reject any attempts to reach compromises on nuclear issues; any conciliations signal weaknesses of the environmental community in terms of their bottom line position that nuclear power must be eliminated
 - Eliminate nuclear culture and the secrecy that has fostered this culture, which is "fundamentally anti-democratic"

Low-Level Waste

- Close nuclear power down by halting development of new LLW disposal facilities
- Band together national environmental organizations with local opposition groups to fight development of new LLW disposal facilities
- Stop the new disposal facility near Needles, California, which is critical to decreasing or reversing the momentum of new site development and in demonstrating the effectiveness of citizen action against the disposal facilities
- Recognize the need to tailor strategies on a local or regional basis
- Improve connections with the media and the educational system -- retake the schools
- Reject the National Energy Strategy and develop a policy that embraces conservation, efficiency, and renewable energy supplies as principal elements

Below Regulatory Concern

- Push legislation now to void NRC's 1986 and 1990 BRC policies

- Cooperate with the States in supporting legislation that clarifies that NRC has no authority under the Atomic Energy Act to preempt more restrictive State requirements
- Reject the NRC's consensus building effort, which is a transparent scam to derail legislative efforts
- Use an economic basis to block deregulation attempts
- Support Senator Wellstone's amendments to the Johnston-Wallop Energy Strategy bill that oppose one-step licensing and clarify that NRC may not preempt more restrictive State regulations
- Consider adding provisions in the reauthorization of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act to void BRC decisions and clarify State authority
- Ensure that Agreement States (e.g., California) and DOE do not implement BRC while the debate focuses on NRC's program
- Turn the issue around from "How clean is clean" to "How dirty is clean enough" and distinguish between cleanup levels and other limits (e.g., on waste disposal) allowing contamination up to these levels
- Raise issues about the inappropriateness of comparing dose criteria to background levels (which already causes the majority of cancers, per Dr. Stewart), reject dose modeling as the basis for compliance (reject millirems and Effective Dose Equivalent, which is someone's subjective judgment about the level of risk posed by radiation), and raise the prospect that inclusion of BRC wastes in municipal waste landfills could preclude their mining and recovery in years to come

High-Level Waste

- Continue to stall until Congress gives up on the repository program and the program grinds to a halt
- Recognize that DOE itself is responsible for delays in characterizing the Yucca Mountain site
- Acknowledge that Yucca Mountain is not suitable, will not be found suitable, and cannot be licensed in accordance with 10 CFR Part 60 ("the only science in the system is political science")

- Store spent fuel onsite using dry cask storage containers, while society rethinks its approach for HLW disposal; this approach is supported by NRC's recent waste confidence decision which concludes that onsite storage is safe for 100 years
- Insist on enhanced participation of the affected public in the licensing process for onsite storage
- Reject efforts by the Nuclear Waste Negotiator to negotiate an agreement for siting the repository, which was characterized by Peter Bahouth as an attempt to find Indian lands where the nuclear culture can dump its trash on the oldest culture in the nation

License Renewal and Aging

- Focus on three critical aging issues: pressure vessel embrittlement, pipe cracking and thinning, and steam generator replacement
- Concentrate on Yankee Rowe because it will be the first plant to submit for license renewal (in Fall 1991) and because the embrittlement issue is most severe for Yankee Rowe's reactor vessel (NRC and the utility have no idea how brittle the vessel is; activation of the ECCS could cause thermal shock to the vessel sufficient to cause it to fail catastrophically and lead to a severe accident worse than Chernobyl); a representative from Yankee Atomic Power Corporation, Bill McGee, commented that Yankee is considering a range of options for replacing or fixing the Yankee Rowe vessel
- Recognize that there is no scientific basis behind NRC decisions regarding aging issues ("NRC doesn't know what is going on"), including vessel embrittlement, leak before break policy, pipe wall thinning and cracking, multitube SG tube rupture, and significance of tube plugging; take these issues to the public to show "the Stalinization of American nuclear regulation" and the absurdity of NRC's regulatory approach
- Include consideration of the current licensing basis and a plant's compliance with this basis as part of the rule on license renewal (expressed by Dean Tousley as his personal views: NRC has no idea about what the licensing basis is for individual plants, NRC said it could not afford the resources to compile the current licensing basis in response to the Bingham Amendment in 1978(?), NRC has no idea whether currently operating plants comply with the licensing basis, the proposed

rule shuts the public out by omitting the licensing basis from the scope of the renewal process and allowing utilities to keep files onsite, the rule allows the utilities to request relaxation of the current licensing basis even though the current licensing basis is not a part of the proceeding, the rule delegates the NRC's responsibility to the utilities by allowing them to define what technical criteria should be imposed on the reactors to ensure safety, NRC has pulled the most important issue out of license renewal by treating reactor vessel embrittlement separately)

- Recognize that NRC's license renewal rule indirectly codifies the meaning of adequate protection as either (1) whatever level of protection a plant currently provides or (2) the level of safety of the least safe plant at its least safe moment (per Dean Tousley)
- Focus on the issues of aging, counterfeit parts, concrete and support structure degradation, and waste storage in license renewal
- Involve the public before docketing the license application, when NRC has its greatest impact on the licensee, similar to the approach that has worked well in the prelicensing process for the HLW repository
- File §2.206 petitions now to address the reactor vessel embrittlement issue through implementation of the Pressurized Thermal Shock rule, rather than waiting to address this issue as part of license renewal
- Work with State governments and public utility commissions to preclude relicensing of existing plants based on economic grounds and "certificates of need" -
- forget the feds

Public Participation

- Recognize that litigating against NRC is an uphill, drawn out process
- Link litigation to networking with other organizations on important issues, proactive media campaigns, and political action in Congress
- Look for opportunities to intervene in license amendments and enforcement actions, particularly when the reactors are shut down

- Take independent action under the Clean Water Act to compel enforcement against violations; easy to get involved with repeat violations and make the utilities pay
- Push legislative approaches to tax nuclear power, such as New Hampshire's legislation that would impose a tax on nuclear power-generated electricity (imposed as a 0.64% property tax) because nuclear power imposes unique responsibilities and safety burdens on society and long-lasting impacts on the environment (the legislation was introduced by Governor Gregg, passed by the House, and scheduled for a hearing in the State Senate on Thursday, May 2, 1991)
- Request information from the librarians at the NRC's Public Document Room, who are doing a great job in providing information
- Oppose what appears to be a concerted effort by the NRC to shut the public out of the process (e.g., raising thresholds for contentions, deficient Sunshine Act notifications, license renewal rule, refusal to release INPO reports)
- Be wary of efforts by the NRC to negotiate agreements or seek consensus; in the LSS negotiated rule, NRC abandoned the consensus position in followup actions on the LSS rule (why should the public participate in a process when NRC is not obligated to accept the end result?)
- Demand that NRC provide followup reports in response to events and improve information transfer to people who live in the vicinity of the plants
- Demand explanations when NRC fails to followup on earlier reports of problems (e.g., why didn't NRC followup on INPO's identification of problems with check valves on the "A" safety train at Seabrook in 1988, yet the plant was recently shut down to address this issue (8 out of 9 bolts missing on one of the valves))

Radiation Protection

- Recognize that background radiation is the most important carcinogen and may be responsible for all the ambient fatal cancers (- 20% of all deaths in developed

countries)

- Recognize that in utero exposure to background radiation is the most important cause of childhood cancers, based on the results of comprehensive epidemiological studies performed by the NRPB
- Reject attempts by industry and government officials to justify selection of exposure levels based on comparisons with background exposure; given the health effects attributed to background exposures, set radiation protection standards to prevent exposure above background levels
- Demand that radiation protection standards be based on the risks of genetic, teratogenic, and latent effects on the immunological system, in addition to lethal and non-lethal cancer
- Insist that "real" radiation standards be established, rather than standards that employ millirems based unverified computer models and effective dose equivalents based on subjective estimates of the risks posed by radiation exposure

Chernobyl

- Recognize that radiation exposures to Chernobyl victims have caused "Chernobyl AIDS" -- an immunological deficiency syndrome especially prevalent in children
- Push for resettlement of up to 2,000,000 additional people living in areas contaminated by fallout from the Chernobyl accident
- Send vitamins and support exchange programs to allow children in Byelorussia and the Ukraine to purge their bodies of cesium and other isotopes
- Acknowledge that the frequency of serious blood disorders has increased in adults exposed to Chernobyl fallout from 2.3/10,000 in 1983 to 64.8/10,000 in 1990
- Demand release of the medical and dosimetric analyses on the exposed population at Chernobyl that have thus far been kept secret
- Demand an independent study be conducted by the Greens about the health consequences of the Chernobyl accident
- Declare April 26 as an international day for the

prevention of nuclear and other industrial accidents

- Recognize that the amount of ^{137}Cs released from Chernobyl was 6,000,000 times that released from the Accident at TMI
- Acknowledge that the Chernobyl accident was caused by a design failure (e.g., control rods were too short), rather than operator error, and that the accident occurred after a routine shutdown of the plant; emphasize that the USSR representatives lied to the IAEA in August 1986 and that these lies have been knowingly propagated by government agencies that promote nuclear power
- Demand assessment and cleanup of over 800 nuclear waste dumps that were hastily constructed around the Chernobyl reactor after the accident
- Acknowledge that over 7000 people have already died from radiation exposures associated with the Chernobyl accident in the Ukraine alone, and that over 4,000,000 people are currently suffering from direct radiation effects

Michael Weber
April 30, 1991

Enclosure:
Conference Schedule