

**November 4, 1978**

**'US Demarche on Pakistani Reprocessing Plant,'  
Department of State cable 281962 to US Embassy  
United Kingdom et al.**

**Citation:**

"'US Demarche on Pakistani Reprocessing Plant,' Department of State cable 281962 to US Embassy United Kingdom et al.", November 4, 1978, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Mandatory Declassification Review request. Obtained and contributed by William Burr and included in NPIHP Research Update #3.

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**Summary:**

U.S. demarche and "non-paper" on Pakistan's attempts to complete the plutonium reprocessing plant and develop nuclear weapons. Sent to 12 countries to ensure that they "exercise vigilance and appropriate control to deter Pakistan from acquiring sensitive facilities."

**Credits:**

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English

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E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: MNUC, TECH, PK

SUBJECT: US DEMARCHE ON PAKISTANI REPROCESSING PLANT

REFS: (A) LONDON 18055, (B) STATE 278247

1. AMBASSADOR OR DCM SHOULD TAKE EARLY OPPORTUNITY TO DELIVER TO EDWIN OR OTHER APPROPRIATE SENIOR OFFICIAL THE NON-PAPER AT PARA 3. IN SO DOING, SUBSTANCE OF PARA 2 SHOULD BE PROVIDED ORALLY.

2. BEGIN TALKING POINTS:

-- I HAVE BEEN ASKED TO RAISE WITH YOU A MATTER OF DEEP CONCERN AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF THE USG. YOU ARE AWARE THAT FOR THE PAST TWO YEARS OR MORE WE AND OTHERS HAVE BEEN TROUBLED BY PAKISTAN'S EFFORTS TO ACQUIRE A NUCLEAR REPROCESSING FACILITY WHICH WE BELIEVE COULD BE AN IMPORTANT STEP IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVE CAPABILITY.

-- IN ADDITION WE ARE INCREASINGLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE GEOPOLITICAL SITUATION IN SOUTH ASIA, AS A RESULT OF THE AFGHAN REVOLUTION AND GROWING INSTABILITY IN IRAN. WE BELIEVE IT IS CRITICAL TO STABILITY IN THE REGION AND TO OUR NON-PROLIFERATION OBJECTIVES TO INHIBIT PAKISTAN FROM

MOVING CLOSER TO THE THRESHOLD OF NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVE CAPABILITY.

-- THERE ARE NEWS REPORTS THAT FORMER PRIME MINISTER

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BHUTTO RECENTLY CLAIMED THAT BEFORE HE WAS DEPOSED, PAKISTAN WAS ON THE VERGE OF "FULL NUCLEAR CAPABILITY". HE POINTED OUT IN THIS CONTEXT THAT ONLY THE MUSLIM WORLD WAS WITHOUT NUCLEAR CAPABILITY AND SAID PAKISTAN WOULD SHARE THE TECHNOLOGY WITH ISLAMIC STATES. WE DO NOT NECESSARILY ACCEPT MR. BHUTTO'S CLAIMS OF IMMINENT SUCCESS IN THIS FIELD, BUT WE DO FIND THIS STATEMENT OF INTENTIONS TO BE DISQUIETING.

-- WE ARE UNDER NO ILLUSION THAT PAKISTAN'S MOTIVATIONS OR INTENTIONS HAVE CHANGED WITH RESPECT TO DEVELOPMENT OF THE NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVE OPTION. WE BELIEVE THAT PAKISTAN IS EXPLORING THE FEASIBILITY OF COMPLETING CONSTRUCTION OF A NUCLEAR REPROCESSING PLANT AS A NATIONAL PROJECT. TO DO SO, PAKISTAN MAY ATTEMPT TO OBTAIN TECHNICAL EXPERTISE, MATERIALS, AND EQUIPMENT FROM INDIVIDUALS AND FIRMS IN VARIOUS FOREIGN COUNTRIES, INCLUDING YOURS.

-- ALSO THE UNITED KINGDOM HAS RECENTLY ADVISED THAT IT HAS FIRM INFORMATION THAT THE PAKS ARE PURSUING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A GAS CENTRIFUGE ENRICHMENT FACILITY. THE U.K. HAS TAKEN STEPS TO CONTROL EXPORT OF INVERTERS FOR SUCH USE AND HAS ASKED OTHER POTENTIAL SUPPLIERS TO BE IN A POSITION TO TAKE SIMILAR ACTION.

-- WE HAVE, IN ADDITION, HIGHLY SENSITIVE INFORMATION THAT NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT WORK IS UNDERWAY IN PAKISTAN.

-- ACQUISITION OF A NUCLEAR FUEL REPROCESSING OR ENRICHMENT CAPABILITY WOULD, AND WE BELIEVE IS INTENDED TO, COMPLEMENT THESE ACTIVITIES. IF PAKISTAN WERE TO SUCCEED IN ITS EFFORTS, WE BELIEVE A PARTICULARLY DANGEROUS RISK OF NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION WOULD ARISE IN PAKISTAN, WITH PROFOUND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE MIDDLE EAST AS WELL AS THE SUBCONTINENT. IT IS FOR THIS REASON THAT MY GOVERNMENT

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HAS ASKED THAT YOUR GOVERNMENT BE MADE AWARE OF THIS INFORMATION ON A HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL BASIS. WE ARE IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH FOLLOWING GOVERNMENTS ON THIS MATTER: AUSTRALIA, AUSTRIA, BELGIUM, CANADA, FRANCE, ITALY, JAPAN, SPAIN, SWEDEN, SWITZERLAND, THE NETHERLANDS, U.K., AND WEST GERMANY. END OF TALKING POINTS.

3. BEGIN NON-PAPER:

THE USG HAS REASON TO BELIEVE THAT PAKISTAN IS SEEKING TO COMPLETE THE CHASMA REPROCESSING PLANT -- AND PERHAPS BUILD AN ADDITIONAL FACILITY AT PINSTECH THAT MAY BE CAPABLE OF REPROCESSING -- NEITHER OF WHICH WOULD NECESSARILY BE SUBJECT TO INTERNATIONAL SAFEGUARDS. IF COMPLETED, EITHER OF THESE REPROCESSING FACILITIES MIGHT PRODUCE SUFFICIENT PLUTONIUM ANNUALLY FOR SEVERAL NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVE DEVICES. WE BELIEVE PAKISTAN IS SEEKING MATERIALS, EQUIPMENT, AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR THESE FACILITIES FROM EUROPEAN COUNTRIES AND JAPAN. THE PAKISTANIS MAY TRY TO ESTABLISH CONTACT WITH RELEVANT FIRMS PERHAPS RESORTING TO THE USE OF INDIRECT REPRESENTATIVES AND "DUMMY" PURCHASING AGENTS TO CIRCUMVENT POTENTIAL GOVERNMENT CONTROLS.

THE U.S. BELIEVES THAT YOUR GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE IN POSSESSION OF THESE FACTS IN ORDER THAT IT MAY EXERCISE VIGILANCE AND APPROPRIATE CONTROL TO VETER PAKISTAN FROM ACQUIRING SENSITIVE FACILITIES WHICH WOULD PERMIT THEM TO DEVELOP NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVE CAPABILITY. IN ADDITION, THE US WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THIS MATTER WHICH MAY COME TO THE ATTENTION OF YOUR GOVERNMENT. THE U.S., FOR ITS PART, INTENDS TO PERMIT NO EXPORTS OF MATERIALS, EQUIPMENT, OR TECHNOLOGY

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FROM THE U.S. WHICH MIGHT CONTRIBUTE TO COMPLETION OF SENSITIVE NUCLEAR FACILITIES IN PAKISTAN. END TEXT OF NON-PAPER.

4. FOR ROME: EMBASSY SHOULD INFORM APPROPRIATE OFFICIALS THAT NYE PARTY INTENDS TO RAISE THIS SUBJECT DURING NOVEMBER 7 BILATERAL.

5. FOR LONDON: NOTE THAT UK-PROPOSED CHANGE IN TALKING POINTS (PARA 1, REF A) HAS BEEN MADE. RE PARAS 2 AND 3, REF A, OUR INTENTION TO INCLUDE SPAIN AND BELGIUM, BUT NOT AUSTRIA, AUSTRALIA, AND SWEDEN, IN OUR DEMARCHE WAS RESULT OF OUR ASSESSMENT OF MOST LIKELY POTENTIAL SOURCES OF REPROCESSING-RELATED EQUIPMENT AND EXPERTISE. IN ORDER TO BRING UK AND US APPROACHES INTO PARALLEL RELATIONSHIP, HOWEVER, WE NOW INTEND TO BROADEN OUR APPROACH TO INCLUDE AUSTRIA, AUSTRALIA, AND SWEDEN. REGARDING OUR APPROACHES TO BELGIUM AND SPAIN, WE APPRECIATE ALSTON'S POINT AND ARE INSTRUCTING EMBASSIES BRUSSELS AND MADRID TO COORDINATE THEIR DEMARCHE WITH UK EMBASSIES. RE PARA 4, WE ARE CONSIDERING THIS ISSUE AND WILL BE BACK IN TOUCH AS OUR THINKING DEVELOPS.

6. FOR BRUSSELS AND MADRID: IN ACCORDANCE WITH REF A, BEING REPEATED SEPTTEL, AND PARA 5 ABOVE, YOU SHOULD TOUCH BASE WITH BRITISH COLLEAGUES BEFORE MAKING DEMARCHE.

7. FOR CANBERRA AND STOCKHOLM: NOTE THAT DECISION HAS BEEN MADE SINCE TRANSMITTAL OF REF B TO INCLUDE AUSTRALIA AND SWEDEN IN THE PRESENT DEMARCHE. VANCE

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