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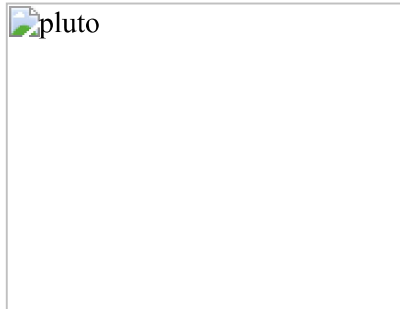
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## D.C.-based disarmament group raps plutonium-recycling deal

September 2, 2000  
 Web posted at: 1:49 PM EDT (1749 GMT)



Plutonium can be used either in weapons or for power generation

A leading independent U.S. disarmament group on Saturday criticized an agreement by the United States and Russia to recycle plutonium from nuclear weapons as fuel for electricity.

The Washington-based Nuclear Control Institute said burying used plutonium would be a better option.

U.S. Vice President and presidential candidate Al Gore signed the agreement, which has already been counter-signed by Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Kazyanov.

The agreement was first announced during President Bill Clinton's Moscow summit with his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, on June 4.

Under the deal, each nation will provide 34 tons of weapons-grade plutonium for peaceful purposes. U.S. officials say the entire project will cost nearly \$6 billion.

But the Nuclear Control Institute said the agreement failed to provide a means of verifying plutonium would be used in Russian reactors.

It said it would have been quicker and cheaper to bury the plutonium in secure dumps and that reprocessing served only to revive a plutonium industry that was already in decline.

### Reprocessing to take 20 years

A statement issued from Gore's office said: "This accomplishment advances the critical task of reducing stockpiles of excess weapons plutonium and contributes to key U.S. arms control and non-proliferation objectives."

Factories will be required to process the plutonium into usable nuclear fuel, costing Russia \$2 billion and the U.S. \$3 billion, according to U.S. officials.

The U.S. has been urging the international community, including G7 members, to help fund Russia's bill for a reprocessing operation which will take 20 years.

The statement added that plutonium disposal will commence in 2007 with a minimum rate of two tons a year.

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