

Georgia Power's customers will pay for the enormous losses made by the project.

Looking at the Vogtle fiasco, the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* commented, "Southern Company's chief executive has said more than once that the giant utility's project to build two more nuclear reactors at Plant Vogtle would be history-making. He may be right, but not in the way he meant." The newspaper said Vogtle, "is fast becoming Exhibit A for why no US utility before...Southern had tried building a new reactor in 30-plus years."

In neighbouring South Carolina, SCANA Corp. and public power system Santee Cooper are facing a similar situation. They bought two Westinghouse AP1000 units to add to their existing two-unit V.C. Summer nuclear plant, which has also suffered long delays in its construction and is well over budget.

In an article in *Power* magazine on May 20<sup>th</sup>, the author Kennedy Maize, "guesses" that both the Vogtle and Summer projects will be aborted. As he argues, "While both utilities enjoy supine state regulators and the ability to earn on construction costs as they are incurred, that will trigger rate shock and political backlash, killing the projects. That's what we saw in the 1980s."

A two-unit, AP1000 project also in Carolina, owned by Duke Energy, which has a combined construction and operating licence from the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission, is still not under construction and The North Carolina Utilities Commission on May 16<sup>th</sup> gave Duke 60 days to respond to a series of questions about its plans for the project, including the impact of the Westinghouse bankruptcy. In 2008, Duke produced an estimate of \$14 billion to build the project, and has already spent over \$500 million even before starting construction.

**In the UK**, on 4<sup>th</sup> May the Moorside 3-AP1000 reactor project was put on hold as the company behind it, NuGen, announced a "strategic review of options".

Well it might! Prior to April, after a long series of changes of ownership, NuGen was owned 60% by Toshiba and 30% by Engie. After the Westinghouse bankruptcy in March caused largely by losses on trying to build AP1000 reactors in the US, parent company Toshiba indicated it would withdraw from all nuclear projects outside Japan, and then in April Engie withdrew from the project leaving Toshiba 100% owning a project it clearly wants to get rid of. But who would want to buy it, or any part of it?

In view of increasing doubts as to whether Moorside would ever be built, the National Grid subsequently put on hold plans to build a power transmission line at an estimated cost of £2.8Bn to connect Moorside to the grid.



Bromley CND Chernobyl Day stall and leafletting outside Bromley South Station, "served" by nuclear waste trains. Ann (on left) writes, "We were joined by Penny from Forest Hill and Sydenham CND and Fay and Kazumi from Kick Nuclear. Leaflets were given out about Fukushima as well as Chernobyl, and people signed the Anti-Nuclear Trains petition."

## COURT RULES SA NUCLEAR DEAL INVALID

Cape Town High Court in late April ruled invalid a deal between the South African government and Russian company Rosatom to build eight nuclear reactors in SA with a combined output of 9.6 gigawatts.

The case was brought by Earthlife Africa and the Southern Africa Faith-Communities' Environmental Institute. The two NGOs were challenging the way in which the state determined the country's nuclear power needs.

The judge in the case, Lee Bozalek, ruled the government's action unconstitutional and found that five decisions it had taken were illegal. These included the government's decision to go ahead with the nuclear build and the fact that it had handed over the procurement process to the state utility Eskom. The court also ruled that Eskom's request for information from nuclear vendors, a step taken to prepare the procurement, was invalid.

If it still wants to pursue the nuclear deal the government will have to start again. To do so legally it would have to open up the process to detailed public

scrutiny. The country's electricity regulator would have to have a series of public hearings before endorsing SA's highest ever spend on infrastructure. And any international agreements would have to be scrutinised by parliament.

The argument that the country needs another 9.6 gigawatts appeared in documents produced in 2011. These are badly out of date. Recent studies by the University of Cape Town's Energy Research Centre have shown that the country doesn't need to consider nuclear for another 20 years.

A number of studies have also shot holes in the government's argument that the country can afford the proposed nuclear build. The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research has developed models showing that new nuclear is likely to be much more expensive than coal or renewables. The price ticket for nuclear - which some estimates put at more than 1 trillion Rand - doesn't take into account the costs of operation, fuel, insurance, emergency planning or the regulation or decontamination at the end of the life of the reactors.

So why the SA government's zeal to pursue the deal? An article in the *Mail and Guardian* (SA) suggests corruption, pointing to President Jacob Zuma's close ties with the Gupta family who own South Africa's major uranium mine and which has close relationships with Eskom.

### FUKUSHIMA WILDFIRE

On the last weekend of April a wildfire broke out in the highly radioactive "no-go zone" near the crippled Fukushima nuclear power plant. Japanese newspaper *The Mainichi* reported that lightning was likely to blame for sparking the fire on Saturday on Mount Juman in Namie, one of the areas evacuated following the 2011 meltdown. It lies in the Fukushima Prefecture and is a restricted zone, due to continually high radiation levels.

In a blog post last year, Anton Beneslavsky, a member of Greenpeace Russia's firefighting group who has been deployed to fight blazes in nuclear Chernobyl, outlined the specific dangers of wildfires in contaminated areas. He wrote: "During a fire, radionuclides like caesium-137, strontium-90 and plutonium rise into the air and travel with the wind...when these unstable atoms are inhaled, people become internally exposed to radiation."

Contaminated forests such as those outside fallout sites like Fukushima and Chernobyl "are ticking time bombs," scientist and former regional government official Ludmila Komogortseva told Beneslavsky. "Woods and peat accumulate radiation," she explained, "and every moment, every grass burning, every dropped cigarette or camp fire can spark a new disaster."

## KICK NUCLEAR & NUCLEAR TRAINS



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

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May 2017

#### NEXT NTAG STALL AND LEAFLETING

**Saturday June 3<sup>rd</sup>**, 11am-2pm, outside Shepherd's Bush Station (Central Line), adjacent to overground station "served" by nuclear waste trains.. Help welcome. Organised by *NTAG*.

#### REGULAR FRIDAY SOLIDARITY VIGILS

**Every Friday** (since August 2012): leafletting outside the Japanese Embassy, 101-104 Piccadilly (Green Park tube) from 10am-12.30pm; and then outside Tokyo Electric Power Co. offices, 14-18 Holborn (Chancery Lane tube) from 1-1.30pm. Held in solidarity with the anti-nuclear movement in Japan. Organised by: *Kick Nuclear* and *Japanese Against Nuclear UK* (JAN UK)

#### NEXT JOINT KN/NTAG PLANNING MEETING

**Monday June 5<sup>th</sup>**, 7pm, At CND Office. Address in masthead.

### NUCLEAR PROJECTS STALLED IN US & UK

The repercussions of Westinghouse filing for bankruptcy in March rumble on.

**In the US**, Georgia-based Southern Company has taken over construction of the two-unit Vogtle plant, featuring Westinghouse's 1,117-MW AP1000 advanced reactor design. It is years behind schedule and billions over budget.