ALERT! ALERT! ALERT!

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WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE & FREEDOM
NUKE GAS TASK FORCE
1818 N.W. Everett
Portland, Or. 97209
ADDRESS CORRECTION

ALERT

TO: FRANK CARLUCCI
Sec. of Defense
Dept. of Defense, Pentagon
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

19 January 1988

NEWS RELEASE

CHEMICAL WEAPONS

URGENT ACTION NEEDED

Word comes from the International Community in Geneva that pressure should be exerted on the U.S. Government and Congress to HALT PRODUCTION OF BINARY NERVE GAS immediately. Geneva Delegates are trying to proceed quickly with concluding negotiations on Chemical weapons. Agreement is very close and should not be threatened by new nerve gas production.

Frank Carlucci, Secretary of Defense is now considering which military programs should be axed to help reduce the deficit. Massive mail and calls, wires, etc. to Carlucci and all legislators urging cancellation of all Binary Nerve Gas production and support for a quick conclusion of the Chemical Weapons Convention would do much to sustain and accelerate the disarmament movement.

Evelyn S. Murray

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Carl W. Levin	166 Russell Senate Office Bldg. Washington, D.C. 20510	(202) 224-6221

U.S. REPRESENTATIVE

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G.R. office	110 Michigan, N.W. Grand Rapids, MI 49503	(616) 451-8383

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Page Twenty Seven

Los Angeles Times
Sunday, January 31, 1988

Contra Aid: Bad Answer to Bad Question

By PAUL B. HENRY

One of my college professors repeatedly told his class: "To secure good answers, you must first ask good questions."

The question of continued funding for the Nicaraguan Contras has, unfortunately, been so poorly framed over the years as to ensure only bad answers. The question becomes the foreign-policy equivalent of "Have you stopped beating your wife?"

The Reagan Administration has allowed the Contra question to eclipse broader questions of American foreign-policy goals in the Central American region, and Congress has been beguiled into debating the question on those limited terms.

In so doing, both Congress and the President have been backed into a "no win" corner. If military aid is approved this week, we risk undermining the diplomatic offensive that has achieved more in six months than military aid has accomplished in six years. Such approval would give the Sandinista regime an excuse to renege on its promises of political pluralism and the restoration of democratic processes.

On the other hand, a rejection of aid without qualification would send a signal to the Sandinistas that Congress and the President have reached a statement on American policy toward Nicaragua. They would thus be tempted to disregard the promises made last August and expanded upon two weeks ago in Costa Rica.

Either way, the Sandinistas win, because the question has been improperly framed from the beginning. And Congress faces the dilemma of either reaffirming bad policy or rejecting it and creating the vacuum of having no policy at all.

Hopefully, the answer to this imprudent ultimatum will be yet another reprieve through an unglamorous compromise that segregates Contra support into non-lethal and lethal-aid packages, fencing off [illegible] of the latter for subsequent consideration.

Such an arran[illegible] more chance, perhaps the last, to return the Contra cahoose to the back of the policy train where it belongs and enable the Administration to forge a truly bipartisan, multidimensional and multilateral approach to the Nicaraguan issue.

Three critical dimensions of our Central American policy need to be resolved.

—An honest attempt must be made to root that policy in genuine bipartisan consensus. Bipartisanship means more than simply securing the magic number of "swing" votes needed to join the majority of Republicans supporting the President on the issue. It means a jointly formulated policy in which there is a sense of shared ownership sufficient to engender a shared obligation to defend it domestically and abroad. Dividing Congress and the nation with "good guy-bad guy" rhetoric over charges of neo-isolationism or malvise regarding Marxist regimes can only serve to undermine that effort. Members of Congress ought not to usurp the role of secretary of state. But implementing foreign policy in the absence of [illegible] political accommodation denies the [illegible] and predictable [illegible]

problem of the drug warlords; the burgeoning Latin populations, the restructuring of Latin American debut and revitalization of Latin American economies must be given short shrift as dramatic focus and attention as the effort to counter Marxist subversion and presence in the region. We must rigorously examine the impact that our policies may or may not be having in inadvertently remilitarizing the very region in which we are trying to sustain the growth of fragile civilian political institutions.

—Our Central American policy must deliberately seek to strengthen multilateral participation of the region's nations. A sense of shared ownership of that policy is no less important to those affected by it than it is to those conducting it. Last fall, while Congress was once again debating additional millions to the Contras, the State Department advised the Organization of American States that the United States could not afford to meet its financial obligations to host the annual OAS meeting. And of course, it goes without saying that a Central American policy is doomed to failure if it runs counter to the joint efforts of the Central American presidents to develop a regional solution to their problems.

As long as policy-making is determined by lurching from Contra aid request to Contra aid request, there is little in the way of meaningful discussion and agreement on the broader goals and purposes of our policy in Central America, and how and when military force might be used to achieve them. In the present context of the diplomatic initiative undertaken by the Central American presidents [illegible]



DOONESBURY, Trudeau, San Pedro Sula, Honduras

Will Michigan be the

RADIOACTIVE WASTE DUMP FOR SEVEN STATES?

Waste: The More You Know the Less You'll Like It."

"Low Level' Radio[illegible]

LOW LEVEL WASTE [illegible] includes high[illegible] thousands of [illegible] and research [illegible] throughout [illegible]

OVER 60% O[illegible] out-of-st[illegible] OF MICHIG[illegible]

THIS OU[illegible] the do[illegible] dumps [illegible] LAKES[illegible]

THE[illegible] Def[illegible] LF[illegible]

[illegible] its name low level waste actually [illegible] will remain radioactive for [illegible] unt is generated by hospitals [illegible] from 15 nuclear reactors

[illegible] owned by [illegible] produced OUT

PLEASE COPY, REVISE, IMPROVE, ETC. FOR ANY AND ALL LISTED. CUT THIS OFF, ADD YOUR NAME, ADDRESS AND PHONE. SEND TO GOV. BLANCHARD, MICH RADIOACTIVE WASTE AUTHORITY, ALL LANSING LEGISLATORS, AND WASHINGTON. ALSO DNR/NRC/DOE etc. See reasons below. AND YES, YOUR DONATION FOR STAMPS IS WELCOME.

Dear Gov. Blanchard

I am very concerned about radioactive wastes and current plans for a Michigan disposal site.

We must take two crucial steps now:

Get ourselves out of the Midwest Compact & REVISE FEDERAL COMPACT SYSTEM!

Store wastes on-site, at nuclear reactors, monitored, retrievable, temporarily.

We must give our wisdom and technology time to develop a thoroughly responsible nuclear policy for ourselves and the future.

Please inform me of your views.

Sincerely,

Reasons:

Out of Compact? Why should water-full Michigan take 100% of 7 states' 100,000-year-commitment instead of our 40%, to begin yet another hazardous site? Re-opening the Compact will re-interest those 6 States in re-opening the disastrous Federal policy which creates 4 times the dumps needed (and eventually in every state)!

On-site storage? The Experts who make (and profit by) it on our Lakeshores can store it "safely", instead of transporting the massive amounts. It can be monitored by proper "responsible" Agencies already on site and under existent security protection. It can be retrievable for re-packaging by each generation as needed during the 50 year decommission "cool-off" period awaiting technology and wisdom.

Get Involved: Don't Waste Michigan, Inc. 224 Custer, LANSING MI 48912
(616)361-6169 (517) 487-6873

- RATIFY INF WITHOUT AMENDMENTS
- KEEP SALT II & ASAT
- REDUCE SDI $
- SCUTTLE MX RAIL GARRISON
- SUPPORT CTB COMPREHENSIVE TEST BAN

DEMOCRACY MEANS SPEAK OUT!

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DOUMONT, Tiempo, San Pedro Sula, Honduras

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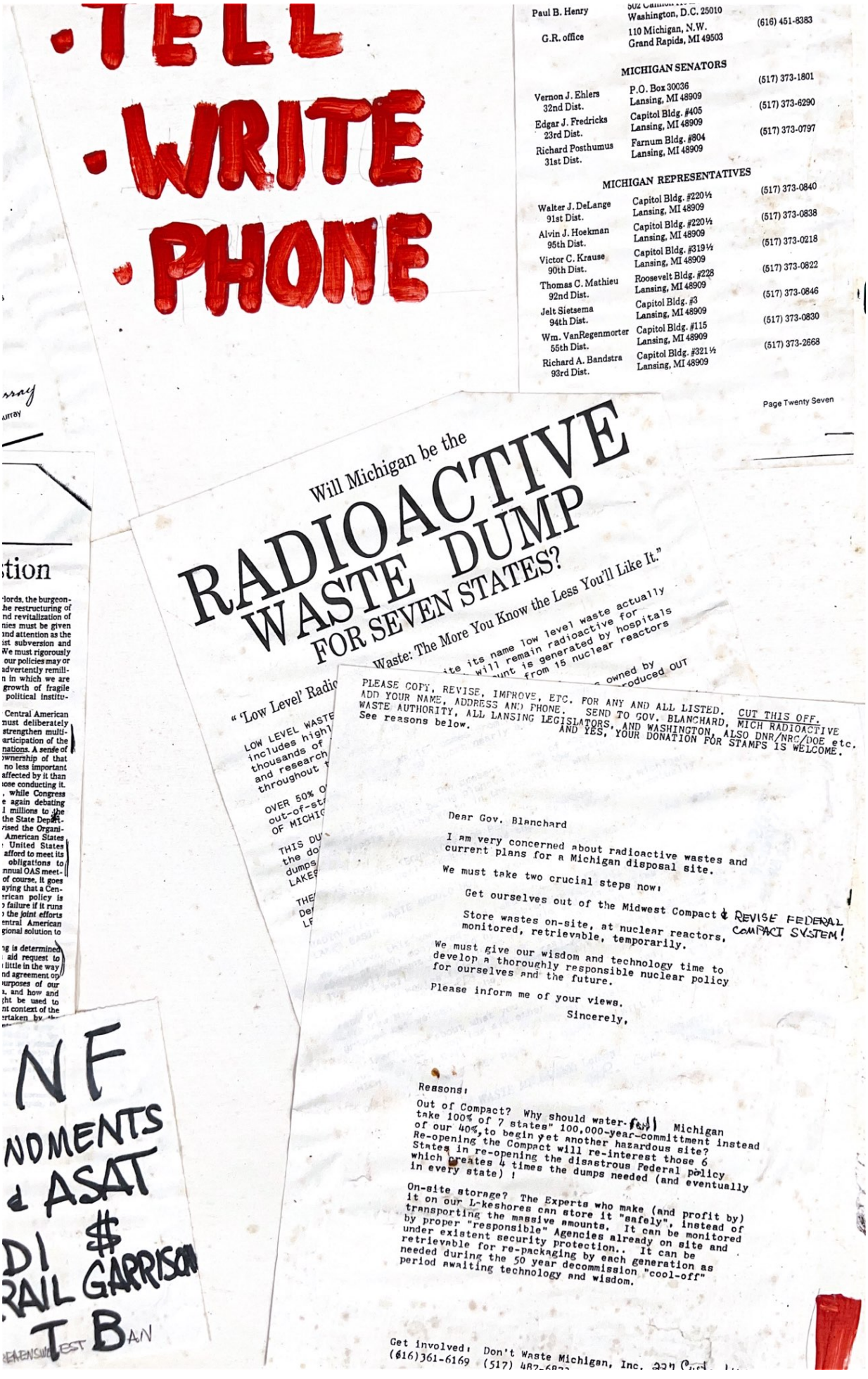

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RADIOACTIVE WASTE DUMP FOR SEVEN STATES?

Waste: The More You Know the Less You'll Like It."

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(616)361-6169 (517) 487-6...

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A6 ☐ SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 1987 ☐ THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS

20,000 children may have been exposed to high levels of radiation

By Linda Roach Monroe
Newhouse News Service

Study by federal scientist shows government plutonium production plant in southeastern Washington may have been harmful from 1944 to 1953.

PORTLAND, Ore. — More than 20,000 children may have been exposed to potentially harmful radiation levels from a government plutonium production plant in southeastern Washington between 1944 and 1953, according to a preliminary study by a federal scientist.

That is about 10 times the number of Utah children who were exposed to radioactive fallout from nuclear bomb testing in the 1950s.

It is a figure so large — and the estimated potential radiation doses are so high — that a study of relatively few of the now-grown-up children could show whether radioactivity from the Hanford Nuclear Reservation harmed people, according to the report by federal epidemiologist James A. Ruttenber.

Ruttenber tracks down health and disease patterns for the federal government's Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta. For the last 18 months, he has been the lead researcher helping the Pacific Northwest evaluate Hanford's massive emissions of radioactive materials.

In the 1940s and '50s Hanford started producing plutonium for the atomic bombs dropped on Nagasaki, Japan, in 1945.

If researchers could find as few as 100 of the children born in Washington's Benton and Franklin counties between 1943 and 1945, health problems from their radiation exposure could be reliably detected, estimated Ruttenber and Sara Cate, a University of Washington medical student who is co-author of the report.

Overall, people who were under age 19 and lived near Hanford in 1944-53 are five to 13 times more likely to have had thyroid cancer than people not exposed in the Hanford radiation, they said.

They estimated there would be 320 excess thyroid cancers and 960 excess cases of benign thyroid nodules among the total group, if all were exposed at maximum radiation levels.

Cate cautioned, however, that the numbers were estimates based on preliminary data. More research needs to be done to assure that assumptions that went into the calculations are accurate, experts agree.

It wasn't until 1986 that Hanford managers released papers showing how huge the nuclear site's emissions in the 1940s and '50s were — so large that radiation doses from iodine 131 in the area easily could have exceeded those that Utah children received from nuclear bomb tests in Nevada.

Radioactive iodine settles onto vegetation and is eaten by dairy cattle, whose milk is the primary pathway for the radioactivity to get into humans. The iodine 131 concentrates in the thyroid, a gland in the neck, where its radiation is thought to cause cancer and thyroid nodules.

Washington state calculations indicate that a baby in Pasco, Wash., near the Hanford plutonium plants, could have received as much as 2,300 rems of thyroid radiation from drinking contaminated milk throughout 1945.

A rem is a measure of biological exposure to radiation. Five rems per year is the maximum whole-body radiation dose nuclear workers are allowed to receive.

The 2,300-rem Hanford figure comes as well, a maximum estimate of 700 rems that a Utah child's thyroid received from all the nuclear bomb tests of the 1950s and early 1960s, said Charles Lyon, who is overseeing a National Cancer Institute study of cancer among such children.

Lyon expressed shock when first informed about how high the potential doses around Hanford were.

"That's incredible. That's getting into the level that the Marshallese received," he said. Residents of the Marshall Islands in the Pacific were accidentally irradiated by a nuclear bomb test in 1954.

Even with lower thyroid doses than those around Hanford, the Utah children's thyroid problems from the bomb radiation have been easier to study because they lived in close-knit, stable farming communities.

But Hanford's radioactive emissions occurred in a highly mobile community that sprang up near the end of World War II. Researchers have doubted that they would be able to find enough of the exposed people to find out whether the Hanford emissions harmed people.

Be thankful

Letter-writer Jack Luidens of Sparta and other able-bodied employed persons who have concerns about unused handicapped parking spaces should be thankful they are physically fit to be employable. They should be thankful they are able to walk and thankful they have a job to walk to.

PETE BOTTOMLEY
Kentwood

Radioactive dump brings risks

Did anyone vote for the electric nuclear power plants that make over 90 percent radioactive waste, whether it is measured by barrels or geiger counter? And when did the people of Michigan vote for beautiful Michigan, nestled in the Great Lakes, to "host" the radioactive dump for seven states?

The Press reported (Oct. 15) that our Legislature Senate has accepted legislation moving us another step meekly into the gas chamber set by the 1980 Congressional "Low Level" Radioactive Waste Disposal law.

And where is Michigan's investigatory group, determining whether to make, or to store? The Low Level Radioactive Waste Commission and our Midwest Compact of seven states only take responsibility to "carry out the congressional mandate," regardless of public concern or environmental insanity.

Some facts need to be noted: With modern technologies and efficiency we don't even need nuclear power. Leaks can be expected. "Low Level" does not mean low hazard, but mostly means "not easily refinable into weapons-grade plutonium." Beneficial medical, research and industrial wastes together total about 10 percent by volume and only about 1 percent by amount of radioactivity.

Current university research asks: Why transport?

Why risk accident, terrorism, etc. to build yet another contaminated site? Why not rote the 10 percent to the 90 percent — the utility sites, already staffed with experts who manage the masses of active High Level fuel rods already on site?

Legislators should stop, think, learn and not be rushed into another nightmare mess. They should do it for my grandchildren, and theirs!

CORINNE CAREY

...nate and House

DON'T WASTE MICHIGAN: NEWSLETTER: JANUARY 1988

Legislative Wrap-up: Despite numerous problems surrounding the radioactive waste disposal issue in Michigan, the Legislature pushed through Senate Bills 65,66 and 297 in December. Sponsored by Senator John Cherry(Clio-D), these bills define siting criteria, repeal the law prohibiting radioactive waste disposal and establish the Radioactive Waste Authority. Representative William Brownell(Utica-D) introduced an amendment to Senate Bill 65 which would have allowed Michigan voters decide the issue of disposing of waste generated in other states. Although the amendment failed it was supported by the following House members:

BENNETT	DUNASKISS	LELAND	PALAMARA	SMITH, V.	WARTNER
BERMAN	DUTKO	NYE	PORRECA	STRAND	WEEKS
BROWNE	GIESE	O'CONNOR	RANDALL	VARGA	YOUNG, R.
BRYANT	JOHNSON	O'NEILL	ROCCA	WALBERG	

If your representative is not on this list give him/her a call and find out why. If we were successful in the amendments to the bills to direct the State to consider go-it-alone alternatives, onsite storage at reactors and legislative approval of the final site selection.

Although we did not succeed in getting this issue on the ballot this time around we will have another opportunity in the spring when the legislature reconsiders the compact law. So we should begin now to contact our representatives to urge their support of a legislative initiative. Let's make radioactive waste disposal in the Great Lakes Basin a top campaign issue in 1988 from the presidential race on down.

IT'S OFFICIAL!!! We have an organization now with a bank account! DON'T WASTE MICHIGAN(formerly known as Coalition for a Responsible Radioactive Waste Policy) is gearing up for the serious fight ahead to keep Michigan from becoming the dumping ground for six other states. But- all of this takes money. We need your help to cover printing and postage costs. YOUR DONATION WILL HELP INFORM OTHERS! Please send checks to DON'T WASTE MICHIGAN, 227 Custer Ave , Lansing, MI. 48912

Coming up in February:

February 6-Public information/organizational meeting in Grand Rapids, 2pm-5pm. Wege Center, Aquinas College, call Corinne Carey (517)361-6169. If you would like to hold a meeting in your area, we will supply the speakers and handout materials. Phone: Ellen Beal (517)-487-6873 or Mary Sinclair (517)-835-1303

February 15-Siting Criteria Advisory Committee will release its recommendations at a public information meeting. If at all possible, try to attend and offer testimony. It will be a great opportunity for media coverage especially if there is a good turnout. For exact time and location contact Radioactive Waste Authority-(517) 335-0430(ask to be put on their mailing list).

February 18- Public Hearing on NORM(Naturally Occurring Accelerated Radioactive Materials). This waste is excluded from low level classification under current definition but the universities are pushing to get it included. For time and location phone Radioactive Waste Authority-(517) 335-0430

EIGHT RADIOACTIVE WASTE DUMPING-COPY AND CIRCULATE THIS NEWSLETTER.

ASK THE CANDIDATES, ETC.

NUCLEAR WARHEAD TESTING

Limiting nuclear warhead testing has been a goal of every President, both Republican and Democrat, since Eisenhower. For the last two years, the US House of Representatives has voted to cut off funds for all but the smallest nuclear tests, so long as the Soviets do the same. From August 1985 to January 1987, the Soviets observed a unilateral halt to all nuclear tests, but the Reagan administration refused to reciprocate, claiming that a test ban cannot be verified and that testing is needed to ensure the reliability of existing weapons. Many scientists and weapons experts dispute these claims.
Do you believe that a verifiable US-Soviet end to all nuclear testing would be a benefit or a detriment to American national security? Why or why not? How would you pursue a nuclear test ban?

Questions for the Candidates on Energy Policy

SOUND ENERGY POLICY

In general, nuclear power has proven to be a very costly source of electricity. Most plants generate only about 60 percent of the power they were designed to produce, and there are serious doubts about plant safety. In most regions of the country, plants with acute safety problems could be phased out without causing power shortages. Over the long term, nuclear power can be replaced by aggressive conservation programs, cogeneration, other power produced by small-scale independent producers, widespread use of efficient motors and appliances, innovative and nonpolluting technologies using natural gas and coal, and better planning and management by utilities.
Do you think America should increase or decrease its reliance on nuclear power as a source of electricity? Would you support government efforts to encourage alternatives to nuclear power? If so, how?

THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

The NRC, the federal agency charged with licensing nuclear power plants, has often been criticized for favoring the financial interests and reputation of the nuclear industry over the health and safety of the public. For example, in April of 1987, a former senior Justice Department official testified: "Based on my extensive experience with the NRC, I can unequivocally state that I know of no other regulatory or investigative agency where senior agency officials have taken as many bizarre and seemingly deliberate actions intended to hamper the investigation and prosecution of individuals the agency regulates."
Do you believe the NRC is doing its job correctly? What would you do as President to ensure that the agency lives up to its mandate to give highest priority to protecting public health and safety?

EMERGENCY PLANNING AROUND NUCLEAR PLANTS

Given the risk of a major accident at a nuclear plant, it is important that adequate plans be prepared to safely evacuate people living nearby. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has recently issued a new regulation that would weaken emergency planning requirements. Nuclear plants would be allowed to operate even if state and local officials determined that safe evacuation is not possible.
Do you support NRC actions to override state judgments on emergency preparedness? As President, what would you do to ensure that the health and safety of citizens living near nuclear plants will be adequately protected?

NUCLEAR WASTE

The highly radioactive waste material produced by nuclear power reactors is now being stored on-site, while utilities wait for the federal government and the states to agree on a safe method and location(s) for permanent disposal. US power plants and reactors operated by the Department of Energy (DOE) currently produce over 12,000 tons of high-level waste per year. In 1982 Congress set up a disposal program to be managed by the DOE. This program has been badly mismanaged, mostly because political concerns have been given greater priority than careful technical analysis. Little progress has been made in finding a suitable disposal site.
If you become President, what will you do to straighten out this program? How will you balance local and federal concerns?

Union of Concerned Scientists 26 Church Street Cambridge, MA 02238

DON'T WASTE MICHIGAN: NEWSLETTER: JANUARY 1988

Legislative Wrap-up: Despite numerous problems surrounding the radioactive waste disposal issue in Michigan, the Legislature pushed through Senate Bills 65,66 and 297 in December. Sponsored by Senator John Cherry(Clio-D), these bills define siting criteria, repeal the law prohibiting radioactive waste disposal and establish the Radioactive Waste Authority. Representative William Browne(Utica-D) introduced an amendment to Senate Bill 65 which would have allowed Michigan voters decide the issue of disposing of waste generated in other states. Although the amendment failed it was supported by the following House members: (+)

BENNETT	DUNASKISS	LELAND	PALAMARA	SMITH, V.	WARTNER
BERMAN	DUTKO	NYE	PORRECA	STRAND	WEEKS
BROWNE	GIESE	O,CONNOR	RANDALL	VARGA	YOUNG, R.
BRYANT	JOHNSON	O'NEILL	ROCCA	WALBERG	

If your representative is not on this list give him/her a call and find out why. (Y) We were successful in the amendments to the bills to direct the State to consider go-it-alone alternatives, onsite storage at reactors and legislative approval of the final site selection.

Although we did not succeed in getting this issue on the ballot this time around we will have another opportunity in the spring when the legislature reconsiders the compact law. So we should begin now to contact our representatives to urge their support of a legislative initiative. Let's make radioactive waste disposal in the Great Lakes Basin a top campaign issue in 1988 from the presidential race on down.

IT'S OFFICIAL!!! We have an organization now with a bank account! DON'T WASTE MICHIGAN(formerly known as Coalition for a Responsible Radioactive Waste Policy) is gearing up for the serious fight ahead to keep Michigan from becoming the dumping ground for six other states. But- all of this takes money. We need your help to cover printing and postage costs. YOUR DONATION WILL HELP INFORM OTHERS! Please send checks to DON'T WASTE MICHIGAN, 227 Custer Ave , Lansing, Mi. 48912

Important

with Mary Sinclair, Ellen Beal & Others!

Coming up in February:

February 6-Public information/organizational meeting in Grand Rapids, 2pm-5pm. Wege Center, Aquinas College, call Corinne Carey (616)361-6169. If you would like to hold a meeting in your area, we will supply the speakers and handout materials. Phone: Ellen Beal (517)-487-6873 or Mary Sinclair (517)-835-1303

February 15-Siting Criteria Advisory Committee will release its recommendations at a public information meeting. If at all possible, try to attend and offer testimony. It will be a great opportunity for media coverage especially if there is a good turnout. For exact time and location contact: Radioactive Waste Authority-(517) 335-0430(ask to be put on their mailing list).

February 18- Public Hearing on NOARM(Naturally Occurring Accelerated Radioactive Materials). This waste is excluded from low level classification under current definition but the universities are pushing to get it included. For time and location phone Radioactive Waste Authority-(517) 335-0430

FIGHT RADIOACTIVE WASTE DUMPING-COPY AND CIRCULATE THIS NEWSLETTER

(+) Kentwood #91 Walter DeLange 698-9340
GR 92 Tom Mathieu 453-1329
EGR 93 Richard Bandstra 458-6381
Rockford #90 Victor Krause 874-7863
Wyoming/K #94 Ken Sikkema 534-5778

ASK THE CANDIDATES, ETC

NUCLEAR WARHEAD TESTING

Limiting nuclear warhead testing has been a goal of every President, both Republican and Democrat, since Eisenhower. For the last two years, the US House of Representatives has voted to cut off funds for all but the smallest nuclear tests, so long as the Soviets do the same. From August 1985 to January 1987, the Soviets observed a unilateral halt to all nuclear tests, but the Reagan administration refused to reciprocate, claiming that a test ban cannot be verified and that testing is needed to ensure the reliability of existing weapons. Many scientists and weapons experts dispute these claims.

Do you believe that a verifiable US-Soviet end to all nuclear testing would be a benefit or a detriment to American national security? Why or why not? How would you pursue a nuclear test ban?

Questions for the Candidates on Energy Policy

SOUND ENERGY POLICY

In general, nuclear power has proven to be a very costly source of electricity. Most plants generate only about 60 percent of the power they were designed to produce, and there are serious doubts about plant safety. In most regions of the country, plants with acute safety problems could be phased out without causing power shortages. Over the long term, nuclear power can be replaced by aggressive conservation programs, cogeneration, other power produced by small-scale independent producers, widespread use of efficient motors and appliances, innovative and nonpolluting technologies using natural gas and coal, and better planning and management by utilities.

Do you think America should increase or decrease its reliance on nuclear power as a source of electricity? Would you support government efforts to encourage alternatives to nuclear power? If so, how?

THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

The NRC, the federal agency charged with licensing nuclear power plants, has often been criticized for favoring the financial interests and reputation of the nuclear industry over the health and safety of the public. For example, in April of 1987, a former senior Justice Department official testified: "Based on my extensive experience with the NRC, I can unequivocally state that I know of no other regulatory or investigative agency where senior agency officials have taken as many bizarre and seemingly deliberate actions intended to hamper the investigation and prosecution of individuals the agency regulates."

Do you believe the NRC is doing its job correctly? What would you do as President to ensure that the agency lives up to its mandate to give highest priority to protecting public health and safety?

EMERGENCY PLANNING AROUND NUCLEAR PLANTS

Given the risk of a major accident at a nuclear plant, it is important that adequate plans be prepared to safely evacuate people living nearby. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has recently issued a new regulation that would weaken emergency planning requirements. Nuclear plants would be allowed to operate even if state and local officials determined that safe evacuation is not possible.

Do you support NRC actions to override state judgments on emergency preparedness? As President, what would you do to ensure that the health and safety of citizens living near nuclear plants will be adequately protected?

NUCLEAR WASTE

The highly radioactive waste material produced by nuclear power reactors is now being stored on-site, while utilities wait for the federal government and the states to agree on a safe method and location(s) for permanent disposal. US power plants and reactors operated by the Department of Energy (DOE) currently produce over 12,000 tons of high-level waste per year. In 1982 Congress set up a disposal program to be managed by the DOE. This program has been badly mismanaged, mostly because political concerns have been given greater priority than careful technical analysis. Little progress has been made in finding a suitable disposal site.

If you become President, what will you do to straighten out this program? How will you balance local and federal concerns?

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20,000 children may have been exposed to high levels of radiation

Study by federal scientist shows government plutonium production plant in southeastern Washington may have been harmful from 1944 to 1953.

By Linda Roach Monroe
Newhouse News Service

PORTLAND, Ore. — More than 20,000 children may have been exposed to potentially harmful radiation levels from a government plutonium production plant in southeastern Washington between 1944 and 1953, according to a preliminary study by a federal scientist.

That is about 10 times the number of Utah children who were exposed to radioactive fallout from nuclear bomb testing in the 1950s.

It is a figure so large — and the estimated potential radiation doses are so high — that a study of relatively few of the now-grown-up children could show whether radioactivity from the Hanford Nuclear Reservation harmed people, according to the report by federal epidemiologist James A. Ruttenber.

Ruttenber tracks down health and disease patterns for the federal government's Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta. For the last 18 months, he has been the lead researcher helping the Pacific Northwest evaluate Hanford's massive emissions of radioactive materials in the 1940s and '50s. Hanford started producing plutonium for the atomic bomb dropped on Nagaski, Japan, in 1945.

If researchers could find as few as 160 of the children born in Washington's Benton and Franklin counties between 1943 and 1945, health problems from their radiation exposure could be reliably detected, estimated Ruttenber and Sara Cate, a University of Washington medical student who is co-author of the report.

Overall, people who were under age 19 and lived near Hanford in 1944-53 are five to 13 times more likely to have had thyroid cancer than people not exposed to the Hanford radiation, they said.

They estimated there would be 320 excess thyroid cancers and 960 excess cases of benign thyroid nodules among the total group, if all were exposed at maximum radiation levels.

Cate cautioned, however, that the numbers were estimates based on preliminary data. More research needs to be done to assure that assumptions that went into the calculations are accurate, experts agree.

It wasn't until 1986 that Hanford managers released papers showing how huge the nuclear site's emissions in the 1940s and '50s were — so large that radiation doses from iodine 131 in the area easily could have exceeded those that Utah children received from nuclear bomb tests in Nevada.

Radioactive iodine settles onto vegetation and is eaten by dairy cattle, whose milk is the primary pathway for the radioactivity to get into humans. The iodine 131 concentrates in the thyroid, a gland in the neck, where its radiation is thought to cause cancer and thyroid nodules.

Washington state calculations indicate that a baby in Pasco, Wash., near the Hanford plutonium plants, could have received as much as 2,300 rems of thyroid radiation from drinking contaminated milk throughout 1945.

A rem is a measure of biological exposure to radiation. Five rems per year is the maximum whole-body radiation dose nuclear workers are allowed to receive.

The 2,300-rem Hanford figure compares with a maximum estimate of 700 rems that a Utah child's thyroid received from all the nuclear bomb tests of the 1950s and early 1960s, said Charles Lyon, who is overseeing a National Cancer Institute study of cancer among such children.

Lyon expressed shock when first informed about how high the potential doses around Hanford were.

"That's incredible. That's getting into the level that the Marshallese received," he said. Residents of the Marshall Islands in the Pacific were accidentally irradiated by a nuclear bomb test in 1954.

Even with lower thyroid doses than those around Hanford, the Utah children's thyroid problems from the bomb radiation have been easier to study because they lived in close-knit, stable farming communities.

But Hanford's radioactive emissions occurred in a highly mobile community that sprang up near the end of World War II. Researchers have doubted that they would be able to find enough of the exposed people to find out whether the Hanford emissions harmed people.

Be thankful

Letter-writer Jack Luidens of Sparta and other able-bodied employed persons who have concerns about unused handicapped parking spaces should be thankful they are physically fit to be employable. They should be thankful they are able to walk and thankful they have a job to walk to.

PETIE BOTTOMLEY
Kentwood

G.R. Press 10/27/87

Radioactive dump brings risks

Did anyone vote for the electric nuclear power plants that make over 90 percent radioactive waste, whether it is measured by barrels or geiger counter? And when did the people of Michigan vote for beautiful Michigan, nestled in the Great Lakes, to "host" the radioactive dump for seven states?

The Press reported (Oct. 15) that our Lansing Senate has accepted legislation moving us another step meekly into the gas chamber set by the 1980 Congressional "Low Level" Radioactive Waste Disposal law.

And where is Michigan's investigatory group, determining whether to make, or to store? The Low Level Radioactive Waste Commission and our Midwest Compact of seven states only take responsibility to "carry out the congressional mandate," regardless of public concern or environmental insanity.

Some facts need to be noted: With modern technologies and efficiency we don't even need nuclear power. Leaks can be expected. "Low Level" does not mean low hazard, but mostly means "not easily refinable into weapons-grade plutonium." Beneficial medical, research and industrial wastes together total about 10 percent by volume and only about 1 percent by amount of radioactivity.

Current university research asks: Why transport?

Why risk accident, terrorism, etc. to build yet another contaminated site? Why not tote the 10 percent to the 90 percent — the utility sites, already staffed with experts who manage the masses of active High Level fuel roads already on site?

Legislators should stop, think, learn and not be rushed into another nightmare mess. They should do it for my grandchildren, and theirs!

CORINNE CAREY

cnate and House