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A Single Drone Can Turn the “Peaceful Atom” Into World War 3



Getty Images and Unsplash+.

Vladimir Putin right now has in his sights nearly 300 pre-deployed atomic weapons set to easily launch a radioactive apocalypse with a single drone strike.

He may already have crashed an early warning into the sarcophagus at Chernobyl.

And taken as a whole, the “Peaceful Atom” lends a terrifying reality to Donald Trump’s Oval Office threat of an impending World War 3.

Some 180 operational “Peaceful Atom” reactors now operate throughout Europe. There are 93 more in the US, 19 in Canada, two in Mexico.

Putin, or anyone else of his ilk, would need precisely one technician with one weaponized drone to turn any “peaceful” nuke into a radioactive apocalypse.

When Donald Trump brought Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelensky into the Oval Office to accuse him of flirting with "World War 3," atomic reactors were among the specifics he failed to cite.

As of today, more than 50 commercial nuclear power plants are considered operable in France. Another 130+ operate in Belarus; Belgium; Bulgaria; the Czech Republic; Finland; Hungary; the Netherlands; Romania; Slovakia; Slovenia; Spain; Sweden; Switzerland; Ukraine; the UK (Germany, Italy and Lithuania have gone nuke-free).

Six reactors are under unstable Russian control at Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia; two more are in Kursk, now a hotly contested war zone. Russia has a further three dozen.

Each could blanket the globe with atomic radiation, as has Chernobyl Unit 4 since it exploded on April 26, 1986.

The still-hot Chernobyl core could explode yet again.

Europe has collectively spent more than \$2 billion to cover that core with a giant sarcophagus, the world's largest movable structure.

On February 14, 2025, it was struck by a military drone.

Putin denies ordering the hit. His supporters say it could have been a "false flag." But the drone itself was of an Iranian design widely used by the Russians.

On-going maintenance at Chernobyl has been conflicted and highly suspect, especially as impacted by the Russian invasion. After decades of denial, nuke supporters admit that what's left of Chernobyl #4 could explode again. A definitive 2007 study by the Russian Academy of Sciences put the downwind human death toll at more than 985,000...and rising.

Three melt-downs and four explosions at American-designed reactors at Fukushima have raised the stakes. Caused by an earthquake and tidal wave, their lost cores still send unfathomable quantities of radioactive poisons into the Pacific, with no end in sight.

Both Fukushima and Chernobyl have released far more radioactive cesium and other deadly isotopes than did the atomic bombings at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. No western insurer will gamble against the likelihood of a new catastrophe caused by natural disasters, faulty designs, operator error, or acts of terror...drone-inflicted or otherwise.

Even without drone attacks, America's 21st century reactor projects are catastrophic economic failures. Two at VC Summer, South Carolina, are dead, at a cost of \$9 billion. Two more at Vogtle, Georgia, came in years behind schedule, billions over budget and completely incapable of competing with renewables. Talks of reviving shut reactors like Three Mile Island in Pennsylvania, Michigan's Palisades and Duane Arnold in Iowa all depend on huge federal subsidies to cover vastly inflated market prices.

Parallel projects in France, Britain and Finland are also very late and far beyond budget. Soaring costs and lagging production schedules have already killed the first order from NuScale, the first licensed US producer of Small Modular Reactors.

No significant supply from SMRs can be realistically expected in less than a decade. None can be protected from drone attacks.

But the billions SMR (Silly Mythological Rip-offs) backers want to squander on this pre-failed technology will help keep Europe dependent on Putin's gas.

Germany has shut all its reactors, as have Italy and Lithuania. Putin's war has destabilized their fossil fuel supply, especially complicating Germany's transition to 100% renewables, still likely within the next decade.

Corporate hype will not can't deliver any new nukes, big or small, that can compete with wind, solar, battery backup or increased efficiency, all of whose cost projections continue to plummet.

And no explosion at a wind turbine or solar panel will ever cause a radioactive apocalypse.

But whoever attacked the Chernobyl sarcophagus has made it clear that as long as atomic reactors continue to operate, World War 3 is just a drone strike away.

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Harvey Wasserman wrote THE PEOPLE'S SPIRAL OF US HISTORY: FROM JIGONSASEH TO SOLARTOPIA. Most Mondays @ 2-4pm PT, he co-convenes the Green Grassroots Election Protection Zoom (www.electionprotection2024). The Mothers for Peace (www.mothersforpeace.org) could use your help in the struggle to shut the Diablo Canyon nukes.