

## Energy Insider by William Engdahl

### Kooks and nukes: They don't mix

*Aspen had a wonderful strategy to eliminate nuclear power, and with it, they crippled American strength . . . but no one else's.*

The other day, I met a leading geopolitical strategist of the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies in Colorado. I have mentioned Aspen before. Its chairman and principal piggy-bank is "oilman" Robert O. Anderson of Atlantic Richfield. Anderson thinks more like a British peer than an energy producer, and is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations.

Although little known, Aspen is a very important policy generating operation—for instance, it mothered the ideology of "environmentalism." Aspen has consistently stood for an end to progress in human affairs; to put it bluntly, a "New Dark Age." The institution has never issued a single memorandum, proposal or policy statement that I could agree with.

As I spoke with this particular, well-known personage, I was struck by how short-sighted these "Olympian" strategists are. In 1978, this man told a friend of mine: "The bloom is off the nuclear rose. We at Aspen were the first to develop the argument that nuclear energy means weapons proliferation." He was referring to the Carter administration's adoption of Aspen's strategy to contain and eventually destroy nuclear energy. Carter halted nuclear technology's next generation—the fast breeder and spent fuel reprocessing. The problem I raised to him is that no one else did.

Viewing Washington with

stunned amazement, the French strengthened their commitment to nuclear development and now have the most advanced fast breeder program in the world. The Soviet Union, eyeing Washington's ludicrous behavior, mobilized a crash escalation of their light water, breeder, and fusion programs. West Germany is now discussing with Moscow a program for energy cooperation reportedly featuring high temperature gas reactor applications.

I gently pointed out that solar, biomass and other negative "Olympian" energy strategies from Aspen had made America the world's laughing stock. It is difficult for many people to believe that some other people want a "New Dark Age." What everyone sees, however, is that American policy is destroying the nation. He defended himself, but was clearly shaken by the nagging perception of his organization's miscalculations. The world didn't bite on Aspen policy, and the U.S., because it did, no longer has the technological and industrial base to launch an effort.

"Carter is an absolute disaster, Brzezinski is a knee-jerk strategist," said the strategist, who is tied to the Kennedy campaign. I pointed out Kennedy's antinuclear record. "Well, you must give us credit for our ability to change our thinking."

But that's not so easy for our

"Olympians." Take the recent antics of the Friends of the Earth, led by Amory Lovins, high-priest of "soft energy paths." FOE was created with \$200,000 of Robert O. Anderson's personal funds. Last week, Lovins' group surfaced in the middle of a controversy in Italy. Some time ago, they commissioned a study by "MHB Associates" of San Francisco, who alleged major seismic dangers in that nation's nuclear plant siting policies. With help from certain "Radical Party" journalists, the report became front-page news in Italy.

Some analysts there have already pointed out that the report is incompetent. That's no surprise. M, H, and B—Minor, Hubbard and Bridenbaugh—are three engineers who gained prominence in the U.S. several years ago when they resigned from General Electric, denouncing safety dangers in the company's reactor design. It turned out they had undergone a Damascus Road conversion to antinukery at a California "consciousness raising" retreat, whose resident guru convinced them that antinukery is next to Nirvana.

Discredited in America, Aspen and its Friends of the Earth recycled the trio into a European antinuclear road show.

This illustrates our Olympians' problem. They've spent a decade, and millions of dollars, creating kooks. How can they now reverse field without destroying all their assets? After my meeting with one of Aspen's leading lights, I had a far more profound appreciation of the pathetic predicament of these self-conceived elite geopoliticians. They've been in Colorado's rarified atmosphere too long without productive activity.