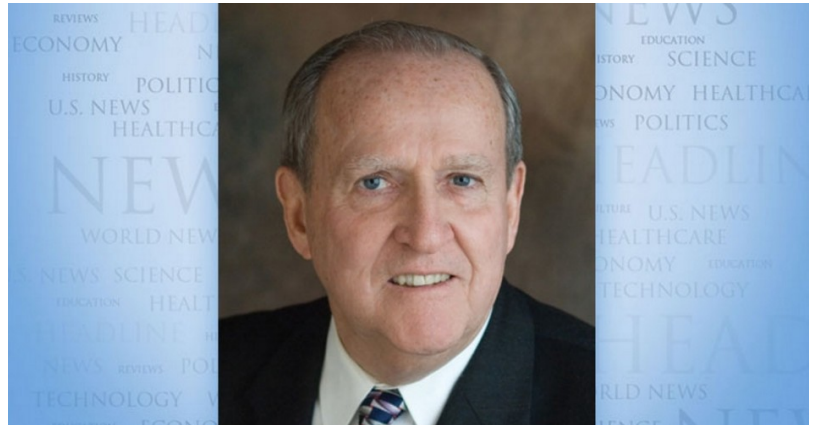




Wind and Solar Power Not the Answer

In France, 80 percent of electricity is generated by nuclear power. In the United States, the figure hovers around 20 percent, and it's declining. Anti-nuclear-power partisans point to supposed dangers in this form of acquiring electric power. But history shows their error. The only nuclear power plant accident in the United States, occurring in 1979 at Pennsylvania's Three Mile Island facility, actually demonstrated how safe this form of generating power truly is. There were no deaths, no injuries, and no nearby inhabitants adversely affected — except for the few who were seriously frightened by irresponsible propaganda.



The anti-nukes like to refer to the Chernobyl “meltdown.” Yes, that Soviet-built power plant did spew large amounts of radiation into the atmosphere and it harmed some people. But, unlike plants in the West, it had no containment shield around it that would have minimized or even completely prevented any accidental discharge of radiation. Then questions arise about the harm caused in 2011 when a huge tsunami crashed into Japan and severely damaged the Fukushima nuclear power plant. It now turns out, however, that the harmful health effects caused at the plant by that wall of water were nearly non-existent and two Stanford University experts who studied the event concluded that mandatory evacuations around the plant killed more people than are supposed to have died because of leaking radiation.

Environmentally charged individuals (they like to be called “Greens”) continue to insist that wind and solar power should replace not only nuclear plants but coal and gas-fired plants as well. They want less carbon sent into the atmosphere by burning coal and gas. Getting rid of burning coal and gas, they insist, will slow or eliminate global warming. But claims by the Greens that carbon emissions lead to a warming of the planet are dubious to say the least.

Journalist Barbara Hollingsworth recently noted that even after “receiving an estimated \$39 billion in annual government subsidies over the past five years,” the solar energy industry accounted for a meager “one-half of one percent of all the electricity” generated during 2014 in the United States. *Time* magazine reported that the largest solar farm in America, California's Desert Sunlight Solar Farm, received billions in federal loans and incentives while producing a minimal amount of electricity. Wind farms, once thought by Greens to be a replacement for fossil fuel-burning plants, have proven to many that they are expensive boondoggles.

Over in Europe, Germany's Greens have so discredited nuclear power that plans are being laid to shut down existing plants. But other Germans have found out that turning to wind and solar isn't a good alternative. Instead, these people have learned the hard way that wind and solar power occasionally go dead — as when weather doesn't cooperate. The result? New coal and gas-fired plants are being built to stave off blackouts, just the opposite of turning away from sending carbon into the air. And France, the



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world's leader in the use of nuclear power, is bowing to the demands of her own Greens and planning to close nuclear plants in favor of what Germans are discovering isn't the answer.

Three conclusions arise from this admittedly brief survey of the problems of electric power generation. These are: 1) Much of the noise coming from Greens should be ignored. 2) If expensive subsidies given to solar and wind power generation interests were cancelled, there would be far fewer opting for it. And, (3) Generating power from the atom is one of the greatest inventions of modern times. As a supplier of clean and plentiful electricity, its usage should be increasing not declining everywhere, even in America.

John F. McManus is president of [The John Birch Society](#) and publisher of The New American. This column appeared originally at the [insideJBS](#) blog and is reprinted here with permission.



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