



Savannah River Site Watch

**Savannah River Site Watch  
For Immediate Release  
February 17, 2016**

**Ship Arrives in Charleston, South Carolina with Nuclear Cargo Destined for Savannah River Site; Cargo Believed to be Plutonium from Germany and Switzerland in Advance of Nuclear Security Summit**

**UK-Flagged *Oceanic Pintail* Arrives from Europe on February 14, Departs February 15**

**Columbia, South Carolina** – A ship dedicated to transport of nuclear materials arrived in the port of Charleston, South Carolina on February 14, with a secret cargo of nuclear materials bound for the U.S. Department of Energy’s Savannah River Site (SRS), according to Savannah River Site Watch, which witnessed the departure of the vessel. (See photos linked in “notes” below and at [www.srswatch.org](http://www.srswatch.org)).

The U.K.-flagged *Oceanic Pintail* delivered its cargo to the non-public dock in the Joint Base Charleston and departed on February 15 after 12-hour layover at a South Carolina Ports Authority pier. The *Pintail* is one of but four specialized ships dedicated to nuclear cargo transport and which are based in Barrow-in-Furness, U.K., near the U.K.’s Sellafield nuclear site.

The cargo remains officially secret but is believed to consist of U.S.-origin plutonium from Germany and Switzerland, possibly in the form of unirradiated plutonium fuel (MOX). DOE is likely bringing the material into SRS at this time in order to make an announcement about it at the Nuclear Security Summit to be held in Washington, DC from March 31-April 1. That announcement will avoid to touchy issue of there being no viable or funded manner for disposal of the material at SRS, meaning it has come into South Carolina with no plans for its exit, making the shipment a hollow nuclear non-proliferation “success,” according to SRS Watch.

German media reported the departure on January 26 from the port of Nordenham of a ship carrying a secret cargo of nuclear materials from Germany and Switzerland. Two other similar nuclear-transport vessels - the *Pacific Egret* and *Pacific Heron* are on a secret mission to pick up 331 kilograms of plutonium in Japan and bring it to SRS, where it will be stranded.

In response to an SRS Watch inquiry about the shipment on board the *Oceanic Pintail*, the DOE’s National Nuclear Security Administration responded on February 16 that the “NNSA has no comment.”

“As the shipment has concluded there is no longer any reason from a security perspective for DOE to be silent as to the nature of the cargo and what will become of it at SRS,” said Tom Clements, director of SRS Watch. “DOE’s silence aims only to keep the public in the dark about various nuclear materials that

are being brought to SRS with no disposition plans, obligating SRS Watch to fill the void in educating the public about nuclear shipments making the one-way trip into SRS,” added Clements.

The shipment onboard the Pintail is likely part of 900 kilograms of “gap” plutonium planned to be imported to SRS. DOE analyzed the import of that plutonium in an “environmental assessment” (EA) prepared in secret and released on December 28, 2015.

The operator of the Oceanic Pintail, International Nuclear Services, confirms in a fact sheet that the Pintail brought plutonium from Sweden to SRS in 2012: “With a track record of safely carrying Mox and high level radioactive waste across the world, and most recently separate plutonium from Sweden to the USA, Oceanic Pintail is available for the most complex of nuclear transport projects, including high security movements.”

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**Notes:**

**Photos of Oceanic Pintail departing Charleston, South Carolina – photos can be used with credit to ©Savannah River Site Watch**, more photos available on request and posted on [www.srswatch.org](http://www.srswatch.org):

<http://www.srswatch.org/uploads/2/7/5/8/27584045/7626526.jpg>

<http://www.srswatch.org/uploads/2/7/5/8/27584045/9375337.jpg>

<http://www.srswatch.org/uploads/2/7/5/8/27584045/5844779.jpg>

**Article in German media on departure of nuclear shipment on January 26, 2016: *Atomtransport Durch Die Wesermarsch - Bundesamt verrät Route aus Sicherheitsgründen nicht***, NWZ Online, January 28, 2016:

[http://www.nwzonline.de/wesermarsch/wirtschaft/von-schweiz-ueber-nordenham-in-usa\\_a\\_6,0,3594114857.html](http://www.nwzonline.de/wesermarsch/wirtschaft/von-schweiz-ueber-nordenham-in-usa_a_6,0,3594114857.html)

**SRS Watch news release, February 6, 2016 on passage of Pacific Heron and Pacific Egret through the Panama Canal – to pick up 331 kilograms of plutonium in Japan, to bring to SRS -- *UK-Flagged Ships Set to Transport Plutonium from Japan to US Located in Panama Canal! - Ships on Secret Mission to Carry 331 Kilograms of Plutonium to US DOE’s Savannah River Site in South Carolina as Part of Nuclear Security Summit Preparation; Plutonium to be Stranded at SRS:***

[http://www.srswatch.org/uploads/2/7/5/8/27584045/srsw\\_news\\_on\\_plutonim\\_ships\\_in\\_canal\\_feb\\_6\\_2016.pdf](http://www.srswatch.org/uploads/2/7/5/8/27584045/srsw_news_on_plutonim_ships_in_canal_feb_6_2016.pdf)

**GTRI Removal Program Overview**, December 3, 2014 (GTRI is now Office of Material Management and Minimization), see page 14 for mention of 30 kgs of plutonium in Germany and 18 kgs in Switzerland planned to be brought to the US:

<http://dels.nas.edu/resources/static-assets/nrsb/miscellaneous/Dickerson.pdf>

**DOE's Environmental Assessment, Gap Material Plutonium - Transport, Receipt, and Processing**, December 28, 2015: <http://energy.gov/nepa/downloads/ea-2024-final-environmental-assessment>

**Factsheet on Oceanic Pintail, by International Nuclear Services:**

[http://www.innuser.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/INS\\_Oceanic\\_data.pdf](http://www.innuser.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/INS_Oceanic_data.pdf)

**White House factsheet on plutonium removal from Sweden (to SRS), March 26, 2012:**

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/03/26/fact-sheet-plutonium-removal-sweden>

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