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WORLD - 53-NATION NUCLEAR POWER 'EVALUATION' PREPARES TO FACE KEY ISSUES

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MUNICH, NOVEMBER 17 - (USICA) - THE FOLLOWING IS AN ITEM BY HUGH O. MUIR, USICA SECURITY AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT.

WASHINGTON -- PREPARING FOR THE FIRST ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE 53-NATION INTERNATIONAL NUCLEAR FUEL CYCLE EVALUATION (INFCE), THE UNITED STATES HAS LISTED WHAT IT SEES AS THE KEY ISSUES ARISING FROM THIS TWO-YEAR EFFORT TO BRING NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION UNDER CONTROL.

THE GENERAL REVIEW SESSION BEGINS NOVEMBER 27 AT THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY IN VIENNA, CAPPING MORE THAN 100 MEETINGS HELD BY INFCE'S "WORKING GROUPS" IN THE 13 MONTHS SINCE THE EVALUATION WAS ORGANIZED. A SECOND AND FINAL GENERAL REVIEW SESSION IS PLANNED FOR THE WINTER OF 1980.

"DIFFERING VIEWS ARE INDEED BEING EXPRESSED," ALBERT CARNESALE, A HIGH U.S. DELEGATE TO INFCE, SAID NOVEMBER 15. "WHILE I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT SOME OF THESE DIFFERENCE WILL BE RESOLVED, SOME ARE BOUND TO PERSIST THROUGH THE END OF THE TWO-YEAR EXERCISE."

THE KEY ISSUES, MR. CARNESALE TOLD THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE ATOMIC INDUSTRIAL FORUM MEETING IN WASHINGTON, HAVE EMERGED AS FOLLOWS:

- THE RATE OF GROWTH OF NUCLEAR POWER.
- THE NEED FOR ADDITIONAL NATIONS TO ACQUIRE THEIR OWN URANIUM FUEL ENRICHMENT PLANTS.
- THE CONDITIONS TO BE IMPOSED BY SUPPLIERS OF NUCLEAR FUELS ON RECIPIENTS.
- THE BENEFITS AND COSTS OF RECYCLING NUCLEAR FUEL IN LIGHT WATER REACTORS (AT PRESENT ALL ONCE-THROUGH SYSTEMS).
- THE SAFETY AND PROLIFERATION RISKS OF LONG-TERM STORAGE OF SPENT NUCLEAR FUEL.
- THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES IN THE MANAGEMENT OF NUCLEAR WASTE IF REPROCESSING OF THE WASTE IS CARRIED OUT.
- THE LEAD-TIMES NECESSARY FOR THE COMMERCIAL APPLICATION OF ADVANCE REACTOR SYSTEMS.
- THE TIMING OF BREEDER REACTOR COMMERCIALIZATION.

ON THE ISSUE OF THE BREEDER REACTOR -- WHICH "BREEDS" MORE PLUTONIUM FUEL THAN IT BURNS, THUS INCREASING THE AVAILABILITY OF WEAPONS-GRADE MATERIAL -- MR. CARNESALE POINTED OUT THAT WHILE THE UNITED STATES HAS RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE BREEDER IS IT NOT TRYING TO USE INFCE TO BLOCK ITS DEVELOPMENT.

"I THINK THAT THE DIFFERENCES INFCE COULD HAVE ON THE FUTURE OF THE BREEDER," HE SAID IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS FROM REPRESENTATIVES OF THE U.S. ATOMIC INDUSTRY, "IS IN THE SHAPE OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BREEDER PROGRAM LATER ON, IN THE RATE AT WHICH ADDITIONAL COUNTRIES GET BREEDER REACTORS AND THE INSTITUTIONALIZING THAT IS REQUIRED TO DEAL WITH THE BREEDER ECONOMY."

IN ANY CASE, HE SAID, "THE PURPOSE OF INFCE IS NOT TO STOP THE BREEDER. IF IT WERE IT WOULD NOT HAVE 53 COUNTRIES PARTICIPATING, INCLUDING WEST GERMANY, FRANCE, THE SOVIET UNION AND MANY OTHERS."

ASKED IF THE UNITED STATES WOULD SUPPORT AN INFCE RECOMMENDATION FOR MULTINATIONAL FACILITIES (PTO) EC

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TO REPROCESS SPENT NUCLEAR FUEL, MR. CARNESALE SAID IT WOULD DEPEND ON WHAT THE ALTERNATIVES ARE, DESPITE PRESENT U.S. RETICENCE OVER DEVELOPMENT OF ANY REPROCESSING PLANTS.

"IF THE CHOICES WAS BETWEEN THE SPREAD AMONG MANY COUNTRIES OF NATIONAL FACILITIES FOR REPROCESSING AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF MULTINATIONAL FACILITIES," HE SAID, "CLEARLY ONE WOULD NOT HAVE TO BE A POLITICAL GENIUS TO COME TO A CONCLUSION THAT FACILITIES UNDER EFFECTIVE MULTINATIONAL CONTROL ARE SUBSTANTIALLY BETTER."

AND, HE CONTINUED, "IF WE LOOK AHEAD TO BREEDER ECONOMIES THAT WILL REQUIRE A SUBSTANTIAL REPROCESSING INDUSTRY, IT IS OBVIOUS THAT MULTINATIONAL REPROCESSING FACILITIES WOULD THEN GET VERY SERIOUS CONSIDERATION."

EVEN THOUGH THE INFCE IS STILL IN ITS FIRST PHASE MR. CARNESALE SAID, IT HAS PASSED THROUGH THE PROCEDURAL STAGE AND "OUR MEETINGS ARE NOW DOMINATED BY SUBSTANCE." TO THAT POINT, HE DESCRIBED THE OCTOBER MEETING OF THE 22-NATION TECHNICAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE -- THE BODY WHICH COORDINATES THE WORK OF INFCE'S EIGHT WORKING GROUPS AND ON WHICH MR. CARNESALE IS THE CHIEF U.S. REPRESENTATIVE.

"AT LAST MONTH'S MEETING," HE SAID, "THE SUBJECT OF THE MOST INTENSIVE AND LENGTHY DISCUSSION WAS PROLIFERATION RISK ASSESSMENT. PHRASES LIKE 'WEAPON-USABLE MATERIALS,' 'PROLIFERATION RESISTANCE' AND 'DETECTABILITY' ARE NOW ACCEPTED FOR USE IN INTERNATIONAL DISCOURSE. AND NOT JUST BY THE UNITED STATES, BUT BY MANY NATIONS WHO SHARE OUR PROLIFERATION CONCERNS."

MR. CARNESALE REMINDED HIS AUDIENCE THAT INFCE "IS NOT JUST A STUDY OF NUCLEAR ENERGY FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES; NOR IS IT JUST A STUDY OF THE PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS."

RATHER, HE CONTINUED, "IT IS AN EXPLORATION OF WAYS IN WHICH NUCLEAR ENERGY CAN BE MADE AVAILABLE TO MEET WORLD ENERGY NEEDS WHILE MINIMIZING ANY ATTENDANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE SPREAD OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS."

AND FINALLY, HE POINTED OUT, "INFCE IS A TECHNICAL AND ANALYTICAL STUDY RATHER THAN A NEGOTIATION. IN INSTANCES WHERE COMMON VIEWS EMERGE, THE CONSENSUS IS TO BE EXPRESSED. BUT ANY PARTICIPANT IS ENTITLED TO EXPRESS A DISSENTING VIEW. PARTICIPANTS WILL NOT BE BOUND BY INFCE'S RESULTS."

THEREFORE, MR. CARNESALE SAID, "TO EXPECT INFCE TO ELIMINATE FOREVER THE PROBLEM OF POTENTIAL MISUSE OF NUCLEAR FUEL CYCLE FACILITIES IS TO EXPECT TOO MUCH."

BUT, HE CONCLUDED, "TO EXPECT INFCE TO ACCOMPLISH NOTHING BECAUSE THERE IS NO PERFECT SOLUTION TO THE PROLIFERATION PROBLEM IS TO EXPECT TOO LITTLE. IN THIS FIELD, AS IN MOST OTHERS, IMPERFECT SOLUTIONS CAN BE FAR MORE THAN ADEQUATE."

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