

## ENERGY

### Lopez Portillo urges U.S. lawmakers to back producer-consumer conference

Mexico's President José Lopez Portillo told visiting members of a subcommittee of the House Science and Technology Committee last week that failure to implement his proposal for international agreements to expand and more justly distribute energy production will lead to another "world war."

This is the strongest warning the Mexican President has sent to the U.S. on the dangers of allowing Energy Secretary James Schlesinger to continue policies which range from plans to "send troops to secure U.S. energy supplies" to contrived gasoline scarcity in the U.S. and the grabbing of Mexico's energy resources to fuel the Anglo-American war machine.

In the face of what Lopez Portillo has called an "apocalypse," the Mexican government has picked up the tempo of its international organizing to win support for the Lopez Portillo proposal for an energy producer-consumer conference to establish international agreements to regulate energy production and distribution to make energy readily available to all nations. In September the Mexican President will bring his proposal to the United Nations.

Having secured support in Europe, various Arab nations and in Latin America over recent months, the government moved strongly on three flanks this week:

- At the United Nations Commission of Trade and Development (UNCTAD) meeting in

Manila, the Mexican delegation's main thrust was in promoting the proposal for an energy producer-consumer conference as the key battle to be won in order to establish a new world economic order. "A rational energy policy can and must be the beginning of the solution of the entirety of problems we face ... if a global equitable accord is not reached, there will be scarcity, injustice and violence," said the head of Mexico's delegation. (More in Commodities.)

- On May 7, the Czechoslovak Ambassador to Mexico set a precedent for the rest of the Comecon countries by calling the press to announce that his country totally supports the Mexican initiative and that it will express that support in UN deliberations. A week later Bulgarian President Zhivkov entered into oil negotiations with his French counterpart Giscard.

- Lopez Portillo himself is expected to brief Cuban President Fidel Castro and Costa Rican President Rodrigo Carazo in two meetings in Cozumel, Mexico, on May 17 and 19 respectively.

#### Mexico's Caribbean project

Mexico's energy collaboration plans in the Caribbean-Central America region are the best expressions of what it means by its energy proposal. In his meeting with the Science and Technology subcommittee members, Lopez Portillo told them that the best example of a better international energy distribution system is a

quadrilateral swap deal being worked out now by which Mexico would supply Cuba with a portion of the oil that Cuba now receives from the Soviet Union, and the Soviet Union would redirect the same amount of oil to fulfill Mexico's contract to Spain. As an example of production agreements consistent with his proposal, he also told them that Mexico wants to build a hydroelectric complex in a river dividing Mexico and Guatemala in order to feed electricity to the entire Central America region.

Mexico's "Caribbean project," Foreign Minister Santiago Roel told the press May 15, includes transfer of technology from the Mexican Petroleum Institute—one of the most advanced technological institutions of the Third World—to the Central American country of Costa Rica.

#### Collaboration with the U.S.

That the U.S. has a key role to play in Mexico's plan was restated to the congressmen by President Lopez Portillo when he told them that Mexico planned to continue its nuclear program and he indicated that the road remains open for the U.S. to supply nuclear technology to Mexico if the U.S. wants to take the orders. According to the congressmen, quoted in the daily *Uno mas Uno*, Lopez Portillo linked future natural gas sales to cooperation in obtaining this technology.

Nonetheless, the status of U.S.-Mexico negotiations over natural gas sales clearly shows that Schlesinger is still in control. On May 8, Mexico's National Patrimony and Industrial Development Minister, L. Andres de Oteyza, told the press that "There is no big news" in the negotiations because there has been no effort so far to meet Mexico's insistence on a fair international price for its gas.

—Elsa Ennis