

## Energy Insider by William Engdahl

### The Reagan nuclear energy mandate

*A new presidential policy declaration represents a "right move," but an insufficient one in actual practice.*

**T**he preliminary steps have been encouraging to date: the President has named one of the nation's most respected nuclear experts, Dr. Nunzio Palladino, to become the chairman of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. That five-man body, which had become a nightmare of bureaucratic obstructionism in the Carter years, now has a pronuclear tilt for the first time since Three Mile Island.

Sometime in September, the President will probably announce his long-awaited policy on the future of nuclear power. The initial draft, prepared by Dr. Lance Keyworth, chief White House Science Adviser, aims at reducing total regulatory and construction time from the present 12 to 14 years, "to perhaps 6 to 8 years as is typical in many other countries." Additionally, it calls for resumption of the Clinch River Breeder Reactor program and commercial spent-fuel reprocessing, which was the obvious solution to the so-called waste problem until it was banned by Carter strategists for partisan political reasons.

On July 16, the President issued his Nuclear Nonproliferation Policy. On paper, it was a clear reversal of Carter's disastrous and deliberate attempt to impose a "technology freeze" on development of peaceful nuclear energy internationally. In contrast to the Carter approach, President Reagan's policy correctly underscores that nuclear weapons nonproliferation suc-

cess depends above all on secure energy development and a "strong and dependable United States." The President declares, "We must re-establish this nation as a predictable and reliable partner for peaceful nuclear cooperation under adequate safeguards," otherwise, nations will go elsewhere to seek the most advanced and efficient energy base for industrialization.

In ordering relevant government agencies to pursue "expedient action on [nuclear] export requests," and declaring that this administration "will not inhibit or set back civil reprocessing and breeder reactor development abroad in nations with advanced nuclear power programs," the President would seem to be undoing the worst damage of the Carter administration antinuclear policy.

I do wish reality were this simple. But, nowhere is the schizophrenia of the Reagan administration's compromise with the Haig State Department, David Rockefeller's Trilateral Commission, and Federal Reserve Chairman Volcker's monetary policies more evident than the nuclear policy field.

The administration's top international spokesman for nuclear policy, Jim Malone, has just returned from India. He did not negotiate a reversal of Carter's nuclear fuel embargo against that nation, nor did he establish new export agreements. Malone discussed ending the U.S. treaty commitment to supply enriched uranium fuel to

the reactor supplying the Bombay industrial belt. However, the talks ended in stalemate because Malone also demanded India maintain the safeguard obligations on the plant and spent fuel, even after the United States stops supplying uranium!

Only weeks earlier, the Haig State Department made a multibillion-dollar arms deal with the lunatic Zia regime in Pakistan which, according to highly reliable intelligence reports, includes provisions for allowing that country nuclear weapons, by "looking the other way" while China and certain others provide the means covertly!

Some further examples of this schizophrenia are relevant. Energy Deputy Secretary Ken Davis, who as head of Bechtel's nuclear construction was regarded as one of the most aggressive nuclear advocates, announced, properly so, that fuel reprocessing was the "cornerstone" of the administration's nuclear waste policy. Yet, when pressed, the administration, Davis included, insists that the private sector bear the cost of reprocessing, something industry has so far found unviable. The private sector argues with some persuasiveness that an advanced technology such as reprocessing ought to be borne by the government as planned in the early years of the Atoms for Peace program.

As if to underscore the emerging tragedy of government inaction, a West German utility group, DWK, sent a delegation to Washington last week to seek out prospective partners to share in underwriting the takeover of the Barnwell, South Carolina nuclear reprocessing facility that is under dispute. A reliable source says the delegation left discouraged.