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To Whom It May Concern;

Below are two articles about insider-sabotage at nuclear plants from Philip D. Lusk's Know No Nukes' weekday daily briefing for July 22nd, 2011. The first paragraph of the second article is particularly chilling to those who live around San Onofre, Indian Point, and a few other "choice" reactor sites.

If San Onofre were shut down, sabotage would immediately be much more difficult, and get more difficult as the fuel cools. Only a relatively small security team would be needed to guard the waste (it's classified just how many that would be...). Their backgrounds would, presumably, be very carefully checked. Practically the only "expertise" needed on the site would be expertise in guarding things. Not high-pressure thermodynamics, fluid dynamics, hydraulics, metallurgy, electronics, electrical systems, computer hardware, software, network security, nuclear engineering, and all the other various people who are vital (and who must do their jobs faithfully) to keeping a nuclear power plant operational and safe.

Special inspections would still be needed regularly, and when the waste is finally moved somewhere, guess what? There aren't enough experts in the world YET who really know how to do THAT safely. But letting the used reactor cores just sit there -- in pools preferably, NOT dry casks -- isn't as dangerous as having operational reactors in California, or recently-removed spent fuel.

There have been terrorism threats against reactors worldwide, including ours, for decades. That further terrorism attempts against American nuclear power plants are coming seems inevitable in light of last week's reports, as if prior reports and incidents hadn't already made it clear.

Based simply on random chance, there's about a 2% chance it will be San Onofre. Based on many other factors, it might be 10 times more likely. In fact, San Onofre might be TODAY'S TARGET.

"The terrorists" have proven time and again to be cunning, capable, smart, determined adversaries who will kill thousands on a moments' notice. 9-11 was so carefully carried out that "conspiracy theorists" STILL think there were additional bombs inside the buildings! (I'm not talking about what happened at Building Seven (or at the Pentagon, for that matter...) I'm talking about the twin towers...)

9-11 was a tragic and colossal failure to stop an insane plan.

The insane plan worked that day.

There were warnings, and clues even months earlier, and the actual acts of demonic violence could have been minimized by shooting down, say, the second plane, or the third... but no one acted fast enough. In a nuclear accident, fast action by hundreds or even thousands of people may be all that will stop a catastrophic tragedy. It is possible that the fourth ("Shanksville, PA") plane on 9-11 was heading for Three Mile Island (one is hard-pressed to figure out what else the target might have been) and only the actions of a few heroic citizens who stormed THAT cockpit saved us from a meltdown that day. If that's true, then the insane plan that worked, didn't really work at all. Damage WAS minimized, because a few alert citizens didn't wait for government action.

Nuclear power plants will ALWAYS be targets, and always have been, as the book Nuclear Power Plants as Weapons for the Enemy by Dr. Bennett Ramberg explained, in the 1980s.

It's time to get rid of San Onofre and Diablo Canyon. They are old and dilapidated. They are terrorist's beaconding beacons for wreaking catastrophic blight -- death and suffering -- on Southern California. They are not necessary; their power production can easily be replaced by other methods, and have been, virtually, many times in the past. In one 14 month period not too long ago, for example, California added more generating capacity than all our nuclear power plants combined produce. So really, it wouldn't be that hard to replace that power with alternative energy sources -- especially conservation.

Instead, the power plants have continued to operate despite the fact that they are falling apart at the seams (literally, and elsewhere). Their biggest success -- upping their "up time" to 9 hours out of every 10, on average (not particularly good for "baseline," especially when they tend to fail during natural disasters) was accomplished NOT by greater skill, efficiency, and "togetherness" on the part of the workers as they claim, but by increasing the enrichment of the uranium-235 to approximately double what it was when they started operating the reactors here, and then shutting down for refuelling less often.

One result is that, pound for pound, our "spent" fuel is far MORE dangerous than it used to be, because when it comes out of the reactor it has accumulated far more fission products. Another result is that there is more radioactive and thermal "heat" in the spent fuel, which takes longer to decay to "safe" (I use the term VERY loosely) levels after the fuel has been removed from the reactor. It undoubtedly has more plutonium, pound-for-pound, as well.

Nothing comes for free in the real world and it doesn't happen in the nuclear world either. We will all be paying for Fukushima in increased cancer rates throughout the planet. Animals and plants will all suffer needlessly from THAT tragedy.

Here in California, such a tragedy is still preventable, but only by determined action by everyone who cares about our great state. The federal regulators have proven time and again that they would approve just about anything and call it "safe" even when it isn't.

The utility will lie about anything (such as: "we do our fire rounds properly") and make up any story (such as: "there are ZERO emissions from an operating reactor"), and then say it's the public that's confused. If so, it's the industry's fault.

Shut San Onofre. Shutdown before meltdown.

Sincerely,

Ace Hoffman
POB 1936
Carlsbad, CA 92018

The author has lived downwind from San Onofre for nearly 20 years. He had bladder cancer a few years ago (one known cause of bladder cancer is radiation.) He is a computer programmer.

Attachments (2):

2) Progress responds to terrorism threat on utilities

Triangle Business Journal - July 21, 2011

<http://www.bizjournals.com/triangle/news/2011/07/21/progress-responds-to-terrorism-threat.html>

A recent federal report has raised alarms about the potential dangers of internal terrorist attacks at U.S. utilities, but a spokesman for Progress Energy Inc. says the Raleigh-based company has appropriate measures in place to protect itself and its customers.

It's something, obviously, we take very seriously, Progress Energy (NYSE:PGN) spokesman Mike Hughes said Thursday morning.

He adds that Progress conducts thorough background checks on all employees, including contract employees, and continues to monitor workers throughout their stay with the company. Some are subjected to psychological examinations.

As for physical protection, Progress, and indeed all nuclear energy facilities, have ramped up security measures, Hughes said, to include more security personnel and better physical barriers to prevent a break in.

Progress operates three nuclear plants in the Carolinas, including the Harris plant in Wake County.

Hughes comments came in response to questions regarding a report titled Insider Threat to Utilities by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. The department issued the report July 19 regarding potential threats to private sector utilities, according to Matthew Chandler, a department spokesman.

While DHS has no specific, credible intelligence of an imminent threat posed to the private sector utilities, several recent incidents highlight the on-going threat to infrastructure in the utility sectors from insiders and outsiders seeking facility-specific information that might be exploited in an attack, he added.

The report was supposed to be confidential, but was leaked to ABC News, which did a story on it Wednesday (SEE STORY BELOW).

A Duke Energy (NYSE: DUK) spokesman did not immediately return phone calls made Thursday morning. Charlotte-based Duke, which is buying Progress for \$13.7 billion, provides power in the western part of the Triangle.

3) New Terror Report Warns of Insider Threat to Utilities

By BRIAN ROSS (@brianross), RHONDA SCHWARTZ and MEGAN CHUCHMACH

ABC News - July 20, 2011

<http://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/terror-alert-warns-insider-threat-infrastructure/story?id=14118119>

Sabotage by an insider at a major utility facility, including a chemical or oil refinery, could provide al Qaeda with its best opportunity for the kind of massive Sept. 11 anniversary attack Osama bin Laden was planning, according to U.S. officials.

A new intelligence report from the Department of Homeland Security issued Tuesday, titled Insider Threat to Utilities, warns "violent extremists have, in fact, obtained insider positions," and that "outsiders have attempted to solicit utility-sector employees" for damaging physical and cyber attacks.

"Based on the reliable reporting of previous incidents, we have high confidence in our judgment that insiders and their actions pose a significant threat to the infrastructure and information systems of U.S. facilities," the bulletin reads in part. "Past events and reporting also provide high confidence in our judgment that insider information on sites, infrastructure, networks, and personnel is valuable to our adversaries and may increase the impact of any attack on the utilities infrastructure."

In the materials recovered after the Navy SEAL operation that killed Osama bin Laden in May, officials found evidence bin Laden sought to repeat the carnage of the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks on or around its ten year anniversary.

"The only way you can actually kill the large scale number of Americans that [bin Laden] literally was calculating was through the use of this critical infrastructure," Chad Sweet, former DHS chief of staff and co-founder of the Chertoff Group, told ABC News.

After gaining access to such sites, causing mayhem could be relatively easy, according to former White House counter-terrorism advisor and ABC News consultant Richard Clarke.

"There are a lot of very sensitive facilities where someone can get a job on the inside, get access to a control room, flip a switch, which causes an electric power grid to short circuit, causes a pipeline to explode," Clarke said.

The Department of Homeland Security said in a statement there was no specific threat.

"DHS routinely shares information with its state and local partners on a wide-range of potential threats, and as part of this responsibility, DHS issued an intelligence note to its federal, state, local, tribal and private sector partners on July 19 regarding potential threats to private sector utilities. While DHS has no specific, credible intelligence of an imminent threat posed to the private sector utilities, several recent incidents highlight the on-going threat to infrastructure in the utility sectors from insiders and outsiders seeking facility-specific information that might be exploited in an attack," DHS press secretary Matt Chandler said. "We will continue to work closely with our state and local partners, including our partners in the utility sector, to take steps to best protect from potential threats including protecting our nation's infrastructure. This includes sharing information as well as best practices."

'I am Taking This Plant Hostage

U.S. officials were stunned last year in Yemen with the arrest of an alleged American recruit to al Qaeda, Sharif Mobley, of New Jersey, who had been employed as five different U.S. nuclear power plants in and around Pennsylvania after successfully passing federal background checks.

If someone is determined, and has the right access, they could do damage that would affect thousands of lives," Sweet said.

Al Qaeda has already put out the word in its online magazine, Inspire, for "brothers of ours who have specialized expertise and those who work in sensitive locations that would offer them unique opportunities to wreak havoc on the enemies of Allah."

As evidence of American infrastructure vulnerabilities, the report specifically cites the attempted insider sabotage this April at a water treatment plant in Arizona

Officials said then a disgruntled night shift worker took over the control room and tried to create a giant methane gas explosion.

"I am taking the plant hostage," the worker said in a recorded 911 call.

There was no tie to al Qaeda and his plot failed, but the incident was a reminder of how easily one insider could create potentially deadly mayhem.

"Facilities in the United States don't have to be attacked by terrorists with airplanes or bombs outside the facility," Clarke said.

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