

Dateline Mexico by Hugo López Ochoa

'Let there be light!'

Mexico's government is campaigning for the country's first nuclear plant, sending the greenies into hysterics.

The International Organization of Atomic Energy announced on Sept. 17 that "the Laguna Verde nuclear power plant," situated some 70 kilometers from the port of Veracruz, Mexico, "has adequate security conditions and sufficiently trained personnel to be started up without posing any serious risks." The IOAE's stamp of approval was the last formal stage of a long battle to get Mexico's first commercial nuclear reactor functioning, and as such represents a major blow to the environmentalist faction inside the cabinet of President Miguel de la Madrid.

The Laguna Verde plant has two BWR5 units, each with the capacity to produce 654 megawatts of power. Together, the two units will supply 6% of the total electricity Mexico will be producing in 1988 (23,000 megawatts). One of the units, 99% completed, is finally about to be plugged in.

As this column has previously charged (*EIR* vol. 14, no. 26), central bank dictator Miguel Mancera Aguayo has conspired with the Alemán-Azcarraga group of the multimillion-dollar Televisa consortium, to promote throughout 1987 a terror campaign about the "dangers" of nuclear energy, with the intention of forcing President de la Madrid to order the suspension of Mexico's first nuclear project, and convert Laguna Verde into a gas-electric plant. The greenie campaign of Mancera Aguayo and company relied, as well, on the backing of Budget and Planning Minister Carlos Salinas de Gortari, Interior Minister Manuel

Bartlett, and Urban Development and Ecology Minister Manuel Camacho Solís.

Despite this powerful array of opposition, the President included in his fifth address to the nation Sept. 1, a healthy endorsement of nuclear energy: "Nuclear energy holds the potential for diversifying our first-order energy sources, and provides us with an unavoidable opportunity to bring the Technological Revolution of our time into Mexico."

He further announced that "the initial tests prior to its start-up" have now been completed and that Laguna Verde only awaited the nod from IOAE. On Sept. 17, the National Commission on Nuclear Security and Safeguards (CNSNS) announced that the charge-up of the reactors would take place "in a few more weeks."

Starting at the end of August, the Federal Electricity Commission (CFE) began a series of press, radio, and television spots in defense of Laguna Verde, which has dealt a devastating blow to the panic-mongering tactics of the greenies. The CFE campaign, under the slogan, "Let there be light at Laguna Verde," addresses each of the technical doubts about the security of a nuclear plant, as well as certain "psychological" fears that have been played up and manipulated by the anti-nuclear forces.

"We Mexicans, unfortunately, are given to lack confidence in ourselves," says one of the media spots, "but we have more than 100 engineers and 225 technical operators . . . trained abroad for operating a nuclear

plant of this size." Thousands of pedagogic leaflets on nuclear energy, with detailed designs of every existing kind of nuclear plant and their individual advantages and capacities, are circulating throughout the country.

The Mexican Association of Fusion Energy (AMEF), a fraternal organization of the Fusion Energy Foundation, will soon be issuing a pamphlet on "The International Greens," containing details of the links of the "tortilla greenies" with Petra Kelly's West German Greens, with narco-terrorism, with Moscow, and with the Project Democracy of Lt. Col. Oliver North.

Fueling of the first Laguna Verde reactor was delayed as long as possible, until all the relevant agencies had a chance to examine and certify the plant's security. This delay turned into an advantage, for it gave the CFE the opportunity to use the nearly finished plant as a living technological museum for visitors from throughout Mexico, who were able to see for themselves the potentials of the technological marvel of nuclear energy.

This writer had the opportunity to visit the plant with a 45-member delegation from AMEF recently. We were able to witness first hand the tremendous pride of Mexico's technicians and workers at the plant. Seventy percent of the project was constructed with Mexican materials and technology.

"These victories pave the way to the future of the Great Ibero-American Fatherland, that of its integration and autonomous technological development," as can be seen in Brazil and Argentina's successes in controlling the complete nuclear fuel cycle, declared a greeting from the Mexican Labor Party (PLM) to Laguna Verde's technicians, published on the editorial page of the PLM newspaper *Solidaridad Internacional*.