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INCOMING TELEGRAM

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FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9094

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E.O. 11652: XGOS-3
TAGS: MNUC
SUBJECT: PROPOSED ASSIGNMENT OF U.S. NUCLEAR SCIENTISTS
-- TO-ROC

REFS: A. TAIPEI 6065, B. STATE 231333

1. AS THE DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, SOMETIME AGO PRESIDENT CHIANG MADE A FORMAL OFFER TO ACCEPT A NUMBER OF U.S. NUCLEAR SCIENTISTS ON ASSIGNMENT TO TAIWAN TO PARTICIPATE DIRECTLY IN NUCLEAR R&D PROGRAMS CONDUCTED BY THE GROC. THIS OFFER HAS BEEN REITERATED TO US ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS, BY THE PRESIDENT HIMSELF, MOST RECENTLY ON SEPTEMBER 8, AND ON HIS BEHALF BY THE PREMIER, FOREIGN MINISTER, TWO VICE FOREIGN MINISTERS, AND OTHERS. THE POINT OF THIS REPEATED OFFER IS TO ALLAY U.S. CONCERNS ABOUT THE NATURE AND THRUST OF GROC NUCLEAR PROGRAMS, ESPECIALLY U.S. CONCERN THAT THE GROC MIGHT VIOLATE EXISTING BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL AGREEMENTS GOVERNING PEACEFUL NUCLEAR COOPERATION. WE HAVE REPORTED THESE REITERATIONS OF THE PRESIDENT'S OFFER AND HAVE DISCUSSED THEM WITH VISITING NUCLEAR TEAMS AND OTHER INTERESTED WASHINGTON OFFICIALS.

2. REF B INDICATES THAT WASHINGTON IS RE-THINKING THE USG
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POSITION ON THIS OFFER. THIS MESSAGE IS INTENDED TO CONTRIBUTE A FEW CONSIDERATIONS SEEN FROM THIS EMBASSY'S PERSPECTIVE.

3. GIVEN THE ROC'S STRATEGIC/POLITICAL VULNERABILITY, THE TEMPTATIONS TO EXAMINE THE POSSIBILITY OF ACQUIRING A NUCLEAR WEAPONS CAPACITY HAVE TO BE ASSUMED. THERE ARE, OF COURSE, MANY FACTORS WHICH WOULD ARGUE AGAINST SUCH AN EFFORT IN COLLECTIVE GROC THINKING, E.G., RELATIVE INEFFECTIVENESS VIS-A-VIS THE PRC, HEIGHTENED DANGER OF A PRC PRE-EMPTIVE STRIKE IF THE ROC SEEMED TO HAVE SUCH A CAPACITY OR THREATENED TO USE ACHIEVED WEAPONRY, JEOPARDIZING POLITICAL SUPPORT FROM FRIENDLY COUNTRIES AND AN IMMEDIATE, ECONOMICALLY DISASTROUS CUT-OFF OF PEACEFUL NUCLEAR SUPPLIES, FROM THE U.S. WE DO NOT KNOW DEFINITELY THAT ANY FUNDAMENTAL DECISION HAS IN FACT BEEN TAKEN. CCK HAS ASSURED US EMPHATICALLY AND CATEGORICALLY IN THE NEGATIVE, ADMITTEOLY, HE COULD BE EXPECTED TO DO THIS, IF HE SAW HIS COUNTRY'S ESSENTIAL INTERESTS AS REQUIRING THE ACHIEVEMENT OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS CAPACITY. CLEARLY, IF THE ROC WERE TO MOVE IN THIS DIRECTION, THEY WOULD HAVE TO CONCEAL THEIR EFFORT FROM US AT ALL COSTS. IN ANY EVENT CCK IS NOW EVEN MORE PAINFULLY AWARE OF OUR CONCERNS AND OF THE NECESSITY OF CONVINCING US OF THE CREDIBILITY OF HIS ASSURANCES. EVIDENCE IS BEGINNING TO APPEAR THAT HE IS ISSUING FOLLOW-UP ORDERS.

4. IN THIS CONTEXT, WE BELIEVE THAT IF PROPERLY STRUCTURED, THE PLACING OF PERCEPTIVE, KNOWLEDGEABLE AND RELIABLE U.S. SCIENTISTS HERE COULD SIGNIFICANTLY FURTHER OUR NONPROLIFERATION OBJECTIVES. OF COURSE, THE PRESENCE OF SUCH SCIENTISTS COULD NOT ABSOLUTELY PRECLUDE A CLAN-

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CLANDESTINE ROC EFFORT TO ACHIEVE A NUCLEAR WEAPONRY CAPABILITY. HOWEVER, THEIR PRESENCE WOULD MAKE SUCH AN EFFORT MUCH MORE DIFFICULT, BY FORCING STILL GREATER CLANDESTINITY, LIMITING THE NUMBER OF ROC SCIENTISTS THAT COULD BE INVOLVED AS WELL AS THE PHYSICAL ASPECTS OF THE FACILITIES, APPARATUS, AND MATERIALS THAT COULD BE EMPLOYED. THE U.S. SCIENTISTS COULD CREDIBLY REQUIRE WIDESPREAD FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT IN SCIENTIFIC LABORATORIES AND RESEARCH AREAS AND CLOSE CONTACT WITH ROC PHYSICAL SCIENTISTS. HIDING CLUES FROM THEM WOULD BE DIFFICULT. FOR THIS REASON, THE PRESENCE OF THESE U.S. SCIENTISTS WOULD PROVIDE US WITH GREATER FREEDOM TO PURSUE LEADS DEVELOPED BY CLANDESTINE SOURCES WITH SUBSTANTIALLY LESS DANGER OF COMPROMISE.

5. WE DO NOT SEE WHAT OFFSETTING DISADVANTAGES THERE WOULD BE. THE USG WOULD NOT GIVE UP ANY OF OUR EXISTING PRACTICES OR PROCEDURES. WE WOULD RATHER ADD ANOTHER STRING TO OUR BOW. IT IS TRUE THAT THE ROC WOULD BE ABLE -- IN RESPONSE TO U.S. INQUIRIES OR INSPECTION TEAMS -- TO POINT OUT THAT WE ALREADY HAVE MEN ON THE GROUND. BUT THIS WOULD BE GIVING THEM ONLY A MINOR TALKING POINT, WHICH OF ITSELF COULD NOT EFFECTIVELY DEFLECT US FROM PURSUING WHATEVER OTHER INVESTIGATIONS WE MIGHT WISH.

6. MOREOVER, THE U.S. SCIENTISTS, GIVEN THEIR DAY-TO-DAY WORKING RELATIONSHIPS WITH THIS COUNTRY'S KEY NUCLEAR SCIENTISTS AND PROGRAM MANAGERS, COULD REPRESENT A POSITIVE FORCE IN INFLUENCING ROC R&D PROGRAMS ALONG LINES COMPATIBLE WITH OUR POLICY GOALS, VIZ., TO ORIENT THOSE R&D ACTIVITIES TOWARD MORE DIRECT AND PRACTICAL SUPPORT OF THE NATION'S PEACEFUL USES NUCLEAR PROGRAM, PRINCIPALLY IN ELECTRIC POWER GENERATION.

7. WE ENVISION SUCH SCIENTISTS BEING ASSIGNED TO TAIWAN

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OSTENSIBLY IN A PRIVATE CAPACITY, PERHAPS AS RESIDENT CONSULTANTS, TO AVOID POSSIBLE PROBLEMS DURING EVENTUAL NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS WITH PEKING. FUNDING, HOWEVER, WOULD BE BY THE USG OR AN AMERICAN INSTRUMENTALITY. THE POINT HERE IS THAT WE AND THE ROC WOULD KNOW WHAT THE SCIENTISTS' PRESENCE MEANT IN TERMS OF OUR BILATERAL RELATIONSHIPS, BUT THAT PRESENCE NEED NOT COMPLICATE DEVELOPMENTS IN U.S.-PRC RELATIONSHIPS. THE SCIENTISTS WOULD MAINTAIN LOW-PROFILE CONTACT WITH THE EMBASSY FOR EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION OF PROBLEM AREAS, BUT WOULD NOT ADVERTISE THE FACT OF THEIR OFFICIAL U.S. GOVERNMENT CONNECTION. IN TERMS OF THE IMAGE THEY WOULD PROJECT, THE U.S. SCIENTISTS WOULD BE PRESENTED AS AND WOULD COMPORT THEMSELVES AS DO HUNDREDS OF OTHER FOREIGN ADVISORS TO THIS GOVERNMENT RESIDENT ON TAIWAN.

B. REGARDING THE KIND OF PERSON TO BE CHOSEN FOR SUCH AN ASSIGNMENT, WE WOULD RECOMMEND, AS A MATTER OF PRIMARY CONSIDERATION, THAT HE/SHE POSSESS HIGH PERSONAL QUALITIES OF MATURITY, GOOD JUDGMENT, RELIABILITY, TOUGHNESS, PERSISTENCE AND PATIENCE TO DEAL WITH AN EXACTING AND TRYING TASK. SECOND, THE PERSON SHOULD BE A U.S. CITIZEN OF UNQUESTIONED LOYALTY, PREFERABLY WITH A WORKING KNOWLEDGE OF MANDARIN AND EXPERIENCE IN DEALING WITH CHINESE.

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BEYOND THESE CONSIDERATIONS, THE INDIVIDUAL WOULD NEED THE PROPER ACADEMIC CREDENTIALS (DOCTORATE LEVEL) AND APPROPRIATE WORK EXPERIENCE TO BE ACCEPTED BY THEIR CHINESE HOSTS BUT ALSO TO MEET THE EXACTING PROFESSIONAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE ASSIGNMENT. ON BALANCE, AND THIS IS SUBJECT TO FURTHER DISCUSSION, WE BELIEVE THAT AT LEAST ONE OF THE SCIENTISTS SHOULD HAVE A BACKGROUND IN NUCLEAR WEAPONS R&D, WHILE A SECOND SHOULD HAVE CONSIDERABLE EXPERIENCE IN NUCLEAR PHYSICS AND HEAVY WATER R&D AND PRODUCTION. IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF ONE OF THE SCIENTISTS HAD SOME BACKGROUND IN REPROCESSING TECHNOLOGIES.

9. FINALLY, WE BELIEVE THAT A PROGRAM SUCH AS THIS COULD BEGIN WITH ONLY TWO SCIENTISTS, WHOSE ASSIGNMENT TO TAIWAN WOULD NOT NECESSARILY HAVE TO BE SIMULTANEOUS. INDEED, IT MIGHT BE WISE TO PLACE ONE SCIENTIST ON TAIWAN FOR A TRIAL PERIOD OF SIX MONTHS BEFORE DECIDING ON THE ADVISABILITY OF ASSIGNING A SECOND. DEPENDING ON THE SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE SCIENTISTS CHOSEN FOR THESE ASSIGNMENTS, WE WOULD RECOMMEND THAT THE ASSIGNMENTS BE PROGRAMMED FOR TWO-YEAR PERIODS.

10. THIS MESSAGE IS TO ALERT THE DEPARTMENT TO THE TREND OF OUR THINKING. AMBASSADOR UNGER WILL BE IN WASHINGTON ON CONSULTATION SEPTEMBER 18-30 AND WOULD LIKE TO EXPLORE THIS SUBJECT FURTHER. BKOWN

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