

## Energy

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# Nuclear power focus in Munich

by Dana Sloan

The World Energy Conference ended five days of deliberations in Munich, West Germany Sept. 12, and out of these deliberations, a solid majority of the more than 3,000 government, business and political leaders from all over the world have gone back to their nations convinced that the industrialized countries cannot halt their development of nuclear energy, nor deny it to the Third World nations, without paying the penalty of economic collapse and probable world war.

The message was clearly directed at the Carter administration, which has come under attack from spokesmen all over Europe for its footdragging and outright sabotage of world nuclear energy. National representatives from several countries, including France and India, asserted the need to extend nuclear energy development to the Third World countries as crucial to reverse the accelerating spread of starvation and disease.

Chancellor Schmidt referred to instability especially hitting countries below the Tropic of Cancer, when he warned in a speech to the full assembly that we now risk the potential of a world war for failing to have developed new resources. "We must not close our eyes to the economic and political risks of a war for energy supplies," said Schmidt, who has pressed Carter to pledge support for accelerating nuclear development at every Western heads of state summit since 1978.

The most articulated formulation of the solution to the crisis was put forward by Hans Bandmann, the European head of the well-known pronuclear Fusion Energy Foundation; his presentation was enthusiastically received by 600 delegates at a seminar during the conference, exemplified in a proposed 40-year plan for the industrial development of India, which recently received major attention in India's press.

The scope of the required programs was also put forward in a report issued to the delegates by the Dresdner Bank of West Germany. It states that the West will have to invest about \$10 trillion on new energy equipment over the next 20 years, about half going towards nuclear energy and electricity grids.

Western delegates were therefore encouraged to

note that the Soviet representatives to the Munich meeting came with offers of joint projects for developing Siberian coal mines in exchange for coal exports to participating countries. This perspective, presented by Prof. Styrikovich of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, was supported by a leading West German mining expert, Erwin Anderheggen. Anderheggen said that the problems to be overcome to set up an integrated East-West energy grid—one of the top agenda items in the dialogue between the West European and Soviet leaders—were not technical, but political.

Chancellor Schmidt also indicated receptiveness by speaking in favor of a longstanding Soviet proposal for a European-wide conference on energy.

### "Playing with fire"

One of the leading participants at the World Energy Conference was Michel Pecqueur, chairman of the French Atomic Energy Commission, which has the world's most ambitious nuclear program.

"You have continued to play with fire," he warned the OPEC countries. The industrialized countries are doing what has to be done to develop coal, he said, "but neglecting nuclear." Underdeveloped countries "who cannot afford the luxury of a crisis or of zero growth" should push for international cooperation for energy and join French President Giscard's call for a "trialogue" among Europe, the Third World and the oil-producing nations.

In an interview to the Paris paper *Le Matin* Sept. 8, the first day of the conference, Pecqueur took stock of how nuclear energy has been run into the ground by the Carter administration. "Since 1977 only 36 orders for nuclear plants have been placed in the industrial world, of which 10 were in France, while 48 projects have been canceled, of which 32 were in the United States."

### Hunger and disease

Most of Chancellor Schmidt's remarks were devoted to the Third World, where, he said, the average country spends one-quarter of its export earnings to pay for oil imports. With no alternative energy capacities to speak of as yet, the oil price increases there are measured in "more hunger, more thirst, and more disease."

Schmidt called on the more than 3,000 delegates to inform the public about nuclear power so as to dispel "fears that may be unfounded."

The delegates also heard a major speech by Klaus Knizia, president of the United Electricity Works utility in West Germany. He outlined how the energy needs of the developing sector will increase nine-fold over the next 40 years simply to maintain living standards at the present abysmal level. The industrialized countries and the more advanced developing states, he said, should substitute nuclear and coal production for oil. Knizia said this policy was crucial for peace. ■