

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 ISLAMA 06585 01 OF 02 110829Z
ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ADS-00 /001 W
-----130375 110833Z /10
O 110651Z JUN 79
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3357

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 ISLAMABAD 6585

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DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS NSC AND NEW DELHI

E.O. 12065: RDSBAQ 10 JUN 1995(CONSTABLE, P.D.) OR-M
PEPR, MNUC, PARM, TECH, PK, US
SUBJ: (U) CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT ZIA UL-HAW 9 JUNE

REFS: (A) STATE 147777 (B) ISLAMABAD 6517 (C) STATE 146848
(D) ISLAMABAD 6242 (E) STATE 146736(F) STATE 147642

1. (S) ENTIRE TEXT.
2. SUMMARY: I DID HAVE OPPORTUNITY AT FAREWELL DINNER
JUNE 9 TO RAISE NUCLEAR ISSUE WITH PRESIDENT ZIA. IN
REPLY TO DIRECT QUESTIONS, HE STATED THAT PAKISTAN
DOES NOT HAVE CAPABILITY FOR "PEACEFUL NUCLEAR EXPLOSION;"
THAT PAKISTAN'S DEFINITION OF PEACEFUL PURPOSES EXCLUDES
PNE; AND THAT HE IS WILLING TO PUT THIS IN WRITING.
RECOMMEND THAT WASHINGTON CONSIDER A LETTER FROM THE
PRESIDENT MAKING ZIA'S OFFER A MATTER OF RECORD; INDI-
CATING DIFFICULTIES PAKISTAN'S NUCLEAR POLICY IS
CREATING IN OUR MEETING PAKISTAN'S LEGITIMATE SECURITY
NEEDS; AND OFFERING SOME HOPE THAT WRITTEN ASSURANCE
FROM ZIA WOULD ENABLE US TO BE A BIT MORE FLEXIBLE
IN OUR EFFORTS TO REBUILD OUR RELATIONSHIP. END SUMMARY.

3. I HAD BRIEF OPPORTUNITY, BEFORE DINNR ON 9
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PAGE 02 ISLAMA 06585 01 OF 02 110829Z

JUNE, TO RAISE WITH PRESIDENT ZIA UL-HAW, AS MY OWN
PERSONAL THOUGHTS, SOME OF THE MATTERS MENTIONED
REFTEL. BITS AND PIECES ON SUCH SUBJECTS AS LOCAL
BODIES POLLS (IN WHICH ZIA PLOUGHED NO NEW GROUND)
WILL BE FACTORED INTO OUR REGULAR POLITICAL REPORTING.
MAIN SUBJECT DISCUSSED, HOWEVER, WAS NUCLEAR ISSUE.

4. I TOLD ZIA THAT AS I LEAVE PAKISTAN AFTER OVER THREE YEARS, MY MAJOR LAMENT IS THE DETERIOUS IMPACT THE NUCLEAR ISSUE IS HAVING ON OUR OVERALL RELATIONSHIP; DRAWING ON THOUGHTS IN PARAS 2 AND 3 REF. (A), I ASKED HIM IF HE SEES ANY WAY OUT OF THIS IMPASSE.

5. ZIA ADDRESSED ISSUE READILY; HE SAID HE FEARS THE NUCLEAR ISSUE IS NOW BECOMING A MATTER OF PRESTIGE FOR THE U.S. AND FOR PRESIDENT CARTER. THAT MAKES IT ESPECIALLY DIFFICULT TO GET AT, HE SAID. I COUNTERED THAT HE SHOULD NOT UNDERESTIMATE DEPTH OF FEELINGS ON THIS SUBJECT IN BOTH THE EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE BRANCHES, AS WELL AS AMONG THE PUBLIC AT LARGE. THE NON-PROLIFERATION CHALLENGE IN SOUTH ASIA IS NOW CRITICAL TO OUR BROADER NON-PROLIFERATION EFFORTS, AND IN THIS I EMPHASIZED THE ADVERSE IMPACT ON PEACE AND STABILITY IN THE REGION OF THE EMERGENCE OF TWO NUCLEAR WEAPONS STATES IN SOUTH ASIA.

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PAGE 01 ISLAMA 06585 02 OF 02 110831Z
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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 ISLAMABAD 6585

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6. WHEN I REFERRED TO THE INDIAN COMMITMENT NOT TO TAKE THE FINAL STEP WITH REGARD TO FABRICATING WEAPONS, ZIA SAID HE IS CONVINCED THE INDIANS ALREADY HAVE 6-12 WEAPONS ON THE SHELF. I SAID WE HAVE NO SUCH EVIDENCE, LATHOUGH IT IS OBVIOUS THE INDIANS HAVE THE CAPABILITY TO PRODUCE WEAPONS AND THAT IF THEY CONCLUDE PAKISTAN IS APPROACHING A WEAPONS CAPABILITY, THEY, AT A MINIMUM, WILL CERTAINLY ABANDON THEIR PRESENT RESTRAINT, WITH CONSEQUENCES

OF THE UTMOST GRAVITY FOR PAKISTAN'S SECURITY.

7. I THEN PROBED THE SUBJECT OF SO-CALLED PEACEFUL NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS(PNE), NOTING THAT WE HAD HEARD INCREASING SPECULATION/REPORTS THAT PAKISTAN IS CONTEMPLATING SUCH A STEP IN THE VERY NEAR FUTURE. ZIA DENIED THIS CATEGORICALLY, SAYINNG AT ONE POINT, "IT IS NOT POSSIBLE," AND AT ANOTHER, "WE DO NOT HAVE THE CAPABILITY." I ASKED IF THE PAKISTANI DEFINITION OF PEACEFUL PURPOSES EXCLUDES A PNE. ZIA'S RESPONSE WAS QUICK AND DIRECT: "YES, ABSOLUTELY." I SAID IT WOULD BE GOOD IF PAKISTAN COULD BE VERY EXPLICIT ON THIS POINT, AND ZIA CAME BACK WITH AN OFFER (OR A DECLARATION) TO "PUT IT IN WRITING."

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SECRET

PAGE 02 ISLAMA 06585 02 OF 02 110831Z

8. REFERRING AGAIN TO THE PERSONAL NATURE OF MY INQUIRIES, I THEN ASKED IF HE WOULD MIND IF I REPORTED THIS EXCHANGE TO WASHINGTON; HE REPLIED, "PLEASE DO; TELL THEM WE DO NOT INTEND TO CONDUCT A NUCLEAR EXPLOSION."

9. ZIA'S OFFER TO PUT HIS ASSURANCE " IN WRITING" IS INTRIGUING. WHILE WE MAY, IN THE END, FIND THAT HIS SECURITY ADVISORS WILL NOT PERMIT HIM TO FOLLOW THROUGH, I BELIEVE IT IS WORTH AN EFFORT TO PURSUE THIS. I RECOMMEND THAT WASHINGTON CONSIDER A LETTER TO ZIA FROM THE PRESIDENT, REFERRING TO OUR OVERALL CONCERNS ABOUT NON-PROLIFERATION, TO THE IMPORTANCE WE PLACE IN TERMS OF THE SECURITY AND STABILITY OF THE REGION ON THE DECISIONS PAKISTAN HAS MADE AND WILL MAKE IN THIS NUCLEAR AREA, TO OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH OTHERS ON THIS SUBJECT, AND FINALLY TO MY CONVERSATION WITH ZIA AND HIS OFFER TO PUT " IN WRITING" HIS ASSURANCE PAKISTAN WILL NOT EXPLODE A NUCLEAR DEVICE.

10. PRESIDENTIAL LETTER WOULD HAVE TO INDICATE, OF COURSE, THE DIFFICULTIES PAKISTAN'S NUCLEAR POLICY IS CREATING IN TERMS OF OUR ABILITY TO ASSIST PAKISTAN WITH ITS LEGITIMATE SECURITY NEEDS -- AT A DIFFICULT TIME IN THE REGION -- AND OFFER SOME HOPE THAT A WRITTEN ASSURANCE FROM ZIA WOULD BE HELPFUL IN ENABLING US TO BE A BIT MORE FLEXIBLE IN OUR EFFORTS TO REBUILD OUR RELATIONSHIP.

11. AT THIS STAGE, WE SHOULD NOT SEEK TO HAVE ZIA MAKE HIS ASSURANCES PUBLIC. IF HE PUTS THEM IN

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 ISLAMA 06585 02 OF 02 110831Z

WRITING, WE CAN SUBSEQUENTLY PROPOSE THAT PAKISTAN
WOULD BE DOING ITSELF A SERVICE TO PUBLICIZE ITS
"NON-EXPLOSIVE" STANCE -- WHICH, LIKE INDIA'S
ASSUMES THE CAPABILITY. TO PRESS ZIA NOW ON THIS
POINT COULD LEAD HIM TO BACK OFF.

12. DEPT. MAY ALSO WISH TO MODIFY REF (E) IN VIEW
OF FOREGOING.
CONSTABLE

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