



**NuClear News No. 18
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1. New Government: New Nuclear Policy?

As we go to press the Liberal Democrats and the Conservatives are locked in talks about the possibility of forming a new government. This has inevitably led to speculation that the new-build nuclear programme could be hit by delays and uncertainty if the Liberal Democrats gain influence over energy in a coalition government. It is not yet clear whether Nick Clegg, the Lib Dem leader, would insist on scrapping the UK's current plans to build up to 10 new nuclear power stations, as one of his demands in a coalition government. (1)

One obvious area of compromise would be to hold an inquiry into the proposed Justification decision (See below "Justification: to inquire or not?"). The Telegraph quotes a Lib Dem insider suggesting the party "could be willing to work with the Tories on nuclear" plans, but would insist on holding a public inquiry into the move". This would be costly and lengthy, at a time when -companies need certainty on the investment climate for nuclear.

Another area where the Tories might be vulnerable to lobbying is the current consultation on the Fixed Unit Price (FUP) for waste disposal. (2) The FUP consultation follows the publication of three pre-consultation discussion papers, and sets out changes made as a result of feedback. One of the changes being proposed is that the Government should take title to nuclear waste and spent fuel earlier, so that it is aligned with the operators decommissioning timetable rather than waiting for the Geological Disposal Facility to be available. Operators will also be allowed to defer the setting of their FUP, and prospective investors will instead be offered an "expected FUP". The Labour Government insisted this does not amount to a subsidy, but the Tories may see things differently. To most ordinary observers the FUP calculations look like "Voodoo Economics" designed to reduce the amount of money nuclear operators have to set aside now and leaving the taxpayer with maximum risk. A Conservative-LibDem Government might decide utilities should be prepared to accept the risks and the uncertainties associated with waste management costs themselves or, if not, opt for other forms of low carbon generation and efficiency measures with lower risks. (4)

Lady Barbara Judge, Chairman of the UK Atomic Energy Authority told Reuters she doesn't believe the Lib Dems would have enough power to stop the nuclear train "which has left the station," partly because there is no legislation pending. (5) But if the Conservatives in the Government are true to their word (6) they should stop trying to hide subsidies to the industry in the way the previous Government were. In other words, the industry should be required to pay a commercial rate for waste disposal and to set aside sufficient funds for decommissioning as soon as the reactor is switched on. If this proves to be far too expensive, killing the prospects of any new reactors, (7) then utilities will need to generate electricity by other, less risky means, or implement efficiency measures. There are plenty of opportunities to do this without requiring the tax payer to accept the risk for such uncertain outcomes.

The other thing to bear in mind is the commitment from both the Tories and the Lib Dems to scrap the Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC). The IPC cost £5m to set up, and costs £9.3m a year to run. We're paying the chairman £200,000 a year, and also supporting a team of 25 commissioners, a chief executive, five directors and a communication team. So far, the IPC has published one opinion, on an expected application for a waste plant. But that had to be withdrawn because it failed to meet consultation requirements. (8)

(1) Telegraph 10th May 2010

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/energy/7702411/Nuclear-fears-over-Tory-and-Lib-Dem-coalition.html>

(2) See More Facilitative Actions, NuClear News No.17 April 2010.

<http://www.no2nuclearpower.org.uk/nuclearnews/NuClearNewsNo17.pdf>

(3) See <http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-vooodoo-economics.htm>

(4) The consultation is currently due to close on 18th June. Consultation on a methodology for determining a Fixed Unit Price for waste disposal and updated cost estimates for nuclear decommissioning, waste management and waste disposal.

http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/consultations/nuc_waste_cost/nuc_waste_cost.aspx

Look out for a briefing by the Nuclear Free Local Authorities. <http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/>

(5) Reuters 30th April 2010

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/idUKTRE63T3XC20100430>

(6) See quote from Greg Clark, Guardian 22nd April 2010

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2010/apr/22/climate-change-environment-debate-election>

(7) Jackson, I, Buried Costs, Nuclear Engineering International, 27th March 2008

<http://www.neimagazine.com/story.asp?storyCode=2049209>

(8) Guardian 21st April 2010

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/blog/2010/apr/21/infrastructure-planning-committee>

2. Europe 100% Renewable by 2050

We reported last month about a PricewaterhouseCoopers study which showed that Europe could meet all its electricity needs from renewable sources by 2050 by using a "super-smart" grid powered by solar farms in North Africa, wind farms in northern Europe and the North Sea, hydro-electric from Scandinavia and the Alps and a complement of biomass and marine energy.(1)

Now, the European Renewable Energy Council (EREC) has launched a "Re-thinking 2050" report, outlining how the European Union can switch to a 100% renewable energy supply. (2)

Re-thinking 2050 looks at how the EU can switch to fully renewable energy supply for electricity, heating and cooling, as well as transport, examining the effects on Europe's energy supply system and on carbon emissions. EREC says the potential benefits of a future based on renewable energy are multiple: mitigating climate change, ensuring energy security and creating sustainable future-oriented jobs. If the pathway set out in Re-thinking 2050 is followed, the renewable energy sector would employ more than 2.7 million people in the EU by 2020; about 4.4 million in 2030, and 6.1 million by 2050. (3)

Another report, this time from the European Climate Foundation, looked at cutting Europe's carbon emissions by 80% by 2050. (4) The report concludes that such a cut would require an almost zero carbon power supply. Three different decarbonized power sector pathways were examined, each with different shares of low/zero carbon supply technologies: fossil fuel plus CCS, nuclear energy, and a mix of renewable technologies. In addition, a scenario with

100% electricity from renewable sources was assessed. While the three main pathways employ some quantity of nuclear and coal-with-CCS plants, neither nuclear nor coal-with-CCS is necessary to deliver decarbonization while maintaining the current standard of reliability.

In the 40% Renewable Energy pathway, about 1,500 TWh per year of nuclear production is required, compared to approximately 1,000 TWh per year today. Approximately 200 GW of new nuclear plants would need to be built - over a hundred new nuclear plants starting construction by 2040. The 80% RES pathway requires that about half of the current level of nuclear production is replaced.

In a letter (5) to The Independent, 30 academics, including Dave Elliott, Steve Thomas, Brian Wynne and Tom Burke, discuss the commonly held view that unless we start on new nuclear construction now, the lights will start to go out by 2015. They say the generation gap by 2015 identified in some recent policy papers is not supported by evidence, in that it assumes that no new generation capacity of any kind will be built over the next five years. In fact more non-nuclear generation is already under construction and will come on-line by 2015 than is scheduled to go off-line. A further 1GW of new capacity beyond 2015 is being planned, permitted or constructed. Although this is predominantly gas-fired, the International Energy Agency has made it clear that gas is available in an increasingly global market to deliver reliable and affordable access for the UK.

Also, as National Grid has made clear, domestic demand for natural gas could be reduced significantly, and as anaerobic digestion biogas starts to come on-line, this will leave more gas capacity for the power sector (National Grid concludes that we can supply up to 18 per cent of UK gas demand from waste digestion). However, in terms of gas supply, the real issue is the lack of storage capacity, making us susceptible to market manipulation and threatened interruptions. In a paper for Energy Policy (August 2009) entitled "New Nuclear Power in the UK: A Strategy for Energy Security?" Watson and Scott conclude that they are "not convinced that there is a strong security case for new nuclear, especially if the costs and risks of strategies that include new nuclear are considered alongside those of strategies that do not."

There are viable and pragmatic energy futures: where offshore wind, waves, tides, biomass and photovoltaics collectively offer the potential to harness enormous energy resources. Other energy futures include: large-scale networks for energy distribution; radical market innovations from energy supply to energy services, comprehensive energy efficiency, and the restructuring of our built environment to provide for more distributed and integrated energy systems. The academics conclude that: "we are approaching an energy future of rich and bewildering choice, where a variety of radically different options present technically and economically viable alternatives – a future where the nuclear option is the dearest and riskiest of gambles".

Meanwhile the UK's coal-fired power stations look likely to receive a stay of execution for five years from the European Union. (6)

(1) 100% Renewable Electricity: A roadmap for Europe and North Africa, Price Waterhouse Coopers, March 2010
http://www.pwc.co.uk/pdf/100_percent_renewable_electricity.pdf

(2) Rethinking 2050, European Renewable Energy Council, April 2010.
<http://www.rethinking2050.eu/>

(3) New Energy Focus 15th Apr 2010
http://www.newenergyfocus.com/do/ecco/view_item?listid=1&listcatid=32&listitemid=3828§ion=Wind

(4) Roadmap 2050: A Practical Guide to a Prosperous Low Carbon Europe. European Climate Foundation, April 2010
http://www.roadmap2050.eu/Volume1_ExecutiveSummary.pdf

(5) Independent 4th May 2010
<http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/letters/letters-nuclear-power-1961532.html>

(6) Telegraph 5th May 2010
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/energy/7678631/UK-power-plants-win-four-year-stay-of-execution-from-EU.html>

Independent 3rd May 2010
<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/news/uk-expects-to-win-reprieve-on-eu-emissions-plans-1960993.html>

3. A month of warnings on nuclear proliferation

The nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) began a five-yearly review on 3rd May, at the United Nations in New York. The review will continue until 28th May. And President Obama hosted a meeting of around 50 countries at the Nuclear Security Summit in Washington on April 12th and 13th.

The Washington Summit heard dire warnings that nuclear material could fall into the wrong hands. (1) The head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Yukiya Amano, said that nuclear powers needed to do more to protect nuclear materials. On average, the IAEA receives information about nuclear theft or smuggling every two days. A senior American counter-terrorism expert, John Brennan, warned that al-Qaeda had been seeking material for a nuclear bomb for more than 15 years.

World leaders endorsed Barack Obama's call for securing all nuclear materials around the globe within four years to keep them out of the grasp of terrorists. But they offered few specifics for achieving that goal. The Summit's communiqué (2) recognised that highly enriched uranium and separated plutonium require special precautions and encouraged the conversion of research reactors from highly enriched to low enriched uranium fuel to minimize the use of highly enriched uranium but there was little mention of how to secure plutonium. The Carter Administration started the Reduced Enrichment for Research and Test Reactors (RERTR) Program in 1978, but less than 50 have been converted to use Low Enriched Uranium since then. (3) There are some 130 research reactors around the globe which still use highly enriched uranium. (4)

Former Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans and former U.S. ambassador-at-large Robert Gallucci called for an end to reprocessing (which separates plutonium from spent nuclear fuel) at a conference of experts held in parallel with the Summit. Evans and Gallucci said reprocessing creates stockpiles of dangerous materials ripe for theft. The practice is drawing attention as more countries look at nuclear power for their energy needs. Areva responded by saying that reprocessing and using plutonium MoX fuel in reactors can support non-proliferation efforts. (5)

The nuclear summit did put back on track the agreement made between Russia and America in 2000 to each dispose of 34 tonnes of weapons-grade plutonium from their stockpiles. (6) The problem is that 'recycling' this plutonium by using it as fuel for nuclear reactors will defeat the objective. It is the most dangerous counter-terrorism and non-proliferation policy imaginable. It will normalise the use of the prime nuclear explosive material in international commerce, and ensure the movement from secured nuclear sites of huge quantities of weapons-usable nuclear material on roads, highways and public railways, placing it into the most vulnerable locations and inviting terrorist interventions. (7)

Extracting plutonium from Mox fuel is relatively simple and building a crude bomb is not that difficult either. So the summit, says Geoffrey Lean, is likely to make things worse, because it endorsed the expansion of nuclear power, and the 68 tonnes of plutonium Russia and the US have agreed to take from their stockpiles, will be moved from well guarded facilities to be converted into MoX. (8)

The gaping hole in the Summit's agenda said Julian Borger in The Guardian was the absence of any discussion about banning the production of any more HEU and plutonium. (9) There is an unfortunate contradiction at the heart of the NPT which is highly unlikely to be revised at the Review Conference. In effect, Article IV offers a nuclear reward to non-nuclear weapons countries who sign the treaty; promise never to make the bomb and you can build and operate nuclear reactors. Since the materials, and to a certain degree, the processing involved in arriving at fuel for a civilian reactor or to create an atomic bomb are basically the same, a civilian programme can lead to – and has led to – the covert development of nuclear weapons. Examples of this pathway include India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea – none of whom are signatories to the NPT. Just how weapons useable materials can be secured at the same time as promoting new reactors around the globe is a conundrum to say the least. (10)

In its briefing on Nuclear Power, the Acronym Institute for Disarmament Diplomacy (11) says questions need to be asked about whether Article IV's role in exclusively promoting nuclear energy is appropriate for present day conditions. While recognising that any attempt to interfere with or amend the NPT text, including Article IV, would be met with considerable resistance, nothing precludes NPT parties discussing alternative ways to provide more safely, effectively and cheaply for countries' legitimate energy aspirations without increasing reliance on fossil fuels or raising proliferation concerns.

Acronym concludes that nuclear power is not the solution to climate change and its deployment will delay the introduction of truly sustainable energy sources in both developing and developed countries. For developing countries it is very unlikely to bring energy independence. The risk – and likelihood – would be that it would deepen dependency on the nuclear exporters, reinforcing the hold of major powers. Further production and use of plutonium-fuelled reactors to expand global nuclear power generation and compensate for declining uranium supply would result

in significantly increased nuclear proliferation and security threats. If Article IV no longer offers a convincing energy incentive, while the exercise of its provisions also raises serious concerns about potential proliferation, consideration must be given to how NPT states can be assisted to meet their growing energy needs by alternative means. The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), which was formally established in 2009, with 142 states already signatories, provides a way forward for global energy co-operation, particularly to meet the legitimate needs of the developing states to control and develop their own sources of energy supply.

As he was leaving his post as director general of the IAEA last year, Mohamed ElBaradei warned the world about ‘virtual nuclear weapons states’, countries that will develop weapons technology but stop just short of producing an actual bomb. This would allow countries to remain technically compliant with the NPT while being within a couple of months of deploying and using a nuclear weapon. It was clear from ElBaradei’s successor Yukiya Amano, in his opening speech to the review conference that these warnings have gone un-heeded. (13) He told the Conference more than 60 countries were considering using nuclear power to generate electricity and between 10 and 25 new countries were expected to bring their first nuclear power plants online by 2030. He said “Any expansion in its use must be done safely and securely, and without increasing the proliferation risk.” (12) Even without reprocessing and plutonium separation, a large increase in global nuclear capacity will need a proportional expansion of uranium enrichment. The diffusion of knowledge and the increase in trade in specialised materials and equipment would make it progressively more difficult to identify clandestine weapons programmes. (14)

(1) BBC 13th April 2010

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/8616855.stm>

(2) Communiqué from the Washington Nuclear Security Summit, 13th April 2010

<http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2010/April/20100413171855eaifas0.6155773.html>

(3) See <http://www.rertr.anl.gov/>

(4) New York Times 13th April 2010

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/13/science/13nuke.html>

(5) Bloomberg 13th April 2010

<http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601072&sid=aNnpUFU8S7yI>

(6) BBC 13th April 2010

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/8618066.stm>

(7) Letter from David Lowry Guardian 16th April 2010.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/apr/16/recycling-plutonium-insane-policy>

(8) Telegraph 16th April 2010

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/earthcomment/geoffrey-lean/7599133/Waking-up-to-a-nightmare-of-nuclear-terrorism.html>

(9) Guardian 13th April 2010

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/apr/13/barack-obama-nuclear-summit>

(10) Linda Gunter of Beyond Nuclear writing in Alternet 3rd May 2010

http://www.alternet.org/story/146710/the_flaw_in_the_non-proliferation_treaty%27s_article_iv%3A_nuclear_power_and_the_pathway_to_nuclear_weapons/

(11) Acronym Institute Series of Briefings: NPT 2010 and Beyond.

<http://www.acronym.org.uk/npt/npt2010.htm#nptbriefings>

Acronym Institute Briefing on Nuclear Power. April 2010

<http://www.acronym.org.uk/npt/npt2010%20B9%20-%20Nuclear%20Power.pdf>

(12) Reuters 4th May 2010

<http://in.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idINIndia-48194920100503>

(13) Greenpeace Nuclear Reaction 5th May 2010

http://weblog.greenpeace.org/nuclear-reaction/2010/05/nuclear_nonproliferation_treat.html

(14) See Chapter 3 of Smith, B. Insurmountable Risks, IEER 2006

<http://www.no2nuclearpower.org.uk/reviews/review01.php>

4. Reprocessing doesn't avoid Geological Disposal

A bizarre, ill-informed, opinion seems to have gained currency in the United States - that reprocessing would somehow eliminate the need for a deep geologic disposal programme to replace Yucca Mountain.

A report by the Institute for Energy and Environmental Research (IEER) argues that reprocessing actually increases the volume of waste by about six times. It also aggravates waste, proliferation, and cost problems. The report has several recommendations for President Obama's Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future, which was created to address U.S. nuclear waste issues after the administration's cancellation of the Yucca Mountain programme. (1)

The Commission has specifically chosen to investigate the possibility of reprocessing spent fuel. After all, the French, Japanese and others routinely do so—and the South Koreans and Indians would like to do so. (2)

(1) IEER Press Release 8th April 2010

<http://www.ieer.org/reports/reprocessing2010pr.pdf>

Full Report: <http://www.ieer.org/reports/reprocessing2010.pdf>

(2) Scientific American 15th April 2010

<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=is-reprocessing-the-answer-to-eliminating-fissile-materials>

5. Is Europe planning to impose Deep Disposal?

The European Commission is consulting on two possible options for binding EU legislation on the treatment of nuclear waste. The commission has said it will table a legislative proposal by the end of the year. The first option would be to strengthen in EU law “internationally accepted” principles and requirements laid down in the IAEA Safety standards and the Joint Convention on the management of radioactive waste and spent fuel. Member states would be required to adopt national programmes. Stakeholders are asked to give their views on possible requirements including the creation of a regulatory authority and an organisation dedicated to waste management. The second option would be to adopt specific requirements for the scope, content and review of national programmes in addition to the first option. For example, the commission wants to know if the programme should include inventories of radioactive waste and spent fuel and identify disposal routes.

For a briefing on responding to the consultation see the Nuclear Free Local Authorities Radioactive Waste Policy Briefing No. 24 http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/docs/radwaste/NFLA_RWB_24_European_consultation.pdf

6. Justification - to inquire or not?

Nuclear “Justification” is a high level assessment about whether the benefits of new nuclear build outweigh the health detriments, says Dr Paul Dorfman of the Nuclear Consultation Group writing in the New Statesman blog. Justification is a legal regulatory requirement under EU law - it must be done before reactors can be approved. Once the Justification decision has been taken, he says, it will be all but impossible to re-open discussion on nuclear policy. (1)

This will not be subject to any Parliamentary scrutiny until after a decision has been made. But if you don't know the reactor design and can't show how you can dispose of radioactive waste, how on earth can you estimate the health risks? The government may be about to take a decision on the “Justification” of more nuclear power when significant “what if” issues that are tied to health impact have not been resolved. Failure to do this leaves the government open to legal challenge and leads to hostility and mistrust of any future energy policy decision. This critical decision must be dealt with openly and fairly to get a better result for everyone by generating public trust in the outcome. Because the Justification of new nuclear power in the UK represents a key issue for trust in government energy policy and the control of nuclear risk, the Government should hold an Independent Inquiry, as allowed for under the regulations governing Justification: The Justification of Practices Involving Ionising Radiation Regulations 2004 (No. 1769), Regulation 17.

(1) The Stagers, New Statesmen 23rd April 2010

<http://www.newstatesman.com/blogs/the-stagers/2010/04/nuclear-reactors-justification>

7. View on the Ground

- Renewables are the best hope for the local economy, Cllr John Whitelegg explained to a public meeting organized by the Heysham Anti-Nuclear Alliance (HANA). Dr Stuart Parkinson, Executive Director of Scientists for Global Responsibility, Dr Noel Cass of Lancaster University Environment Centre and Maurice Pennance from the Heysham Anti-Nuclear Alliance spoke and took questions and contributions from the audience about proposals for a third nuclear station at Heysham. (1)
- The Green Party has launched - The Right to Know: Oldbury Nuclear Expansion and Your Safety – the risks to the people of Gloucestershire. (2)

(1) Virtual Lancaster 29th April 2010

<http://virtual-lancaster.blogspot.com/2010/04/lancashire-economy-needs-renewables-not.html>

Heysham Anti-Nuclear Alliance

<http://www.lancaster-district-cnd.org/HANA.html>

(2) http://www.stroudgreenparty.org.uk/documents/Oldbury_Report-May-2010.pdf

8. Chernobyl – still causing deaths 24 years after the accident

Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich warned that Chernobyl remains a serious threat to Europe, and urged donors to stump up funds to secure the facility. The damaged reactor is encased in a deteriorating shell and internationally funded work to replace it is far behind schedule. A statement released by the president's office said that the plant's fourth nuclear reactor continued to present an active danger after work to replace a deteriorating concrete shell around the facility was postponed due to a shortage of funds last year. (1)

Nearly one million people around the world died from exposure to radiation released by the 1986 disaster according to a new book from the New York Academy of Sciences. The book, "Chernobyl: Consequences of the Catastrophe for People and the Environment," was compiled by authors Alexey Yablokov of the Center for Russian Environmental Policy in Moscow, and Vassily Nesterenko and Alexey Nesterenko of the Institute of Radiation Safety, in Minsk, Belarus. The authors examined more than 5,000 published articles and studies, most written in Slavic languages and never before available in English. (2)

Now the author of a new study, published in Pediatrics, on continuing health effects is demanding more comprehensive studies. Wladimir Wertelecki of the University of Southern Alabama found above average rates of a number of birth defects in one province in Ukraine. Wertelecki. He says the rise could be linked to continuing exposure to low-level radiation doses. The results show claims that birth defects are not linked to the disaster need to be re-evaluated. He told The Lancet: "The official position is that Chernobyl and birth defects are not connected. That position needs to be reconsidered at the very least." (3)

(1) Morning Star 27th Apr 2010

<http://www.morningstaronline.co.uk/index.php/news/content/view/full/89667>

(2) Environment News Service 26th Apr 2010

<http://www.ens-newswire.com/ens/apr2010/2010-04-26-01.html>

(3) The Lancet 24th April 2010

<http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736%2810%2960605-8/fulltext>

9. Low Level Waste Dump Proliferation

There is a danger we could see a proliferation of low level radioactive waste dumps around the country. (1) This so-called ‘flexible approach’ advocated by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority means increasing the amount of wastes going to landfill; lowering standards for site remediation in an attempt to reduce the volumes of waste generated and costs; and an increase in discharges of liquid radioactive waste into the marine environment, caused by the decontamination of metals earmarked for recycling. (2)

The corporate sector is already considering the opportunities presented by a wider use of landfill. Leading waste management firms such as the French-owned Sita group and the American company, EnergySolutions, are trying to press ahead with plans to use Cumbrian facilities at Keekle Head and Lillyhall for dealing with waste from Sellafield and elsewhere. Recent press reports suggest that even Cumbria County Council is not happy about the proliferation of low level waste dump sites and may refuse permission for disposal at Lillyhall and Keekle Head. “It should not be put in holes and imposed on people around West Cumbria.” (3)

These plans received a major setback when it was discovered that five bags of radioactive waste from Sellafield were dumped at Lillyhall after a faulty scanner wrongly passed them as safe. Environment Agency inspectors have found one of the bags but are still searching for the other four at the landfill site near Workington. The bags contained waste collected in restricted areas at Sellafield where disposal of all items, including protective clothing, is strictly controlled because of the risk of radioactive contamination. The waste should have been sent for storage in concrete vaults at the Low Level Waste Repository near Drigg. (4)

The Nuclear Free Local Authorities asked how we can contemplate building more nuclear power stations and nuclear waste dumps when we know that human error and similar lapses can have huge public health implications. (5) Martin Forwood of Cumbrians Opposed to a Radioactive Environment said: “We are absolutely opposed to the plans to increase the amount of nuclear waste going to landfill. Some of the sites are not just for very low-level waste but low-level also. By allowing nuclear waste to go to landfill the government is letting the nuclear industry off the hook. What they are doing is scattering the waste all around this country. It is completely irresponsible.” (6)

Meanwhile Copeland’s Green Party Candidate, Jill Perry, submitted an objection to other Cumbrian waste proposal - Sita Endecom’s proposal to bury one million cubic metres of low level nuclear waste at Keekle Head. Endecom plan to send 12 lorry loads of waste a day to the site, during its 50 year operation. The waste would include rubble, contaminated soil, contaminated concrete, overalls, gloves and boots. The lorries are not just from nearby Sellafield but also from other parts of the UK, causing unreasonable disturbance and risk to the local population. The Company accepts that if their planned dump goes ahead there will be risks to local people or “receptors”, as radioactivity will dissolve, get into the water supply – and may reach the local population. (7)

(1) Low Level Waste Dump Proliferation. NuClear News No.12 November 2009
<http://www.no2nuclearpower.org.uk/nuclearnews/NuClearNewsNo12.pdf>

(2) Nuclear Free Local Authorities, Radioactive Waste Briefing No.20, 20th Aug 2009
<http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/docs/radwaste/RadWaste20.pdf>

(3) Whitehaven News 25th August 2009
http://www.whitehaven-news.co.uk/news/nuclear_waste_sites_set_for_thumbs_down_1_600367

(4) Times 26th April 2010
<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/environment/article7107865.ece>

(5) Times 27th April 2010
<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/letters/article7108680.ece>

(6) Morning Star 26th April 2010
<http://www.morningstaronline.co.uk/index.php/news/content/view/full/89649>

(7) Carlisle News and Star 27th April 2010
<http://www.newsandstar.co.uk/news/nuclear-waste-dump-would-cause-unreasonable-risk-claims-copeland-green-candidate-1.700597>

Get Noticed Online 26th Apr 2010
<http://www.getnoticedonline.co.uk/news/general-news/copeland-candidate-objects-to-nuclear-waste-plan.html>

10. Ambitious Solar Plan for North Africa

The ambitious dream of providing Europe with energy from solar farms located in the North African desert has taken a small step towards reality, after one of the companies involved in the high-profile Desertec coalition confirmed it is on track to complete Egypt's first solar thermal power plant later this year. Hopefully the €250m Kuraymat project will act as a template for the solar farms that the Desertec group plans to one day use. These will supply power to much of North Africa and southern Europe.

The Desertec coalition has already secured backing from a host of European blue-chip firms as it attempts to move forward with the €400bn project. The group is currently working on a comprehensive feasibility study of its plans, which would see a network of solar thermal plants in North Africa connected to Europe via high voltage direct current cables capable of transmitting energy thousands of miles. (1)

(1) Business Green 21st April 2010

<http://www.businessgreen.com/business-green/news/2261741/desertec-project-takes-first>

Guardian 27th April 2010

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2010/apr/27/sahara-europe-solar-power>