UPF UPDATE

THERE IS NO NEW UPF PLAN-LONG LIVE THE NEW UPF PLAN!

Two years after the National Nuclear Security Administration announced it was reducing the scope of the Uranium Processing Facility to save time, space and money, it continues to misrepresent the project to the public. After the 2012 space/fit fiasco forced NNSA to

abandon plans for a multipurpose facility, the UPF was pared down to a production-only operation, its sole mission the manufacture of secondaries (the thermonuclear core of a warhead) and cases for stockpile life extension programs.

The latest example of NNSA duplicity was on display at the "Business Opportunities Conference" in Knoxville, Tennessee. The UPF exhibit featured a large floor display showing a worker at a glovebox with the tagline "Weapon Dismantlement."

NNSA's reluctance to be honest about its mission as its sells the UPF to the public is understandable, perhaps, since the mission is to produce weapons of mass destruction.

MENDACITY RUN AMOK

A little misdirection at the Knox-ville trade show might be shrugged off as public relations spin, but UPF program managers appear to be adopting mendacity as an across-the-board strategy to shield the project from public scrutiny.

When asked about legal requirements to subject its new UPF plan to environmental analysis the response is "We don't have a plan." At the same time, it is becoming increasingly clear that a plan has been developed, and it no longer bears any resemblance to the 2011 Record of Decision authorizing construction of "one new facility."

Meanwhile, NNSA and Bechtel are spending \$300 million, courtesy of Tennessee Senator Lamar Alexander's Energy and Water Appropriations subcommittee. Since late 2013, when NNSA abandoned its first UPF design, half a billion dollars has been spent despite the fact, if NNSA is to be believed, that there is no plan for the UPF.

Watchdogs familiar with how the Department of Energy works are used

to hearing public affairs spokespersons asking them to "Move along, move along, nothing to see here..." with a wan smile. But when hundreds of millions of dollars are being spent on a project, there must either be:

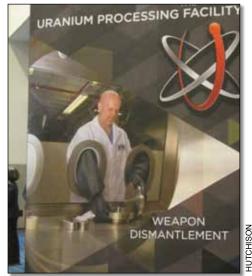
A.) something to see here; or

B.) fraud and corruption

In either case, an explanation is in order. This is especially true for a project that has already spent over a billion taxpayer dollars and still insists they have nothing to show for it.

In Congress, where accountability for the UPF budget lies, the bi-partisan public line seems to shift back and forth from "We're having quarterly meetings with project managers," to "There is no plan to talk about yet." Tennessee Senator Bob Corker told the Knoxville *News-Sentinel* in October he "wasn't comfortable commenting directly on the UPF issues." Is he igno-

UPF UPDate is a publication of the UPF Accountability Project Contact: Ralph Hutchison Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance



rant of the current plans, or is he on board with the "tell them nothing until we get it built" strategy?

Bottom line: No public accountability for a billion dollar project that is becoming increasingly hard to deny.

THE CONE OF SILENCE CRACKS

Denials of convenience aside, the UPF project is moving forward and the plan that doesn't exist does, in fact, exist.

High-level DOE officials said in May of this year that it would be a year or more before a plan was ready.

A month later, NNSA Administrator Frank Klotz was quoted in the Knoxville paper saying there was almost "nothing we disagree with" in the April 2014 Red Team proposal: use some existing facilities while building at least two new facilities. OREPA and the Alliance for Nuclear Accountability pointed out NNSA is obliged to

prepare a new environmental analysis before settling on a new plan. Then things went quiet. Very quiet.

Until now. The *Nuclear Security* and *Deterrence Monitor* reported in October that the Army Corps of Engineers has released a Request for Information seeking small businesses to perform very specific site preparation work for the project that doesn't exist.

At the same time, a Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board weekly report said the UPF Federal Project Manager approved the latest revision to the Safety Design Strategy for the UPF project, noting "This revision is the first to reflect changes...that address the recommendations from the Red Team report (most notably to alter the design strategy to one that utilizes multiple buildings appropriately sized and categorized for safety and security requirements.)" That last bit is pretty detailed for a plan that doesn't exist.

Most recently, in a November 19 Atomic City Underground blog, the Knoxville News-Sentinel's Frank Munger interviewed UPF project director John Eschenberg who reported the UPF team is making "better-thansteady" progress and confirmed the plan that doesn't exist includes three new buildings to carry out production activities. When asked if the UPF had not turned the corner, Eschenberg said, "I think we turned the corner some months ago."

Then, on November 20, Munger's blog posted an artist's sketch of what the new UPF facility plan that doesn't exist will look like when it is built.

TOO LATE TO BE EARLY?

As NNSA proceeds with the new UPF without a valid Record of Decision to support the project and without the legally required environmental analysis, the public is left with a host of questions:

Does the new plan account for the increased earthquake hazard risks

identified by the US Geological Survey this summer?

Will older buildings be used for some operations? What are the environmental and safety hazards associated with keeping them in service as they deterioriate?

Why does the new plan incorporate security vulnerabilities by constructing above-grade facilities in the narrow Bear Creek Valley?

How does NNSA intend to skirt the National Environmental Policy Act's requirement of public involvement in an environmental analysis *before* the agency has committed itself to any one alternative?

In Congress, responsible for funding the UPF, the Republican leadership has its own questions to answer. Allocating hundreds of millions of dollars for plans that "do not exist" does not reflect conservative budgeting or a conservative approach to oversight of a historically troubled project.

The public has a right to know when our elected officials will demand a budget for the UPF that presents a credible cost estimate for the project. Presently, taxpayers are being asked to accept the incredible assertion that hundreds of millions of dollars are being spent—more than a billion total so far—on a plan that, according to some officials, does not exist.



INSISTING ON ACCOUNTABILITY

As NNSA proceeds without an Environmental Impact Statement, abetted by a Congress unable or unwilling to compel NNSA to produce a plan or a budget, unwilling even to insist the Administration obey the law, the public is left with only bad choices—let them get away with it, or appeal to the Judicial branch of government.

OREPA has rarely resorted to lawsuits. We'd like to live in a world where government officials do what they are supposed to do, and Congress exercises oversight as necessary. Lawsuits slow things down and cost a lot of taxpayer dollars. They are a sign that government is not working or is working badly. For us, they are a last resort.

In mid-November, OREPA's Board of Directors took the first step toward building the case we hope not to have to bring. We are documenting NNSA's actions (and omissions) and consulting with allies to lay out the road ahead. Stay tuned.

The UPF Accountability Project is a project of the Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance to collect, develop and provide information to the public about the multi-billion dollar Uranium Processing Facility planned for the Y12 Nuclear Weapons Complex in Oak Ridge, TN in the spirit of Thomas Jefferson who admonished that an informed public is the only safe repository of government.

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