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Declassified Case:
NW# 60542 Date:
06-02-2023

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EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

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EA/ROC:JPLEONARD
PM/NPO:GOPLINGER
ERDA:RSLAWSON
OES/SCI/AE:DHOYLE
S/S- MR. MOFFAT

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USMISSION GENEVA
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EXDIS, US DEL REVCON

E.O. 11652: XGDS2,3

TAGS: PARM, TECH, TW

SUBJECT: ROC NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
GENEVA FOR US DEL REVCON
REF: TAIPEI 01425 (NOTAL)

1. REFTEL DISCUSSION OF ROC NUCLEAR PROGRAM AND POTENTIAL WAS EXTREMELY USEFUL AND TIMELY. THERE WAS A CHARACTERIZATION OF ROC REPROCESSING NEEDS INCLUDED IN REFTEL EVALUATION THAT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED FURTHER, HOWEVER.

2. USG CONTINUES TO OPPOSE THE ACQUISITION OF A REPROCESSING CAPABILITY BY THE ROC. THE ROC MAY ATTEMPT TO JUSTIFY ACQUISITION AS CONTRIBUTING TO ITS CIVIL NUCLEAR POWER PRO-

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GRAM. TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THAT FIRST ROC POWER PLANT IS NOT SCHEDULED FOR OPERATION UNTIL 1977 AND THAT THERE WILL NOT BE SIGNIFICANT QUANTITIES OF IRRADIATED FUEL PRODUCED UNTIL THE MID-1980'S, IT IS HIGHLY QUESTIONABLE WHETHER THE ROC NEEDS REPROCESSING IN THE NEAR TERM OR EVEN NEEDS TO MAKE A DECISION AT THIS STAGE. THE CONSTRUCTION OF A REPROCESSING PLANT IS A VERY EXPENSIVE, VERY RISKY AND VERY COMPLICATED VENTURE AND THERE HAVE BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL VENTURES BY VERY COMPETENT ORGANIZATIONS. VERY FEW COUNTRIES HAVE ENGAGED IN REPROCESSING IN THE PAST; THOSE WHICH HAVE, EXPERIENCED CONSIDERABLE DIFFICULTY. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT NO COUNTRIES IN WHICH COMMERCIAL-SIZE REPROCESSING PLANTS ARE LOCATED, I.E., U.S., U.K., BELGIUM AND FRANCE, ARE CURRENTLY ENGAGED IN REPROCESSING SPENT FUEL ON A COMMERCIAL BASIS, BECAUSE OF EITHER TECHNICAL PROBLEMS OR PLANT REDESIGN. WHILE THE U.S. AND OTHER COUNTRIES WITH VERY LARGE NUCLEAR POWER CAPACITIES ARE ATTEMPTING AND WILL PROBABLY UNDERTAKE COMMERCIAL REPROCESSING IN THE FUTURE, ALL HAVE OPERATED NUCLEAR POWER PROGRAMS WITHOUT DOING SO FOR SOME TIME.

3. ACCORDING TO REFTEL, THE ROC WILL APPARENTLY NOT ACCEPT BNFL STIPULATION THAT RADIOACTIVE WASTE FROM REPROCESSING BE RETURNED TO TAIWAN. NOTE IS ALSO MADE OF THE LARGE AMOUNT OF SPENT FUEL EXPECTED TO BE PRODUCED BY TAIPOWER BY 1985 AND THEREAFTER. WHATEVER THE REASON FOR ROC RESISTANCE TO THE BRITISH STIPULATION, THEIR WASTE DISPOSAL PROBLEM WILL NOT BE SOLVED BY LOCATING A REPROCESSING PLANT ON ROC TERRITORY. AN INTERIM ALTERNATIVE TO REPROCESSING OF SPENT FUEL, WHICH IS A PRACTICE FOLLOWED BY OTHER COUNTRIES, IS STORAGE OF SPENT FUEL IN FUEL ASSEMBLIES WITHIN HOLDING PONDS. MOST IMPORTANT, THERE IS NOTHING IN THE ROC SITUATION THAT CAN NOW BE SAID TO REQUIRE A DECISION ON WHERE ROC SPENT FUEL MIGHT BE REPROCESSED. THERE IS, THEREFORE, A MANIFEST BASIS

FOR THE EXPRESSION OF USG AND EMBASSY CONCERN AND SKEPTICISM AT ANY ROC CLAIMS THAT THEY NEED THEIR OWN FACILITY. FYI. WE MAY WANT EVENTUALLY TO SEEK TO DIRECT ROC INTEREST IN REPROCESSING TOWARD REGIONAL PLANT LOCATED OUTSIDE OF ROC. REPUBLIC OF KOREA HAS PROPOSED SUCH A PLANT ON PRELIMINARY BASIS TO BE LOCATED IN ROK, ALTHOUGH LOCATION IN THE ROK MIGHT ALSO POSE PROBLEMS. USG IS STUDYING MATTER OF REGIONAL REPROCESSING.

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MEANWHILE, IAEA HAS UNDERTAKEN STUDY OF FEASIBILITY OF REGIONAL REPROCESSING PLANTS TO MEET NEEDS OF COUNTRIES IN PARTICULAR AREAS, INCLUDING EAST ASIA. END FYI.

4. CONTINUED EMBASSY SENSITIVITY TO ROC INTENTIONS, AND ANALYSIS OF THEIR ACTIVITY IN THE NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM, WOULD BE EXTREMELY HELPFUL. KISSINGER

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