



News In Review

A collection of NGO views on the NPT Review 2000

16 May 2000 - No. 16



UN Office: 777 UN Plaza, New York, NY 10017. phone (212) 682-1265 Fax: (212) 286-8211 E-mail: wilpfun@igc.org

Int Secretariat: 1, rue de Varembe, C.P.28, 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland. Phone: (+41 22) 733-6175 E-mail: wilpf@iprolink.ch

Normally Pretty Tedious

NGOs took up their role as couch potatoes outside Conference Room 4 on Monday as they put together snippets of information received from the two meetings of Subsidiary Body I. Despite the hard work of Chairman Clive Pearson of New Zealand, "no consensus as yet" was the report of gloomy delegates (also known as 'delicates' at this stage of the game). The decision on whether the consultations will continue in the form of a Subsidiary Body or in a smaller drafting group is in the hands of President Baali, who returned from London late Monday afternoon and will take a decision on this matter Tuesday morning. With the drafting group canceling their Monday afternoon and Tuesday morning sessions due to lack of text, predictions are that, like the Review Conference that ended at 5.30 am in 1990, and after midnight in 1995, Friday, May 19, 2000 will be a long, long day.

The language of the forward looking document from Subsidiary Body I will (d)evolve over the coming days, but when comparing the text of May 9 with that of May 15, NGOs observe that 'annual' reports on the implementation of Article VI have become 'regular' reports, ratifications have become "in accordance with constitutional processes", and "strategic stability" has been tacked onto a fourth sentence. It seems that some nuclear weapon states are being hard liners, some non-nuclear weapon states are being passive observers while others compromise, and compromise again.

One case in point is the New Agenda Coalition. Allegedly NAC members needed to again explain that the language calling on nuclear weapon states to make an "unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals" is not a reinterpretation of the legal treaty commitments, but rather is a call for a political commitment that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is indeed the goal.

Many NGOs are preparing draft damage reports based on the possibility of a consensus text that is perceived to be

meaningless, or worse, a complete break-down that would frustrate and undermine the intentions of the NPT and the work of other disarmament fora.

What the nuclear weapon states do not seem to understand is the ever-increasing price of their nuclear status. Their hold on the non-nuclear weapon states is loosening because the international community is increasingly realising the untenable nature of security through nuclear weapons. The pressure of international and domestic legal opinions plus increasing citizen activity adds to this shift. The delegitimisation of nuclear weapons is happening. Proliferation has happened, and will happen again. Disarmament has not happened. When will the nuclear weapon states realise that the two are intrinsically linked?

Felicity Hill
Director UN Office
WILPF

You Gotta Laugh

or you cry...

Arms Control COMEDY with Bill Hartung

Reception

tonight 6 - 8pm

2nd Floor

777 UN Plaza

wine and refreshments provided

All delegates and NGOs welcome

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Trouble in Transit

While much of the attention during the first three weeks of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference was focused on the thorny disarmament and Middle East debates taking place in Main Committee 1 and 2, a heated discussion concerning nuclear transports was approaching the boiling point in Main Committee 3. And, while Japan has traditionally been a champion of progress on nuclear disarmament in Main Committee 1, when it comes to the issue of nuclear transports, the Japanese delegation has joined nuclear weapon states, United Kingdom and France, as roadblocks in Main Committee 3.

The main driver of the transport controversy is Japan's ambitious program to acquire plutonium for its nuclear program and the accompanying shipments of nuclear waste and plutonium from European reprocessing facilities to Japan. The plutonium transports in particular cause concern because of the serious proliferation and environmental risks associated with them.

It is very difficult to evaluate the environmental impact of a nuclear transport accident. Given the tremendous number of variables involved, including the nature of the accident, weather conditions, and proximity to land, many different scenarios are possible, all involving many different kinds and levels of damage. Nonetheless, it can be said that a serious accident involving a plutonium or nuclear waste shipment which resulted in a long-duration, high-intensity fire and the eventual sinking of the damaged cargo could result in significant, long-term radioactive contamination of the environment.

A report by Dr. Edwin Lyman of the Nuclear Control Institute suggests that a damaged and sunken waste shipment "could cause chronic exposure to the public far in excess of standards set by the international community". Ultimately, communities affected by such an accident would face mass evacuations and/or massive decontamination efforts. At the same time, local and regional fisheries, agriculture, and tourist industries would be undermined if not destroyed by public fears about radioactive contamination.

Although the plutonium is shipped back to Japan in the form of Mixed Oxide (Mox) Fuel, it could be separated from the fuel with surprising ease and used in a nuclear explosive device.

Against this backdrop, many nations along the routes of nuclear shipments came to this NPT Review determined to raise their concerns about the increasing frequency of radioactive transports and to launch discussions on increased transparency and ensuring liability for accidents. Members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), along with New Zealand and Ireland, raised four primary issues in Committee 3;

- The need to discuss prior notification and consultation between shipping nations and en route states on shipments of radioactive materials;
- The need to discuss the possibility of environmental assessments on the impacts of possible transport accidents;
- The need to discuss provisions for guarantees of assistance with salvage of cargo in the event of an accident; and
- The need for consultations on the development of a more comprehensive liability regime that, in the words of CARICOM - "includes full indemnification for damage resulting from accidental or deliberate events." New Zealand, noting that public perceptions about the dangers of radioactivity could destroy a

tourist or sea-food based economy, wants consideration of liability for damages after an accident even if serious contamination was avoided.

These countries ran head-long into steadfast opposition from Japan, the United Kingdom, and France. The Committee chair was reluctant to place text in his report that would not garner consensus, so that even factual references to the "increasing frequency" of such transports were left out of the Chair's final report.

New Zealand, Barbados, and Ireland had to fight to ensure that the Chair's text mentioned not only a nation's "right" to ship materials on the high seas but also its "responsibilities". They were able to score a victory on this seemingly common sense point, but the larger issue was lost.

France, Japan, and the United Kingdom, with a nod from Australia, managed to strike "a call for consideration within appropriate international organizations of an effective and comprehensive regime of prior notification and prior consultation with potentially affected States on the transport of radioactive material". Despite the "spirit of consensus", "flexibility", and "compromise" so often cited during the increasingly tense last hours of negotiation, Japan made it clear that they "could not live with" this sentence. The UK and France were quick to second the sentiment.

The clearly frustrated delegate from Trinidad and Tobago noted that their call for consideration of environmental assessments "never saw the light of day". By Friday, the resulting language in the transport section had been so weakened that New Zealand was ready to just have the paragraphs deleted. For now, they remain as contested language.

The behavior of the United Kingdom, France and Japan in Main Committee 3 betrays an arrogant disregard for the legitimate and common sense concerns of a large and diverse group of nations put at risk by these hazardous transports. They are prepared to ignore calls for improved environmental practices to protect their dying nuclear industries. In doing so, they have jeopardized the success of this conference.

**Bruce Hall
Greenpeace**

Quote of the Day

“ There are plenty of problems in the world, many of them interconnected. But there is no problem which compares with this central, universal problem of saving the human race from extinction.”

John Foster Dulles

Speech to UN General Assembly, 1952

Sharon Riggle

Director, Centre for European Security and Disarmament, Brussels

1. What are your hopes or expectations for the Nuclear Non-Proliferation 2000 Review Conference?

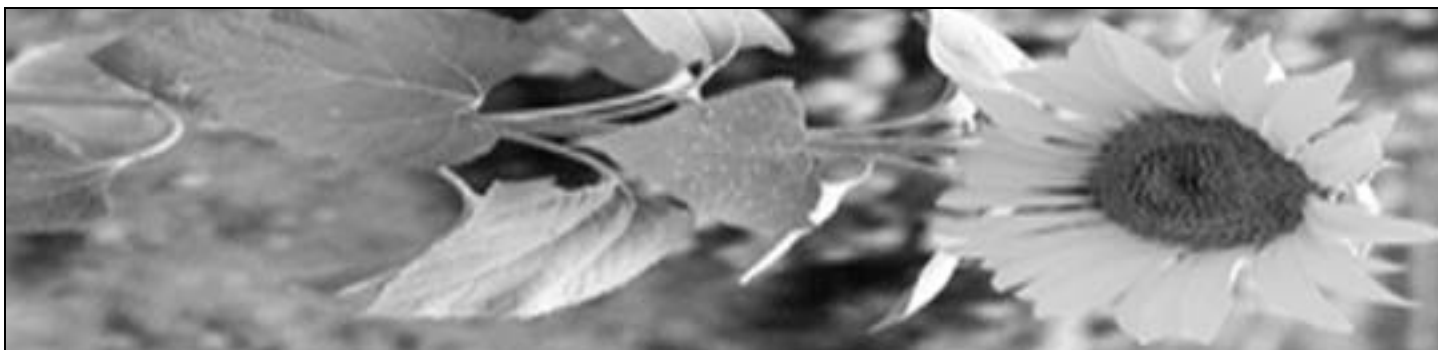
Throughout the new review process, my hopes have remained high that the bargains and promises made in 1995 would be fulfilled. While my hopes are still that we will have a strong, meaningful outcome by the end of the RevCon, it will be in spite of the unwillingness of a handful of states to truly commit to their treaty-bound obligations. We hear again and again a reiteration of the importance of these weapons and plans that do not involve getting rid of them for the 'foreseeable future'. This is an untenable situation, which I hope can be resolved before the NPT suffers irreparable damage.

2. What topics do you work on most or find the most interesting in this forum?

I work in three subject areas, and find them all interesting: UN, NATO and European Union security issues. There is a certain amount of synergy between these bodies, and we work to highlight interrelated events and policies in order to get a better overall picture of European security. I must say the NPT and nuclear matters are closest to my heart, as I have spent more of my time and energy working on them. This Review Conference will show us if the NPT has the capability to evolve and adapt to a changing security context. That will be the crucial quality I look for this year.

3. What led you to be doing the work that you are doing now?

I have absolutely no idea. Disarmament work seems to have come out of nowhere and has captured my imagination and commitment. I have always worked for NGOs (environmental, women's and libraries) with the conviction that those who are able and willing to do so, should contribute to the society in which they live, in whatever way they can. I see disarmament as a vital piece in a global effort to make our world more habitable and humane.



Who's Who - Diplomat Profile

H. E. Celso Luiz N. Amorim

Ambassador of Brazil to the United Nations and International Organisations in Geneva

1. What are your hopes or expectations for the Nuclear Non-Proliferation 2000 Review Conference?

Concrete steps towards elimination of nuclear weapons, also as the best means of ensuring non-proliferation. The New Agenda has made concrete proposals with these objectives in mind – both in relation to an unequivocal commitment to nuclear disarmament, and towards specific measures. These form a good basis for progress in that direction.

2. What topics do you work on most or find the most interesting in this forum?

Many topics are interesting, and often interrelated, but ensuring Article VI is implemented fully is one of our priorities.

3. What led you to be doing the work that you are doing now?

I am the official representative of Brazil to the Conference on Disarmament, and having been Foreign Minister of Brazil, I was very involved with the ratification and amendment process of the Tlatelolco Treaty. I was also very involved in the Quadripartite Agreement between Brazil, Argentina, ABACC and the IAEA. In my personal capacity, I was also a member of the Canberra Commission, whose conclusions remain essentially valid.

Human Experiments: Plutonium Written on the Body

In May of 1993, the then US Department of Energy's Secretary, Hazel O'Leary, began to declassify secret records from DOE archives located throughout the country. Of the 32 million-page mass of documents released, the most notorious pointed to evidence of nuclear scientists experimenting on human beings to study the effects of plutonium (New York Times, 30 December 1993).

The declassified documents revealed a disturbing and cavalier attitude amongst nuclear scientists in their quest to discover the ill effects of plutonium on human biological systems. US Congressperson, Edward Markey of Massachusetts, submitted a report to Congress entitled 'American Nuclear Guinea Pigs', where he argued that "too many of these experiments used human subjects that were captive audiences or populations . . . considered 'expendable': the elderly, prisoners, hospital patients, who might not have retained their full faculties for informed consent" (Newsweek, 27 December 1993: 15). The subjects were also likely to be ethnic minorities whose rights as US citizens were inadequately protected due to institutionalized racism (Pacifica Radio Archives, 20 November 1996). It is estimated that over 600 people were unwittingly subjected to these experiments (Newsweek, 27 December 1993:14).

In 1963, 131 male inmates at prisons in Oregon and Washington State were paid by the US Atomic Energy Commission to participate in a bizarre experiment which involved exposing their genitalia to excessive doses of radiation (Newsweek, 27 December 1993: 15). The consent form in Oregon read "I hereby agree to submit to X-ray radiation of my scrotum and testes" (Newsweek, 27 December 1993: 15). Although the subjects of this experiment were advised about consequences, such as sterility and radiation burns, they were not told about the risk of testicular cancer.

After the experiment, the Oregon men were given vasectomies — "to avoid the possibility of contaminating the general population with irradiation-induced mutants", wrote the late Dr. Carl Heller, who ran the tests (Newsweek, 27 December 1993: 15).

Elmer Allen, a 36 year old African-American man who injured in the course of his employment as a railroad porter in September of 1946, was another casualty of the AEC's secret nuclear experiments (New York Times, 30 December 1993). Allen was the unwitting subject of a government sponsored project to study 'tracer injections' of plutonium, conducted during the years 1945-1947 (Newsweek, 27 December 1993: 16). Elmaureen Whitfield-Bell, Allen's daughter, describes what happened.

"After ten months of unsuccessful treatment . . . [Allen] was referred by his private doctor to a specialist at the University of California, San Francisco Hospital . . . After being there five days, he was injected with plutonium. We know that now. He was injected with plutonium into that particular leg . . . And three days later the leg was amputated and the records show that that leg was taken to radiological research [sic]. . . He was told that [his] injury was so severe that his leg would have to be amputated" (Pacifica Radio Archives, 20 November 1996).

Allen was never told that he had been injected with plutonium, and against the odds he lived for another forty-four years.

According to Arjun Makhijani, O'Leary's disclosure of human experimentation marked an important step forward for the nuclear industry.

"The day that Secretary O'Leary announced to the world, on 7 December 1993, that the Department of Energy and the US government had done these experiments on people without their consent was a very important day for democracy in the United States. I think Secretary O'Leary's openness initiatives have been historic because no other nuclear weapons nation has come forth even partially and said what they have done to their own people and they have all harmed their own people. So I think that this represents the beginning of the end . . . but only the beginning because there is a very, very large number of people who have been hurt" (Pacifica Radio Archives, 20 November 1996).

The 'beginning' that Makhijani is referring to occurred on 19 November 1996 when the families of 12 victims of plutonium experimentation were awarded a total of \$4.8 million as compensation for the suffering they incurred. However, all 12 'subjects' of the plutonium experiments had died before acknowledgment or compensation had arrived.

Makhijani argues that the AEC/DOE lacked a critical foresight in . . . examin[ing] the ill effects of plutonium contamination.

"[The] paucity of available data on the effects of human exposure to plutonium is . . . inexcusable . . . given the large number of plutonium workers employed over the last five decades in the US alone, on whom data in fact exist. As concluded by [a] review of the Physicians for Social Responsibility task force, the US government and its contractors have simply failed to set up the studies to properly collect and analyze these data" (IEER et al 1992: 16).

Eileen Welsome

**For further information see
The Plutonium Files - Dial Press 1999**

Test Mannequins at an Atom Bomb Site

~ a constant preoccupation of the early atomic years was imagining the effects of a nuclear blast. These dummies at a test site in Yucca Flat, Nevada, were used to gauge what was only too easy to imagine: the impact a blast might have on the human body.

from: *EYEWITNESS: 150 Years of Photojournalism*

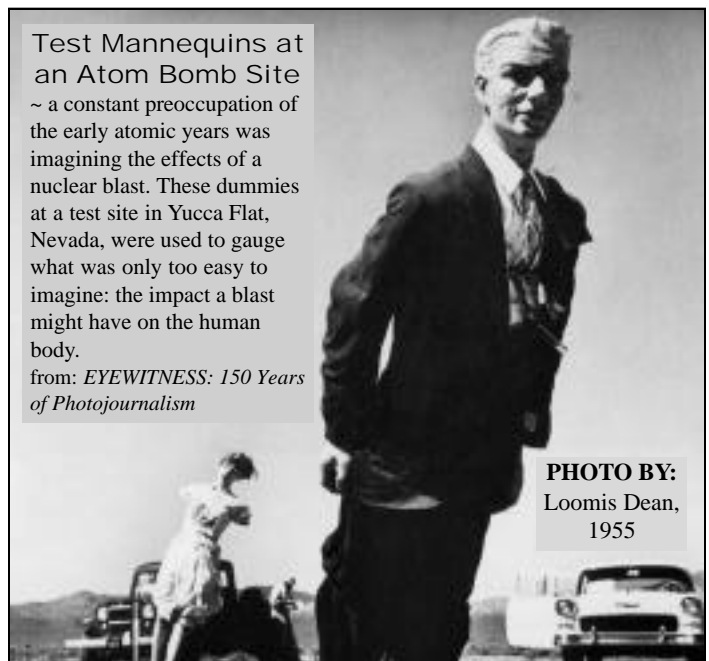


PHOTO BY:
Loomis Dean,
1955

Pangea: what part of *NO* don't they understand?!

Pangea, the company proposing to use Australia as the site for a high level international nuclear waste dump, has been arguing that the proposal offers a 'global' solution to the nuclear waste problem and enhances Australia's security. More recently Pangea has been focussing on how an international waste dump will aid nuclear disarmament, as it may take waste from dismantled nuclear weapons. Yet, ironically Pangea will not tie its proposal to any political commitments to phase out nuclear power or to eliminate nuclear weapons.

Documentation produced for Pangea argues that an international nuclear waste dump located in Australia will enhance global security and further Australia's regional security.

Specifically it is suggested that the Pangea proposal will:

- support international efforts to reduce the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and further the objective of nuclear disarmament;
- strengthen the alliance with the US;
- protect the global environment;
- contain terrorism and nuclear smuggling; and
- support the UN

Pangea's project will not reduce proliferation

The claim that an international radioactive waste dump will reduce the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and help nuclear disarmament implies that the absence of a good solution to nuclear waste is a barrier to nuclear disarmament. This is not the case. The barriers to nuclear disarmament are political.

Pangea's project will not strengthen the alliance with the US

Further, the idea that Australia should become the nuclear dump of the world in the hope that our allies, such as the US, will like us more, suggests that perhaps the benefits of the friendship are a little one sided.

Pangea's project will not protect the global environment

Pangea will not stop the production of the radioactive waste. It is imperative that existing nuclear wastes be stored appropriately. However, an underground dump does not constitute "proper storage" and could very well lead to an out-of-sight, out-of-mind attitude which, given the toxicity and longevity of radioactive materials, could result in far greater threats to the environment in

the long term than the option of above ground monitored storage.

Pangea's project will not help to contain terrorism

There is no doubt that the availability of plutonium poses a significant risk from the point of view of terrorism and proliferation. However, there are far more acceptable ways to deal with this risk than by transporting fissile material over the sea and land to a centralised site.

The amount of plutonium needed to produce a nuclear weapon is very small. The bomb that destroyed Nagasaki had about six kilograms of plutonium. To suggest that providing a nuclear waste dump is going to stop the diversion of all quantities as small as six kilograms of plutonium is clearly absurd.

Pangea's project does not support the UN

The proposal does not have UN endorsement. The UN would be better strengthened if the nuclear weapon states took heed of the majority of the world's nations who have called for the speedy and total elimination of the world's nuclear weapons.

The UN should be involved in governing mechanisms to deal with nuclear waste. However, solutions will only be workable in the context of legally binding agreements between the world's nations — not short-term proposals put by private companies.

Nuclear disarmament is the solution

The document prepared for Pangea states "in summary, the radioactive detritus of nearly five decades of using nuclear energy for both civilian and military purposes has created a serious and worsening security issue for the international community". This has been the message of the anti-nuclear movement for many years.

The solution, however, does not lie in an out-of-sight, out-of-mind proposal as suggested by Pangea. The solution lies in agreeing to abolish nuclear weapons and phasing out nuclear power. Only then will we be in a position to address the hard issues of how we manage the wastes created by the nuclear industry.

Dr Susan Wareham

Clare Henderson

Executive Officer

Medical Association for Prevention of War - Australia

Russian NGOs Speak Out on the Nuclear Threat

At a panel discussion on 15 May, five Russian activists spoke about their work, and about the development of democracy and public organizations. They came from the region with the highest concentration of nuclear facilities in Russia - the region East of the Urals, on both sides of the river Ob, including the cities of Chelyabinsk, Ozersk, Tomsk, Krasnoyarsk and Novosibirsk.

Natalie Mironova, President of the Movement for Nuclear Safety at Chelyabinsk, said that her organization gave priority to educating the government and the public on the nuclear dangers. Until the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, the public knew little about the risks and dangers the nuclear facilities in the region held for the population and the environment. Evidence was accumulating of serious health problems that could be related to the nuclear activity and earlier nuclear incidents. This led to the formation of a network of groups concerned with health and those concerned with the environment.

Lately, young people and students have joined the network bringing to the movement creative ways of educating, such as theatre and music, computer knowledge and imaginative public relations skills. Natalie stressed that her generation brings to the movement the experience while the new generation brings the technical knowledge and that the lack of a culture of

cont page 6

democracy in the country was being overcome.

Sergei Paschenko, Director of the Siberian Scientists for Global Responsibility, underlined the need for NGOs to collect reliable data which is as good, or if possible superior to that of the government. The population of Novosibirsk was not informed about the city's nuclear facilities. In 1994, two US scientists came with Geiger counters to monitor radiation levels of soil and water and compiled important data that was sent to the authorities.

Konstantine Kozlov, President of the Tomsk Environmental Students' Inspection group, spoke of the accident of a nuclear facility in Tomsk Seversk in 1993. It contaminated an area of more the 100 square miles. Due to favourable winds, the city of Tomsk was spared. Moss samples being tested still show a very high level of radioactive pollution.

The organization was formed in 1996 and counts 150 members from different universities. It provides information to the public and supports those affected by the accident. For example, the citizens of Tomsk Seversk had been promised a 50% reduction in their electricity bills but the promise had not been fulfilled until the pressure exerted through the student's group brought results.

Nadejda Kutepova, Director of the Ozersk regional socio-ecological organization "The Planet of Hopes", related the difficulties of organizing in a "closed city" which has a population of about 90,000. Ozersk has a major nuclear facility on which half the population is dependent for its livelihood. The organizations works 'internally' with the local authorities and 'externally' with the Siberian region as a whole on socio-ecological issues.

The Movement for Nuclear Safety and other NGOs have created an agency on nuclear information which brings together some 40 organizations dealing with nuclear issues. The network collects and disseminates information in the region and the rest of the country as well as beyond.



What's On

16 May 2000

event:

Reception by WILPF & Reaching Critical Will - the last of the weekly receptions for delegates and NGOs

place & time:

2nd Floor, 777 UN Plaza @ 6pm - late - see front cover for details

Conference Sessions as scheduled

Andrey Talevlin is Vice-President of the organization "Pravosoznanie" at Chelyabinsk. They are a group of young lawyers who deal with environmental protection, among other things, in the context of international law. They find, for example, that Articles IV and VI of the NPT are flawed, particularly from the environmental perspective.

Their major focus is the development and implementation of domestic law. They have gone to court to defend the right of compensation to victims of nuclear accidents, they have assisted workers in bringing complaints and have provided legal support to NGOs.

The presentations were followed by a lively question and answer period which underlined the commonality of organizations working against the nuclear dangers wherever they were. There was a unanimous expression of thanks to the Russian presenters for a very enriching afternoon's panel.

Edith Ballantyne

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom



Waste Not ~ Want Not

those that would take longer. According to the DOE the increase from the last cost estimate of \$147 billion reflects increases due to a better understanding of project work scope and cost and includes a cost estimate for project uncertainties.

Specifically, the Department's Environmental Management (EM) program is responsible for addressing the environmental legacy of nuclear weapons research, production, and testing and of DOE-funded nuclear energy and basic science research in the United States. These activities collectively produced large volumes of nuclear materials, spent nuclear fuel, radioactive waste and hazardous waste, resulting in contaminated facilities, soil, and groundwater at 113 sites around the US. *Paths to Closure* details the needs and progress of these sites.

The report describes, among other things, progress in accelerating the closure of the Rocky Flats Environmental Technology site in Colorado, the Fernald Environmental Management Project, the Miamisburg Environmental Project (Mound) in Ohio and other smaller sites across the US. It also focuses on efforts to complete as much work as soon as possible at other DOE sites where cleanup work will continue for the long-term, such as Savannah River Site in South Carolina, Hanford Site in Richland, Washington, Oak Ridge reservation in Tennessee, and the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory.

Excerpts from: *The Cost of Nuclear Clean-Up-Earth Vision* Environmental News

A long-range plan for accelerating the cleanup of US nuclear weapons sites estimates that \$151 billion to \$159 billion will likely be needed through to 2070 to do the job. The Department of Energy (DOE), which oversees the cleanup process, issued the *Paths to Closure* report to provide a forecast of sites that could be cleaned up by 2006 and