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U.S. Export Of Supercomputers To Brazil Bogged Down In Dispute Over Suspected Use

by John Neagle
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A US congressional source, who requested anonymity, told AFP on Aug. 20 that the export of supercomputers to Brazil, India and Israel has become bogged down in a dispute over the three nations' possible intent to use the equipment for nuclear weapons and missiles. The Commerce and State Departments support the exports, while the CIA and Department of Defense are opposed. The source said, "There is a deadlock between the agencies and it's going to come up to the White House for a political decision...You have the State Department trying to smooth relations with friendly nations, you have the Commerce Department trying to promote exports. "On the other hand, you've got the intelligence community concerned, number one, about illicit uses of those computers; and number two, about possible Soviet access to some of those systems." In the case of Brazil, the dispute affects requests for two IBM supercomputers, one by the University of Sao Paulo and the other by the government-owned Embraer SA aircraft company. The source said that because of the activities of the proposed recipient institutions, US officials have good reason to believe the supercomputers could be used for military programs. (Basic data from AFP, 08/20/89)

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