NUCLEAR ISSUES

Posted on 12/04/2011 by Naider

The issue of nuclear energy is becoming more and more similar to religion. Either you believe or you don't believe, a matter of faith. Faced with such a complex issue, and with so much information for and against, one sometimes has existential doubts about which side to position oneself on. More so when you see that James Lovelock, a renowned British ecologist co-author of the Gaia theory along with Lynn Margulis, fiercely defends nuclear energy in one of his latest books, Revenge of the Earth, in which he even goes so far as to publicly announce that he would be willing to store in his own garden the high-intensity waste that a nuclear power plant produces for one year.

Recently an article in La Vanguardia reflected as every time more green activists like Lovelock champion nuclear power. Among those quoted in the article is George Monbiot, who recently wrote a column for The Guardian under the provocative headline Why Fukushima made me stop worrying and love nuclear power (quickly answered by Jeremy Legget: George Monbiot is wrong. Nuclear power is not the way to fight climate change). The main argument of these defenders of nuclear energy is that to replace fossil fuels it is not enough just to deploy renewables. By the way, as another important argument, they downplay the **risks** of this type of energy. Monbiot himself links in his article to a summary table of radiationsthat is very useful for contrasting the information that comes to us every day from Japan about the Fukushima nuclear accident.

Radiation Dose Chart, by xkcd

Risk and **danger**: two concepts that, according to Mariano González, have been intentionally confused by the nuclear industry to promote the construction of new plants or extend the useful life of existing ones: Fukushima shows that < strong>zero risk does not exist and that different situations may come together that trigger the potential danger **that a nuclear power plant entails.**

Another interesting article dated before the current **overdose of atomic information** that we are receiving these days: Nuclear Renaissance: A Forceps Delivery, 2008. In it Marcel Coderch, citing an MIT study (The Future of Nuclear Power) states that five fundamental problems would have to be solved so that nuclear energy could be part of the energy mix: **cost**, **security**, **waste**, **proliferation** and **social perception**.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SLcJF3E8uV4

Even with the **pro-nuclear positioning of the environmental gurus** that I exposed at the beginning of the post, I think that my nuclear faith has not yet awakened. I still think that **the risks involved in this type of energy cannot be assumed by our society** and that the deployment of renewables as well as the development of advanced energy distribution and storage systems are the paths to follow to definitively disassociate ourselves from fossil fuels.

Finally, two other references. The first, a recent piece of news related to **cost** and **security**, two of the problems cited by the MIT study: The nuclear cemetery passes its bill; As of today, Spain already owes Areva more than €6.4 million for the storage of high-intensity radioactive waste. The second reference, a classic on energy issues: the World Energy Outlook 2010< /a>; fossil fuels will be the predominant energy sources in 2035, with oil being the dominant fuel within the primary energy mix (28%); renewables increase from 7% contribution on primary energy in 2008 to 14% in 2035; **nuclear energy, before the Fukushima accident, would increase by only 2%** (6% in 2008, 8% in 2035).

There are no comments yet.