Brazil-paraguay: 18th & Final Turbine Of Itaipu Hydroelectric Plant Inaugurated

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At a May 6 ceremony in Itaipu, Presidents Fernando Collor de Mello of Brazil and Andres Rodriguez of Paraguay inaugurated the 18th and last turbine of a joint hydroelectric project. Itaipu's installed capacity is 12.6 million kw, the largest in the world. Construction of Itaipu on the Parana River cost $18.3 billion over a 16-year period. The repayment period on $16.9 billion of the total extends until 2023. With its 18 turbines functioning, Itaipu will produce 75 billion kwh per year, accounting for one-third of Brazil's energy consumption, and all of Paraguay's. The Itaipu treaty was signed on April 26, 1973, and infrastructure construction began in October 1975, 14 km. north of Iguacu Falls on the Parana River. The first turbine was put into commercial production on May 5, 1984. The Parana River, one of the seven largest in the world, is 4,000 km. long, with a 3 million sq.km. basin. (Basic data from AFP, 05/06/91)