

News in Brief

France To Develop a New-Generation Reactor

French President Jacques Chirac announced Jan. 6 that in addition to the third-generation nuclear reactor type, the European Pressurized Reactor (EPR), which will begin construction in 2007, France will develop a fourth-generation, “new, inherently safe reactor,” to be ready by 2020. Chirac said the development of such a reactor is urgent, because it will be far more efficient than even the EPR, the most modern type of fission reactor as of now.

Press reports the next day indicated that he meant a reactor based on high-temperature technology. France will present its project in the context of the new European Union energy policy, work on which was agreed to at the EU meeting of energy experts in Brussels on Jan. 4.

Germany Has A Pioneer Area Of Fusion Research

The northeastern region of Germany around Greifswald not only will be the site where the North European Gas Pipeline will berth in 2010, but there are also a number of pioneer research programs in place there, for bio-technology and fusion technology development, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* reported Jan. 6.

The article prominently mentions the Stellarator project, or Wendelstein VII-X, which Germany is constructing at Greifswald, to begin the first high-powered microbeam testing in 2012. The 300 researchers and engineers there are working on a technology more complex than the Tokamak generation of present-day fusion reactor types, as used in the ITER (International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor) being built in Cadarache, France. The Tokamak-generated plasma is like a “wild horse,” difficult to tame for industrial and commercial use in the future, the Greifswald team thinks. Their Stellarator type is expected to help solve the problems—and solved they must be, if fusion reactors are to go on the grid by 2050, the

scientists say.

The anti-nuclear power taboo, the debate on power generation, has been broken in Germany recently, after power blackouts hit some areas of the country. The article’s author, Christian Schwägerl, is the same person who also a few weeks back wrote on the re-industrialization of Berlin.

IMF Chief Rato Gives Brazil Marching Orders

IMF Chief Rodrigo Rato ordered the restive Lula government that it had better “stay the course,” during his Jan. 10 visit to Brazil, according to IMF and Brazilian press accounts. He stated that the IMF will continue to play an important role as advisor to Brazil even though it no longer owes the IMF any money. He asserted that his presence at the ceremony to celebrate Brazil’s paying off its debt to the IMF, shows our close relations.

Leading Brazilians are saying, as Parana state governor Roberto Requião did in mid-December, that “Brazil hopes for a Kirchner,” referring to anti-IMF President Néstor Kirchner of Argentina, to come out of the October 2006 presidential elections. With Kirchner coming for a state visit on Jan. 18, Rato, the former Finance Minister under Spain’s Jose Aznar, came into Brazil before Kirchner’s visit.

Rato laid out the conditions the financial vultures expect Brazil to meet, if it wishes to receive the investment-grade rating its bankers’ faction keep telling the President is required to entice foreign investment: pass the law granting full Central Bank autonomy; ensure no slippage in the gigantic fiscal surpluses being channelled into debt payments; rip up labor regulations, as Spain did under his direction; reduce state “directed credit” [this is an attack on the national development bank, BNDES, and the few other remaining state credit programs]; eliminate Constitutional requirements that certain percentages of the budget must go to health care, social programs, and education.

Brazilian Economics Minister Antonio Palocci, under heavy fire from within the Lula government for pushing these same policies, took the opportunity to promise that

Brazil would, indeed, implement Rato’s demands.

Danger of Dictatorship Seen in the Philippines

Reporter Neal Cruz, a regular columnist for the dominant newspaper in the Philippines, *The Inquirer*, on Jan. 9, finally broke through the black-out in the press (other than the LaRouche Society newsletter in Manila, Executive Alert) on the fact that the campaign by the friends of the neo-cons in Manila to dump the presidential system in favor of a parliamentary system, backed by the Heritage Foundation in Washington, is intended to establish a dictatorship. In the proposed parliamentary system, writes Cruz, “There is no balance of powers. The party in power runs the whole government like a dictator.” Cruz reviews the numerous illegalities involved in the drive by President Gloria Arroyo and former President Fidel Ramos to ram through a “charter change,” and exposes the effort to get a phoney debate going on the best way to do it.

With the Philippine Senate showing signs of resistance, the Arroyo government is now talking about a 5-million-strong petition drive, to force a plebiscite over the heads of the Senate.

Monetarist Economics Is Greatest Threat to Brazil

The Governor of the state of Parana, Roberto Requião, a member of the Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (PMDB) party and collaborator of former National Economic and Social Development Bank chief Carlos Lessa, told a radio interviewer on Jan. 2 that the political corruption which obsesses the press is really an issue for the police and for the Congress. “It is a serious problem, but it is a small problem relative to the damage wreaked by Brazil’s economic policy,” he charged. The “extremely conservative and monetarist vision” created the economic stagnation the country is suffering.

Requião also revealed that, after four or five statewide meetings of the PMDB party

to discuss the proposed economic platform drafted for the party under the direction of Lessa (see *EIR*, Oct. 14, 2005), the PMDB national leadership stopped convoking the meetings planned for the remaining states. Requiao, a potential Presidential candidate for the party, said he is not interested in running, unless the national debate over the needed changes in economic policies is revived. Without proposing changes, why run? he asked.

Is Cheney Set To Go 'For Health Reasons'?

If Vice President Dick Cheney resigns under threat of impeachment, the stage has been set anew for "for reasons of health" to be the plausible official explanation.

When Cheney was rushed to the hospital well before Monday morning rush hour Jan. 9, the word was that he had simply suffered "shortness of breath."

But one medical expert told *EIR* that the symptoms Cheney was exhibiting implied heart or kidney failure. Associated Press reported that "Cheney's own doctors weren't talking". Other doctors were saying the official explanation made no sense.

Columnist: 'Give Bush The Nixon Treatment'

In a Jan. 9 op-ed, "The Nixon Syndrome," *New York Times* columnist Bob Herbert says that President George Bush deserves the Nixon Treatment.

"Spying on the populace is a giant step toward totalitarianism," wrote Herbert. "Get rid of the checks and balances, and you've gotten rid of the United States as we've known it." Herbert said that Bush has "aligned himself with Richard Nixon, who had his own notion of the separation of powers. That notion was best expressed in Nixon's chilling comment: 'When the President does it, that means it is not illegal.'"

How did the institutions deal with Nixon? Herbert answered the question: "Nixon was out of control, so Congress and the courts stepped in. Threatened with im-

peachment, he resigned his office and left town. Checks and balances."

Bush on Abramoff: 'Never Met the Guy'

Plea-copping lobbyist Jack Abramoff was a Bush-Cheney campaign "Pioneer," meaning he was responsible for kicking in more than \$100,000 for the purchase of the Presidency in 2000. Then when the Florida recount needed the right kind of cash, Abramoff funnelled in another \$5,000, reported *Roll Call* in 2003.

The Associated Press reported last year that Abramoff and his staff made "nearly 200" visits to the White House in Bush's first nine months in office.

But Scott McClellan, W's spin doctor, subtly put it this way[]: "The President does not know him, nor does the President recall ever meeting him."

The President's memory may yet be jogged. An 2002 *National Journal* article reported that Abramoff helped arrange a meeting with Bush for top Indian leaders. And an unidentified FBI agent investigating the Abramoff case told *Time* magazine last week, "The case is far from over."

Retired 4-Star General Says Rumsfeld 'Ruthless'

Retired Gen. Edward C. Meyer, Army Chief of Staff from 1979 to 1983, said Jan. 6 that he doesn't know whether senior officers in the Army are *afraid* to speak out, as Rep. John Murtha (D-Penn.) has charged, "but they're certainly reluctant to." Meyer was answering a question from *EIR* after speaking at a Heritage Foundation event on the hollowing-out of the Army during times of military change. Another panel member at the event made the point that the late Army Chief of Staff Gen. Creighton Abrams, had admonished his fellow officers to "tell it like it is".

Meyer predicted that in the next year, "there's going to be more speaking out about what's going on, particularly when Rumsfeld leaves." He said Rumsfeld has

been "an obstacle" to such speaking out, "because he's ruthless."

Florida Supreme Court Outlaws School Vouchers

Florida's Supreme Court ruled early this month for "high-quality system of free public schools," not vouchers. In a 5-2 ruling, the state's highest court struck down Gov. Jeb Bush's program which diverts tax monies from public to private schools, through the issuance of vouchers. Under Bush's voucher program, families with children in "failed schools" have obtained government money to pay for tuition at private schools, draining money, and students from public schools. The teachers union has been fighting vouchers in Florida since 1999.

The *New York Times* has reported that the Florida ruling cannot be appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, since only state laws are involved, but it is likely that this ruling will have an impact in other states, where voucher programs have been challenged in court.

Is Mexican Oil Company To Be Privatized?

Senator Manuel Bartlett, a nationalist within the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), has sounded the alarm that the government of President Vicente Fox of the National Action Party, is trying to privatize the national oil company, Pemex, before leaving office at the end of the year, according to *La Jornada*, Jan. 4. On Jan. 3, the nationalist senator attacked draft legislation presented by PRI Sen. Genaro Borrego, which would permit 20% private ownership of Pemex. "This would begin the privatization of the national company. . . . Everything that they [the Fox government] proposes, every proposal is to privatize and open up the energy sector. . . . For five years, a clear majority has defended the nationalist thesis of the Constitution" requiring state ownership over oil, against the Fox offensive. "That is the goal of this government, and they are desperate because they are about to go."