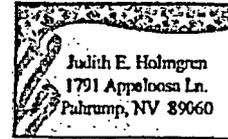


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Questions:

How is storage for foreign nuclear waste currently funded? Which 40 countries, besides Australia, send spent nuclear fuel to the U.S.? Are all 41 countries charged the same fee per unit weight of nuclear waste? How are these fees divided among the affected U.S. countries, in which the foreign spent nuclear fuel is stored?

How much money is set aside for the cost of foreign nuclear waste storage at this point in time? Does the DOE administer the budget?

How many metric tons of foreign spent nuclear fuel are currently stored within the U.S.? When did the U.S. start storing foreign spent nuclear fuel? Where is the largest accumulation of the "spent fuel containing uranium previously enriched in the U.S. from 41 countries?"

Is the foreign spent nuclear fuel tonnage in addition to the approximately 70,000 metric tons of domestically-generated nuclear waste, and 7,000 metric tons of DOD waste, for which the U.S. must build a permanent subsurface repository, and for the construction of which, the Rate Payers' Fund was established?

With respect to the new "remarkable" agreement:

How many metric tons of waste has the DOE agreed to accept from the new Lucas Heights replacement research reactor in Australia over the 10-year agreement period?

How do the spent fuel rods that the U.S. already accepts from Australia, differ from the spent fuel rods from the new Lucas Heights research reactor, which necessitated the entirely new separate "remarkable" agreement?

If the "low-enriched uranium fuel" waste from the proposed new Lucas Heights reactor is "not easily reprocessed" and "not open to

potential abuse," why does the approval for the new reactor's operating license hinge upon storing the new reactor's nuclear fuel waste outside of Australia, in this case, in the U.S.? Where will it be stored and how will it be transported to that U.S. site?

With respect to old existing agreements:

Where did the "previous enrichment" of the spent nuclear fuel, which is currently returning to the U.S. for storage from 41 countries, take place? After its initial "enrichment," in what manner was it transported to the 41 respective countries? Are the agreements with the 41 countries participating in this exchange, public documents? Do these exchange agreements terminate after a certain number of years?

Why does the U.S. persist in the assertion that U.S. waste storage technology, more than that of any other nation, reduces the risk that the residual uranium in waste nuclear fuel will be used for nuclear weapons? Do the exchange agreements require that the U.S. accept and store the foreign nuclear waste, as a condition to permit the operation of nuclear power plants in these 41 countries? Is the DOE bolstering the nuclear power industry worldwide at the health and financial expense of the U.S. ratepayer, who has not received the benefit of the foreign electric power?

Why was the public's attention deliberately focused on the terrorist threat to the transport of spent nuclear fuel, when the greatest terrorist threat is the myriad opportunities to commandeer the more desirable enriched nuclear fuel en route to the 41 recipient countries?

US to be Aussie nuclear dump

By Amanda Hodge
January 21, 2005

From: THE AUSTRALIAN

THE US will become Australia's nuclear dumping ground in a remarkable 10-year agreement that takes the pressure off the Howard Government to find a domestic waste site.

The agreement to take spent fuel rods from the proposed new Lucas Heights reactor in Sydney was sealed at ministerial level late last year following talks between the US Department of Energy and the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation.

The deal was revealed yesterday in a letter from ANSTO, released by the country's nuclear watchdog, the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency.

This removes the last major obstacle to the approval of a replacement nuclear reactor at the Lucas Heights facility and eases the pressure on Canberra to resolve the dump issue.

The question of where to store the nation's nuclear waste became a federal election issue last October after John Howard backed away from a plan to force a repository on South Australia.

The two added fuel to environmental arguments that the federal government had failed to make progress in finding a dump location - a condition for the granting of an operating licence for the new reactor.

The commonwealth generates more than 90 per cent of the nation's nuclear waste, and more than 80 per cent of this is now stored at Lucas Heights.

ANSTO spokesman Steve McIntosh yesterday hailed the US agreement as a coup for Australia.

"We have always viewed the spent fuel question as the biggest hurdle we had to jump and that seems to be out of the way," Mr McIntosh said.

ARPANSA chief John Loy is expected to decide within 12 months whether to approve the new reactor's operating licence. Yesterday he said the agreement was an "important new development which I will take into account in my considerations on the licence".

A spokesman for federal Science Minister Brendan Nelson refused to comment on the dump issue, saying only that the Government was "committed to

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ensuring the Australian research community had access to world-class facilities".

The agreement has not impressed the NSW Government, which yesterday reiterated its opposition to the storage and transport of nuclear waste through the state.

The US decision represents a special exemption for Australia, in part to reward ANSTO for helping develop a low-enriched uranium fuel capable of producing radio-pharmaceuticals but not open to potential abuse.

The US already accepts spent fuel containing uranium previously enriched in the US from 41 countries, including Australia, to reduce the risk that residual uranium will be used for nuclear weapons.

But the proposed Lucas Heights replacement research reactor will use low-enriched uranium fuel which does not come under this agreement and is not easily reprocessed.

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