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DIALOG(R)File 9:Business & Industry(R)
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02452853 (THIS IS THE FULLTEXT)

ENVIRONMENT-MEXICO: NO NUCLEAR EMERGENCY IN LAGUNA VERDE
(Of Mexico's total energy production of 35,000 megawatts, 1,300 comes from nuclear sources)

Interpress Service, p N/A

April 27, 1999

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By Pilar Franco

MEXICO CITY, Apr. 27 (IPS) -- Mexican officials have finally confirmed that a mishap occurred at the country's only nuclear plant four months ago, but stressed it was a "simple technical fault."

The National Commission for Nuclear Security and Safeguards (CNSNS) issued a news release at the weekend verifying that an accident occurred Dec. 22 at the Laguna Verde nuclear plant, located in the southeastern state of Veracruz.

The CNSNS statement said the incident was caused by a defect in the braking system of a crane that loaded and unloaded fuel and denied there had been any type of emergency situation or any radioactive risks for workers at the plant or people living nearby.

Some activists were not so sure.

"The history of Laguna Verde has been shrouded in mystery. Any accidents are covered up and we never get a complete damage assessment," said Homero Aridjis, president of the environmental Group of 100.

Contaminated runoff into the lagoon for which the plant is named, workers affected by radioactivity, and other mishaps "are facts that authorities deny, using their cover-ups to avoid responsibility," Aridjis alleged.

The Group of 100 opposed the opening of the nuclear plant in 1990, "not just for the risk of nuclear disaster, but because it has also been an economic disaster due the corruption of its administration."

The organization has continued to warn against "the latent risk of a serious accident" in Laguna Verde, located on the Gulf of Mexico coast. Aridjis claimed "there are no independent authorities that control the functioning of the plant -- the state and federal governments are above following environmental laws."

Activists from Mexican and international environmental watchdogs, such as Greenpeace, have demanded that the government report on the operations of the nuclear plant, and that an independent commission intervene to supervise operations.

The environmentalists point out that Laguna Verde operates without oversight by any regulatory authority and under conditions that do not guarantee the safety of its employees or of the inhabitants living in surrounding areas.

In December, the general manager of Laguna Verde stated that the nuclear plant invests the equivalent of \$100,000 per month in safety measures.

Even so, environmental groups want the CNSNS to periodically publish an inventory of the radioactive substances the facility releases into the atmosphere.

In another forum, the environmental organizations denounced the

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radioactivity containment design of Laguna Verde's reactor, which is of a type the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission considers "defective."

Laguna Verde authorities insist that the radioactive waste is safely kept in special tanks and warehouses at the facility.

The plant began operations with an investment of more than \$4 billion, after delays stretching back to the late 1970s caused by protests from ecological, political and social organizations.

Mexico's total electrical energy production is greater than 35,000 megawatts, with just 1,300 coming from nuclear sources.

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INDUSTRY NAMES: Energy; Utilities

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GEOGRAPHIC NAMES: Latin America (LAMX); Mexico (MEX); North America (NOAX)

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DIALOG(R)File 20:World Reporter

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14471081 (THIS IS THE FULLTEXT)

CFE to Build 32 Plants by 2010 - Mexico

BUSINESS NEWS AMERICAS

January 02, 2001

BNamericas.com) - Mexico's state-owned integrated power company CFE intends to construct 32 plants - 26 thermoelectric, four hydroelectric and two geothermal - over the next nine years, which will contribute 22,248MW to the network, the company stated in its 2000 annual report.

Regarding the **Laguna Verde nuclear** plant, CFE said international commissions were evaluating the security of the plant, which would pass through an audit.

In the 2000 annual report, CFE claimed it had established itself as one of the best companies of its kind worldwide, highlighting the increase in its client base to 18.5 million; ISO 9002 certificates obtained by several regional management divisions; and the Industria Limpia guarantee for its Presidente Juarez thermoelectric plant in Lower California and Guadalupe Victoria in Durango.

Business News Americas (BNamericas.com)

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DIALOG(R)File 20:World Reporter

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13226093 (THIS IS THE FULLTEXT)

Greenpeace: Veracruz Nuclear Plant Unsafe - Mexico

BUSINESS NEWS AMERICAS

October 05, 2000

BNamericas.com) - Mexican state power company CFE's **Laguna Verde nuclear** facility in Veracruz state is unsafe and would be unable to cope in an emergency, environmental group Greenpeace said. The plant is Mexico's only **nuclear** energy facility, and Greenpeace has been demanding the plant's closure on safety grounds since June this year.

Greenpeace Mexico director Alejandro Calvillo claims to have obtained a report by plant engineers referring to numerous safety problems, including the inability to monitor radiation levels in case of an accident. In September, Calvillo told BNamericas.com of cracks in storage areas for spent fuel rods and in the reactor itself, claims backed up by the Union of Concerned Scientists.

Greenpeace has been predicting an accident at **Laguna Verde** since it began operations 10 years ago, but nothing has ever happened, CFE

spokesperson David Lopez told BNamericas.com. "I don't think that Greenpeace will ever come to terms with the pacific use of **nuclear** energy. It has a limited vision of the way things operate in the world. **Nuclear** power is the chief source of electricity in a number of countries," he continued.

"The plant is completely safe. It is constantly checked and monitored. The CFE has asked for an independent environmental and safety audit of **Laguna Verde** by (Mexican environmental enforcement agency) Profepa," he continued.

In regard to the reported cracks, Lopez said "That's false, there are no cracks. That report was written by ex-employees of **Laguna Verde**, some of whom were sacked. As you know, sacked former employees sometimes want to discredit where they worked."

Laguna Verde has two units producing a total of 1,368MW, which helps supply the states of Veracruz, Puebla, Tlaxcala and the Federal District. This is 5-6% of the total amount of electric energy produced in Mexico, Lopez concluded.

Business News Americas (BNamericas.com)

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10002543 (THIS IS THE FULLTEXT)

CFE Responds to Greenpeace Laguna Verde Declaration - Mexico
BUSINESS NEWS AMERICAS
March 10, 2000

March 10, 2000

Mexican state power company CFE's **Laguna Verde nuclear** facility in Veracruz state operates satisfactorily and under established international security standards, CFE's communications' department told BNamericas.com, adding that national and international entities have praised the plant since it began operations nine years ago.

Greenpeace claimed Wednesday (March 8) the **nuclear** facility was a time bomb, citing a leaked World Association of **Nuclear** Operators (WANO) report that said **Laguna Verde** supervisors do not adequately carry out **nuclear** emergency simulations, problem equipment is not separated, old equipment causes automatic shutdowns and there is not sufficient radiological control.

Last November, WANO, along with 18 **nuclear** plant operators from various countries, evaluated the facility at CFE's request. WANO classified the plant's performance as acceptable, according to the CFE. The International Atomic Energy Organization has also classified the plant's operation as highly satisfactory.

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