

Come Celebrate 25 years of working for peace!



A birthday party for OREPA
FRIDAY, JUNE 6 • IJAMS NATURE CENTER • 6:00 - 9:00pm



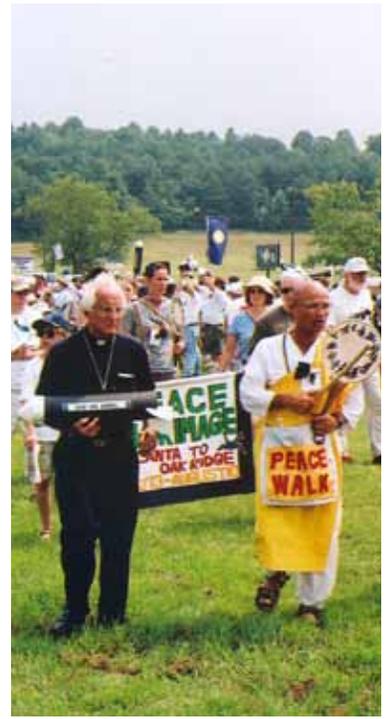
25th Anniversary
Party Details



The UPF is Dead...
Long live the UPF!



Taking
the
message
to
DC



Come Celebrate with us!

It's true—OREPA is twenty-five years old. And it's time to celebrate!

A wonderful committee made up of past Presidents of OREPA's Board of Directors has arranged a picnic potluck for us to celebrate this milestone.

Please join us at Ijams Nature Park, 2915 Island Home Avenue in south Knoxville. We'll be gathering for the celebration at 6:00pm on Friday, June 6, but you can come early if you want to hike the nature trails of Knoxville's urban nature preserve.

The evening will feature music, pictures, memories, stories and whatever you bring with you to commemorate the last twenty-five years.

It's a potluck, and we'll have a grill, so bring what you would like to eat—protein or veggies for the grill, salad, chips—for yourself and a bit to share. We'll provide dinnerware, beverages and, of course, cake and ice cream!





“Big Box” UPF headed for scrap heap



The UPF “as we know it” is dead. Beware the Zombie UPF!

WHEN THE PRICE TAG for the Uranium Processing Facility hit \$19 billion late last year, the National Nuclear Security Administration’s Bomb Plant to Nowhere plans came crashing down. In desperation, NNSA Administrator Bruce Held appointed a “Red Team” to propose an alternative to the UPF.

Football aficionados would recognize this as a “Hail Mary” play, though it is doubtful Mary would be pleased to be part of any endeavor related to making weapons of mass destruction.

.....>

The Red Team was composed almost entirely of DOE insiders, though NNSA refused to release their names. They worked in secret. Their task—figure a way to keep bomb production operations going at Y12 even as the 9212 Complex that houses bomb operations was deteriorating and would soon be unsafe to work in. Oh, and whatever plan they came up with had to be fundable—no more than \$6.5 billion, a number pulled out of thin air.

The Red Team Report

The Red Team handed in its report to the head honcho at NNSA on April 15, six weeks after beginning its work. OREPA filed a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request for the report, and an unclassified version was released on May 1. While several

pages of the report are redacted, it provides more information than ever before about weapon production operations at Y12.

The Red Team recommendations include:

- Don't build a "big box" UPF.
- Relocate some operations as soon as possible into existing facilities. They'll have to be upgraded to handle the new equipment.
- Keep developing new technologies for the next generation of weapons manufacturing.
- Begin planning for new facilities. The Red Team recommends a modular approach, noting that operations using Special Nuclear Materials (Highly Enriched Uranium) require more security and higher safety standards than other, more routine,

industrial operations.

The Red Team recommendations include some back-of-the-envelope calculations of the cost of upgrading existing facilities, and it will cost tens of millions of dollars. The Red Team guessed the other parts of its proposed plan could be done for \$6.5 billion.

Insights

Putting a fresh set of eyes—dozens, in fact—on the UPF project was a good thing. The Red Team's recommendations are not bound by the myopia that usually limits the vision of planners in Oak Ridge. But some of the recommendations raise questions and present good news/bad news setups.

NNSA regularly resists proposals

GAO Report Rips NNSA Technology Development system

WHEN THE FAILURE-IN-PROGRESS KNOWN AS the UPF got so bad it could not be ignored, Congress told the Government Accountability Office to do some observing and reporting. GAO was familiar with the project; the UPF was the poster child for an earlier GAO report on how NNSA couldn't control costs or manage schedules for large projects. Congress asked the GAO to report back quarterly on the UPF.

At the end of April, the GAO filed a quarterly report looking at the pace of technology development for the UPF. In some ways, the report sounds like a long, heavy sigh from a parent who has tried, time and time and time again, to get through to a wayward child.

The report was enlightening.

GAO noted that the money being spent to develop new technologies specifically for the UPF, like microwave casting, agile machining, saltless direct oxide reduction, was not coming from the UPF budget.

The central issue is simple: there is an industry standard that applies to technology development; it requires proof the technology will work before the technology is included in the design of a new facility. The microwave casting ovens, for example, start out as an idea and move up through a Technology Readiness Level checklist (basic principles observed, proof of concept, validated in a laboratory environment, validated in a relevant environment, etc).

Technologies are not considered acceptably mature

until they have achieved TRL 7: Subsystem demonstrated in an operational environment. In other words, prove it will work in a real-world situation.

The GAO compared NNSA's claims of technology maturity with independent reviews and determined that NNSA was overestimating technology readiness in not one or two, but in six out of nine new technologies.

Why does it matter? Because if designers create a building around a particular technology, allot a given amount of space, direct utilities and build in safety systems for that technology, and then it turns out the technology won't really work—well, that's a major setback and a lot of money down the drain.

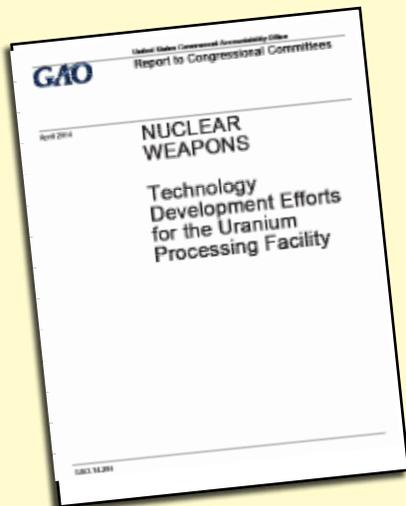
The fact that NNSA cheated on 6 of 9 TRLs means it wasn't an accident. It was bad management—duplicious management, misleading not only Congressional funders, but the design team as well.

The GAO noted cases of new technologies failing performance tests, and cases of inadequate funding for technology development.

The GAO's central finding was echoed by the Red Team which noted

the building design had "already outpaced the technology design."

This would not be acceptable in private industry, if management were spending shareholders' money. NNSA should not be allowed to get away with it, either, just because they are spending our tax dollars.



made by public interest groups like OREPA; we advocated making use of existing facilities to save money seven years ago, and our comments were dismissed. NNSA was determined to build its Supersized Bomb Plant to Nowhere. Now the Red Team has made a similar recommendation, and it is likely to be accepted.

The Red Team also noticed the need for a better management system for enriched uranium operations. Unfortunately, the complexity of the Red Team's solution to NNSA's problem will only further challenge an already demonstrably deficient management team. The very first illustration in the report carried this caption: "The new strategy will require engagement and matrix-

ing of numerous NNSA offices." For an agency plagued with cultural deficiencies in big-project management, these words are not reassuring. The truth is, until structures for concrete performance goals and strict accountability are put in place, the modernization project will continue to waste taxpayer dollars and suffer mission failure.

There is good sense in the Red Team's recommendation to separate high risk/high security operations from others as a way to save money. One downside of this approach is the loss of the highly-touted cost saving "footprint reduction." And the Red Team suggests balancing safety and cost concerns, an approach that could open the door for safety and security compromises in the name of saving money. This is true even when decided how much to upgrade existing facilities before moving bomb production operations.

If the US practice at the weapons sites was consistent with our policy (a world free of nuclear weapons) and our legal obligations, the work at Y12 would be limited to passive curatorship of the stockpile.

The Red Team also echoed the concerns of the General Accounting Office (See *GAO Rips...*, page 2) about technology development. Despite NNSA assurances that new technologies planned for the UPF were on track, the Red Team said "Facility design may have already outpaced the process design in key areas."

Translated into plainer english: They've got the cart in front of the horse.

Is the UPF Dead?

It's too early to toast the demise of the UPF. Clearly, the "big box" UPF is no longer in the picture. The Red Team was not charged with asking the fundamental question that deserves an honest answer before any extensive investments are made in future weapons production infrastructure. But they did allude to the question in their recommendation that design on the "big box" be stopped until "a comprehensive review of

program requirements" can be completed.

That question is: What production capacity will the US need in 2025 to maintain the nuclear stockpile in a safe and secure status until the weapons are dismantled?

The driving force behind the big box UPF was the desire of the weapons designers to re-build our nuclear stockpile through major modifications to existing weapons and, in some cases, by designing new bombs that would use old bomb parts. But this activity—known euphemistically as "Life Extension Programs"—runs afoul of US commitment in the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty and undermines our efforts to dissuade other nations from pursuing nuclear weapons. It

will also cost hundreds of billions of dollars over the next thirty years.

If the US were to pursue a policy on the ground, at the weapons sites, that was consistent with our national policy (a world free of nuclear weapons) and our legal obligations (disarmament "at an early date"), the work at Y12 would be limited to passive curatorship of the stockpile—surveillance of weapons to identify any problems due to aging, assuring the safety and surety of the weapons, and providing security of weapons and components as they move through the dismantlement and disposition process.

Some of the work currently done at Y12—replacement of limited life components—can reportedly be done at the Pantex assembly plant in Amarillo, TX. If this is true, the nation

can save considerable time and money and eliminate significant security risks that come with shipping thermonuclear secondaries from Pantex to Oak Ridge and back to Pantex.

It's still about Money

The fact is the NNSA has \$300 million to spend this year in Oak Ridge on "modernizing" the weapons production facilities, and the President's budget requests \$335 million more next year for—well, with the Red Team report under review at the moment, we have absolutely no idea what for. But

they'll likely get the money—that's what Tennessee Senator Lamar "Sugar Daddy" Alexander is for.

Until the budget numbers drop to something reflecting an actual plan, we know "modernization" is just a cover for keeping the money flowing to contractors. Under the Red Team proposal, the UPF remains a live op-

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CONTINUES ON PAGE 4

tion, reimagined in smaller pieces, but doing the same dirty work of building nuclear weapons of mass destruction.

What's Next?

For those keeping score, the Red Team recommendations represent Plan C for the UPF effort.

Plan A, the Supersized, multi-purpose UPF, was 80% complete when they noticed the “space/fit” issue—not enough room in the building. The problem wasn’t dumb designers, it was bad management—management that established the “footprint” of the building before they knew how much room the equipment would take, and management that refused to address seismic and safety concerns until it was too late.

Plan B threw out everything but bomb production (Adios, Dismantle-ment!) and raised the roof eighteen feet and ran the price up, up, up—management refused to update its \$6.5 billion estimate, but when the Defense Department took a look they came up with nineteen billion dollars and Plan B sank under the weight.

Plan C is whatever comes of the Red Team Report. It’s not a done deal—NNSA and Congress will look at the report and come up with a plan. We don’t know what that will be or exactly when it will be announced.

We do know, though, that Plan C will be a pretty far piece from Plan A. And therein lies part of the answer to “What’s Next?” Plan A was backed by the official, legal Record of Decision in 2011, the result of the long Y12 Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement Process, which included two public hearings and extensive environmental review.

Plan C doesn’t have that pedigree. One official was recently quoted saying, “By definition an alternative plan differs from the original.” So NNSA will have to restart the Environmental Impact Statement process when they figure out their new Plan, either with an entirely

new EIS or a significant Supplement to the existing EIS. Since EIS’s are to be reviewed and renewed every five years, it seems to make sense for NNSA to begin anew.

The new EIS can also do a better job on its central mission—assessing the environmental impact of activities. In the last EIS, NNSA dismissed public concerns about legacy contamination in soils that would be part of the UPF construction project. But in February, workers building a haul road came across a piece of contaminated scrap. And then another. And another—eventually, an entire field of radioactive debris was uncovered, some of it

We know that
NNSA’s insistence
that the big box
UPF was a “must
have” was false.
And we know
even more clearly
that the future of
Oak Ridge is in
dismantlement, not
production.

buried fourteen feet deep. We don’t know the extent of the contamination, though OREPA has filed a FOIA request for that.

The new EIS should have enough respect for worker safety and public health to conduct a thorough survey of all lands likely to be impacted by construction operations at any facilities being built or modified. Some older facilities being considered for temporary housing of uranium operations have asbestos issues. Contaminated debris like that already discovered likely exists in other places as well—

the effect of disturbing this material requires environmental analysis.

Back to Square One?

We’re not quite back at square one, though we’re close. One difference is we have more information now than we did before. And we know that NNSA’s insistence that the big box UPF was a “must have” was false—if it were required for national security, the case could be made persuasively and Congress would shell out the money without blinking an eye.

We know now that the kinds of “Life Extension” programs NNSA wants to do in the future will compromise the reliability of the stockpile and cost tens of billions of dollars—the less likely they are to happen, the less “need” there is for the UPF.

We know NNSA was intentionally misleading Congress when they fixed the original price for the UPF at \$600 million - \$1.5 billion—they’ve admitted lowballing the number.

And we know the technology, despite misleading reports from NNSA, is not where it needs to be before it can be confidently included in the design of a new facility.

Finally, we know even more clearly that the future of Oak Ridge is in dismantlement, and that the best investment that can be made with taxpayer dollars is in upgrading dismantlement facilities and expanding dismantlement capacity to address the current backlog and prepare for the future.

*Support OREPA’s work to
stop the UPF today.*

*Send your tax-deductible
contribution to OREPA
at:*

**OREPA
P O Box 5743
Oak Ridge, TN 37831
www.orepa.org**

What the Red Team said...

Some key excerpts from the Red Team report, along with translations and editorial comment when appropriate.

In the current configuration, significant risk exists in the ability to safely execute the uranium missions. The delay in the Uranium Processing Facility project schedule and the increasing baseline cost exacerbates these issues and necessitates the ongoing use of existing facilities...for the foreseeable future. *In other words, we can't keep operating in the 9212 Complex, and the botched UPF project has only made things worse.*

The US Department of Energy National Nuclear Security Administration must create an overarching enriched uranium mission strategy. *There doesn't seem to be anyone in charge, and dividing up key responsibilities is causing confusion.*

Design efforts of the current "big box," single structure UPF concept should be stopped while a comprehensive re-evaluation of program requirements and applicable design standards is undertaken. *Time to pull the plug on the Supersized UPF.*

This new approach will create a complicated, highly matrixed organization that will require engagement of numerous NNSA offices.

In a culture already demonstrating major management deficits, this sentence may be the scariest of the entire Red Team Report.

The Red Team report proposes a major shift in responsibility for construction work at Y12, saying it should be taken out of the hands of the primary contractor so it can operate with autonomy as is done for "large projects in other elements of DOE."

The principal recommendation is to pursue a strategy of mission risk reduction while sustaining safe and secure highly enriched uranium capabilities (*That means keep building bombs without interruption. – ed.*) through three primary means:

- Accelerate risk reduction actions in all existing enriched uranium facilities through program operations.
- Maximize the use of existing facility space to relocate and /or replace 9212 capabilities.
- Acquire smaller, segregated space for those required 9212 capabilities that are inappropriate to be relocated to existing facilities. (*mini-UPFs – ed.*)

The Review Team assessed the utilization of existing facilities and recommends that the 9204-2E facility be designated as an enduring facility (at least 25 years) and that the 9215 facility be designated as an interim facility (less than 25 years) so that the current HEU capabilities can be sustained while being transitioned out of the 9212 facility. Space within 9204-2E (prime) and 9215 (secondary) needs to be used for the essential 9212 capabilities that are compatible with those spaces.

A concern to the Review Team is that the facility design may have already outpaced the process design in key areas. *The cart is way ahead of the horse.*

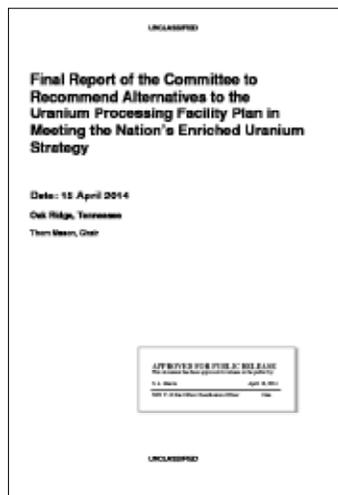
Reevaluation and relaxation of requirements related to seismic design

category (SDC) and limit state (LS), while ensuring appropriate risk mitigation, reduction, and acceptance, will result in cost and schedule reduction. Furthermore, the use of experience-based data, for example, within the Seismic Qualification Utility Group (SQUG) database would save cost for seismic qualification of equipment, and in some cases would eliminate the need for seismic analysis. This approach would result in a reduction in overall costs associated with procurement, installation, maintenance, and testing. *If we just ease up on these earthquake requirements, we can save a lot of money—maybe even enough to hire a team of people to keep watch around the clock with their fingers crossed.*

To be certain, there is urgency in the need for new facility space to replace a set of 9212 capabilities, the construction of which must be completed post-haste. *This suggests things are really bad, worse than they are letting on, in the 9212 Complex. It's time for a safety inventory.*

As a result, there is much in the current UPF facility design that will not carry over to the new facilities; however the Review Team is hopeful that much of the process design can be more readily used as the new build(s) proceed. *Anyone care to guess how much of the \$1 billion spent so far is a total write-off? DOE says at least half of it—our guess is higher.*

Additionally, the staff was asked to provide suggestions for alternative regulatory interpretations and applications, or exemptions, that would reduce design costs while maintaining acceptable protection of workers, co-workers, and the public. *Yikes! Who decides what is acceptable protection of workers and the public? And what are co-workers if not workers?*



WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW

The FY 2015 budget is before Congress now, with hearings scheduled for this month. Now is the time to tell your Senators and Representative to cut funding for the UPF—at least until the NNSA can explain what it will spend the money for. It makes no sense at all to appropriate \$335 million to design an imaginary facility. Ask for lawmakers to demand accountability for past UPF mistakes and insist on a cultural change at NNSA—or simply abolish the NNSA altogether. Share this Update with friends and encourage them to take action.

Letters to the editor are a relatively easy and important way to get lawmakers' attention, especially if you name them in the letter—“We are looking for Senator _____ to spend our tax dollars wisely, not waste them on a misguided boondoggle.”

You can also help by supporting OREPA as we work to keep people informed about the UPF. In mid-May, we are sending a delegation to Washington, DC to participate in the Alliance for Nuclear Accountability's DC Days. We'll meet with key Administration and Congressional

decision-makers and, along with activists from across the country, we'll deliver the message that the days of bomb production are over—in Oak Ridge and everywhere. We'll be working to stop the UPF and start dismantlement. **We can use help—you can support all the work, including the travel to DC, with a donation today.** Contributions can be sent to OREPA at P O Box 5743, Oak Ridge, TN 37831. And you can stay informed and up-to-date by checking in at www.orepa.org regularly.



2014 Peacemaker Awards

OREPA honored three local communities of faith with the 2014 Peacemaker Award for their work doing and supporting progressive change in our community. Accepting the awards are, from left: Millie Gimmel from the West Knoxville Friends Meeting, Jerry Bone from the Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church, and Judy Sullivan from Church of the Savior (UCC). In addition to their strong support of OREPA's work, each of these faith communities promotes peace and justice in wide-ranging efforts, from anti-military recruitment work to working for fair tax policies, from immigrant rights work to support for LGBT teens and their families.

Support Transform Now Plowshares—work and write!

On February 28, 2014, Judge Amul R. Thapar sentence Michael Walli, Greg Boertje-Obed and Megan Rice to prison terms for their July 28, 2012 Transform Now Plowshares action at the Y12 Nuclear Weapons Complex in Oak Ridge, TN. The three had been held in county jails awaiting sentencing since their convictions on sabotage and other charges by a jury in May 2012.

After a facile lecture from the judge about finding other ways to change policies, the three were given sentences ranging from 35 months (Megan) to 62 months (Mike and Greg); the sentences take into account “criminal” history.

The defendants refused to accede

to the court's lust for remorse, noting they had nothing to feel bad about, and each delivered strong statements. You can find information about the sentencing at www.transformnowplowshares.wordpress.com.

Many have asked how they can support Megan, Michael and Greg. Some have proposed petitions or campaigns to seek commutation of their sentences. Megan, Greg and Michael are not encouraging these efforts; they prefer people to devote time and energy to stopping nuclear weapons, especially in Oak Ridge, the site of their action.

You can write. Write your return address on the envelope (no labels).

Books and magazines must be sent directly from bookstores/publishers.

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