

An Ever-Growing Inventory of Unburied Nuclear Waste

Written by

Tuesday, 19 June 2007 01:10 - Last Updated Tuesday, 19 June 2007 01:10

An Ever-Growing Inventory of Unburied Nuclear Waste

Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility - Dr. Gordon Edwards with introduction by Mike Wallace - Apologies for cross-posting, but the issue of the disposal of reactor waste has now become an major Canadian public policy issue. A quick check of national nuclear websites indicates a consensus that at least 30 years of "cooldown" is required before geologic disposal. I also came across this fascinating American document dated September 2006 that virtually confesses that existing American reactor waste cooling facilities are vulnerable to terrorist attack, and admits that *"no technical fix will ever erase the catastrophic risk that reactor operations pose because of the intensely radioactive waste that is inherent to their production of electricity. Reactor sites will continue to be attractive targets."*

<http://www.neis.org/press/2006%2009%2006%20HOSS.shtml>

An excellent paper discussing the inadequacies of nuclear power as a solution to future power needs or to the problem of global warming was released by the U.S. National Resources Defense Council in February: <http://www.nrdc.org/nuclear/plants/plants.pdf>

Dr. Gordon Edward's powerpoint slideshow designed to show [hy the geologic storage "solution" is a cynical hoax](#)

if it is combined with a "nuclear renaissance" involving a growing nuclear industry. Please feel free to distribute this power-point if you wish.

Each dot represents one year's worth of high-level radwaste (irradiated fuel). The changes in colour indicate that the waste is cooling off (both in terms of heat generated and in terms of penetrating radiation given off). The reddest waste is the hottest and most volatile, able to release far more radioactive gasses and vapours than the older fuel (in case of damage to the cladding caused by overheating or otherwise). The reddest fuel is where the potential for the greatest surface catastrophe lies (in case of terrorism, conventional warfare, major industrial accident, or natural disaster).

Over 90 percent of the radioactivity from 40 years of waste production is contained in the "first 10 years" portion -- the reddest, and hottest part. As the industry expands, the potential for catastrophe at the surface is steadily growing because the 90% is being multiplied and only the 10% is being buried. (By the way, 10 years is really much too fast to bury the waste underground, so the situation is actually worse than indicated in these diagrams.)

The NWMO -- Nuclear Waste Management Organization -- in Canada assumes that the

An Ever-Growing Inventory of Unburied Nuclear Waste

Written by

Tuesday, 19 June 2007 01:10 - Last Updated Tuesday, 19 June 2007 01:10

irradiated fuel will not be moved off-site until it has been 30 years out of the reactor.)

*Gordon Edwards, Ph.D., President,
Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility.
Regroupement pour la surveillance du nucléaire,
c.p. 236 Station Snowdon Montreal H3X 3T4
internet: <http://ccnr.org> tel/fax: (514) 489 5118*