

Philippines Congress Weighs Re-Opening The Never-Used Bataan Nuclear Plant

by Mike Billington

In 1986, U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz and his deputy, Paul Wolfowitz, orchestrated a coup against Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos, to stop the momentum spearheaded by Marcos and backed by the remnants of the “Atoms for Peace” tradition in the United States, to transform the Philippines into a nuclear-power-driven agro-industrial state, based on modern industries and Green Revolution agricultural technologies. The destruction of that mission by the Shultz gang was total. The most devastating symbol of that imperial act is the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant, a 620 megawatt nuclear facility built by Westinghouse during the Marcos years, completed in 1985, but *never turned on*, as the the new American anti-nuclear policy under Shultz and Wolfowitz, backed up by the international environmentalist

hysteria, financed and steered by the British and Dutch royal families, was imposed upon the Philippines. Still today, the completed nuclear plant stands, unused, as a horrible example to the citizens of the Philippines and the developing sector generally, that the British imperial “globalization” era would not allow developing nations to escape their neo-colonial status.

Now, however, for the first time, both the House and the Senate of the Philippine Congress have legislation before them, “Mandating the Immediate Re-commissioning and Commercial Operation of the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant.” The bills, sponsored by Rep. Mark Cojuangco in the House and Sen. Mariam Defensor-Santiago in the Senate, argue in almost identical terms that the citizens of the Philippines have been cheated



The Bataan Nuclear Power Plant, built by Westinghouse, was completed in 1985, but the assault on the Philippines led by U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz made sure that it was never turned on. Finally, moves are afoot to renovate it and power it up, to the great benefit of the nation.

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The LaRouche Society of the Philippines tours the Bataan nuclear plant, May 19, 2008. The engineers accompanying the delegation confirmed the assessment of the IAEA, that, after some upgrades and minor repairs, the plant can go into operation if the Congress gives the go-ahead.

and looted by the failure to open up the nuclear facility, and that, as Cojuanco puts it, “this asset is now a part of the patrimony of the nation. It can forever be a useless hulk, or it can be a savior of our energy situation and a tipping point in our national outlook as far as energy and prosperity are concerned.”

Although both bills opportunistically appeal to the fraudulent “global warming” hoax as one motivation for the use of (carbon-free) nuclear power, they otherwise correctly point out that 1) nuclear power is the cheapest form of energy; nuclear plants are dramatically safer than any other form of energy generation; 2) nations such as France and South Korea, which depend on nuclear for significant portions of their energy, have had no safety problems; 3) solar, wind, and other energy fads are far more expensive, unreliable, and generally “unsuitable as a base load source” for a modern nation; and 4) the only feasible source for the electricity needed to produce the huge quantities of hydrogen for the future “hydrogen economies” is nuclear power.

Perhaps most importantly, the bills call for a crash nuclear science and engineering education program, to be centered at the University of the Philippines, such that within ten years, the Bataan plant, and others which should rapidly follow, can be staffed entirely by Filipinos.

While the authors of these bills believe that they have little chance of early passage, the reality of the global financial breakdown, together with the energy crisis, could well place them at the center of emergency legislation.

Atoms for Peace, Philippines, Inc.

Behind this positive shift in the perspective of significant layers of the political leadership regarding nuclear power, is a sustained campaign by the international LaRouche movement. This campaign began even before the 1986 coup against President Marcos, to expose both the coup plot, and the intention of the plotters—

especially the anti-nuclear intention. Later, the LaRouche Society of the Philippines was founded, under the direction of former Undersecretary of Education Butch Valdes, followed by the founding of the Philippine LaRouche Youth Movement (PLYM). These institutions, through weekly radio broadcasts and political organizing efforts among the political elites and youth, presented the urgency of reversing the destruction of the Philippines’ historic leadership in science and technology in Southeast Asia, with the re-opening of the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant a central policy demand.

The PLYM intervened in numerous public events in Manila, called to discuss the energy crisis, denouncing the Malthusian, genocidal nature of the anti-nuclear hysteria from the greenies and Al Gore’s global warming hoaxsters, countering with the need for a global nuclear renaissance to fuel great projects for national development. The PLYM gathered support and won the respect of many youth, scientists, and political leaders for its polemical fight to restore the idea of progress to the nation.

Valdes, by this time, had become recognized as the nation’s political expert on the nuclear issue, and through collaboration with the Philippines Chamber of Commerce Foundation, officials in the Department of Energy, and others, the government was won over to a serious plan to open the Bataan plant, after 22 years on

ice. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was brought in to determine whether the plant were still operable—they ruled that it was, with only minor repairs and upgrading required.

Finally, in October, “Atoms for Peace, Philippines, Inc.” was formally established in Manila, as the nation’s first and only institution dedicated to renewing the country’s nuclear position in the world. Valdes is the president, while other members include Ramon Pedrosa, chairman of the Philippines Chamber of Commerce Foundation; Dr. Jose Juliano, a University of the Philippines physics professor and nuclear energy authority; former Undersecretary of Energy Jun Delfin; Bill Shaare, an engineer who worked with President Marcos in the 1980s, and others. The current Under-

secretary of Energy, Mar Salazar, is an advisor to the institution.

In May of this year, the LaRouche Society, the PLYM, and several scientists toured the mothballed nuclear plant (see box), confirming the opinion of the IAEA.

The opening of the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant would be far more than an immediate source of desperately needed electricity and water (through desalination facilities that could be added to the original construction). It would represent a process of overturning the globalization policies implemented during the 1980s and 1990s, and a fight to put the pressing needs of the populations of the underdeveloped nations back on the agenda.

Touring the Bataan Plant

The following is taken from a report by Ligaya Rebolos of the Philippines LaRouche Youth Movement; the full text is on the website of the Philippines LaRouche Society, www.larouchephil.com/LaRouche_phil_prometheus_tries_again.html.

In May 2008, the Philippines LaRouche Society (PLS) had the rare opportunity to visit the first and only nuclear power plant in Southeast Asia, the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant. This unique occasion resulted from the efforts of a small group of youth, who provoked society and government by challenging the pseudo-science and Malthusian genocidal philosophy of Al Gore’s anti-nuclear scare. It was these young people’s intervention at various conferences on global warming, which sparked audiences—including leading government officials—to question the value of “alternative energy,” by posing the necessity of the most advanced technological form of power generation: nuclear power.

The purpose of the tour, arranged by the Department of Energy, was to investigate the effects of 22 years in which the plant had not been used, and to determine whether it could become operational again. On the one hand, we found computers and control panels that were high-end technology during

the late 1970s, but are now obsolete. A lack of proper temperature and humidity controls in the plant had accelerated the deterioration of some machinery. But the plant was fundamentally sound, and could be relatively easily reactivated.

The PLS also discovered excitement, not among one another, but among the engineers who had been employed these past 22 years in maintaining the plant as best they could. They had stretched each cent of the limited government funding to preserve the plant, without ever doubting that what they did would not be in vain. Some of the engineers admitted to being duped during the anti-Marcos campaigns, realizing only later that the political decision to mothball the nuclear plant was a tragic one and should be reversed.

Organizing the engineers around the limitless potential that technological growth would bring, by utilizing nuclear power to provide the energy for water desalination plants and magnetically levitated rail, and producing hydrogen for the hydrogen economy of the future, inspired them even further. Furthermore, the idea that these industrially vectored projects would be a means of achieving a sovereign nation-state republic, was a fundamental breakthrough through which these engineers will cherish for a lifetime.

The Philippine LaRouche Society’s determination to bring about a nuclear renaissance means that, one day, this plant will become operational, and the construction of many more will become a reality.