The Nuclear Penetration of the Monroe Doctrine

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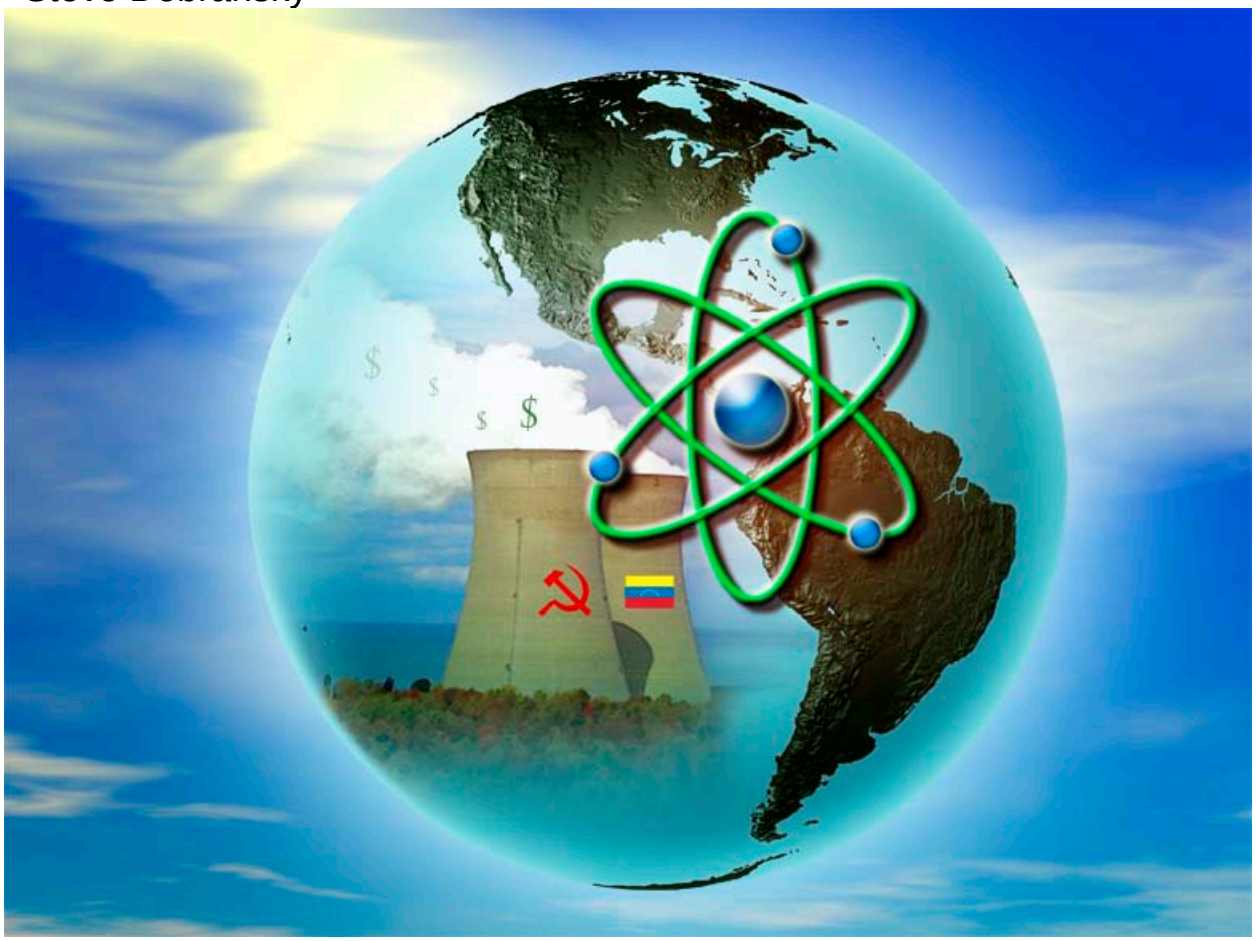

Introduction

Since 1823 the United States has made it clear that there should be no new major expansions of power in the Western Hemisphere by any country outside the region. At first directed at the Western European colonialists and then at the Soviet Union and communism, the Monroe Doctrine has been implemented relatively successfully for nearly 200 years. Although not clearly defined by American policymakers (at least not publicly), the Monroe Doctrine has allowed

for trade and arms shipments from outside the hemisphere but, as shown in the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, it does not allow for outsiders to establish a strategic military presence in the region or alter fundamentally the balance of power relations between the U.S. and other hemispheric nations. Now, with the recent declaration that Russia will develop its first nuclear reactor in Venezuela (and, possibly, many more), the Monroe Doctrine could be in the process of being seriously challenged in a new and very ingenious way. The U.S. has so far responded with indifference and uncertainty. Given the relative ease to shift enriched uranium from nuclear reactors to nuclear weapons, it is a major case of strategic analysis and perceptions, both in the short and long terms. If wrong, the U.S. could be threatened with one or more nuclear-armed countries right in its own "backyard," as many American policymakers have referred to Latin America.

The Russians and Venezuelans are moving full speed ahead on developing a nuclear power plant. They originally signed in November 2008 their intent to discuss the construction of a nuclear reactor. Their first working group session on the matter took place in the following months in 2009. Everything culminated recently on October 15, 2010 when Russian and Venezuelan officials signed the agreement to begin officially constructing Russia's first nuclear reactor in Latin America.[1] The groundwork is now laid and, based upon previous Russian nuclear deals (mainly, Bushehr in Iran), it will take approximately one decade or so to build the nuclear reactor. Once done, this will be the Western Hemisphere's first completely built and controlled nuclear

reactor that originates from a country not under U.S. tutelage. Moreover, considering Russia's past nuclear deals, it will only be a short while longer that Russia signs agreements to build even more nuclear reactors in Venezuela and, possibly, the surrounding area.

Russia has shown in recent experience that one nuclear power plant constructed is usually not enough. Led by Rosatom and Atomstroyexport, Russia's state-controlled civilian nuclear power corporations, billions of dollars in potential nuclear power plant opportunities await throughout Latin America.[2] Once the deal enters the construction phase, there may be no stopping the Russians in using it as the model to build many more nuclear power plants in Venezuela and the rest of Latin America. With more nuclear deals will likely come an increasing dependence on Russia for future-enriched uranium, expertise, and maintenance, which are all usually incorporated into a nuclear energy contract. This may seriously challenge and undermine America's power and influence in the region. Furthermore, as shown in the last several years between Russia and Venezuela, with a nuclear energy deal often comes many more economic and military agreements worth billions of dollars between the partners. Thus, a nuclear energy agreement can go well beyond the contract itself or, at the very least, significantly improve a nuclear supplying country's chances of winning other valuable agreements with the customer in competitive economic situations. This also could weaken the U.S. and its control over the region.[3]

In the end, once the Russo-Venezuelan precedent is set, the U.S. and others will have to accept is as a legitimate framework for other extra-hemispheric powers to work within. This may lead to a flood of nuclear reactor deals between Russia and the rest of Latin America. It may lead other countries, especially China, into the fray as well. Considering the vast opportunities for nuclear power plant development and the finite amount of uranium, it is well understood that nuclear energy will become more of a zero-sum game in the coming decades, especially in terms of new plant development. And, this will make it an extremely valuable endeavor in the future. Overall, the U.S. must do a much better job in defining and modernizing the Monroe Doctrine for the 21st century. Then, the U.S. must compete more aggressively and effectively with other countries seeking to penetrate the region through nuclear energy deals and other major agreements. The Russo-Venezuelan nuclear energy deal is likely just the first of many more challenges to come to the U.S.'s dominance and leadership in the region.

Nuclear Power and Latin America

The three Latin American countries with extensive uranium reserves are Brazil, Argentina, and—yes—Venezuela. It, therefore, is not surprising that four of the current six existing nuclear power plants in Latin American happen to be in Brazil and Argentina, with two plants in each country. The other two nuclear power plants are in Mexico. The six nuclear reactors were completed by the U.S., Canada, and Siemens (Germany), and the U.S. and others watch very carefully over these nuclear plants.[4] The U.S., moreover, has greatly

minimized their expansion and impact on Latin America, whether for reasons of economic control and/or out of concerns that the enriched-uranium for the nuclear power plants could be transferred over to nuclear weapons production. It is not entirely clear publicly what the U.S.'s policy intentions are except that the U.S. has been strongly opposed to any Latin American country obtaining nuclear weapons. The U.S. repeatedly declares its support for Latin American economic development and open access to energy supplies, but the U.S. has done relatively little in promoting nuclear energy development in Latin America for the past half century. These actions and results may speak volumes for themselves and help explain the U.S.'s policy intentions.

In the cases of Brazil and Argentina, their nuclear programs originated from within and only later did the U.S. move in and exert significant control over the programs. This, of course, was the result of new democratic governments coming to power in these two countries in the 1980s and, subsequently, revealing that their authoritarian governments and militaries had intentions of developing not only nuclear reactors but also, possibly, nuclear weapons. These revelations pushed the U.S. and others to move quickly in supplying the two Latin American countries with nuclear power that was internationally supervised. Thereafter, the desire for nuclear power was nipped in the bud. Economic incentives and pressures also seemed to assist in curbing the nuclear enthusiasm in Latin America.[5]

As for Mexico, the U.S. responded to its southern neighbor's growing energy needs and the political pressures that were inherent in a government heavily

dependent on oil revenues. The U.S. was forced to recognize that Mexico's oil reserves were rapidly depleting and more domestic consumption meant less exports to the U.S. and hard currency for the Mexican government. The Mexican government played its cards and threatened to go it alone unless the U.S. facilitated a quick export of nuclear power plants and expertise. Mexico got its two nuclear power plants, but its energy capacity still had an extremely difficult time keeping up with its rapid economic and population growth. Moreover, NAFTA appeared to play a significant role in convincing the U.S. to co-opt any homegrown Mexican nuclear program and facilitate a better energy grid for U.S. corporations and investors in Mexico. Just recently, Mexico has declared its intention to expand the two existing nuclear power plants and, possibly, build two more nuclear facilities. The U.S. government has so far not responded publicly to the matter.[6]

In all three Latin American countries, ultimatums were essentially given to the U.S. and international community to provide modern and safe nuclear energy programs or have the countries go it alone. The U.S. chose to move in and establish international supervision. Canada and Siemens benefited but only after the U.S. gave the green light. Nothing further has developed from these deals. If perhaps U.S. influence does not exist over the nuclear energy field in Latin America, i.e. the U.S. does not regulate nuclear energy in its self-described sphere of influence, then it is very hard to explain why so many more billions of dollars in nuclear energy deals have not been established by U.S. and international companies and, furthermore, Latin American countries have

not built many more nuclear facilities to meets their extensive and growing energy needs. There apparently is an understanding and, likely, very powerful financial pressures to ensure the minimal number of nuclear power plants. The U.S. needs to finally make clear what its policy intentions are towards Latin America's acquisition of more nuclear energy reactors. The U.S. policy may have to be updated, especially given recent Russian activities. Ironically, the Russians seem to be implementing the U.S.'s Atoms for Peace program, which in 1953 President Eisenhower called for promoting peaceful uses of nuclear energy throughout the world. The U.S., however, has avoided or minimized the policy for the past half century throughout much of the developing world, especially Latin America. Thus, some Latin American countries went it alone briefly and Russia is now ready to exploit the situation and fulfill the U.S.'s promise.[7]

In all, the U.S. government has taken the lead in minimizing and controlling the development of nuclear energy in Latin America. It can easily change its policy and promote a major expansion of nuclear reactors in Latin America. Considering that the six existing nuclear reactors produce just a few percent of their countries' energy needs, it is clear that many more nuclear reactors can be built but have not. This has left an extensive number of new opportunities for Russia and other non-U.S. tutelage countries in potentially reaping the benefits of many future nuclear export deals. The Russians have just started laying the foundations for a major nuclear export program, from regional to global. It is only a matter of time that the Russians may flood the Latin

American nuclear market and sweep the field. It is unclear whether the U.S. will allow this to happen or continue to restrain its allies from losing out on all future nuclear energy deals. And, it is even more questionable as to how long U.S. companies will continue to be prevented from billions of dollars worth of new nuclear energy deals, especially with a sluggish economy and stagnant export sales. Furthermore, the more nuclear power plants in Latin America, the more likely it could be for one or more regional countries to develop nuclear weapons.[8] Considering that the U.S. and other major powers have never intervened and gone to war with another country with nuclear weapons, a nuclear-armed Latin American country could guarantee once and for all no more U.S. military intervention (aka the Roosevelt Corollary) and, moreover, billions of dollars in U.S. and international aid. This would fundamentally alter the balance of power in the Western Hemisphere greatly at the expense of the U.S. and, from at least one scenario, could threaten the very existence of the U.S. The Monroe Doctrine would certainly be challenged significantly in principle due to external powers.

Nuclear Checkmate: The International Component of Russia's Nuclear Energy Policy

Russia is implementing a strategy of moving full speed ahead with exporting nuclear reactors to the entire world. These efforts can greatly increase its capabilities and personnel and, thereafter, be directed vigorously at Latin America. Russia, at first, focused on regional deals with Eastern Europe, China, India, Iran, and other close-by neighbors, and now it is focusing on

worldwide contracts. Not concerned with other countries' domestic politics or regional issues, Russia is intent on making billions of dollars with whoever is willing to sign a nuclear deal with it. So far, Iran has been in the front of the line, with the recent completion of the Bushehr nuclear power plant. More Russian reactors are expected to be built in Iran. Russia also has signed a deal recently with India to build at least six nuclear reactors. Many more there and elsewhere are likely to follow. The only thing holding back the Russians from running the nuclear power plant table is the Russians themselves and their still-growing export capacity. More deals, however, mean more experience, customers, and reduced costs/increased profits overall.[9] They also tend to lead to many more trade agreements in other areas, both military and non-military items, as Russia's recent multi-million dollar tank deal with Venezuela demonstrates.[10] Russia will soon become (if it has not already) the go-to place for affordable nuclear power plants for developing countries, with no political strings attached. And, it will reap the benefits in that area and, likely, many more areas.

Russia is becoming the world's primary energy engine, not only for nuclear energy but also for oil and natural gas, as the Europeans know so well. Russia is going to the core of countries' interests. With the depletion of worldwide natural resources, Russia and others understand that energy security is far more important than the often fluctuating and outgoing paper currency that the U.S. and others tend to offer. It is a simple national calculation: No energy, especially reasonably priced energy, then no sustained development and

modernization. It is rather an age-old understanding of what real power and wealth are. The Russians have only recently started to play it its energy card to the maximum.[11]

The U.S. government has not responded aggressively to the recent Russian nuclear export policy or made any public response to its initial penetration of Latin America. Bureaucratic institutionalism and path dependency may be hindering U.S. behavior, but it has not been the case with Russia. Technically, it is not illegal to export nuclear energy to countries in the world, though there are risks and regional implications to take into account. It does help that countries are part of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.[12] Yet, it is surprising that the U.S. has done relatively little since Eisenhower's 1953 speech to greatly expand nuclear energy to the developing countries, especially in Latin America. The apparent U.S. indifference or deliberate imperial-like policy has minimized the U.S. nuclear energy export program to the world. Russia is now stepping into the void and pursuing with vigor what Eisenhower only spoke of.

The World's Energy Conundrum and Russia's Ascendance

Most developing countries including those in Latin America are limited in energy resources and will have to import increasingly large amounts of energy in the coming decades. Whether it is through mass energy depletion or the export of highly needed hard currency, it appears that most developing countries will not be able to sustain their fossil fuel use for much longer without completely undermining the whole purpose of development. This leads

us to conclude that nuclear power plants and other alternative energy resources are necessary for long-term economic development and stability in much of the developing world, particularly in Latin America.[13]

Considering that most alternative energy programs (solar, wind, etc.) have minimal and intermittent effects (prone to occasional and seasonal blackouts), it appears that nuclear energy is the future gold standard of energy programs. In some Latin American countries and others, hydroelectric power may be of some use, but it can be very costly, limited to a particular area, require many trained personnel, and can fundamentally alter the regional ecosystem. Thus, it appears that nuclear energy plants will have to be built in large numbers in the coming decades in order to maintain and facilitate the ongoing modernization of most developing countries.[14] This is where the Russians could gain substantially throughout the world and especially in the U.S.'s own self-described "backyard."

The Russians are throwing down the gauntlet and proclaiming that they will be the world's top energy supplier for the rest of this century. The Russian nuclear energy export program is expanding rapidly. Russia's recent deal with South Africa for uranium demonstrates that whether through nuclear power plants or through nuclear materials, Russia will be heavily relied upon by many countries.[15] Russia is making all the moves to expand its nuclear export program and it is more than willing to work with governments anywhere, regardless of political sensitivities. Venezuela and Iran are just two examples. The Russian nuclear export program contrasts with the highly restrained U.S.

nuclear energy program. The U.S. program has for decades been very selective in its customers and numbers. U.S. companies would be more than interested in discussing further the potential billion dollar nuclear energy deals with Latin American countries. But, they are clearly blocked by the U.S. government in finalizing these deals. So far, it appears that U.S. politics has trumped good business. The Russians have shown less restraint and are going full steam ahead with no compunctions whatsoever.[16]

The U.S.'s Nuclear Standstill

The U.S. Departments of State, Energy, and Commerce have not been as aggressive in the international nuclear reactor business as many would expect them to be, especially with Russia's nuclear energy initiatives in the last 10-15 years with Venezuela and other countries throughout the world.[17] If this continues, then Russia will likely sweep most of the remaining customers, including those in Latin America. The U.S.'s allies have appeared to mirror the U.S. government's policies and have tended to back off or close down initial programs that the U.S. government develops issues with. Notably, Iran's Bushehr nuclear power plant was supported by Europeans until running into American diplomatic pressure; subsequently, Russia took over the reins and has now completed the nuclear power plant.[18] The lesson is that if the U.S. government remains complacent and highly constrained politically, then someone else like the Russians will take over the lead in the nuclear energy field. If current trends proceed, then it is hard to imagine whether the U.S.'s friends and allies will be as restrained and continue to lose billions of dollars in business opportunities, especially in this world

economic downturn. It is certain that as long as the current U.S. nuclear energy policy remains in place, particularly in Latin America, Russia will take full advantage of it.

Given the growing need for more energy in developing countries and especially in Latin America, it would seem that USAID and the MCC (Millennium Challenge Corporation) would be two of the biggest proponents of exporting U.S. nuclear energy plants as a major foreign aid tool. So far, nothing substantial has emerged from these leaders in U.S. foreign aid. They appear to be toeing the policy line, but it seems that they would at least be putting the pressure on to alter the current limits on U.S. nuclear energy exports and promote greater economic development and modernization. There is no indication up to now that they have tried to change the current nuclear export policy. Furthermore, U.S. nuclear energy companies should be pressing for new foreign business opportunities but so far they have been relatively silent. The U.S. Congress has stood by, as well, as billions of dollars of state and local business opportunities have been lost in possibly supplying the personnel and materials for a greater nuclear energy export program.[19]

Heading Towards 2050: Uranium Reserves and the Nuclear Path

A number of energy experts have concluded that at the current production rate of nuclear power plants, there will not be enough uranium reserves far beyond the next half century. This means that once the uranium deals from here on out are locked in for the next several decades, no more nuclear power plants will be able to be built unless more uranium is discovered. There are, as stated before, large deposits of uranium in Brazil, Argentina, and Venezuela—hence their more ready ability to go down the nuclear energy path. There may be more uranium deposits, but it is most likely that the

rate of nuclear plant production will eventually outpace the supply. Thus, there is a zero-sum game in terms of building nuclear power plants, even though it is not yet seen on the horizon.[20]

Up to now, the limited number of nuclear power plants especially in the Western world has kept the resource reserves issue off the table. However, with the massive energy consumption of newly industrializing and modernizing countries like China, India, Brazil, and others, the natural resources question is now arising. It is completely unrealistic to think that the growing numbers of industrialized countries and their future mass consumption is sustainable for more than the next several decades without serious consequences. Modernized Western countries can turn to some alternative energies and try to delay the inevitable, but whatever gains are made with reducing energy consumption are quickly lost in the developing world. In other words, massive depletion of natural resources is inevitable this century, regardless of energy savings in some parts of the world.[21]

Nuclear energy can be a very important alternative energy source, especially in the long term, but only if the necessary uranium is acquired. Russia may actually be taking this into account with its Venezuelan nuclear power plant deal. This could be another shrewd Russian move in terms of building nuclear power plants in places that may have large deposits of uranium. Russia can build several power plants in Venezuela and other parts of Latin America and then get access to substantial amounts of uranium that can sustain much greater numbers of nuclear power plant exports.

Once the uranium supplies are locked up by countries and nuclear power plants, then those left out in the cold will have to watch the world's other natural resources

quickly disappear. Shortages will greatly increase prices, ruining economies and standards of living, particularly in Latin America. Then, resource extinction. Many key minerals and commodities will not make it beyond this century at expected rates of usage.[22] Latin American countries are extremely vulnerable to this potential tectonic energy shift. This means that there could be major alterations in the international system and Western hemisphere and those who preempt and hoard resources now or in the near future will have the best chance at trying to delay the inevitable and stay at the top.

Russia's Pursuit for Nuclear "Immortality"

The nuclear energy equation has recently taken on a new potential variable which may fundamentally alter the uranium reserves dilemma. The Russians, along with the Chinese, Indians, and others, are right now racing to the moon for the best nuclear energy resource called Helium-3. Helium-3 is the potential future replacement for the depleting uranium supplies. Helium-3 is the best material for creating fusion energy. It is very cheap, produces no pollution or nuclear waste, and is massively abundant on the moon. It is estimated that there is 1 to 5 million tons of Helium-3 on the moon, equivalent to meeting the entire world's current energy needs for the next 10,000 to 50,000 years. Acquisition of Helium-3 and the development of fusion nuclear reactors will greatly transform the energy equation and the international balance of power for the rest of this century and beyond.[23]

If the Russians acquire and develop Helium-3, then they will be able to massively expand and sustain their nuclear energy export program by just shifting in the decades ahead from nuclear fission to fusion energy. Considering that the current U.S. administration has downgraded its mission to the moon, it means that Russia (and, possibly, China and others) will be able to fully

claim and develop the most potentially abundant energy source for the rest of this century and beyond. If successful, then Russia's ability to penetrate the Monroe Doctrine could be absolute. Once the uranium reserves are locked in or depleted, Russia can switch from building fission to fusion nuclear reactors. If this happens, then Russia's nuclear power plant export program will go into hyperdrive, especially just in time when most of the world will be facing mass energy shortages and extremely high energy prices. This could greatly benefit the Latin American countries and others who are far behind in developing sufficient numbers of nuclear reactors, let alone locking in enough uranium reserves.

Sooner or later but sometime in a century or so, most of the world's energy resources will be used up. Whichever country(ies) gets control of the Helium-3 on the moon and develops the necessary fusion reactor program here on earth will likely shoot to the top and become the dominant world power for the rest of this century and beyond. Latin American countries like Brazil and Argentina may have an opportunity here if they develop a space program and/or fusion reactor program. They may work alone or with the Russian and others on this issue. Essentially, whoever controls the world's energy supplies controls the world. Right now, Russia controls much of the world's natural oil and gas reserves, and it is becoming a major exporter of nuclear reactors. Nuclear power will supplant fossil fuels as the primary alternative sooner or later in many countries. Then, fusion nuclear reactors may replace fission ones. In all three areas, Russia is moving full speed ahead of everyone else. Can and will the U.S. change course and respond? What will the Latin American countries do? These are key questions that will determine much in the coming decades.

Conclusion

Overall, Russia is becoming the world's dominant energy supplier through its nuclear export program. Already an established oil and natural gas power, Russia's recent entry into Latin America is a harbinger that the U.S. should seriously pay attention to. The Russo-Venezuelan nuclear energy deal is likely just the first of many in Latin America. The U.S.'s complacency in Latin America since Atoms for Peace may now be in the process of being surpassed by Russian vigor and ingenuity in the nuclear energy field. Once Russia establishes a nuclear foothold in Latin America, there will be significant pressure on other regional countries to turn towards and expand nuclear energy programs—and, the Russians will be more than happy to promote themselves and their nuclear works. Russia offers a credible source for relatively cheap nuclear power plants with all the concomitant resources, expertise, and maintenance that will sustain and expand its relationships with countries for decades to come.

In addition, once the Monroe Doctrine starts to be penetrated in the nuclear energy field by the Russians, it will most likely lead to many other nuclear power plant manufacturers, especially the Chinese, to burst in through the cracks. The Europeans and others may delay but they will not be far behind for long, and they may even try to jump ahead of the Russians early on regardless of U.S. pressures. Tremendous amounts of economic gains and diplomatic influences are there to be reaped. And, there is even the environmental cause of major pollution reductions, which may motivate the Europeans even more. All of this is extremely tempting for many, especially

those in hard economic times. Furthermore, the Latin American countries themselves may try to develop their own nuclear energy programs thereafter with external assistance.

The U.S. has a number of policy options to deal with the Russian nuclear energy challenge. The U.S. can, from one end, continue to remain silent and on the sidelines or, to the other end, it can react vigorously in a number of ways, or it can do something in between. The U.S., from one side of the spectrum, can stand by and allow the Russians and, possibly, others to penetrate the region with nuclear reactors. If so, the U.S. can hope that this will only help economically the U.S.'s neighbors and not hurt significantly the U.S.'s influence and power in the region. The U.S. can perceive the foreign nuclear energy programs as nothing more valuable and significant than the equivalent of simple trade goods or even military weapons shipments at best from outside the region. The U.S. also can hope that the nuclear energy will not at anytime be extended to nuclear weapons, though in the cases of India and Pakistan no one knew until they had already developed them. So, it would be a great leap of faith on the U.S.'s part that future Russian nuclear reactors and others would not lead to a real penetration of the Monroe Doctrine and alter fundamentally the balance of power in the Western Hemisphere.

On the other hand, given the more than 150 years of the Monroe Doctrine right on up through the Reagan Doctrine in the 1980s, it may be very hard for many Americans, especially in the security establishment, to accept this new perception and interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine and, thereby, downplay

the potential ramifications for U.S. power, influence, and domination in the Western Hemisphere. It may be even harder for American businesses and other components of the U.S. government (State, Commerce, etc.) to withstand the temptations and need for billions of dollars in more trade opportunities abroad. Moreover, there could still exist a number of hardcore security people inside and outside of the government who may advocate the absolute retention of the traditional Monroe Doctrine. If so, this could involve a nuclear quarantine of Latin America, whereas there will be no more additional nuclear power plants or only those from the U.S. and/or close friends and allies. This may require the use of military forces to ensure that there is no more nuclear expansion in Latin America or that a non-hemispheric power not under U.S. tutelage does not transfer any more nuclear plants or technology to the region.

On the flip side of things, the Monroe Doctrine may be combined with the U.S.'s global leadership role to argue that the U.S. should prevent any uranium exports from Latin America to countries outside the hemisphere, especially to terrorist-supporting countries like Iran and North Korea. Given Hugo Chavez's continued declarations of close relations and trade with Iran, a nuclear quarantine may need to work both ways. Once again, different forms of force and pressures may have to be used to ensure an absolute or highly controlled nuclear quarantine in order to prevent hemispheric uranium from being exported to rogue states and nuclear knowledge and technology from being imported.

Another policy option for the U.S. would be to continue minimizing and pressuring countries to limit or avoid nuclear exports to Latin America. This may require a lot more costs and incentives in the future to control the nuclear sphere of influence in the region, as well as to hold back potential domestic suppliers. The U.S. also could stress to other nuclear countries that uranium reserves may be depleted sometime this century at current production rates and this may encourage other countries, especially the Europeans, to put their own nuclear energy expansions ahead of Latin America's. But, with the potential development of Helium-3 and fusion energy, this argument may not last for long.

Finally, the U.S. can just go all-out and compete with the Russians and others in the nuclear energy field throughout Latin America and the rest of the world. The U.S. can use all of its powers, influences, and position to run the nuclear energy gauntlet in Latin America. If this option is pursued, the U.S. could make billions of dollars. And, it may transform the Latin American countries into much more compliant and friendly states, by engendering a tremendous amount of influence and goodwill throughout the region; though, on the other hand, it may make them a lot more independent of the U.S. and outside energy sources and supply lines. In the long term, it may even help prevent a major economic collapse of Latin American countries due to future major shortages and extreme costs of energy resources, primarily oil. This could save the U.S. much money, influence, and hardship by not having the negative impact of collapsing and unstable Latin American countries, as well as

allowing the U.S. to avoid the pressures to intervene to protect American interests and citizens.

In the end, if the U.S. does not fundamentally reassess its current nuclear energy policies particularly towards Latin America, then Russia may very well supplant the U.S. as the most influential power in Latin America and throughout the world. The Monroe Doctrine, subsequently, will go from penetrated to destroyed. Energy security will be the supreme power and goal in the world in the coming decades. The Russians are going full speed ahead in promoting energy as a foreign policy instrument that has the potential to reap billions of dollars and tremendous diplomatic influence. Will the U.S. alter course and react accordingly, especially in its own "backyard"? The U.S. needs to fully consider all the consequences of maintaining the status quo. Nuclear exports hold the promise of greater political, economic, and security influence. On the other hand, lost nuclear energy opportunities will mean significant reductions in power, money, and position. It is ultimately up to the U.S. to determine whether to meet the Russian challenge in the nuclear energy arena or to throw up the flag and go out with a whimper. The U.S. can compete full-scale with the Russians and others in the nuclear energy field, stand by on the sidelines and try to minimize the nuclear expansion in Latin America, or go all-out to quarantine the region in some form or another. The U.S. must soon determine its policy stance and clearly define and update the Monroe Doctrine. But, if complete inaction is the final choice, then there is no need to worry. The Russians will be sure to turn off the lights when the U.S. is

gone—and, turn on its nuclear energy plants in Latin America. Thus will go the nuclear chess board and Russia's ascendance. And, thus, will go the Monroe Doctrine.

Notes

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19. United States Agency for International Development, www.usaid.gov. See also Millennium Challenge Corporation, www.mcc.gov., J. Brian Atwood, M. Peter McPherson, and Andrew Natsios, "Arrested Development: Making Foreign Aid a More Effective Tool," *Foreign Affairs* 87, no. 6 (November/December 2008): 123-132, Carol Lancaster, *Foreign Aid: Diplomacy, Development, Domestic Politics* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), Carol Lancaster and Ann Van Dusen, *Organizing U.S. Foreign Aid: Confronting the Challenges of the Twenty-First Century* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2005), and David Halloran Lumsdaine, *Moral Vision in International Politics: The Foreign Aid Regime, 1949-1989* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

20. Klare, *Rising Powers, Shrinking Planet*, Campbell and Price, *The Global Politics of Energy*, and Marquina, *Energy Security*.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.

23. See the Fusion Technology Institute's website at http://fti.neep.wisc.edu. Dr. Gerald Kulcinski is the Director of the FTI at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Author interviewed Dr. Kulcinski on April 2, 2009.

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