



KIMO RESOLUTION 5/01

Presented by KIMO UK

TRANSPORTATION OF NUCLEAR WASTE BY SEA AND AIR (ARCTIC ROUTE)

An important development has taken place over the past year concerning the transportation of nuclear wastes and other hazardous materials, namely the proposal that the Russian north coast Arctic route might be used for such shipments between Europe and the Far East, in particular Japan.

The nuclear cargoes concerned are: new fuel, including plutonium MOX fuel, from the UK and France to Japan and other Asian customers; the return of highly radioactive spent fuel from Asian reactors to Europe for reprocessing in the UK and France; and the return of high-level reprocessing wastes from the UK and France to Asian customers. All these shipments already take place along routes using either the Panama Canal, Cape Horn or the Cape of Good Hope.

The proposal has been studied by a number of agencies and is supported within Russia as a potential source of foreign income for the country's (nuclear) ice-breaking fleet and from the provision of facilities along the northern Arctic coast. To date the nuclear industry has made no commitment to using the route, but if further studies and trials proved successful the proposal would appear attractive to the nuclear industry because it avoids the increasing opposition to such shipments by national states and communities along existing routes. Vessels carrying such cargoes are already banned from many national waters and ports.

The suggested routes pass close to one of the most densely populated areas in the world and will cross some of the busiest shipping lanes, therefore increasing the potential for collision. Possible routes to Japan include; through the English Channel and the North Sea, the Irish Sea, or west of Ireland into the North East Atlantic Ocean; all of which pass through oilfields and/or fishing grounds.

The lack of emergency planning in the event of a marine accident involving nuclear material; the questionable integrity of the flasks used to transport nuclear fuel; and evidence that ship borne fires last longer on average and at a more intense heat than the safety criteria used in flask stress tests are major issues. The question of liability and compensation in the event of a nuclear accident at sea from cash strapped Russia is also a major concern.

Recognising the enormous environmental dangers of the proposal to use Russia's northern Arctic coastal route for nuclear shipments,

Urges

(1) the Governments of Europe, the European Commission and other agencies to raise these concerns in the International Maritime Organisation and other relevant agencies and to take all possible steps to prevent this route being used for hazardous shipments; and to urge the UK and French Governments to prevent their nuclear industries from any further involvement in this proposal.

KIMO members;

(1) agree to submit this Resolution to all National Governments, the European Commission and other relevant agencies.

*This Resolution was agreed unanimously by Delegates at the 11th KIMO International Annual General Meeting in Göteborg, Sweden on October 14th 2001 and became KIMO policy upon that date.

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