



Savannah River Site Watch

**Savannah River Site Watch
Columbia, South Carolina USA
For Immediate Release
March 1, 2016**

Swiss Government Forced to Admit Shipment of 20 kilograms (44 Pounds) of Plutonium to the United States – to US DOE's Savannah River Site, in Advance of Nuclear Security Summit

As SRS Watch has publicized for Over a Month, the Shipment Took Place on the UK-Flagged Ship Oceanic Pintail, which Discharged its Cargo in Charleston, SC on February 15; Pintail Arrived in its Home Port of Barrow-in-Furness, England on February 29

Statement of Swiss Government: “Transport von aufgelösten Plutoniumlager des Bundes in die USA ist erfolgt” linked here: <https://www.news.admin.ch/message/index.html?lang=de&msg-id=60791>

Columbia, SC – After much publicity and government secrecy over the past month about a plutonium shipment from Germany and Switzerland to the U.S. Department of Energy's Savannah River Site (SRS), the Swiss government has formally admitted that the shipment took place.

In a news release forced out of the government by public interest groups, the Swiss have admitted that 20 kilograms of plutonium from the Paul Scherrer Institut were shipped to the U.S. in January/February 2016.

“This admission is a victory for nuclear non-proliferation, transparency and contributes to the increasingly difficult discussion about the fate of yet more plutonium being imported to the Savannah River Site,” according to Tom Clements, director of SRS Watch. “As the US Government has refused to talk about the arrival of this plutonium at SRS and deployed a secrecy-for-secrecy's-sake strategy, it fell to public interest groups to alert the public that more plutonium was being brought into SRS without any disposition path out of the site.”

The public interest group Savannah River Site Watch (SRS watch) publicized the departure of the UK-flagged ship Oceanic Pintail from the port of Nordenham, Germany on January 26 and observed and photographed the ship departing the port of Charleston, South Carolina on February 15.

See lots of photos of the ship and much more information on the SRS Watch website:

<http://www.srswatch.org/> and SRS Watch Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/SavannahRiverSiteWatch>

Despite efforts by DOE's National Nuclear Security Administration to save the "news" for the upcoming Nuclear Security Summit in Washington, SRS Watch revealed that the shipment took place and that there was no viable disposition path out of SRS for the imported material. It is believed that NNSA asked Swiss and German authorities not to talk about the shipment before the Nuclear Security Summit for PR reasons, an approach that had nothing to do with sound nuclear non-proliferation policies.

"It's good news that the Swiss Government has ignored pressure by NNSA and admitted that the plutonium shipment to the US took place as this affirms both openness and sound nuclear non-proliferation policies," said Tom Clements of SRS Watch. "NNSA attempts to block any information about the shipment until the Nuclear Security Summit had nothing to do with nuclear non-proliferation but was rather a botched attempt at summit theatrics."

The imported plutonium will be added to the stockpile of 13 metric tons of plutonium now stored at SRS. Given the chaos in the U.S. plutonium disposition program, all of that plutonium is now stranded at SRS with no defined and funded pathway out of the site, DOE aims to import up to 900 kilograms of plutonium to SRS, all of which would be stranded at the site.

###

Contact:

Tom Clements
SRS Watch
Columbia, South Carolina USA
tel. 1-803-834-3084
cell 1-803-240-7268