

# Nuclear Shorts



## Fukushima Continued

Report, told the *Independent*, the company “hasn’t a clue what it is doing,” in decontaminating and securing the complex.

Richard Black, director of the Energy and Climate Intelligence Unit, said that the high radiation reading from outside the foundations is “more of a concern as the cause is at present unclear.” Schneider said more directly, “I find it symptomatic of the past seven years, in that they don’t know what they’re doing.”

\* For a detailed review of the ongoing Fukushima catastrophe, see “Key figures for the seventh anniversary,” published Feb. 17 by the group ACRO-nique Fukushima at: <fukushima.eu.org/chiffres-cles-septieme-anniversaire/>. The group offers daily monitoring of events related to the current radiation disaster in Japan, and more.

\*\* For an excellent analysis of the dangers of exposure to tritium, see author Dahr Jamail’s Aug. 2017 report “Fukushima Plant Is Releasing 770,000 Tons of Radioactive Water Into the Pacific Ocean.” Just type the title into any search engine.

## REOURCES

\* **Beyond Nuclear**, 6930 Carroll Av., #400, Takoma Park, MD 20912; (301) 270-2209; Web: beyondnuclear.org; Email: info@beyondnuclear.org

\* **Campaign Against the Arms Trade**, Unit 4, 5-7 Wells Terrace, London, N4 3JU. Phone: 020 7281 0297. Email: enquiries@caat.org.uk; Web: caat.org.uk

\* **Institute for Energy and Environmental Research**, 6935 Laurel Av., # 201, Takoma Park, Maryland, 20912; (301) 270-5500; Email: info@ieer.org; Web: ieer.org

\* **Los Alamos Study Group**, 2901 Summit Pl NE, Albuquerque, NM 87106; (505) 265-1200; Web: lasg.org; Email: gmello@lasg.org

\* **NEIS**, 3411 W Diversey Avenue, #13, Chicago, IL 60647; (773) 342-7650; Email: neis@neis.org; Web: neis.org;

\* **No More Deaths**, Unitarian Universalist Church of Tucson, 4831 E. 22nd St., Tucson, AZ; (520) 333-5699; Web: nomoredeaths.org

\* **Nuclear Information & Resource Service**, 6930 Carroll Av. #340, Takoma Park, MD 20912; (301) 270-6477; Email: nirsnet@nirs.org; Web: nirs.org

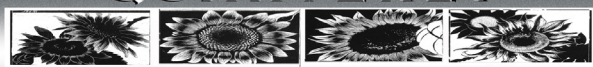
\* **Nuclear Issues Study Group**, nuclearnewmexico.com/NISG; and protectnewmexico@gmail.com

\* **Nuclear Watch New Mexico**, 903 W. Alameda St. #325, Santa Fe, NM 87501; (505) 989-7342; Email: jay@nukewatch.org; Web: nukewatch.org/info [Not to be confused: NWNM uses our name.]

\* **Southwest Research & Information Center**, 105 Stanford SE, PO Box 4524, Albuquerque, NM 87196; (505) 262-1862; Email: info@sruc.org; Web: SRIC.org

\* **Trident Ploughshares**, Edinburgh Peace & Justice Centre, 5 Upper Bow, Edinburgh EH1 2JN, Scotland; Email: media@tridentploughshares.org; Web: tridentploughshares.org

## NUKEWATCH QUARTERLY



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## Faked Reactor Inspections Bring Fine

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission slapped a \$145,000 fine on Southern Co. for falsifying records of inspections at Plant Vogtle, 30 miles southeast of Augusta, Georgia. According to news accounts, “at least” 13 workers at Southern Nuclear Operating Co., a subsidiary of Southern Co., signed off on inspections of equipment and conditions in units 1 and 2 that never happened. The system operators falsified inspection records by entering data into electronic logs, between August and October 2016, indicating they had done the work. The required inspections are for Vogtle’s two operating reactors, the 41-year-old Unit 1, and 39-year-old Unit 2, not the two that are currently under construction. The violations happened multiple times, a NRC press release says. The company has 30 days to pay the fine or challenge it. Southern Co. is building two new reactors at the site, Units 3 & 4, the only nuclear power reactors to be approved in 30 years, but the projected construction cost estimate has doubled to more than \$25 billion.

The Southern Co. fraud case is similar to Xcel Energy’s fraud at its Monticello reactor on the Mississippi River in central Minnesota. In late 2013, Xcel managers failed to monitor the testing of welds on heavy casks holding highly radioactive waste fuel. They then falsified reports about their safety-related tests on the canisters, which are stored onsite, outside, above ground, indefinitely. —*Washington Examiner*, the *Aiken Standard*, & Bloomberg, Feb. 21, 2018; *Star-Tribune*, July 28, 2015.

## Court Sympathizes with Arms Bazaar Resisters

In spite of nine guilty verdicts at Stratford Magistrates Court in Scotland, there was commendation from judges for protesters who blocked entrances to London’s ExCel Centre last Sept. 6, disrupting the delivery of military gear to the world’s largest arms bazaar, the Defense and Security Equipment International “Arms Fair.” Protesters were charged with obstructing the highway during “No To Nuclear Day” which turned a spotlight on the participation of nuclear weapons builders BAE Systems, Rolls Royce, Babcock International, Thales, and Lockheed Martin. Coordinated by the Campaign Against the Arms Trade, protesters blocked both entrances to the ExCel site causing considerable disruption to Fair preparations. Nine protesters were fined less than £200, and the district judge commended them for their passion and for acting out of concern for the public interest.

Angie Zelter, one of the defendants, said, “both judges have shown sympathy ... Perhaps they too recognize that the real criminals are those who make a squalid profit out of conflict and preparations for nuclear war. I feel our protest and today’s court appearance have been very effective in raising public awareness and concern about the blatant trade in the tools of death. We must never fall into the trap of thinking that peaceful direct action is a waste of time.” —Trident Ploughshares, Jan. 12, 2018

## Climate Threatens Far-Flung US Military Bases

Contradicting the Trump administration’s bogus denial that climate change is underway, the Pentagon reported in late January that extreme weather events brought on by rising global temperatures is affecting half of the 3,500 US military sites around the world with floods, droughts, and wildfires. It found that almost 800 US bases were affected by drought, 350 by extreme heat, 225 by flooding during storm surges, and over 200 by wildfires.

The US military has long understood that climate change is a threat to US security. A 2014 Pentagon report declared climate change to be a “threat multiplier” that can create terrorists. *Newsweek* and Reuters reported October 10 that year on a Pentagon report that declared climate change the sort of global threat that can foster terrorism. The Reuters analysis said, “The Department of Defense has dramatically shifted its views towards climate change, and has already begun to treat the phenomenon as a significant threat to national security. Climate change, the Pentagon writes, requires immediate action on the part of the US military.” Ignoring these facts, Trump’s December 2017 “National Security Strategy” and his January 2018 “National Defense Strategy” both avoided any mention of climate change at all. In a

slap at this obfuscation, the new Pentagon report warns that climate change is “impacting stability in areas of the world where our troops are operating today.” And notes for example that severe drought exacerbated the Syrian civil war.

—*USA Today*, Feb. 1, & *Weather.com*, Jan. 31, 2018; *Newsweek*, Oct. 10, 2014

## French Police Evict Dumpsite Opponents

Hundreds of French police were used in a surprise sunrise action to evict about 15 protesters living in tree houses in the forest of Lejuc near the village of Bure in Eastern France, a site that’s been targeted as a sacrifice zone for deep burial of radioactive waste. Two bulldozers and about 500 police in body armor also removed about 30 people occupying a nearby residence they’d dubbed the “House of Resistance,” arresting several. Although exploratory drilling has so far been prevented by protests, the area has been targeted for a 1,600-foot-deep dig-out to hide high-level waste fuel rods produced by France’s 58 nuclear reactors. The dumpsite location has not yet gotten final government approval. One protester, speaking on the phone before police moved against him, told Agence France Presse, “We are here because we don’t want the Earth to be poisoned. We are on this old oak tree which has lived far longer than us.” —*London Telegraph*, AFP, and French RFI Radio, Feb. 22, 2018

## China Reaffirms No-First-Use Policy

On February 18, a senior Chinese diplomat reaffirmed that China will not use nuclear weapons first in a war, reminding a major conference of international military officials that, “China maintains a very small nuclear arsenal (a total of 260 nuclear weapons) and China follows the policy of self-defense and minimum deterrence.” The phrase “minimum deterrence” refers to the policy of deterring a nuclear attack by threatening to retaliate. The United States and Russia each maintain about 7,000 nuclear weapons most of which are designed to strike first and attack enemy nuclear weapons before they are launched. In addition to its formal no-first-use policy, the veteran diplomat Fu Ying, who is also chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National People’s Congress, China’s top legislature, added that under no circumstances will China use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon states or nuclear-weapon-free zones. She spoke at what was called the Munich Security Conference.

Countries that have pledged “no first use” of nuclear weapons include China since 1964, India since 1998, and North Korea since 2016. Nuclear armed countries with first-use/first-strike weapons and war plans include the US, Russia, the UK, France, Israel, and Pakistan. —The Diplomat online, & *The Straits Times*, Feb. 21; Xinhua news service, Feb. 18, 2017

## US Reverses Pledge to Stop Use of Cluster Bombs

The Trump administration has repealed a 2008 prohibition on the use of cluster munitions and declared that it will again make combat use of them, in spite of a 2008 UN treaty ban that’s been ratified by 120 countries. Cluster munitions—rockets, bombs, missiles and artillery projectiles that scatter hundreds of smaller exploding bomblets over wide areas—were outlawed by the treaty because they indiscriminately maim civilians, and because unexploded bomblets in war zones around the world have killed or wounded civilians many years after the conflict has ended.

CNN reported: “In 2008 then-Secretary of Defense Robert Gates ordered the military to cease using older types of cluster bombs by Jan. 1, 2019, and to retain only newer versions of the bombs that explode at least 99% of the time or have advanced safeguards that would automatically defuse unexploded ordnance, reducing the risks of injuring civilians.”

The 2008 US prohibition was compromised, and in 2009 Cluster bombs in Cruise missiles were used by the Navy in an attack inside Yemen that Amnesty International reported killed 41 people, including 14 women and 21 children. The Pentagon keeps more than 1.5 million of the older munitions (containing over 90 million bomblets) in South Korea, where they imply readiness for war against North Korea, and another 2.2 million in the United States.

—*New York Times*, Dec. 1; CNN, Nov. 30, 2017