

September 5, 1978

'Ambassador's Talk with General Zia,' Embassy Islamabad cable to State Department

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Summary:

Ambassador Hummel describes a conversation with General Zia. They discussed the cancellation of the French reprocessing project, disputes over the Pakistani-Afghan border, and the Central Treaty Organization (CENTRO).

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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S TALK WITH GEN ZIA

REF: STATE 222911 (NOTAL)

1. I SAW GEN ZIA FOR 25 MINUTES ^{Sept.} ~~AUGUST~~ 4 AT MY REQUEST. FONSEC SHAHNAWAZ AND MFA NOTETAKER ALSO PRESENT. I HAD PASSED WORD THAT I HAD BEEN ASKED TO HAVE CONSULTATIONS IN STATE DEPT AND I WOULD BE PLEASED TO CALL ON GEN ZIA IF HE WISHED TO SEE ME BEFORE MY DEPARTURE.

2. ZIA SAID THAT U.S. PRESIDENT "SHOULD BE HAPPY" ABOUT STATUS OF FRENCH REPROCESSING PLANT. GISCARD'S LETTER WAS "NICE" AND TALKED ABOUT CONTINUED COOPERATION IN TRAINING IN NUCLEAR FIELD AND IN POWER GENERATION, BUT WAS NOT SATISFACTORY, ZIA SAID HE WAS CONTINUING DISCUSSIONS WITH FRANCE, HAVING "GONE BACK TO GISCARD" IN ANOTHER LETTER TO TELL GISCARD THAT IF IT IS GISCARD'S INTENTION TO CANCEL THE CONTRACT HE SHOULD SAY SO PUBLICLY. APPARENTLY, ZIA SAID, AMERICAN PRESSURE HAD PAID OFF. HE SAID THAT IT WAS ABSOLUTELY

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IMPOSSIBLE FOR ANY PAK GOVERNMENT TO AGREE TO ANY CANCELLATION OR CHANGE IN THE CONTRACT, AND ADDED THAT THIS OF COURSE IS A MATTER BETWEEN THE FRENCH AND PAK GOVTS.

3. I REFERRED TO UNDERSECY NEWSOM'S REMARKS THAT WE UNDERSTAND THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE GOP'S POSITION AND HAD NO DESIRE TO MAKE ADDITIONAL PROBLEMS; I REFERRED BRIEFLY TO CONGRESSIONAL ATTITUDE AS EXPLAINED BY NEWSOM TO AGHA SHAHI AUGUST 11, I WAS PLEASED THAT USG COMMENTS ON THE REPROCESSING PLANT HAD BEEN MINIMAL, SHAHNAWAZ AGREED THAT TEXT OF DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S REMARKS AUGUST 24 WHICH WE HAD GIVEN HIM WAS VERY UNRESTRAINED, NEITHER OF US MENTIONED RESUMPTION OF AID.

STOP

4. ZIA SAID HE WANTED ME TO TELL NEWSOM THAT ZIA HAD HELD TO HIS WORDS ABOUT NOT LEAVING CENTO QUICKLY OR IN ANY MANNER THAT DAMAGED USG INTERESTS, AND ZIA ASKED WHAT ABOUT NEWSOM'S WORDS CONCERNING A STATEMENT ABOUT THE PAK-AFGHAN BORDER, I REMINDED HIM THAT WE HAD DELIVERED A STATEMENT TO MFA, RE-AFFIRMING THE USG VIEW THAT THE DURAND LINE IS THE INTERNATIONAL BORDER, WHICH THE GOP WAS FREE TO REFER TO, ZIA STIPULATED THAT HE WAS NOT MAKING ANY REQUEST, BUT WANTED TO POINT OUT THAT THE U.S. STATEMENT WAS AWKWARD BECAUSE IT WAS BASED ON A "DEFUNCT SEATO" CONTEXT, AND THE GOP WOULD FAR PREFER A PUBLIC STATEMENT BY THE USG. HE SAID THAT ALTHOUGH U.S.-PAK RELATIONS ARE NOW "AT THE LOWEST EBB" IT IS NOT GOOD THAT THEY SHOULD BE SEEN PUBLICLY AS BEING AT THE LOWEST EBB. ZIA AND SHAHNAWAZ SAID IT IS NOW MORE IMPOCANT THAN EVER TO HAVE INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT, BECAUSE OF WHAT THEY TERMED THE HIGHLY

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AGGRESSIVE AND OMINOUS STATEMENTS FROM KABUL ON AUGUST 31 ON THE OCCASION OF "PUSHTOONISTAN DAY". THE STATEMENTS SPECIFICALLY REPUDIATED THE DURANT LINE AND CLAIMED ALL TERRITORY WEST OF THE INDUS. I SAID I WOULD DISCUSS THE MATTER IN WASHINGTON.

5. TURNING TO CENTO, ZIA SAID HE DOUBTED THAT THE ORGANIZATION COULD EVER PLAY A REALLY USEFUL ROLE, THAT AS FAR BACK AS THE 1970 ELECTION CAMPAIGN ALL PAK POLITICAL PARTIES HAD PLEDGED TO LEAVE CENTO, AND IT SEEMED TO HAVE "NO VALUE, ONLY PENALTIES", WHEN ZIA ASKED WHAT USG INTENDS TO DO TO STRENGTHEN CENTO, I SAID I HAD NO SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS BUT I KNEW THAT WASHINGTON IS CONSIDERING VARIOUS POSSIBILITIES FOR STRENGTHENING THE ALLIANCE.

6. I SAID I WOULD STAY ONE DAY IN TEHRAN SEPT 9 ON MY WAY TO WASHINGTON, AND ZIA SAID HE WOULD ALSO BE IN TEHRAN ON A VISIT THE SAME DAY.

COMMENT: ZIA WAS UNCHARACTERISTICALLY SARCASTIC IN THE SUBSTANCE OF SOME OF HIS REMARKS, WHILE MAINTAINING THE NORMALLY CALM AND COURTEOUS MANNER HE HAS ALWAYS SHOWN ME. SMALL-TALK WAS RELAXED AND VERY FRIENDLY. HE DID NOT SAY SO DIRECTLY, BUT IT WAS CLEAR HE KNOWS THE REPROCESSING PLANT IS CANCELLED. MY INSTRUCTIONS IN REFTEL NOT TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE RESUMPTION OF AID OR ANY CONSULTATIONS I MIGHT HAVE WITH CONGRESS CAUSED ME TO LET ZIA CARRY THE CONVERSATIONAL BALL AND I REFRAINED FROM PROBING.

HUMMEL

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