



MONDAY 28 DECEMBER 2009

<http://www.truthout.org/1222096>

## Helen Caldicott Slams Environmental Groups on Climate Bill, Nuclear Concessions Tuesday 22 December 2009

*by: Art Levine, t r u t h o u t | Report*

(Photo: Whiskeygonebad)

Dr. Helen Caldicott, the pioneering Australian antinuclear activist and pediatrician who spearheaded the global nuclear freeze movement of the 1980s and co-founded Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR), has joined with left-leaning environmental groups here in an uphill fight to halt nuclear power as a "solution" to the global warming crisis. "Global warming is the greatest gift the nuclear industry has ever received," Dr. Caldicott told Truthout.

The **growing rush** to nuclear power was only enhanced, experts say, by the weak climate deal at the Copenhagen 15 climate conference. The prospects for passage of a climate bill in Congress - virtually all versions are pro-nuclear - were enhanced, most **analysts** say, because it offered the promise that China might voluntarily agree to verify its carbon reductions and it could reassure senators worried about American manufacturers being undermined by polluters overseas. But at the two-week international confab that didn't produce any **binding agreements** to do anything, Caldicott and environmental activist groups were marginalized or, in the case of the **delegates from Friends of the Earth**, evicted from the main hall.

The upshot of the latest trends boosting nuclear power - although no nuclear reactor has been built in America since the 1970s - are indeed grim, she said. "Nothing's going to work to stop them but a meltdown," she said, fearing the prospects of such a calamity. "I don't know how else the world is going to wake up."

Her fears may sound apocalyptic, but as Truthout will explore in more depth in part II of this article, the dangers of a meltdown, terrorist attack and radiation damage are far greater than commonly known. That's because of

what federal and Congressional investigators, advocacy groups and medical researchers say is a culture of sloppy **security**, health and **safety** oversight by a cozily pro-industry Nuclear Regulatory Commission. (An NRC spokesman denied those allegations in a written statement to Truthout.) The quasi-independent agency is funded primarily by fees from nuclear power plants. On top of all that, the Obama administration is planning to offer about \$20 billion in loan guarantees to fund two new uncertified and **risky** reactors designs that have faced safety and cost overrun problems overseas.

Despite nuclear energy's apparent dangers, Dr. Caldicott was a Cassandra crying out at the Copenhagen conference with little or no attention from the major government and media players there. Caldicott, who was featured on major American TV news shows and magazines during the 80s, who met one on one with President Reagan and addressed about a million people opposing nuclear weapons in New York City in **June, 1982**, found herself speaking to groups as small as 50 people in Copenhagen. Although still an active **lecturer, author** and radio broadcaster, she was essentially ignored by the media, even with the six minutes or so she was given to **speak** to an outdoor rally of 100,000 protesting the global leaders' inaction inside the main hall. "It was a *shemozzle*," she said of the conference, using the Yiddish word for a confusing mess.

In her brief speech outdoors in bitterly cold weather, you can see her speaking more slowly than in her usual **lecture**, so that not one word or grisly fact is missed by her international audience. But you can almost sense her frustration at boiling down into just over six minutes all that she knows about the dangers of atomic weapons and nuclear plants. While inside the Bella Center, no official who really counted was bothering listening to her - or the protesters:

She told the crowd:

The Earth is in the intensive care unit, it is acutely sick. We are all now physicians to a dying planet ...

The nuclear power industry has used global warming to say "we're the answer." All the money to go into nuclear power, 15 billion dollars per power plant, is being stolen from the solutions to fix the earth - solar, wind, hydro, geothermal, conservation.

The nuclear power industry is wicked. The nuclear power industry was formed by the bomb makers - it's the same thing. Nuclear power plants are bomb factories - they make plutonium. Two hundred and fifty kilos a year

of plutonium that lasts for 250,000 years. You need five kilos to make a nuclear bomb. Any country that has a nuclear power plant has a bomb factory.

If the Second World War were fought today in Europe, none of you would be here; Europe would be a radioactive wasteland because all the nuclear power plants would melt down like Chernobyl. So, war is now impossible in Europe. Do the politicians understand that?

Nuclear power produces massive quantities, hundreds of thousands of tons of radioactive waste, which will get into the water, concentrate into the fish, the milk, the food, human breast milk, fetuses, babies, children. Radioactive iodine causes thyroid cancer. Twelve thousand people in Belarus had thyroid cancer. Radioactive Strontium 90 causes bone cancer and leukemia, [it] lasts for 600 years. Cesium 137 - all over Europe now - in the reindeer, in the lands, in the food, lasts for six hundred years, causes brain cancer. Plutonium, the most dangerous substance on Earth, 1 millionth of a gram cause cancer, lasts for 250,000 years. Causes lung cancer, liver cancer, testicular cancer, damages fetuses so they are born deformed.

Nuclear power, therefore, nuclear waste for all future generations will cause cancer in young children because they are very sensitive, [will cause] genetic disease, congenital deformities. Nuclear power is about disease, and it's about death. It will produce the greatest public health hazard the world has ever seen for the rest of time. We must close down every single nuclear reactor in Europe and throughout the world...

That's hardly the spirit of acceptance granted the nuclear industry as part of a hoped-for climate deal by world governments and environmental groups.

She was there for the first week as a guest of the [Women's International League for Peace and Freedom](#) and a science adviser to the Spanish government. But for a woman whose organization, PSR, won the Nobel Peace Prize and who has been cited by the Smithsonian as one of the most influential women of the 20th century, she was still unable to wangle even a three-minute opportunity to address the delegates. After she returned home to Australia, she saw the dreary news about the chaotic final days of the conference and the loophole-laden climate "accord."

"I was deeply depressed," she said. "I hadn't done anything, and the world hadn't done anything in the face of an impending catastrophe."

It also reinforced her anger at those environmental groups that haven't strongly opposed nuclear power while they're supporting legislation that sees nuclear energy as a vital element in reducing carbon emissions. "They've sold their souls," she said bluntly, while attacking the ties of some key groups to the energy industry,

especially in such alliances as the **US Climate Action Partnership** that includes such outfits as Duke Power *and* the Natural Resources Defense Council. The well-funded coalition is widely credited as having set the template for both the main House and Senate climate bills that have passed the full House and the Senate Environment Committee - all containing provisions for nuclear energy.

Al Gore's advocacy group, RePower America, also includes environmental and industry groups; a spokesperson said it hasn't issued any statements on nuclear power and declined to answer charges that by failing to actively oppose nuclear power, it was allowing the spread of nuclear plants to undermine renewable solutions to global warming. (In his writings and some interviews, Al Gore has offered **some criticisms** of nuclear power, but the Nobel Prize winner hasn't used his international platform to attack its role in pending legislation or potential treaties.)

In her interview with Truthout, she ripped into those environmental groups that didn't take strong, public stands against climate bills that included nuclear power, even while she, in turn, has been derided as a **Luddite** or politically naive. "Some of the people within these organizations are not well educated about the biological effects of radiation and mutation, and what actually happens in the human body and the food chain," she said. "So, they've gone soft on opposing nuclear power, and because they're all very worried about global warming, they're about to leap from the global warming frying pan to the nuclear fire."

She continued, "You don't replace one evil with another. Anyone who promotes an industry that will induce a global nuclear war that will mean the end of most life on earth, the final epidemic of the human race; or anyone who promotes an industry that down the time track will induce hundreds of thousands of cases of childhood cancers and leukemia, and babies being born grossly deformed; or anyone who would promote an industry that actively promotes disease when we're so worried about cancer and spend all this money trying to cure it - well, they have sold their souls as far as I'm concerned."

I noted, "They say they're not promoting it," they're just not actively opposing it.

"If you don't actively oppose it, it will get through. They know that," she responded - "especially with all the advertising being spent on by the nuclear industry which is a bunch of lies." She added, "If you talk to the average person, they believe all this stuff. The power of propaganda is enormous."

But environmental groups contacted by Truthout deny her claim that they've "sold their souls" or failed to vigorously criticize the nuclear industry, pointing to letters and testimony to Congressional committees. Tom Cochran, the senior scientist at NRDC's nuclear program and perhaps the leading progressive expert on nuclear reactors in the country, pointed out, "Our **position** is that we're opposed to additional federal subsidies for the construction of new nuclear plants, but NRDC is in favor of getting climate legislation through the House and Senate. In terms of process, we're happy to move the process along." He noted, for instance, "We don't support all the principles of **Kerry-Graham-Lieberman**," the most pro-industry proposal so far. "Our position is clear: we do not support additional subsidies."

When I asked at what funding amount of subsidies the NRDC might be willing to draw a "line in the sand" and oppose the legislation, he replied, "I'm not going to negotiate through your publication."

Caldicott and other experts say that even the claims that nuclear power is "clean air energy" fall apart when examined carefully. They have pointed out how over the full fuel lifecycle of a plant - from mining uranium to shipping it to "decommissioning" a plant - the nuclear process emits far more carbon and other greenhouse gases than the industry and its cheerleaders (and environmentalist enablers) admit. Indeed, according to **one major study** she cited, because of the need to find more uranium as higher-grade uranium disappears, using the poorer quality ores would "produce more CO2 emissions than burning fossil fuels directly."

Even so, "there's a push for nuclear power," said Erich Pica, president of Friends of the Earth US. He noted that there were no limits on nuclear power in this latest nonbinding climate agreement - unlike the earlier Kyoto treaty, which the US didn't sign, that restricted subsidies for nuclear power. And grassroots groups largely aren't fighting back in a high-profile way against the industry's drive for a \$100 billion **bailout** in federal subsidies. "Right now, the environmental community wants a climate bill," said Pica, whose group, along with Greenpeace and a few others, hasn't supported the legislation moving through Congress, asserting it's too industry-friendly.

In continuing her **decades-long crusade** against the **health, financial and environmental dangers** posed by nuclear energy, Caldicott and her outgunned allies are opposing an array of powerful institutional forces.

They include the Obama administration and its **top scientists**; an industry that has successfully sold itself as "**clean air energy**;" the tacit acceptance or muted opposition of such major environmental groups as the **Sierra Club** and the relative silence on the issue by most influential environmental journalists. All of them are joined

in what critics view as a near-"conspiracy of silence" about nuclear power in order to advance the goal of supporting a purportedly carbon-reducing **climate bill** that can pass Congress.

Indeed, neither most grassroots environmentalists nor members of the broader progressive movement have been engaged to fight a nuclear bailout of \$100 billion, **if not trillions**, in loan guarantees for nuclear plants that would, critics say, dry up funds for renewable industries that could be up and running quickly. In contrast, **it takes as long as 10 years to build nuclear plants** while the perils of global warming - from rising ocean levels to drought - have already begun.

The largely indifferent response to nuclear power has been in part because activists have taken their cues from leading national environmental organizations and progressive media outlets. And with a few exceptions, such as Mother Jones or Greenpeace, they have not aggressively opposed the advancement of nuclear energy in their eagerness for a climate bill. That stands in sharp contrast to the grassroots environmentalist opposition that coalesced against including a \$50 billion bailout in 2007 energy legislation, including a **superstar rock video**. Despite **new petitions** today, the organizing against nukes is woefully outdone by supporters of the current climate legislation.

Yet, Helen Caldicott's passion for stopping nuclear power hasn't eased, and although she's older now, she still brings the same fervor and implacable determination to explain the dangers of nuclear energy that she did as a glamorous activist in her 40s speaking to a larger global audience. It was well captured in an Oscar-winning **documentary short**, "If You Love This Planet," now the title of her **syndicated radio show** and updated **book**:

*Art Levine, a contributing editor of The Washington Monthly, has written for Mother Jones, The American Prospect, The New Republic, The Atlantic, Slate.com, Salon.com and numerous other publications. He wrote the October 2007 In These Times cover story, "Unionbusting Confidential." Levine is also the co-host of the "D'Antoni and Levine" show on BlogTalk Radio, every Thursday at 5:30 p.m. EST. He also blogs regularly on labor and other reform issues for In These Times and The Huffington Post.*

**This is a moderated forum. It may take a little while for comments to go live. Be civil and on-topic, don't threaten or advocate violence, please keep it under 300 words. Thanks for participating.**

**I've known Helen for a**

Tue, 12/22/2009 - 21:19 — Anonymous (not verified)  
I've known Helen for a number of years, and she is spot on.

## **Dr. Caldicott is my hero, a**

Tue, 12/22/2009 - 21:20 — mgmyers79 (not verified)

Dr. Caldicott is my hero, a genius, and 100% accurate in her analysis. Nuclear power proliferation is nuclear weapon proliferation. The logical end to this is nuclear war. Weapons are made to be used, and weaponry dominates the global marketplace with illegal drugs (profits used to buy weapons of course) running a close second. Also worth mentioning, Missile Envy is required reading for anyone wanting to understand the Cold War.

## **The environmental groups**

Tue, 12/22/2009 - 21:38 — Cordley Coit (not verified)

The environmental groups say they have not sold out yet look at the Sierra Club allowing and encouraging the sale of a radium lac3ed tailings site in Colorado Springs as a housing development or their suppression of evidence in the King Mine case in the Philippines where one point eight million dollars were paid to terrorists so the mining could move forward. And what about the suppressed stories about Three Mile Island, etc. The environmental groups are strangely silent about where the Nuke miners are going to shove the tons of waste with a quarter of a million year's half life. No one sane seems to want that baby.

## **"Nuclear Power, More**

Tue, 12/22/2009 - 21:59 — Anonymous (not verified)

"Nuclear Power, More Dangerous than What?" Norman Rasmussen How many people have died because of western nuclear technology? How many have died in the last 20 years because of the use of crude oil? At least 175,000 Iraqis. How many people have died because of the use of coal? Black lung disease. Chinese mine disasters. Destruction of WV streams from mountain top removal. Vast CO2 emissions. How many people will die from malnutrition because we remove so much land from food production? Very carefully about the unintended consequences narrow focus on a single issue. All life (and science) is based on multi-variable optimization that seldom goes to the limit. We created the risk, when we decided to have so many children and the population exploded in the 20th century.

## **So (1) nuclear reactor**

Tue, 12/22/2009 - 23:04 — Anonymous (not verified)

So (1) nuclear reactor plants have lax safety and security practices, and (2) we have to deal with all the nuclear waste left over. As a nuclear engineer for the U.S. military, I recognize that these are both serious problems, but I think through the appropriate regulations, neither provides sufficient reason to oppose nuclear power.

## **As a Sierra Club energy**

Wed, 12/23/2009 - 01:18 — Ned Ford (not verified)

As a Sierra Club energy leader for over a quarter century I wish you had put a different perspective in the article. We are not putting muted opposition to nuclear power forward, so much as we are scrambling to solve global warming with almost no resources, and people like Mr. Levine are paying attention to the wrong things, which we can't always control. The recession can be the death of nuclear power, if we play it right. The nation's electric consumption fell about five percent last year (final stats not in yet). No one can build a commercial reactor in a declining sales environment, even with the most nonsensical NoPublican subsidies, because a new nuclear plant is so expensive that it will kill the electric sales of the utility which builds it, and undermine the revenue stream necessary to pay for it. Congress may not understand this, and some utilities still haven't learned from past experience, but Wall Street is on top of this puppy. If you want to keep nuclear power from resurfacing do the following: Get involved in your state's Stimulus spending to ensure that the efficiency, renewable and low income weatherization funding is spent well, so the electric downturn is twice as long as it would be in the absence of this money, if it is spent well; Learn about utility efficiency programs and make sure your state is developing them fast and hard. 2% per year load avoidance is the best current example, although we have historical examples of 4%, 5% and maybe 6%. 3% will probably solve global warming, but we have to

keep it up for longer than the historical examples. Make sure your state is spending a third of the efficiency savings on funding the programs for the next year, another third on renewables, and splitting the third third with the utilities to keep them in the game. This will keep electric spending flat for about twenty years. Ignoring climate change will raise rates all through the future. We need to push efficiency and renewables HARD so that when the old nukes retire, they won't open up old coal plants previously shut. No danger of new nukes in a declining sales environment. Wind is cheaper than new coal, but has problems with load shape, so PV will take over in a few years when the price drops a little, because it peaks when American peaks. But if we don't push, the utilities will build clean energy in response to demand, instead of anticipating it. That makes the difference between a low cost energy future and a high cost one. We can share the savings with them, and they will love the low cost future, but the way things work now, they love the high cost future. Nukes are only part of the high cost future we can avoid if we want to.

### **250,000 years--the time it**

Wed, 12/23/2009 - 01:25 — Gordon K (not verified)

250,000 years--the time it takes for plutonium to fully break down--is vastly longer than the duration of any known civilization, past or present. It's profoundly irresponsible for us to saddle THOUSANDS of future generations with the waste from this short-term "solution" to our energy needs.

### **As a nuclear engineer**

Wed, 12/23/2009 - 01:37 — Anonymous (not verified)

As a nuclear engineer myself, I can tell you that the biggest problem with fission is that it is overseen by political concerns and run by business. Neither of these have long term well being as a priority. Furthermore, although the reactors themselves can be run reasonably, they make for great terrorism and/or military targets. If it ever comes to them being breached in a destructive way (either by conventional or, worse, nuclear arms), they will contaminate vast areas for longer than civilization has been around so far. You never design anything for the best case. Waste goes to the same problem -- the results will be with us far longer than there are going to be people who will be able to read the language of what's left of the sign on the repository doors... Thoughts of a political jurisdiction lasting that long are pure hubris. The only even remotely reasonable nuclear solution involves fusion.

### **Caldicott is hysterical.**

Wed, 12/23/2009 - 01:57 — Shelly T. (not verified)

Caldicott is hysterical. She's a pediatrician, she doesn't specialize in physics and in fact has a hatred for physicists and regular scientists. She is harming the effort to switch to low-carbon and no-carbon energy. New nuclear plants won't even be of the old breeder reactor design and she seems to have no clue about any of the new plans. She also shamelessly makes up facts and figures to support her own paranoia. I'd like to see her as paranoid and hysterical about COAL, which should be banned immediately.

### **More people have died from**

Wed, 12/23/2009 - 02:02 — Anonymous (not verified)

More people have died from the use of coal and oil than have ever been harmed by nuclear power. She is off-base. Go after coal. Coal is what is killing hundreds of thousands in China and will continue to kill billions when global warming increases. Is she aware of what is coming with climate change? Or is she just fixated on nuclear waste leading to nuclear war? That's something that can be controlled. Death by coal is not.

### **There will be virtually no**

Wed, 12/23/2009 - 02:24 — Wake- Up (not verified)

There will be virtually no nuclear plants in the US by 2030. Who is going to renew their contracts on the most aging plants in our energy portfolio. Of the 102 reactors, how many will survive 2030---NONE. Not ONE, which means that all this hyperbole about nuclear power saving us from climate change is simply BULL. Get with it, if

you even get 2-3 reactors built for every 5-7 years, we will not even catch up with the reactors that will be closing down. The technology is so incredible over priced, dependent on fossil fuels--duh, the FUEL CYCLE in mining, processing, and babysitting for centuries that it simply is not worth it. Bottom line, unless these babies are fully subsidized by taxpayers, there is not a sane investment company willing to put a dime in dinosaur technology.

### **The way some people think**

Wed, 12/23/2009 - 02:27 — J. David (not verified)

The way some people think and behave, you'd think that humans have control over their ultimate destiny. We Don't. Stop trying to save the Earth and focus on saving our dying Galaxy.

### **Dr. Helen Caldicott is a**

Wed, 12/23/2009 - 03:08 — Fr. Benjamin J. Urmston, S.J., PhD (not verified)

Dr. Helen Caldicott is a hero beyond measure! We need more like her to spread the word about nuclear energy and nuclear weapons. We cannot write without a pencil or pen. We cannot follow the lead of Catholic social teaching (see "Charity in Truth," No. 67 and footnotes) without a new world constitution. We need a structure that will make events like Copenhagen more democratic and effective. The war system is eating us alive! There is an alternative to war, to competing ruthlessly and violently with other nations, pouring a disproportionate amount of resources into destruction of other human persons and our planet. The alternative is a workable global governance system such as a democratic world federation. Pope John XXIII said a world authority is "a moral imperative." Doesn't that mean that striving now for this is not optional? All hands on deck! Fr. Benjamin J. Urmston, S.J., PhD Cincinnati, Ohio

### **This is a very well-done**

Wed, 12/23/2009 - 05:18 — Russell Lowes (not verified)

This is a very well-done article, except that there should have been more done to show that groups like the Sierra Club are officially and actively anti-nuke. The nuance is that many of the environmental groups have been sucked in to believing that cap & trade and carbon offsets will work. They will not work, and are fraud-prone systems. These systems will wipe out the value of any bill passed that has them. And many groups believe that nukes will be destroyed by their own terrible economics. However they do not realize the zeal the nuke industry has, which if received by Congress as fashioned by these bills, will make over the economics with hidden subsidy. In France the government pretends the "cost of money" does not exist, and no interest is applied. Many of the promoters of these bills officially oppose U.S. socialization, but then promote it for nukes. The environmental groups need to face that there is no limit to the pro-nuke appetite for fund diversions from renewables and efficiencies to nukes.

### **My sister was a secretary at**

Wed, 12/23/2009 - 05:23 — Anonymous (not verified)

My sister was a secretary at an investment firm a few years ago and oh they did love nuclear power. Get poor desperate slobs to dig it out of the earth, make money from the power, bury it near people you don't care about...a dream come true for the super wealthy.

### **What a hero!!! have very**

Wed, 12/23/2009 - 06:06 — Jean (not verified)

What a hero!!! have very knowledgeable anti Nuclear friends/activists.They believe Global Warming is a hoax,dreamed up by Al Gore in order to promote Nuclear Power...I cannot convince them otherwise..

### **Helen is absolutely correct.**

Wed, 12/23/2009 - 13:52 — Anonymous (not verified)

Helen is absolutely correct. Having dealt with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission on a very close basis regarding radioactive contamination for 2 decades, I can assure anyone that the NRC will sell us all down the river. They will do so with the blessings of the current U.S. administration (see Obama's short senate record on the issue). It takes a lot of people to create a "conspiracy of silence" and it's a shameful reality.

### **The problem with many on the**

Wed, 12/23/2009 - 14:24 — RJ Garfunkel (not verified)

The problem with many on the left, and I am a life-time Democrat who has worked in political campaigns for 40+ years, is that much of their ideas are unworkable, quite often undemocratic, elitist, and will cause more dislocation than they realize. We are being held captive by the oil oligarchs and we need to wean ourselves away from these brigands as soon as possible. As a person who is working with communities on sustainability and resiliency, we cannot gut our economies over unproven science and scare tactics. The earth is a dynamic place and there is no solid evidence that man-made actions have either exacerbated global warming or can prevent it. If one assumes there is strong evidence of global warming happening, the most prudent action would be to prepare for it, not become Luddites. We face two greater threats, being impoverished by a future of higher and higher energy costs and the outflow of petro dollars to countries controlled by mostly undemocratic oil oligarchs or going broke as India and China continue to industrialize with our agreement or not. I assume many on the left want us to indulge in trade wars with these economic and physical behemoths! But that would be a fool's journey. Richard J. Garfunkel Host of The Advocates WVOX 1460 AM Radio <http://advocates-wvox.com>

### **There are more factors to**

Wed, 12/23/2009 - 16:14 — Anonymous (not verified)

There are more factors to consider. For example, nuclear power requires a strong central government and a military infrastructure to protect it from terrorism. In other words, nuclear power prevents decentralization and a locally-oriented government. Power moves up the ladder by necessity. We ought to be using benign energy sources like solar and wind which cannot be used for evil purposes and don't require a strong central government. It's going in the wrong direction. Also, the issue is not merely nuclear materials but the attitude of "it doesn't matter" when it comes to energy use. When analyzed deeply, our energy behavior patterns are intimately linked to a "throw-away" consumer society based on private property rather than sustainable communities. Again, nuclear power takes us in the wrong direction. When viewed in terms of direction of evolution, it scores very badly in my opinion.

### **Caldicott is right. Many of**

Wed, 12/23/2009 - 17:12 — Anonymous (not verified)

Caldicott is right. Many of the mainstream environmental groups have sold out, not just to the nuclear industry, but also to the fossil fuel industry. Yes, incredible as it may seem, there are actually more fossil fuel subsidies in the bills they support. It's similar to how many health care reform advocates kept selling out to and compromising with the very industries that have caused the health care crisis, until the resulting bill actually makes the fundamental problems worse. Getting a few good things in a bill that makes the fundamental problem worse is worse than passing nothing at all. It's amazing they are so blind they can't see this. Unfortunately, many in the mainstream environmental movement have not been able to grasp the problem of global warming. They see it in terms of conventional pollution, but it is very different, and a much more serious problem. Obama doesn't get it, the Sierra Club doesn't get it, NRDC doesn't get it, LCV doesn't get it, CREDO doesn't get it. I have been studying global warming for years, and I can guarantee you that they don't have people who know the science like I do. If they did, they would behave in a very different way.

### **You anti-coal activists are**

Wed, 12/23/2009 - 20:32 — Newscorner (not verified)

You anti-coal activists are right on. But open your eyes. We can't afford to continue the coal catastrophe AND we can't continue nuclear fission. Mining and transporting the nuclear fuel produce plenty of CO2. Meanwhile, the nuclear plants produce mountains of poisonous wastes that (on a human time scale) will NEVER go away.

## **The amount of misinformation**

Thu, 12/24/2009 - 03:38 — Tom Blee (not verified)

The amount of misinformation and exaggeration in this article and the comments that follow is staggering. There are reactors that can burn nuclear "waste" as fuel, utilizing uranium with 160 times as much efficiency as the current generation of reactors, and leaving no long-lived nuclear waste. As for proliferation risks and nuclear power, the situation is far from what is characterized here, but those who recognize that nuclear power use is increasing and will continue to do so are working on initiatives for international control so that can be done safely. Denying that nuclear power will be a prominent energy source in the future only precludes many of the people who are concerned about nuclear power issues from participating in and contributing to the creation of such an international regime. The IAEA is a mere shadow of what is necessary to oversee the spread of nuclear power. Don't kid yourself. Nuclear power is here to stay. Let's work together to do it right. You can have a look at a chapter on new reactor technology here: [tinyurl.com/cwvn8n](http://tinyurl.com/cwvn8n) And you can read more here: [tinyurl.com/mmll4s](http://tinyurl.com/mmll4s) A little knowledge is a dangerous thing. More is better.

## **Though I share the spirit of**

Thu, 12/24/2009 - 08:08 — Anonymous (not verified)

Though I share the spirit of Ms. Caldicott's distaste for nuclear weapons, I don't share her distaste for nuclear power. Her argument is logically fallacious regarding proliferation: it's like saying that "Napalm is evil and should be banned. Oil is a major component of napalm. Therefore oil must be banned." Rather, we ban people from making oil into napalm. Another world IS POSSIBLE, and perhaps those who read this article on truthout should know that more than most people. Nuclear weapons are human failures, defects caused by human beings, not by uranium or plutonium. Ms. Caldicott seems to believe that we ought to fear, fear, fear, fear because we don't understand, kind of like an anti-nuclear reflection of a far-right loony tune like Rush Limbaugh going off about SOCIALISM this, SOCIALISM that, yada yada yada. We're all supposed to be scared of socialism, but what is socialism? We don't even know it. What is nuclear power? Do those who are commenting here know it? Perhaps we should get to know it because sometimes knowledge is the antidote to unreasoned fear. Then we can determine whether or not our fear is reasonable and founded, or our fear is unreasonable and can be discarded.

## **Consumers can help solve**

Thu, 12/24/2009 - 13:03 — Anonymous (not verified)

Consumers can help solve this problem. How? By buying efficient appliances and electronics. Also, create a demand for solar panels built into electronics such as laptops and cell phones. Electronic devices are poised to create the biggest energy increase. If we can collectively cut our energy input, even a small amount, no new utilities could ever be built. The old nuclear power plants work, they are expensive, have this cleanup/disposal problem, have potential carcinogenic properties, only last 20 years--yes, perhaps these things can be solved, but why pursue such a complex way to produce power when other less costly methods suffice. Even one failure could wipe out entire states and pollute all of North America.

## **The end products from**

Thu, 12/24/2009 - 21:51 — fred fep (not verified)

The end products from nuclear fission, and this matters not if you can reuse the waste again and again, WILL BE HERE FOR THOUSANDS of years. Nothing you can do will convert it to lead, not quicker than its half life. And to presume any entity in this world will be able to handle and control it on a more massive scale than today, seeing how inefficient the world seems at adequate control of anything, seems presumptively naive and pretty outrageous, and no matter how much you disdain and insult others, nor how well you write, this does not change the science. And truthfully, claims to this effect are as ridiculous as those for "clean coal"

## **Levine says "no nuclear**

Thu, 12/24/2009 - 23:33 — GRLCowan (not verified)

Levine says "no nuclear reactor has been built in America since the 1970s", but in fact quite a few were started in the 80s and since. What has been scarce, in that time, has been nuclear power reactor construction starts that would, upon completion, deprive government of oil and gas income. So lots of naval propulsion reactors have been built. Taxing the oil that the ships would otherwise have burned would amount to one branch of government taxing another. Since there would be no net gain for government in that, and no net loss for the citizens, there has been no hue and cry to prevent naval nuclear power. --- G.R.L. Cowan ('How fire can be domesticated') <http://www.eagle.ca/~gcowan/>

### Fred, the end products from

Sun, 12/27/2009 - 03:43 — Tom Blee (not verified)

Fred, the end products from fast reactors like the IFR will only exceed background radiation levels for a few hundred years, and they'll be entombed in glass so that nothing can leach out into the environment for thousands of years. Thus those waste products will be environmentally benign. But hey, don't let the laws of physics hold you back. Believe whatever you want. But this isn't a matter of belief, it's just straight science. No matter how impassioned you feel about it, it's not going to change.

### What can one say about the

Sun, 12/27/2009 - 19:11 — Alan Muller (not verified)

What can one say about the disastrous meltdown of the mainstream enviro groups? Just how shameful can it get?

### Helen Caldicott has been an

Mon, 12/28/2009 - 03:40 — Conrad Golich (not verified)

Helen Caldicott has been an anti-nuke as long as myself back in the 70's, when we actually met. Our Farallon Project has data about two inventions to SOLVE the radioactive waste problem. It can be used to safely eliminate radwaste anywhere. So whether or not more nuke plants are built, even disposing of nuclear bombs could be done. We did stop the U.S. Navy from dumping old nuke subs in the ocean back in '82. For more info, please contact: [RadwasteNot@webtv.net](mailto:RadwasteNot@webtv.net).

NAME

Your name:

EMAIL

E-mail:

COMMENT

Comment: \*

[More information about formatting options](#)

POST »

Your Email

»

Search truthout

FIND »



- *Autumn of the Republic?*  
by: [Kirk Nielsen](#) | [Miller-McCune](#)
- *What Congress' Health Care Overhaul Likely Means for You*  
by: [Jordan Rau](#) | [Kaiser Health News](#) | [News Analysis](#)
- *In (Very Reluctant) "Defense" of the Insurance Mandate*  
by: [Joshua Holland](#) | [AlterNet](#)
- *Stephen Rohde | We Want Our Flag Back*  
by: [Stephen Rohde](#) | [LA Daily Journal](#)
- *The Racial Diversity of Hunger*  
by: [David Bacon](#) | [East Bay Express](#)
- *Jim Hightower | Hoping for a New Ethic in 2010*  
by: [Jim Hightower](#), [truthout](#) | [Op-Ed](#)
- *A Peek Inside Sarah Palin's Diary*  
by: [Bernard Weiner](#), [truthout](#) | [Op-Ed](#)



**KEEP  
INDEPENDENT  
JOURNALISM  
ALIVE**

**MAKE A TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATION  
TO TRUTHOUT TODAY**