

# Gwynne Dyer gives straight talk on environmental issues

Canadian journalist focuses his speech at the Myer Horowitz theatre last Wednesday on how best to combat global climate change

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News Staff

Journalist and author Gwynne Dyer spoke on campus last Wednesday about the politics of climate change. Dyer, a syndicated columnist on international affairs, argued for controversial solutions such as nuclear power to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

"It's going to split the environmental movement right down the middle. Nobody wants to hear about it. They hate it. I think the fear is exaggerated because we tend to tangle up nuclear power with nuclear weapons in our mind," he said.

He argued that nuclear power is one of the only options to reduce carbon emissions, stating that other technologies are simply not mature enough to be put into widespread use. While he acknowledged that there are problems with nuclear power, such as the waste, he believes nations like France show that nuclear power can work.

"France generates 80 per cent of its

power through nuclear power. And although I don't see French people naked in large number on a regular basis, I'm pretty sure they don't glow in the dark. It's not the desirable choice, but it's probably going to be the necessary choice," Dyer said.

As for renewable alternatives such as wind or solar power, Dyer believes that they are the way of the future and the preferred option. However, he also asserts that they're still too problematic to be put into widespread use.

"There is a less-discussed problem with the renewals," he said. "With the exception of tidal power—because the tides go up and down all the time—all the renewals are a fluctuating power source, because sometimes the wind does not blow and sometimes the sun does not shine."

But, Leila Darwish, associate director of the Sierra Club of Canada, disagreed with Dyer's assertions, and believes that nuclear power isn't an option.

"It is not a climate-change solution,"

she explained in a later interview. "It is a very long-term environmental problem. Even the [International Atomic Energy Agency], which is and an industry group, has stated that nuclear energy cannot be deployed quick enough to combat climate change."

Instead, Darwish said the real solution to combat climate change is to implement clean energy solutions and, most importantly, to lower consumption.

"It's economically feasible for people to consume less. And I think when Gwynne Dyer would rather put an expensive, dangerous, risky thing like nuclear energy than to ask people to cut it back, I think that shows a total inaccuracy of thinking," she said.

However, during his speech, Dyer said that while lowering consumption would be the more painless solution, it's politically unfeasible.

"Practically speaking, we are going to have to do things that are politically going to work. And taking all the toys away from the kids isn't going to work."



MIKE OTTO

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