

Franco-German Alliance For Nuclear Energy Reinforced By Japan

Japan and France have signed a long-term agreement involving French cooperation in reprocessing spent fuel from Japan's nuclear power plants. This deal formally links the future of Japan's nuclear policies to the joint French-West German drive for peaceful development and export of nuclear technology. France has already offered the same reprocessing services to the West German government, an arrangement which would greatly aid West Germany in breaking the environmentalist stranglehold on its nuclear industry.

The Franco-Japanese agreement represents a major setback for attempts by U.S. Energy Czar James Schlesinger and British-dominated monetarist forces to sabotage plutonium breeder reactor development. But it is only one part of a more fundamental effort by Japan to remove itself from U.S. efforts to brake its overall economic expansion. This cause was substantially furthered by the visit of West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher to Japan this week. The trip, originally designed specifically to establish close cooperation between Japan and West Germany on nuclear technology and Third World development, quickly expanded to other topics.

Genscher and his Japanese colleague Hatomaya not only agreed to adopt a joint position on the export of nuclear technology and coordinate on the question of nuclear nonproliferation, but also discussed the creation of "independent industrial regions" in Southeast Asia to replace the "colonial hegemony" of the past. In particular, Genscher offered the countries that comprise the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines, Singapore — ASEAN) ministerial representation at meetings of the European Economic Community's Commission. As Japan is the recognized major industrial power of ASEAN, the thrust of Genscher's proposal is clearly to draw Japan and ASEAN into active collaboration with Europe.

Cooperation between West Germany and Japan has been rapidly increasing around their common opposition to British-motivated demands to reflate their economies and cut steel exports. These ties were dramatically put to the test at the meeting of the International Monetary Fund last month, when West German Finance Minister Hans Apel publicly defended the Japanese against attacks from British Chancellor of the Exchequer Healey and his U.S. allies. Japan's ties with France were likewise expanded two weeks ago, when the respective Committees for Economic Development of the two countries met in Tokyo to discuss joint development of nuclear energy and oil resources, support for peace initiatives in the Middle East, and trade.

Link to Soviets

Close cooperation with the Soviet Union is rapidly becoming an indispensable component of these alliances. According to Japanese press sources, at a recent Japanese-Soviet cooperation meeting, Japanese big-business leader Toshio Doko accepted a Soviet offer to

provide Japan with enriched uranium in exchange for nuclear power plants.

The Soviet Union already enriches uranium for a number of European countries, and further steps are underway in this area. At the Belgrade European Cooperation and Security Conference, the representative of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), Stanovnik, called for the formation of an East-West bank or fund to finance trade and development among the participating countries (East and West Europe, the U.S. and Canada).

Stanovnik also endorsed East-West conferences on energy and transportation, similar to those put forward by Soviet President Brezhnev, who on this issue has received enthusiastic support from West Germany and interest from the French. France's policy, explained a lead editorial in the French daily *Le Figaro*, aims at making the achievement of commercial fusion energy reactors, with expanded intermediary use of fast breeder technology as the basis for establishing a meaningful East-West dialogue and reviving the failed dialogue between the advanced and developing sectors. At the Belgrade conference itself, West German delegation leader Günther van Well emphasized that it is not "human rights," but rather the economic aspect of East-West detente which is crucial, since "the highly industrialized continent of Europe cannot proceed without close, concerted action in energy."

Italy Also Pulled In

Both in France and in Italy the Communist parties are emerging as a powerful force for nuclear energy development. Now that the French Communist Party (PCF) has definitively broken with the zero-growth, deindustrialization policies of French Socialist François Mitterrand, the PCF is making overtures towards its Italian sister-party for an unprecedented cross-national programmatic alliance. Yesterday in Paris, the first session of the PCI-PCF Joint Commission was held on questions of agriculture, energy industry, disarmament, and education, and a draft joint program is expected to come out of subsequent meetings.

French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing pointed in the same direction when he addressed a farewell dinner in honor of the Italian Ambassador to Paris, Malfatti. Giscard expressed his "appreciation for the consolidation of Italian-French relations" during the period of Malfatti's ambassadorship, and stressed the "particular consideration" the French government has for Italy.

The Italian Communist Party and its wing of the CGIL trade union federation continues to provide crucial support for the Italian government's resistance to the inflationary demands of the International Monetary Fund and their domestic agents Gianni Agnelli and Ugo La Malfa. Yesterday, CGIL chairman Luciano Lama called for the mobilization against this "party of inflation and stagnation," and asserted that "the alternative is not

Mexican Government Backs Nuclear Effort

A ceremony at the site of Mexico's major nuclear plant construction project Oct. 7 highlighted the 10-month-old Lopez Portillo administration's tenacious commitment to nuclear energy development. The government has now restarted construction of the country's first commercial reactor, officials have revealed in speeches at Laguna Verde on Mexico's northern Veracruz coast. The 1.3 million kilowatts facility had been stalled due to the changeover in administrations following Portillo's election and financing restrictions imposed by the International Monetary Fund.

According to Federal Electricity Commission head Hugo Cervantes del Rio, the government is determined to bring the reactor on stream by 1982.

It was first planned 11 years ago; construction began during the 1970-1976 administration of Luis Echeverria. It is expected that final cost, increased due to the delays, will be upwards of \$1.2 billion.

It was also announced that Mexico will push ahead rapidly with uranium exploration and new facilities for uranium processing in the northern state of Chihuahua.

In the days directly following the Laguna Verde tour and press conference, a flurry of articles in the Mexico City press publicized Mexico's nuclear energy effort, emphasizing that environmental considerations were adequately dealt with and that the key element in the program is the training of Mexican scientists and technicians.

inflation or stagnation, but rather selective credit for investments." Such views have been fully endorsed by Christian Democratic leaders like Flaminio Piccoli, who recently warned that any Italian government which attempts to exclude the PCI would immediately degenerate Italy to Weimar conditions, leaving the country politically open for a fascist (i.e., British monetarist) takeover.

The Battle for West Germany

Every new link in this international pronuclear alliance serves to help solve the predicament of West Germany, the industrial heartland of Western Europe, where nuclear energy plant construction has been virtually halted by a "moratorium" brought about by a combined deployment of environmentalists and saboteurs inside the ruling Social Democratic Party (SPD). Ironically, the opposition Christian Democratic Union (CDU) is performing a function similar to that of the Communist parties in France and Italy, since they are supporting the industrialization policies of Chancellor Helmut Schmidt "from the outside" against such inside saboteurs as SPD Chairman Willy Brandt.

In this spirit, CDU Chairman Helmut Kohl announced at a recent party congress that "Schmidt's thinking is along the lines also favored by the CDU" regarding

nuclear energy and antiterrorist policy. Kohl attacked the antinuclear movement as "the most reactionary force in the country," and proposed that a parliamentary debate on nuclear energy be held immediately in order to deal them a fatal blow.

The mainstream trade union movement fully share this opinion. In the industrial city of Dortmund this week, factory labor council members representing almost two million West German workers heard speaker after speaker emphasize the vital need for nuclear energy not only for their country, but for the Third World as well. "Cutting nuclear energy means to let the Third World die, since they depend on rapid energy development for industrialization," the head of the Association of German Electricity Plants told a cheering audience.

This support has made the Schmidt government feel strong enough to take a practical step towards ending the present court-enforced nuclear moratorium, by forming a commission to make proposals for bringing their "Nuclear Law" more into line with the necessity of technological progress. Chancellor Schmidt has also sent a letter to the Minister-President of the state of North Rhine-Westphalia, urging him to overthrow a local court decision obstructing the completion of a fast-breeder project at Kalkar.