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Authority *VND 009 021*
By *MN* NARA Date *1/28/08*DECLASSIFIED
A/ISS/IPS, Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
October 11, 2007MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION *Rodman*

PARTICIPANTS: The Secretary
Mr. Robinson, Deputy Secretary
Amb. Yaqub Khan, Pakistani Ambassador
Mr. Iqbal Riza, Minister, Pakistani Embassy
David Passage, Notetaker

SUBJECT: The Pakistan Nuclear Reprocessing Issue *Pak*

DATE, TIME & PLACE: September 11, 1976; 3:07 pm
The Secretary's Office

DISTRIBUTION: S, S-RWA, NSC-Rodman

Yaqub: Thank you very much for receiving me, Mr. Secretary.

Kissinger: I want to tell you how much I appreciate the reception your Prime Minister gave me when I visited Lahore.

Yaqub: The Prime Minister extends his best wishes for your forthcoming trip (to Africa).

Kissinger: Thank you very much. I have to tell you that I think the odds of success are probably less than 50-50.

What I wanted to tell you this afternoon is the same thing that I've told Giscard and your Prime Minister. The nuclear reprocessing issue has become a domestic issue. Each of us is in exactly the same boat.

Yaqub: The Prime Minister thinks it is a very sensitive issue.

Kissinger: Yes. Giscard is sensitive, as is your Prime Minister. Frankly, there are two interpretations of what your Prime Minister told me in Lahore. First is that you have decided to go ahead and have simply taken an elegant way of saying that neither of you can take the initiative cancelling it. Or, both of you are now on the horns of a dilemma with ramifications neither could foresee. You know what the American domestic situation is. You know that if the Democrats win, they would like nothing better than to make a horrible example of somebody. They would love to take on the French, but they can't. They cannot be accused of being anti-European integration and anti-NATO, let alone anti-Atlantic. If the Democrats win, you will face an assault and they will attack you. Credit and arms sales will be much more difficult, even impossible. You know that the last thing I want to do is to be responsible for this. Frankly, what I would like at this point is some sense of what you would like to do.

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SUBJECT TO GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION
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Yaqub: Mr. Secretary, let me tell you that I very much appreciate your candor and your sincerity. I too would like to see what we can do.

Kissinger: In response I'd like to be able to do something on the side of conventional arms.

Yaqub: I appreciate that. If I may speak frankly in reply to your question, your objections came after we signed an agreement with France. It is quite possible that we might be able to explain that away. But the Prime Minister reasoned that despite IAEA and other safeguards, there is still a chance that the 7% of unsafeguarded plutonium can be diverted. The Prime Minister suggests that without prejudice to our agreement with France, we look at what we might do with the seven percent.

Kissinger: You know, of course, this "newspaper crisis" (referring to the controversy over the Symington Amendment) was manufactured. I had never read the Symington Amendment and then everyone said: "But what will you do?" I said it may apply. They then wrote: "Henry A. Kissinger threatens Pakistan!"

Yaqub: The Symington Amendment, of course, refers only to non-IAEA safeguarded facilities.

Kissinger: Multinational control simply complicates problems. How could you possibly handle it if the Saudis, Iranians and Iraqis were involved? It would be infinitely more complicated. There is no regional arrangement that could possibly be worked out that would work. But if we can somehow show something positive on reprocessing, then we may be able to do something on conventional arms.

Yaqub: If we can remove the impression of a threat, perhaps we may be able to do something. If the A-7 could be agreed to "en principe", then perhaps we can see if we can do something about safeguarding the seven percent.

Kissinger: Yes, but you know once a country has the installation it can always repudiate the agreement.

Yaqub: The Prime Minister's view is that the commitment would be a fundamental one. That is to say, it would be agreed to by the Government of Pakistan irrespective of personalities and even in the event that personalities changed, the Government of Pakistan would respect the agreement.

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Kissinger: Why couldn't you simply pass a new law if you wanted to repudiate an ironclad agreement. You know your Prime Minister's influence over his legislature is much greater than ours over our own. No, it is possession of the facilities for reprocessing that is objectionable.

Yaqub: By taking that course of action we would foreclose our freedom of action. It would be binding; it would be irrevocable.

Kissinger: But why? How?

Look, Mr. Ambassador, I just want to understand what you're saying. You are or are not saying that one side has said he couldn't cave because the other side has said it wouldn't cave? The French President said they'd cave but Bhutto won't. Bhutto told me that he'd cave, but the French won't. I mean, I want to be sure that I understand this absolutely clearly. The French have not said that they would not go through with it. They said they would and I didn't pressure them, but I got the idea that if the French took the initiative, the Prime Minister would agree.

Yaqub: There is of course much that goes on between the United States and France. We do not want to make the first move. I have no authority to say what our views would be in the event that the French made the first move.

Kissinger: Neither your Prime Minister nor Giscard said that it was done and irrevocable. What I understood was that your Prime Minister said that if Giscard took the first move, that your Prime Minister would then see what he could do about it. You must understand of course both of these gentlemen are allies of ours and personal friends of mine. But what I don't understand is whether I was the recipient of a gentlemanly putoff or an irrevocable binding statement.

Yaqub: As I read the minutes, at no point did the Prime Minister say he would be prepared to break the agreement.

Kissinger: We were alone at this point.

Yaqub: Of course, I understand (nods assent to a point understood between the two of them, but not enunciated).

Kissinger: My memory is that -- and I don't know that he used the word -- he of course is so skillful -- he never said that Pakistan would take the initiative. He didn't say that he would rule it out.

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Yaqub: I have the point, Mr. Secretary.

Kissinger: You will resolve that for me?

(To Chuck Robinson): You will check of course what else we need to establish acceptable safeguards.

Robinson: Yes, I will. One of the things that we haven't mentioned this afternoon is economic viability of the nuclear reprocessing facility.

Kissinger: Chuck, let me tell you, I know the Prime Minister's mind. He is not interested in economics. (Turning to Yaqub) Am I wrong? I'm no psychologist, of course.

Yaqub: Absolutely not (wrong).

Kissinger: It just isn't an economic issue. You (turning to Yaqub) and I know why you want the reprocessing plant. You also know why I don't want it. You understand the problem. It's whether you are prepared to pay the costs.

Mr. Ambassador, I need an answer to the question I have put to you. We will look at the seven percent, if you will look at what can be done. Once we understand each other, then we can take a look at the problem of how we get you the A-7's without making it look as though you had backed down. I have no desire to embarrass the Prime Minister.

Yaqub: Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary. I shall let you know just as soon as I have word from my Prime Minister.