

Amory Lovins: 'Europe Has Neanderthal Pro-Nuclear Policy'

AMORY LOVINS, FRIENDS OF THE EARTH-GREAT BRITAIN: Lovins operates, from his official position as director of the Friends of the Earth-Great Britain, as an international traveler-agent for the Rockefeller banks' international "environmentalist" private intelligence outfit with branches in 20 countries.

Lovins has succeeded in generating internal dissent and squabbling over nuclear issues in advanced sector governments including Great Britain, France, West Germany and Sweden. His crankish dissertation, "Energy Strategy: The Road Not Taken" was published by *Foreign Affairs*, the journal of the New York Council on Foreign Relations in 1976 and was integrated in the Council's economic policy. Lovins has more recently elaborated his "renewable resource alternatives" in a book, *Soft Energy Path*, which proposes replacing electric power grids with small decentralized generators and heaters utilizing solar, wind, firewood and similar energy sources.

Q. Can you give me a picture of where the anti-nuclear fight stands at this point, especially in Europe?

A. First let me comment on the U.S.: the main problem here is that the Carter policy came out in pieces. First there was his energy conservation speech, then the nuclear export bill, then the strategic arms initiative; so it has been piecemeal and uneven. The State Department is aware of this and are trying to fix up the problem, but it would have been much easier if it had been done right in the first place.

General comments on Europe: the official view is that nuclear electric power development is of a high priority for Europe to get off of the OPEC hook. There has been no fundamental re-examination of energy and nuclear power needs — what is really needed is low temperature heat, and liquid fuel for transportation. There is also a serious technical misunderstanding in Europe. They think that nuclear fuel reprocessing is necessary to solve the waste problem. They are less concerned about the problem of proliferation and radiation dangers.

Q. So you are fighting an uphill battle.

A. Well there are encouraging developments. The perceptions which turned us around here on the nuclear question are now oozing into European consciousness.

Q. Let's go through the situation country by country.

A. All right. In Great Britain the domestic nuclear program is in great disarray. There have been no new nuclear orders since 1970 so you can imagine the economic bind they are in. Recently the UK atomic authority told me that they were facing a total collapse.

The major opposition right now is concentrated around the Windscale Inquiry into the proposed expansion of reprocessing facilities for Japan and other countries. It would not be surprising if the expansion was refused. It is

definitely an open question.

The Windscale thing represents the first public debate in England over the nuclear power issue, so this shows the rapid growth of anti-nuclear activity.

This shift in the British nuclear outlook came when Callaghan went to meet with Carter with a complete misperception of Carter's knowledge of the nuclear question. At the meeting it turned out that Carter knew more about the nuclear energy situation and problems than all of Callaghan's advisors put together, so when he got back to Britain he started to shake things up. Also, of course, David Owen has a personal interest in the matter, which helps. (David Owen is the British Foreign Minister —ed.)

Q. How so?

A. Well, uh, he has been interested in the issue for a number of years.

Q. A decision to refuse expansion of Windscale would then go a long way to economically undercut international nuclear development?

A. More politically than economically. You see, the Japanese want the Windscale reprocessing so that they can tell their people that the waste is out of the country. The Japanese have a terrible problem with this as well as siting reactors. Every time there is an attempt to site a reactor there are mass protests.

Friends of the Earth-Great Britain is the major intervenor into the Windscale hearings, along with the National Resources Defense Council European project; they are sending a group over to testify along with Albert Wohlstetter and Gene Rochlin, an Arms Control and Disarmament Agency contractor. There is also an ad hoc coalition of anti-nuclear groups called CANTO which is intervening, though not very effectively.

France: Recently there have been cutbacks in their nuclear program by about one-half. Essentially their program is as large as the Shah (Iran) is willing to pay for. The Super-Phenix fast breeder is being rushed through in para-military fashion at a rather alarming rate. This is drawing the Socialist Party's attention and they are taking an active interest in the nuclear issue now. Recently the government official in charge of constructing light water reactors told me there is a one-in-three chance that the reactors will get built. The official who monitors choosing sites for reactors now says that of the six sites which have been designated for new reactors, at least four of them are in severe local political trouble from angry farmers and residents.

The way this site choosing works is that the government announced about 30 potential sites while going ahead with construction at a few of them. What this has done is to coalesce local anti-nuclear resistance at every one of the 30 sites, building overall resistance around the country. This was a major political blunder by the government.

There is also resistance extending into the top levels of

the French government, including the Finance Minister (presumably deputy minister Durafour—ed.) and Foreign Minister (Guiringaud) who have second thoughts about nuclear development. In fact one senior cabinet member has commissioned me to prepare a soft energy path study for France. The head of the Environment Conservation Program, Jean Syrota, is having a big fight with the Electricité

company — ed.) There is an article in *Le Point* Jan. 10, which is good on the overall situation you should look at.

Also the French reprocessing plant in the north has been shut down for some time now with a strike over health and safety issues.

Belgium: Here there is a new government every week or so, so I don't have a clear understanding of what the latest developments are. I do know that the new government broke its promises to the environmental groups. Also in the interim a Euro Chemtec reprocessing plant in Mol has been shut until certain decisions are made.

West Germany: Right now there is a temporary moratorium on any new nuclear construction until the waste issue is solved. Certain plants already under construction have still got permission to keep building. Recently the German courts have been favoring the anti-nuclear intervenors and taking their suits seriously with some good results; especially effective was the U.S. team of experts headed by Bob Pollard who made a strong case against the existing safety requirements.

Also the Science and Technology Minister, Matthöfer, is a surprising point of resistance against nuclear development. I met with him around a month ago and he is extremely pro-conservation and wants renewable energy sources. His party has more recently backed him into a corner over the freezing of the breeder budget but the pressure seems to be lifting.

One of the main problems is the Germans have a paramilitary nuclear outlook. For example, the energy ministry building is surrounded by barbed wire, armed guards, etc., like an armed camp. Frankly I think that the government has brought on a lot of the terrorist attacks by this kind of approach, though I'm not saying the Germans don't have a particularly nasty brand of terrorists; but I think that in Britain we have equally dangerous terrorists like the IRA, but British maintain security without it being so visible. This armed camp approach is a provocation which brings on terrorist response.

The anti-nuclear activists are spied on, their phones tapped and their mail opened. It is a very ugly situation. Recently the Chancellor of Germany (Helmut Schmidt) made a national statement that the government had determined that nuclear power was inevitable and that there was no legitimate reason for debate. What he said in essence was that now every good German should shut up on nuclear energy. Most of the anti-nuclear demonstrations have been provoked.

Perhaps you remember the case of Traube, who lost his job in the science ministry and it later turned out that he had been spied on by the secret police. There was a big stink around it and the government finally apologized to Traube for the spying, but he still lost his job.

Even more ridiculous was a rumor put out by the government that the anti-nuclear groups were funded by East Germany. I mean, this is really absurd and everyone knew it.

Q. Could you describe the nature of the anti-nuclear groups who is involved, what organizations and so forth?

A. It's diverse, there are some highly responsible figures and some left-wing groups who want to use the environmental movement for their own purposes. However, much of the movement is non-violent and committed to it. The press has played up the small violent fringe to attempt to discredit the environmentalists.

Probably the most prominent group in Germany is the Citizens Initiative headed up by Karl Wustenhagen, a pharmacist with a strong character. He's great in debates and a good organizer. But mainly what has been done is that the environmentalists have set up excellent phone nets where they can mobilize 30,000 people to a site within hours.

Q: How do they get so many?

A. Local people, surprisingly enough — mainly conservative farmers and other local people. There's one thing that you should know about how the Germans, and the French, handle these construction sites. They just move in with barbed wire and bulldozers overnight and you wake up in the morning to find an armed camp with barbed wire fences, spotlights, guard towers already set up. So it is important and we have had a lot of success with these phone nets in mobilizing people on the spot to block the bulldozers and block roads and so forth. You should also know that these people are not around the same level of issues. They are mainly concerned about thermal pollution. This is a much bigger issue than, say, the safety problems, and even nuclear waste. For instance, the grape farmers in southern France are legitimately concerned that if there is more steam in the air, it will block out sunlight and ruin their wine. It is also an international question where several countries use the same river to cool their reactor and the last country on the river ends up getting tap water at near boiling temperature.

Holland: They have a small nuclear program with a general lack of support. I saw a poll from about six months ago which showed a 60-40 ratio against nuclear development. Their anti-nuclear activity has been low-key but very effective, run by something called the "Reflection Group" which is made up of academics, industrialists and theologians who put out papers against nuclear power. Every time the parliament decided to bring up a resolution for continued development these people go out with their papers and get them around and the issue is postponed again.

Switzerland: Before I go into this I should mention that there are several state and municipal jurisdictions which have vetoed any nuclear development within their jurisdiction. This has happened in Holland, France, and Switzerland already.

Switzerland has probably the largest nuclear program

per capita than anywhere in the world, which is ridiculous. They already have enough hydro and other forms of power for all their needs and could only want more if they wanted to corner the world market in aluminum refining or something. There is now an initiative which is to be voted on by the population of the canton of either Berne or Basle, I can't remember which.

Norway and Denmark: Have no nuclear programs to speak of. Norway builds a reactor every five years or so and Denmark is very much into renewables.

Sweden: This is a complicated situation. You know that the Center Party government was elected on an anti-nuclear platform, which they went against for several months. However, recently the prime minister has made a statement that he will make no more compromises with the nuclear industry and if he is forced into it he will resign and take his campaign to the people. They are now trying to get some momentum back into the environmentalist movement around conservation and alternative energy sources. There is actually a good situation with several experimental technologies being tested out. For example a fluidized bed is going on line in October in Enköping which will burn anything. There are also solar, wind and wood renewables being tested out. I have spent a lot of time in Sweden working with these alternative projects.

Spain: There is a large anti-nuclear movement here that I don't know much about yet, but it seems that they are doing a lot. Of course the Basques and ETA (an anarchist-terrorist group — ed.) have taken anti-nuclear issues for their own nationalist cause, which confuses things a bit — like the Breton separatists in northern France who have bombed a half-dozen nuclear facilities, causing substantial damage, nothing to cause a serious accident, but major damage.

Italy: Italy has a large paper nuclear program but absolutely no money to finance it. I don't think that anybody really believes that they will ever build anything.

Q. It is clear that you are a major figure in the anti-nuclear movement. Are there any others who should be identified as the important leaders of this movement?

A. Well there is of course Wald Patterson in the Friends of the Earth-Great Britain, Robert Jung in Germany ... well look we held a major conference in Salzburg, Austria in May where every significant person attended.

I suggest you call Jeff Knight at the Friends of the Earth in Washington and he'll give you that list. The most important group I want to mention is in France, where the CFDT has taken an interest in anti-nuclear activities. This is ironic, since they are the union of the electric company. Personally I think that France will be easier to crack than Germany, despite what the situation appears to be.

I should bring up the European Economic Community here. The EEC has a neanderthal policy toward nuclear energy. One hopeful development is that EEC director Brunner will hold hearings this autumn. However, the International Atomic Energy Agency and the EEC are under pressure from Germany and France to stifle the nuclear opposition by proposing that these organizations be responsible for nuclear development for all Europe. This is a way of letting the various countries off the hook, so they can tell their protesters to stop complaining to them and go complain to the EEC, which of course no one has the capacity to do.

Q. What are the upcoming situations to watch and where can the environmental movement move its cause forward?

A. First of all we are arranging an exchange program between the Swedish and New England environmentalist groups. In New England they have a lot of capability but are short on technological know-how. Whereas it is the reverse in Sweden, where they have all the technology but have a hard time organizing for it.

Also the UN Economic Commission for Europe is going to be preparing a major energy study for Europe. This is not just for Western Europe but includes Central Europe and parts of Eastern Europe as well. I will be working on that as the senior advisor.

Q. Are the European groups tied together through any umbrella organizations? How does liaison work between countries?

A. It is informal, which is the great success of it. We are not bureaucratized like the energy departments and thus are able to communicate information and get things done much faster than they are. This freaks them out. There is one liaison I can think of between the OOA in Sweden headed by a guy named Christensen who coordinates the German and Scandinavian networks, being bilingual; this has worked well.

I suggest that you get hold of my book *Soft Energy Paths*, which you can get from the Friends of the Earth in either Washington or California.