

Department of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

March 18, 1998

Arjun Makhijani, Ph.D.
Institute for Energy and Environmental Research
6935 Laurel Avenue
Takoma Park, MD 20912

Dear Dr. Makhijani,

[Enclosed](#) is the Department of Energy's written response to your October 24, 1997 report, [*Containing the Cold War Mess: Restructuring the Environmental Management of the U.S. Nuclear Weapons Complex*](#). The Department appreciates the opportunity to respond to the issues that the Institute for Energy and Environmental Research (IEER) report raises. Although we do not necessarily agree with all of the report's findings and recommendations, we value the important role of independent analysts such as Marc Fioravanti and yourself. Moreover, we recognize and appreciate the substantial effort you and Marc put into its research and analysis.

Many of the issues raised in the report recognize the difficult technical, organizational, and managerial challenges the Department faces in carrying out the complex scope of the Environmental Management (EM) program. We have benefited from the independent perspective you contribute, and in some cases it has helped improve the EM program. The Department hopes that this response document will aid IEER and the public in clarifying many of the issues relating to the activities that the Environmental Management program performs. I believe that the several meetings between the Department and IEER that have taken place to discuss specific issues raised in your report have been very valuable. I hope that we can continue this dialogue as the EM program progresses.

I know that you have also raised concerns about the situation regarding the In Tank Precipitation (ITP) facility at the Savannah River Site. Let me briefly say that EM recognizes the serious nature of this situation. As a result, EM is establishing an independent review team that will report directly to me to perform a thorough and independent assessment of the situation and provide recommendations. In addition, the Department is taking steps to improve its overall project management system including the need for independent reviews of all major projects as recommended in the recent report by the National Research Council.

Please don't hesitate to contact me with your further views or concerns regarding any aspect of the EM program. I can be reached on 202-586-7710.

Sincerely,

James M. Owendoff
Acting Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management