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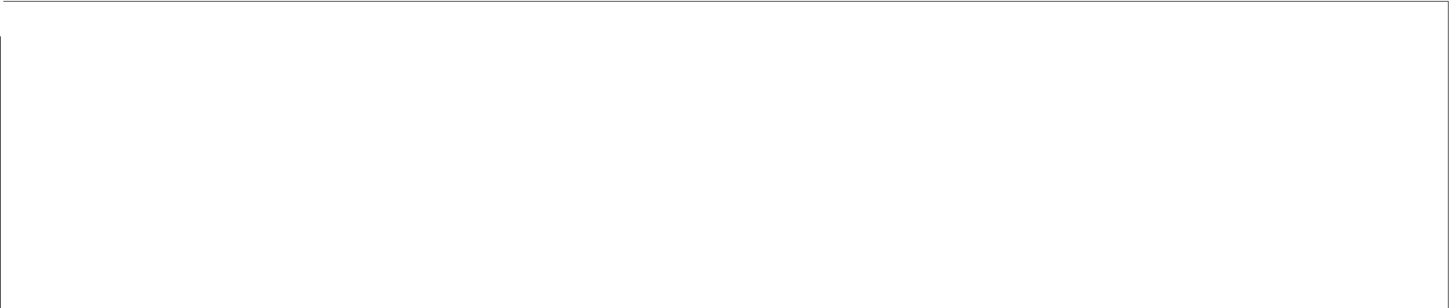
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 C O N F I D E N T I A L BUCHAREST 03143

EXDIS

LONDON FOR RMO ARNOLD WEBER AT MED CONFERENCE

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: ENGR, TRGY, PREL, AMED, RO

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SUBJECT: ROMANIA REQUESTS SCIENTIFIC ASSISTANCE ON
- RADIOACTIVE FALLOUT
-

REF: (A) BUCHAREST 3102, (B) STATE 136047

1. (C - ENTIRE TEXT)

2. SUMMARY: FOLLOWING A SUDDEN INCREASE IN RADIOACTIVITY ON MAY 1, GOR LEADERSHIP HELD AN EMERGENCY MEETING, WHICH DECIDED TO FORM A SPECIAL COMMITTEE, REVIEW THE ALARMING MEASUREMENTS, AND SEEK U.S. SCIENTIFIC ASSISTANCE. ACTION REQUESTED: AN IMMEDIATE REPLY TO THE ROMANIAN REQUEST, INCLUDING THE POSSIBILITY OF SENDING AN EXPERT ON RADIOACTIVE FALLOUT TO ROMANIA. IF SERIOUS DAMAGE TO DAIRY OR OTHER FOOD SUPPLIES SEEMS LIKELY, USG SHOULD BEGIN CONSIDERING WHETHER IT WOULD NOT BE IN OUR INTEREST TO OFFER EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE. END SUMMARY.

3. FOREIGN MINISTER VADUVA CALLED IN DCM TO AN "URGENT" MEETING ON MAY 1, IN ABSENCE OF AMBASSADOR WHO IS TRAVELLING IN ROMANIA. IOAN URSU, FIRST VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, ACCOMPANIED THE FOREIGN MINISTER AND LED THE DISCUSSION. MARIN IVASCU, VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE STATE COMMITTEE FOR NUCLEAR ENERGY, JOINED LATER. RACEANU (MFA) WAS ALSO PRESENT. URSU NOTED THAT THE EMBASSY HAD INQUIRED ABOUT RADIATION LEVELS ON APRIL 30 (REF A), AND EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR OUR INTEREST.

4. URSU SAID THAT AS SOON AS GOR LEARNED ABOUT THE CHERNOBYL INCIDENT, IT HAD ALERTED ITS NATIONAL NETWORK OF MONITORING STATIONS TO MEASURE AIR, WATER AND SOIL RADIOACTIVITY. UNTIL THE NIGHT OF APRIL 30/MAY 1, THERE HAD BEEN NO SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN RADIOACTIVITY -- WHICH HAD RESULTED IN A "COMMUNIQUE" OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION TO THAT EFFECT ON APRIL 30. (NOTE: WE HAVE NOT SEEN THIS REPORT.)

5. DURING THE NIGHT OF APRIL 30/MAY 1, THERE WAS A GREAT INCREASE IN RADIOACTIVITY IN SEVERAL REGIONS OF

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ROMANIA, ESPECIALLY IN THE NORTHEASTERN PART, URSU CONTINUED. PRESIDENT CEAUSESCU CHAIRED A MEETING OF THE LEADERSHIP TO REVIEW THE RESULTS, WHICH URSU ATTENDED IN HIS OFFICIAL CAPACITY AND AS A PHYSICIST. THE LEADERSHIP DECIDED TO FORM A PARTY/STATE GROUP, HEADED BY ACADEMICIAN ELENA CEAUSESCU TO IMPLEMENT THE NECESSARY MEASURES TO PROTECT THE POPULATION, LIVESTOCK AND THE COUNTRY IN GENERAL. THE LEADERSHIP ALSO ASKED TO PASS TO U.S. AUTHORITIES, IN CONFIDENCE, THE KEY RADIOACTIVE MEASUREMENTS, AND A REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE BY SPECIALISTS OR APPROPRIATE MATERIALS TO HELP ANALYZE THE SITUATION IN ROMANIA. URSU SAID THAT SINCE IT WAS A HUMANITARIAN MATTER, GOR DID NOT OBJECT TO SHARING THE INFORMATION WITH OTHER STATES, BUT ASKED REPEATEDLY THAT IT BE HELD CONFIDENTIALLY.

6. MEASUREMENTS OF RADIOACTIVITY AT 4:30 TO 5:00 A.M. ROMANIAN TIME, MAY 1 (AFTER NEGLIGIBLE REPORTS UP TO NIGHT OF APRIL 30):

A. IASI (MOLDAVIA):

- -- SOIL RADIOACTIVITY SLIGHTLY OVER ALARM LEVEL (50,000 PICO CURIES PER SQUARE METER).
- -- AIR: CLOSE TO NORMAL, NO SIGNIFICANT CHANGE.

B. SUCEAVA:

- -- SOIL ABOVE WARNING LEVELS (20,000 PICO CURIES PER SQUARE METER)

C. TIRGU MURES (TRANSYLVANIA):

- -- SOIL CLOSE TO WARNING LEVEL (10,000 PICO CURIES)

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D. TULCEA (DANUBE DELTA):

- -- INCREASE IN ATMOSPHERIC RADIATION, 600 PICO
- CURIES PER CUBIC METER.
-

7. AFTER FORMING THE COMMITTEE, THEY OBTAINED THE FOLLOWING HIGHER LEVELS OF RADIOACTIVITY AT 1:00 P.M. MAY 1:

A. IASI:

- -- SOIL: OVER 200,000 PICO CURIES
- -- AIR: FOR FIRST TIME, SMALL READING AT ABOUT
- WARNING LEVEL
- (ABOUT 1000 PICO CURIES PER CUBIC METER)

B. SUCEAVA: LEVELS SAME AS EARLIER

C. TULCEA: AIR RADIOACTIVITY REACHED 3000 PICO CURIES PER CUBIC METER, THEN DROPPED A LITTLE.

D. GALATI (DANUBE, NEAR SOVIET BORDER):

- -- AIR RADIOACTIVITY REACHED ABOUT 2000 PICO
- CURIES.

E. THERE WAS ALSO A SMALL INCREASE IN RADIOACTIVITY IN SEVERAL OTHER PLACES IN ROMANIA, INCLUDING BUCHAREST, BUT NOT A CAUSE FOR CONCERN.

8. ASKED WHY THERE MIGHT BE SUCH A SUDDEN INCREASE IN RADIATION, AFTER NORMAL READINGS, URSU SAID HE HAD NO OFFICIAL CONCLUSION. HOWEVER, IT LOOKED TO HIM AS IF ROMANIA HAD BEEN LUCKY AT FIRST, WITH THE WIND HEADED TOWARD POLAND; BUT UNFORTUNATELY THE WIND SHIFTED. HE ATTRIBUTED THE SUDDEN CHANGE IN SOIL RADIOACTIVITY TO AN ACCOMPANYING LIGHT RAIN -- "NOT MUCH RAIN, BUT ENOUGH."

9. REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE. URSU AND IVASCU SAID ROMANIAN SCIENTISTS WANTED INFORMATION FROM U.S. SCIENTISTS ON PREVENTION AND TREATMENT OF HARM FROM THE VARIOUS ISOTOPES. THEY WERE AWARE OF RADIOACTIVE IODINE AND THE THREAT TO THE THYROID; THEY WERE LESS

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ACQUAINTED WITH CESIUM AND STRONTIUM. WHAT WERE THE ANTIDOTES? WERE THERE NOT ANTIDOTES MORE SOPHISTICATED THAN POTASSIUM IODIDE (WITH WHICH THEY WERE FAMILIAR)? WHAT TREATMENT WAS THERE FOR ANIMALS? WERE THERE OTHER ISOTOPES? SO FAR, ROMANIA HAD NEVER HAD ANY CASES OF RADIATION POISONING, AND URSU REALIZED THAT THE U.S. HAD A GREAT BODY OF EXPERIENCE. THEY THEREFORE REQUESTED WHATEVER WRITTEN MATERIALS OR INSTRUMENTS WOULD BE APPROPRIATE. THEY WOULD WELCOME A VISIT BY SPECIALISTS. THEY WANT KNOWLEDGE, NOT BROAD ADVICE. URSU THEN ADDED, ALMOST AS AN AFTERTHOUGHT, THAT ROMANIA HAD NO INFORMATION WHATSOEVER ABOUT THE REACTOR INCIDENT ITSELF, OTHER THAN THAT AVAILABLE THROUGH THE PRESS, AND SAID HE WOULD APPRECIATE ANY INFORMATION THE U.S. COULD PROVIDE, ON A CONFIDENTIAL BASIS.

10. COMMENT: APPARENTLY GOR HAS NOT BEEN BRIEFED AT ALL BY THE SOVIETS, AND IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT THE USSR WILL BE IN A POSITION TO SPARE EXPERTS. WE HAVE A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE A HUMANITARIAN AND SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTION THAT WILL BE APPRECIATED AT THE HIGHEST POLITICAL LEVELS HERE. THE INFORMATION MAY ALSO BE OF VALUE TO US. WHILE WE SHOULD RESPECT THE GOR REQUEST FOR CONFIDENTIALITY -- OBVIOUSLY INTENDED TO AVOID PANIC, AS WELL AS OFFENSE TO THE SOVIETS -- WE CAN EXPECT EVENTUALLY TO HAVE A STRONGLY POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE ATTITUDES OF ORDINARY ROMANIANS AS WELL, ONCE THEY LEARN THE U.S. PROVIDED PROMPT HELP.

11. IT WOULD ALSO BE USEFUL FOR USG TO GAUGE HOW BADLY FOOD SUPPLIES WILL BE CONTAMINATED HERE. IF
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THIS TURNS OUT TO BE SERIOUS, WE MAY ALSO WANT TO
CONSIDER THE POSSIBILITY OF MAKING A MAJOR POLITICAL
DEMONSTRATION BY PROVIDING RELIEF ASSISTANCE, AS WE
DID FOLLOWING FLOODS AND THE EARTHQUAKE IN THE 1970S.
END COMMENT.

12. ACTION REQUESTED: PLEASE PROVIDE AN IMMEDIATE
ANSWER TO THE REQUEST FOR SCIENTIFIC ASSISTANCE.
PLEASE ALSO ADVISE WHAT DATA WE CAN SHARE WITH GOR
ON THE CHERNOBYL INCIDENT ITSELF. KIRK

END OF MESSAGE

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