

Arms - Nuclear - 4th Country

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

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June 4, 1957



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Mr. Robert E. Matteson
USDEL Disarmament
American Embassy
London, England

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EO 12356, Sec. 1.3(a)
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Withdrawal No. 23-35

Dear Bob:

In response to the Embassy's telegram # 6636 of June 6 (Disarmament No. 243) I enclose two Congressional documents which will, I believe, provide you the data you request in paragraph 1. The Department contributed a considerable amount of information to these documents and they represent the most complete study on the subject available at this time.

The Legal Adviser's office (Miss Bolter) is compiling the list you requested in paragraph 3 and will pouch it as soon as it is completed.

I also enclose a weighty OIR contribution to NIE 100-6-57 on the Fourth Country problem. This is a very preliminary draft representing the views of the intelligence area of the Department, but I thought that the Governor as well as other members of the delegation might like to look at it. As you know, the final NIE will be an agreed document of the entire Intelligence Community and the views expressed in our contribution may undergo considerable modification. In any event, this is the first time that systematic treatment has been given the fourth country problem from an intelligence standpoint and I think the exercise has been well worth it.

In view of the latest developments, there has been much weekend and night work here and I suspect Ray may be able to bring something back with him when he returns later in the week.

Best regards to Governor Stassen and the rest of the Delegation,

Sincerely,

Hel

Helmut Sonnenfeldt
Division of Research for USSR
and Eastern Europe

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E.O. 13526, Sec. 3.
NW 48461
By JL0124, NARA, Date 11/11/2015

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OIR CONTRIBUTION TO NIE 100-6-57:

NUCLEAR WEAPONS PRODUCTION IN FOURTH COUNTRIES -
LIKELIHOOD AND CONSEQUENCES

May 31, 1957

NOTE: Attached are regional studies of the fourth country problem as it affects Western Europe, the Soviet Bloc, the Middle East, Far East and Latin America. A further paper on general and global implications of the fourth country problem will complete the Department's contribution to this estimate.

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OUR CONTRIBUTION TO NIE 100-6-57:

NUCLEAR WEAPONS PRODUCTION IN FOURTH
COUNTRIES -- LIKELIHOOD AND CONSEQUENCES

PART E

LATIN AMERICA

May 31, 1957

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OFFICE OF INTELLIGENCE RESEARCH

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-Latin Am.

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DRA CONTRIBUTION TO NIE 100-6-57

PART E: LATIN AMERICA

GENERAL

No Latin American country at present has the combination of raw materials resources, scientific and technological facilities, and competent scientific manpower required to produce nuclear weapons. Nor has any Latin American government expressed interest in developing a nuclear weapons program. However, a number of countries in the area are now launching programs to produce nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and may eventually be in a position to manufacture nuclear weapons. The cost factor is not expected to present an insurmountable obstacle to a weapons production program in the larger countries, such as Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico. Brazil is the only country in the area which appears to have the capability -- given favorable circumstances and ample and continuing outside assistance -- to produce a limited quantity of atomic bombs by 1967. No Latin American country, left entirely to its own resources, will be in a position to produce nuclear weapons within the next decade.

Nowhere in Latin America has thorough exploration of atomic minerals reserves been carried out, but incomplete reconnaissance indicates the likelihood that within ten years a number of Latin

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American countries will be at least self sufficient in fissionable ore resources. The area may become an important source of atomic minerals for the free world. Argentina and Brazil have known deposits of fissionable minerals and have begun limited exploitation and stockpiling. Argentina is reportedly able to process twenty tons of metallic uranium per year, while Brazil is mining and stockpiling thorium ores, monazite sands, and sodium sulphate rare earths in excess of ten thousand tons annually. Brazil is not yet working newly discovered uranium deposits.

No Latin American country has the highly developed heavy electrical and chemical industries necessary to support a nuclear weapons program. It is believed that Brazil is the most advanced Latin American nation in this respect, with Argentina and Mexico ranking next in order of importance.

Latin America has a comparatively small number of specialists trained in nuclear physics and allied fields. A few Latin Americans receive training each year in research centers in the US and Europe, and a somewhat larger number is now beginning to study at research centers in Latin America. The limited number of such students and the type of training they receive would appear to preclude the early development of a weapons program in the area.

Most Latin American nuclear research programs are developing within the scope of the US Atoms-for-Peace program. The US has bilateral agreements for cooperation concerning civil uses of atomic energy with Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica,

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Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela. In addition, Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, and Uruguay have expressed interest in negotiating a power reactor agreement with the US. Negotiations are now being conducted with Brazil.

Private and/or government sponsored research in nuclear energy is being carried on in universities and/or national institutes in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, and Venezuela. In the remaining countries organized nuclear research programs have not advanced beyond the planning stage.

Within the framework of the OAS, the Committee of Presidential Representatives at their second and third meetings (January and May 1957) proposed the creation of an Inter-American Nuclear Energy Commission that would have jurisdiction over all aspects of inter-American development of nuclear energy and provide for cooperative research and training programs. Proposals for the creation of regional nuclear research centers have also been presented by a number of countries within the OAS. The US has proposed the establishment of a regional research center in Puerto Rico, while Cuba, Venezuela, Argentina, and Brazil have suggested that centers be set up on their national territory. While it is still not certain that such centers will be established under the OAS, there is a strong probability that during the next decade there will be an increasing degree of inter-American cooperation in nuclear research.

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BRAZILI. CAPABILITIES FOR NUCLEAR WEAPONS PRODUCTION

At present Brazil lacks the facilities and technical skills necessary to produce nuclear weapons. In the absence of substantial and continuing outside assistance it is almost certain that Brazil will be unable to develop nuclear weapons capabilities within the next decade.

II. PROBABLE POLICIES OF FOURTH COUNTRIES

Under certain favorable circumstances, with substantial and continuing outside assistance, Brazil can probably develop facilities for limited production of nuclear weapons within ten years. Brazil appears to have adequate amounts of essential radioactive raw materials, and under the US Atoms-for-Peace program is now beginning to acquire the necessary minimum equipment required for training specialists and conducting nuclear research projects. During the past several years a small number of Brazilian scientists have received graduate training in nuclear fields in the US and Europe. At present the National Nuclear Energy Commission is attempting to place ten students per year in US centers and a smaller number in Europe.

To date Brazil has evidenced no desire to develop an atomic war potential but has emphasized exclusively the importance of producing atomic materials for medical, agricultural, and electric

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power purposes. At present there is no strong reason to believe that Brazilian policy in this respect will be seriously modified in the near future.

Brazilian defense considerations are linked closely with US hemispheric defense planning. The production of atomic weapons would increase rather than decrease military costs, since Brazil currently maintains only sufficient armed forces to preserve internal order and to repel invasion by armies equipped with conventional weapons. Nevertheless, the cost factor alone would probably not deter a decision to produce atomic weapons.

If the question of national prestige were involved, the pressure of widespread nationalism, prevalent in virtually all strata of Brazilian society, might well force the government to adopt a program of atomic weapons production within a decade. Brazilian nationalists are extremely sensitive to implications that Brazil does not have all the attributes of a world power. Should another Latin American country, one of the lesser European nations (such as Spain, for example), any African country, or India obtain or produce nuclear weapons, there would almost certainly be strong pressure upon the Brazilian government to acquire similar weapons.

Should the allied powers offer to provide nuclear weapons for common defense, Brazil would probably request the same consideration accorded the smaller NATO powers or India, for example. In the event such an offer were extended to other Latin American countries,

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Brazil could be expected to demand preferential treatment within the area.

In the present world situation it seems unlikely that Brazil would agree to the stationing of nuclear weapons under the control of foreign military units on Brazilian territory. However, should nationalistic pressure develop for Brazilian possession of nuclear weapons, foreign troops equipped with such weapons might be acceptable.

Given the present Brazilian desire to exploit the peaceful uses of atomic energy, it is unlikely that Brazil would violate US or IAEA restrictions on the production of atomic weapons, unless such violations had already become widespread and were believed to present a threat to Brazilian security, prestige, or international standing.

It is expected that Brazil will continue to support international efforts to limit production and to restrict testing of nuclear weapons.

III. CONSEQUENCES OF THE POSSESSION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS BY FOURTH COUNTRIES

The acquisition or production of nuclear weapons by Brazil would probably modify, but not radically alter, popular attitudes toward the employment of such weapons. The Brazilian public is largely uninformed on matters of nuclear warfare, but the military and informed sectors of the civilian population are aware of the

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destructive capabilities of atomic arms. In all probability nuclear weapons would be regarded as defensive arms by the Brazilian government to be used only in the event of a general war.

Possession of nuclear weapons by Brazil is not expected to increase the possibility of a local war involving Brazil.

Possession of nuclear weapons by Brazil might well make the Brazilian government somewhat less willing than at present to favor disarmament proposals.

Brazilian production of atomic weapons, with assistance from the US would provide the Communists with an effective propaganda theme, but would probably not create serious Soviet concern over disruption of the balance of power, unless there was a corresponding increase in the size and effectiveness of the Brazilian military establishment.

The prior possession of a nuclear weapons stockpile by Germany and/or France would probably not affect Brazilian attitudes toward the desirability of nuclear weapons, since neither country is regarded as a potential threat to Brazilian security.

The acquisition or production of nuclear weapons by India would almost certainly lead to pressure on the Brazilian government to obtain or produce nuclear weapons.

The production or acquisition of nuclear weapons by Brazil would almost certainly place great strain on the Western Hemisphere military defense alliance system and generate demands by other

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Latin American countries for possession of comparable weapons. The possession of nuclear weapons by Brazil would not add materially to the effectiveness of hemispheric defense arrangement since at present Brazil does not have the necessary military units in force to carry on atomic warfare.

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