

# Nuclear power and divestment issues linked

To the editor:

I have not witnessed as much political energy and activity in my five years in Chapel Hill as I have in the past six months. On the surface it would appear that the torch has been passed from the opponents of UNC's investment policies relating to South Africa to the opponents of the Shearon Harris nuclear power plant. In reality, however, the two groups are largely divorced from each other. The divestment movement was dominated by students (and rightfully so) and the movement in opposition to Shearon Harris is composed almost entirely of people not associated with the University.

This situation would not be of concern if there existed no logical link between these two issues. Despite their substantive differences, these issues are linked. Both issues are characterized by a conflict between an active and vocal numerical majority and a relatively small group of powerful men. In the spring semester a student referendum clearly illustrated the overwhelming student support for divestment. Each and every day, people throughout this region are demonstrating their opposition to the loading of nuclear fuel into the Shearon Harris nuclear reactor.

These two issues are united by

the fact that in both, people are attempting to gain control over actions that are supposedly being taken for them. In a disappointing move, the UNC Board of Trustees responded to student action with empty words. In the fight against Shearon Harris, there are signs that the voice of the people will be heeded. Recently the government of Chatham County and the City of Durham passed resolutions withdrawing from the evacuation plan in accordance with the wishes of their citizens. Similar action is expected soon by the cities of Chapel Hill and Carrboro. It is now time to take the issue to the state legislature and to Gov. James G.

Martin and see whether they stand with the people or the utilities.

It is my feeling that the relative absence of student involvement in the fight against Shearon Harris reflects a delusional belief that UNC is a world unto itself. This is unfortunately not the case. The recent nuclear accident in the Soviet Union made it clear that a nuclear accident at Shearon Harris (less than 25 miles from here) could contaminate Chapel Hill beyond repair. Bye-bye Dean Dome. Lest you think this is a danger far off in the future, CP&L hopes to load nuclear fuel in July and commercial operations by the end of this year.

We have a duty to ourselves and to future generations of UNC students to do all that we can to stop this from occurring. Much can be done, from writing letters to attending political meetings and rallies. To learn what you can do, stop by the CASH (Coalition for Alternatives to Shearon Harris) table located in front of the Post Office on Franklin Street.

P.S. A great way to meet people is to walk up and say "What are YOU doing to stop Shearon Harris?"

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## Robertson is the 'paradigm New Right candidate'

He is the candidate of the religious right. No, not Vice President George Bush, endorsed by the Rev. Jerry Falwell. No, not Jack Kemp, the ultra conservative congressman from New York. Better put, the Rev. Marion Gordon "Pat" Robertson is the religious right and last week he gave evidence that he is for real.

Robertson's political action committee, the Freedom Council, spent \$340,000 on a vigorous campaign to line up precinct candidates in Michigan's delegate selection process. When the numbers were in, Robertson had tied Bush and left Kemp looking like a Little Leaguer inspecting his glove after missing an easy pop fly.

A telegenic Anglo-Saxon, graduate of Yale Law School, and the son of a former U.S. Senator, Robertson is classified by religionists as a Neo-pentecostal. In his case, that means a Southern Baptist who believes in the gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as speaking in tongues and faith healing. Last October,

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Robertson claimed to have rebuked Hurricane Gloria from the coast of his native Virginia with prayer.

Robertson attempts, much like Jesse Jackson did in 1984, not to take stands on issues but to make issues. Perhaps his chief advantage over other Republican candidates is that he leaves no room for other candidates to appear more conservative on a given issue. The New Right (Jesse Helms, Newt Gingrich, Paul Weyrich et al) in 1980 and 1984 politicized as a package the issues of abortion, secular humanism and evolution in public schools, Communism, and social programs as a platform for "crusade-type" politicians from which to wage war. Robertson is

unwavering on each issue making him the paradigm New Right candidate — a litmus test by which other conservative candidates will be judged for political correctness.

"Oh, it's like a miracle," says a supporter, "when you look back 10 months ago, who had ever heard of him?"

According to a 1985 Nielsen survey, 16.3 million households tune into Robertson's Christian Broadcast Network for at least six minutes every month. Robertson and co-host Ben Kinchlow appear four times a day on the network's flagship program, The 700 Club. His ability to raise the volume of cash that would be necessary to fund a presidential campaign is shown by the \$233 million in revenues CBN generated last year, coming mostly from viewer donations.

Political observers on both the right and left are wondering if Robertson's victory represents a temporary perk in the electoral

process or the beginning of a New Right juggernaut. Probably neither. But then that probably won't stem the anxious feelings on either side.

The Republican establishment is not likely to tolerate an outsider who is potentially divisive in the party for very long — they got an education along with the rest of us watching the Jackson candidacy. The GOP power brokers' task will be one of appeasing Robertson, moving him out of the picture, while maintaining the political capital of the New Right platform as not to alienate Robertson's constituency.

The paternalistic press, which regards itself as liberal, is unsure on how to deal with a truly religious candidate. Jackson carried the title of "reverend" but didn't harp on such religious issues as creationism vs. evolution.

The press alternates between hysteria and delight on the prospect of a Robertson candidacy depend-

ing on what he is doing at the moment. If he disparagesd: Rather & Co., feathers are ruffled. If he is selling his book, "Answers to 200 of Life's Most Probing Questions," he is seen as good copy.

For those of us that are slightly more to the left, we are concerned not with his candidacy but his wealth and media power. He has given millions in "humanitarian aid" to the contras — codename Operation Blessing. He promotes an eschatological view that has the Soviet Union and Middle Eastern countries attacking Israel but then being defeated by natural, God-inspired, catastrophes.

I'm not worried about Pat becoming president, though. The restless American public with its ever-shrinking attention span is bound to get tired of anybody who appears on television four times a day.

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## Shearon Harris alternatives impractical; plant safe

The debate over the safety and economic feasibility of the Shearon Harris nuclear power plant has raged over the years. Opponents have raised their voices many times in an attempt to stop the plant's opening, but their cries each time have been squelched by repeated investigations and inquiries and hearings concerning each of the points raised.

Recently, after hearings that generated almost 1,300 pages of literature and personal testimony producing 11,000 pages of material, the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board approved the licensing of the plant for fueling and low level testing. Still the voices of the Coalition for Alternatives to Shearon Harris, or CASH, can be heard recycling previously contested points, and wearing them into the ground. Many of their arguments were valid, but they already have been made, and handled by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board. Now, unless there are new grievances, Shearon Harris should be allowed to open and

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operate without further rhetoric from the opposition.

CASH, led by Wells Eddleman, raised many serious concerns in the early stages of the plant's development. One of these was the viability of the evacuation plan. The radius around the plant considered the emergency evacuation zone was said to be too small. This was reviewed again by the NRC, which had previously examined the area and said that it was totally safe and realistic. The evacuation plan has also been discussed over and over by the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board, and the plan's ability to be implemented quickly and efficiently were major factors in the board's decision to license the plant for fueling.

The coalition also cited construction flaws, specifically that the cooling system was poorly constructed and that there were many

bad pipes and valves. This charge was recognized and thoroughly investigated by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board, which found the charge to be totally unsupported.

In addition to their accusations, CASH has suggested four alternatives to Shearon Harris, all of which are impractical. The first was already mentioned; conversion to other fuels. They also suggested that industries be encouraged to generate their own power with the surplus going to the consumer. The construction manager for Fraser, Morrow, and Daniels, a development firm in the Triangle area, said that one of the major attracting factors for industry in the Triangle is the ready availability of power and other utilities. Were the responsibility placed on industry to provide its own power, many companies would abandon the Triangle for an area in which this commodity would be provided.

The third option was "Purchased Power" from an Ohio based company called American Electrical

Power. The coalition cited a statement made by one of the power companies representatives saying that if CP&L would purchase power from them at 10 cents per kilowatt hour, their company could provide 900 megawatts of "guaranteed power." This is a complete misrepresentation of facts. In a telephone interview Tuesday, a spokesman for the company said that he had said nothing of the sort and that he "didn't know what kind of bull people were spreading around." He said that for any reasonable estimate of the feasibility of this option, CP&L would have to call their research department and talk to them personally. He added that even if they did make an agreement, power would only be available in small amounts, nothing large enough to replace a nuclear unit.

The fourth and final option given to CP&L by CASH was simple, improved efficiency in existing plants coupled with solar power. This would work well if the Triangle remained at its present size. The Shearon Harris plant is being

built because of the growing need for power in the Triangle area. To neglect this need is defeating to this area and its great industry. The money provided by new industry attracted to this area by its readily available commodities will far outweigh any temporal financial gains made by small efficiency increases and relatively ineffective solar power.

Shearon Harris carries with it a risk, but this risk is no larger than the risk taken by people every day when they get into their cars to drive to work. It produces relatively inexpensive and efficient power and should now be allowed to operate without further incumbrance from individuals or organizations with overdriven arguments who would not only like to stop Shearon Harris, but any nuclear plant.

*Bill Logan is a junior biology from Chapel Hill whose weekly column in the Summer Tar Heel has been a constant source of controversy. Letters to the editor are gladly accepted.*