

Stem cells can be obtained from the living human nerve tissues of consenting adults and from adult cadavers, according to researchers. Like the fetal stem cell research, all of this is experimental.

Here's one reason why the fetuses and embryos are used. It's easier. They're available. And that's the problem.

Because it is easy, and because there is promise in the research, we might be willing—through small steps we don't even notice at the time—to barter something away. Our humanity.

WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE MEDDLING IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF SOVEREIGN NATIONS—YET AGAIN

HON. HELEN CHENOWETH

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 1, 1999

Mrs. CHENOWETH. Mr. Speaker, can you believe that the Clinton-Gore Administration may be working with the United Nations to override a decision by the sovereign, duly-elected government of Australia regarding an internal land-use issue in that country?

On July 12th the World Heritage Committee of the United Nations Educational Cultural and Scientific Organization (UNESCO) will meet in Paris, France for the purpose of stopping the proposed Jabiluka uranium mine near the Kakadu National Park in the Northern Territory of Australia. Mine opponents were unable to persuade the Australian people and their government to stop the mine, so they have appealed to the World Heritage Committee (WHC) of the United Nations. Since Kakadu National Park is a U.N. World Heritage Site, environmental and anti-nuclear activists want the WHC to have Kakadu declared "In Danger," thus making mine construction very difficult.

The United States is a Member of the 21 nation World Heritage Committee, and the Clinton Administration is being lobbied by U.S. environmental and anti-nuclear activists to oppose Australia and vote in favor of the "In Danger" designation. The important issue here is protection of the rights of people in the democratic process of a sovereign nation from interference by international bureaucrats with no accountability whatsoever. The Jabiluka mine decision fundamentally affects citizens of Australia and a global organization should not be ceded that role and its associated powers to in which affected Australians have no representation. If the United States does not oppose this interference of the WHC in Australia's internal affairs, then we will hardly be able to complain when the WHC shows up on our doorstep to review some land-use decision in this country.

I would like to put this letter signed by 40 of my colleagues in the RECORD. The letter urges President Clinton to direct the U.S. Delegation to the World Heritage Committee in Paris not to meddle in the Jabiluka issue in which the United States has no clear national interest—nor any business in becoming involved. I also want to put a newspaper article in the RECORD from the Sydney, Australia Daily Telegraph. This article provides crucial background information on this important issue. I urge every Member to become familiar with this very serious issue.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,

Washington, DC, July 1, 1999.

Hon. WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON,
President of the United States of America, The White House, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: As you know, the House of Representatives approved for the third consecutive Congress the American Land Sovereignty Protection Act (H.R. 883) which increases congressional oversight of UNESCO's World Heritage and Biosphere Reserve programs.

This legislation, which has 183 bipartisan cosponsors, is partially a response to the international World Heritage Committee's meddling in a dispute regarding a proposed gold mine located on private property outside the boundary of Yellowstone National Park. Yellowstone has been designated as a World Heritage Site. The World Heritage Committee, a collection of unelected United Nations bureaucrats, voted in Berlin, Germany to declare Yellowstone a World Heritage Site In Danger in an effort to stop the mine. The Committee did not seek local or U.S. congressional input, but acted after only a brief visit to the park in 1995.

All permitting decisions regarding the mine were being considered pursuant to relevant state and federal laws including the National Environmental Policy Act. Actions taken by the World Heritage Committee were intended to short-circuit these laws and influence land use policies in the United States. In short, it amounted to a significant threat to the sovereignty of the United States. Any decision regarding this proposed mine should have been made by U.S. citizens and their elected officials; not by a committee of unelected United Nations bureaucrats meeting in Germany.

We understand the World Heritage Committee, of which the United States is a member, will meet on July 12 in Paris to consider designating the Kakadu National Park in Australia as a World Heritage Site in Danger in an effort to stop the proposed Jabiluka uranium mine which is located near that park—a situation remarkably similar to that in Yellowstone.

The duly elected Government of Australia has performed exhaustive studies regarding the environmental impact of the Jabiluka Mine. Based on these studies, it has concluded that a properly regulated mine will not impair the park. Consequently, Australian government authorities have issued the necessary permits for the mine to proceed, and the Australian government strongly opposes any intervention by the World Heritage Committee.

Australia's environmental record is exemplary. There is another nearby mine, the Ranger mine, which has successfully operated for many years without impairing the park. In fact, one color picture used by the Australian Wilderness Society in its 1999 annual calendar showed an idyllic wilderness scene of Kakadu with the oft-photographed Mt. Brockman in the background and a lovely picturesque lake in the foreground. The lake—home to frogs and crocodiles—also happens to be the Ranger mine's man-made retention pond.

As in the case of Yellowstone, any dispute regarding an Australian mine should be settled by the citizens of Australia working with their elected leaders—not at some obscure World Heritage Committee meeting thousands of miles away in Paris. Our government has no business engaging in exercises of eco-imperialism that undermine the sovereignty of Australia's elected government.

Any action by the U.S. delegation to support a World Heritage Site in Danger status for Kakadu could threaten our foreign relations with Australia which historically has

been among our strongest allies. We strongly urge you to direct the U.S. Delegation to the World Heritage Committee in Paris not to meddle in the Jabiluka issue in which the United States has no clear national interest—nor any business in becoming involved. Sincerely,

Helen Chenoweth, Don Young, Greg Walden, John Doolittle, David McIntosh, Jack Metcalf, Tom Tancredo, Jim Gibbons, Bob Ney, Ron Paul, Van Hilleary, John Shadegg, Joe Knollenberg, Barbara Cubin, John Peterson, Rick Hill, Richard Pombo, Bob Schaffer, George Radanovich, John Hostettler, Frank Lucas, Mike Simpson, Tom Coburn, J.D. Hayworth, Sam Johnson, Asa Hutchinson, Dana Rohrabacher, Roscoe Bartlett, John Duncan, Donald Manzullo, Dave Weldon, Tom DeLay, Jo Ann Emerson, Kevin Brady, Doc Hastings, Bob Stump, Bob Barr, Scott McInnis, Wally Herger, Duncan Hunter,

PITTING EMOTION AGAINST REALITY

Maybe, just maybe, the UN is at last showing some spine on environmental and indigenous matters.

It's a big maybe but at least the UN's World Heritage Commission has given the Australian Government six months breathing space to counter the scurrilous propaganda put out by environmentalists and some Aborigines about the development of the Jabiluka uranium mine adjacent to Kakadu national park.

The report, prepared by a committee chaired by Italian Francesco Francioni, is undoubtedly one of the most egregious documents ever to come out of UNESCO.

Environment Minister Senator Robert Hill was not exaggerating when he damned it as "biased, unbalanced, and totally lacking in objectivity".

At a time when the United Nations' misguided committees are coming under more fire than ever before, this sort of criticism from a senior figure in a democratic government, unlike most UN members, will attract the concern of senior people up the UN ladder. And it should.

Dr. Francioni's group not only failed to take into account material on Jabiluka which would have added some balance to its report, it actively avoided witnesses who could have shed informed light on the issue and attempted to impugn the integrity of others.

Instead it was spoon-fed the usual pap from green and Aboriginal activists and a mish-mash of scientific data from so-called experts who hadn't even visited the site.

In most circles, the omission of evidence from key scientific and Aboriginal groups in such a report would be considered to constitute fraud.

Not unexpectedly, the usual suspects are saying they're outraged that the UN hasn't bought the report.

Well, let them huff and puff and let them explain why the report they cherish contains fundamental and humiliating errors of law.

For example, the report refers to the 1993 Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples but last we heard, this most contentious document was still being negotiated with just two of its 45 draft articles being settled.

The report seeks to rely on Australia's obligations under two Conventions to which Australia is not a party and it seeks to rely on another Convention relating to stolen or illegally exported cultural exports, to which Australia is not only not a party to, but which is also irrelevant.

The UN mission relied almost exclusively on a submission from four scientists from the ANU, three of whom have never been on

the Jabiluka mine site and whose refusal to accept invitations could indicate an alarming degree of partiality.

The mission claims the mine should be stopped because of its visual impact but then conceded that it was not visible to visitors to Kakadu park from the ground.

It also makes reference to the disputed Boyweg cultural site which is not in the World Heritage Area. (By the way, the dispute over the site is between senior traditional custodians at odds about the significance of the area.)

But perhaps most importantly, the report, which relies heavily on the emotional and very public arguments placed before it by the media-savvy Yvonne Margarula, the current senior traditional owner, ignores the fact that traditional owners have twice given their consent to the Jabiluka project.

In 1982, the Mirrar people gave their consent to an agreement with Pancontinental to

allow mining on the lease, and they consented again in 1991, when Pancontinental sold its rights to ERA.

Indeed, traditional owner Yvonne Margarula was part of a Mirrar delegation to Canberra in 1991 which vigorously lobbied the Labor government for mining at Jabiluka.

Royalty payments were accepted and the validity of both agreements is supported by the Northern Land Council.

The UN committee, however, wants to introduce a new concept to the law under which agreements can be torn up by successive generations, ushering in an unworkable degree of uncertainty which would cover all agreements with traditional owners.

Interestingly, former NT ALP Senator Bob Collins, has attacked his former colleague, Senator Nick Bolkus, for his uninformed approach to the dispute.

Though most of the ideologically-tainted Australian media chose to ignore Collins, he did take the trouble to read the full report and its annexes and noted that contrary to Senator Bolkus's assertions "there was no recommendation from the majority of the committee calling for immediate halting to the Jabiluka mine".

The no-nonsense former senator has also gone on the record to complain about the "very small group" of unrepresentative Aboriginal people who were given the opportunity to speak to the UN investigators.

"There is no acknowledgement whatsoever in this UNESCO report—in any part of it—that there is a view of traditional owners of the park that is different from the view that was expressed by the people they spoke to," he said in an interview on 2GB.

As the former senator said, all Australians should be concerned about the issues raised.