

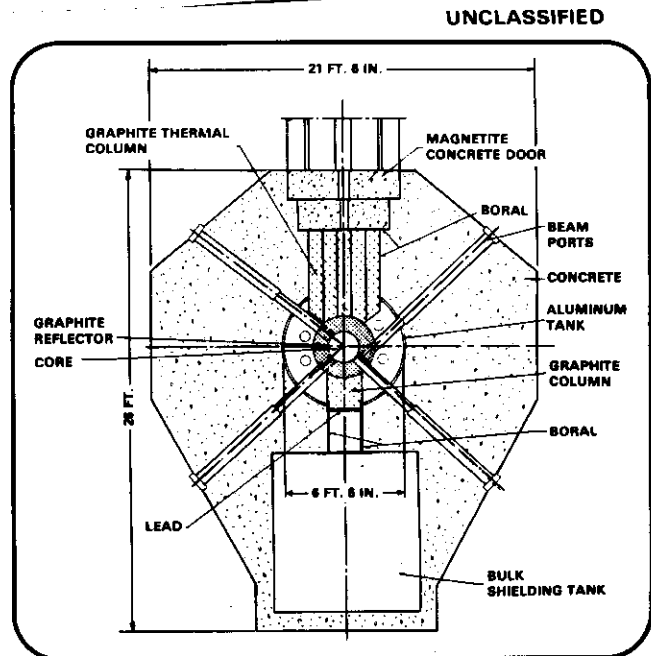
SRV AR
 FILE SUBJ.
 DATE SUB-CAT.
 1181

VIETNAMESE DISPLAY INTEREST IN NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENT

A 10-man Soviet nuclear delegation was to arrive in Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) on 25 December to assist the Vietnamese in the field of nuclear research; the group was expected to travel to Da Lat on the following day.

The Da Lat nuclear research facility has existed since February 1963 when the US-manufactured TRIGA-MARK II nuclear reactor became operational under the direction of the former government of South Vietnam. This reactor is identical in its main parts with the Triga Research Reactor at the John Jay Hopkins Laboratory, San Diego, California. The reactor's primary use was to be the production of radioisotopes for research. The nuclear facility provided a focus for scientific effort in medical diagnosis and therapy, in providing the tool of activation analysis in industry and mining, and in carrying out mutation and fertilizer studies of indigenous crops, such as studying the effects of neutrons and X-rays on rice, corn, and beans.

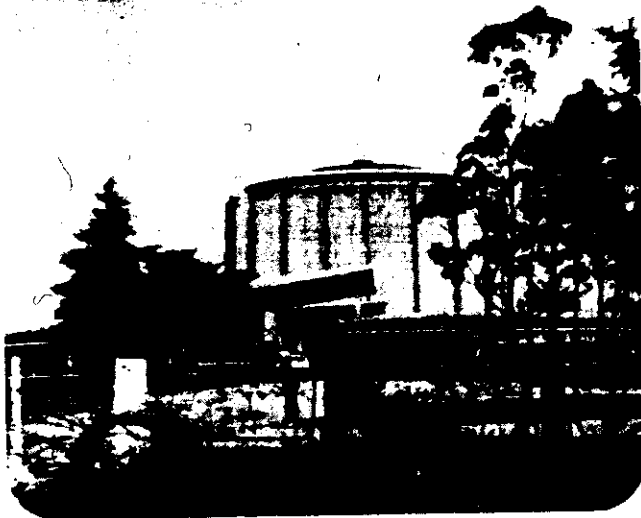
Just before the fall of South Vietnam in 1975, the reactor was rendered inoperative by the re-



(U) HORIZONTAL SECTION REACTOR
 TRIGA II DA LAT

16 Jan 81

UNCLASSIFIED



(U) DA LAT REACTOR,
THREE MILES EAST OF CITY

removal of its core, but it was not destroyed. The expected arrival of the Soviet nuclear delegation indicates the Vietnamese have a renewed interest in the reactor and are probably relying on Soviet expertise for assistance.

(S) Even if the Soviets were to provide the Vietnamese with the capability of reactivating the reactor,

UNCLASSIFIED



(U) DA LAT REACTOR CENTER:
MAIN BUILDING HOUSING REACTOR
SURROUNDED BY LABORATORY, OFFICE AREA

cility at Da Lat, the possible use of the reactor is not clear. In view of the current serious agricultural situation in Vietnam, the reactor could be used for research in increasing the food supply. Since the reactor's purpose is research, the amount of plutonium produced for an eventual military application would be relatively small. However, the reactor can be used as an ancillary facility to a larger one. (Classified by multiple sources; review on