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Secret Defence Document.

Suicide crash dangerous for pressurised water reactors.

The « Sortir du Nucléaire » Group has in its possession a secret defence document of EDF, the French Electricity Board, which clearly admits the danger to pressurised water reactors (PWR) in the event of a suicide crash.

Because Madame Lauvergeon, Director General of AREVA, constructor of the reactor, maintains that it is built to resist to a commercial plane suicide crash, the group considers imperative to reveal the truth of the situation by publishing the contents of the secret defence document.

Extracts from the Electricity Board's letter accompanying the document

With the secret defence document, dated February 22nd 2003, is a letter from Bruno Lescoeur who was at that time director of the Energy Department of the Electricity Board. This letter is in itself a revelation :

1) A « reasonable » response to risk

Extract : The study of different possibilities concerning an impact should induce a reasonable response to the risk incurred and will not be able to take into consideration each and every possibility »

Comment from « Sortir du Nucléaire » : a « reasonable response » to the risk in the event of an impact is an incomplete response. A suicide crash on a pressurised water reactor could produce a nuclear catastrophe.

2) Keep the truth of the matter hidden from the public

Extract : The different scenarios studied, the rules and analysis used to do so should not appear in the security reports immediately available or which could become available to the public.

Comment from « Sortir du Nucléaire » : the Electricity Board Directors wish to hide the truth from the public. The information is nevertheless of prime importance : if the pressurised water reactor is to be constructed it will be the first one built since September 11th 2001. As such it is absolutely imperative that it be able to resist to a suicide crash.

Copy of the letter from the Electricity Board accompanying the secret defence document on the pressurised water reactor

*Bruno Lescoeur
Director Energy Department EDF
Site Cap Ampère, 1 place Pleyel
93282 SAINT-DENIS CEDEX*

*To The Director of Radioprotection and Nuclear Security
6 place du Colonel Bourgoïn,
75572 PARIS
Paris, August 12th 2003*

Dear Sir,

In your letter , you ask me to examine the EPR reactor capacity of resistance to/to withstand an potential commercial plane crash, and then to make any necessary suggestions.

Very quickly after the September 11th attacks in the USA, the EDF made a point of analysing the problem and in particular with regards to the conception/design of the EPR.

As you note in your letter, the new project takes into account resistance to a military plane crash, which is already a heavy charge. For this, the designers have chosen functional and geographical building plans taking account of such accidents. The project has 4 trains which are completely separate, and a part of the construction is " bunkerised " : in particular the buildings containing the reactor and used nuclear fuel, and one building containing 2 of the 4 safeguards trains (electrical and mechanical parts).

The " bunkerised " part, designed to resist to the impact of a military plane, presents a high resistance and especially with regards to perforation : a military plane is considered to be the equivalent of a perforating missile.

All this gives to the EPR an important capacity to resist to the impact of a commercial plane, so no change has been made in the construction plans.

Despite this capacity for resistance to plane accidents, it is nevertheless necessary to note that EDF is not in a position to ensure resistance to eventual war or terrorist action. Prevention or limitation of such action and its possible results involve State responsibility

In this case

- The controls concerning resistance to such accidents and any necessary supplementary measures are to be considered as outside the (normal)design basis of the building, and I am obliged to place this situation amongst the " Risk Reduction Categories "*
- The study of different possibilities concerning an impact should induce a reasonable response to the risk incurred and will not be able to take into consideration/cover each and every possibility. Furthermore, the measures should, in my opinion, be in complete coherence with the measures adopted internationally, and should not be too different from the measures adopted for other industrial risks.*

I also consider that the different scenarios studied, the rules and analysis used to do so should not appear in the security reports immediately available or which could become available to the public. Precisions concerning this general logic are to be found in the joined annex. And, added to this, in order to decide or control the design basis of the protective construction/shear wall of the " bunkerised " part of the building, it will be necessary to define a reference impact load.

This reference, whilst generally covering the case of the sort of planes which could crash in the event of an intentional action, should not be associated directly to a particular plane nor to a particular speed of impact. It should correspond to a general hypothesis based on criteria and calculation of a general and conventional nature.

For this reason I propose to retain as the reference the impact charge given in the annex which represents the risks reasonably considered possible by the sorts of planes in European skies.

*Yours faithfully,
B. LESCOEUR.*

CONCLUSIONS

1) If built, the reactor will be the first since September 11th 2001. Its resistance to suicide crashes should be imperative.

The different EPR projects are all on coastline sites (Flamanville , Penly and Paluel, Gravelines) and all are directly accessible to hijacked planes.

" Sortir du Nucléaire " reiterates its demand for the declassification of the Secret Defence document. In the event of a refusal, the group is studying the possibility of publishing the document nevertheless, especially during the public debate.

2) The sale of a part of EDF funds, first step towards privatisation, is done in order to finance the construction of new reactors.

Keep in mind that nuclear plants are privatised in several countries (USA, Great Britain, Japan). Unlike what is maintained round and about us, nuclear power does not protect EDF from privatisation !

3) In fact, nuclear power is extremely costly for France

" For many years, French people have been contributing, through their taxes to the development of nuclear power " (Patrick Devedjian, Minister of Industry, January 2nd 2005,JDD). This contribution does not appear on EDF bills, giving the impression that nuclear produced electricity is very cheap. But the situation is much worse : dismantling of nuclear plant and stockage of nuclear waste, problems still not resolved, will be backlog bombshells, especially financially.

4) Nuclear power does not protect France from either climate changes or the rise in the price of petrol

The proof is there : heat wave in 2003, draught in 2005 and the price of petrol for cars at the moment ! In fact, nuclear power only adds other problems : risks of catastrophe, nuclear waste legated to future generations, arms proliferation, excessive costs, etc.

In order to pass on a planet fit for life to the future generations, to replace fossilised energy sources and nuclear power (world uranium reserves are diminishing), three huge projects must be put into action, at the same time, especially in the rich countries where there is the most waste : energy efficiency, energy saving, renewable energy .