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## Kiev Regime – a Disaster Awaiting Meltdown

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Was the forced shutdown of the biggest nuclear power plant in Ukraine last week a result of the country's fuel crisis? That crisis is itself a product to the political crisis that the Western sponsors have engendered in the country with the illegal coup in Kiev earlier this year.

The Western-backed Kiev regime has claimed that there was «no threat» to public safety or the environment from the week-long closure of the nuclear reactor at Zaporozhiya. But with scant detail on the nature of the incident and given the regime's total unreliability and unscrupulousness in other matters, there are grounds to be extremely cautious.

Also, the Kiev authorities did not report the shutdown until at least five days after it occurred. Such maverick incompetence is typical of this regime. After all, it took a bizarre unprecedented

step this of appointing three foreign nationals, including an American citizen, to its ministerial cabinet. But why the apparent secrecy over the nuclear accident? What are they hiding?

Recall too that this is the country that inflicted the world's worst nuclear accident when the reactor at Chernobyl exploded in April 1986. That disaster resulted in thousands of cancer deaths, radioactive contamination of large parts of Russia and Western Europe, and an estimated \$18 billion in damage control.

The Zaporozhiya nuclear power station, which was forced to shut down on November 28, is located on the Dneiper River in southeast Ukraine. It is not only the biggest in the country, it is also the largest operating facility in Europe, with an output of 6,000 megawatts. Ukraine relies on four nuclear power plants for the supply of about half of all its electricity requirements.

The facility at Zaporozhiya is by far the biggest generator of the four nuclear power sites, according to the World Nuclear Association. Fitted out with six reactors, it produces over 20 per cent of Ukraine's total electricity needs. The latest shutdown reportedly occurred in Unit 3, one of the oldest of the six reactors, having been commissioned back in 1987 and approaching the end of its 30-year operating life.

Kiev's newly-appointed energy minister Volodymyr Demchishin told a press conference on Wednesday this week, held five days after the Zaporozhiya outage, that the problem was «caused by a short-circuit in its power outlet system». He claimed that it was not linked to power production. Well, we have to take his word on that explanation. The minister added with notable uncertainty: «I think the problem will be resolved by Friday [one week after the shutdown].»

Demchishin maintained that there was radiological leak from the incident. That assessment appeared to be supported by a French-based watchdog organisation. Reuters reported: «France's public nuclear safety institute IRSN said it had not detected any unusual radioactivity in Ukraine.»

Other media reports on the nuclear incident described an electrical transformer «tripping» and resulting in a halt in electricity production while the reactor continued operating as normal. That suggests an unexpected surge in power led to the shutdown.

While the Kiev regime is claiming that nothing untoward or dangerous occurred the fact is that the country is, by necessity, relying more heavily on its nuclear facilities to generate sufficient electricity, especially as winter deepens.

The two other major fuel sources of Ukraine's electricity supply are coal and gas, which account for some 40 per cent and 10 per cent, respectively, of total production.

However, the supply of coal and gas are being severely disrupted as a direct consequence of the Kiev regime's war on eastern Ukraine and its hostility towards Russia. More than 80 per cent of all of Ukraine's coal mines are located in the eastern Donbas regions, which are under the control of the breakaway self-declared republics of Donetsk and Luhansk.

The Kiev regime is running short of coal stocks, with some media reports putting its depot inventories down by a quarter, and this shortage is because of the conflict it embarked on against the dissident Donbas population in April this year. Recent plans by the Kiev regime to import alternative coal from South Africa and Poland have also hit a dead-end, partly because the quality of fuel from these countries does not suit Ukraine's thermal power stations. The stations have been designed to run on anthracite coal that is typical of the Donbas mines. Another impediment are disputes over non-payment for imports by the Kiev regime. No surprise there given the regime's insufferable gimme-something-for-nothing attitude.

Massive military expenditure from the regime's seven-month assault on the Donbas has exacerbated the country's fiscal woes and foreign debt. That plus past unpaid gas debts to Russia amounting to over \$5 billion, as well as overt hostility towards Moscow, has vitiated natural gas supplies from its historically important Russian trading partner.

The inescapable upshot is that the Kiev regime, which seized government power in an illegal Western-backed coup last February, has created an acute energy crisis in the country through its own reckless hostile policies. Voice of American reported this week that «rolling blackouts» are being expanded in many towns across Ukraine by the regime in order to conserve dwindling electricity supplies. With freezing temperatures hitting negative double-digit figures, the energy crisis can only worsen.

This is, in turn, leading to greater dependence on the nuclear power network and the giant facility at Zaporozhiya in particular. It is fair to surmise that the authorities in Kiev are pushing the nuclear plants to their maximum operating capacity so as to make up for the desperate decline in electricity production – a vicious cycle that the regime has itself generated.

So far as one can tell, the shutdown at the Zaporozhiya site does not appear to have been the result of a meltdown in the nuclear reactor. But with the whole nuclear industry being pushed to its capacity limits, and perhaps beyond, the danger is that a catastrophic event is becoming more probable.

With full support from Washington and Brussels, the Kiev regime, led by irresponsible demagogues like CIA-sponsored prime minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk and the oligarch-president, Petro Poroshenko, has already instigated a litany of disasters. More than 4,000 people have died in Kiev's military onslaught against fellow Ukrainians and up to one million have been turned into refugees. The Kiev military has used internationally banned cluster bombs on civilian areas and deploys neo-Nazi paramilitary battalions that have committed wholesale war crimes. A civilian airliner was downed last July with the loss of 298 lives, most likely as a result of Kiev's military machinations. Ukraine's economy and infrastructure has been destroyed, with the impact worsened by Kiev's declared economic blockade on the eastern regions – a Nuremberg crime of collective punishment.

Is a nuclear disaster the next outcome?

We shouldn't be in the least surprised because this Western-sponsored regime is a constant disaster awaiting meltdown.