

ATOM - *discovery*
Werner Zorn

FF012

1977

100510/77

E/W -- MOSCOW REJECTS CARTER'S CALL TO CONTROL PLUTONIUM
WASHINGTON, MAY 10 (SPECIAL) -- THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE BY BERNARD
D. NOSSITER APPEARS TODAY IN THE WASHINGTON POST:

SALZBURG, AUSTRIA, MAY 9 -- THE SOVIET UNION TODAY REJECTED
PRESIDENT CARTER'S BID TO FOREGO THE PLUTONIUM ECONOMY AND ITS
THREATENED SPREAD OF ATOMIC WEAPONS.

A SOVIET OFFICIAL, VLADIMIR SHMIDT, TOLD AN INTERNATIONAL
NUCLEAR POWER CONFERENCE HERE THAT "PLUTONIUM MUST BE USED."
THE SOVIET UNION, HE SAID, WILL PRESS ON WITH ITS FAST-BREEDER
REACTORS THAT CREATE MORE PLUTONIUM THAN THEY USE UP AS FUEL.
THE SOVIET UNION IS BELIEVED TO HAVE ONE FAST-BREEDER OPERATING
COMMERCIALY AND A FAMILY OF SMALLER ONES FOR EXPERIMENTS.
HIS STATEMENT CAME AS NO SURPRISE TO U.S. OFFICIALS HERE,
ALTHOUGH THEY SAID IT WAS THE FIRST TIME THAT MOSCOW HAD RESPONDED IN
PUBLIC TO THE PRESIDENT'S EXAMPLE.

LAST MONTH CARTER ANNOUNCED THAT THE UNITED STATES WOULD
INDEFINITELY POSTPONE COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF ITS OWN FAST-BREEDER
AND SEEK A FUEL OTHER THAN PLUTONIUM. HE ALSO WARNED OF THE DANGERS
FROM A PLUTONIUM AGE.

PLUTONIUM, AN ELEMENT CREATED IN NUCLEAR REACTORS, IS ONE OF THE
FISSIONABLE OR SPLITTABLE MATERIALS FROM WHICH AN ATOMIC BOMB CAN BE
MADE EASILY. FAST-BREEDERS ARE ATTRACTIVE TO NATIONS CONCERNED ABOUT
THE LIMITED SUPPLY OF URANIUM, THE VITAL ELEMENT IN CONVENTIONAL
NUCLEAR PLANTS.

CARTER FEARS THAT THE SPREAD OF FAST-BREEDERS WILL ENDOW NATIONS
WITH A BOMB-MAKING CAPACITY THAT THEY NOW LACK.

SHMIDT, WHO SPOKE AT THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON NUCLEAR
POWER AND ITS FUEL CYCLE, SPONSORED BY THE UNITED NATIONS'
INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY, IS A RANKING OFFICIAL IN MOSCOW'S
UNION INSTITUTE OF INORGANIC MATERIALS.

HE BLUNTLY DISMISSED THE PROLIFERATION PROBLEM, SAYING:
"PROBLEMS OF PROLIFERATION DO NOT CONCERN US SO MUCH", BECAUSE "WE ARE
A SOCIALIST SOCIETY."

SHMIDT INDICATED THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD USE PLUTONIUM BECAUSE
URANIUM IS LIMITED, AND HE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THEY WOULD NOT SLACKEN
THEIR WORK ON FAST-BREEDERS.

IN PRIVATE, SOVIET OFFICIALS WERE LESS HARD-LINE, POINTING OUT
THAT CARTER'S RENUNCIATION IS ONLY A MOTH OLD AND THAT MOSCOW IS
STILL DIGESTING ITS IMPLICATIONS.

IN ANY EVENT, THEY AID, THE SOVIET UNION IS A CENTRALLY PLANNED
ECONOMY THAT MAKES INVESTMENT DECISIONS YEARS IN ADVANCE AND CANNOT
SIMPLY TURN OFF A MAJOR PROGRAM IN AN INSTANT.

OTHER DELEGATIONS HERE, WHILE LESS BLUNT THAN SHMIDT, MADE IT
CLEAR THAT THEY HAVE NO INTENTION OF FOLLOWING THE CARTER LEAD. SIR
JOHN HILL, CHAIRMAN OF BRITAIN'S ATOMIC ENERGY AUTHORITY, THREW COLD
WATER ON U.S. SUGGESTIONS THAT ANOTHER FUEL, PHORIUM, COULD BE
SUBSTITUTED FOR PLUTONIUM. TOO MUCH, HE INDICATED, HAD ALREADY BEEN
INVESTED IN EXISTING TECHNOLOGY TO JUNK IT. (PTO) BY
(THE ABOVE WILL APPEAR IN THE FEATURE FILE.)

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E/W -- (1) -- MOSCOW REJECTS CARTER'S CALL TO CONTROL PLUTONIUM

FRENCH, BELGIAN AND JAPANESE SPOKESMEN ALSO MADE IT CLEAR THAT THEY ARE DEVOTED TO PLUTONIUM. AS ONE SAID, THE ONLY THING TO DO WITH PLUTONIUM IS "BURN IT," AS A NUCLEAR FUEL.

ONE LONE DISSIDENTING VOICE, HANNES ALEVEN, A NOBEL PRIZE-WINNING PHYSICIST FROM SWEDEN, TOLD THEM THAT EXISTING NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY "IS OBSOLTE AND SHOULD BE PHASED OUT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE."

IT IS, HE SAID, "A SERIOUS THREAT TO HUMAN ECOLOGY" BECAUSE IT IS INEXPLICABLY LINKED TO THE PRODUCTION "OF ENORMOUS QUANTITIES OF RADIOACTIVELY POISONOUS SUBSTANCES" AND THE MAKING OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS.

"THE BEST SCIENTISTS, ALEVEN SAID, NO LONGER GO INTO THE FIELD, SO SECOND-RATERS ARE NOW DEALING WITH THE COMPLEX PROBLEMS THAT NUCLEAR ENERGY POSES.

ANOTHER NOBLE PRIZE-WINNING PHYSICIST, HANS BETHE OF CORNELL, TOLD THEM THAT "EXAGGERATION, DEMAGOGUERY AND EMOTIONALISM" MARK THE FOES OF NUCLEAR POWER. THE PROPONENTS, HE SAID, HAVE ALL THE BEST ARGUMENTS.

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