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RELEASED IN FULL

June 8, 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT
THE WHITE HOUSE

Subject: Nonproliferation in South Asia

You asked for my comments on Charge'Constable's cable 3293 from Islamabad.

Constable's proposal is based on the assumption that Pakistan would not insist on emulating India by having at least one nuclear explosion, but will rather be content to acquire a full fuel cycle capability. This seems unlikely.

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True

Whether or not this is true, it would be a mistake to acquiesce in Pakistan's acquiring unsafe-guarded sensitive facilities, treating South Asia differently from the rest of the world as regards non-proliferation. We are already vulnerable to the charge of such behavior with respect to Israel. A second exception would drain most of the consistency out of your nonproliferation policy.

We do not have any hard intelligence to support the Islamabad gossip about a test this year. I think we still have some time to wrestle with the problem. I plan to consult in Vienna in about two weeks with the British, Germans, French, Japanese, Canadians and Dutch to see if we can't come up with something that has a chance of deterring the Paks. Since the problem is as much, if not more an Indian one than an American one, I think we should give New Delhi some time to stew in the juice that they squeezed by conducting a nuclear test in

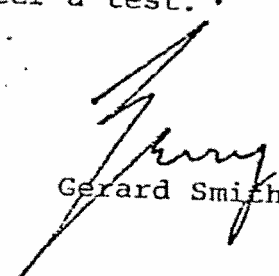
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1974. A recent cable from Bob Goheen, New Delhi cable 9979, suggests that Desai may be beginning to take the Pakistan nuclear explosive program more seriously, and that the Indians might take action to deal with it, either before or after a test.



Gerard Smith

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