

Nuclear dynamite: the peaceful nuclear explosions fiasco.

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- SEE: See
- USE: Use
- UF: Used For

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AbstractAbstract

[en] Serious examination of the possibilities of 'nuclear dynamite', the use of nuclear explosives for non-military purposes, began in the mid-1950s with American and Soviet theoretical studies using data from thermonuclear weapon tests. Subsequently both countries established substantial peaceful nuclear explosion (PNE) programs, conducting experiments at nuclear weapon test sites and in the field. The uses envisaged for PNEs included: earthmoving, harbour, canal and highway construction, oil and gas stimulation, underground cavity formation, seismic surveys, scientific experiments (such as producing transuranic elements), steam-power generation and the extinguishing of oil and gas well fires. The author comments on the declining fortunes of 'nuclear dynamite' and the emphasis is on the collapse of the American PNE program, Project Plowshare, the saga of international efforts to cope with the arms control implications of PNEs, the ill-judged involvement of Australia, the duplicity of India and the current waning of Soviet interest. While in technical terms the benefits of PNE's have not been proven or disproven, it is concluded that in political terms 'nuclear dynamite' has largely been discredited.

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