

# Japanese and German Glass Companies Involved in U.S. Nuclear Weapons Development

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Glass companies of two non-nuclear states, Japan and Germany, are helping the United States with its research on nuclear weapons.

Hoya Corporation USA, a US subsidiary of a Japanese optical glass giant, and Schott Glass Technologies, a US subsidiary of the German Schott Group, are supplying a US hydrogen bomb research facility called the National Ignition Facility (NIF) with laser glass slabs, key components of the facility.

Immediately after Hoya's involvement in NIF was reported in early Feb. last year in Japan, Hoya announced that it would withhold delivery to NIF for the time being due to strong opposition. But on 22 March the company declared that it would resume delivery as of 26 March. Many people believe that the struggle is over, because the announcement of the resumption was not reported widely. But the struggle continues.

NIF is under construction at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL), one of the two US nuclear-weapon design laboratories, located near San Francisco. The aim of NIF is to achieve the fusion explosion phenomenon of hydrogen bombs in a laboratory environment by using laser energy.

Hoya's glass slabs (79 x 44 x 4.5 cm), mixed with a slight amount of neodymium to amplify the laser, are essential for NIF. Hoya plans to supply half of the approximately 3,500 slabs needed for NIF, with the other half being supplied by Schott Glass Technologies. They are the only companies that have the mass production technology for this special glass, and are also producing glass for Laser Megajoule, a similar weapons research facility being constructed by France. According to LLNL, by January last year, Hoya had produced 600 slabs for NIF and 125 for LMJ.

In a letter to the Japan Congress Against A- and H-Bombs (GENSUIKIN) dated 20 Feb. 2001, Hoya tried to justify its relation with NIF by saying that it understands that "the main focus of the NIF project is not the maintenance and expansion of the defense technology." Yet a US General Accounting Office report dated Aug. 2000 says about 85% of the facility's experiments will be for nuclear weapons physics.

Hoya also maintains that "one of the NIF's missions is to avoid the danger of leaving nuclear weapons unattended." But the US is not going to leave nuclear weapons unattended, with or without NIF.

To clarify the issue, Frank von Hippel, a former scientific advisor to the Clinton administration, wrote an open letter for us explaining that the principal mission of NIF is to maintain and enhance the laboratories' understanding of nuclear weapons physics. \* The mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the councils of at

least three municipalities have officially criticized the Hoya's involvement with NIF. The City of Arcata's Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Commission also wrote a protest letter to Hoya.

Hopefully this type of effort will quickly develop into an international campaign to stop the nuclear weapons collaboration among Japan, Germany, US and France.

\* The Mission of the U.S. National Ignition Facility (April 16, 2001) Japanese translation published in Kagaku Aug. 2001 Vol.71 No.8. For the English original, see: <http://www.gensuikin.org/english/index.html>

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