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INFO: SNP (01)  
----- 07/0839Z AB (TOTAL COPIES: 001)

ACTION OES-09  
INFO LOG-00 ACDA-13 ADS-00 AMAD-01 CEQ-01 DOEE-00 EB-00  
EUR-00 H-01 INRE-00 INR-01 IO-19 L-03 NEA-00  
NRC-02 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 OIG-02 PH-00 SNP-00 SP-00  
SS-00 T-01 EPAE-00 /BGBN

R 071027Z JUN 91  
FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC #586  
INFO AMEMBASSY BEIJING  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY RABAT  
AMEMBASSY TUNIS  
USMISSION USVIENNA #012  
DIA WASHDC  
CIA WASHDC

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Pik-CC

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E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR  
TAGS: PARM, MNUC, ENRG, TRGY, KNWP, IAEA, CH, AG  
SUBJECT: (U) TV FEATURE ON ALGERIAN NUCLEAR PROGRAM

REF: ALGIERS 2133

1. (C) SUMMARY. A MAY 20 TV FEATURE ON THE ALGERIAN NUCLEAR PROGRAM REVEALS EXTERIOR AND

INTERIOR FOOTAGE OF ALGERIAN NUCLEAR LABS, OF THE NUR REACTOR, AND OF THE SALAM REACTOR SITE. BIGHT NUCLEAR MANAGERS AND SCIENTISTS ARE IDENTIFIED AND INTERVIEWED; ONE APPARENTLY WORKED PREVIOUSLY FOR NASA. ADDITIONAL DETAILS OF THE GENESIS, PURPOSES, AND STAFF OF THE SALAM REACTOR PROJECT ARE PROVIDED. ALGERIA'S INTENTION TO PUT THE REACTOR UNDER IAEA SAFEGUARDS IS REITERATED. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) WE HAVE NOW OBTAINED A COPY OF THE MAY 20 ALGERIAN TELEVISION FEATURE ON THE ALGERIAN NUCLEAR PROGRAM, AS SUMMARIZED IN PARA 6 OF REFTEL. IT RUNS ALMOST TWO HOURS AND IS IN A MIXTURE OF ARABIC AND FRENCH.

3. (C) NEAR THE BEGINNING OF THE PROGRAM, THERE ARE ABOUT 10 MINUTES OF EXTERIOR AND INTERIOR FOOTAGE OF THE NUCLEAR RESEARCH CENTERS IN ALGIERS, DRARIA/DELY IBRAHIM (THE NUR REACTOR NOW IN OPERATION), AND BIRINE/AIN OUSSERA (THE SALAM REACTOR UNDER CONSTRUCTION). WE ARE FORWARDING THE COPY IN OUR POSSESSION TO NEA/AFN FOR FURTHER VIEWING BY THOSE AGENCIES THAT MAY FIND THE VISUALS INFORMATIVE.

4. (C) AMONG THE ALGERIAN NUCLEAR MANAGERS AND SCIENTISTS INTERVIEWED ON CAMERA WERE:

-- CHERIF HADJ-SLIMANE, MINISTER-DELEGATE FOR RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY;

-- BOVALEM TATAH, DIRECTOR OF THE AIN OUSSERA "CENTER FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENERGY SYSTEMS" OF WHICH THE SALAM REACTOR IS FORMALLY A PART;

-- ABDALLAH KHELLAF, RESEARCHER ON THE STAFF OF THE AIN OUSSERA CENTER, IDENTIFIED AT ONE POINT AS A

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FORMER NASA EMPLOYEE (NOTE: IT WOULD BE INTERESTING TO KNOW IF NASA HAS ANY RECORD OF KHELLAF, WHICH COULD ALSO HAVE BEEN SPELLED KHALLAF, KHALAF, KHELEF, OR KHALEF. END NOTE);

-- OMAR GHOU, RESEARCHER ON THE STAFF OF THE AIN OUSSERA CENTER;

-- DJAMEL BBNMORHAMMED, RESEARCHER ON THE STAFF OF THE AIN OUSSERA CENTER;

-- MOHAMMED BELAMRI, RESEARCHER ON THE STAFF OF THE AIN OUSSERA CENTER;

-- MOHAMMED RAZINE, DIRECTOR OF THE NUR REACTOR;

-- ALI BOUSSAHA, DIRECTOR OF THE ALGIERS NUCLEAR RESEARCH CENTER.

5. (U) BEYOND THE POINTS SUMMARIZED IN PARA 6 OF REFTEL, THOSE INTERVIEWED STATED:

-- BEFORE CHINA WAS ENGAGED TO HELP BUILD THE SALAM REACTOR, TALKS WERE HELD WITH FRANCE, WEST GERMANY, THE U.K., THE U.S., THE SOVIET UNION, AND

ARGENTINA. SOME WANTED TO APPLY UNACCEPTABLE POLITICAL PRESSURES; SOME WANTED TOO MUCH MONEY; SOME SIMPLY PROCRASTINATED.

-- CHINA WAS QUICK TO RESPOND; ITS PRICE WAS RIGHT; AND ITS ONLY CONDITION WAS THAT ALGERIA COMMIT ITSELF TO LIMITING THE USES OF THE REACTOR TO PEACEFUL PURPOSES; THIS WAS ACCEPTABLE, SINCE IT WAS WHAT ALGERIA INTENDED ANYWAY.

-- CONSTRUCTION OF THE REACTOR BEGAN IN 1988.  
-- THE SYSTEMS USED IN THE REACTOR HAVE ALREADY BEEN TESTED OUT IN CHINA AND THUS PRESENT NO DANGER TO THOSE LIVING NEARBY.

-- ITS USEFUL LIFE IS 30 YEARS.

-- THE SMOKESTACK IS 60 METERS HIGH.

-- ALGERIA HAS VERY CLOSE RELATIONS WITH THE IAEA, AND SEVERAL OF ITS DIRECTORS HAVE VISITED THE COUNTRY.

-- AT THE APPROPRIATE TIME, ALGERIA WILL BE IN TOUCH WITH THE IAEA TO PUT THE SALAM REACTOR UNDER SAFEGUARDS.

-- UP TO NOW, IAEA INSPECTORS HAVE NOT VISITED THE SALAM CONSTRUCTION SITE, ALTHOUGH THEY POSSESS FULL INFORMATION ON THE AIN OUSSERA CENTER.

-- IN THE CASE OF THE NUR REACTOR, ALGERIA AND THE IAEA SIGNED AN AGREEMENT TO PUT IT UNDER SAFEGUARDS UPON ITS COMPLETION.

-- IN 1982, ALGERIA HAD TEN GRADUATES IN NUCLEAR SCIENCES; IN 1991, IT HAS ALMOST 2,000 NUCLEAR SCIENTISTS, TECHNICIANS, AND EMPLOYEES -- ALL ALGERIANS.

-- ALL THE PERSONNEL AT THE CENTER FOR DEVELOPMENT OF ENERGY SYSTEMS OF WHICH THE SALAM REACTOR IS A PART ARE ALGERIAN. FOREIGNERS DO VISIT FROM TIME

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TO TIME FOR SHORT PERIODS THAT RUN ANYWHERE FROM  
ONE WEEK TO THREE MONTHS. IN NO WAY ARE THEY  
LONG-TERM ADVISERS.

-- DURING CONSTRUCTION OF THE NUR REACTOR  
(1982-89), ALGERIA HAD STUDENTS IN NUCLEAR SCIENCES  
IN BELGIUM, HUNGARY, AND TURKEY.

-- BY THE END OF THE ENTURY, ALGERIA WANTS TO HAVE  
DEVELOPED ITS NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY TO THE POINT OF  
PERMITTING ELECTRICAL POWER GENERATION.

6. (U) THE CHINESE AMBASSADOR, ALSO INTERVIEWED,  
STATED THAT:

-- CHINA IS FIRMLY COMMITTED TO NON-PROLIFERATION.

-- COUNTRIES TO WHICH CHINA SELLS NUCLEAR  
TECHNOLOGY MUST COMMIT THEMSELVES TO (A) USE IT

ONLY FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES; (B) PUT IT UNDER IAEA  
SAFEGUARDS; AND (C) ABSTAIN FROM TRANSFERRING IT TO  
THIRD COUNTRIES.

-- SINO-ALGERIAN NUCLEAR COOPERATION BEGAN IN 1983.

-- THE NOMINAL POWER OF THE SALAM REACTOR IS 10  
MEGAWATTS; ITS MAXIMUM THERMAL POWER IS 15  
MEGAWATTS.

-- THERE IS NO TRUTH TO CHARGES THAT IT WILL BE  
USED TO PRODUCE NUCLEAR WEAPONS.

-- CHINA UNDERSTANDS THAT ALGERIA WILL BE  
TRANSMITTING THE DETAILS OF THE NUCLEAR PROGRAM AT  
AIN OUSSERA TO THE IAEA AND PUTTING THE SALAM  
REACTOR UNDER IAEA SAFEGUARDS.

7. (U) IN THE DAYS FOLLOWING THIS PROGRAM,  
ALGERIAN NEWSPAPERS COMMENTED PROUDLY ON ALGERIA'S  
PROGRESS IN THE NUCLEAR FIELD. A MAY 22 ARTICLE IN  
THE INDEPENDENT ALGIERS DAILY "QUOTIDIEN D'ALGERIE"  
REPEATED STATEMENTS MADE OVER AND OVER BY ALGERIAN  
OFFICIALS TO THE EFFECT THAT ALGERIA, LIKE ANY  
STATE, HAD THE SOVEREIGN RIGHT TO ACQUIRE NUCLEAR  
TECHNOLOGY, THAT ISRAEL AND OTHERS DID NOT LIKE  
THIS, AND THAT WESTERN PRESS LEAKS WERE DESIGNED TO  
BLOCK IT. THE ARTICLE CLOSED WITH STATEMENTS THAT  
WELL CAPTURE THE DEFENSIVE AND PARANOID STATE OF  
MIND THE ALGERIANS HAVE PRODUCED FOR THEMSELVES:  
"THE REDOUBTABLE POWER OF THE AMERICAN MEDIA IS

WELL KNOWN. IT STRIKES DOWN PRESIDENTS AND EXTENDS  
ITS TENTACLES ACROSS THE SEAS TO AFFECT PEOPLES AND  
STATES. EVEN DISTANT AND PEACEFUL ALGERIA, BECAUSE  
OF A FEW MEGAWATTS, FINDS ITSELF UNDER HEAVY-HANDED  
SCRUTINY.... WILL AIN OUSSERA BE A BASTION OF  
PROGRESS OR A VICTIM OF SUBMISSION TO THE WEST'S  
DICTATES? LET US NOT BE TRAPPED IN THIS SHAMEFUL  
ALTERNATIVE. WE MUST PROCLAIM HIGH AND LOUD THE  
RIGHT OF NATIONS TO KNOWLEDGE, SCIENCE, AND  
TECHNOLOGY AND PUT AN END TO THE DISCRIMINATION  
THAT ARAB STATES IN PARTICULAR HAVE SUFFERED. FOR  
OVER 40 YEARS, ISRAEL HAS BEEN FEEDING ON THE  
HOLOCAUST OUTRAGEOUSLY AND PLAYING THE ULTIMATE  
VICTIM. EACH TIME AN ARAB COUNTRY MAKES A TIMID  
FORAY INTO THE FORBIDDEN TERRITORY OF ADVANCED  
TECHNOLOGY, THE ZIONIST STATE CRIES LIKE A LAMB  
ABOUT TO BE DEVOURER. EVEN AS IT TERROPIZES ITS  
NEIGHBORS LIKE A WOLF. THE STILL-SMOKING RUINS OF

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IRAQ SHOW WHERE THIS LOGIC OF REPRESSION AND  
HUMILIATION CAN LEAD."

8. (C) COMMENT: WHILE, ON THE SURFACE, THIS  
PROGRAM WAS A REMARKABLE AND UNCHARACTERISTIC CASE  
OF ALGERIAN OPENNESS, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN MORE  
CONVINCING HAD IT COME SPONTANEOUSLY, INSTEAD OF AS  
PART OF A DELIBERATE CAMPAIGN TO COUNTER WESTERN  
PRESS REPORTS. WE DOUBT THAT THE VISUALS WILL GIVE  
AWAY ANY SECRETS, BUT THE SHOTS OF ALGERIAN LABS  
SHOULD SAY SOMETHING ABOUT THE SOPHISTICATION OR  
LACK THEREOF OF THE WORK BEING PERFORMED IN THEM.  
END SUMMARY.

ROSS