



Photo by Sherylyn Bjorkgren

Dr. Mary O'Brien, information coordinator for the Northwest Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides, says the Air Force needs to address the effects of nuclear war in its environmental impact statement.

No-GWEN Alliance vows to fight construction of towers elsewhere

By Mary Courtis
Of the Emerald

Members of the No-GWEN Alliance adopted "Learning from Success" as its platform Wednesday at the First Christian Church of Eugene. The gathering was essentially a celebration of the group's victorious efforts to stop U.S. Air Force plans to install a GWEN tower in Lane County.

GWEN, or Ground Wave Emergency Network, is a low-frequency communications system designed to transmit coded messages in the event of a nuclear war. The military would use the network as a way of maintaining communications between various bases during a prolonged nuclear conflict.

Currently, plans call for the installation for 56 relay towers and 37 radio terminals across the United States. Possibly 70 more towers and 101 radio terminals would be built in the future.

The Air Force and other sup-

porters of the network argue that additional towers will increase the chances of surviving a nuclear war and thus deter enemy attack.

But opponents say that the installation of the towers could result in serious social and political consequences. They argue that areas where GWEN towers are installed would automatically become military targets.

Opponents worry also about the towers' environmental impact.

"The National Environmental Protection Act states that all federal agencies have to file an environmental impact statement assessing the effects of any proposed program as viewed through the eyes of environmentalists," said Dr. Mary O'Brien, information coordinator for the Northwest Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides. "This includes the military."

The No-GWEN Alliance

brought suit against the military charging the Air Force violated the EPA by failing to provide an environmental impact statement for the GWEN tower planned for Eugene, O'Brien said.

The No-GWEN Alliance of Eugene requested also that the Air Force submit an environmental impact statement.

"We asked them to address the effects of using GWEN, and not just the impact of building and installing GWEN," she said. "Since GWEN makes prolonged nuclear war possible, we have to evaluate what is the chance of people and the environment also surviving such a conflict."

A recent study by Princeton University indicates that the odds of civilians surviving a nuclear are not promising.

The most conservative estimate projects that 16.3 million people would die if 100 nuclear weapons were used against military targets, (silos, bomber bases, weapons storage facilities).

"Nuclear war is a violent, environmental disaster mediated socially," O'Brien said. "The present mentality of the military is to keep the military alive, not necessarily the civilian population. Under NEPA, the Air Force must come in contact with the reality of this devastation and take it into account."

Barabara Keller, local building designer and legal coordinator for the No-GWEN Alliance agreed.

"The idea behind mutual deterrence is that if we have

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Hatfield, Packwood lose committee chairmanships

By Shawn Wirtz
Of the Emerald

The Democrats wrested control of the U.S. Senate away from Republicans by a 55-45 margin and ousted Oregon senators Bob Packwood and Mark Hatfield from their committee chair positions in Tuesday's elections.

Democrat John Stennis of Mississippi will replace Hatfield as chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee. Hatfield will remain as the ranking Republican member.

Hatfield and Stennis "have an extraordinarily close and unusual relationship," according to Hatfield's press secretary Rick Rolf. "The most important thing is how they function together," Rolf said.

As a result, there will be little change in legislation coming through the committee, Rolf said.

"Stennis is a very conservative Democrat when it comes to a lot of the military issues," Rolf said. "For the Democrats to re-enter the position of leadership will take some time. The Democrats still don't have a real clear agenda," he said.

"The Democrats have the majority on paper," but a considerable number of southern Democrats will vote with the Republicans," he said.

As "the dean of moderate and progressive Republicans," Hatfield will be a key person who will "bridge the gap" between conservatives and liberals, Rolf said.

"The senator will continue to be involved in the larger issues of war and peace," including arms control and aid to Central America, Rolf said. Hatfield has opposed presidential policies in these areas.

Hatfield "will press for a re-ordering of national priorities away from unnecessary and excessive defense spending," Rolf said.

Republicans losing control of the Senate, "certainly makes the election bittersweet," for Packwood, "as it affects Oregon. Both of (the senators) still will have ample opportunity to do things for Oregon" though, according to Packwood's press secretary Bob Witteck.

Witteck denied the election results translate into a rejection of Reagan's policies. "We'd have to stop and look at all the races," he said. "Each one of them had their own issues."

However, Witteck admitted, "Packwood has been one of the more independent Republicans and that has helped."

Packwood will remain senior member of the Senate Finance Committee. A Democrat will be selected to chair the committee.

"The national implications are that yes, people believe Ronald Reagan is a nice person, but the other side of the coin has been proved that the American people don't like his policies," said Oregon Democratic Party Chairwoman Judy Carnahan.

"The president might as well have stayed home as far as campaigning is concerned," she said. "Ronald Reagan probably helped Slade Gorton in Washington to lose."

A Democratic-controlled Senate "gives us a step up in looking toward the presidential race in 1988," she said. The new majority also will boost Democratic fund raising, she said.

"Without having Ronald Reagan to personify the party, what is left for the Republican party?" Carnahan said.

"Now the Democrats are in a position, since we have both the House and the Senate, to have a fuller role in crafting national policy," she said.

"The big question of course is agriculture and what is the role of government," she said. The new majority should exert a "great deal of influence on the amount of money spent on the military."

In addition, "The president will have to be far more accountable for his actions," Carnahan said.

Carnahan is not worried about the Oregon senators' losing their chairmanships, she said. "I'm a little cynical when it comes to that," she said.

"Right now our return back on federal dollars is between 39th and 49th. That has not added up to a great deal of advocacy for Oregon," she said.

"What we also have is our congressional members becoming stronger in influence," Carnahan said.

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