

Message Text

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51

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-11 COME-00 AEC-11 ACDA-19 CIAE-00

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FEAE-00 DODE-00 PA-04 USIA-15 PRS-01 SP-03 AID-20

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3795

INFO AMEMBASSY ROME

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E.O.M 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG, TECHN, EMIN, BL,

SUBJECT: URANIUM EXPLORATION CONTRACT WITH ITALIAN FIRM

REF: (A) ROME 10223 (B) LA PAZ 4241 (C) LA PAZ 4578

1. ON JULY 29 MANUEL D'AGNOLO OF AGIP, SUBSIDIARY OF ITALIAN STATE ENTERPRISE ENI, SIGNED "OPERATIONS CONTRACT" WITH BOLIVIAN MINISTER OF MINES ZELAYA AND DIRECTOR OF BOLIVIAN NUCLEAR ENERGY COMMISSION (COBOEN) ALBERTO SAENZ.

2. AGIP AGREED TO EXPLORE FOR URANIUM "AND OTHER RADIOACTIVE MATERIALS" IN SIX OF BOLIVIA'S NINE DEPARTMENTS (COCHABAMBA, BENI AND PANDO EXCLUDED) WITH WORK TO FOCUS PRINCIPALLY IN COROCORO ON ALTIPLANO, LIPEZ, TARIJA AND SAN JOSE DE CHIQUITOS, SANTA CRUZ. CONTRACT TO RUN FOR 24 YEARS WITH EXPLORATION ANTICIPATED IN FIRST FOUR YEARS. AGIP AGREED TO SPEND US\$ 2 MILLION IN BOLIVIA IN NEXT TWO YEARS, USE BOLIVIAN TECHNICIANS WHERE POSSIBLE, AND HAVE ACTIVITIES SUPERVISED BY A JOINT AGIP-GOB BOARD OF CONTROL.

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3. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, IF COMMERCIAL QUANTITIES OF

MINERAL FOUND, AGIP WILL INVEST IN FIELD'S EXPLOITATION.
MINISTER STRESSED TO PRESS THAT COBOEN WILL RETAIN
PROPERTY RIGHTS OVER MINERAL BUT REPORTED STATEMENT THAT
COBOEN WILL PAY AGIP "FOR ITS SERVICES" IN CONCENTRATES
IMPLIES THAT CONTRACT MAY GIVE COMPANY SOME CONTROL
OVER DESTINATION OF MINERAL. PRESS ALSO REPORTED THAT
FORMULA FOR DIVIDING PRODUCTION HAS NOT YET BEEN FIXED
BUT PRINCIPLE WAS ESTABLISHED THAT GOB WOULD RECEIVED
MORE PROPORTIONALLY FROM RICH FIND AND LESS FROM FIELD
MORE DIFFICULT TO EXPLOIT.

(SEE REFTEL B.)

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