

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-09 ISO-00 AEC-05 FEA-01 ACDA-05 CIAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6091

INFO USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

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BEIRUT PASS BAGHDAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TECH, TGEN

SUBJECT: IRAQI INTEREST IN BUYING FRENCH NATURAL  
URANIUM POWER REACTOR

1. THE IRAQIS ARE DISCUSSING WITH THE FRENCH  
NUCLEAR AGENCY THE POSSIBILITY OF BUYING A 500-  
MEGAWATT (ELECTRIC) NUCLEAR POWER STATION. THE  
INTERESTING ASPECT IS THAT THE IRAQIS ARE CON-  
SIDERING THE GAS GRAPHITE NATURAL URANIUM REACTOR  
DESIGN, ABANDONED BY THE FRENCH IN  
1970 IN FAVOR OF U.S. LIGHT WATER DESIGNS, USING  
ENRICHED URANIUM FUEL. MFA NUCLEAR AFFAIRS  
DIRECTOR ALLINE SAID THE DISCUSSIONS HAVE BEEN  
GOING ON FOR SEVERAL MONTHS BUT ARE STILL AT  
A "PRELIMINARY" STAGE. HE VOLUNTEERED THAT THE  
IRAQI PREFERENCE FOR THE GAS GRAPHITE REACTOR  
OWED TO THEIR DESIRE TO BE INDEPENDENT OF FOREIGN  
SOURCES OF ENRICHMENT.

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2. FRANCE HAS BUILT FIVE GAS GRAPHITE NATURAL URANIUM REACTOR POWER STATIONS WITH A CAPACITY EACH OF ABOUT 500 MEGAWATTS (ELECTRIC). ONE OF THESE IS LOCATED IN VANDELLOS, SPAIN, NEAR THE FRENCH BORDER. THE LAST TO BE PUT UNDER CONSTRUCTION (ST. LAURENT II), IN 1966, WAS COMPLETED IN 1972.

3. COMMENT: GIVEN THIS TIME LAPSE, THE COST OF BUILDING JUST ONE GAS GRAPHITE REACTOR WOULD PROBABLY BE ASTRONOMICAL. AS LE MONDE COMMENTED, ENGINEERING TEAMS WOULD HAVE TO BE RECONSTITUTED, INDUSTRIAL CAPACITY REBUILT, PROBABLY NOT TO BE RE-USED UNLESS OF COURSE THE FRENCH COULD FIND OTHER BUYERS. PERHAPS MORE IMPORTANT FOR U.S. INTERESTS IS THE EVENTUAL QUESTION OF SAFEGUARDS. THE FRENCH DO NOT HAVE INTERNATIONAL SAFEGUARDS ON THE REACTOR THEY BUILT IN VANDELLOS, SPAIN. THEY CLAIM THAT GIVEN THE CONTINUING PRESENCE OF FRENCH TECHNICIANS AND THE REPROCESSING IN FRANCE OF SPENT FUEL, THERE IS LITTLE POSSIBILITY OF AN UNDETECTED DIVERSION OF PLUTINIUM.  
RUSH

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## Message Attributes

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