

July 1, 1974

Telegram, Brazilian Embassy in Buenos Aires, 'Visit of an Embassy Employee to the Nuclear Center [at] Atucha'

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Summary:

Report from the Brazilian Embassy in Buenos Aires about the visit of Brazil's Superior War College to the Atucha nuclear plant. There its director, Jorge Cosentino, explained the Argentine nuclear program in detail and expressed interest in finding formulas for cooperation with Brazil in the nuclear field.

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TELEGRAMA RECEBIDO

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CONFIDENCIAL
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VISITA DE FUNCIONARIO DA
EMBAIXADA AA CENTRAL NU-
CLEAR DE ATUCHA.

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1520-SEGUNDA-FEIRA-16-15 HS - APROVEITANDO A VISITA DA DELEGACAO DA ESCOLA SUPERIOR DE GUERRA AA CENTRAL NUCLEAR DE ATUCHA, DESIGNEI O SECRETARIO LUIZ AUGUSTO DE CASTRO-NEVES, QUE AQUI SE OCUPA DE ASSUNTOS REFERENTES A ENERGIA ATOMICA, PARA ACOMPANHAR A DELEGACAO DA ESG NESTA VISITA.

2. EM ATUCHA, SITUADA A 110 QUILOMETROS DO CENTRO DE BUENOS AIRES, AAS MARGENS DO RIO PARANA' DE LAS PALMAS, A DELEGACAO FOI RECEBIDA PELO ENGENHEIRO COSENTINO, SEU DIRETOR, QUE FEZ UMA PALESTRA INICIAL SOBRE O FUNCIONAMENTO DA USINA, TENDO TAMBEM DISCORRIDO AMPLAMENTE SOBRE AS RAZOES QUE LEVARAM A ARGENTINA A CONFIRMAR A ESCOLHA DO URANIO NATURAL PARA MATERIAL FISSIL DE SUA SEGUNDA USINA NUCLEAR. SOBRE ESSE PONTO, CABE DIZER QUE COSENTINO FOI ELEMENTO DECISIVO NO PROCESSO DE DECISAO QUE FAVORECEU O URANIO NATURAL, HAVENDO, NA EPOCA DA DECISAO, FICADO EM OPOSICAO AO PRESIDENTE LANUSSE, QUE CONTEMPLAVA O URANIO ENRIQUECIDO.

3. A USINA, COM CAPACIDADE PARA 319 MIL KW, AINDA NAO ESTA' FUNCIONANDO A PLENA CARGA - SEU PAINEL DE COMANDO REGISTRA UMA PRODUCAO DE 237 MIL KE. O EQUIPAMENTO E' TODO SIEMENS E TANTO DENTRO DA USINA COMO EM SUAS IMEDIACOES, TODAS AS PLACAS E INDICACOES ESTAO EM ESPANHOL E ALEMAO. CONFORME FOI INFORMADO, APENAS HA DEZ DIAS A OPERACAO DA USINA PASSOU A MAOS ARGENTINAS.

4. A ARGENTINA IMPORTOU 327,08 TONELADAS DE AGUA PESADA PARA A OPERACAO DA USINA (300 TONELADAS DOS ESTADOS UNIDOS E 27,08 TONELADAS DA ALEMANHA FEDERAL, ESTAS ULTIMAS PARA COMPENSAR A PERDA DIARIA DE CERCA DE 600 GRAMAS).

5. O PLUTONIO GERADO POR ATUCHA FICA ARMAZENADO EM PISCI-

TELEGRAMA RECEBIDO

NAS, EM PREDIO ANEXO AO REATOR. INFORMOU COSENTINO QUE OS MESMOS NAO SAO PROCESSADOS, ESTAO SOB SALVAGUARDA E NAO HA PLANOS PARA A REUTILIZACAO DO MESMO COMO COMBUSTIVEL NA PROPRIA USINA. AFIRMOU AINDA QUE, DEVIDO AO LONGO TEMPO QUE AS BARRAS DE COMBUSTIVEL PERMANECEM NO REATOR, O PLUTONIO AIH GERADO SO' APRESENTA ISOTOPOS PARES (240 E 242), QUE NAO SERVE PARA FINS EXPLOSIVO. PARA A OBTENCAO DE PLUTONIO PARA FINS EXPLOSIVOS, AINDA SEGUNDO COSENTINO, SERIA NECESSARIO UM GRANDE AUMENTO DO CONSUMO DE COMBUSTIVEL, BEM COMO UMA OPERACAO MAIS TRABALHOSA E COMPLEXA DO REATOR. COSENTINO DECLAROU TEXTUALMENTE QUE A ARGENTINA NAO TEM INTENCAO DE FABRICAR BOMBAS E QUE ESTAH DISPOSTO A RECEBER, SEM NENHUMA RESERVA, QUAISQUER TECNICOS BRASILEIROS QUE QUEIRAM CONHECER DETALHES DO PROGRAMA NUCLEAR ARGENTINO.

6. COSENTINO MANIFESTOU A ESPERANCA DE QUE BRASIL E ARGENTINA VENHAM A TRABALHAR EM COOPERACAO EM MATERIA DE ENERGIA NUCLEAR. AFIRMOU QUE ATE' HOJE ESSA COLABORACAO TEM SIDO MAIS FORMAL DO QUE EFETIVA, POR "ALGUMA RAZAO QUE ELE NAO SABIA QUAL ERA". ACHA ELE QUE, TENDO O BRASIL OPTADO PELA UTILIZACAO DO URANIO ENRIQUECIDO, AMBOS OS PAISES TERIAM MUITO O QUE TROCAR EM MATERIA DE INFORMACOES, PELO SIMPLES CONFRONTO DE DUAS EXPERIENCIAS DISTINTAS. DEMONSTROU CONHECER BASTANTE BEM O PROGRAMA BRASILEIRO. FEZ MUITOS ELOGIOS AO PROFESSOR MARCELO DAMY, NO SEU ENTENDER A MAIOR AUTORIDADE BRASILEIRA NO ASSUNTO.

7. SOBRE DADOS TECNICOS RELATIVOS AO FUNCIONAMENTO DE ATUCHA, REITERO O RELATORIO DO ENGENHEIRO BRASILEIRO JULIUS WILBERG, QUE A VISITOU EM FINS DO ANO PASSADO, E QUE FOI TRANSMITIDO PELO OFICIO 976, DE 27/11/73.

8. AO FINAL DA VISITA, AGRADECEU EM NOME DA ESCOLA SUPERIOR DE GUERRA O CORONEL EINAR WALTER BERG, QUE DECLAROU "TER FICADO INTEIRAMENTE CONVENCIDO DAS VANTAGENS DA UTILIZACAO DO URANIO NATURAL, EM VISTA DE O MESMO TER COLOCADO A ARGENTINA LIVRE DA DEPENDENCIA DAS GRANDES POTENCIAS, UNICAS FORNECODORAS DO URANIO ENRIQUECIDOS".

PINHEIRO

Telegram received

BRASEMB BAIRE

7/01/74

Confidential

DPB/DAM-I/

VISIT OF AN EMBASSY EMPLOYEE TO THE NUCLEAR CENTER ATUCHA.

1520-MONDAY-16-15 HS - TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE BRAZILIAN WAR COLLEGE DELEGATION'S visit TO THE NUCLEAR CENTER ATUCHA, I DESIGNATED THE SECRETARY LUIZ AUGUSTO DE CASTRO NEVES, WHO HERE DEALS WITH SUBJECTS RELATED TO ATOMIC ENERGY, TO ACOMPANY THE WAR COLLEGE'S DELEGATION ON THIS TRIP.

2. AT ATUCHA, LOCATED 110 KILOMETERS FROM BUENOS AIRES, ON THE BANKS OF THE RIVER PARANA DE LAS PALMAS, THE DELEGATION WAS RECEIVED BY ENGINEER COSENTINO, ITS DIRECTOR, WHO GAVE AN INITIAL PRESENTATION ABOUT HOW THE REACTORS OPERATES, AS WELL AS SPEAKING AMPLY ABOUT THE REASONS THAT LED ARGENTINA TO CHOOSE NATURAL URANIUM AS THE FISSIONABLE MATERIAL TO USE FOR ITS SECOND NUCLEAR REACTOR. ABOUT THIS POINT, IT IS IMPORTANT TO MENTION THAT COSENTINO PLAYED A CRUCIAL PART IN THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS, HAVING, AT THE TIME OF THE DECISION, STOOD IN OPOSITION TO PRESIDENT LANUSSE, WHO CONTEMPLATED USING ENRICHED URANIUM.

3. THE REACTOR, Which HAS THE CAPACITY TO PRODUCE 319 THOUSAND KW, IS STILL NOT FUNCTIONING AT MAXIMUM CAPACITY - ITS CONTROL PANEL MEASURED CURRENT PRODUCTION AT 237 THOUSAND KW. ALL EQUIPMENT IS MADE BY SIEMENS, AND BOTH INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE REACTOR, ALL THE BOARDS AND INSTRUCTION SIGNS ARE IN SPANISH AND GERMAN. ACCORDING TO WHAT I WAS TOLD, IT WAS BARELY TEN DAYS AGO THAT OPERATION OF THE REACTOR WAS PASSED TO ARGENTINIAN HANDS.

4. Argentina imported 327.08 tons of heavy water TO RUN THE REACTOR (300 TONS FROM THE UNITED STATES AND 27.08 TONS FROM THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY, THE LAST SHIPMENT WAS TO COMPENSATE FOR THE DAILY LOST OF 600 GRAMS).

5. THE PLUTONIUM GENERATED BY ATUCHA IS STORED IN POOLS, IN A BUILDING ADJACENT TO THE REACTOR. ACOORDING TO COSENTINO, THIS PLUTONIUM IS NOT PROCESSED, RATHER, IT IS STOCKED, AND THERE ARE NO PLANS FOR THE FUEL TO BE REUSED BY THAT SAME REACTOR. HE FURTHER STATED THAT, DUE TO THE LONG PERIODS OF TIME THAT THE COMBUSTION RODS REMAIN WITHIN THE REACTOR, THE PLUTONIUM GENERATED THERE ONLY CONTAINS EVEN ISOTOPES (240 AND 242), WHICH CANNOT BE USED FOR EXPLOSIVE PURPOSES. TO OBTAIN PLUTONIUM FOR EXPLOSIVE PURPOSES, ACCORDING TO COSENTINO, IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO GREATLY AUGMENT THE FUEL CONSUMPTION, AS WELL AS A MUCH MORE COMPLEX AND LABOROUS OPERATION AT THE REACTOR. COSENTINO CLEARLY STATED THAT ARGENTINA HAS ABSOLUTLY NO INTENTIONS OF FABRICATING NUCLEAR BOMBS, AND THAT ARGENTINA IS HAPPY TO RECEIVE BRAZILIAN SCIENTISTS WHO ARE INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT ARGENTINA'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM.

6. COSENTINO REVEALED THAT HE HOPED BRAZIL AND ARGENTINA WOULD COME TO WORK TOGETHER IN THE FIELD OF NUCLEAR ENERGY. HE STATED THAT, TO THIS DAY, SUCH COLABORATION HAS BEEN MORE A FORMALITY THEN AN EFFECTIVE PROCESS, FOR "SOME REASON THAT HE DOES NOT KNOW." HE BELIEVES THAT SINCE BRAZIL HAS OPTED TO USE ENRICHED URANIUM IN ITS REACTORS, BOTH COUNTRIES

WOULD HAVE LOTS OF INFORMATION TO EXCHANGE WITH EACH OTHER, DUE TO THEIR DIFFERENT EXPERIENCES IN THIS FIELD. HE DEMONSTRATED THAT HE KNOWS QUITE WELL THE BRAZILIAN NUCLEAR PROGRAM. HE MADE HIGH REMARKS ABOUT PROFESSOR MARCELO DAMY, IN HIS OPIONION THE MOST IMPORTANT BRAZILIAN AUTHORITY ON THIS MATTER.

7. RELATING TO THE TECHNICAL DATA ON ATUCHA, I REITERATE THE REPORT BY THE BRAZILIAN ENGINEER JULIUS WILBERG , THAT VISITED THE PLANT NEAR THE END OF LAST YEAR, AND THAT WAS TRANSMITTED BY LETTER 976, FROM 11/27/73.

8. AT THE END OF THE VISIT, COLONEL EINAR WALTER BERG THANKED HIM, IN THE NAME OF THE WAR COLLEGE, AND DECLARED THAT HE "WAS ENTIRELY CONVINCED OF THE SUPERIORITY OF THE UTILIZATION OF NATURAL URANIUM, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THAT THIS MOVE HAS FREED ARGENTINA ENTIRELY FROM DEPENDING ON THE GREAT POWERS, THE ONLY SOURCES OF ENRICHED URANIUM."

PINHEIRO