

# Fairness Doctrine Complaint On Energy Policy Filed With FEC

The U.S. Labor Party, the Fusion Energy Foundation, and Colonel Thomas McCrary, a prominent Georgia conservative, filed a complaint April 27 with the Federal Communications Commission against the National Broadcasting Corporation and its New York local affiliate WNBC-TV. The complaint, filed under the Fairness Doctrine, charges that NBC has given issue "favoring conservation as a response to an energy shortage and neglecting to report on the possibilities of advanced nuclear technologies to rapidly expand the energy supply and relieve the relative shortages."

The complaint was filed when NBC and WNBC-TV after stalling for 11 days, flatly refused to allow Labor Party chairman Lyndon LaRouche, Jr. — or for that matter any other well-informed spokesman for controlled fusion energy development — air time to respond to the series of prime-time TV energy policy statements by President Carter during the week of April 20.

NBC has essentially taken the position that there is *no debate* in this country around whether the United States is to devolve into a "conservor society" as proposed by the recent Rockefeller Brothers Fund Report "Unfinished Agenda" put out by the Environmental Agenda Task Force which states: "...and above all, nuclear power is dying. Dying not only because in economic terms it is too capital intensive...but because the more debate that surrounds it, the less viable it becomes as a political reality..."

Despite its policy of "non-debate" on Carter's suicidal national economic austerity policy under the guise of energy "conservation," NBC has unabashedly stated in writing to Labor Party attorneys that in fact it did present "numerous points of views on this subject" (nuclear power).

The facts show otherwise. The USLP complaint cites extensive and exhaustive monitoring of virtually *all* NBC coverage of energy-related questions over the last six months and concludes with regard to the past week's coverage alone that "It would be stretching the imagination far indeed to propose that 35 seconds of news coverage on fusion and no documentary news special coverage on the potential of advanced nuclear technologies could balance against the 23 minutes of news coverage directly devoted to conservation in the same time period or the ten hours of documentary and news special coverage which presented conservation as the necessary response to the energy shortage."

In a related development, Carl Walske, President of the Atomic Industrial Forum, has filed complaints against NBC for highly inaccurate and inflammatory coverage of nuclear power presented in special features like "Danger! Radioactive Waste." Walske also wrote to

NBC stating: "But NBC did not pretend to present a balanced discussion of the facts, experience and plans for handling radioactive waste; instead it resorted to emotionalism, show-biz gimmicks and heavy handed editing to create a classic propaganda piece in the guise of news."

Is NBC biased in favor of Carter's and Schlesinger's energy program? A look at a WNBC-TV editorial on Monday April 25 demonstrates that it is: "We think his (President Carter's) proposals are basically sound and they have our *enthusiastic* support...We need to conserve...There is a danger though. And the danger is *us*..."

The FCC is now considering the complaint.

The complaint is excerpted below.

## *Fairness Doctrine Complaint*

This complaint has been drawn up pursuant to the guidelines established by the Federal Communications Commission in its 1974 Fairness Report.

1. The petitioners' complaint will demonstrate that the National Broadcasting Corporation, hereinafter referred to as NBC, and WNBC-TV have not met their obligations under the fairness doctrine to air the controversial debate on energy policy in a way which provides balanced coverage to both sides in the debate.

The petitioners are aware that debate on energy policy is currently extremely heated, that the outcome of this debate will shape the future energy and economic policies of the nation as well as having a significant impact on international relations, and have acted with dispatch to insure a timely hearing of their complaint and a resolution of this vital issue....

6. NBC responded, after a number of telephone conversations, with a letter from Mrs. Barbara Hering denying the fairness doctrine request for the following reasons: "First, President Carter recognized the need for nuclear power, the position which you appear to favor. Second, NBC has presented numerous points of view on this subject, in compliance with the Fairness Doctrine."

7. WNBC-TV, replying through Mr. Carl Trunk of their legal department, stated that they would adopt the response of Mrs. Hering.

8. The petitioners have filed fairness doctrine requests with the American Broadcasting Corporation and Columbia Broadcasting Systems and reserve the right to file formal complaints dependent on the responses they receive.

9. The controversial issue defined by President Carter three times on national prime-time television during the week of April 18-24, in a similar prime-time address to the nation (fireside chat) on Feb. 2, 1977, in the

featuring spokesmen for the conservation argument or spokesmen opposing nuclear technologies and urging they be limited or abolished....

The major requirement of the fairness doctrine is that the public be informed. All evidence shows that, although NBC and WNBC may not have chosen to present the controversy in the words we have chosen, the basis of the controversy is as we have stated above. Therefore the NBC and WNBC-responses to the requests of petitioners plainly indicate that they do not intend to fulfill their obligations under the fairness doctrine. The U.S. Labor Party request quite explicitly stated the issue the petitioners felt at controversy. That NBC and WNBC did not choose to address themselves directly to that controversy and instead claim, as did NBC, that "President Carter mentioned nuclear energy, which is presumably the position you favor" indicates nothing less than either a totally unreasonable view of the issue in question or bad faith. Given that at least 15 telephone calls and three personal visits were required to elicit any response from NBC over a period of 11 days, one might, not without basis, consider the latter as possible.... While NBC made every effort not to make available records of their programming, as is their right by law, supposedly inaccessible files are freely made available to the public if the individual requesting to see them is not researching a fairness doctrine complaint. It was on the basis of their public availability that our analysis was done.

It should further be emphasized that petitioners fairness doctrine request, did not, as NBC claims, insist upon selecting a spokesman to balance the network and station programming. Instead the petitioner USLP suggested a competent spokesman in order to urge upon the networks their responsibilities to present the other side of the debate....

The petitioners are reasonably confident that NBC and WNBC plan no immediate coverage to remedy the unbalanced coverage they have presented to date. For example, Tom Pettit, a reporter for the Today Show proposed to air the debate as discussed in this complaint by presenting a "face-off" between Carter energy advisor Schlesinger and Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr., USLP Chairman, on the Today Show April 20. His producer, Jim Courtney, refused to schedule such a debate, stating to USLP press coordinator Fay Sober that he would not permit this because "there is no significant debate on the Carter energy policy."

These responses appear even more unreasonable when contrasted with the considerable public support for fair network and local station coverage of the actual possibilities advanced nuclear technologies offer for the resolution of the energy crisis....

Therefore, petitioners ask that the FCC order NBC and WNBC to remedy the deficits in their programming as soon as possible following the receipt of this complaint.

# Executive Intelligence Review

## Press Service Bureaus

### CONTINENTAL HEADQUARTERS

Wiesbaden BRD  
62 W. Schiersteiner Str. 6  
Tel. (06 121) 37 70 81

Mexico City  
Apdo Postal 32-0229  
Mexico, 1, D.F. Mexico  
Tel. (915) 546-3088

New York  
231 W. 29 St.  
N.Y., N.Y. 10001  
Tel. (212) 563-8600

### LATIN AMERICA

COLOMBIA — Bogota  
VENEZUELA — Caracas

### EUROPE

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY —  
Bonn, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Dusseldorf  
BELGIUM — Brussels  
FRANCE — Paris  
ITALY — Rome, Milan, Turin  
SWEDEN — Stockholm  
DENMARK — Copenhagen

### NORTH AMERICA

UNITED STATES — Boston, Charlotte,  
Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington,  
D.C., Detroit, Cleveland, Chicago, Den-  
ver, Seattle, San Francisco  
CANADA — Vancouver, Toronto,  
Montreal

**Subscription Rates for  
New Solidarity International Press Service  
Executive Intelligence Review**

**Executive Intelligence Review  
P.O. Box 1972, GPO  
New York, N.Y. 10001**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

\$ 60  for three months

\$115  for six months

\$225  for one year