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BRAZIL

Nuclear Weapons Question

[redacted] The Brazilians have an ambitious nuclear energy program and have certainly not foreclosed the option of developing a nuclear weapons capability in the future [redacted]

[redacted]

The Brazilians may ultimately decide to develop a nuclear weapon, but there are several reasons to doubt that they have already done so.

[redacted]

At present, moreover, Nuclebras appears to be absorbed totally with obtaining the technology provided for in the Brazilian - West German nuclear agreement.

There are also major technical obstacles to the development of a nuclear

weapon at this time. [redacted]

[redacted]

The plutonium produced by any of the three power reactors Brazil is scheduled to have operating by then will be subject to very strict international safeguards and will not be available for weapons use unless Brazil decides to violate these agreements.

International safeguards will apply even if the Brazilian Government intends to use the nuclear technology it obtains from West Germany to build its own small, closed fuel cycle.

[redacted]

Even in the mid-1980s, a Brazilian decision to develop and to test a nuclear explosive would probably endanger its entire nuclear power program. Adverse reaction throughout the world would cut off foreign supplies of enriched uranium at a time when Brazil will have the domestic capability to meet only a small fraction of its need for enriched uranium.

It is highly unlikely that Brazil sees in South America any potential challenge—even from rival Argentina—sufficient to justify a decision to go ahead with an atomic weapons program.

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TSU—Top Secret UMBRA
SS—Secret SPOKE
S—Secret
C—Confidential
U—Unclassified
NOFORN—Not Releasable to Foreign Nationals
ORCON—Dissemination and Ex-
(OC) traction of Information Controlled by Originator
REL—This Information has been Authorized for Release to ...

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