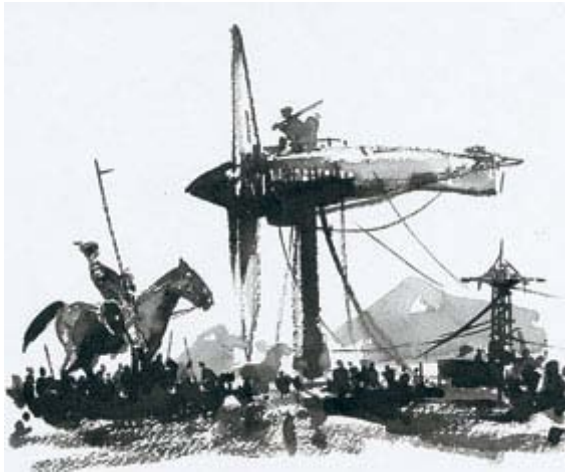


Renewable optimism

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Picture: Konstantin Batynkov

The renewable energy sources (RES) share in the power fuel balance will reach 60 % by 2030, said Executive director of the International Energy Agency (IEA) **Nobuo Tanaka** at global energy sector Reuters summit last week. Previously, he predicted solar electricity alone will amount to 20-25 % by 2050. The pace of investment growth to this segment is expected to accelerate this year even in comparison with a record last year despite the crisis due to RES supportive policies adopted by many countries.

At the moment the RES (primarily wind and solar power) share, including large hydropower plants, is about 25 % of power generation, where renewable energy (about 400 GW of total installed capacity) amounts to about 6%, and hydropower (less than 850 GW) - about 18-19%. But let us recall that thermal and nuclear power generate the remaining three quarters of power and total capacity of thermal and nuclear power plants exceeds 3500 GW. If we apply the projections of Nobuo Tanaka to the current situation, at least approximately, it would require at least two and a half times the capacity of renewable energy installed at the moment to cover 60% of approximately 20 trillion kWh generated worldwide last year.

Let us leave our skeptics over excessive optimism of IEA Executive Director on renewable energy that **Pyotr Kapitsa** back in 1975 called "promising, in amateur's opinion" (excluding large hydropower sector, with resources largely developed in the world). The source of optimism in relation to renewable energy shown by foresight analysts and investment managers, who are blowing it out of proportion once again, lies primarily in the growing wind energy rate shown each year. According to vice president of RAWI **Anatoly Kopylov**, wind energy has set another record in 2009 by adding 38 GW to the existing installed capacity of 122 GW, that is almost 32% growth rate. This confirmed the current trend of doubling wind power plants capacity in the world every three years. Together, they generated about 340 billion kWh of electricity, or a little more than 2%. China remained the leader in introduction of new capacities, by adding about 14 GW, doubling its wind power capacities for the fourth straight year. The level of installed wind power capacity in Latin America more than doubled as well, also showing an enviable growth, mainly due to Brazil and Mexico. Wind power sector turnover amounted to about 50 billion euro all over the world in 2009. Now it employs about 550 thousand people, and 1 million people employed in the industry is planned by 2012.