

**“THE NUCLEAR OPTION IN GREEK  
NATIONAL ENERGY POLICY:  
A RENAISSANCE OR A DEJA VUE”**

by

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- “Renaissance”, a notion that inspires rejuvenating sentiments.
- “Deja Vu”, inspires opposite sentiments of monotony, even frustration.

- Starting from as early as the late 1950's, many scientists produced paper studies on nuclear application in the Greek electricity generation mix.
- At that time the total installed capacity in Greece was less than 1000 MW and consumption of electricity less than 3000 MWh per year!
- A lot of emphasis on use for water desalination.

- Mid 1960's early 1970:
- The atoms for tobacco negotiations

- 1971: ΔΕΗ Governor Demopoulos Establishes “Nuclear Office”

- Mid to late 1970's
- Konstantinos Karamanlis to National Energy Council Chairman MIT Professor Elias Gyftopoulos:
  - ***“It will probably be after my lifetime, but when the time comes, I want my Country to be equipped with a team of excellence in personnel that will be capable for the control and assurance of proper and safe operation of nuclear electricity generators”.***

- 1976: A nuclear reactor appears at the tail end of the  $\Delta$ EH ten-year development program, to be in operation in 1986

1980

Establishment of the *Alternative Energy  
Sources Department* at ΔΕΗ  
( Governor Moissis)

The “evil” nuclear office  
and the “benign” renewables section  
placed under the same roof



1980

EBASCO engaged to identify possible sites

- Anticipating turmoil in the media, a statement that has its value to this day:
- ***«The use of nuclear reactors is the subject of a current technological controversy, at least in the Western World. As is to be expected, there are many who believe that the nuclear option is the most reliable medium-term solution to the energy problem, just as there are others who consider it as one to be avoided at all costs.***
- ***«ΔEH, without having reached the point where its position will be de facto irreversible in either direction, is pursuing the study of all aspects of this important problem with particular care and firmness. The contract that we have signed today falls within the framework of these long-term studies that will enable us, in due time, to reach a well founded final decision in one direction or the other».***

- Then came Three Mile Island and Chernobyl and in most of the world (except France, of course) all nuclear plans were put on hold.
- In Greece, the issue was no longer a theme.
- It became an anathema!

- Long before we were in the new Millennium, I was taking bets that by the year 2000, the environmentalists would be out in the streets chanting in favor of nuclear reactors.
- Well, I was wrong of course, but not quite.
- It is environmental concerns that have brought the nuclear option back into play!

- So, here we are in 2008, with one country after the other un-shelving or initiating plans for the installation of nuclear reactors.
- This appears to be particularly true in our neighborhood,

What about the European Union's position about which we have heard controversial statements earlier this week?

- the Commission:
- Recognizes the contribution of nuclear energy in CO2 emission reduction.
- Underlines the paramount importance of ensuring nuclear safety and security.
- States that if in any EU Member the level of nuclear energy generation is reduced, it is essential that this reduction be phased-in with the introduction of other low-carbon energy sources for electricity production.
- Finally, the Commission confirms that “it is for each and every Member State to decide whether or not to rely on nuclear electricity”.

- So, what is the case for Greece?
- What is the position of the National Energy Council that I have the honor to Chair?

- The Council's long term energy plan aims at the following goals:
- Security of energy supply with differentiation of energy sources.
- Saving and rational use of energy.
- Protection of the environment and sustainable development.
- Contribution to productivity and competitiveness of the National Economy.



- For the period 2008-2020, we have arrived at a mix that assures on the one hand energy sufficiency and on the other attainment of the European Energy Policy targets.
- It turns out that, if all goes according to plan, the double-headed goals may be achieved, with limited use of imported coal and no need to resort to any other new source of electricity generation.

- The verdict is “no nuclear”.
- This a conclusion that the Council supports unanimously and it is a position that is responsible and firm.
- Nevertheless, we must not allow it to become de facto irreversible.
- The need for alertness, awareness and preparedness is as important today as it were at the time when a reactor was included in  $\Delta EH$ 's development plans.

- It is a known fact, that the time between deciding to build a nuclear plant and commissioning it, is more than ten years.
- If without investing too much money we can do something to shorten that decision-making to-commissioning time span, we should not hesitate to do so.
- All we need is to make sure that we have the proper human resources and expertise.

- Some of the organizers of this workshop have designed a road map for mobilizing such resources.
- We encourage them and offer our support

- This is not the Council's and certainly not the present Government's commitment in favor of nuclear electricity.
- It is simply an assertion that we have no right to deprive the people of Greece and their future Governments, of the possibility to re-consider.

- So, is it Renaissance or déjà vu?
- I leave it to you (and the future) to judge.