



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555

Reply to:
1050 East Flamingo Road
Suite 319
Las Vegas, Nevada 89119
Tel: (702) 388-6125
FTS: 598-6125

TO: John J. Linehan, Section Leader, HLOB, Mail Stop 4-H-3
FROM: Paul T. Prestholt, Sr. On-Site Licensing Representative
DATE: April 26, 1988
SUBJECT: Newspaper Article(s)

Please find enclosed more information that appeared in our local newspaper that is of interest.

PTP:nan
cc: Greg Cook
Sue Gagner

8804290268 880426
NMSS SUBJ
102

DCD

NHPC
102 1/1

Tuesday, April 26, 1988

Vucanovich names 3 for nuclear negotiator

By Mary Manning
SUN Staff Writer

Rep. Barbara Vucanovich, R-Nev., has provided President Reagan with a three-man list of candidates for the position of nuclear negotiator for the nation's first high-level radioactive waste repository.

Vucanovich included McCarran International Airport Manager Bob Broadbent, former Utah Gov. Scott Matheson and Edward Dorwenski, an assistant State Department secretary, on the list, said her spokeswoman, Stephanie Hanna.

Broadbent, with Clark County Manager Pat Shalmy, county commissioners Manuel Cortez and Paul Christensen, and Assistant Airport Director Roy Clauson visited Washington, D.C., Monday, a county spokeswoman said. Vucanovich said she will meet with them Tuesday night.

The Reagan administration was going to wait until the 1988 election year was over before appointing a negotiator, Vucanovich said. "But we moved them along a little bit," she said.

Vucanovich selected a bipartisan list, Hanna noted. The National Academy of Sciences is also submitting a list.

Vucanovich said she spoke with Reagan's chief of staff, Howard Baker.

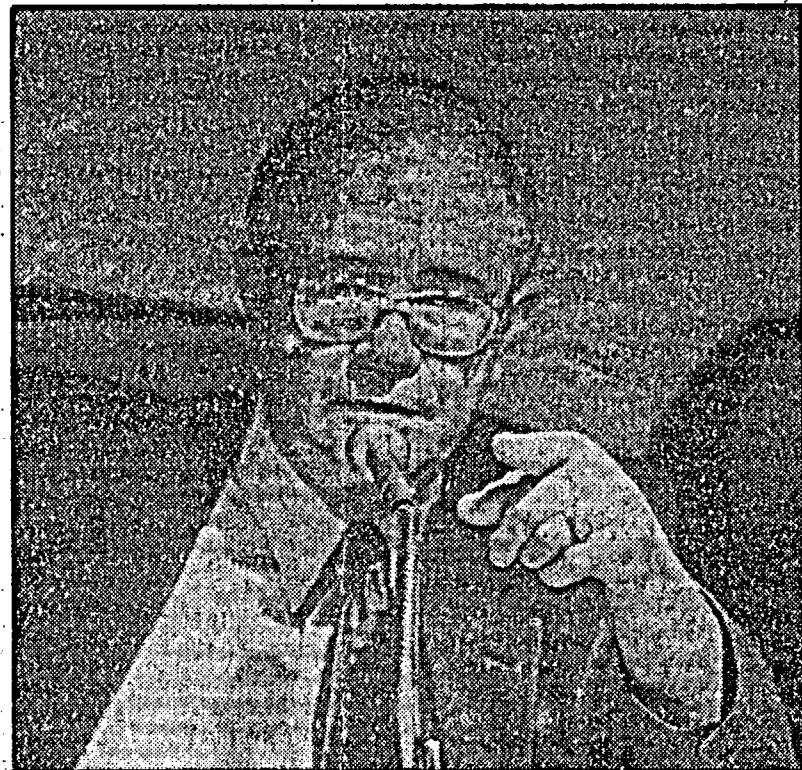
"He was very interested and seemed to know all about it," she said. "You call people like that and you wonder sometimes if they're going to know."

Apparently Sen. Chic Hecht, R-Nev., spoke to Baker last week, Vucanovich learned.

The negotiator's role will be to attempt to find a volunteer state or Indian tribe willing to host the nation's first commercial high-level nuclear repository.

Vucanovich said she views the negotiator's role as one of "protection." Rep. Morris Udall, D-Ariz., included the negotiator in the Nuclear Waste Policy Act Amendments last year.

Currently, the Department of Energy is preparing for intensive studies of Yucca Mountain, a tuff mound about 100 miles from Las Vegas. Congress selected Southern Nevada



Bob Broadbent is on the list for nuclear negotiator.

as the sole repository study site in mid-December, led by Sen. J. Bennett Johnston, D-La.

The president will appoint the negotiator whose position was established within the executive branch of government.

Vucanovich has explored burying nuclear fuel now stored in 110 reactors around the country in the Marshall Islands, site of early atmospheric atomic weapons tests.

Vucanovich visited those

islands during Easter recess this year and said local government officials favored hosting a nuclear waste repository.

But critics say shipping the highly radioactive waste across international waters would be a major stumbling block.

If a negotiator reaches a proposed agreement with a state or Indian tribe, the proposal must be approved by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, which will license the dump.

Teller says use nuke waste on food, drugs

By Fleety Manning
SUN Staff Writer

Physicist Edward Teller, 80, said Monday radioactive elements extracted from nuclear reactor wastes should be used to preserve foods and in medicine before burying thousands of tons of it in the ground.

"If radioactive waste is first processed in a reasonable way, the more component is used, the less we dispose of will be much less radioactive, and then put it down in such a way as to get it back," Teller said at a press conference. "The present idea is not optimal."

The federal government is preparing to study Yucca Mountain, a volcanic mound about 100 miles northwest of Las Vegas, as the nation's first high-level nuclear repository to keep extremely radioactive wastes buried up to 10,000 years.

"If they are buried in a deep geological repository it will cost little and it will also be completely safe," he said. "However, it is not the most reasonable method (of disposal)."

Teller has suggested design of nuclear reactors to operate underground, minimizing surface contamination in air and soils, as the Soviet Union's Chernobyl Unit 4 did a year ago.

The U.S. must rely more on nuclear energy, since it costs \$30 billion a year to import oil today and by the end of this century it will cost \$100 billion a year, Teller said.

Storing more than 40,000 metric tons of nuclear wastes in "swimming pools" at 110 U.S. nuclear reactors is extremely dangerous in case of nuclear attack, Teller said. Radioactivity in wastes is "hotter" than fallout from a nuclear weapon explosion, he said. "They are longer lasting and can be damaging over longer distances," Teller said, explaining radioactive waste particles can burn out the way they do in the split second of a nuclear explosion.

Radiation is so easily detectable, it can be handled without

risk to human life, he said.

Teller returned to Las Vegas to give a Eugene Warner lecture, "An Evening with Dr. Edward Teller," at UNLV's Artemus Ham Concert Hall. From the days when the Nevada Test Site opened in 1951, Teller was intimately involved in developing atomic weapons by fusion, instead of the conventional fission bombs. His idea for the hydrogen bomb — the "super bomb" — placed him at the pinnacle of modern physics.

Unruffled by a Washington Post story that said the investigative arm of Congress — the Office of Technology Assessment — had labeled the Reagan administration's Strategic Defense Initiative a "catastrophic failure" on the first try, Teller waved a plump hand as if swatting a fly.

"This same office came out four years ago and said it cannot be done," he said. "Now they are coming out and saying 'Hardly never.'"

Teller explained that the SDI concept, popularly known as "Star Wars," rests on defense for the purpose of making an offensive attack more difficult.

Asked if SDI could become a weapon capable of striking the enemy first, Teller replied, "Everything can be made any way." He explained that the new technology allows such a defense system to be precise, seeking targets with great care.

"It shows you in which direction a reasonable discussion might develop," he added.

"If they (Soviets) had something better — and I knew about it — I would argue for it," he said, seated comfortably in a modern plush chair, one hand resting on a walking stick.

Teller called the idea of a comprehensive nuclear test ban a "very peculiar idea." He applauded efforts to negotiate an Intermediate Nuclear Forces treaty and said it makes the job of defense easier and aggression less inviting by reducing numbers of nuclear weapons.

The problem with a test ban is catching a violation, since disrupting the agreement would be done in secret, he said.

Metro

Tuesday, April 26, 1988

Scientist Edward Teller emphasizes a point.

"I'm not arguing for it (a ban) never happening," Teller said, adding he hoped to share nuclear knowledge.

"We are generally moving in that direction — to worry about the joint defense of everybody," he said. The U.S. is sharing technology with Britain, Israel, Italy and Japan. "I'm more comfortable exchanging with the British than the Soviets, but in the end, I want to share with everybody."

Unfortunately, he noted, "We are a long way from that."

Teller's appearance was marked by protest from a new local group. Nevadans for a Nuclear Test Ban gathered to hand out leaflets at Teller's speech Monday night.

"Dr. Edward Teller's point of view is dangerous to the citizens of Nevada and the U.S.A.," a group statement said. "We, the Nevadans for a Nuclear Test Ban, feel the need to propose a safer and more secure alternative to the nuclear future that Dr. Teller proposes for Nevadans."

Teller gestured toward Sen. Chic Hecht, R-Nev., who arrived in a black limousine with the father of the hydrogen bomb. People like Hecht, finding out in detail for themselves, can help make the decisions, the physicist said.

"Nuclear technology, including nuclear explosive technology, is here to stay and is useful," Teller said.

Teller

From 1A
"strictly non-political."

Even so, Teller, who holds many of the same positions as the senator on defense and nuclear waste issues, praised Hecht and called him "my good friend."

About three dozen members of the newly formed group Nevadans for a Nuclear Test Ban peacefully protested outside the Artemus Ham Concert Hall before Teller's speech. They held banners and handed out fliers to those going inside the hall.

Angie Garland, a spokeswoman for the anti-nuclear group, said the protesters supported Teller's right to speak. "We just wish to make it known that we're opposed to his policies," she said.

Teller also endorsed the right of the protesters to demonstrate. "I would never want to suppress a protest. I would want to answer it," said the 80-year-old scientist.

While opposing a comprehensive test ban, Teller supported ratifying a treaty to eliminate medium-range nuclear missiles in Europe and moving ahead with the Strategic Defense Initiative.

Although the treaty "probably will not be strictly observed by the Soviets," he said, "It will cause everyone — the Soviets and us — to destroy a number of aggressive weapons."

Teller dismissed an unpublished congressional report released during the weekend that claimed the space shield being developed to fend off a Soviet missile attack would "suffer a catastrophic failure" if it were used.

Despite spending \$12 billion on the program during the past five

years, the report said, the computer software needed to make the so-called "Star Wars" system work still does not exist.

"They are trying to say you can't do a perfect job, so you shouldn't even try," said the Hungarian-born Teller.

"I have lived through two wars. In the first one, my native country was carved up. In the second one, half of my close relatives were killed in concentration camps," he said.

The Strategic Defense Initiative will provide the defense necessary to deter a nuclear war, Teller said. "Our purpose is not to make war impossible but to make war less likely," he said.

On the topic of radioactive waste from commercial nuclear reactors, Teller said the U.S. Department of Energy's plan to bury the 70,000 metric tons of waste at Yucca Mountain, 110 miles northwest of Las Vegas, is not the best disposal method.

"If you ask me, reprocess it and then bury it," Teller said. The by-products from the waste could be used in medical applications and to preserve food, he said.

Hecht has frequently used Teller's preference for reprocessing to bolster his arguments in Congress that deep, geologic burial is a bad idea.

Carl Gertz, an Energy Department spokesman who attended the news conference, said the repository would be designed so that the radioactive waste could be retrieved in 10 years and reprocessed.

Reprocessing has been opposed by the nuclear industry because of

H-bomb inventor says nuclear tests important

By Laura Wingard
Review-Journal

Prominent nuclear physicist Edward Teller said Monday that a U.S.-Soviet nuclear test ban is "a very peculiar idea" that would "make the world more dangerous."

An end to the underground nuclear weapons testing done at the Nevada Test Site, 65 miles northwest of Las Vegas, would signal that scientists "should refrain from knowledge," Teller said.

"That, I never want. I think knowledge is extremely valuable," he said.

His only criticism of the U.S. nuclear testing program was that the U.S. Department of Energy, which oversees the program, is too

secretive about releasing the results of underground nuclear blasts. "Get the knowledge and spread the knowledge," he said.

Teller, known as the father of the hydrogen bomb, made his remarks at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, where he spoke at an afternoon news conference and at an hourlong lecture Monday night that about 800 people attended.

Sen. Chic Hecht, R-Nev., invited Teller to speak at UNLV and was in attendance at the news conference and lecture.

Hecht, who is facing a challenge for his seat from Democratic Gov. Richard Bryan, said his involvement with Teller's lecture was

Please see TELLER/4A



Jeff Scheid/Review-Journal

EDWARD TELLER - The noted nuclear physicist listens to a question Monday during a press conference at UNLV.

its high cost.

Teller and Hecht also have been working together to try to bring Soviet physicist Andrei Sakharov to the United States.

While on a recent trip to the Soviet Union, Hecht had a 20-minute meeting with Sakharov at the American Embassy where he gave the Soviet scientist a letter from Teller.

Teller, a booster of nuclear energy, said in the letter that he would like to talk to Sakharov about an

idea to build nuclear reactors underground in an effort to make them safer.

"I know from Chic Hecht and others that the great Sakharov wants to come," Teller said.

Teller also sent a letter to Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev asking that Sakharov be allowed to visit the United States.

"If you put the two of them together something good has to come out of it."