

Is an Ayatollah in Mexico's future?

Although the United States would like to import large quantities of oil from Mexico, the Mexicans fear that rapid oil development in their nation could set the scene for social unrest similar to Iran's.

So says a University of Michigan energy specialist who recently returned from a trip through Mexico sponsored by the U.S. State Department and the U.S. International Communications Agency.

Greg Daneke, assistant professor at the U-M School of Natural Resources, acknowledges that a sudden increase in Mexican oil production could scar Mexico's "fragile" economic and social fabric.

"The Mexican population faces relatively high unemployment and considerable 'underemployment,' including many seasonal agricultural workers. It would seem a likely breeding ground for social unrest if oil revenues did not filter down in gains in employment and wages nationally," according to Daneke.

Largely because of these considerations, the Mexican government today is

pursuing a national industrial development plan which calls for a gradual increase in oil production, in phase with a steady economic growth pattern, says Daneke.

THE PLAN calls for between one and two million barrels of oil per day for export, and a possible increase to about 2.5 million barrels in the 1980s, but this amounts to less than 10 percent of U.S. oil needs, says Daneke. "Some interests in the United States would like to see the total increase to four or five million barrels a day, but this prospect is highly unlikely," according to the professor.

Daneke, a specialist in resource and energy policy and public administration, was accompanied by representatives of the U.S. Department of Energy and U.S. private industry on a 10-day tour of Mexico in November, including meetings with Mexican energy specialists, university researchers and business executives.

Urging development of a diversity of energy technologies in Mexico in addition to oil production, the U.S. experts

cited the recent advances in the United States in a number of alternative energy fields, including solar energy, wind, and electrical energy created by ocean thermal variations, according to Daneke.

He maintains that, by concentrating exclusively on oil development — including Mexican government subsidization of industry through domestic sale of oil at artificially low prices — Mexico is likely to follow in the footsteps of the United States which forged a path of environmental degradation and wasteful use of resources.

Already, in Mexico's largest industrial cities — Monterrey, Guadalajara, and Mexico City — there are widespread congestion and pollution problems, he says.

"THIS NEW attempt to forge ahead industrially and create a consumer economy modeled after that of the United States will get a very poor rate of return — at least initially. Probably a 15 percent increase of energy use in Mexico will be necessary to produce a one percent increase in the Gross National Product (GNP)."

"This is an extremely high ratio of energy consumption, even by U.S. standards when our energy use was highly wasteful. Today, employing conservation practices, the United States is capable of producing a four percent increase in GNP worth only a two percent increase in energy use."

"In view of limited natural resources

available globally, it doesn't make sense for Mexico to use its oil so wastefully, while other countries could use it more productively," says Daneke.

In Mexico, he says, greater emphasis on alternative energy development would have the dual advantage of conserving oil resources and creating a "dispersed energy technology" in urban as well as rural areas, which would create employment opportunities nationwide.

"Because of its mild and sunny climate, Mexico has tremendous solar potential," says Daneke. "There is also great potential for use of ocean thermal technology, whereby thermal gradients of the ocean are used to generate electricity. This same technology can be applied for desalinization of sea water, thereby helping relieve a major problem in Mexico — the shortage of water for agriculture and industry. "And development of wind systems in agriculture holds promise in Mexico, particularly in remote areas where it would be expensive to install traditional electrical power lines," says the U-M specialist.

Daneke notes that, although the United States now has programs to aid Mexico in alternative energy research, the United States has a difficult task ahead convincing Mexico that we are not merely interested in exploiting their oil. Our "good relations" with Mexico may be more tenuous than most Americans — including President Carter — perceive.

Parks unit picks photo, slide winners

Ten winners from Oakland County and the metropolitan Detroit area were chosen from the more than 250 entries in the first Oakland County Parks fall photo contest.

Prizes of \$100, \$50 and \$25 went to the top three finishers in three categories — color prints, black and white prints, and color slides.

Winning photos will be on display through Jan. 15 in the main lobby of the Oakland County courthouse, 1200 N. Telegraph, in the Oakland County Service Center between Pontiac Lake Rd. and Dixie Hwy.

The winners: Color prints: Sandra Sullivan, Dearborn, first; Marlene Glowicki, Ortonville, second; and Julie Hallock, Ortonville, third.

Black and white prints: Ed Hancock, Detroit, first; Ralph Wolf, Madison Heights, second; and Robert Scott,

Clarkston, third. Color slides: William Lomaka, Pontiac, first; Art Brooks, Southfield, second; and Gary Beesley, Union Lake, third.

Winner of the \$50 prize in the children's 14 years and under category is Amy Weiss, 14, of Sylvan Lake.

Winners receiving an honorable mention and a 1980 annual vehicle pass to all Oakland County Parks were:

Color prints: Jean Bielski, Drayton Plains; Kim Bouchard, Clarkston; Joanne Cook, Clarkston; Eula Crispell, Pontiac; Clyde Kizer, Drayton Plains; Debbie Martinez, Clarkston; Wilbur Ott, Union Lake; Dennis Riss, Madison Heights; and G. B. Thomas Rochester.

Color slides: John Lines, Lake Orion; Ted Mazur, Troy; Jack Morris, Union Lake; and R. L. Stuart, Madison Heights.

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