

## Brazil Comes Back to the Nuclear Table

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Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva has given the green light to build a long-delayed third nuclear plant in Brazil, reported the Brazilian press. The respected financial newspaper Valor Econômico, from São Paulo, said without citing a source that Lula approved the construction of the plant a month ago.

The publication said the president's positive nod happened during a meeting with Cabinet ministers and that Lula will preside over a meeting in June of the National Energy Policy Council to advance the issue. The president's office declined to comment on the report.

Leonam dos Santos Guimarães, an assistant to the president of Eletrobrás Termonuclear SA, which manages Brazil's two existing nuclear power plants, said any decision by Lula would be merely "personal," and must be ratified by the council.

Brazil currently has two operating nuclear plants, Angra 1 and Angra 2, with an installed capacity of about 2,000 megawatts, near the coastal city of Angra dos Reis, 180 kilometers west of Rio de Janeiro.

Work on Angra 3, which would raise capacity to 3,300 megawatts, began in 1984 but was stopped because of financing problems and concerns over security and the viability of nuclear power.

Two large dam projects in the Amazon basin are awaiting licenses by the federal environmental protection agency as Brazil races to meet burgeoning electricity demand.

The Angra 3 plant is expected to cost some 3.6 billion US dollars and could be completed by 2013, Guimarães said.

Late last year Brazil announced plans to build four new nuclear plants, each with a generating capacity of 1,000 megawatts, starting in 2013 in the country's northeast and southeast. Brazil has signed the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, and its constitution bans the military use of nuclear energy.

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