

amass sufficient to produce an arsenal of weapons.

The second is that the customer countries themselves would use the plutonium to make nuclear weapons in the future. That possibility itself can be a destabilising element in international politics. Technological capability and the possession of a stockpile of Plutonium taken together can be the basis for threatening other countries. The very existence of stockpiles of Plutonium in a neighbouring country is itself a considerable incentive for governments to develop nuclear bombs.

It would take Japan, for instance, roughly six months to manufacture nuclear weapons,

once it has built a stock. This was one of North Korea's justifications for continuing its own nuclear weapons programme.

It is also why there was so much opposition to THORP within the United States. Clinton has made statements that he is worried about what THORP will do. The Pentagon's own Non-Proliferation office lobbied hard to have THORP's commissioning stopped. 25 Congressmen and women, including Joe Kennedy of Massachusetts, promoted legislation in Congress condemning THORP and calling on Clinton to initiate "High-level bilateral discussions" with the British Government with a view to halting the project.

However, despite all the proof of the environmental dangers, the probability of massive financial losses and the dangers the export of its product represents internationally, it was commissioned and is now functioning.

The scale and the seriousness of the problems THORP represents has yet to be appreciated either by politicians or by the bulk of the Trade Union movement. The demands that it should be closed shouldn't be limited to those times when leaks are publicised or when deaths begin to be attributed to its emissions. Pressure

on it should be continuous and consistent.

## TO THE MEMORY OF BROTHER HAGGAR

This is an obituary for Pete Haggar.

Peter was a vice chairman of the T&GWU, he was one of the T&GWU EC members representing the South East, he was on the TUC General Council representing the T&GWU and chaired the Trades Councils national committee where he represented the TUC. He represented the T&GWU on Trade Union CND's EC. None of that gives a clear picture of his significance within the trade union movement, which was profound. He died of Cancer in February this year and his death is a terrible blow to the progressive movement in Britain.

He made his living as a Taxi Driver. The Taxi was called Rupert, after Rupert Murdoch who very kindly donated the money to buy it after having mistakenly accusing Bro Haggar of being involved in ballot rigging. Pete never believed it was possible to build a progressive movement by cheap manoeuvres like rigging ballots.

Pete was an immensely influential figure within the T&GWU. If you wanted to do something in or together with the T&GWU, people in the union would ask what Pete had said about it. If he didn't agree he wouldn't stop you from doing it, in fact he was usually loath to do such a thing, it was just that people put such store by his opinion it was very difficult to achieve much if he felt you were wrong. With his support, a great deal of the organisation would respond positively. I once overheard Ron Todd impressing upon someone - in jest - that he was the General Secretary and not Pete Haggar.

Pete was a catalyst. Machines moved and the world changed if Pete pressed the button - because he was so well respected.

Dealing with Pete was worrying. Other people do the same amount

of work but they but they have a couple of secretaries, an office, an organisation behind them and get paid a lot to do it. Peter relied on what he referred to as his filofax, which was a crop of bits of paper in the back pocket of his trousers. That matters of such weight and import should depend on him not forgetting to check his pockets before the trousers went into the washing machine... but he never to my knowledge made an organisational error.

Politically he was also really very astute and he was willing to admit he was wrong. He was always willing to listen and he was always capable of making an insightful contribution. The only serious disagreement I

ever had with him was over the organisation of the campaign against the military intervention in the Gulf. He felt it was right to support a separate campaign committee to carry out the work against the war and I felt CND should have been the appropriate body.

One of the reasons for the depth of his influence was that he came across as being very intelligent but not in any way arrogant and of being a warm and generous person. Talking to him felt like visiting an oasis.

Jimmy Barnes (Secretary, Trade Union CND)

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NEWS  
10491

Issue 15 - Summer 1995

## THE WAR IN THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

At the time of writing the war in the former Yugoslavia is raging apace and, in the short term, it is difficult to see how the war will develop. What is clear is that the press in this country have delivered a grossly distorted picture of both the events and the reasons for the war.

### WHY THE WAR?

The former Yugoslavia had a massive debt problem, gained in the same way as the bulk of the developing world: by following the misguided policies of the World Bank and the IMF. Croatia and Slovenia with 40% of the GDP and 20% of the population said the reason for the split was they thought they could survive far better on their own, leaving the poorer areas to fend for themselves. The election of a fascist government in Croatia, which resolutely refused to give any guarantees for the safety of the Serb ethnic minority there meant that civil war was a grave possibility. Germany's recognition of Slovenia and Croatia without such guarantees made the war inevitable.

The former Yugoslavia has reserves of Copper, Zinc, Lead, Tin, Mercury, Antimony, Chromium and Tungsten. The latter two being very important in making high grade steel. This is why modern Germany is interested in Croatia and why Hitler's Germany was interested before World War 2.

The tensions in the former Yugoslavia, created largely by the debt

problem, were used by a number of politically very ugly people as a justification for nationalism and as a means to gain power. The image given in the press that the Serbs are the aggressors or that they are the villains is a dreadful distortion. That isn't to say their leaders are nice people, but it is flatly wrong to claim the others are any better.

### THE WAY OUT

So long as the little war lords like Trudjman and Milosovich believe there can be a military solution there will be no end to the war. The arms embargo has clearly been systematically broken by a number of western nations to supply Croatia. For instance, following German recognition of Croatia the German army 'lost' 1,400 vehicles - some of them Leopard Tanks. As long as this continues Russia will ignore the arms embargo on Serbia.

The almost hysterical cries from some of the left in Britain to lift the arms embargo on Bosnia means in practice allowing the USA to give

weapons to Croatia, which now dominates the Bosnian government.

An arms embargo would have a marked effect on the war. Large scale military actions depend on the constant supply of huge quantities of parts fuel, ammunition and replacement equipment. An embargo on Croatia would make an effective embargo on Serbia possible, making it very difficult for them to continue the war.

The other major contribution the western world could make would be to address the problems created by the IMF sponsored debt crisis the area faces. If they fail to find a way of doing this for the former Yugoslavia, a constant string of wars, driven by similar dynamics, could break out in a number of countries and the next decade could well see a continuing ugly civil war rolling on in the former Yugoslavia, like the continuing war in Afghanistan, fuelled by arms supplies from countries seeking to further their own interests.

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For a number of years, with the exception of China, the nuclear weapons states have operated a moratorium on testing nuclear weapons. It is hoped that a treaty banning all nuclear weapons' testing (Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty - CTBT) will have been negotiated in mid 1996.

There has been a sharp and widespread negative reaction to the decision to re-start testing nuclear weapons. Below are two examples of this. The fact that neither of these came from the peace movement should give an indication how deep the general feeling is against this decision.

On the 15th of July the New Scientist carried the following editorial:-

"On July 10th, 1985 French Secret Service agents bombed the Greenpeace ship Rainbow Warrior in Auckland harbour and sank it. One crew member was killed in this act of government-sanctioned terrorism. Exactly ten years later, the French government was once again demonstrating its utter contempt for world opinion.

This time it was the turn of the Greenpeace ship Rainbow Warrior II, which was protesting against plans for a series of nuclear tests by the French Government on the Muroroa Atoll. Although Greenpeace's members are committed to non-violent resistance,. The hooded thugs from the French armed forces which attacked the ship saw fit to smash down doors with axes and fill it with tear gas. Thankfully, this time they did not kill anyone.

The nuclear tests on Muroroa Atoll are completely unnecessary, except to satisfy the French governments obsession with maintaining an independent nuclear force looks and is completely irrational.

Protests against the tests have taken place all round the world, particularly in the Pacific where some of France's last colonies are now beginning to question the wisdom of their masters. No one expects the French Government to take the slightest notice unless the protests are made to hurt.

In Australia and New Zealand, many people are now refusing to buy French goods. If you oppose further nuclear testing, New Scientist recommends that you follow their example. Indeed if you give up French wine and buy Australian or New Zealand instead, you will not only be helping a good cause but enjoying better tasting wines too."

Another response to the French Test came from John Monks and eighteen General Secretaries in the following letter to the Financial Times on 20th June-

"Dear Sir,

We wish to publicly express grave concern over the French President's decision to resume the testing of nuclear weapons in the South Pacific. It is less than credible for the French government to assert that these tests

# IRRATIONAL, DANGEROUS, OUTRAGEOUS - THE FRENCH DECISION TO TEST

are needed for the future development of their nuclear weapons programme when the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which they have just signed, commits them to the long term aim of getting rid of nuclear weapons.

That a nation such as France should engage in the further development of nuclear weapons at this time, when the fragile international progress towards Nuclear Disarmament holds so much hope, can only be considered to be both a foolish and deeply irresponsible decision.

There is, and can be, no justification for the French President's decision and we thoroughly condemn him for having moved in this direction and would strongly urge him to reconsider his decision.

Yours sincerely

Bill Morris - General Secretary, T&GWU

Barry Reamsbottom - General Secretary, CPSA

Lew Addams - General Secretary, ASLEF

Clive Brooke - General Secretary, IRSF

John Sheldon - General Secretary, NUCPS

Jim McCusker - General Secretary, NIPSA

Judy McKnight - General Secretary, NAPO

Simon Petch - General Secretary, STE

Ken Cameron - General Secretary, FBU

John Foster - General Secretary, NUJ

Roger Bolton - General Secretary, GMB

Denis Scard - General Secretary, MU

Garfield Davies - General Secretary, USDAW

Roger Lyons - General Secretary, MSF

George Brumwell - General Secretary, UCATT

Allan Jinkinson - General Secretary, UNISON

David Treisman - General Secretary, AUT

John Monks - General Secretary, TUC "

With a couple of dishonourable exceptions there has been an almost universally negative response from other Governments. Amongst others the Governments of Russia, Sweden, Ireland, Austria, Denmark, Finland, Greece, the Netherlands and Spain have strongly condemned the decision. Japan's foreign minister "very strongly condemned"

the decision and said that Chirac had "betrayed the trust of the Non-nuclear nations". Australia has recalled its ambassador and military attache from France and, together with New Zealand suspended all defence contacts with France. The New Zealand foreign minister said Chirac's decision displayed "Napoleonic-d e Gaulle

arrogance". A boycott of French goods has been organised in both New Zealand and Australia, with the enthusiastic support of the trade union movement in both countries.

The French ambassador wrote back to the Financial Times saying that his government had decided to do only eight tests starting in September. These, he said, were to provide information so that France can improve the "reliability and safety" of her arsenal. He also said that the tests were "in no way intended to increase the power or numbers of weapons France possesses, or to develop new systems."

However, according to the French Government's publicity handouts the first test will be for the new TN-75 warhead for France's new Triumphant class of large nuclear missile submarine. The second and third are to test the trigger mechanisms on existing and new warheads. The next four are to develop a computer model so that tests need not be used in the future. They will probably double up as development for the warhead on an air to ground missile France hopes to have ready in ten years' time and for a new generation of ballistic missiles ready for 15 years' time.

## THREE DIMENSIONAL COMPUTER MODELLING

The idea behind the computer modelling is to develop a system which has all the information about the way nuclear material behaves so that a warhead can be designed without having to test if it works. The United States has a model and a number of commentators argue that the reason the US are keen on a test ban is because they can do without while others don't have the technology. It was through using this model that the Professor Drell discovered the possibility of Trident warheads being detonated accidentally while being transported.

It is extremely unlikely that France can develop anything like a workable model on the basis of four tests. The United States used information from the 1030 tests it has conducted, a large proportion of which were in recent years when its monitoring techniques were becoming more sophisticated. France has less sophisticated monitoring equipment and has performed fewer than 200 tests.

The ban on testing was intended to inhibit the development of new weapons yet Chirac is saying France needs a method of

developing weapons without having to test. That's a contradiction.

## ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS

France controls the Muroroa Atoll as a result of a mandate given it following the second world war. That mandate ran out, however, in 1986 - which means they have no legal right to be there, let alone rip it to bits.

A number of attempts have been made by environmentalists to monitor any releases at the time of a French test and also to check to see what radioactive pollution exists in the area following a test but the French government has successfully prevented this happening.

However, the detailed information now available on test sites in the former Soviet Union shows that radiation leaks into the

atmosphere occurred in most of the tests conducted. In some cases the quantities released were of a level generally accepted as dangerous, despite denials at the time of the tests. Information available on US tests indicates a slightly less dramatic picture, but it should be remembered that this is only partial information. The British government has vociferously resisted releasing any information about the tests it conducted in Australia and has been proven to have lied on a number of occasions about the environmental damage and the dangers to people living close to the area. So Russian, American and British governments have lied and all have been responsible for considerable environmental damage through their tests. France, which is doing its tests on the cheap, is inevitably causing serious damage to the area of the Pacific and clearly lying through their teeth when they claim there is minimal damage to the environment.

## BRITAIN'S POSITION

Britain was not in favour of the moratorium on testing. In recent years her tests were carried out in the US test site in Nevada. Eventually Britain was forced to concede and accept the ban, when some members of the US congress began suggesting they charge Britain for cleaning up the test site, if the open opposition to the policy was not dropped. However, the British government has engaged in intense lobbying in both the US and France to encourage both governments to drop the moratorium. Foreign office and MOD personnel have acted as 'advisors' to both the French and US defence ministries. While there is an almost universal condemnation from the rest of the world, Britain has refused to condemn either the French decision or the efforts of the Pentagon to overcome Clinton's opposition.

# TWO MILLION JOBS TO BE LOST IN THE USA BUT A DIFFERENT ATTITUDE FROM THAT IN BRITAIN

The defence procurement budget in the United States has been steadily reduced since 1986 and will be for the next couple of years. One result is that jobs in the defence industries are being steadily lost.

Britain is also facing cuts in procurement and a loss of jobs in the defence industries. There are, however, a number of differences in the way the way government and industry are responding in the two countries.

## SUBSTANTIAL JOB LOSES IN THE US

Currently a number of people within the arms industry are saying that between 700,000 and 800,000 further jobs will be lost in the industry. The picture varies from area to area and from industry to industry. So, for instance, the aerospace industry employs a large number of people in California - 383,000 in 1986. This has fallen to 169,000 people currently and is expected to fall to 131,000 by 1997. Some of this has been because of companies relocating but that has simply aggravated what is an overbearing trend and most of the downturn results from a decline in military orders.

One of the other factors which should be taken into account when assessing this situation is the effect on jobs in other sectors of the economy when jobs are lost in mainstream manufacturing. When one job goes in mainstream manufacturing, such as aerospace, most industrial analysts would estimate that three other jobs go in a mixture of service, subcontracting and in local infrastructure. That multiplier leaves a

possible overall total of up to 2.4 million jobs. There have not been many occasions where this multiplier mechanism has proven inaccurate.

## THE VALUE OF PARTICULAR INDUSTRIES

Something else which is important to remember is that particular industries have an impact upon the pattern of industry overall. In the case of Aerospace the industry is very much a stimulant for advanced technology which has an impact upon other parts of the economy.

An aerospace industry brings with it design capacity and an appreciation within industry of leading edge technologies. For this reason alone a number of countries have developed their own aircraft industry. Every major aerospace deal the Indian government signs includes technology transfer and support in developing the capacity to produce aircraft in India. This makes good financial sense for India but this isn't always the case. For some countries the financial figures associated with it don't make commercial sense.

Taiwan has, for instance, just developed its own fighter aircraft, and that is very largely to act as a catalyst to the development of an aerospace industry overall, both civil and military. Japan has done the same. Mitsubishi Heavy Industry are about to start production on the FS-X fighter bomber which they have developed in conjunction with Lockheed. It is apparently a derivative of the F-16C Block 45. Each aircraft will cost the Japanese Government roughly speaking a staggering 100 million pounds. Bearing in mind that, depending on the exchange rates, an off the shelf US manufactured F-16C

aircraft would cost roughly a quarter of this figure, as would a Eurofighter, and a top range Russian plane about an eighth, 100 million pounds per aircraft is an astonishing figure. If Japan produces more than 130 of them the price would come down to roughly 65 million pounds, which is three times the cost of a Eurofighter.

Japan isn't known for being illogically spendthrift. In this case the reason for the development of the aircraft is clearly to help develop the technical and skill capacity within the technologies associated with aerospace.

The US Government recognises this and had put into place a programme aimed at maintaining some industries. One set of measures is the National Shipbuilding Initiative which is a package of measures aimed at helping the warship yards move to producing merchant vessels. This involved billions of dollars in aid as well as other protective measures on top of a range of protectionist measures already in place for shipping in the USA. This was set in place prior to the domination of government by the Republicans, who are eroding some of it. Even in its reduced version, however, it represents a considerably greater level of support for the industry than exists in Britain.

## PUBLIC RESPONSE

The US government response has been to say clearly what they think the effect on jobs will be, and to attempt to do something about trying to retain the industrial base which is currently devoted to defence. In contrast the British Government, although faced with very similar industrial dynamics and with a problem of similar scale in proportion to the rest of the economy, has



WRITE TO CHIRAC

# STOP THE FRENCH NUCLEAR TEST

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© Steve Bell 1995 - AFTER DELACROIX -



Despite promising international moves towards nuclear disarmament France has decided to continue development of its own nuclear arsenal and proposes a programme of nuclear tests, thus undermining the disarmament process. France chose Muroroe Atoll in the South Pacific to conduct these tests, even though France has no legal claim over the islands. Add your voice to the millions of people worldwide, who are protesting to the French government against this foolish, irresponsible and damaging decision.

Write to Jacques Chirac,  
C/O the French Embassy 38  
Knightsbridge,  
London SW1X 7JT



first to denied it is happening then blamed it on mysterious forces beyond their control. Thus while the US is openly trying to predict what areas of industry will be affected and to set in place mechanisms which will help retain the industry, the British Government does nothing but issue statements claiming the economy is doing well.

## REASONS

There are two reasons why the US is behaving the way it is. One is that it now regards the protection of US economic

interests as a legitimate part of its overall defence strategy. Thus part of the post-cold war role for both the National Security Agency (which runs the spy base at Menwith Hill in Yorkshire) and the CIA is industrial espionage.

The other is that the US want to maintain the ability to function within a number of areas of technology and want to maintain production capacity in certain industries so that they can rapidly, should they feel the need, return the industries to arms and defence production.

The same problems face the British government but the response is, again, very different. There are two reasons for this. One is that they are locked into a free market philosophy which would be publicly compromised were they to make exceptions for some areas of manufacturing. The other is they simply do not have the money.

To make such a programme possible in Britain would require a radical shift away from the free market philosophy currently practised by our government.

by Jim Mortimer

The main cause of Britain's poor economic performance over many years under both Tory and Labour

governments has been the low level of investment in industry, in transport and in training. It has been estimated that investment as a proportion of national income in Britain is about 15%, but in Germany it is 22% and in Japan near 30%.

Yet Britain continues to spend more for military purposes as a proportion of national income than the average for other European NATO countries. In 1994-95 estimated British military expenditure was about 22.5 billion. If this level were brought down to the average level of the European NATO countries it would imply a saving of about £7 billion, or nearly one-third of Britain's military budget.

But this is not all. Because of its proportionately high military spending, Britain's expenditure on vital research and development is heavily biased towards military purposes. The result is there for all to see. In a succession of industries, British manufacturers have been overtaken, particularly by Japan. Japanese research and development has been directed towards the production of manufactured goods for sale on the world market. Today Japan has a huge trading surplus with the rest of the world. Disarmament has been one of the key factors in its success.

There is evidence that the main political parties have not yet taken to heart the lesson of this experience. The 1995 defence estimates show only a very small fall in military spending, down from £22.5 billion to £21.75 billion. The projected expenditure up to and including 1997-98 shows little change.

The Labour Party has been no less committed to military spending. Indeed, in recent months it has given the impression that, if anything, it is critical of the even limited cuts made by government.

From the standpoint of social morality, Britain's commitment to high military

# AN ALTERNATIVE TO MILITARY SPENDING - INVESTMENT IN ECONOMIC EXPANSION

spending raises another important question. Britain is heavily engaged in the international arms trade. The UN Secretary General pointed out in a recent report that the five permanent members of the Security Council account for 86% of the arms export trade throughout the world. Britain, it is said, now accounts for 16% of this trade.

The arms trade is very actively encouraged by the Defence Export Services Organisation of the MoD. The British government is involved in the promotion of arms sales and in providing subsidies for the trade. Some of these sales are to regimes with a dishonourable record, including Indonesia and Iraq.

The attitude of Labour's parliamentary leadership towards military expenditure has been, and is, in striking contrast to the policy declarations of successive annual conferences of the Labour Party. The majority of delegates, both from the constituencies and the unions, have voted for resolutions calling for British military expenditure as a proportion of national income to be reduced to the European NATO average. A vital question, of course, is that of increasing unemployment as a result of reducing military spending. But it should be seen as an opportunity for the expansion of civil production rather than as a problem of contraction. Money spent for civil purposes will create more jobs than an equivalent sum spent on expensive military products. Military expenditure is highly capital intensive and is the most expensive way of creating employment.

If resources are to be used for the expansion of civil production there will have to be effective instruments of economic control. Market forces will not do the job.

This is why public enterprise is so vital. Labour's commitment to full employment will be meaningless unless it is translated into proposals for public intervention to increase the level of investment in industry, in housing, in training and in the social services. The idea that all this will be achieved by a

voluntary social 'partnership' with big business is unrealistic.

The domination of the City of London financial institutions over investment decisions has deep roots in British history. They have traditionally looked for short-term high returns on their investments. British industry has not been

given priority.

In recent years tens of billions of pounds have been invested abroad while British industry has increasingly fallen behind. This will not change unless the government intervenes to compel such a change.

The effect of this limited investment in British industry is shown in the figures for manufacturing output. In the 25 year period 1964-1989 manufacturing output rose in Britain by an average 1.5% a year. In contrast, manufacturing output in Japan rose by an average of 6.5% per year, in Germany by 2.7%, in Italy by nearly 3% and in France by 2.9%.

In 1983 Britain's trade surplus in manufactured goods was converted for the first time in 150 years into a deficit. Similarly, when Britain entered the Exchange Rate Mechanism there were disastrous results. At the existing rate of exchange it was soon demonstrated that Britain was highly uncompetitive. Britain was at the mercy of currency speculators.

In recent years the profits of many sections of big business have been dissipated in substantially increased dividend payments and in huge increases to top directors. Taxes on high incomes have also been drastically reduced. It has been estimated that if income tax for those receiving more than 50,000 a year were raised to 60% the Exchequer would benefit by about £5 billion.

Cuts in military spending and an effective policy for public intervention in the economy, including a programme of public ownership, limitations on overseas investment and higher taxation on top incomes are essential elements for the recovery of Britain. It will not come from a Conservative government. It could come from a Labour government but only if the unions and constituency parties insist on the necessary radical measures.

## THE FUTURE FOR TUCND

The TUCND AGM this year was a complex affair. The outgoing EC had agreed the circulation of a paper proposing that TUCND should establish an additional, separate general peace movement organisation based within the trade union movement.

TUCND already has a policy of campaigning on a range of political and economic issues related to peace, but not necessarily directly related to nuclear weapons, as well as campaigning over nuclear weapons. However, a number of unions regard CND's position on Nuclear Power as something they do not wish to be associated with. The GMB disaffiliated from CND because of this and a number of others have indicated they feel it is a problem. The paper proposed establishing a new,

additional, organisation which did not have opposition to nuclear power as part of its programme. It was intended to have the new organisation campaign over issues such as the genocide in Rwanda and the war in the former Yugoslavia, which TUCND is not in a position currently to have a serious impact upon, although they remain part of its policy.

TUCND also is facing a very serious problem over finances. It is not, at the moment, in a position to be able to sustain a worker, which means the organisation itself has a limited future, unless there is some change. Part of the proposal was to seek a considerably enhanced income from the trade union movement.

There was a great deal of opposition to this move from within CND. The NUM also argued strongly for the rejection of this plan on the grounds that the new additional organisation would not be campaigning on nuclear power. At the AGM a number of

delegates indicated their unions were not in favour of establishing a new body.

An alternative motion, rejecting the proposal to establish a new body, was moved by the NUM. This argued that opposition to nuclear power should remain a central feature of TUCND's work and that it should be on the grounds of the environmental and economic costs of nuclear power and not solely on the relationship with the production of nuclear weapons. Although there were a number of abstentions this motion was passed with only one vote against.

To address the financial problem a further motion was moved by the NUM to establish an individual membership scheme. In the past there was not a structure for individuals to be members of TUCND, which was seen primarily as a vehicle for national unions affiliated to CND. Individuals can now become members of TUCND for a fee of 5.

## MAJOR CONCERNS OVER THORP

There were three major areas of concern raised prior to the commissioning of the Thermal Oxide Reprocessing Plant (THORP) at Sellafield. One relates to the costs involved. The second results from the increase in radioactive discharge and other environmental problems and the third results from the separation of Plutonium, which will be THORP's chief export.

### COSTS

Some press reports quote the cost of building THORP as 2.3 billion, others quote 2.8 billion.

The decision to build THORP was made in 1977 when Britain, together with a number of other countries, was still developing fast breeder reactors. These, it was argued, could use as fuel the Plutonium THORP would separate from spent fuel from conventional reactors. As a result, it was thought, THORP would make huge profits from reprocessing spent fuel other countries. That now looks extremely doubtful. No fast breeder reactors have worked successfully and the cost of refining Uranium from ore is now much cheaper than in 1977. There is now a considerable glut of Uranium worldwide, which means there is no need to develop reactors which use other fuel.

BNF have argued that THORP will make 500 million profit over a ten year period. However, BNF's figures which have consistently proven to be wildly optimistic in the past and few people are prepared to believe them now. The turn over which will produce this profit will be 10 billion, which means that the stated margin is tight, not to say tiny.

Also, the government withdrew a commitment to underwrite any losses made

by the customers. Scottish Nuclear then withdrew their contract and decided, instead, to 'dry store' their waste. Reprocessing "no longer appears to offer any immediate and significant advantage from a waste disposal point of view", they said. BNF have not revealed who their other customers will be or what quantities will be involved. German legislation, until recently, required reactor operators to reprocess their fuel rods. This legislation is being changed and a number of operators are looking seriously at the contracts they signed with BNF. It is difficult, therefore, to see how THORP will avoid making a very substantial loss.

One estimate of the cost of cleaning up the site once it has reached its safe working life is 40 billion. This remains speculative and it could prove an underestimation. For it to be less than that new technologies would have to have been developed and there is no sign of this happening. There is no theoretical possibility currently known to physics which would suggest such a technology could be forthcoming.

### ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS:-

In June 1994 the Paris Commission - the group of 13 nations who control pollution into the North Sea - agreed to a motion calling for far tighter controls over discharges of nuclear material from THORP than Britain was proposing to operate. They also called for more rigorous procedures in handling nuclear materials. Britain was the only government to vote against.

The THORP plant will discharge into both the sea and the air. Sellafield village already has ten times the national average for childhood Leukaemia.

Some concerns are based on the fact that the process will produce sixteen times the quantity of nuclear waste than THORP receives as spent fuel for reprocessing. As

yet no satisfactory method has been found for neutralising the radioactivity associated with this waste and so it will remain a problem for thousands of years to come.

The government's own advisory panel (the Committee on Medical Aspects of Radiation), has also voiced concerns in a recent report. They said that the rise in radioactive discharges resulting from THORP's activity "should be viewed with some concern" because it would inevitably involve a greater risk to the population."

The report also says that "No practice involving radiation should be adopted unless it produces benefit to the exposed individuals or to society to offset the radiation detriment it causes." The committee says that no estimate of the potential hazard has been made available and that no new process should be authorised without such information being taken into account.

Ireland, the United States and the Scandinavian countries have been the most outspoken of the governments who have voiced opposition to THORP on environmental grounds.

### PROLIFERATION

It takes over 7kg of plutonium to make a nuclear bomb. But Plutonium is the most toxic substance known and small amounts of it could be used as a weapon simply by having it spread over an area - so it doesn't have to be made into a nuclear bomb to be extremely dangerous. THORP will be producing about 57 tons of it a year, much of it for export.

There are two dangers in this. One is that the customers may sell material to a third party or that security will be insufficient to prevent it from being stolen; by terrorists or by governments who wish to make nuclear weapons. Bearing in mind that a hundred weight of the stuff would make up to 20 nuclear bombs it would not be too difficult to