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JPRS L/9209

23 July 1980

Worldwide Report

NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENT AND PROLIFERATION

(FOUO 8/80)

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JAPAN

ENERGY INSTITUTE PLANS TO DEMOLISH EXPERIMENTAL REACTOR

OW120913 Tokyo THE DAILY YOMIURI in English 11 May 80 p 2--FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

[Text] Japan's first experimental nuclear power reactor will be demolished by 1985 in order to develop techniques to demolish other reactors currently used for power generation, the Japan Atomic Energy Research Institute (JAERI) decided Friday. JAERI owns the reactor which is located at its Tokai Research Institute in Tokaimura, Ibaraki-ken. The reactor, officially named "Japan Power Demonstration Reactor," was put into operation in October 1963. It was used chiefly for a series of power generation experiments and to train technicians of local electric power stations to run nuclear power reactors. However, operation of the reactor was discontinued after March 1976 when a considerable amount of radioactive waste water leaked into Kashima Bay through a crack in its auxiliary tank.

JAERI plans to carry out numerous tests before demolishing the reactor, including examination of pipes used to supply coolants to the reactor, JAERI officials said. The method of demolishing the reactor, including remote control of fuel, will be examined, they added. The officials noted that Japan has had no experience in demolishing nuclear reactors whereas the U.S. and West Germany have had experience. The U.S. demolished a reactor at Elk River between 1972 and 1974. They also noted that Japan would in the future have to demolish another nuclear reactor now in use by numerous electric power stations. Nuclear power reactors can be used for about 30 years on the average, the officials said.

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JAPAN

ENTERPRISE WILL COLLECT URANIUM FROM SEAWATER

OW311025 Tokyo NIHON KEIZAI SHIMBUN in Japanese 28 May 80 Morning Edition p 7

[Text] The Metallic Minerals Agency (board chairman: Masaoki Nishiuchi) has notified the Nio township office in Mitoyo county, Kagawa Prefecture, of its decision to build a plant in the town designed to experiment with the collection of uranium from seawater. When built, the plant will be the first of its kind in the world. A formal contract will be concluded shortly between the agency and the township. The agency plans to begin construction this September, complete it in mid-1984, and conduct experimental operations for 3 years following completion.

This experimental plant will collect uranium from seawater and enrich it. Seawater contains extremely small quantities of uranium. Research is now underway in various countries on the same subject, but it is said that no plant has ever been built which can conduct all three processes of 1) absorbing uranium from seawater; 2) detaching uranium from absorbents; and 3) conducting enrichment and separation to heighten uranium concentration.

Nio, site of the plant, faces Hiuchinada sea zone on the Inland Sea. Another project is now underway in the town to build a plant designed to experiment with solar-power generation. It is in an area adjacent to--and south of--the 10,000-square-meter site of the planned uranium collection plant.

This uranium project will require a total of 3 billion yen, including an operating cost of 300 million yen each year. When completed, the plant will use 1,500 tons of seawater per day and produce 10 kilograms of uranium per year.

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JAPAN

MITI PLANS TO DEVELOP SMALLER NUCLEAR REACTORS

OW110119 Tokyo ASAHI EVENING NEWS in English 9 Jun 80 p 3

[Text] The Ministry of International Trade and Industry intends to begin developing medium-and-small multi-purpose nuclear powered generators in the next fiscal year. The reactors will be used in the ministry's effort to establish a nation-wide network of reactors to fulfill the country's energy needs.

The ministry intends to finalize the blueprint for the development plan by fiscal 1982, and embark on the establishment of the reactor network in 1983 at the earliest. The purpose of the project is to secure the country against future energy shortages.

According to the ministry, the new nuclear reactors will be of the light-water type and will have a capacity generating 200,000 to 300,000 kilowatts of electricity. The big nuclear reactors can produce 800,000 to 1,100,000 kilowatts of power.

In addition to generating electricity, the smaller nuclear reactors will be used for heating and cooling systems by using the steam and hot water produced by the reactors. The hot water and steam will be used in local offices and factories. The ministry emphasizes that the development of the smaller nuclear reactor could help relieve the energy shortage faced by non-oil-producing developing nations, because Japan will export them in the future.

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FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

SAFETY RECORD OF NUCLEAR REACTOR CRITICIZED

Hamburg STERN in German 24 Apr 80 p 254

[Article by Karen Andresen: "Still Not Reliable"]

[Text] It was reported that at the nuclear power plant in Brunsbuettel on the Lower Elbe, which has been shut down for 2 years now following an accident, safety regulations were being avoided once again.

Actually, the three gentlemen had imagined that their visit to the Federal Ministry of the Interior in Bonn would be quite different. Wolfgang Wolter, departmental chief in charge of nuclear power plants in the Kiel Ministry for Social Affairs, and his two companions Manfred Timm of the managing board for the Hamburg Electricity Works (HEW) and the Brunsbuettel power plant chief Werner Hartel, did not want to talk any more about the atomic power plant at Brunsbuettel in Schleswig-Holstein. The agenda called for a discussion of general reactor safety. And the three people from the north were convinced that the reactor on the Lower Elbe, which had been shut down 2 years ago following an accident, could soon be operating again. At last, the Reactor Safety Commission (RSK) of the interior ministry had now given the green light. The still lacking approval of Minister Gerhart Baum seemed to be only a formality.

But then the report from a news agency came to light, according to which 2 days earlier a mishap had again occurred at Brunsbuettel: During some repair work, 130,000 to 150,000 liters of weakly radioactive water had leaked into the reactor building through an oversight.

"Here we are, talking about everything under the sun, but you say nothing about that," complained Bonn's State Secretary Guenter Hartkopf to his visitors. When he wanted to hear details about the new accident, the three gentlemen had to give up. They too knew nothing more than the agency had reported. "Oh boy, then they are still not reliable?" wondered Hartkopf, and he ordered a fresh investigation. The consent expected by the visitors for the start-up of Brunsbuettel was denied.

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The HEW was not alone in being angered at Bonn's decision. At the Kiel Ministry for Social Affairs, which has supervision over the atomic power plant in Brunsbuettel and also sees itself as the intercessor for the HEW, the verdict was severely criticized as well. Minister Baum wants to delay the start-up of the plant "for flimsy reasons," chided Minister for Social Affairs Walter Braun in a newspaper interview. Similar words could be heard from the Hanseatic city of Hamburg. Wilhelm Noelling, the city's senator for finance and at the same time supervisory board chairman of the HEW, asked the people in Bonn in a letter to quickly come to a decision in favor of the reactor. The flooding of the reactor building, he said, was quite insignificant in terms of safety.

The hectic activity in Kiel and Hamburg is not without its reasons. Because as early as this summer, the nuclear reactor will possibly have to be shut down again for at least a year--the HEW has not complied with a requirement which was set. Some 5 years ago, the Federal Ministry of the Interior had directed the nuclear power plant operators to overhaul the scram accumulator tank by the middle of 1980. But the HEW at first procrastinated, in the hope that the safety requirement which it found inconvenient would be dropped again.

Not until the middle of 1979 did it bring itself finally to order the necessary material. The result of this late order: The parts cannot be delivered until the spring of 1981. Thus the reactor would have to be shut down for about 9 months before the work on it can commence. Therefore the HEW is pressing Bonn to postpone the impending shutdown deadline. Its grounds: After all, the reactor has not been operating for 2 years, and therefore the wear on the material is less. But Bonn is setting its face against the HEW arguments, which were immediately endorsed by the Kiel social ministry. This material, says Bonn, finally wears out even if the reactor is shut down. In May, the RSK experts are supposed to give their opinion yet again on this point of controversy.

The ministry has good reason not to endorse the HEW's lax approach to the safety regulations, because on 18 June 1978 this practice had led to the most serious radioactive polluting of the environment so far by an FRG atomic power plant. At that time, at the Brunsbuettel nuclear power plant a nozzle had broken on one of the pipes which carry steam to the turbine. Although the measuring instruments duly registered the failure, the operating crew blocked the safety system which would have shut down the nuclear reactor automatically, and they sought in vain for 3 hours to find the trouble spot. Meanwhile, about 145 tons of radioactive steam flowed from the leak and escaped unfiltered and uncontrolled through the open folding dormer windows of the power house, into the open air.

Two officials of the Federal Ministry of the Interior later claimed that the HEW had acted negligently. Also, the Kiel social authority had failed in its supervisory duty, reproached the officials. Evidently, those reprimanded at that time still have not understood their lesson.

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FRANCE

BRIEFS

NUCLEAR SECURITY MEASURE--France may as well be prepared for power outages. The amendment to the draft bill on "the physical protection of nuclear materials," introduced by the government on 2 May, calls for suspension or firing "without advance warning or indemnification" in the event of the "intentional violation of instructions given by the employer (EdF, CEA, Cogema, etc.) when such violation affects nuclear safety or endangers lives or property." The unions see this as an attack on the right to strike. [Minister of Industry] Andre Giraud replies that it is a safety measure; he is worried by the serious incidents that have occurred recently at some nuclear power plants, Bugey, for instance. [Text] [Paris L'EXPRESS in French 24 May 80 p 125]

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ITALY

NATIONAL NUCLEAR ENERGY CHIEF INTERVIEWED

Milan L'EUROPEO in Italian 20 May 80 pp 32-34

[Interview with CNEN Chairman Umberto Colombo on safety of Italian nuclear energy plants, by Giuliano Ferrieri; date and place not given]

> [Text] Caorso? As trustworthy as Japanese nuclear plants. Montalto? It would resist an earthquake with its focal point under the reactor. Garigliano? It did not operate properly and we have shut it down. In the opinion of the CNEN [National Nuclear Energy Commission] chairman, there is no doubt: we can rely on nuclear energy in Italy.

Nuclear energy is again in the limelight. In Latina a military rifle range is moving close to atomic energy facilities. In Montalto di Castro the new power plant is for the mement only "a large hole in the ground," around which work is at a standstill. In Formia the town council has unanimously voted to send an appeal to the government to appoint a commission to investigate the damage done by the Garigliano plant (shut down for the last 2 years). And with reference to Caorso, the association "Friends of the Earth," an international federative organization which defends the ecology (in Italy it acts jointly with the radicals), has published a lengthy study commissioned to the American experts of MHB Technical Associates. It is entitled "IRSS" (Italian Reactor Safety Study, a study made on the safety conditions of Italian reactors) and concludes that the conditions under which nuclear energy is being developed by us "leave something to be desired on the question of safety."

On the opposite front, the government has just launched a five-year plan which allots 2,500 billion lire to the CNEN. Are those who have confidence in nuclear energy right or those who do not trust it? Who is afraid of it and who is financing it? CNEN Chairman Umberto Colombo speaks to us about the alleged risks and advantages, safety and economic gains involved in nuclear energy. That he is concerned in the matter is understood; but, from the standpoint of competence, authority and culture, he is also one of the most credible defenders of "nuclear energy from the human aspect."

[Question] The American study on Caorso, Professor Colombo: What do you think of it? Why, with the CNEN invited, did you not participate in it?

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[Answer] We did not consider it opportune, even institutionally, to spend the state's money to pay for a study promoted by a committee which was openly antinuclear. We gave the "Friends of the Earth" all the documentation they requested (even the deliberations and notes of our technical commission, which are classified). As for the results of the work of the American engineers, it is a collection of information on an extremely heterogeneous level, moreover, a repetition of an analogous study already conducted by the same group of specialists on a reactor of the Caorso type. It uses the methodology of the RSS (Reactor Safety Study), the well-known text of Professor Rasmussen on the safety of nuclear plants, however, applying it to hypothetically more pessimistic situations. I mean: peremptory and dramatic conclusions are tied in with allusions to certain conditions and to small precautionary phrases on which the accent does not fall. The expert understands and weighs all factors. The inexperienced, who does not understand the precautionary phrases, reads and becomes frightened, which is precisely what was desired.

[Question] As a matter of fact, professor, the Caorso power plant (controversy about its defects, prolonged suspension and the like); what degree of safety does it offer?

[Answer] A degree of safety on a par with the maximum level possible for boiling-water reactors built by General Electric throughout the world, that is, the most highly tested and safest in existence. At Caorso we are within the same safety limits as the two Japanese power plants similar to ours; and it is well-known that Japan--which has experienced first-hand the effects of atomic radiation of a far different power--is using some of the most advanced safety criteria in the world. Speaking again of Caorso, it is normal to bring a nuclear facility to full capacity in stages, and at the Caorso plant tests have achieved 100 percent nominal power. Among the difficulties which occurred, we can, for example, cite the case of plastic components on the handles in the control room, which became damaged through wear (the manufacturing firm itself had pointed out the defect) and which were replaced. Since nuclear technology is recent and complicated, it is possible that there may be breakdowns of various types; but to have an accident, there would have to be an improbable chain of simultaneous negative events.

[Question] And the degree of safety at the Montalto installation?

[Answer] It offers the best conditions that can be found in Europe. Montalto had also exceeded the preselection for the EURODIF [European Diffusion Agency] installation (already built in France now, after our renunciation, with four power plants which will be inaugurated in 1981).

[Question] The best conditions in Europe, even though Montalto is about 30 airline kilometers from the area of the recent Tuscania earthquake?

[Answer] The Montalto faciltiy was designed to withstand an earthquake, even if its epicenter is directly "under" the power plant and its seismic reading a degree higher than that of Tuscania (generally speaking, a degree higher means doubled stresses).

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[Question] And Garigliano, shut down for the last 2 years?

[Answer] In that power plant (which is of the "first generation," from 1964), we had encountered corrosion phenomena in a secondary exchanger. This was discovered in a routine inspection, and the reactor was shut down both to determine the cause of the corrosion (and eliminate it) and because we asked ENEL [National Electric Power Agency] to check the "entire" plant in case there were other similar phemomena perhaps in parts of the primary circuit.

It is strange that, paradoxically, people charge us with insufficient safety control; and then, when the CNEN recommends a halt in operations, we are harshly criticized for the precautionary measure taken. As for the control committee, let it come; we have nothing to hide. The Formia commune could have asked us for statistics and information; they have never asked us for anything.

[Question] And Latina? Does not the expansion of the firing range clear to the periphery of the power plant give the CNEN reason for concern?

[Answer] Here the problem is not one of danger "from" the power plants but, rather, "for" the power plants. The new areas which are supposed to be included in the firing range (to which they already belong) were requested by the Defense Department to avoid the possibility of unlawful installations. That is, it is not a matter of using them for drills but only as supplementary areas. However, the final decision has not yet been made and is up to the Council of Ministers. If it is decided to make these areas a part of the firing range, it would mean that the government gives priority to military exercises over the safety of nuclear power plants.

[Question] In addition to all the cases of which you have spoken to us, Professor Colombo, is there "no" aspect of nuclear risk which worries you?

[Answer] My answer is that, up to now, throughout the world there has not been a single fatal accident connected with the operation of nuclear power plants for the production of energy (and 3,500 billion kilowatt-hours have been produced, that is, more than all the electric power ever produced in Italy, through whatever means, from the moment of electrification to the present). The three fatalities of Idaho Falls in America, one might object; but that was a military installation. The 1960 accident in Yugoslavia; but that was in a research reactor. The Soviet accident of 1959; but that was not in a power plant; it was in a deposit of radioactive slag connected with a military installation. And one fatality in Italy, a worker, in an apparatus for the irradiation of seeds, in Brescia; killed by radioactivity, yes, but not nuclear. And so-called minor radioactivity (x-rays, isotopes, radioactive waste: laboratory and hospital trash) is a problem with current, urgent, genuine risks, which I maintain is given less attention and notoriety than are given to theoretical nuclear risks.

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[Question] No fatality; and the calculable "fractions" of fatalities in the future, the average shortening of life?

[Answer] I believe that energy from nuclear fission should cover a certain arc of time in the energy history of humanity, let us say, limited to a century (then we shall have nuclear fusion, renewable sources of energy, solar). I say this: if humanity should continue to use "this" nuclear energy for many thousands of years, with thousands of power plants instead of the current hundreds, then thousands multiplied by thousands would mean millions of power plants per year, and I would not exclude one or two serious accidents. But considering the limited number of power plants in the world (and extremely limited in Italy) for a limited time, I think that we are reasonably safe in an absolute sense.

[Question] Perhaps a little less safe, since the controllers control themselves. I am referring to the notorious purse-snatching of "clause k," when the CNEN succeeded in getting the responsibility for health control of dangers from nuclear activities away from the Higher Health Institute.

[Answer] There is often confusion between nuclear safety and the people's health. Nuclear safety should relate to the construction, utilization and maintenance of the plants; the CNEN has always had the responsibility for that control and should continue to have it. Then there is the question of health protection of the workers and people. Here the Department of Health comes into the picture; it should continue to have that responsibility and we have no intentions of taking it from that department, within the scope of consultation. However, it would be dangerous at the operational level if there were a division of responsibilities.

[Question] Nevertheless, America is continuing to update (particularly after the Three Mile Island accident) its norms and regulations on the safety of its nuclear power plants. And Italy?

[Answer] It is doing the same; the old power plants have all been inspected and often shut down (like the Garigliano of which we spoke, and Trino Vercellese, now shut down precisely because they are installing an emergency cooling system, which they did not have previously). Naturally, we cannot expect to transform 20-year-old plants into those which we would now build. But just as America is reviewing and establishing new parameters, we are doing the same.

[Question] There is a proposal (by the republicans) for a European unification of the safety controls of nuclear facilities. What is your opinion on that point?

[Answer] Valid, in perspective. However, let us not forget that safety is also a technological problem, therefore with economic interests in the background. That is why progress toward unification might be slowed down by efforts to support the industries of certain countries, particularly those at an advanced technicnuclear level.

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[Question] Economy, costs; is nuclear energy still "economical" in comparison with other energy sources? Or does it cease to be economical if we take into consideration either the expense of dismantling the power plants after 20 to 25 years (which many experts consider equal to the initial construction expense) or that of eliminating radioactive waste (not quantifiable because the problem is still unresolved)?

[Answer] We normally include 10 percent in the cost estimate of a nuclear plant for its future dismantling, and various experts (myself included) consider this sufficient. Then too, in the cost of a kilowatt-hour we include a secondary factor of 1.5 percent, and this is considered adequate for elimination of the waste. A problem which is not "unresolved": if we bury the waste at the same depth, as much as 7,000 or 10,000 meters, as that at which we extract oil in the ocean (so there are no technological obstacles), the radioactive waste will not be able to affect the environment for the next 100,000 to 200,000 years. If we now prefer solutions of an engineering nature, so to speak, such as depositing the waste for 50 years in abandoned mines from which it can then be recovered, it is for reasons of cost; and because technology is progressing and will give us other solutions in the future.

[Question] Money: the CNEN has had 2,500 billion lire for the last 5 years. Does that suit you?

[Answer] That figure represents the minimum necessary, to be reviewed upward, if the energy crisis should become worse. But we have taken into consideration the fact that our country has a large deficit in government spending, and we can, therefore, not invest sums such as those invested by nations which are financially stronger.

[Question] And only 400 billion in 5 years for CNEN's activity on behalf of all other energy sources. Is not that a small amount?

[Answer] It does not appear to me to be so. It has gone from 5 billion in 1979 to 140 billion in 1984, an increase of 28 times; meanwhile, allocations for nuclear energy remain constant (that is, they are reduced, considering inflation). We must also remember that only the CNEN is concerned with nuclear energy, whereas for alternative energy sources there are also funds from the National Research Council.

[Question] As a matter of fact, you are accused of wanting to extend the CNEN's control to all other sources of energy, to broaden that control.

[Answer] This is a phenomenon which also occurs in other countries. Why? It is because the nuclear organizations have already had the dialog and administrative contacts with industry that alternative energy sources will need. Better then to expand the operations of the nuclear body than to duplicate it for the alternative energy sources by creating a new organization of that type.

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[Question] However, at the last CIP [Interministerial Price Committee] meeting, it is said that Minister De Michelis attacked the CNEN against Bisaglia and La Malfa, who defended it.

[Answer] I would not speak of a battle; De Michelis gave a critical but constructive report on the CNEN's programs, especially on the subject of safety and alternative energy sources.

[Question] Does the presence of socialist ministers in the government create problems for the CNEN?

[Answer] On the contrary; since the PSI [Italian Socialist Party] has, let us say, an articulate position on the problem of energy and on the nuclear problem, this conflicting position favors the country's determination of an energy policy; and this, once decided and having a majority support, should be capable of realization. I prefer this way to the other of a minority government which, even though highly in favor of nuclear energy, would be constrained in parliament to deal continuously with the opposition.

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ITALY

OBSTACLES IN CONSTRUCTION OF MONTALTO DI CASTRO NUCLEAR PLANT

Milan CORRIERE DELLA SERA in Italian 29 Apr 80 p 9

[Article by Gianfranco Ballardin: "Future of Montalto di Castro Nuclear Power Plant Still Uncertain"]

[Text] Montalto di Castro--"Halt there; turn back," says the guard sworn in by ENEL [National Electric Power Agency] with a pistol in its holster. We are in the construction yard where ENEL's 2,000 megawatt nuclear power plant (2 and 1/2 times more powerful than that of Caorso) was scheduled to be built and is now being blocked by order of the republican mayor, Alfredo Pallotti, and confirmed by a very recent judgment handed down by the regional administrative court of Lazio. To celebrate the event last Sunday, the citizens of Montalto organized a procession in honor of the "Madonna of victory." At the same time, nonreligious persons celebrated the victory in the wine-cellars of the area's most celebrated farms.

For years Montalto citizens have been doing everything possible to divert ENEL's nuclear power plant elsewhere; this area had been designated by Decree No 393 in 1975. The work, begun about one year ago, was to be completed within six to seven years. ENEL has already taken over the land, paying 25 to 30 million lire per hectare, has extended Aurelia to the site selected for the power plant and has completed a substantial part of the excavation. An enormous hole has been dug on the land to house the nuclear reactor. But now, in accordance with the mayor's orders, the work is stopped. A committee of geologists, engaged by the commune, has submitted a report which claims that ENEL's power plant has been located near an active volcano. In addition, an extremely dangerous active fault extending over a distance of about 20 kilometers is said to exist in the plant's subsoil; in case of an earthquake, there would be a catastrophe.

A few days ago, the TAR [Regional Administrative Board] said the mayor was right and backed the work stoppage. "In the next elections," the mayor asserts, "the nuclear question will be the piece de resistance of all parties. The nuclear power plant will be built only if the CNEN [National Nuclear Energy Commission] and ENEL are able to prove to us that this site is the

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"most suitable and that there is no danger." With the elections in mind, a municipal slate has been drawn up with a single objective: to combat the construction of the power plant. However, it is rather strange to see a republican mayor block a power plant, while in Rome the republican party has always been one of the strongest advocates of nuclear power. "In Rome," the mayor answers, "the republican party may say what it wishes; but only we are familiar with Montalto's situation."

Is it true that ENEL's power plant would be located above an active volcano, as maintained by the geologists engaged by the Montalto commune? CNEN's chief geologist says it is absolutely not true: "There are certainly some active faults in Montalto's subsoil but not to the extent of endangering the people's safety. The land on which the Caorso plant is being built is somewhat more seismic than that of Montalto and, at project headquarters, we took that into consideration strengthening the plant's foundations." Is the report of the geologists hired by the Montalto commune then false? "More than anything else it is a mosaic of half-truths. As one example, it is not true that the plant would be located above an active volcano. Some hundreds of thousands of years ago, there were actually some volcanoes at a few tens of kilometers from Montalto; but now they no longer exist."

The judiciary guerrilla warfare, unleashed by antinuclear factions, has made ENEL's top leaders uncomfortable.

Meanwhile, the group of attorneys and geologists who are collaborating with the antinuclear movement are already thinking of extending the judiciary guerrilla warfare to the Caorso plant, located in Piacenza Province about 80 kilometers from Milan. On the basis of a recent judgment handed down by the supreme court, the ordinary magistrature is allegedly invited to block the power plant, which would constitute "a serious threat to the population as a whole." "To resolve this uncertain situation," engineer Franco Velona, one of ENEL's engineers, comments, "it would perhaps be better to hold a referendum to decide once and for all if Italy should or should not follow the path of nuclear energy."

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