

Nuclear Shorts

Nuclear Weapons Divestment Campaign Makes a Dent

Dozens of financial institutions in the United States invest in companies doing nuclear weapons research, development and production, and you dear reader may have some skin in the game. Aetna? Allstate? American Family? These firms all claim to have your back but are banking on your demise. The group Don't Bank on the Bomb (DBB) has been making headway in its campaign against these. The Swedish pension funds AP4 and AP, the Belgian bank KBC, and Germany's giant Deutch Bank have all halted investments in nuclear weapons. Scores of other businesses have done the same, including Japan's 5th largest banking group, Resona Holdings. By slashing investors' dollars from investment firms and weapons contractors, DBB campaigners hope to force the nuclear bomb biz to simply, slowly, dry up. US companies behind the Bomb include among others

Aecom, Aerojet Rocketdyne, BAE Systems, Bechtel, Boeing, BWX Technologies, CH2M Hill, Fluor, General Dynamics, Honeywell, Huntington Ingalls, Jacobs Engineering, Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, and

Orbital ATK. Don't Bank on the Bomb is pressuring the Dutch multinational banking and financial services firm ING Group in Amsterdam, to dump the \$756 million it currently has tied up in weapons production. Activists recently projected onto ING's headquarters an image of the company's mascot lion kicking the bomb (above).

Information on the financial affairs of the nuclear weapons industry, so lacking in the US, can be found on the dontbankonthebomb.com website. Get the latest news about who produces the weapons, which companies make the most, which ones have divested and earned a spot in the Hall of Fame. Take advantage of this organization's amazing research. The site contains resources so you can begin your own local divestment campaign. Check to see if you unknowingly invest in nuclear weapons—then divest.

— www.dontbankonthebomb.com

Cancelled Reactor Projects

Nuclear power keeps taking head punches from the hard-hitting marketplace. On January 17, Japan's Hitachi Corporation halted work on a \$19.3 billion nuclear power project called Wylfa in North Wales. Hitachi also cancelled nuclear reactor plans in Oldbury in Gloucestershire, England and Toshiba scrubbed its reactor construction at Moorside in Cumbria, England. The British press noted that “renewable alternatives are increasingly being viewed as cheaper, less risky, and more economic,” while Greg Clark, England's Secretary of State for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, told the *New York Times*, “The economics of the energy market have changed significantly...” with the price of renewables going down and that of nuclear power going up. According to reports, Clark considered offering taxpayer support to Hitachi for one-third of the project's equity financing and all of its construction debt, but the company wanted more. Private investors were put off by the project's 10-year wait for a dividend and the risks of cost overruns. Hitachi will reportedly take a \$2.75 billion loss in cancelling the Wylfa reactor. The company purchased the construction site for \$900 million, but spent about \$2.6 billion on design permits, staff, and job training. —London *Daily Telegraph*, Jan. 24; *New York Times*, Jan. 18, 2019

Nuclear Reactor Phase-outs Spreading

The Nuclear Monitor reports that Belgium has reached an agreement on an Energy Pact which includes a nuclear phase-out. All political parties—with the exception of one small, far-right party—have agreed to the new strategy. Likewise, Spain has declared it will close the last of its nuclear reactors before 2030 and not build new units. Secretary for Energy José Domínguez said Nov. 15, 2018 that

Spain does not plan to operate any of its reactors beyond their 40-year licenses. Accordingly, the country's oldest reactor will be closed in 2021, and its newest will go offline in 2028. Belgium, Germany, Spain and Switzerland are phasing out nuclear power. Germany has permanently shut down eight of its 17 reactors and pledged to close the rest by the end of 2022. Italy has resolved to remain non-nuclear, and Switzerland has banned the construction of new reactors.

—EURACTIV.com, Nov 19, 2018; *The Nuclear Monitor*, issue: #860, No. 4718

Hoist on a Nuclear Petard? Army Wants “Battlefield” Nuclear Reactors

A soldier's fear of being “hoist on your own petard” means being accidentally wounded or killed by the detonation of one's own bomb. Now comes the US Army's announcement of “Project Dilithium,” a scheme worthy of science fiction to make a small, portable nuclear reactor that can be hauled—alongside occupying military forces—to remote military outposts to provide electricity. The Army says such reactors could reduce the number of diesel tanker caravans transporting tons of fuel, could shorten military supply lines, and eliminate some easy targets (below). But putting a reactor in a warzone would be to exchange one easy target for another, one that would risk catastrophic health and environmental damage if the unit were to suffer containment failure. Even *Popular Mechanics* had the common sense to push back, noting

that *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* reports that “... it would never be safe enough to deploy on the battlefield. The risk of meltdown and radiation release would be too great ever to justify deploying the reactor into the field, the scientists say.” *The Bulletin* slammed the proposal, warning: “An operating nuclear reactor is essentially a can filled with concentrated radioactive material, including some highly volatile radionuclides, under conditions of high pressure and temperature. Even a reactor as small as 1 megawatt-electric would contain a large quantity of highly radioactive, long-lived isotopes such as cesium-137—a potential dirty bomb far



Gunmen in Pakistan set ablaze these NATO oil tankers carrying fuel to occupation forces in Afghanistan Aug. 22, 2011. The Army thinks light, portable nuclear reactors would be better than diesel. Photo: Banaras Khan/AFP/Getty Images

bigger than the medical radiation sources that have caused much concern among security experts.”

— *Popular Mechanics*, Feb. 25; *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Feb. 22, 2019

Feds File Complaint Against Waste Cask Maker

On December 27, Holtec International, which makes storage casks for high level radioactive waste, was surprised to learn that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) was bringing enforcement action against the firm. In an unusual move, the NRC filed a complaint against Holtec for neglecting to conduct a written evaluation prior to installing a new bolt design system for inside its radioactive waste casks. Holtec challenged the enforcement action and at a January 9 hearing before the NRC, its president Krishna Singh described the issue as “Much ado about nothing.” The firm's cask specifications, originally approved by the NRC, state that the bolts are “required for cooling of the system to prevent

[waste] fuel damage and to prevent the [waste] from going critical” (an uncontrolled nuclear reaction), said Donna Gilmore of San Onofre Safety. As a result of the flawed design that was later approved by the NRC, bolts inside as many as 51 casks have bent or fallen off. The exact number is unknown, since the interior of a loaded cask cannot be inspected, according to the NRC. The *Brattleboro Reformer* reported that similar Holtec casks are being used to store radioactive waste at reactor sites in California, Vermont, Illinois, Mississippi, Georgia, Washington, Tennessee, and Missouri. Despite the generally permissive relationship between the regulatory agency and Holtec, they also threatened to bring additional unnamed charges. A final decision regarding the complaint and further enforcement actions will take up to 60 days.

—*Brattleboro Reformer*, Jan. 15, 2019 & Dec. 27, 2018; San Onofre Safety press release, Jan. 9, 2019; Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Oct. 11, 2018

Boeing Corporation to Run Pentagon

If he is confirmed by the US Senate, Patrick Shanahan, formerly of Boeing Corporation, will become Secretary of Defense although he has no military or foreign policy experience. Shanahan was Deputy Defense Secretary under General James “Mad Dog” Mattis when President Trump appointed him Acting Secretary January 1st. Shanahan worked for Boeing—the giant weapons contractor with \$93 billion in sales in 2017, and 153,000 employees in 65 countries—for over 30 years, before joining the Pentagon. Boeing makes tanker aircraft for the Air Force, fighter jets, helicopters, satellites, missiles, missile defense systems, and laser weapons, as well as civilian airplanes. Shanahan was at Boeing when a notorious “kickback” scheme won the company a \$23 billion Air Force contract, but resulted in both the procurement officer and the CFO being fired, fined and jailed, and the firm paying a \$600 million fine. Boeing was also caught “vastly overcharging the Pentagon for its work on cruise missiles,” the *New York Times* reported. A Boeing man being appointed to run the Pentagon, by the man whose personal attorney, Michael Cohen, called him “a racist, a con man and a cheat,” seems to be in step with the president's own history of corporate corruption, for which Shanahan has now been rewarded. — BBC, Feb. 23; *New York Times*, Feb. 20, 2019, & Boeing.com

RESOURCES

- * **Act for Peace**, 35, rue Van Elewuyck, 1050 Ixelles, Belgium; Email: info@agirpourlapaix.be; Web: agirpourlapaix.be
- * **Beyond Nuclear**, 6930 Carroll Av, #400, Takoma Park, MD 20912; (301) 270-2209; Web: beyondnuclear.org; Email: info@beyondnuclear.org
- * **Don't Bank on the Bomb**, PAX, P.O. Box 19318, 3501 DH Utrecht, The Netherlands; Email: nukes@paxforpeace.nl; Web: dontbankonthebomb.com
- * **Federation of American Scientists**, 1725 DeSales St. NW, # 600, Washington, DC 20036; (202) 546-3300; Web: fas.org
- * **Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space**, PO Box 652; Brunswick, ME 04011; (207) 607-4255; Email: globalnet@mindspring.com; Web: space4peace.org
- * **Greenpeace**, 702 H. St., NW, #300, Washington, DC 20001, (800) 722-6995; Web: greenpeace.org; Email: info@greenpeace.org
- * **Halt Holtec**, Email: protectnewmexico@gmail.com; Web: facebook.com/HaltHoltec/
- * **International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, ICAN**, 150 Route de Ferney, 1202 Genève 2, Switzerland, Email: info@icanw.org, General inquiries: +41 22 788 20 63 (Geneva), Media inquiries: press@icanw.org, Web: icanw.org
- * **Kings Bay Plowshares**, PO Box 3087, Washington DC 20010, Phone (607) 280-8797; Web: kingsbayplowshares7.org; Email: kingsbayplowshares@gmail.com
- * **Nonviolent Action to Abolish Nuclear Weapons**, Beckstr. 14, 20357 Hamburg, Germany; 040-4307332; Email: marion.kuepker@gaaa.org; Web: gaaa.org
- * **Nuclear Information & Resource Service**, 6930 Carroll Av, #340, Takoma Park, MD 20912; (301) 270-6477; Email: nirsnet@nirs.org; Web: nirs.org
- * **San Onofre Safety**, Web: sanonofresafety.org
- * **The Nuclear Monitor**, World Information Service on Energy, P.O. Box 59636, 1040 LC Amsterdam, The Netherlands; Email: info@wiseinternational.org; Web: wiseinternational.org
- * **The Nuclear Resister**, PO Box 43383, Tucson, AZ 85733; (520) 323-8697, Email: nukeresister@igc.org; Web: nuclearresister.org
- * **We the People**, Web: wwwstephencomleysr.net