

December 20, 1968

**National Atomic Energy Commission Report to the
Argentinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Brazil's
Request for Uranium**

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Summary:

This document reports on CNEA's position on the exports of uranium to Brazil and reports that the operation will not produce any economic benefit. Nevertheless, it is favorable to the export as a token of Argentina's good will in regard to nuclear cooperation with Brazil.

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BUENOS AIRES, 20 de diciembre 1968

SEÑOR MINISTRO:

Tengo el honor de dirigirme a V.E. para informarlo y solicitar sus instrucciones con respecto a las siguientes tratativas iniciadas por Brasil ante esta COMISION NACIONAL, para adquirir en la Argentina una pequeña partida de uranio:

En el mes de septiembre último visitó esta Casa el señor Carlos Antonio BETTANCOURT BUENO, Primer Secretario de la Embajada de Brasil, quien nos adelantó el interés de su país en comprarnos cinco toneladas de uranio, libre de salvaguardias y dentro de la mayor reserva.

Dado el carácter informal de la gestión no se tomó ninguna decisión, pero se respondió al señor BETTANCOURT BUENO que se consideraría la solicitud con la mejor disposición y dentro del espíritu de colaboración que caracteriza las relaciones de ambos países.

Entre tanto iniciamos en este organismo el análisis de las posibilidades reales existentes a este respecto. Asimismo se consultó la opinión del señor Director de Política de la Cancillería, quien estimó que en el momento actual y dado el espíritu de buena voluntad en que se desarrollan nuestras relaciones con Brasil, debía tratarse de acceder a la solicitud siempre y cuando no supusiera un mayor esfuerzo.

En fecha reciente se recibió una nota del señor Presidente de la COMISION DE ENERGIA NUCLEAR de Brasil, profesor Uriel da COSTA RIBEIRO, en la que confirma y oficializa dicha solicitud; nota cuya respuesta concreta hemos diferido hasta conocer las instrucciones del señor Ministro.

A fin de proporcionar a V.E. los elementos de juicio de competencia de esta COMISION NACIONAL, cumpla en hacerle conocer las conclusiones del análisis de posibilidades efectuado:

Aspectos técnicos: esta COMISION NACIONAL está en condiciones de proveer el uranio pedido. Por su escaso volumen dicha provisión no incidiría mayormente en su programa regular de producción ni afectaría su stock.

Aspectos económicos: la negociación no reportaría en la práctica beneficio alguno. Por el contrario, desde el punto de vista operacional son más los inconvenientes que las ventajas que se pueden esperar. Se estima sin embargo que son otros los tipos de consideraciones que deben prevalecer para juzgar sobre el interés de la operación.

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Aspectos legales: de acuerdo a lo establecido en el decreto nº 1307/68, la COMISION NACIONAL DE ENERGIA ATOMICA está autorizada para exportar hasta 100 toneladas de uranio contenido en concentrados, dentro del lapso de los próximos 3 años, contados a partir del 1º de enero de 1968. Es decir que tampoco en este aspecto habría problemas para exportar las 5 toneladas pedidas por Brasil.

Finalmente debo señalar al señor Ministro que dentro del marco de las relaciones entre ambas comisiones de energía atómica, estimamos conveniente satisfacer el requerimiento formulado, como una expresión más de nuestra voluntad de cooperación.

Saludo a V.E. con mi mayor consideración.

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| CNEA |
| AI |
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JOSE LUIS ALEGRIA
Jefe Departamento Planes

OSCAR A. QUIHILLALT
PRESIDENTE

SECRET

Buenos Aires, 20 December 1968

Minister:

I have the honour to contact Your Excellency to inform you and request your instructions with respect to the following negotiations started by Brazil before this NATIONAL COMMISSION, to acquire in Argentina a small portion of uranium:

In the last month of September, Mr. Carlos Antonio BETTANCOURT BUENO, First Secretary of the Embassy of Brazil, visited this House and informed his country's interest in purchasing five tons of uranium, without safeguards and with great discretion.

Given the informal character of the consultation, no decisions were made but it was responded to Mr. BETTANCOURT BUENO that the request would be considered with great disposition and in the spirit of collaboration that characterises the relationship between the countries.

However, we began in this institution an analysis of the actual possibilities in that respect. Likewise, the opinion of the Director of Politics at the Foreign Ministry was consulted, who estimated that in the current situation and given the spirit of good will under which our relations with Brazil have been developing, agreement should be sought always and as long as it did not imply greater efforts.

At a recent date, a note from Mr. President of the NUCLEAR ENERGY COMMISSION of Brazil, Professor Uriel da COSTA RIBEIRO was received, in which it confirms and officialises the above mentioned request; note to which we have delayed responses until we know your instructions, Minister.

In order to provide Your Excellency the elements for your decision which are in the domain of this NATIONAL COMMISSION, I must make you aware of the conclusions from the analysis of the possibilities conducted:

Technical aspects: this NATIONAL COMMISSION is able to provide the requested uranium. Due to its scarce volume, that provision would not significantly affect our regular production programme nor affect its stock.

Economic aspects: the negotiation would not yield in practice any benefit. On the contrary, from an operational point of view one may expect more inconveniences than advantages. It is estimated, however, that other types of considerations should prevail to evaluate our interests in this operation.

Legal aspects: according to what was established in the decree 1307/68, the NATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION is authorised to export up to 100 tons of non-concentrated uranium in the course of the next 3 years, starting on January 1st 1968. That is, also in this aspect there would be no problems in exporting the 5 tons requests by Brazil.

Finally, I should point out to you, Mr. Minister, that in the framework of the relations between the two atomic energy commissions, we find it convenient to satisfy the requests made as one more expression of our will to cooperate.

I salute Y.E. with my greatest consideration,

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JOSE LUIS ALEGRIA

Head of Planning Department

OSCAR A. QUIHILLALT

President □□ □□