

SECRET

No: ²³ [8805]

Date: 30 December 1974

²⁹ [] DESK


⁰¹ [FETCH]

We attach ² 2 copies of note number ²³ [611] of 17 December 1974
from ⁰¹ [FETCH]

Yours sincerely ^{of}

[Redacted signature box]

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NUCLEAR RESEARCH IN CUBA

1. The first national meeting of the National Research Institute (ININ) was held in August 1974 and, according to a Havana radio broadcast monitored by the BBC on 23 October, some 135 papers related to the peaceful use of the atom were presented. One of these papers had dealt with "the identification of iron and manganese in minerals by the use of neutrons" and another with research in "changing the physical properties of bagasse to give it solidity and durability; in order to achieve this the bagasse was treated with nuclear radiation". The newspaper, Juventud Rebelde, reported on 22 August that a paper was presented at the same meeting on the subject of thermonuclear powerplants by **MARIE FLEITES**, head of the Department of Future Development of the *Empresa Consolidada de la Electricidad*. **FLEITES** estimated 1980 as the earliest possible date for work to begin on such a plant.
2. The 23 October broadcast, made by **Hamel Juan SANDZA**, claimed that research into the use of nuclear energy for economic growth during the previous five years was producing the necessary technical and scientific knowledge; Cuban leaders expected to have nuclear plants generating electricity in Cuba in the near future. More than 10 institutes, including ININ, were involved in the work.
3. A Prensa Latina report, datelined Moscow, appeared in Granma of 10 December quoting the Russian Vice-Minister of Energy and Electrification, **Nikolai D MATISEV**, as announcing the project study for an "atomelectric" plant in Cuba. The plant would have two reactors of 400 or 500 megawatts. (The proposal for such a study was presumably discussed by the Russian energy delegation, led by the Minister of Energy and Electrification, **Piotr S NEPOROZHNI**, which visited Cuba in the second week of October 1974; it would also seem probable that the project was included in the agenda dealt with in the first week of December by the Fifth Cuban/Soviet Meeting of the Commission for Economic and Scientific/Technical Collaboration which was led on the Russian side by **Vladimir N NOVIKOV**, Vice-President of the Council of Ministers).
4. As I have already reported, a US professor of nuclear physics, **Jerome STEFFENS**, is in Cuba at present, lecturing at Havana University. There may, of course, be no connection between **STEFFENS** and the nuclear research already taking place in Cuba for thermonuclear power plants. However, when I met **STEFFENS** briefly on 7 December (having already met his wife some three days earlier) he said he would like to meet again at my office, or socially, as there were several matters concerning his work in Cuba which we (the mission) might find of interest. **Nicole SZULC**

/later.....

(1/10)

later told me that she had given STEFFENS my name and office telephone number as he had asked for them; she added rather mysteriously that whatever it was he wished to discuss was a matter between the two of us, and she had no wish to be involved (this was anyway stating the obvious as she was leaving two days later). I hope to see STEFFENS again and will report anything of interest.

5. Since drafting the above I have spoken to Dorothy STEFFENS on their hotel telephone on 17 December. She said that they were leaving for Barbados on 18 December and so were unable to accept the invitation I had given them. She also remarked that the matter her husband had wished to discuss had lost its urgency: it could wait until their next visit in 1975.