

April 6, 1979

**Cable from the Secretary of State to the American
Embassy in Islamabad, 'Contingency Press
Guidance: Pakistan Nuclear Problem**

Citation:

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Summary:

This document, sent from the U.S. State Department in Washington D.C. to its embassy in Islamabad, is a collection of questions and answers regarding the Pakistan nuclear program. This "Contingency Press Guidance" is meant to guide diplomatic officials on how to appropriately answer questions posed by the press regarding the Pakistan situation.

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Contents:

Original Scan

SENSITIVE

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SITUATION LISTING

DATE 06/02/79//153

SITUATION: NODIS
SUBJECT CATEGORY: OUT

MESSAGE / ANNOTATION:

MESSAGE: DOS REVIEWED 12-Jun-2007: DECLASSIFIED FOR RELEASE IN FULL

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O 060430Z APR 79 ZFF6

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO RUSBQD/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD NIACT IMMEDIATE 4666

INFO RUSBAE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE 7544

RUDTC/AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE 0521

RUFNPS/AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE 0323

RUFHOL/AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE 5628

RUEADWW/ WHITE HOUSE IMMEDIATE 1892

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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 STATE 085184/01

NODIS

E.O. 12065 GDS 4/5/85 (MIKLOS, JACK)

TAGS: MNUC, PK

SUBJECT: CONTINGENCY PRESS GUIDANCE

1. (S-ENTIRE TEXT).

2. THE FOLLOWING CONTINGENCY RPT CONTINGENCY PRESS GUIDANCE HAS BEEN CLEARED IN THE DEPARTMENT AND IS PROVIDED FOR YOUR INFORMATION ONLY. YOU SHOULD REFER ANY QUESTIONS TO DEPT.

BEGIN TEXT:

CONTINGENCY PRESS GUIDANCE

PAKISTAN NUCLEAR PROBLEM

Q. IS PAKISTAN DEVELOPING THE CAPABILITY TO PRODUCE NUCLEAR WEAPONS?

A. -- WE ARE AWARE OF REPORTS THAT PAKISTAN IS BUILDING A CENTRIFUGE ENRICHMENT FACILITY. OVER TIME SUCH A FACILITY COULD GIVE PAKISTAN THE MEANS TO ACQUIRE NUCLEAR WEAPONS- GRADE MATERIAL. THAT WOULD BE A SERIOUS DEVELOPMENT.

-- I WOULD NOT LIKE TO GO INTO ANY FURTHER DETAIL AT THIS TIME SINCE THIS MATTER IS THE SUBJECT OF CONFIDENTIAL DIPLOMATIC EXCHANGES.

Q. HAVE WE BEEN IN TOUCH WITH THE PAKISTANI GOVERNMENT ON

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THIS MATTER?

A. WE HAVE CONSISTENTLY MADE CLEAR OUR CONCERNS OVER THE SPREAD UNDER NATIONAL CONTROL OF SENSITIVE NUCLEAR FACILITIES, INCLUDING REPROCESSING AND ENRICHMENT FACILITIES, BECAUSE OF THE PROLIFERATION DANGERS INHERENT IN SUCH CAPACITY. WE HAVE EXPRESSED TO THE PAKISTANIS OUR CONCERNS, MOST RECENTLY DURING THE VISIT OF DEPUTY SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER (MARCH 1-2). I WANT TO EMPHASIZE, HOWEVER, THAT THIS IS A GLOBAL POLICY WHICH APPLIES TO PAKISTAN AND OTHER STATES AS WELL.

Q. WHAT WAS THEIR RESPONSE?

A. WE ARE CONTINUING OUR DIALOGUE WITH THE PAKISTAN GOVERNMENT. WE DO NOT NORMALLY COMMENT ON CONFIDENTIAL EXCHANGES BETWEEN TWO GOVERNMENTS.

Q. WHAT IS THE STATUS OF THE FRENCH REPROCESSING PLANT? AREN'T THE PAKISTANIS CONTINUING WORK ON THIS PROJECT AND WOULDN'T IT GIVE THEM WEAPONS GRADE PLUTONIUM?

A. WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT ANY SENSITIVE FACILITY, WHETHER REPROCESSING OR ENRICHMENT, AND THE PAKISTANIS ARE AWARE OF OUR CONCERNS. I SUGGEST YOU ADDRESS YOUR DETAILED QUESTIONS ON THE PROJECT TO THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT.

Q. WHAT IS OUR BEST ESTIMATE ON HOW SOON PAKISTAN COULD EXPLODE A NUCLEAR DEVICE?

A. THIS INVOLVES INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATES AND I REALLY CAN'T COMMENT ON THAT EXCEPT TO SAY THAT IT WOULD NOT BE IMMINENT, BUT A MATTER OF SOME YEARS.

Q. WHAT ARE YOU DOING ABOUT THIS SECRET NUCLEAR PROGRAM?

A. I HAVE SAID WE ARE CONTINUING DISCUSSIONS WITH THE PAKISTAN GOVERNMENT, AND MAKING CLEAR OUR CONCERNS. WE ARE ALSO IN TOUCH WITH A NUMBER OF OTHER GOVERNMENTS, BUT I CANNOT GIVE YOU ANYTHING ON THESE CONTACTS.

Q. ARE THE PAKISTANIS IMPORTING EQUIPMENT FOR THESE SENSITIVE FACILITIES AS ALLEGED IN THE INDIAN PRESS REPORT AND, IF SO, WHERE IS IT COMING FROM?

A. MANY ITEMS NEEDED FOR SUCH FACILITIES ARE DUAL PURPOSE

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ITEMS AND CAN BE PURCHASED THROUGH COMMERCIAL CHANNELS FROM A NUMBER OF FIRMS IN A NUMBER OF COUNTRIES. I CANNOT

GIVE YOU A LIST OF SOURCES. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT MANY COMPONENTS OF THIS KIND CAN BE IMPORTED WITHOUT NECESSARILY BEING SUBJECT TO EXPORT CONTROLS.

Q. HAS THERE BEEN ANY EFFORT BY THE PRINCIPAL NUCLEAR SUPPLIERS TO CUT OFF THE SUPPLY OF COMPONENTS FOR SENSITIVE FACILITIES?

A. OUR CONCERNS ARE SHARED BY OTHER GOVERNMENTS, BUT I CANNOT ELABORATE ON WHAT OTHER GOVERNMENTS MIGHT BE DOING?

Q. ARE YOU APPLYING THE LAW (SYMINGTON/GLENN AMENDMENTS) FORBIDDING US AID TO ANY COUNTRY TRANSFERRING OR RECEIVING ENRICHMENT MATERIALS, EQUIPMENT, OR TECHNOLOGY?

A. AS REQUIRED UNDER THE LAW, WE ARE WINDING DOWN IN AN

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MESSAGE:

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DE RUEHC #5184/02 0960507
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O 060430Z APR 79 ZFF6
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO RUSBQD/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD NIACT IMMEDIATE 4667
INFO RUSBAE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE 7545
RUDTC/AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE 0522
RUFNPS/AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE 0324
RUFHOL/AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE 5629
RUEADWW/ WHITE HOUSE IMMEDIATE 1893

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S E C R E T FINAL SECTION OF 02 STATE 085184/02

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ORDERLY MANNER OUR AID PROGRAM TO PAKISTAN.

Q. HAVE YOU BEEN IN TOUCH WITH THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT, AND WHAT IS THEIR REACTION?

A. I CANNOT TELL YOU WHICH GOVERNMENTS WE HAVE CONTACTED. FOR INDIAN VIEWS, YOU SHOULD ASK THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT.

Q. WOULD NOT THE PAKISTANIS' ACQUISITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS UPSET THE BALANCE IN SOUTH ASIA AND FORCE INDIA TO DEVELOP NUCLEAR WEAPONS?

A. THE POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES IS TO OPPOSE THE PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD AND TO DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO PREVENT PROLIFERATION. BOTH INDIA AND PAKISTAN UNDERSTAND THIS POLICY. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THE PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS ADDS TO THE SECURITY OF ANY COUNTRY; INDEED, IT THREATENS REGIONAL SECURITY AND THE SECURITY OF US ALL.

Q. WHAT WOULD BE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR THE MIDDLE EAST OF WHAT HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS A "MUSLIM BOMB" TO BALANCE THE ISRAELI BOMB?

A. AS YOU KNOW THE ISRAELIS HAVE REPEATEDLY STATED IN THE PAST THAT THEY WOULD NOT BE THE FIRST TO INTRODUCE NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN THE REGION. IN OUR VIEW, ANY PROLIFERATION OF

NUCLEAR WEAPONS ANYWHERE CAN ONLY HAVE THE MOST SERIOUS

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CONSEQUENCES FOR WORLD SECURITY.

Q. HOW DOES THIS PAKISTAN DEVELOPMENT BEAR ON THE
PRESIDENT'S NON-PROLIFERATION POLICY?

A. IT DEMONSTRATES THAT THE IMPORTANCE GIVEN TO NON-
PROLIFERATION IN US FOREIGN POLICY IS WELL PLACED. OUR
POLICY IS TO CONTINUE TO TRY TO PERSUADE THE PAKISTANIS
TO AVOID A PATH TOWARD PROLIFERATION WHICH WOULD JEOPARDIZE
THEIR OWN SECURITY AS WELL AS THAT OF THEIR NEIGHBORS.

END TEXT VANCE

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