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E.O. 12065: RDS-3 8/13/80 (PTCKERING, THOMAS R) OES

TAGS: MNUC, PARM, ENRG, IT, IZ

SUBJECT: (U) ITALY-IRAQ NUCLEAR TRANSFER

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REF: A. ROME 18974; B. STATE 175197

1. SECRET (ENTIRE TEXT).

2. AS EMBASSY IS AWARE, WE WELCOME ASSURANCES (REF B) PROVIDED PRESIDENT BY PRIME MINISTER COSSIGA REGARDING ITALIAN GOVERNMENT INTENTION TO CONFORM TO NPT AND SUPPLIER GUIDELINE COMMITMENTS AND TO ENSURE THAT THERE WILL BE NO TRANSFER OF SENSITIVE TECHNOLOGY TO IRAQ, AND THESE HAVE PROVED HELPFUL IN HILL CONSULTATIONS ON ITALIAN-IRAQ NUCLEAR COOPERATION AND THE FRIGATES MATTER.

3. WE ARE, HOWEVER, BECOMING INCREASINGLY CONCERNED AT THE DELAY IN THE ITALIAN REPORT OF THE OUTCOME OF THE CNEN INVESTIGATION AND EVASIVENESS OF THE ITALIAN CNEN IN RESPONSE TO OUR QUESTIONS ON DETAILS OF THE ITALIAN-IRAQ PROGRAM AS REPORTED REF A. EMBASSY SHOULD BE AWARE THAT WE ARE CONTINUING TO RECEIVE PRESSURE FROM THE HILL ON THIS ISSUE. WE ARE ALSO CONCERNED ABOUT INFORMATION WE HAVE ABOUT EXTENT OF TRANSFERS.

4. ACCORDINGLY, EMBASSY SHOULD SEEK EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY TO SEPARATELY APPROACH FOREIGN MINISTER COLUMBO AND PROF. UMBERTO COLUMBO OF CNEN TO RAISE THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

A. WITH FOREIGN MINISTER COLOMBO:

-- WE APPRECIATE THE PRIME MINISTER'S RECENT STATEMENT ON ITALIAN NUCLEAR COOPERATION WITH IRAQ IN WHICH HE ASSURED US THAT THERE WOULD BE NO TRANSFER OF SENSITIVE NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY TO IRAQ.

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-- THIS ASSURANCE HAS PROVED HELPFUL ON OUR CONGRESSIONAL CONSULTATIONS REGARDING THE FRIGATE MATTER ALTHOUGH THAT ISSUE IS NOT FINALLY RESOLVED.

-- AS A RESULT OF RECENT PUBLICITY REGARDING THE OVERALL IRAQI NUCLEAR PROGRAM COUPLED WITH ISRAELI STATEMENTS ABOUT THE IRAQI NUCLEAR INTENTIONS, WE CONTINUE TO RECEIVE EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN ABOUT YOUR NUCLEAR COOPERATION WITH IRAQ AND ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE ULTIMATE IMPACT OF THIS ON CONGRESSIONAL ATTITUDES ON THE FRIGATE MATTER AS WELL AS ON OUR NUCLEAR COOPERATION.

-- WE ARE SEPARATELY APPROACHING PROF. UMBERTO COLOMBO WITH SOME SPECIFIC REQUESTS FOR FURTHER CLARIFICATION ON THE NATURE OF THAT COOPERATION IN ORDER TO BETTER UNDERSTAND ITS SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES.

-- EARLY RECEIPT OF THIS INFORMATION IS CRUCIAL TO ABATE GROWING CONCERNS AND TO RESOLVE CONTINUING UNCERTAINTY ABOUT THE SCOPE OF ITALIAN ASSISTANCE TO IRAQ, WHICH HAVE A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON CONGRESSIONAL ATTITUDES AND COULD HINDER U.S.-ITALY NUCLEAR COOPERATION IN THE LONGER TERM.

B. WITH PROFESSOR COLOMBO OF CNEN:

-- WE APPRECIATE YOUR EARLIER OFFERS TO LOOK INTO THE SPECIFICS OF THE ITALIAN NUCLEAR COMMITMENTS TO IRAQ AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO EARLY CONSULTATIONS ON THE OUTCOME OF THAT REVIEW.

-- IN THE MEANTIME, AS A RESULT OF THE RECENT PUBLICITY REGARDING THE OVERALL IRAQI NUCLEAR PROGRAM, THERE ARE GROWING CONCERNS IN THE US ABOUT THE NATURE OF YOUR COOPERATION WITH IRAQ. WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE POTENTIAL

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IMPACT OF THESE CONCERNS ON US-ITALIAN NUCLEAR COOPERATION.

-- IN ORDER TO ALLAY THESE CONCERNS, IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF WE COULD OBTAIN INFORMATION ON THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

-- TYPES OF EQUIPMENT BEING INSTALLED IN THE RADIO-ISOTOPE PRODUCTION LAB AND THE CHEMICAL ENGINEERING TEST FACILITY. IN PARTICULAR, WE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN KNOWING IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF EQUIPMENT ARE BEING PROVIDED SHEARS OR OTHER DEVICES WHICH COULD BE USED FOR THE REMOTE DISASSEMBLY OF IRRADIATED FUEL, DISSOLVERS, MIXER-SETTLERS, PULSE COLUMNS OR ION EXCHANGE COLUMNS; EVAPORATORS CAPABLE OF CONDENSING RADIOACTIVE, ACIDIC SOLUTIONS AND CRITICALITY SAFE CONTROL TANKS. IN ADDITION, ANY INFORMATION RELATIVE TO UPGRADING OF THE WASTE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS OF THESE OR OTHER FACILITIES WOULD BE USEFUL.

--- CNEN OFFICIALS HAD EARLIER INDICATED THAT PROCESS EQUIPMENT WAS NOT BEING PROVIDED FOR THE RADIOISOTOPE LAB, AS PART OF THE ORIGINAL CONTRACT BUT THAT DISCUSSIONS WERE UNDERWAY WHICH COULD RESULT IN FUTURE PROVISION OF SUCH EQUIPMENT. WE WOULD APPRECIATE IT IF YOU COULD PROVIDE US WITH DETAILED INFORMATION ON ANY SIGNIFICANT PROCESS EQUIPMENT WHICH YOU MAY NOW BE PROVIDING FOR THIS FACILITY INCLUDING ANY ITEMS TO BE INSTALLED IN THE CO-60 CELLS.

--- ALSO CNEN OFFICIALS HAD EARLIER TOLD US THAT THE CHEMICAL ENGINEERING TEST FACILITY IN IRAQ WAS TO BE USED FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND TESTING OF LARGER SCALE PROCESS EQUIPMENT. WE NOW UNDERSTAND THAT SOME

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OF THE EQUIPMENT BEING PROVIDED MAY BE DIRECTLY USEFUL FOR REPROCESSING. WE HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE THAT A FUEL ELEMENT DISASSEMBLY AND CHOPPING MACHINE MAY HAVE BEEN CONSTRUCTED IN ITALY FOR THE IRAQI ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION AND IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THIS MACHINE HAS ALREADY BEEN SHIPPED TO IRAQ AND THAT IT MAY BE INTENDED FOR INSTALLATION IN THE CHEMICAL ENGINEERING TEST FACILITY. WE WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR VIEWS ON THIS POINT AS WELL AS A LIST OF THE MAJOR ITEMS OF EQUIPMENT THAT ARE BEING PROVIDED FOR THIS FACILITY, A DESCRIPTION OF EACH ITEM AND ITS INTENDED RESEARCH PURPOSE.

-- THE NATURE OF THE TRAINING BEING PROVIDED TO IRAQIS IN ITALIAN FACILITIES ESPECIALLY IN THOSE FACILITIES INVOLVING REPROCESSING-RELATED ACTIVITIES.

-- IT WOULD BE EXTREMELY HELPFUL IF THIS INFORMATION COULD BE PROVIDED BY AUGUST 25.

CHRISTOPHER

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