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P.S. Living downstream from Monticello, Mn. and Prairie Island, Mn. is my day to day concern, given water soluble Uranium isotopes in pool storage and casks at the ISFSI at Prairie Island. Should I attach a geiger counter to my tap or toilet to verify a safe radioactive level?

Father of four 7-17 years of age.

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June 12th, 2001

Dr. Jane R. Summerson, EIS Document Manager
M/S 010
U.S. Dept. of Energy
Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management
Yucca Mountain Site Characterization Office
P.O. Box 30307
North Las Vegas, NV 89036-0307

Dear Dr. Summerson:

I have recently completed reading the Executive Summary of the Yucca Mountain Science and Engineering Report. I have yet to read the Supplement to the draft Environmental Impact Statement (DOE/EIS-0250D-S), but felt some response was in order before June 25th.

1... First, I am concerned about human intervention in safe storage. Primarily, I worry about warfare between nations as a source of disruption of a 10,000 year safe storage forecast. I do not believe we can project more than a few days at a time globally. I do believe that thousands of strategic nuclear warheads capable of penetrating and destroying Yucca Mountain's facilities currently are deployed by China, France, Israel, India, Pakistan, Russia and the United Kingdom. My knowledge of chemical, biological and laser weaponry is far less developed, but I would suggest scenarios for each type of weapon could be devised which might successfully breach the defenses planned for Yucca Mountain's facility.

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I see Yucca Mountain as a logical target for opponents of the United States in coming years if the project gets approval and recommendation from the President. The aim of an opponent at war with the United States would be to employ an attack upon the waste storage facility to foul or contaminate large portions of the United States with radioactivity, thereby harming our population with air and water pollution.

Has anyone studied the size of nuclear warhead necessary to penetrate Yucca Mountain to repository depth? The potential for laser weapons would seem to be another source of concern for transportation packages, if eco-terrorists were in control of such a device. Please examine the threats existing weaponry could pose to the project and publicize your resulting analysis before agreeing to sign off on such a facility.

Another concern is seismic activity in the vicinity of the mountain. Could you forsee any earth quakes that would either lower the North and/or South Portals of the facility or raise the 40 mile wash area in such a way that precipitation would drain into the tunnels? I doubt our ability to project seismic activity in any area of the planet for the next 25 years, let alone 10,000....

Terrorist activity by political opponents of waste emplacement at Yucca Mountain is a further concern — domestic opposition has a history of ability to mobilize thousands for protests. I would anticipate such opposition for the transportation schedule, particularly in the northeast. The question is how far would opponents go to make the facility unuseable? Would they:

A) detonate explosives to foul the rail/truck vehicles or freeways/rail routes?

B) attack a transport vehicle to prevent successful transport?

C) seek to damage entry portal facilities?

D) seek to detonate bomb(s) in the repository area?

E) try to sabotage transport vehicles, routes or the Yucca Mountain facility in other ways?

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1 cont.

The domestic opposition has a history of more than 30 years. I used to be part of that sentiment. My conversion came as a result of reading, study, and monitoring about cask technology and performance at ISFSIs, especially at Prairie Island 1 and 2 near Red Wing, Minnesota. I would advise broad public education as the strongest deterrent to domestic opposition.

International terrorists represent a whole different level of threat to such a waste repository. I could conceive of people within Iraq, for instance, who might try to bomb the north portal to prevent waste emplacement. If such people were to wait their attack until significant waste was at repository level and used an atomic bomb placed at repository level, would the resulting blast be capable of breaching casks and enhancing radioactive pollution of air quality in the US?

Recently a news broadcast suggested Vladimir Putin of Russia was offering Russian facilities for nuclear waste storage generated by other nations. That puts the U.S. in a competition mode, conceivably, for access to wastes produced elsewhere. Is this an attempt to gain materials for reprocessing to expand weapon arsenals with more reliable warheads?

Does the concentration of nuclear waste in one area commit the United States to a military defense of that facility? Has DOE covered that contingency or is that a D.o.D. policy/province?

3...

I noted the stated radionuclides that may be water soluble. What percentage of the waste packages will these be within spent fuel rods for how long before deterioration/decay? I assume a substantial portion of the casks' (content) is water soluble radionuclides ~~initially~~ initially, since all isotopes of Uranium are reportedly water soluble.

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As a free lance writer and a peace movement activist, I first became concerned about nuclear power due to the problem of generation of more and more waste at the back end of the fuel cycle with no long term permanent repository. With more than 40 MTHM now in temporary storage due to double before all existing power plants run their licenses to a renewal or shut down point, I believe my view was correct. Now, 20 years and more later, I believe DOE and the OCRWM have the problem near enough to potential solution to alter my viewpoint. As I see it, pool storage on site and ISFSIs, when combined with the Yucca Mountain option present us with some light at the end of the tunnel, if you will. That potential solution is not sufficient to warrant extending waste generation by re-licensing yet. It is not enough to provide confidence in a long term waste problem solution. But it is enough to proceed cautiously toward utilization of Yucca Mountain as a national waste storage permanent repository, if approved by the Administration and able to gain public acceptance without incurring opposition that would extend to eco-terrorist attacks on the facility or on transportation routes and methods.

I would ask also whether helicopter transport is feasible, permitting avoidance of population concentrations. Also, I have considered possible ocean transport from the east coast to either the Gulf of Mexico or the west coast as a way of avoiding transport by truck or rail through major population centers.

Thank you for any consideration and response.

Christ's peace always,

Charles Thomas Smith

3 cont.

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