

Do Japan's climate goals really spark uncertainty for global LNG?

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It has been reported lately in an excellent [article](#) that Japan's climate goals spark uncertainty for global LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas), after the country announced plans to drastically cut down on natural gas consumption.

However:

About 36% of Japan's electricity is produced using natural gas, 30% uses coal, 4% is nuclear, 8% is hydroelectric, so-called renewables is 13%, oil is 4%, and 5% comes from other sources.

One would think that before the Japanese cut down on natural gas they would cut down on coal first. If the plan is to reduce natural gas to 20% after having eliminated coal, that would mean increasing renewables from 13% to about 60% since they declared that they would shun the nuclear option.

Assuming wind power only for the substitution, you would need to install enough capacity to generate about 450 to 500 TWh per year. Since the average wind load in Japan is 21%, you would need to install 250,000 MW of wind power (doubling the country's overall installed capacity from all energy sources), or probably about 100,000 units, which would cost in the vicinity of \$500 billion, one tenth of their GDP, \$4,000 per Japanese.

If you installed these windmills all along the windward coasts of Kyushu, Honshu, and Hokkaido, you would need about 15 parallel rows of them. You would think that the preservation of such a beautiful environment as the coastline of Japan would make it out of bounds for a hundred thousand behemoths of Quixotic windmills, but you would be mistaken, since it seems the public has lost any concern about their visual environment, so scared are they to either perish in some Infernal Flames or drown in some modern Flood, either cataclysm being of their own making.

Some commentators predict a drop in windmill cost, although it is hard to see how costs could drop while demand explodes.

Since wind (and solar, for which the predicament is even worse) is obviously not a reasonable option, the only alternative would be nuclear. After all, the whole current climate theory was originally promoted for the sole purpose of making nuclear energy appear more palatable to the peoples of democracies. However, chances are that in the end Japan will consume more LNG rather than less, after they substitute natural gas for coal. The Fukushima experience of 2011 is more than likely to continue tempering any ardor to further develop and extend nuclear power in Japan.

What a quandary for politicians: either please their whimsical constituents and be re-elected, or govern responsibly and get the sack!

A time will come, though, when current absurdities will be swapped for different more modern incongruities. Meanwhile, it is probable that LNG has still some good years ahead (especially if the scare pushes prices down).

Since the governments of rich countries with their plateauing or dwindling populations can hardly compel the ever increasing populations of poor countries to do as instructed (as in the good old days of Empire), in the end all of the available underground fossil fuels will be consumed by the poor (although not so poor by then), at reduced prices and to the detriment of the rich (although not so rich by then).

Wouldn't it be ironic if in the end the instrument of the alleviation of inequality between poor and rich countries were precisely the terrifying theories of the rich?

The winter here is quite cold this year, and I've observed for a while that only those who can afford central heating grumble about the warmth. Those, like I, who have to toil daily, eight months out of twelve, at the strenuous chores demanded by firewood cutting, drying, gathering, transporting, chopping, splitting, storing, stoking, not to forget stove cleaning, disposal of ashes and soot and the resulting thorough daily dusting of the house, well, those never think it is warm enough.

Of course, some will look you in the eye with a straight face and tell you without blushing that it is cold precisely because it is warm and vice-versa and if you don't believe it you're just an idiot and a denialist, although if you asked them the simplest basic question about thermodynamics they'd reply by asking you what the devil the word means.

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