A Pro-Nuclear Policy Calling for CO_2 Reduction Still Has Genocidal Effects

by Benjamin Deniston

Aug. 22—With the recent escalation of the "man-made climate change catastrophe" propaganda campaign, there is a growing emphasis on nuclear fission—and even fusion—as the basis of a CO_2 reduction policy.

The development and mass implementation of advanced nuclear fission and fusion power is urgently required, but any attempt to pair nuclear expansion with a CO_2 reduction policy would condemn hundreds of millions of people to unnecessary suffering and premature death.

Present global nuclear fission production capacity is woefully inadequate, and mass production of fusion power will take significant time to develop (even with a crash program). Coal and natural gas consumption must be increased to support a more rapid gear-up of the needed manufacturing capacity for fission and fusion plant mass production.

Any CO_2 reduction program—even one that supports nuclear—would be devastating to the growth requirements of the planet.

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The Bellefonte Nuclear Generating Station in Hollywood, Alabama.

The Present Global Picture

In 2012 the global electricity consumption rate was 2,500 gigawatts (GW). Coal and natural gas provided the majority, roughly 60% of global power (1,500 GW). Hydro provided 15% (375 GW), nuclear fission provided 10% (250 GW), and "non-hydro renewables" provided 8% (200 GW).

According to a 2018 assessment published in *EIR*, "Mass Production of Modular Nuclear Reactors to Industrialize Developing Countries Until Fusion Power Comes Online," by Ramtanu Maitra, the total global manufacturing capacity for producing nuclear power plants can only add 30 GW of nuclear power per year. That means, with present capacity, it would take 50 years to replace all existing coal and natural gas with nuclear.

A massive ramping up of nuclear power production capacity is clearly

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The Salem Harbor Natural Gas Power Station in Salem, Massachusetts.

needed. However, it would be devastating to dedicate that expanded nuclear production capacity to an accelerated replacement of CO_2-emitting power sources (coal and natural gas), rather than keeping existing coal and natural gas policies (including expansion) and adding new nuclear power on top of CO_2-emitting power sources.

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The Qianxi Power Station, a coal-fired power plant near Gantang, Guizhou Province, China.

The Realities of Energy Poverty

According to the International Energy Agency, one-seventh of the world's population—1.1 billion people—don't have access to electricity. If we examine this by nation, there are currently 3 billion people in 34 nations with catastrophically low levels of electricity consumption—averaging less than 100 watts per capita. By 2045 those 34 nations will have 4.5 billion people.

What will be required to lift these nations out of energy poverty?

In 1990 China's energy-flux density, by this measure, was 60 watts per capita. By 2015 (25 years later), China had increased its energy-flux density nearly eightfold, to 450 watts per capita (while its population also grew by 20%). Presently 65% of China's electricity comes from coal and 20% from hydro (with 5% from wind and 4% from nuclear).

For these 34 energy-starved nations to go through the same rate of growth in electricity consumption per capita (energy-flux density) that China went through from 1990 to 2015, would require an additional 2,000 GW of electricity production by 2045.

What's more important over the next 25 years? Using nuclear to replace 1,500 GW of existing coal and natural gas plants, or using nuclear to provide 2,000 GW of new, additional power generation for the poorest countries on the planet? We presently don't have the production capacity to do either, let alone both. Further, the 2,000 GW of power required for these 34 energy-starved nations to go through a China-comparable 25-year growth in energy-flux density, is far from what's needed globally.

A Planetary Perspective

A minimum goal for global electricity consumption by 2045 is 10,000 GW, four times 2012 levels (2,500 GW)—although that's probably far below what Lyndon LaRouche would be calling for under a Moon-Mars program. For comparison, the World Energy Council projects global electricity consumption to be 6,000 GW by 2050 (rather than 10,000 GW). That gap of 4,000 GW would ensure premature death and unnecessary suffering for hundreds of millions (if not billions) of people.

For example, since infant mortality rates correlate with a nation's energy-flux density (power per capita), we can estimate that 90 million infants will die unnecessarily by 2045 if these 34 energy-starved nations aren't able to go through a China-comparable 25-year growth in energy-flux density.

This is a clear example of the cost of CO_2 reduction, 90 million human lives ended, before these people even have a chance to speak.

The reality is coal and natural gas consumption must increase to support a more rapid gear-up of the needed manufacturing capacity for fission and fusion mass production. In a few generations, coal and natural gas use will naturally decline in the context of a fission- and fusion-driven global energy program. However, any policy mandate to unnaturally accelerate CO_2 reduction (even if it's premised on expanded nuclear power) is tantamount to genocide.