

The Sham of Nuclear Power & Patrick Moore

By Harvey Wasserman

Vermont, like too many other places with nuclear reactors, was recently disgraced by an industry-sponsored visit from Patrick Moore, who claims to be a “founder” of Greenpeace, and who is out selling nuclear power as a “green” technology.

The two claims are roughly equal in the baldness of their falsehood.

But the impact of the lies about Vermont Yankee — like so many other reactors — are far more serious. Vermont is now at a crossroads in its energy and environmental future. The reactor is old and infirm. Every day it operates heightens the odds of a major accident.

In a world beset by terror, there is no more vulnerable target than an aged reactor like Vermont Yankee. Its core is laden with built up radiation accumulated over the decades. Its grounds are stacked with supremely radioactive spent fuel. Its elderly core and containment are among the most fragile that exist.

Despite industry claims, VY’s high-level nuclear waste is going nowhere. Nuclear Regulatory Commissioner Edward McGaffigan has told the *New York Times* he believes the Yucca Mountain waste repository cannot open for at least another 17-20 years, if ever. At current production levels, it will by then require yet another repository at least that size to handle the spent fuel that will by then be stacked at reactors like VY. In short: the dry casks stacked at Vermont Yankee

comprise what amounts to a permanent high-level nuke dump, on the shores of the Connecticut River.

The Better Business Bureau recently recommended that the Nuclear Energy Institute withdraw its advertising that claims atomic reactors are clean and nonpolluting. The NEI is an industry front group. The BBB says that reactors cause thermal pollution in their outtake pipes and cooling towers, and also create substantial amounts of greenhouse gases in uranium production. In short, the Better Business Bureau has punctured the industry’s claim that Vermont Yankee and other reactors are any kind of solution for climate chaos. The idea that VY is a “green” facility is utter nonsense.

Indeed, all nuclear power reactors produce huge quantities of global warming gases as they are wrapped up in the mining of the uranium ore that goes into the fuel, and in the milling of that ore into fuel rods. The American West is littered with gargantuan piles of mill tailings that pour thousands of curies of radioactive radon into the atmosphere.

Fabricating fuel rods is one of the most electricity-intensive industries on earth, consuming millions of tons of coal in the process, emitting untold quantities of greenhouse gases. The radioactive emissions from the reactors themselves also unbalance the atmosphere, and the heat they dump into the air and water directly heats the planet.

The alleged “renaissance” of nuclear power is nothing more than heavily funded industry hype. Wall Street financiers are not lining up to invest in these dinosaurs, and numerous

utility executives have publicly doubted the wisdom of building them.

One reason is the explosive take-off of the renewable energy industry. Wind power is now substantially cheaper than nukes. The production of photovoltaic cells, which convert sunlight directly to electricity, can barely meet demand. Investments in biofuels such as ethanol and biodiesel are soaring, as are those in the cheapest form of recovered energy, increased efficiency. Shutting VY would open the state to the revolution that is reshaping the future. Keeping it open locks Vermont into a sorry past.

Nuclear power is a 50-year experiment that has failed. Extending the operations of VY will only leave the state with more radioactive waste, a Connecticut River increasingly threatened by heat and radioactive emissions and an increasingly radioactive relic despoiling the region. Nukes cannot compete in the market, and would all cease to operate overnight if the huge subsidy of federal liability insurance was removed.

It is fitting, therefore, that the industry has insulted Vermont by sending in a spokesman of the caliber of Patrick Moore. Moore has claimed for years to be a founder of Greenpeace, an exaggeration of his actual role. Moore sailed on the first Greenpeace campaign, but he did not actually found the organization. According to Dorothy Stowe, an American Quaker, who immigrated to Canada in 1966 and founded Greenpeace with her husband Irving Stowe and other Canadian pacifists and ecologists, “Technically, Patrick Moore cannot be described as a founder of Greenpeace. He was there in early stages with a lot of others. But what he is doing now is unconscionable.”

In *Greenpeace: How a Group of Ecologists, Journalists, and Visionaries Changed the World*, author Rex Weyler writes, “Greenpeace was founded by Dorothy and Irving Stowe, Marie and Jim Bohlen, and journalists Ben Metcalfe, Dorothy Metcalfe, and Bob Hunter. This group organized the first campaign to sail a boat into the U.S. nuclear weapon test zone on Amchitka Island in the Bering Sea.

“Canadian ecologist and carpenter Bill Darnell coined the name ‘Greenpeace’ in February 1970. A year later, Moore wrote to the organization, applying for a crew position on the boat and was accepted.”

Moore wrote his letter on March 16, 1971, two years after the group was founded, describing himself as a graduate student “in the field of resource ecology.” Moore was not a founder of Greenpeace. Founders don’t write letters applying to join. After the Stowes, Metcalfes and Bob Hunter left the organization, Moore briefly served as president, from 1977 to 1979. Former members recall that his bullyism nearly scuttled the organization. He launched an internal lawsuit against his rivals in other Greenpeace offices, was replaced as president in 1979 and was eventually drummed out of the organization as a troublemaker.

According to Steve Sawyer, who still works with Greenpeace in Amsterdam, “Moore harbored hopes of regaining his throne. Those hopes were dashed when he was chucked off the board in 1985.” Moore started a fish farm, but did not succeed. He then did public relations for the Canadian forestry industry, absurdly defending massive clearcuts as an ecologically viable logging practice.

In a newspaper column in 1993, authentic Greenpeace founder Bob Hunter, called Moore “The Judas of the ecology movement.” According to Hunter, Moore “burned off his old buddies because of his hubris. He was always a Green Tory at heart.”

Moore says he is the “head scientist” of his public relations firm, but has never published a peer-reviewed scientific study. Moore exaggerates his role in Greenpeace and his credentials as a scientist to serve as a public relations hack for hire.

Moore now gets big money defending the indefensible, posing as a reformed environmentalist who has seen the light ... any light he is paid to see. He has hyped genetically modified crops, PVCs and brominated flame retardants. He has soft-pedaled dioxins and toxic mine tailings dumped by Newmont mines into Indonesia bays.

Now he wants to sell Vermont on its nuclear reactor. In exchange for a paycheck, he portrays Three Mile Island as a “success story.” But if a meltdown turned Vermont Yankee into a TMI-type, billion-dollar liability, would he pitch in his pitchman’s paychecks to help you underwrite this “success?”

Years ago, when he worked for Greenpeace, Moore wrote: “Nuclear power plants are, next to nuclear warheads themselves, the most dangerous devices ... ever created. Their construction and proliferation is the most irresponsible, in fact the most criminal, act ever to have taken place on this planet.”

Greenpeace agrees. The “revival” of nuke power is hype being perpetrated by phony experts. Wall Street is not exactly lining up to invest in a failed technology with 50 years of proven failure. Vermont Yankee must be shut, dismantled and buried. Closing it now will narrow the burden of its permanent waste dump and open the door to the booming revolution in the real energy of the future: renewables and efficiency.

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Major Security Breach at Palisades Reactor Critics Urge Congressional Investigation

By Kevin Kamps, NIRS

TAKOMA PARK, MD — A story appearing in the June edition of *Esquire* magazine that reveals a major security breach at the Palisades nuclear power reactor in Covert, Michigan, confirms that reactor security around the country is grossly inadequate according to specialists in the field.

Nuclear Information and Resource Service (NIRS) and its allies today called on the U.S. Congress to investigate the security breach at Palisades. The *Esquire* story, entitled “Mercenary,” details how the head of Palisades security — William E. Clark — had largely fabricated his background, experience and security credentials presenting himself as an expert on armed deterrence. Clark has since resigned his position.

“Mercenary” reveals that officials at Palisades failed to detect false assertions in Clark’s resume that claimed he had high-level security clearance from the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD). Clark also passed a Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC)-regulated background check. He was hired by the reactor’s previous owner, Consumers Energy Company, and operator, Nuclear Management Company, a year and a half ago, but was kept on by the new owner and operator, Entergy, since it acquired Palisades one month ago.

What’s disturbing is not only that Palisades hired an individual who claimed to be an experienced assassin, but apparently no one tried to verify his false claim to have DOD clearance. This lapse has serious implications for security at all 103 reactors across the country. It begs the question as to what would have happened if a terrorist had decided to fake a resume rather than fly a plane, and earned a top-level security job at a nuclear power reactor.

The article describes how Clark convinced NRC officials, as well as FBI and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) agents, to support and even join his “Viper team,” a supposedly “elite strike force” he set up at Palisades. According to *Esquire*, FBI agents and NRC officials attended a “Viper team” presentation by Clark hosted at DHS headquarters in Washington, D.C. The federal officials

reportedly considered establishing Clark’s “Viper teams” at nuclear reactors across the U.S.

“If what *Esquire* says about Clark is true, I surely hope Entergy and Consumers have formally notified the NRC, FBI and DHS of the revelations by now,” said Terry Lodge, an attorney based in Toledo, OH who represents citizens in public interventions against Palisades. “Apparently a journalist can do a much better background check than Entergy and Consumers security officials. Entergy has also had security problems at the Indian Point reactors near New York City. The NRC must reconsider whether Entergy can guarantee the safe operation of Palisades, and 100 percent protection of the high-level radioactive waste still stored at Big Rock Point in northern Michigan,” Lodge said.

Despite the NRC claim that the 9/11 attacks prompted a “top to bottom” security review, it did not detect Clark’s deceptions or even check up on the man’s erratic behaviors described in the article.

Palisades’ reactor and waste storage facilities hold potentially catastrophic amounts of radioactivity, at continual risk of release into the environment due to accident or attack. This incident of industrial fraud clearly shows that the private companies and government agencies that are supposed to protect public health, safety, security, and the environment are incapable of doing so.

NIRS has called upon Congress to investigate the failures at NRC, FBI, DHS and the nuclear utilities involved at Palisades and to explore whether similar problems exist within security programs at other reactor sites across the country. Based on the information revealed by *Esquire*, NIRS will also re-apply to the NRC for public hearings on allegations of security-related problems at Palisades and Big Rock, hearings that were previously denied.

The *Esquire* article can be found at <esquire.com/features/mercenary0607>

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