
PART II

Argentina's nuclear plan: history and perspectives

by Lic. Luis Fernando Calviño

EIR is pleased to present the concluding section of the article on the history of Argentina's nuclear program, written by the interim director of the Buenos Aires-based Energia magazine, Lic. Luis Fernando Calviño. In Part I, published in EIR Nov. 23, Mr. Calviño described Argentina's efforts, beginning in the late 1940s, to develop a nuclear industry that could function independently of the whims of anti-industrial forces in the advanced sector and simultaneously guarantee the overall scientific and technological progress of the nation. It proceeded to develop the first operational nuclear program in Ibero-America, despite obstacles placed in its path by the "anti-proliferation" government of Pierre Trudeau in Canada.

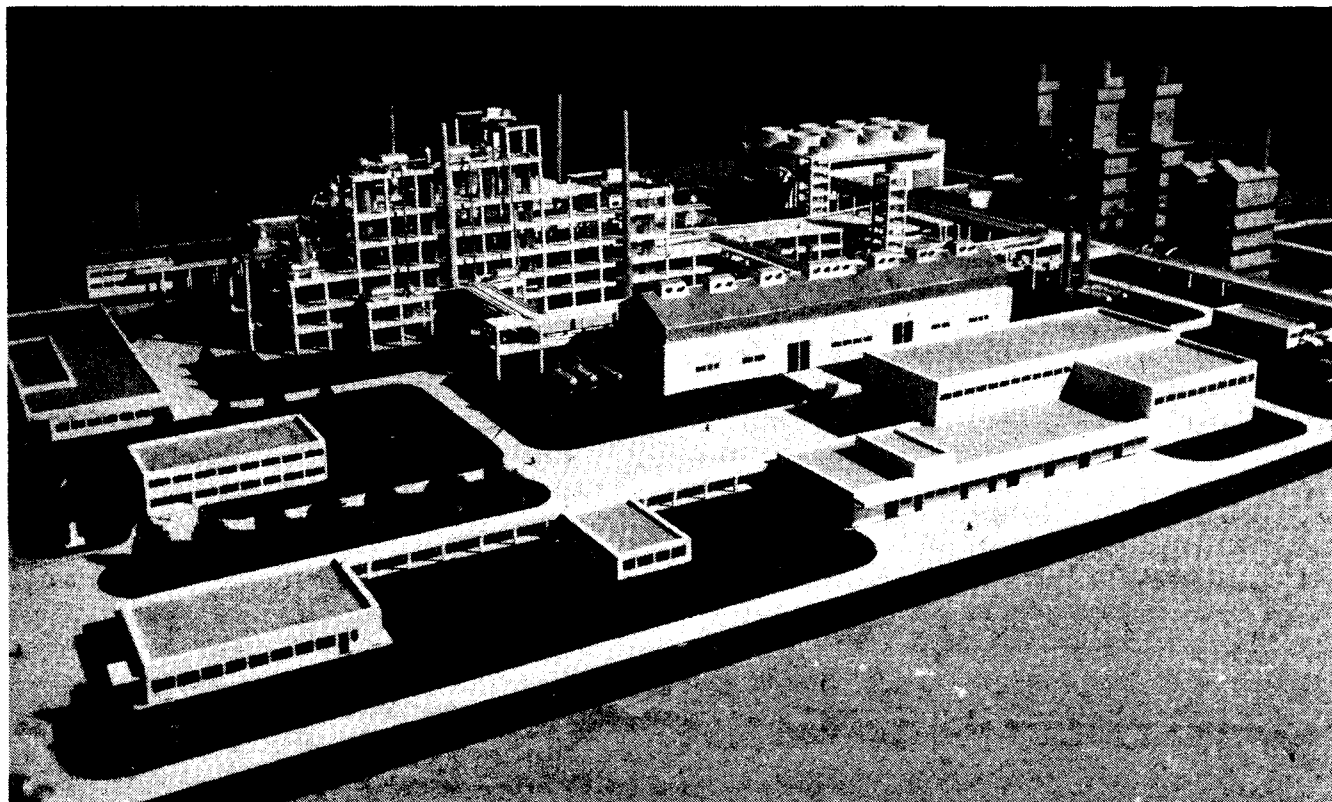
In the concluding section of his article, Mr. Calviño describes the conjuncture at which the Argentine nuclear

program finds itself today. He particularly poses the question of whether the nuclear sector can overcome the effects of the monetarist policies applied between 1976-81 by Finance Minister José Martínez de Hoz which have slowed the overall progress of the Nuclear Plan and shut down part of it.

The period of expansion

The stage begun in 1976 is characterized by three basic principles: on the local level, by nuclear "democratization"; in the international arena, by the affirmation of the equality of states; and on the technological level, by nuclear autonomy.

Undoubtedly, the most important milestone for the CNEA (National Atomic Energy Commission) in this period was the approval through Decree No. 3183 of the National Objectives



A mock-up of a heavy-water plant at Arroyito, now nearing construction.

and Policies on nuclear energy in 1977, and the definition in Decree No. 302 of the Argentine Nuclear Plan in 1979, which projected the construction of four nuclear reactors and accompanying infrastructure, including a heavy water reactor, before the year 1997.

At the end of 1979, following extensive analysis of the proposals, KWU Siemens was awarded the contract to build the third nuclear reactor, Atucha II. At the close of bidding on April 23, 1979, the following proposals were received: a) AECL (Atomic Energy of Canada, Ltd.) and its partners (Canatom and General Electric on one side and Nira on the other); and b) KWU Siemens' offer—\$1 billion versus \$1.5 billion—the difficulties previously mentioned with AECL tipped the balance in favor of the German offer. At the same time, a license was issued for the construction of a heavy water production facility, at the level of 250 tons per year, and the contract awarded to Sulzer Brothers of Switzerland, Ltd.

KWU also offered the CNEA 75 percent participation in an engineering company, which was agreed upon in 1980. Among the functions of this company were especially the basic engineering of future nuclear plants and the supervision of their construction, assembly and operation. Upon the creation of this company, called ENACE (Argentine Nuclear Company for Electrical Plants), it was agreed that KWU's participation would gradually decrease, leaving CNEA as the sole stockholder.

In November of that same year, the CNEA and AECL-Italmianti concluded a round of negotiations giving the Argentine nuclear agency the role of principal construction contractor in the nuclear area, thus obviating interference which would have slowed the progress of the projects.

Returning briefly to the principles cited in the first paragraph of this section, I would say that the CNEA complied with the first by providing information and publicizing its activities. Through its president, the CNEA constantly details to the press its objectives and accomplishments, without sidestepping apparently controversial issues. This is especially important, in that dealing with the issue of nuclear energy openly leads to the creation of a dynamic (but for now informal) system, which will crystalize into an authentic nuclear community and undercut the preachings of the anti-nuclear movement.

With regard to the equality among states, the Argentine position rejecting the Non-Proliferation Treaty is final and unequivocal. This legal instrument, as revealed on numerous occasions by nuclear authorities, is discriminatory and restricts the capability and autonomy of nations that do not possess nuclear arms in the nuclear field. The statements made before the International Atomic Energy Commission by the president of the CNEA, Vice-Admiral Carlos Castro Madero, commenting on the Club of London document, illustrates this point. Castro Madero noted:

"Ethical and religious principles, and legitimate convictions about the danger to the world derived from the prolifer-

ation of nuclear arms are shared by all of us who look with faith to the future of humanity. But when these principles and standards are used to not comply with agreements and contracts, thus arbitrarily affecting bilateral relations and the progress and development of the nation, then they become our worst enemy and favor those who, intentionally or not, desire their definitive collapse."

Intimately linked to this principle is the affirmation of technological independence, toward which the projects of the CNEA tend, in [defense of] the national interests. It should be noted that the incipient Argentine nuclear community solidly supports the positions taken by the CNEA. For example, in referencing the problems of technology transfer during the 1979 conference of the International Nuclear Law Association, held in Buenos Aires, Dr. Alfred Carella noted that:

"To adhere to the theory of non-proliferation, as posed by the United States, would be to endorse the division of the world into responsible states, namely the nuclear powers, and the irresponsible ones, that is, those that aim toward peaceful nuclear programs or are well situated to develop them. The London cartel emerges, then, as a sort of Holy Alliance based on legitimizing the monopoly of military nuclear power destined to thwart the right of states to fully exercise self-determination."

Conclusions

1. In the framework of the state's monopoly over Argentina's nuclear activity, the CNEA has been the sole and principal adviser to the National Executive in this field, subject to sometimes useful and sometimes harmful intervention from other government agencies, particularly from the Secretary of Energy.

2. The stability of the CNEA's leadership is a unique example in Argentina's institutional history, which has resulted in a homogenous attitude capable of adjusting to changes on the local or international level.

3. Upon entering a period of expansion, the CNEA suffered the consequences of the monetarist economic policy inspired by the teachings of Milton Friedman, led by transnational interests and implemented by an elite steeped in ultraliberalism. The results of six years of monetarism in Argentina [1976-81—ed.] are in plain view and require no further elaboration. I will say however that under an economic leadership desirous of reinstating in this country the scheme of an international division of labor such as conceived by David Ricardo, the place allotted to nuclear development is very small. Only the closest coordination among the sector's authorities prevented the Nuclear Plan's dismemberment altogether.

In any case its timetable has suffered serious delays due to budget cutbacks, and many of the planned achievements are now paralyzed with no scheduled completion date.

4. The antinuclear movement, dependent in large part on those transnational interests previously alluded to, will take

advantage of this situation. The effectiveness of its activities, limited to be sure by the CNEA's efforts to "popularize" nuclear energy, thus shaping a public opinion resistant [to the antinuclear movement], must be evaluated by those pursuing the definitive industrialization of the nation. Taking into account the fact that the nefarious "green wave" has not yet unleashed its full power in Argentina, but that it possesses abundant resources and tools with which to do so, and that it is favored by a political conjuncture of broadening participation, one of the favorite arguments of the international ecology movement is identification of nuclear development with authoritarian forms of government.

5. A good indication that the fears expressed in the previous point are not unfounded can be seen in the succession of statements opposing the CNEA's decision to build a nuclear waste disposal facility in the south of the country. From the moment Castro Madero announced the selected site, voices began to be heard doubting the effectiveness of the chosen method, or the site conditions, or in most cases, attacking the decision-making process and demanding a more open discussion of the matter. What we are really seeing here are attacks on the Nuclear Plan itself, which barely survived the anti-industrial experience of the post-1976 period.

In sum, there is little question that the majority of the sectors of our national life openly or tacitly share the strategic outlines defined by successive nuclear authorities, and conceive of nuclear development as a "vanguard" alternative with vast multiplier effects in the socio-economic structure. The future of Argentina as a nuclear state will depend on the vigor with which these positions are defended in the face of the designs of a genocidalist, liberal elite.

'Nuclear power a sovereign right'

The following are excerpts of the inaugural speech delivered at the Second International Conference on Transfer of Nuclear Technology by Vice-Admiral (Ret.) Carlos Castro Madero, president of the Argentine National Atomic Energy Commission. The conference was held in Buenos Aires on Nov. 1-2, 1982.

The conference we open here today is of fundamental importance for international co-existence because it will analyze the conditions by which all countries may have equal access to nuclear technology, one of the primary tools for the progress of states today.

It is well known that unequal scientific-technological advance has created a gap between living standards of nations which accentuates trade relations that are decidedly unfavorable for developing countries. This characteristic of current international trade has created a type of neocolonialism

through dependence on critical materials, machinery, spare parts, and specialized services, which aggravates these unbalanced trade relations and affects each state's exercise of its sovereignty. . . .

For Argentina, as for many countries, sovereignty is not a limited or anachronistic concept, based only on the notion of territory. It is a live, dynamic, indivisible concept that is integrated into the power of national decision-making on the use of one's own resources and intellectual capabilities in accordance with the fundamental interests of each country.

The need to reverse the growing inequality in trade relations has led to diverse actions, one of which is what we generically term technology-transfer agreements. In most cases, however, these technology-transfer agreements tend primarily to increase the economic burden on those nations attempting to create the conditions for self-sufficiency in the production of priority goods and services for their development. In other words, the transfer of technology . . . really does not contribute to the incorporation of a new productive attitude, and basically does not create local capabilities for generating innovation.

While such avarice in the control of technology is evident in all areas of international trade, it is particularly accentuated in the nuclear field, with the addition of specific conflictive elements. In effect, the legitimate desire, shared by us all, to avoid the use of nuclear energy for destructive means, ends up endorsing policies and measures opposed to the unquestionable right of all states to develop independent nuclear programs for peaceful means. We must therefore undertake actions that eliminate unacceptable and undue demands and restrictions, so as to permit access to the mastery of nuclear technology within a framework of reciprocal confidence and responsibility. My country, in its efforts to achieve self-sufficiency, has gained valuable experience in all aspects of technology transfer.

For this reason, Argentina today can proudly point to collaborative agreements and projects underway with other Latin American nations in which we demonstrate, by our acts, our vocation for transferring technology with no pretensions at domination. We openly collaborate in the training of local personnel . . . because just as important as the vocation for transferring technology is the willingness to receive, apply, and develop it. For the same reason we provide technical assistance to the local industry and engineering community of those countries to promote their maximum participation. . . .

I trust that the countries that generate nuclear technology will translate into acts their understanding of the aspirations of the developing nations to increasingly participate in a dynamic process of growth that will benefit us all.

The crisis of the contemporary world makes it imperative that this conference be not only a forum for enlightening us, but for generating those actions that can contribute to a more just access for all states and all men to the benefits of the development of nuclear technology.