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TAGS: PEPR, MNUC, MASS, PK, US

SUBJECT: DISCUSSION BETWEEN UNDER SECRETARY NEWSOM AND PAKISTAN'S MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AGHA SHAHI ON THE REPROCESSING ISSUE

SUMMARY: DURING HIS MEETING WITH AGHA SHAHI IN NEW YORK ON AUGUST 11, UNDER SECRETARY NEWSOM DESCRIBED OUR INTENTIONS AND POLITICAL PROBLEMS WITH RESPECT TO THE RESUMPTION OF AID TO PAKISTAN IF THE REPROCESSING ISSUE IS RESOLVED. SHAHI INDICATED THAT IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE GOP TO PROVIDE PUBLIC OR PRIVATE ASSURANCES ON PAKISTAN'S

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
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FUTURE INTENTIONS ON REPROCESSING. END SUMMARY.

1. IN HIS MEETING WITH AGHA SHAHI, THE UNDER SECRETARY NOTED THAT WE WERE AWARE DISCUSSIONS ON THE REPROCESSING PLANT WERE NOW GOING ON BETWEEN FRANCE AND PAKISTAN AND WE DID NOT WISH TO PROBE, BUT HE WANTED TO SHARE WITH AGHA SHAHI THE RESULTS OF OUR INITIAL, VERY QUIET CONSULTATIONS WITH SENATOR GLENN AND CONGRESSMAN ZABLOCKI. NEWSOM HAD BRIEFED THESE KEY LEADERS ON HIS TRIP TO THE AREA, INCLUDING THE CHANGED CIRCUMSTANCES SUBSEQUENT TO THE AFGHAN COUP AND THE IMPORTANCE WE ATTACH TO OUR RELATIONS WITH PAKISTAN. HE TOLD THEM THAT DISCUSSIONS WERE CONTINUING BETWEEN FRANCE AND PAKISTAN ON THE REPROCESSING

PLANT AND ALTHOUGH WE DID NOT KNOW WHAT THE OUTCOME WOULD BE, IF THERE WERE A SUSPENSION OF THE PROJECT FOR ANY REASON, WE WOULD WANT TO CONSULT WITH KEY MEMBERS OF CONGRESS ABOUT THE RESUMPTION OF ASSISTANCE TO PAKISTAN. HE HAD EXPLAINED TO BOTH MEN THAT IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR PAKISTAN TO MAKE ANY PUBLIC COMMITMENTS FORESWEARING REPROCESSING AND THAT WE WOULD BE PREPARED TO GIVE CONGRESS OUR ESTIMATE OF GOP INTENTIONS. BOTH GLENN AND ZABLOCKI EXPRESSED CONTINUING CONCERN OVER GOP INTENTIONS WITH RESPECT TO NUCLEAR WEAPONS DEVELOPMENT AND FELT THAT SOME FIRM COMMITMENT ON NO REPROCESSING IN THE FUTURE MIGHT BE NECESSARY.

2. MR. NEWSOM SAID THAT HE WAS PROVIDING AGHA SHAHI WITH THIS BACKGROUND IN ORDER TO BE SURE THERE WAS NO MISUNDERSTANDING ABOUT OUR POSITION ON ASSURANCES. AS NEWSOM HAD INFORMED AMBASSADOR YAQUB-KHAN, IF WE LEARN OF A DECISION ON SUSPENSION OF THE REPROCESSING PROJECT, WE WILL SEEK TO OBTAIN CONGRESSIONAL AGREEMENT TO RESUME

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OUR ASSISTANCE. WE WILL HAVE TO CONVINCING GLENN AND OTHERS THERE IS LITTLE LIKELIHOOD OF PAKISTAN PROCEEDING WITH ITS OWN REPROCESSING PLANT. HOWEVER, IN LIGHT OF HIS CONVERSATIONS ON THE HILL, NEWSOM WOULD LIKE VERY FRANKLY TO POINT OUT THAT OUR ABILITY TO GAIN CONGRESSIONAL CONCURRENCE WOULD BE FACILITATED BY SOME KIND OF PAKISTANI ASSURANCE ON THEIR FUTURE INTENTIONS AND WOULD, ON THE OTHER HAND, BE MADE MORE DIFFICULT BY ANY PUBLIC GOP COMMITMENT TO CONTINUE WITH REPROCESSING. NEWSOM SAID IT WAS CLEAR THAT THERE WAS VERY STRONG FEELINGS ON THE HILL ABOUT NON-PROLIFERATION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF TECHNOLOGY THAT LEADS TO WEAPONS DEVELOPMENT. INDEED, THIS IS NOT ONLY A MATTER OF CONCERN TO CONGRESS BUT TO PRESIDENT CARTER AS WELL. THE DEGREE TO WHICH PAKISTAN MIGHT PROCLAIM PUBLICLY ITS INTENTIONS TO GO FORWARD WITH THE PLANT WILL OBVIOUSLY COMPLICATE THE PROCESS OF OBTAINING CONGRESSIONAL CONCURRENCE. WE RECOGNIZE THAT THIS IS OUR PROBLEM AND WHAT THE GOP DOES IS WITHIN ITS SOVEREIGN RIGHTS.

3. AGHA SHAHI CLAIMED THE GOP HAD BEEN SURPRISED BY AMBASSADOR HUMMEL'S DEMARCHE ON ASSURANCES. IT WAS FELT THE U.S. WAS GOING BEYOND THE GLENN AMENDMENT AND MAKING DEMANDS THAT NO COUNTRY COULD ACCEPT. HE SAID HE WOULD REPORT THE UNDER SECRETARY'S REMARKS TO GENERAL ZIA. HE SAID PAKISTAN WILL NOT INFORM US OF ANY SUSPENSION OF THE REPROCESSING PLANT. IF FRANCE SO INFORMS US IT WILL BE A MATTER BETWEEN THE U.S. AND FRANCE. PAKISTAN WOULD CONSIDER THE FRENCH TO BE RENEGING ON A CONTRACT

AND CAN UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCE APPEAR TO BE ACQUIESCING. IT WOULD BE POLITICALLY FATAL TO THE GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE PUBLIC OR PRIVATE ASSURANCES REGARDING FUTURE PLANS ON REPROCESSING. HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS STILL STUDYING HOW TO DEAL WITH THE QUESTION AND SUGGESTED THAT THE MINIMUM THE GOP WOULD HAVE TO DO IS TELL ITS

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PUBLIC THAT PAKISTAN HAS THE UNFETTERED RIGHT TO DO WHAT IT WISHES AND WILL RETAIN ALL ITS OPTIONS.

4. SHAHI PROBED ON THE SUBJECT OF PROGRAMS WHICH MIGHT BE AFFECTED BY A NEGATIVE CONGRESSIONAL VIEW ON RESTORATION OF AID AND THE UNDER SECRETARY RESPONDED THAT IT COULD AFFECT DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE AND MILITARY SALES OR CREDIT. THINGS IN THE PIPELINE WOULD NOT BE AFFECTED, NOR WOULD PL-480. SHAHI ALSO RAISED THE QUESTION OF DEBT RESCHEDULING AND REGRETTED THAT OUR NEGATIVE POSITION SEEMED TO HAVE BEEN LINKED TO THE CURRENT QUOTE POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES UNQUOTE. HE ASSERTED THAT THE U.S. ALONE AMONG CREDITOR NATIONS HAD BEEN QUOTE ODD MAN OUT UNQUOTE. IT WAS POINTED OUT TO SHAHI THAT OUR DECISION ON DEBT RESCHEDULING WAS MADE ON ECONOMIC GROUNDS AND WAS RELATED TO PAKISTAN'S UNEXPECTEDLY HIGH LEVEL OF REMITTANCES. IT WAS ALSO NOTED THAT OTHER CONSORTIUM MEMBERS HAD EXPRESSED RESERVATIONS.

5. MR. NEWSOM INQUIRED ABOUT GENERAL ZIA'S PLANS TO BROADEN THE BASE OF HIS GOVERNMENT AND ASKED IF THIS MIGHT MAKE IT EASIER FOR THE GENERAL TO DEAL WITH THE ISSUES WE HAVE BEEN DISCUSSING. SHAHI RESPONDED THAT ZIA HAD TALKED SEVERAL TIMES WITH THE VARIOUS POLITICAL LEADERS AND ALL OF THEM SUPPORTED THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION ON REPROCESSING. SHAHI REPEATED SEVERAL TIMES THAT OUR EMBASSY SHOULD NOT BELIEVE ANY PRIVATE REMARKS TO THE CONTRARY OF OUR POLITICAL CONTACTS, SINCE NONE OF THEM WOULD TAKE A PUBLIC POSITION AGAINST REPROCESSING. HE ADDED THAT HE HAD RECEIVED A PHONE CALL FROM ZIA THE PREVIOUS EVENING, AND THE CMLA HAD INDICATED HE WOULD BE KEEPING THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE PORTFOLIOS. CHRISTOPHER

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