

Ukraine De-Escalation Can Start with Ending Nuclear Weapons “Sharing”

By John LaForge

Ukraine, the United States, and NATO have condemned what they correctly called Russian President Putin’s “dangerous and irresponsible” transfer of nuclear weapons to neighboring Belarus.

On June 9, Putin announced that Moscow would deploy its nuclear weapons in Belarus, reporting that work on new facilities for housing the weapons would be complete by July 7-8.

Putin had said on March 25 that Belarusian “President Alexander Lukashenko’s right: He says we’re your closest allies. Why do the Americans deploy their nuclear weapons to their allies, on their territory, train the crews, and pilots how to use this type of weapon if needed? We agreed that we will do the same.”

Indeed, the United States has transferred more than 100 of its 50- and 170-kiloton nuclear gravity bombs known as B61s to bases in Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Turkey, where allied pilots rehearse nuclear weapons attacks using their allied fighter jets. Case in point, NATO’s “Air De-

fender 2023,” a nine-day German-led, international war game involving 24 countries live-flying all across Germany, began on Monday June 12, in the midst of the hot war in Ukraine.

Point of information: The Associated Press keeps calling these nuclear weapons “tactical,” and less destructive than “city-busting” “strategic” devices. So it must be recalled that the city-busting Hiroshima bomb was a 15-kiloton weapon far less destructive than today’s B61 “tactical” hydrogen bombs.

Now Putin and Lukashenko copy the U.S. practice of violating the terms of the 1970 Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in the same way that the United States has for decades. All such nuclear “sharing” constitutes not just a violation of the NPT’s Articles I, II and VI, but a hair-raising and unnecessary escalation of the quagmire powder keg in Ukraine.

Last May 15, ICAN, the Nobel Peace Prize-winning International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, confronted the increasingly globalized war in Ukraine by sending a set of four demands to the G7 — Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the U.K. and the U.S., all of which are actively arming Ukraine —

noting that every one of them employ nuclear weapons “either as nuclear-armed states or as host or umbrella states.” ICAN’s four demands included a clear denunciation of nuclear sharing, as practiced by the U.S. and NATO, noting:

“Following Russia announcing plans to place nuclear weapons in Belarus, the G7 leaders must agree to end all nuclear-armed states stationing their weapons in other countries and engage Russia to cancel its plans to do so. Several G7 members are currently involved

in nuclear sharing arrangements of their own, and can demonstrate their opposition to Russia’s recent deployment announcement by commencing negotiations of new Standing of Forces Agreements between the U.S. and Germany and the U.S. and Italy, to remove the weapons currently stationed in those countries.”

This important call for an end to the stationing of U.S. nuclear weapons in other countries, and its direct reference to the U.S. and its allies, helps contextualize Russia’s escalation. The only practically workable way to move Putin to reverse his deployment to Belarus, is to offer to reverse the Pentagon’s deployment.

Call it a Cuban Missile Crisis Redux. That terrible confrontation was resolved when President Kennedy offered to, and then did, withdraw U.S. nuclear-armed missiles from Turkey. De-escalation works, and it can lead to further breakthroughs.

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Monticello

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consider the authority of the National Academy of Sciences in its 2006 report BEIR VII — the Biological Effects of Ionizing Radiation. The book-length BEIR VII conclusively reported that there is no safe dose of ionizing radiation, no level of exposure that can be declared harmless. Every exposure, no matter how small, carries a potential for causing cancers and other mutations.

Considering that the radioactive half-life of tritium is just over 12 years, and that it takes about 10 half-lives before a radioactive substance becomes relatively benign biologically, it is probably premature to speculate about public health and safety impacts. In fact, there are three pathways for leaked radiation to affect the public: it can migrate to the river, which supplies most of the drinking water for Minneapolis; it can migrate into groundwater off-site, where it becomes available for private and municipal water pumps; and it can evaporate. There is no doubt that during the next 120 years, some fraction of the leakage will follow each of these pathways and then affect biological activity. Of course, nobody will ever know how much contamination went where, or know what it did when it got there, because radiation monitoring at Monticello, as well as at the rest of the global commercial nuclear fleet, is mostly incapable of detecting radiation in any of these pathways. It makes better PR to just say there is no threat to public health and safety.

This Monticello pipe leak could be an omen of things to come. The leak occurred because a pipe carrying primary cooling water broke. Primary cooling water circulates through the reactor and thereby becomes radioactive. This radioactivity bombards the pipe through which it flowed with neutrons, and over time, this neutron bombardment causes metals to get brittle. Arguably, the pipe broke because it had become embrittled and something jarred it. The problem here — as with all nuclear reactors — is that every bit of metal at Monticello that is part of the primary system, which contains and controls the nuclear reaction, has also been subjected to this same neutron bombardment. All these metals are at some elevated state of embrittlement, now that the reactor is over 50 years old. As a result, we all now get to sit around and wait to see which components will be next in line to brake, and what the consequences of that breakage will be. That could get real exciting very quickly.

— Additional news on Minnesota reactor troubles can be found at *Water for Life*, the newsletter of the North American Water Office (nawo.org)



U.S. hypocrisy and double-talk were on parade as Uncle Sam demanded the global community accept, ignore, or applaud destabilizing U.S. nukes stationed in Europe, yet condemns Putin for sending Russian nuclear warheads to Belarus. All nuclear sharing is escalatory, illegal and should end.

Stop Holtec’s Radioactive Wastewater Dump

By Mari Inoue

Holtec International wants to dump radioactive wastewater from decommissioning nuclear facilities. People and elected officials are fighting back to halt such outrageous, unilateral plans.

Founded in 1986 in New Jersey by Kris Singh, Holtec manufactures dry storage and transport casks for highly radioactive spent nuclear fuel waste from reactors. The company also built the Central Spent Fuel Storage Facility inside the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone in 2021 for Energoatom, Ukraine’s national nuclear energy company. Its wholly-owned subsidiary, Holtec Decommissioning International, provides dismantling work for Holtec nuclear power reactors, including Indian Point on the Hudson River, 24 miles north of New York City, and Pilgrim Nuclear Station on Cape Cod Bay in Massachusetts.

On February 2, 2023, at a public forum of the Indian Point Decommissioning Oversight Board (DOB), Holtec announced its plans to dump highly radioactive wastewater from Indian Point’s fuel cooling pools into the Hudson River. On April 27, 2023, Holtec explained that approximately 1.3-to-1.5 million gallons from the radioactive fuel pools, a refueling water storage tank, the reactor cavity, and elsewhere need to be “processed and discharged via

its Liquid Waste Processing System.” Holtec intends to begin dumping as early as September. The “processed” wastewater that will be dumped into the river contains tritium (radioactive hydrogen) and possibly other radioactive isotopes.

Tritium is clinically known to cause more harm and death to living cells than gamma rays. Numerous studies show that tritium produces common radiogenic impacts including cancerous tumors, reproductive and genetic effects, and developmental abnormalities. Studies also indicate that smaller doses of tritium can cause more mutations, chromosome damage, and cell death than larger doses. Tritium crosses the placenta and can impact an embryo or fetus.

In Massachusetts, fisheries and neighbors along Cape Cod Bay are pushing back against Holtec’s plans to dump more than 1.1 million gallons of radioactive wastewater into the Bay from Pilgrim. A warning issued by the Environmental Protection Agency states that Holtec’s unauthorized discharge into the Bay would be in violation of the Clean Water Act. Holtec agreed to cooperate with an independent environmental study, but refused U.S. Senator Ed Markey’s demand that they pay for it.

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