Is new nuclear build in the UK a step forwards, or backwards?

Dr Paul Norman

"The news about EDF Energy's agreement with government, to build new nuclear reactors at Hinkley Point, has understandably had mixed reactions from the general public."

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Feedback

- M on 04 November 2013, **Andrew Whiting** wrote

  Personally, I totally agree with all the points made in this nicely balanced and well-informed article by Dr. Paul Norman. There is no alternative other than to use fission reactors to provide for base load electricity demand over the medium term if the UK is serious about complying with its carbon reduction commitments while ensuring energy reliability and security of supply. So the announcement of a commercial agreement between EDF and the UK Government for a guaranteed electricity price (£92.50 per MWh) for a period of 35 years after the Hinkley Point C plant is completed in 2023 is definitely a welcome development and a major step towards securing investment in a new generation of nuclear power stations. Not much to add, apart from highlighting the fact that fusion energy, the much anticipated successor to fission energy, will most likely not become a commercial possibility until sometime after 2060, assuming the necessary technological developments proceed satisfactorily at ITER, DEMO and PROTO i.e. commercially viable fusion is still more than 50 years away!

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- M on 01 November 2013, **Habibur Rahman** wrote

  I don't think a step has been taken in either direction. Yes it's great that there is a fixed price energy output which will remain stable regardless of the weather and environmental conditions however nuclear power is not sustainable in the long term. If 'green' activist groups don't mount a formidable barrier against nuclear power, there will be a time when uranium and other natural resources of gamma radiation will run out. That may be a long way off, but if every nation followed this trend- including the 300+ chinese coal powered stations built every year -and turned to nuclear power, it wouldn't be long before it becomes the state at which oil has become.Then we would be back to where we are now-thus we won't have moved forward.

  In my personal experience, a combination of renewable sources might be sufficient enough to meet the consumer demands of the UK. There won't always be wind or sunlight. But as long as the moon orbits the Earth, we will always have tides and therefore tidal hydroelectric power. I know it is inefficient and can be somewhat intermittent, however we are an island and we have an abundance of water. If large investments were made in wind (both inland and offshore), tidal, and solar energy it could ease some of the pressure off nuclear and carbon. At least until the mother of all sources is established-fusion.

  A few weeks ago, scientists had made a breakthough in fusion. It's only a matter of time before fusion becomes a reality. That time may be centuries so we cannot use nuclear keep us going until then. If we have renewable, we can maintain that alongside fusion, whereas fission wouldn't have a role next to fusion.

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- M on 26 October 2013, **ali** wrote

  until we can find new ways of generating electricity ,we have to build safer nuclear power stations.....but its evident that energy companies and corporations have more power than elected governments ,which is very dangerous and unacceptable.....energy companies have the nation at their mercy. its time the consumer set the prices. greed has no place in todays democracy.

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