

Nuclear Shorts

“Nuclear Titanic” Arrives at Russian Seaport

The world’s first floating nuclear power reactors (two on one barge) arrived Sept. 15 at the town of Pevek in Russia’s Far Eastern region of Chukotka, 53 miles across the Bering Strait from Alaska. Dubbed a “Chernobyl on ice” and the “Nuclear Titanic” by critics, the reactors are supposed to supply power to a remote, Siberian mining complex. The reactors began their dangerous 3,100-mile journey through Arctic waters when the barge left Murmansk August 23. Russia’s state nuclear reactor agency Rosatom has said it wants to see the twin reactors aboard the 472-foot barge *Akademik Lomonosov* operational by the year-end. The head of Rosatom, Alexei Likhachev, reportedly said in a statement that nuclear reactors making electricity for mining is, “a small step towards sustainable development in the Arctic.” Other ocean-going vessels including submarines, ice breakers, and aircraft carriers use onboard reactors for propulsion. But not until now have nuclear reactors been built to bob on the high seas to provide electricity for on-shore projects. —Reuters, Power Technology, and Agency France Presse, Sept. 16; & Reuters, May 21, 2019

Failed Reactors Bailed Out by Taxpayers

State governments have approved a new generation of public tax giveaways to the private nuclear industry. In Ohio, after originally announcing plans to close and file for bankruptcy, FirstEnergy Solutions, owners of Davis-Besse and Perry reactors, spent \$30 million on lobbying. On July 23rd it was offered \$1 billion of Ohio ratepayer/taxpayer funds to keep the failed reactors afloat, when Governor Mike DeWine signed House Bill 6. Since 2016, the nuclear industry has won nearly \$15 billion in state taxpayer bailouts, including \$7.6 billion in New York in 2016, \$2.3 billion in Illinois in 2016, \$2.7 billion in New Jersey in 2018, and \$1.7 billion in Connecticut in 2018. There is currently no federal giveaway program, since Energy Secretary Rick Perry refused to deliver a federal handout. In June he concluded that the Energy Dept. doesn’t have “regulatory or statutory ability” to create tax credits, tax breaks or other incentives for coal and nuclear reactors. Sec. Perry did remind state legislatures that they have this authority. —*Columbus Dispatch*, July 23; Environmental Working Group, July 8; Energy and Policy Institute, April 11, 2019; and *New York Times*; June 1, 2018

Welding Flaws Plague French Reactors

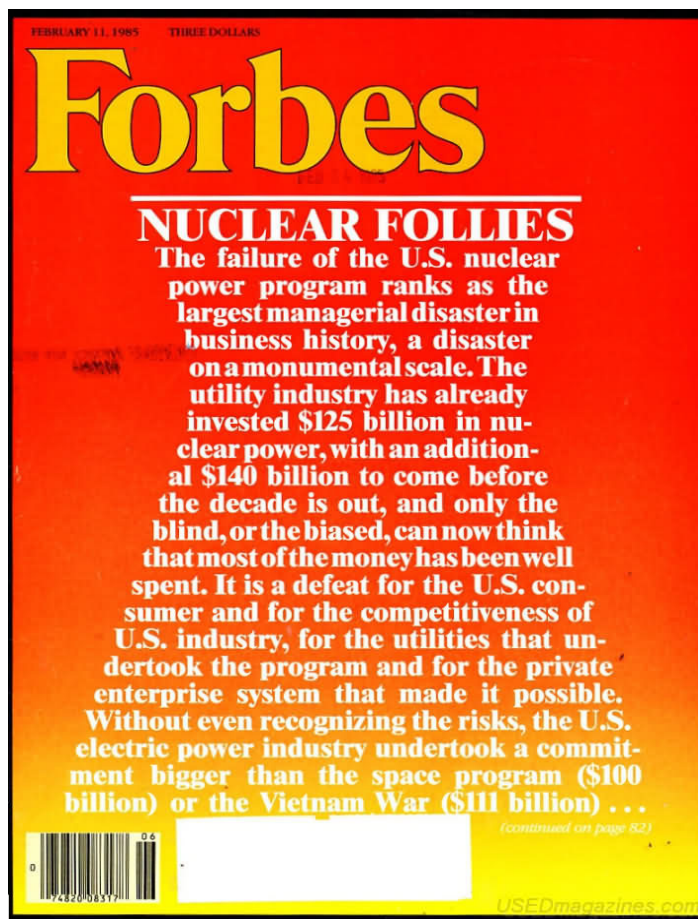
The head of the French Nuclear Safety Authority said on Sept. 10, “At least five nuclear reactors are affected” by unsafe welding on giant steam generators, raising the possibility of shutting them down. The exact number of faulty generators is unknown. *Montel News* reported that perhaps 20 generators were faulty, having all been constructed by Framatome at its Saint Marcel factory. Next to reactor cores, and pools full of hot waste fuel rods, steam generators are some of the most important components of a nuclear reactor complex. The generators turn water into steam using heat from the reactor’s core. France’s 58 reactors typically hold two to four steam generators. —Reuters; *Montel News*; and WTVB News; Sept. 12, 2019

Europe Reactors Running Without Licenses

There are at least 18 nuclear reactors currently operating without a valid license in the European Union, according to a report put together by Germany’s Green Party member and nuclear expert Sylvia Kotting-Uhl. The unlawfully run reactors should have been subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment because of their age. Reactors deemed “high risk” are required by law to undergo the environmental assessment, particularly those over 30 years old and those approaching or past the end of their 40-year operational life. EU governments illegally running reactors include The Netherlands, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Belgium, Finland, the UK, Sweden and Switzerland. Another 34 other reactors are also operating illegally in neighboring countries outside the European Union. Kotting-Uhl demanded in her report that the German government push for an “end to illegal nuclear power plant operation.” —Business Insider Germany, Aug. 25; and Spiegel online, Aug. 16, 2019

Disaster Planning: Germany Quadruples Stock of Iodine Pills

Germany’s federal Office for Radiation Protection said Aug. 22 that it ordered 189.5 million iodine tablets—four times the current stockpile—for use in case of a radiation disaster. Iodine pills can help block the absorption by the thyroid gland of radioactive iodine-131, which is dispersed and spread in huge quantities by damaged reactors, *Japan Times* reported. Germany plans to phase out all 17 of its nuclear reactors by 2022, but eight remain operating. Health officials noted that neighboring countries Belgium, France, Switzerland and the Czech Republic will continue operating their reactors, even those without valid licenses and with welding defects.



With its Feb. 11, 1985 cover story, *Forbes* magazine harshly dismissed nuclear power as “the largest managerial disaster in business history.”

There are health risks associated with taking iodine pills and the Center for Disease Control warns that they should only be taken on the advice of public health or emergency management officials. —*Japan Times*, Aug. 23; *The Hill*; *The Washington Post*; and the Associated Press; Aug. 22, 2019

Wind Power Surpasses Nuclear Capacity in the US

On Sept. 20, when millions around the world were marching to raise awareness about the climate, a major milestone was passed in the race to replace fossil fuels with renewables. The US now has more wind power, as measured in megawatts (MW) of generating capacity, than nuclear power. From April to July 2019, the total generating capacity from the country’s 57,000 wind turbines was up to 97,960 MW, according to the American Wind Energy Association. The World Nuclear Association figures show that total generating capacity from the remaining 96 nuclear reactors in the US is now 97,722 MW. That is, 238 MW less than wind! Likewise in Britain, early in 2018, wind farms provided more electricity than the country’s eight nuclear power stations, marking the first time wind has overtaken nuclear over a fiscal quarter, the *Guardian* reported. —Timmon Wallis, nuclearban.us; Sept. 20, 2019, *The Guardian*, May 16, 2018

Cancer Now No. 1 Killer in Wealthy Countries

Cancer is now the leading cause of death among middle-age people in wealthy and middle-income countries, according to a study published in *The Lancet*. After studying the lives of thousands of people from across 21 countries, the researchers, led by a team from Canada’s McMaster University, found that cancer now kills over twice as many people as heart disease. The study investigated causes of death among 160,000 people between 2005 and 2016. The people in the program from such countries as

Sweden, Canada, Chile, Argentina, Poland and Turkey, had an average age of 50 at the start and were found 2.5 times more likely to die of cancer than cardiovascular disease. CNN’s Jacqueline Howard reported that, “...successful strategies to prevent and treat cancers, other than tobacco control, are yet to lead to large reductions in most cancers.” Put another way, Dr. Helen Caldicott, in *Nuclear Madness* wrote, “If present trends continue, the air we breathe, the food we eat, and the water we drink will soon be contaminated with enough radioactive pollutants to pose a potential health hazard far greater than any plague humanity has ever experienced.” —BBC, Reuters, and CNN, Sept. 3, 2019

Redundant Space Command Launched

President Trump announced Aug. 29, the establishment of a “Space Command” and named its first commander, Air Force Gen. Jay Raymond. Trump called it “the 11th combatant command” within the US military and said, “Space Com’ will boldly deter aggression.” The further militarization of NASA “will ensure that America’s dominance in space is never questioned and never threatened...” The President claimed that Space Command “will soon be followed by the establishment of the US Space Force as the 6th branch of the US Armed Forces.” But Congress has not yet approved a Space Force, and some have suggested that the program should be a section of the Department of the Air Force. Former Secretary of Defense James Mattis saw plans for a Space Force “as potentially redundant” and a waste of tax dollars, PBS News Hour reported. Trump’s choice of Gen. Raymond as the program’s chief proves this point. Raymond is currently the head of the Air Force Space Command, not to be confused with US Space Force or US Space Command. —*Vanity Fair*, Aug. 30; *Washington Post*, Aug. 29, 2019

Resources for More Information

- * **Beyond Nuclear**, 6930 Carroll Avenue, # 400, Takoma Park, MD, 20912; Email: info@beyondnuclear.org; Web: beyondnuclear.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
- * **Institute for Energy and Environmental Research**, 6935 Laurel Ave., # 201, Takoma Park, MD, 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
- * **Nonviolent Action to Abolish Nuclear Weapons** (GAAA), Beckstr. 14, 20357 Hamburg, Germany; Email: marion.kuepker@gaaa.org; Web: gaaa.org
- * **The Treaty Compliance Campaign**, Email: info@nuclearban.us; Web: Nuclearban.us
- * **Tularosa Basin Downwinders Consortium**, 7518 2nd St. NW, Albuquerque, NM 87107; Email: info@trinitydownwinders.com; Web: www.trinitydownwinders.com
- * **Nuclear Information & Resource Service**, 6930 Carroll Avenue, # 340, Takoma Park, MD, 20912; (301) 270-6477; Email: nirsnet@nirs.org; Web: nirs.org
- * **The Nuclear Resister**, P.O. Box 43383, Tucson, AZ 85733; (520) 323-8697; nukeresister@igc.org; Web: nukeresister.org
- * **Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance** (OREPA), PO Box 5743, Oak Ridge, TN 37831; (865) 776-5050; Email: orepa@earthlink.net; Web: orepa.org
- * **Red Water Pond Road Community Association**, P.O. Box 4524, Albuquerque, NM 87196; (505)577-8438; Email: info@swuraniumimpacts.org; Web: swuraniumimpacts.org/red-water-pond-road-community-association/
- * **Union of Ontario Indians**, 1 Migizii Miikan, PO Box 711, North Bay, Ontario, P1B 8J8, Canada, (877) 702-5200; (705) 497-9127; Email: info@anishinabek.ca; Web: anishinabek.ca
- * **Voices for Creative Nonviolence**, 1249 W. Argyle St., #2, Chicago, IL 60640; Email: info@vcnv.org; (773) 878-3815; Web: vcnv.org
- * **World Beyond War**, 513 E Main St., #1484, Charlottesville, VA 22902; Web: worldbeyondwar.org