

## KICK NUCLEAR & NUCLEAR TRAINS



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### The monthly mailing of Kick Nuclear and the Nuclear Trains Action Group of London Region CND.

Editor: David Polden

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#### NEXT NTAG STALL AND LEAFLETING

**Saturday February 4<sup>th</sup>**, 11am-2pm, by the Clocktower in Harlesden High Street, NW10, near Willesden Junction Station. Help welcome. Organised NTAG.

#### REGULAR FRIDAY SOLIDARITY VIGIL

**Every Friday** (since August 2012) 10am-noon, leafletting outside Japanese Embassy, 101-104 Piccadilly (Green Park tube); then go on to new Tokyo Electric Power Company offices near Chancery Lane tube to leaflet there too. In solidarity with the anti-nuclear movement in Japan. Organised: *Kick Nuclear* and *Japanese Against Nuclear UK* (JAN UK)

#### NEXT JOINT KN/NTAG PLANNING MEETING

**Monday February 6<sup>th</sup>**, 7pm, At CND Office. Address in masthead.

#### WESTINGHOUSE BRINGS TOSHIBA TO ITS KNEES

Toshiba bought the previously US-owned company Westinghouse in 2006 for about \$5.4bn.

Westinghouse produces the AP1000 Pressurised Water Reactor. Eight of these reactors are in construction, four in the US and four in China. It has no firm orders for any others, though Toshiba has announced it is to build three of this

design at Moorside, next to Sellafield and in a few other places.

So, like the EPR design, no AP1000s have actually been completed and all are years behind schedule.

The *Japan Times* (JT) reported on January 31<sup>st</sup> that Toshiba is considering selling Westinghouse. It reported Toshiba's president and CEO Satoshi Tsunakawa as saying Westinghouse is "unlikely to carry out actual construction work for the future nuclear power plant projects to eliminate risk". The same day The Japan Atomic Industrial Forum [JAIF] said that Westinghouse expects to incur a loss of as much as \$6.4bn on the construction of nuclear power plants in the US.

*JT* reports "sources" as saying that, against this background, Toshiba aims to eliminate risks of incurring further losses in the future by selling Westinghouse or lowering its equity stake in the unit that builds nuclear power plants.

"As it appears difficult for Toshiba to find a buyer of Westinghouse," the *JT* report continues, "[Toshiba]...reeling under heavy losses...is considering various options, including selling some of the unit's profitable segments, such as nuclear fuel business"

Toshiba conceded it was scaling back ambitions for its nuclear business, saying that "construction costs have increased since the 2011 accident at Fukushima-Daiichi *because of the imposition of stricter safety standards in the US.*" [My italics] JAIF commented that costs had increased for equipment, facilities and materials to meet the new standards, [and] with construction periods also extended, leading to higher personnel costs.

It seems to me this all makes the odds against Toshiba building an AP1000-equipped power station at Moorside extremely high. Trying to build AP1000 nuclear power stations has virtually bankrupted the company, so it's unlikely to want to take on building any more. And it's hardly conceivable that any other company would take over the financing of building AP1000 nuclear reactors where an enormous conglomerate like Toshiba has so spectacularly failed.

#### IS NUCLEAR POWER IN THE US DOOMED?

In an article, published by *World Nuclear News*, Jarret Adams, CEO of "Full On Communications" laments:

"The agreement to close prematurely the Indian Point Energy Center north of New York City felt like a gut punch. The latest in a string of closure announcements, Indian Point hurts so deeply because of its high-profile and proximity to the world's leading financial centre.

“As many as two-thirds of America's 99 reactors could shut down by 2030. Today we are building four. The only way to change this trajectory in the near term is to convince more Americans that nuclear energy makes sense. But we are not doing enough to earn more supporters and remain too focused on finding technical solutions.

“Nuclear energy produces - by a wide margin - the largest portion of America's carbon-free power. It is the nation's safest and most reliable source of electricity. The reality is that every time a nuclear plant shuts down the power that replaces it is less reliable, produces more emissions, and costs more.

But too few people know this or care. That is what is really driving nuclear energy out of business. The nuclear energy industry has not invested enough in telling people why they should value this important technology.

“The same thing is happening in other countries with established nuclear fleets. If the US nuclear sector falls apart, others will follow. Led by brilliant, hard-working engineers, the industry would rather find an engineering solution to a challenge than one involving squishy stuff like marketing and public relations.

“When opponents claim nuclear plants are not safe enough, the industry develops a doohickey to make them even safer, even though nuclear energy is already America's safest source. This, of course, increases their costs.

“When critics say that nuclear power is too expensive (and most vocal critics belong to organisations pursuing legal and regulatory actions to make it more so), the industry has pursued ambitious initiatives to cut costs.

“Cutting costs and developing safer new technologies are important, but they are not enough to save the plants at risk. If people care about the climate effects of closing plants, they should consider this: the five nuclear reactors that closed since 2013 annually produced about the same amount of carbon-free power as all US solar power in 2015 combined.

“Six years after the incident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear facility in Japan and faced with declining public support, the US nuclear sector is cutting spending on public outreach.

“People inherently prefer subsidized wind and solar because they understand the simple technology and think they somehow seem safer. Without a carbon tax, highly unlikely at least at the federal level, nuclear energy is generally more expensive than fossil fuels.

“As business guru Michael Porter noted, businesses must either be the cost leader or differentiate. With natural gas prices at historic lows, nuclear energy must differentiate itself.

“How do other industries convince customers to pay more for a product that is more reliable, safer and environmentally friendly? They invest in more marketing, advertising, and public relations.

“As we are witnessing in real time, treating nuclear-generated electricity as a commodity is a recipe for failure. Nuclear energy is a premium product and must be sold as such.

“The professionals tasked with marketing and communication have performed heroically. But they need more resources if we are going to turn the tide.

“Each nuclear plant that closes prematurely results in the loss of hundreds of high-paying jobs and hurts the local tax base.

“Each nuclear plant that shuts down early makes our electricity less clean, less reliable and more expensive.

“Each nuclear plant whose light goes out before its time should be a rallying cry for the diligent and dedicated people who build, operate and supply them.”

Sorry to have quoted this nonsense at such length, but it does illustrate what desperate straits the US nuclear industry, at least, feels itself in. David Polden.

**STOP PRESS:** the *Asahi Shimbun* reported (2<sup>nd</sup> Feb) that Hitachi is to report a loss of \$620 million on the current year most of it due to an aborted nuclear project in the US. Hitachi is of course supposed to be building nuclear power stations at Wylfa and Oldbury. <http://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/AJ201702020042.html>

## FUKUSHIMA MELTED-DOWN FUEL FOUND?

The Japanese paper the *Asahi Shimbun*, reported on January 30<sup>th</sup> that a remote-controlled video-camera had taken pictures inside the destroyed Fukushima reactor the previous day that showed the bottom of its pressure vessel.

Water used to cool the nuclear fuel is seen dripping, and possible melted fuel is seen strewn on a grating used for maintenance work

The paper says, “If confirmed, the first images of melted nuclear fuel at the Fukushima ... nuclear plant show the condition of what is believed to be melted fuel inside the No. 2 reactor at the plant appears far worse than previously thought... Before the [new] pictures were taken...TEPCO presumed that most of the nuclear fuel at the No. 2 reactor had remained within the reactor’s pressure vessel. But the images showed black lumps scattered on a wire-mesh grating in the lower part of the containment vessel, which encloses the pressure vessel. This indicates that the fuel melted through the bottom of the pressure vessel, spilled through the grating and fell on the floor of the containment vessel.”