

anything for it, then the chances of trying to do any infrastructure projects, are almost nil. Because then you are forced to tax your own population, which is already been stretched too thin in terms of taxation.

EIR: In your own policy leadership, let's look at what you have been spotlighting. Take energy: You have said the Federal government has a role to regulate power. You've campaigned for that outside Nevada, even in Mexico.

Neal: You have to have that. And even with an interest such as gambling, you have to have regulations on that, too.

EIR: On energy, there is still a shortage question; there was

a Stage One blackout alert yesterday in California. I think the electricity wholesale market price went up to \$27 a megawatt-hour, up from \$10.50, just this week. So what are you doing to keep this in the forefront, the way you have done in the past?

Neal: Turning back deregulation is one of the issues of the campaign. It's a very popular issue. In fact, the County Commission tried to strip that issue from me, by putting it on the ballot as a referendum in Clark County, to create a public energy utility to handle electricity. It is merely asking the voters, if they actually want it. But, I think it was as a result of that being a part of my platform. Those guys were somewhat connected with the established folks here; they were trying to deprive me of that particular issue.

Nuclear Waste Isn't Waste, It's a Valuable Resource!

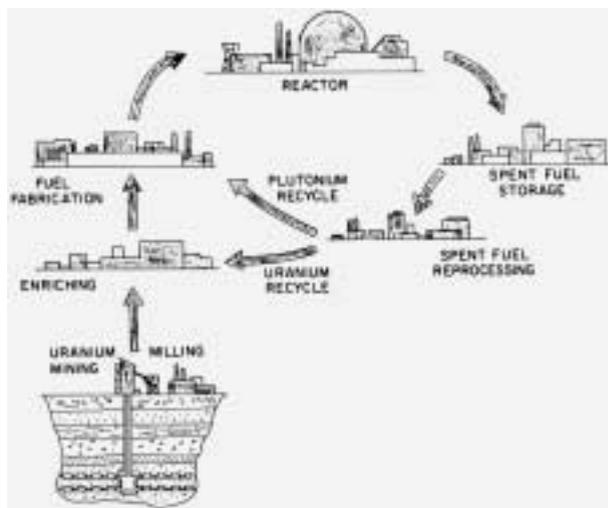
From the beginning of the civilian nuclear program in the late 1950s and early 1960s, it was assumed that nations would develop the entire nuclear fuel cycle—mining uranium, enriching it and fabricating it into fuel, burning it in reactors, and then removing the spent fuel and reprocessing it into new fuel (with valuable isotopes as a by-product). In fact, nuclear energy is the only truly “renewable” energy source, and this renewability makes nuclear power an inexpensive source of electricity.

More than 96% of the so-called “waste” from spent nuclear fuel can be reprocessed to be reused as uranium or plutonium fuel. The remaining 4%, which is called high-level waste, can also be “mined”; that is separated into constituent elements, using advanced isotope separation technologies. Not doing so is a terrible waste of available energy.

To give you an idea of what we are wasting: The spent fuel produced by a single 1,000 megawatt nuclear plant over its 40-year lifetime, is equal to the energy in 130 million barrels of oil, or 37 million tons of coal, plus strategic metals and other valuable isotopes that could be retrieved from the high-level waste.

Why We Don't Reprocess

The enormous potential of nuclear power to uplift the world's poor by industrializing the Third World, made it a prime target for the anti-population “utopian” faction. By the late 1960s, the newly created environmentalist movement was demonizing nuclear energy, and scaring an increasingly scientifically illiterate public into anti-nuclearism. The United States, which pioneered reprocessing,



The nuclear fuel cycle.

shut down its capability during the Carter Administration, leaving reprocessing to Canada, France, Great Britain, and Russia (plus the countries they service, including Japan, which is developing its own reprocessing capability). In subsequent years, new methods of isotope separation using lasers, such as the AVLIS program at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, were also shut down or lost funding.

As a result, today we have more than 20,000 metric tons of spent fuel stored at U.S. nuclear plants, with the plans to move it to permanent storage at the Yucca Mountain site embroiled in a political battle defined by fear. Can nuclear waste be safely stored in a repository like that of Yucca Mountain? Technologically speaking, the answer is yes. But why should we incur the billions of dollars of expense to immobilize what is actually billions of dollars worth of nuclear fuel that could be supplying electricity in the years to come?

—Marjorie Mazel Hecht