

some of the bilateral questions with France. I refer to the question of reprocessing. I think it is necessary for me to attempt, on this highly complex subject, to give the House a layman's assessment or explanation of what exactly is in play in connection with this very important issue.

Basically, there are two points of view in the world community on the issue of reprocessing. One, articulated most recently by President Carter of the United States, is that reprocessing is not a necessary part of any civilian nuclear-development program. It ought to be emphasized that the President and the Government of the United States have not excluded the possibility of all reprocessing for all time. What has been said by the President, with which we concur, is that, because reprocessing tends to lead to proliferation in the amount of plutonium, and since it is inevitably linked to the fast-breeder reactor, therefore we need to know a good deal more about it before we plunge headlong into the development and creation of these fast-breeder reactors, and it is also necessary to take a hard look at how reprocessing is going to be done, the nature of controls, and such questions.

There is a second school of thought, and equally legitimate, I am told, by the scientific community — although there are differences of view amongst different people, and this is not a subject lacking in emotion. One may take the view of the President of France, the Chancellor of Germany and all the leaders of the European Economic Community, or what I might describe as the energy-short industrialized countries of the world, many of which have virtually no other sources of available energy at the present time; at least, that is their contention and their view and it is not my position to argue with them....

**Argument in
favour**

I have looked sufficiently hard at such countries as Germany, and have learnt...that they would be hard-pressed at the present time to totally abandon any civilian nuclear-energy program. This is a matter of opinion. I repeat, they feel strongly that, in terms of reprocessing, it is an essential and necessary element of their civilian program. Their argument is defensive, at least on the surface, to the layman. I shall come back to why the layman's judgment in these matters must sometimes be questioned. The point is that reprocessing provides up to 60 times the utilization of the same amount of uranium as does the straightforward, conventional use of uranium through enrichment and nothing else.

Countries that have seen their economies badly battered in the last four years as a result of the OPEC action and the general price rise in fossil fuels are, in effect, saying that they want to utilize to the maximum extent whatever fuels are available and that they cannot simply turn their backs on a process that will give 60 times as much utilization as non-reprocessed material.

Those, highly oversimplified, are the two main arguments. It is a mistake to say they are mutually exclusive. This mistake is frequently repeated by a great many people. Europeans, on the one hand, are not going headlong into reprocessing and fast-breeder reactors. Indeed, even in the most optimistic "scenario", we shall probably be pretty close to the year 2000 or beyond before there can be any