

# "The Lie of the Peaceful Use of Nuclear Energy: Nuclear Weapons and Nuclear Power Plants - Two Sides of the Same Coin"

## European Trip Report, October 2004

By Satomi Oba, Director, Plutonium Action Hiroshima, Hiroshima, Japan.



One of our international Women and Life on Earth advisors, Satomi Oba (<http://www.womenandlife.org/WLOE-en/background/advisorssept04.html>) has long been involved in international campaigns against nuclear power and nuclear weapons and the militarization of space. In this paper she reports on European-wide plans against nuclear energy and for more effective action against nuclear proliferation. For more on war, peace and energy issues, see Satomi's Summer 2004 report, a 6 page pdf -format download in our new "Voices of Women" (<http://www.womenandlife.org/WLOE-en/resources/wwaa/wwaa-fs.html>).

### Linz Symposium

I went to Linz, Austria to attend the International Symposium, "The Lie of the Peaceful Use of Nuclear Energy - Nuclear Weapons and Nuclear Power Plants - Two Sides of the Same Coin" on October 1-2. Participants came from 34 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in 17 countries: Austria, the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, France, UK, Czech Republic, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, Russia, Ukraine, Finland, Sweden, Norway, India and Japan.

This symposium was held as a follow-up to last year's: "For a Brighter Future - Strategies for a World without Nuclear Madness", and was organized by the Linz-based NGO, "Upper Austria Platform against Nuclear Danger" (Chairwoman Ms. Mathilde Halla), and supported by the City of Linz and the Province of Upper Austria.

The keynote speaker Dr. Alexey V. Yablokov revealed the connections between civilian and military nuclear programs, with examples from the histories of more than 20 countries including Israel, Iran, North Korea, South Korea, and Japan. He also presented legal evidence and information on the physical and technological connections.

About 70 participants then divided into several workshops, discussing strategies

for ending the nuclear danger, Euratom, waste trade with Russia, preventing the construction of the fifth reactor in Finland, etc.

I joined the workshop on the Finnish reactor, a European pressurized water reactor (EPR) designed by a French-German consortium joined by Japanese industry. Planned at the site of Olkiluoto, this would be the world's largest reactor with a 1600 MW capacity. Mitsubishi Heavy Industry is constructing the pressure vessel without official approval of the Finnish government.

Symposium participants agreed to send a letter to the Finnish government and members of the parliament urging reconsideration of the EPR project. (See more details in the latter part of this report on my trip to Helsinki.)

We also agreed to send a letter to the United Nations about the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), on some commemoration date, perhaps on March 1 next year, the anniversary of US hydrogen bomb test on the Bikini Atoll. We would call for reform of the IAEA so that it no longer promotes nuclear energy, but works solely on nonproliferation.

As the European Union is in the process of adopting a constitution, participants agreed to work on a one-million signature petition campaign for exclusion of nuclear energy as an option in Europe. As the 20th anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster nears (in April 2006), there will be a big event in Kiev, Ukraine next year, and the organizers welcome the participation of international activists there.

In 1978 the Austrian people prevented operation of the planned Zwentendorf nuclear power station through a public referendum against the plant. The "Upper Austria Platform against Nuclear Danger" came from that movement, and supported anti-nuclear movements in neighboring countries, such as that to stop the Temelin nuclear power plant in the Czech Republic. The symposium last year was held on the 25th anniversary of the victory over Zwentendorf.

As this meeting was held during the Keep Space for Peace Week, an international action week called by the Global Network against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space (<http://www.space4peace.org/>), I took copies of our poster for distribution, and Aurel Duta of Rumania also invited people to the network actions.

### **Trip to Finland**

Following the symposium, members of the anti-nuclear/safe energy groups World

Information Service on Energy (WISE) (<http://www.antenna.nl/wise/>) and the Nuclear Information Resource Center (NIRS) (<http://www.nirs.org/>) held their annual meeting in Linz on October 3-4. After this meeting I flew on to Helsinki with messages from the symposium .

In Finland, I stayed with Anna-Liisa Mattsof, a member of the No More Nuclear Power movement. A retired teacher of the Rudolf Steiner school in Helsinki, she and her colleague Ulla arranged my schedule. I visited the Ministry of Environment, Trade and Industry (MoTI ) on Wednesday and Thursday with Anna-Liisa and Gert from Women for Peace. I presented our joint message together with one of my own concerning the EPR to Mr. Pekka Jalkanen, Director General of the Environmental Protection Department of the Environmental Ministry and to Mr. Jussi Manninen, Director General, Head of the Nuclear Energy Division, and Anne Vaatainen, Chief Counselor of the Ministry of Trade and Industry's Energy Department.

First I spoke with all those we met in Helsinki about the Linz symposium. Mr. Jalkanen said that they have no power over this issue, for it is under the control of MoTI. But when we visited MoTI, Mr. Manninen said he could not do anything, as it was decided at the parliament, and under control of STUK, the Finnish radiation and safety authority.

On Wednesday we met six parliamentarians from different parties, and again presented our messages. They said that although they oppose construction of the EPR, they can do nothing about it, as the decision has been made. I asked these people if they had seen any design or specification for the EPR, at least a rough illustration, but no one had. I asked the parliamentarians to get specific information on it for expert analysis. Mr. Manninen told me that he himself had not seen it, but STUK had. And that the design information has not been made public because of fear of terrorism.

I wonder how these people can guarantee the safety of the reactor without checking the design themselves? Who is really responsible for the health and safety of the Finnish people? But I am really not so surprised at this, for we often see the same things happening in Japan.

One of the new surprises for me was that there is a possibility that MOX (uranium and plutonium mixed oxide) fuel can be loaded into the planned reactor. I asked about it at the MoTI, but Mr. Manninen immediately denied it. He looked surprised and asked me who had told me this. Then Gert said she had found it from French information. At first Manninen denied the possibility. Later he said

that there is no plan for MOX utilization at the EPR, but that this could be changed.

I also asked how many reactors are being planned in Finland in the future. He answered "none." However just two days later the Finnish media reported that the government is in fact considering adding a sixth and seventh reactor. So, it is clear that he told a lie.

I showed photos of the Japanese Mihama nuclear power plant accident in August, and told them about Mitsubishi Heavy Industry's military connections, and its notorious history of radioactive contamination in Malaysia. I am not sure how effective this information was, but at least I believe that the Finnish people have the right to know the truth about the nuclear danger that threatens Finland and neighbouring countries.

On Thursday night we met with members of NGOs including Friends of the Earth and Green peace. It was a fruitful meeting with a good exchange of information. I did not meet members of the media, but a women writer from the Green Party interviewed me for an hour.

The last day of my visit was a wonderful, as I talked with students at the Steiner school where Ulla teaches. I spoke to students 14-19 years old, including Ulla's class, divided into two big groups, older and younger. In both classes I spoke about the young girl Sadako, who died from leukemia after the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, and how nuclear weapons and nuclear power plants were connected. I stressed the important role that young people can play for a peaceful and sustainable future. The students listened carefully. Later I showed some students in the younger classes how to make paper cranes, symbols of peace. I hope that the Finnish leadership will be responsible for these young people.

After visiting the school, Anna-Liisa took me to the Finnish Peace Committee, where we met Teemu Matinpuro and Anu Harju. I told them about the symposium of Linz. They took interest in the slogan, "nuclear weapons and nuclear power plants - two sides of the same coin." Teemu said that they will be more active on military issues, so Mitsubishi's connection to the weapons production will be important. He also knew about the company's infamous contamination in Malaysia. (In the 1980s a Mitsubishi subsidiary dumped radioactive waste from its operation in the local community of Bukit-Merah in Malaysia causing severe health problems).

I left Helsinki on October 8, arriving home on the next day.

## **Appendix**

**1. Message from the International Symposium in Linz, Austria  
October 1st - 2nd, 2004  
(Linz Symposium participants' letter to the Finnish Government, the  
Finnish Parliament and the Finnish Press).**

**2. Message to the Finnish government and to the Finnish Parliament from  
Satomi Oba**

"The Lie of the peaceful use of atomic energy - nuclear weapons and nuclear power plants - two sides of the same coin"

### **PROTOTYPE OF A PROTOTYPE**

In France there are plans to build an EPR prototype reactor which is planned to be ready in 2012.

This means that the EPR-reactor ordered by Teollisuuden Voima (TVO) in Finland is actually a prototype of a prototype.

In Japan in the light of the recent accidents and scandals relating to nuclear power plants, for instance in the Mihama nuclear power plant, nuclear power is rapidly losing its credibility concerning safety. There are less perspectives for the Japanese society to accept new construction of nuclear power plants. Japanese people would never accept such a huge 1.600 MW (plant) that includes unknown dangers.

### **EPR FOR A FIXED PRICE**

The Finnish utility TVO got the EPR-reactor for a fixed price of 3 billion euros. All costs exceeding this price will be carried by the EPR constructors Framatome and Siemens. Already now it is expected that the project will cost a lot more than 3 billion euros. In such a case there is a great risk that cost savings will threaten the security of the reactor. The French utility EdF proposed to other utilities in Germany and Spain to take part in an EPR-project in France. The German utilities compared this price to the price that TVO got and came to the conclusion that the French EPR reactor would produce electricity at a 25 % higher price than

in Finland.

In Germany it has been criticized that a German bank has offered an extremely advantageous loan at a rate of only 2,6 % for the Finnish project. Ordinary German bank customers have to pay a much higher rate.

## CABLE

Cables for electricity transfer are being planned between Kernovo in Russia and Kotka in Finland, both situated at the Finnish Gulf, and between Olkiluoto (where the Finnish 5th reactor is planned to be built) and Sweden.

It is to be remembered that one of the arguments for building new nuclear power capacity in Finland was to stop imports of nuclear power from dangerous reactors in Russia. The planned cable between Kernovo and Kotka shows that the EPR project is built on false promises.

In Sweden the Green party is protesting against the plans of Sweden to participate (by 4/5 of the price) in the cable project between Finland and Sweden. The plans show clearly that the 5th Finnish reactor will not be built only to cover the Finnish electricity needs, but also consumption in Sweden and most likely also elsewhere. In fact the 5th Finnish reactor would be the 13th Swedish reactor.

## CLIMATE

Many climate specialists agree that nuclear power is not a solution to the climate change. Even an analyst of the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) has stated that nuclear energy cannot prevent the climate change - not even slow it down.

It is a lie used by the atomic energy lobby to gain public and political support for their projects. The 5th Finnish reactor would only push Finnish energy and climate policies further down the unsustainable path.

## EARTH QUAKE

It is incomprehensible that the pro-nuclear decision-makers do not at all consider all the effects of the climate change on nuclear power plants, for instance - the heat and drought on one side - and the floods, storms and hurricanes on the other. In France for instance a nuclear power plant had to be closed down in the summer of 2003 because of the heat.

The same goes for earthquakes. Scandinavia has been considered to have a

stable soil but still there was a very exceptional earthquake in the Kaliningrad region on the Baltic Sea coastline in September this year. It caused trembling even in southern and western Finland.

Church bells began to toll in Lohja, in southern Finland.

It is to be taken into account how this kind of earthquakes, and even stronger ones, can affect both the 1.600 MW reactor and the final deposit for highly radioactive nuclear waste, both planned to be built in Olkiluoto on the west-coast of Finland.

## CONCLUSIONS

We, the representatives for 38 organisations from 17 countries meeting in Linz, urge the Finnish government and parliament to reconsider the plans for building the 1.600 MW EPR-reactor in Finland, and instead, to urgently make plans for covering eventual needs for more electricity by renewable energy sources. Finland is a country with vast potentials for wind and biomass energy. Instead of becoming promoters of an ancient technology we urge you to become promoters for energy efficiency technologies and for energy sources that can serve the future.

We also urge the Finnish press to tell the truth about all aspects of the EPR project to the Finnish people. They, as all Europeans, have a right to know what consequences are to be expected and how to deal with them.

Linz, October 2nd, 2004

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Message to the Finnish government and to the Finnish Parliament**

From Satomi Oba

Dear Sir, dear Madam,

I would like to express my deep concern about the planned reactor at the site of Olkiluoto, designed by the French-German Consortium, and joined by a Japanese company, Mitsubishi Heavy Industry. It is surprising that the reactor

vessel is under construction at the Mitsubishi plant in Kobe in Japan even before the official construction license for the fifth Finnish reactor has been given by the Finnish government.

On August 9th this year a horrific accident took place at the Mihama-3 nuclear power plant of Kansai Electric Power Company (KEPCO) in Japan. 800 tons of vaporized coolant (cooling water) burst out from a damaged pipe of the secondary coolant circuit. Four out of 11 workers at the site were exposed to the steam and died almost immediately. Another worker died some days later.

KEPCO and the authorities tried to calm down the public by emphasizing that there was no radioactive leakage into the environment as it was from the secondary circuit. But in fact it was a "Loss of Coolant Accident" (LOCA) in which more than 75 % of the coolant was lost. It could have caused core meltdown if the heat removal system had failed.

It was reported that the pipe damage had been caused by erosion/corrosion. The utility never checked and replaced the pipe in 28 years i.e. since it started operating the plant. Similar problems were found one after another in other nuclear power plants.

In 1991 there was another serious accident at another unit, Mihama-2. At that time the pipes of the steam generator suddenly ruptured and the primary coolant burst into the secondary system. It caused no victims but was also a serious accident.

Reactors and turbine systems of Mihama Nuclear Power Plant (NPP) were built by Mitsubishi Heavy Industry. The responsibility of KEPCO for the fatal accident on the 9th of August is clear, because it had disregarded repeated warnings and avoided necessary checking for years. But we should also pay attention to other facts concerning Mitsubishi.

Mitsubishi is the biggest nuclear and military industry in Japan. It produces air conditioners, elevators, ships and constructs nuclear power plants. Besides it is known for its involvement in weapons production. Mitsubishi is one of the major contractors and a partner of the United State's Missile Defense System.

There is a case that demonstrates Mitsubishi's neglecting of human rights and the environment; the radioactive contamination in Bukit-Merah in Malaysia. In the 1980s Asian Rare Earth (ARE), a subsidiary company of Mitsubishi, dumped its



radioactive waste caused by its operation in the vicinity of the local community, exposing the residents including children and pregnant women to radiation. For years the local people complained about health problems that they had not experienced before ARE started its operation. ARE denied the connection between the radioactive waste, cancer, severe birth defects and other diseases. Local people supported by international experts filed a lawsuit. Although they won in the High Court the Supreme Court rejected the arguments of the people. ARE won the case but had to close its operation in Malaysia. The company, however left the waste in the dump site of the village. The inhabitants have not got any compensation and some children in a serious condition died.

It is highly questionable if Mitsubishi is able to carry the responsibility for a safe operation of the Finnish EPR reactor, or willing to pay compensation in case of a serious accident.

When we look into the dismal records of scandals relating to nuclear industries in Japan, the regulation and control system by the Japanese authorities also seem to be questionable.

Since the Chernobyl accident in 1986 we have not heard about any such severe accidents as the JCO-accident in Tokaimura 1999, and the steam burst at Mihama NPP this summer, which altogether caused the death of seven workers.

Mitsubishi started the construction of the reactor vessel for TVO even before any permission had been given by the Finnish government. I hear that the contract with TVO was signed even though there is no nuclear power trade agreement between Finland and Japan which is essential for any nuclear related trade. Therefore the contract between TVO and Mitsubishi has been criticized in the Japanese media for being illegal.

The planned Finnish EPR reactor is reported to have a capacity of 1.600 MW, being the largest reactor in the world if it will be built. A Japanese expert on nuclear reactors has stated that a large reactor is usually more dangerous, and there are a great number of factors that can cause trouble. He states that it is irresponsible to build such a huge scale reactor in Finland without building a prototype in France or Germany first.

In Japan today more and more people become aware that nuclear energy is not safe, clean or economical. In Japan local people have rejected NPP construction plans in many places, in spite of enormous political pressure. Recently also utilities had to abandon new construction plans because of economical reasons

as well as because of strong resistance of local residents.

Very few Japanese know of the involvement of Mitsubishi in the construction of the EPR in Finland. Without any doubt they would oppose to such a potential disaster in any place in Japan, if there was such a proposal in their vicinity.

The Finnish people have the right to full information and consultation about the construction of the EPR reactor in their country.

I seriously hope that the Finnish Government and Parliament will make the decision based on the deepest consideration, respecting democracy and considering all legal obligations in order to protect the people, the environment and future generations from irretrievable devastation that would last for immeasurable time.

I believe that Finland, known for its sophisticated technology, is capable to develop a safe, clean and sustainable energy system instead of posing the risks and dangers caused by nuclear power on the citizens.

Sincerely yours,

Satomi Oba

Director of Plutonium Action Hiroshima  
Phone/fax: 81-82-828-2603  
e.mail: kota-goldencat@kfa.biglobe.ne.jp