

# NUKE INFO TOKYO

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c/o Citizens' Nuclear Information Center

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40 Years of Nuclear Development:

## TIME FOR A CHANGE

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Exactly 40 years ago, on March 2, 1954, Japan's first budget for nuclear research and development (about 250 million yen) was abruptly submitted to the Diet in the final moments of the budget bill session for 1954. It was a ploy thought up by Y. Nakasone (later prime minister) together with a few economic leaders and the bill passed the Diet with practically no discussion.

No discussion and no information on which to base discussion -- this was the start of Japan's nuclear research and de

velopment, less than a decade after Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Ironically, on March 1, the preceding day, the US detonated Bravo Shot, a 15-megaton thermonuclear weapon, at Bikini Atoll and fallout from this nuclear test exposed the Marshal Islanders and Japanese fishermen on board the Daigo Fukuryu-maru (Lucky Dragon) to intense radiation. But it was not until March 20 that the news of Lucky Dragon's exposure to "shi no hai" (lethal fallout) was reported by the Japanese press and nobody was aware of the relation between the two events at the time.

In view of the long history of undemocratic decision making on nuclear issues, what happened in the first days of March 1954 was a very symbolic start to Japan's nuclear development. Now, for the first time in 40 years, some changes seem to be taking place with regard to the way things are decided in Japan.

The Atomic Energy Commission has decided to hold a public inquiry on Japan's nuclear energy policy on March 4-5 as part of the review of the current Long Term Program For Nuclear Energy Development and Utilization now being conducted by the AEC's Long Term Program Committee. In the hearing, the AEC will invite submissions from the general public and also ask several experts, including those against plutonium utilization, to give addresses on Japan's plutonium program. Some foreign experts are expected to be invited as well.

While there have been so-called "public hearings" on construction plans for individual facilities as a step in the licensing process, nobody takes these hearings seriously because they are used by the government merely as a tool for public acceptance and they only address a limited number of subjects.

The coming public inquiry on the plutonium program could be the first of its kind in that the public is being asked to voice opinions on Japan's comprehensive long term nuclear energy policy.

In 1991, when the AEC started to

prepare for revision of the current long term program, which envisages a very ambitious plutonium utilization plan, it expected the revision work to proceed in a "business as usual" manner - just updating old projections - and to be completed by the end of 1992. Due to growing domestic and international concern over Japan's plutonium program triggered by the plutonium shipment from France to Japan, however, the AEC has been unable to draw up a new long term program and has now been forced to hold a public hearing to avert the criticism that it is discussing Japan's policy inside a closed "nuclear family".

In view of the situation, then, the AEC's decision to hold the public inquiry may basically be a very defensive one and the inquiry may only be used to give the general public, and particularly foreign governments, the impression that the decision-making process in Japan has become more democratic. Even if its intention to listen to the public opinion is sincere, not much can be expected from a two-day meeting with a limited number of speakers.

All said, however, we welcome the AEC's decision and are prepared to make submissions to the hearing. The apparent shift in the AEC's attitude toward more openness reflects the strong international concern aroused by anti-plutonium campaigns worldwide. Furthermore, the indecisiveness of the AEC over its plutonium program is generally thought to be due to persistent skepticism within the nuclear industry itself with regard to the rationale and economics of plutonium utilization, and we know that this skepticism is largely based on the arguments we have been pursuing since 1991.

It can be said that, therefore, Japan's anti-plutonium citizens' movement is responsible for the ongoing policy change and, regardless of the somewhat questionable intentions underlying the AEC's decision, we have to take a positive role in the coming inquiry in order to democratize

the policy decision-making process in Japan.

### Concern Over Aged Reactors

Another issue which deserves special consideration at this historic juncture is the aging of reactors. The construction rush for nuclear power plants began in the mid-sixties in Japan and many reactors started operation in the early seventies. The first plant, Tokai 1, is now 28 years old and additional 5 reactors are more than 20 years old.

There is now increasing concern about the safety of these aged reactors particularly after the sudden double-ended break of a steam generator tube at Mihama 2 in 1991. Before the Mihama 2 accident, the utilities and MITI (Ministry of International Trade and Industry) asserted that the safety of reactors could be guaranteed by the LBB (leak before break) principle which claims that any failure of the so-called reactor pressure boundary could be detected at the stage of a minor leak. But the accident at Mihama showed that this is not necessarily the case for old reactors. Piping could break suddenly, triggering a loss-of-coolant accident which might lead to a core meltdown.

The possibility of severe accidents to aged reactors renewed concern last December when the Osaka District Court decision on Takahama 2 warned against the deterioration of safety margins in old reactors. (See page 4). It is now time to seriously consider the decommissioning of aged reactors. However, there are no special regulations or guidelines for decommissioning aged reactors and, under the present regulations, a reactor can be operated as long as its owner regards it operable. There is an urgent need to provide guidelines for decommissioning.

The disposal of radioactive wastes from decommissioned reactors is also going to be a controversial issue. The NSC (Nuclear Safety Commission) is now planning to issue regulations for the management and

disposal of radioactive waste. What is most controversial with the new regulations is that they will adopt the concept of BRC (beyond regulatory concern), exempting 90% of low level radioactive wastes resulting from the decommissioning of reactors. This will enable the utilities to dump these BRC wastes as mere industrial non-radioactive wastes, thus making decommissioning cheaper and easier.

The introduction of the BRC concept is very controversial because it implies that a certain level of radiation is safe, which is scientifically not true. Scientifically, there is no safe radiation level and any level of radiation should be placed under regulatory concern. The AEC should also hold a public inquiry on this issue.

### Events Expected in 1994

- Jan. 31 Sendai District Court decision in lawsuit against Onagawa 1
- Mar. 4-5 Public inquiry
- Mar. Niigata District Court decision in lawsuit against Kashiwazaki-Kariwa 1
- Mar. 30 Kanazawa District Court decision in lawsuit against Noto 1
- Mar. Genkai 3 starts commercial operation
- Apr. First criticality of FBR Monju
- Jun. Aomori International Symposium on Reprocessing
- Jul. Kashiwazaki-Kariwa 4 starts commercial operation
- Oct. Japan-Belarus International Symposium on Chernobyl, Minsk
- Dec. Possible start of HLW shipment from France to Japan

## Court Rejects Injunction But Notes Danger

On December 24 the Osaka District Court handed down a decision rejecting the request of a lawsuit seeking an injunction on the operation of Kansai Electric's Takahama 2 reactor (PWR, 826 MW). In this action, people living within 150 km of the plant sought to shut down the facility, claiming that because the reactor's steam generator is badly deteriorated, and because at least half the tubes are damaged, a tube break could lead to a core meltdown. Although the reactor was scheduled to shut down in January 1994 to begin the job of replacing its steam generator, the lawsuit claimed that Kansai Electric's stance in keeping the reactor in operation until then was a violation of the surrounding inhabitants' "personal rights."

Until now, lawsuits involving nuclear power plants in Japan have always taken many years to conclude: even if suits are filed at the time permission is granted for construction, a plant would be completed and in operation for a number of years before the court handed down its decision. Unfortunately, in Japan there is not a single instance in which nuclear plant construction or operation has been stopped by a lawsuit. The lawsuit against Takahama 2, was filed in October 1991 and concluded in the unusually short time of two years and three months. This was because the judge and others had declared at the outset that a decision would be forthcoming before the steam generator was replaced, an event that would negate the lawsuit's significance.

Just as declared, it was announced that the decision would be issued before the replacement -- even if only shortly before -- and this gave the plaintiffs great hope. Still, even if the decision ordered the reactor stopped, this would come only 12 days before the scheduled shutdown. Many people believed that even though the courts

are highly susceptible to political pressure, it would be possible to issue a shutdown order under these circumstances. Even if only a few days before the scheduled shutdown, a reactor shut down by court order would be a considerable shock. But in the end it was impossible for a court decision to stop a reactor even for 12 days.

And yet, the decision concurred with the plaintiffs' claims to a considerable extent. The court brushed aside the contention of defendant Kansai Electric that there are no rights such as "personal rights," which are not explicitly specified by law. It also recognized the plaintiff qualification of people living as far as 150 km from the reactor. This is noteworthy in view of the court decision in a case involving the danger of the fast breeder reactor Monju, a decision that did not recognize this qualification for people living more than 20 km from the reactor, claiming that it would be possible for them to evacuate (however, the qualification was subsequently recognized in an appeal to the Supreme Court). Until the Takahama 2 decision, the farthest distance for which plaintiff qualification had been recognized was 60 km.

Most noteworthy of all is that the court clearly recognized the danger that the steam generator tubes might break. In February 1991 a steam generator tube broke at Kansai Electric's Mihama 2 reactor (PWR, 500 MW), although the utility insists that the implementation of adequate countermeasures will prevent such breaks in future. However, the court said that as it is impossible to detect intergranular corrosion cracks in tubes using eddy current testing, it is conceivable that cracks could grow during operation and lead to tube breaks.

What is more, the court noted other items, including instrument trouble, that arose concurrently with the accident at Mi-

hama 2, and the fact that Kansai Electric had long overlooked the faulty installation of that reactor's anti-vibration bar. On this basis the court sternly condemned the defendant's poorly discharged responsibility for maintenance and management. Nevertheless, in the court's judgment it could not be said that such instrument problems and human error would by themselves lead to a core meltdown.

The court decision stated that the possibility of multiple and simultaneous breaks or of a series of breaks was very small or nonexistent. With regard to a single tube break the decision pointed out the danger by discussing and refuting the defendant's claims one by one, but in the latter part of the decision the court said that the plain

tiffs had not offered proof that a core meltdown would occur, thereby forcing the burden of proof onto the plaintiffs and dismissing the matter once and for all. It is safe to say that, if the court had not done so, it would have been impossible to hand the defendant a victory.

Such was the decision, but it is significant that it made an issue of the fact that in Japan there is no time limit on nuclear reactor permits. And it went further in pointing out problems, such as the appropriateness of maintenance and management and to what extent changes should be made in existing equipments and instruments when they have proved to be inadequate based on the latest findings.

"DON'T CONTAMINATE PETER RABBIT'S  
HOMELAND! STOP SENDING SPENT  
NUCLEAR FUEL!"

reads the beautifully designed color leaflet distributed at the U2 concert held in Tokyo on Dec. 9 & 10. The leaflet says, 'in a corner of the beautiful homeland of Peter Rabbit, there is a huge nuclear base, Sellafield. ...The new reprocessing plant THORP, once it starts operation, will further contaminate the countryside. ...The biggest customer for, and investor in, THORP is Japan. The waste created by generating electricity for the Japanese people is being sent to Sellafield to be reprocessed. ...Stop THORP! Stop Contaminating the Lake District!' This leaflet was designed to appeal to those who love Peter Rabbit but don't know anything about Sellafield. When they have read and understood it, they can send a postcard to the head of the Federation of Electric Power Companies demanding that it stop sending spent nuclear fuel. 3,000 leaflets were distributed to the U2 fans. Already about 200 postcards have been returned answering the questionnaire, asking if they; knew about the connection between Peter Rabbit and Sellafield, etc. The leaflet has been extremely well received and many said they were surprised to know that Peter Rabbit's homeland was so close to a nuclear facility and is being threatened by radioactive contamination. Many have offered to distribute more to their own groups. The first 30,000 leaflets are already sold out.



## 2 More N-Plants Approved in Tsuruga Amidst Growing Opposition

On Christmas day, the Fukui Prefectural Council decided to accept two more nuclear power reactors in Tsuruga City, where there are already 4 units: the LWRs Tsuruga 1 and 2, the prototype advanced thermal reactor Fugen, and the controversial prototype fast breeder reactor Monju. There are now a total 15 nuclear power plants in the environs of Wakasa Bay in Fukui.

The plan was officially proposed to Tsuruga City in February, 1993. The Tsuruga Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Tsuruga Political & Economic Conference, and the City Council announced their intention to accept the offer at once. They claimed that the main condition for accepting the plan was that the government provide aid to promote the local economy, including new highways and ports and contracts for local contractors.

Outline plans for the new reactors were announced only on December 3. They will be advanced pressurized water reactors (APWR), with an output of 1,420 MW each. The design is a completely new one, and their output would be the biggest ever in Japan.

The reason for such a speedy decision, just 10 months after the plan was officially proposed, is that the council wanted to preempt the startup of Monju in April, which they fear will concentrate worldwide attention on the region and boost the anti-nuclear movement.

Kawano Village, on the opposite side of the bay from Monju, expressed its concern in March, immediately after the plan was proposed. The seven surrounding local authorities came out in opposition in April. The residents of Tsuruga City, together with the Anti-Nuclear Fukui Prefectural Congress, expressed their concern and opposition. In May, the members of Wakasa Solidarity Network distributed questionnaires

to every household in Tsuruga City, and 90% of those returned were against the plan. According to a telephone survey conducted by Asahi Newspaper in September, 70% said they are against having more nuclear plants.

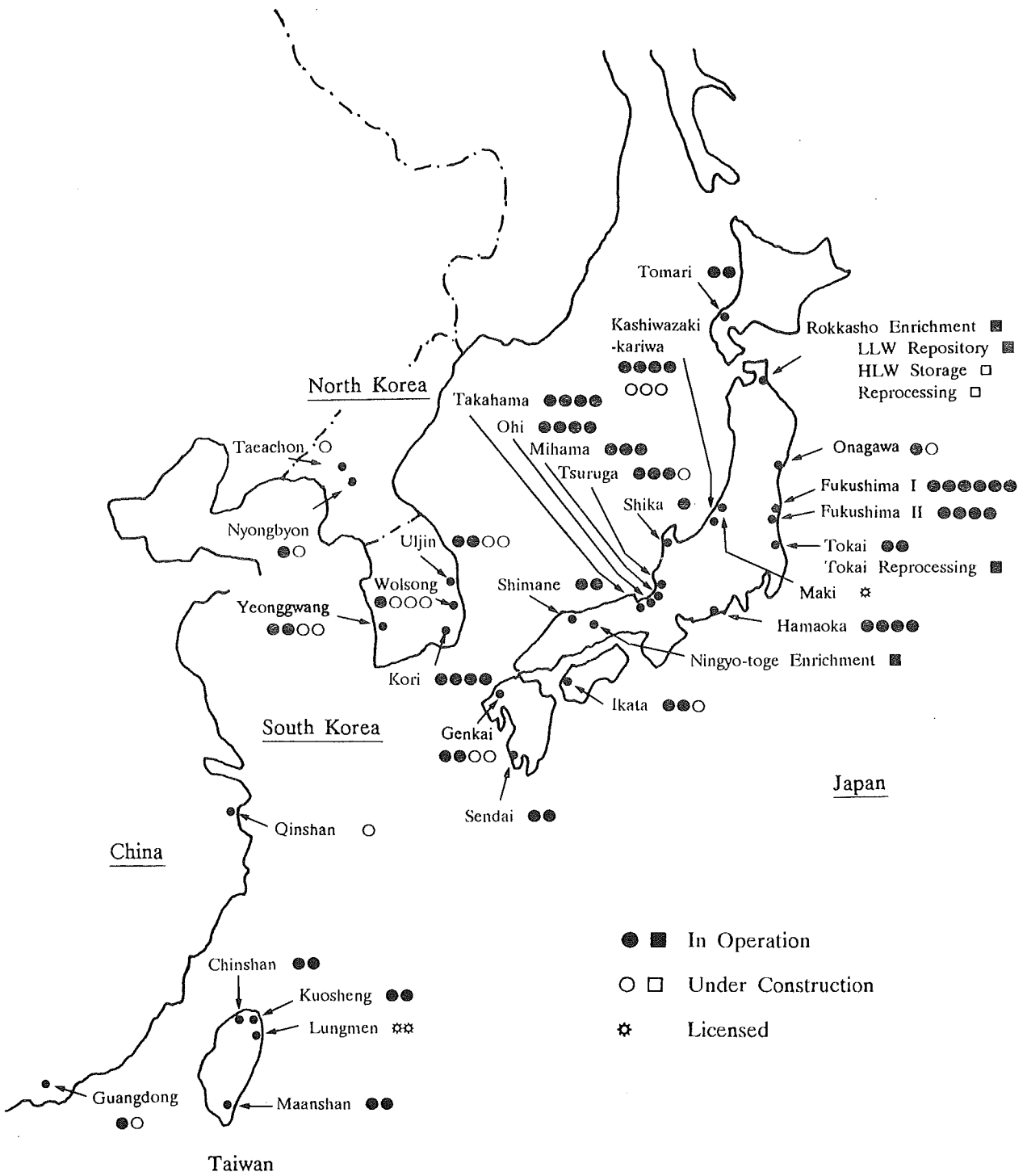
25 citizens' groups (2,890 members) formed an organization to demand a referendum. They needed to submit signatures from 2% of the total electorate (48,943) within a month, and they collected 11,992 signatures, 11 times more than necessary.

Tsuruga City Council, however, rejected the referendum, claiming that the opinions of the people are represented not by a referendum but at the Council. The issue was then brought to the Prefectural Council, and was discussed for two weeks. The surrounding 7 local authorities were invited to state their opinions. All of the delegates stated their concern and opposition. "How much prosperity did the 15 nuclear plants bring to the prefecture? They only degraded the image of the prefecture, never upgraded it." "Nothing manufactured by mankind is perfect. If we accept nuclear plants, the local government will become rich. But material affluence is already out of date."

After these appeals were ignored and the plan was approved by the Prefectural Council, all the members of the Kawano Village Council including the Mayor resigned from the Liberal Democratic Party to which all of them belonged. The Japan Atomic Power Co. announced they will apply for a feasibility study in March.

Meanwhile, the Anti-Nuclear Fukui Prefectural Congress has decided to launch a campaign to marshal public opinion against the plan by collecting more than 200,000 signatures, and putting opinion advertisements in the local newspapers.

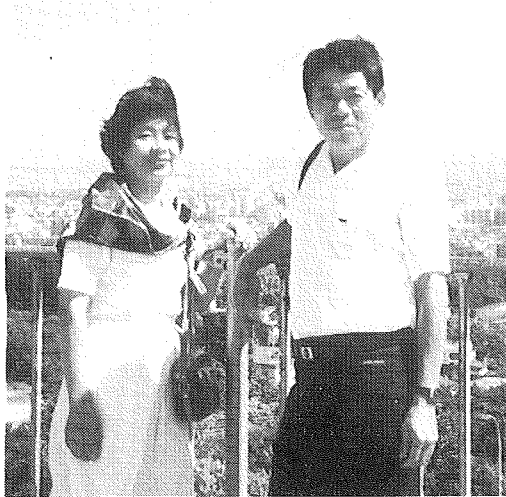
# N-Plants & N-Fuel Facilities in East Asia (1993)



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## Anti-Nuke Who's Who

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It was only from a newspaper report, on Feb. 17, 1992, that we learned of Kyushu Electric Power Co.'s plans to build nuclear plants at Kushima city in Miyazaki prefecture.

Breakfast on that day didn't taste right, and felt depressed for the next few days. Then I wondered how Mr. & Mrs. Takeshita were feeling about the news.

Chikayuki Takeshita teaches fine art at junior high school. He is deeply interested in social problems, and often contributes his opinion to newspapers and educational magazines. Tsuyo Takeshita always keeps a sharp eye on what's going on in society. Whenever anything happens in the world, people wonder what the Takeshitas think about it. They are that kind of couple. I had a call from the Takeshitas inviting me to a meeting to talk about nuclear power. As a result of our discussion, we decided to oppose the construction of the plants. So we organized a series of study meetings. Sometimes we felt depressed because we could not foresee how things would turn out. But then Mr. & Mrs. Takeshita would encourage us, saying we should enjoy this kind of campaign.

I live in a farming region where sweet

potatoes are cultivated. It is famous throughout Japan for its 'Kotobuki' sweet potatoes (kotobuki means congratulations and longevity). But if the nuclear plants are built, the value of the crop will decline.

The Agricultural Cooperative had postponed its decision to oppose the siting of the plants, and the farmers were slow to get involved. Meanwhile the Takeshitas got up a petition, distributed leaflets from door to door, circulated video tapes about nuclear power, and continued to hold study meetings. As a result of their activities, one of the three Agricultural Cooperatives passed a resolution against the siting of the plants last March, and the other two also decided to oppose the siting in October and November. A group opposing the plants also emerged from the Fishermen's Cooperative Association which had approved the siting because of the compensation it would receive.

The three agricultural cooperatives formed a network to prevent the siting of the plants, and collected 11,083 signatures, representing a majority of the local electorate.

An act to hold a referendum on the siting of the plants passed the city assembly in October, but the assembly also adopted a resolution to ask KEPCO to conduct a feasibility study. The agricultural co-ops then expressed their opposition to the resolution to the Mayor, since the feasibility study would lead directly to the siting of the plants. The co-ops took this action as a result of our tireless campaign.

Whenever anti-nuclear study meetings and lectures are held in Kushima, participants usually drop in at the Takeshitas' house to talk about problems and encourage each other. I was surprised to hear that more than 400 people have visited the couple's house in the last year.

Everybody who visits the house is encouraged by the Takeshitas, as well as by the other visitors, and together we have built up quite an opposition movement.

(Reiko Uchida,

We Love Kotobuki-imo Club)



# NEWS WATCH

## Japanese Agenda 21 Promotes Nuclear Power

At a meeting of ministers concerned with global environment preservation, held on December 24, the Japanese government decided on its version of the Agenda 21 Action Program agreed at UNCED (the UN Conference on Environment and Development or "Earth Summit" held in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro). The decision was made after a draft was released to the public on November 16 to canvas public opinion, - an unprecedented step in Japan. More than 100 revisions are said to have been made in response to suggestions by the public. However, no revision was made to the point where the program advocates the encouragement of nuclear power generation, in spite of the fact that (according to the Environment Agency), this point invited the most suggestions for revision.

## Russia Wants To Dump More ?

The fourth Japan-Russia specialist meeting on the ocean dumping of radioactive waste was held on December 21 in Tokyo. During the meeting the Russian side asked Japan to provide it with a chemical tanker for emergency storage, stating that the amount of liquid waste exceeded the storage

capacity of the Russian Navy's Pacific Fleet. On Jan. 19, however, they rejected the Japanese offer of a used tanker, saying it was "not safe enough."

On the previous day (Dec. 20) it was reported that Mr. Romanov, director of the Technical Bureau of the Russian Navy Pacific Fleet, had intended to ask the Russian government for permission to resume "controlled dumping." On December 27 representatives of Greenpeace Japan, the Japan Consumers' Union, CNIC and others visited the Russian Embassy and demanded that Russia does not resume dumping.

## ARE Judgement Overturned

The Malaysian Supreme Court on December 23 overturned the judgement passed by the Ipoh High Court in July, 1992, which ordered the immediate closure of the Asian Rare Earth plant in Bukit Merah and the removal of all radioactive waste from the factory. The Supreme Court Judge said that the high court decision was 'erroneous' and 'the radiation level around the company was within the legal limit' and allowed the plant to be reopened. Mitsubishi Kasei, the Japanese partner in the joint-venture plant, announced the plant would close on January 18. Since they have not been found liable for any damage, they can now withdraw with a free hand and just claim the plant is no longer 'economical.'

## HLW TRANSPORT -- Series No. 1

The French have repeatedly expressed their intention of sending high-level radioactive waste back to Japan before the end of 1994, and a facility to store vitrified high level waste is currently being constructed at high speed in Rokkashomura, Aomori Prefecture. So it is highly probable that the transport of high level waste may start by the end of this year. However, according to discussions we had with the Science & Technology Agency in November last year, no final decision has been made on how the transport will take place or who will take full responsibility for the shipment. We would therefore like to provide regular up-to-date information regarding this shipment in the newsletter this year.

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## U.N. Sea Convention Ratified

The United Nations announced on December 6, 1993 that the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea, opened for signature 11 years ago, had been ratified by the required 60 states and would come into force on November 16, 1994.

The convention, which covers virtually all uses of the world's oceans and their resources, includes articles which give every state the right to establish a 12 nautical mile territorial sea limit and a 200 nautical mile exclusive economic zone in which coastal states have control of all natural resources, including fish, oil and minerals.

The convention also includes provisions for peaceful navigation through these zones and for ships and aircraft passing through narrow straits.

Under the law, states have the obligation to protect and preserve the marine environment (Article 192), so prior consultation and environmental impact assessments are required whenever the activity of one nation creates a significant risk of harm to another.

The Japanese government's plutonium shipment in 1992 violated all these provisions. However, the countries en route of shipments of high level radioactive waste or the next plutonium shipment can now use the law to prohibit the entry of nuclear transport vessels into their territorial waters or exclusive economic zones.

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