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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1043

DECAPTIONED

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E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR, MNUC, TW  
SUBJECT: ROC'S NUCLEAR INTENTIONS: CONVERSATION WITH PREMIER  
CHIANG CHING-KUO

REF: TAIPEI 6100

1. AT HIS REQUEST, I CALLED ON PREMIER CHIANG CHING-KUO AT 5 P.M., SEPTEMBER 14. DCM ACCOMPANIED ME. FORMIN SHEN CH-ANG-HUAN AND JAMES SOONG, PREMIER'S AIDE AND INTERPRETER, WERE ALSO PRESENT.

2. PREMIER SAID HE HAD ASKED ME TO COME IN TO TALK ABOUT "THE NUCLEAR MATTER", ALTHOUGH FORMIN SHEN'S REPLY TO MY SEPTEMBER 7 DEMARCHE "SHOULD HAVE LEFT NO QUESTION ABOUT THE ROC'S NUCLEAR RESEARCH POLICY". HOWEVER, IN ORDER TO CLEAR UP ANY POSSIBLE MISUNDERSTANDING, PREMIER WISHED TO RESTATE THAT THE POLICY OF HIS GOVERNMENT WAS "NOT TO MANUFACTURE NUCLEAR WEAPONS". THIS HAD BEEN PRESIDENT CHIANG'S POLICY AND HAD BEEN ENDORSED BY THE 9TH PLENUM OF THE KMT IN THE FORM OF A RESOLUTION ADOPTED SOME SIX YEARS AGO (SIC; CORRECT REFERENCE IS 10TH PLENUM, 1969). THIS RESOLUTION, SAID THE PREMIER, DECLARED THAT ALL NUCLEAR RESEARCH ON TAIWAN WOULD BE DIRECTED TOWARD PEACEFUL USES; AND THAT WHEN THE MAINLAND WAS RECOVERED, THE NUCLEAR FACILITIES EXISTING THERE WOULD BE DIVERTED TO PEACEFUL USES AS WELL. THIS, SAID THE PREMIER, WAS "FUNDAMENTAL ROC POLICY".

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
REVIEW AUTHORITY: DONALD A JOHNSTON  
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3. THE PREMIER SAID THAT THE GROC WAS CONDUCTING NUCLEAR RESEARCH ACTIVITIES "BECAUSE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY REQUIRED IT"; WHEN THE LATE PRESIDENT CHIANG HAD SEEN THE CHING HUA REACTOR, HE HAD JUDGED IT TO BE "TOO SMALL" AND HAD THEREFORE ORDERED THE PROCUREMENT OF ANOTHER REACTOR FROM CANADA -- "WITH THE SAME PEACEFUL PURPOSE". "WE DO NOT DENY THAT WE HAVE MADE SOME PROGRESS IN NUCLEAR RESEARCH," CONTINUED THE PREMIER, "BUT THIS PROGRESS IS NOT TOWARD WEAPONS; IT'S TOWARD PEACE." THE PREMIER ADMITTED THAT "REPROCESSING IS NOW A PROBLEM" BUT TO AVOID ANY MISUNDERSTANDING GROC HAD STOPPED RESEARCH IN-QUIRIES RELATING TO A REPROCESSING FACILITY. (WHEN INTERPRETER USED THE TERM "LABORATORY" IN TRANSLATING PREMIER'S REFERENCE TO A REPROCESSING FACILITY, FORMIN SHEN INTERRUPTED TO CORRECT HIM AND TO EXPLAIN DISTINCTION BETWEEN LABORATORY-TYPE FACILITY AND PILOT REPROCESSING PLANT. SHEN ASSERTED GROC HAD NO INTENTION TO DEVELOP "LARGE-SCALE" REPROCESSING CAPABILITY AND WAS NOT IN PROCESS OF "ACQUIRING ANYTHING TO PRODUCE A LARGE QUANTITY OF WEAPONS-GRADE MATERIAL". A LABORATORY FACILITY, SAID SHEN, COULD NOT PRODUCE QUANTITIES SUFFICIENT TO MAKE A WEAPON.)

4. FOLLOWING UP ON SHEN'S REMARKS REGARDING THE REPROCESSING LABORATORY, THE PREMIER STATED THAT COMPONENTS FOR THE SMALL LABORATORY HAD BEEN OBTAINED FROM THE U.S., JAPAN AND EUROPE. HE HAD PERSONALLY INQUIRED ABOUT EQUIPMENT BOUGHT FROM EUROPE AND HAD FOUND IT "NOT SIGNIFICANT": SOME STANDARD PIPE AND GLASS HAD BEEN PURCHASED "BUT NOTHING LARGE-SCALE". "WE HAVE CHECKED INTO THE AVAILABILITY FROM EUROPE, BUT WE HAVE NOT BOUGHT ANY LARGE-SCALE EQUIPMENT", THE PREMIER DECLARED. NOTING THAT "U.S. EXPERTS HAVE VISITED OUR (REPROCESSING) FACILITIES", THE PREMIER SAID THAT "WE HAVE FOR THE TIME BEING DECIDED NOT TO EXPAND THEM AND THEREFORE WE COULD NOT PRODUCE ENOUGH MATERIAL FOR WEAPONS". (NOTE: THE FOREGOING COMMENTS OBVIOUSLY OBSCURE THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE REPROCESSING LABORATORY AND A PILOT REPROCESSING PLANT. WE ARE UNCERTAIN WHETHER THIS STEMS FROM A POOR UNDERSTANDING OR A DESIRE TO OBFUSCATE.)

5. THE PREMIER THEN CITED TWO POLITICAL REASONS IMPELLING THE ROC TO REFRAIN FROM THE PRODUCTION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS. FIRSTLY, SUCH WEAPONS COULD NOT BE USED AGAINST CHINESE PEOPLE,

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AND SECONDLY, HE UNDERSTOOD THE USG'S STRONG OPPOSITION TO PROLIFERATION. THE ROC WANTED GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES, AND THE GROC WILL ALWAYS KEEP ITS PROMISES TO THE USG. HE SAID HE HAD ALREADY INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE YUAN THAT HE WILL AGAIN STATE PUBLICLY WHEN HE APPEARS BEFORE THAT BODY ON

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FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, THAT HIS GOVERNMENT "WILL NEVER MANUFACTURE NUCLEAR WEAPONS TO KILL ITS OWN PEOPLE". THE PREMIER THEN RECALLED THAT HE HAD ASSURED ME (A REFERENCE TO MAY 27 CONVERSATION) THAT "ROC WILL NEVER MANUFACTURE NUCLEAR WEAPONS" AND THAT HE CONSIDERED THIS ASSURANCE AS "A BINDING COMMITMENT TO AN ALLY".

6. THE PREMIER ALSO SAID THAT AT A RECENT "MILITARY CONFERENCE" HE HAD USED THE OLD CHINESE DICTUM "DO TODAY; REGRET TOMORROW; NOT DO TODAY, REGRET TOMORROW" TO POINT UP HIS DIFFERING ATTITUDE TOWARD THE NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM, ON THE ONE HAND, AND THE 10 MAJOR PROJECTS, ON THE OTHER HAND. "TO MANUFACTURE NUCLEAR WEAPONS WOULD BE LIKE DROPPING A ROCK ON ONE'S OWN FEET," HE HAD TOLD HIS MILITARY LEADERS.

7. YESTERDAY, CONTINUED THE PREMIER, HE HAD MET WITH THE CHAIRMAN OF THE ATOMIC ENERGY COUNCIL (AEC) CHIEN TZU-LIANG; VICTOR CHENG, SECY-GEN OF THE AEC; AND LT. GENERAL T'ANG CHUN-PO, DIRECTOR OF CHUNG SHAN INSTITUTE (CIST), TO "EXPLAIN TO THEM HIS (THE PREMIER'S) POSITION" AND THEY HAD ASSURED HIM THAT "IT WAS NEVER IN THEIR THOUGHTS TO MAKE NUCLEAR WEAPONS; THAT THEIR PURPOSE WAS PEACEFUL RESEARCH".

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8. IN VIEW OF USG SENSITIVITIES AND IN ORDER TO CLEAR UP ANY MISUNDERSTANDINGS, SAID THE PREMIER, HE WAS SUGGESTING THAT, WITH USG CONCURRENCE, THE ROC ACCEPT U.S. GOVERNMENT EXPERTS AS RESIDENT, LONG-TERM ADVISORS TO THE CHUNG SHAN INSTITUTE (CIST), INER, AND THE AEC. ALL EXPENSES RELATED TO THESE EXPERTS WOULD BE PAID BY THE GROC. THEY COULD ACT AS INSPECTORS. THE ROC WOULD ACCEPT ONE, OR TWO, OR THREE.

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9. AT THIS POINT OF THE CONVERSATION THE PREMIER STATED THAT HE HAD JUST RECEIVED INFORMATION FROM HONG KONG WHICH "EXPLAINS WHY RUMORS WERE CIRCULATING". HE HANDED ME A DOCUMENT CONSISTING OF SEVERAL PAGES HANDWRITTEN IN CHINESE. THE PREMIER SAID THAT THIS DOCUMENT PROVIDED "DETAILED INFORMATION ON THE BACKGROUND OF THE RUMORS". HE SAID THE INFORMATION "INVOLVES SEVERAL U.S. CONGRESSMEN WHOSE INTENTIONS WERE GOOD, BUT ...." HE THOUGHT WE "WOULD FIND IT AN INTERESTING DOCUMENT".

10. PREMIER THEN SAID HE WANTED TO RESTATE HIS "BASIC POLICY THAT ROC WOULD NEVER MANUFACTURE NUCLEAR WEAPONS -- AND IT HAS NEVER BROKEN A PROMISE". HE "WANTED TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO REAFFIRM ROC'S BASIC POSITION WITH RESPECT TO THE NUCLEAR ISSUE -- ALTHOUGH FORMIN SHEN HAD ALREADY DONE SO".

11. I HEARD OUT THE FOREGOING PRESENTATION WITHOUT INTERRUPTING THE PREMIER. I TOLD HIM I WOULD REPORT HIS REMARKS FULLY AND CAREFULLY TO WASHINGTON, INCLUDING HIS PROPOSAL FOR THE PARTICIPATION OF U.S. EXPERTS IN GROC NUCLEAR RESEARCH ACTIVITIES -- A PROPOSAL I FOUND INTERESTING AND WORTH CONSIDERATION.

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I ALSO THANKED HIM FOR PASSING TO US THE INFORMATION HE HAD RECEIVED FROM HONG KONG AND SAID WE WOULD TRANSLATE IT AND FORWARD IT TO WASHINGTON.

12. I THEN REFERRED TO MY EARLIER DISCUSSION WITH FORMIN SHEN, AND REVIEWED IN DETAIL FOR THE PREMIER THE SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS CONTAINED IN PARA 4 OF DEPTTEL 219733, EXPLAINING THAT GIVEN THE COMPLEXITIES OF NUCLEAR ACTIVITIES I FELT IT IMPORTANT TO COVER THE GROUND VERY CAREFULLY IN ORDER TO AVOID ANY POSSIBLE MISUNDERSTANDING. DURING COURSE OF MY PRESENTATION, I LAID HEAVY EMPHASIS ON OUR CONCERN OVER THE SPREAD OF NATIONAL REPROCESSING FACILITIES, MENTIONING PREVIOUS OCCASIONS ON WHICH SUBJECT WAS RAISED WITH GROC AS WELL AS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES SUCH AS PAKISTAN AND SOUTH KOREA. I SPECIFICALLY REFERRED TO MY MOST RECENT REVIEW WITH SHEN OF THE REPRESENTATIONS WE MADE IN 1973 AND THE ASSURANCES WE HAD RECEIVED FROM SHEN AT THAT TIME WITH RESPECT TO ROC EFFORTS TO OBTAIN A REPROCESSING FACILITY. IN ORDER TO UNDERLINE THE STRENGTH OF CONGRESSIONAL FEELING ON NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION, I ALSO INFORMED PREMIER THAT I HAD JUST LEARNED FROM WASHINGTON THAT SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE MAY BE HOLDING HEARINGS NEXT WEEK CENTERED ON RECENT PRESS REPORTS OF ROC ACTIVITIES IN NUCLEAR FIELD. I CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT I COULD NOT OVEREMPHASIZE IMPORTANCE USG PLACES ON THIS ISSUE, AND EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE GROC WILL REAFFIRM THE ASSURANCES WE HAVE ALREADY RECEIVED.

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13. BY WAY OF RESPONSE TO MY PRESENTATION, THE PREMIER SAID "TWO STEPS HAD BEEN TAKEN" IN ORDER TO CLARIFY MISUNDERSTANDING: (1) "ALL REPROCESSING RESEARCH, PEACEFUL OR OTHERWISE, WILL BE TERMINATED" AND (2) MINISTER SHEN WILL PREPARE A WRITTEN MEMORANDUM SETTING FORTH GROC COMMITMENT NOT TO MANUFACTURE NUCLEAR WEAPONS. I ASKED IF FIRST STEP REFERRED TO PILOT REPROCESSING PLANT, POINTING OUT THAT THERE WERE ESSENTIALLY TWO LEVELS OF REPROCESSING WHICH WERE BEING TALKED ABOUT: (A) THE LABORATORY LEVEL FOR WHICH USG NOW HAS UNDER CONSIDERATION GROC REQUEST FOR PUTTING INTO OPERATION, AND (B) A PILOT REPROCESSING PLANT, I.E., AN "INDUSTRIAL" SCALE OPERATION; THE TYPE OF PROJECT ABOUT WHICH WE HAD MADE REPRESENTATIONS IN 1973. I TOLD PREMIER THAT IT WAS THIS LATTER TYPE OF PROJECT WHICH WAS IN QUESTION WITH REGARD TO OUR INFORMATION ABOUT CURRENT INQUIRIES INER WAS MAKING IN EUROPE.

[REDACTED]

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THIS, I ADDED, WAS OUR SPECIAL CONCERN AT THE MOMENT. THE PREMIER REPLIED THAT "THE USG WAS ALREADY AWARE OF INER'S LABORATORY REPROCESSING PROJECT, BUT IF THE USG CONSIDERED IT DANGEROUS, IT WOULD BE TERMINATED; ALL OPERATIONS ARE KNOWN TO THE USG." I AGAIN ASKED THE PREMIER IF HIS REMARKS INCLUDED A PILOT REPROCESSING FACILITY. HE REPLIED THAT "GROC WOULD NOT PROCEED". I THEN REITERATED THAT USG WOULD BE OPPOSED TO ANY LEVEL OF REPROCESSING NOT PLACED UNDER SAFEGUARDS, BUT THAT WITH RESPECT TO A PILOT REPROCESSING PLANT USG WOULD BE OPPOSED WHETHER OR NOT SAFEGUARDS WERE APPLIED. I THEN AGAIN REFERRED TO THE INFORMATION WE HAD RECEIVED FROM EUROPEAN SOURCES AND ASKED THE PREMIER IF ROC HAD INTENTION OF MAKING FURTHER SUCH INQUIRIES (AS THOSE REPORTED). PREMIER RESPONDED "NO, NO." I SAID I WOULD SO REPORT TO WASHINGTON.

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14. THE PREMIER FOLLOWED UP THIS EXCHANGE WITH COMMENT THAT "THEY HAD MADE INQUIRIES FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES, BUT WILL DISCONTINUE THEM SINCE USG HELD THE VIEW THAT IT WAS DANGEROUS". I SAID I WOULD SO REPORT.

15. THE PREMIER REPEATED HIS PROPOSAL FOR ASSIGNING USG EXPERTS TO OVERSEE GROC NUCLEAR RESEARCH ACTIVITIES, SAYING THAT "THEY COULD STAY ON A PERMANENT BASIS, COULD INSPECT AND WORK TOGETHER WITH GROC PEOPLE". I SAID THAT HIS PROPOSAL APPEARED TO BE A CONSTRUCTIVE ONE AND ASSURED THE PREMIER THAT I WOULD CONVEY IT TO THE DEPARTMENT. I ASKED THE PREMIER IF IT WOULD BE CORRECT TO ASSUME THAT, IF SUCH PERSONNEL WERE ASSIGNED, THEY WOULD HAVE ACCESS TO ALL ROC NUCLEAR ACTIVITIES. HE REPLIED "YES" AND MENTIONED SPECIFICALLY ACTIVITIES AT CHING HUA, CHUNG SHAN (NOTE: WHICH WOULD INCLUDE BUT NOT BE CONFINED TO INER) AND THE AEC. CONVERSATION ENDED WITH PREMIER ASSURING ME THAT WE WOULD BE RECEIVING MEMORANDUM FROM FORMIN SHEN IN NEXT FEW DAYS.

16. COMMENT: THE FOREGOING IS PRETTY MUCH A VERBATIM RENDITION OF THE CONVERSATION AND IS BEING SO TRANSMITTED NOT ONLY IN THE INTERESTS OF ACCURACY, BUT ALSO IN AN EFFORT TO GIVE THE DEPARTMENT, TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE, - "FEEL" FOR THE PREMIER'S MANNER OF HANDLING THIS VERY STICKY ISSUE. I COULD NOT ESCAPE THE IMPRESSION THAT THE PREMIER HAD HOPED TO BE ABLE TO OBFUSCATE OR SKIRT THE PRINCIPAL CAUSE OF OUR CURRENT CONCERN, NAMELY, GROC INTEREST IN ACQUIRING A PILOT REPROCESSING FACILITY. FOR THIS REASON, I FELT IT NECESSARY TO SUBJECT HIM

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TO A FULL REVIEW OF THE GROUND I HAD COVERED A WEEK EARLIER WITH FORMIN SHEN AND ABOUT WHICH HE SHOULD HAVE BEEN FULLY INFORMED. ULTIMATELY, I BELIEVE I RECEIVED THE SPECIFIC ASSURANCE I WAS SEEKING. IN ANY EVENT, NO DOUBT CAN NOW REMAIN THAT THE PREMIER IS FULLY AND CLEARLY INFORMED OF OUR CONCERN AND WHAT WE EXPECT IN THE WAY OF REMEDIAL ACTION FROM HIS GOVERNMENT. THERE CAN ALSO BE NO DOUBT THAT HE IS FULLY AWARE OF THE POSSIBLE DRASTIC CONSEQUENCES IN STORE SHOULD THE GROC PERSIST IN ITS COVERT EFFORTS TO DEVELOP A PILOT PLANT REPROCESSING CAPABILITY.

17. WE SHALL BE COMMENTING SEPARATELY ON OTHER ASPECTS OF THIS MATTER, INCLUDING THE PREMIER'S PROPOSAL FOR STATION-

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ING UG EXPERTS HERE TO PARTICIPATE IN NUCLEAR RESEARCH  
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