May 29, 1986
Embassy Islamabad Cable 11791 to Department of State, 'Nuclear: Solarz Conversation with GOP'

Citation:

Summary:
The year after Congress passed the Solarz amendment in August 1985, Rep. Stephen Solarz (D-CA) traveled to Pakistan, a country that would become a major test case for the amendment which cut off U.S. foreign aid to recipients. Solarz confronted General Zia and other top officials with his perception, based on U.S. intelligence, that Pakistan’s Kahuta plant was enriching weapons-grade enriched uranium. The Pakistanis strenuously denied the charge.

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SECRET SECTION 01 OF 03: ISLAMABAD 11791

EXHIBIT

DECL:ADR
TAGS: MNUC, PREL, PK
SUBJECT: NUCLEAR: SOLARZ CONVERSATIONS WITH GOP

1. ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY: DURING HIS MAY 24-25 VISIT TO ISLAMABAD, COG, STEPHEN SOLARZ RAISED THE NUCLEAR ISSUE WITH ALL THE SENIOR OFFICIALS HE MET. SOLARZ WENT STRAIGHT TO THE POINT SAYING U.S. INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES HAD HIGHLY OR MIGHTY CONCLUDED THAT PAKISTAN WAS PRODUCING FISSILE MATERIAL THAT COULD BE USED TO MAKE AN EXPLOSIVE DEVICE WERE THERE POLITICAL WILL, HE SAID, THIS ISSUE HAS THE POTENTIAL TO DERAIL CONGRESSIONAL AGREEMENT NEXT YEAR FOR A FOLLOW-UP PROGRAM. HE URGED THE GOP TO TAKE STEPS TO ALLOW INDEPENDENT VERIFICATION, AND RESTED TO GOP INSISTENCE ON A REGIONAL SOLUTION THAT IT SEEMED FULLY TO ALLOW THE INDIANS A VETO ON U.S.-Pak RELATIONS.

2. THE PRESIDENT, PM, ZAIN ABBASI AND MUHAMMAD ABBAS DEEMED THAT PAKISTAN HAD ENRICHED TO WOULD ENRICH FUEM OVER FIVE PERCENT. THEY SAID THE WORD OF SECRET.

REVIEW AUTHORITY: Sharon Ahmad, Senior Reviewer
SECRET

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GOVERNMENT LEADERS MUST BE ACCEPTED IF THERE IS TO BE ANY BASIS FOR THE RELATIONSHIP; THE PM WENT ONE STEP FURTHER, SAYING IF THE WORD OF A MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATOR WAS GOOD ENOUGH, AN ELECTED HEAD OF GOVERNMENT'S WORD SHOULD BE SUFFICIENT NO. ZIA AND NOORANI RULED OUT THE POSSIBILITY OF INDEPENDENT VERIFICATION, EXCEPT IN THE CONTEXT OF SIMILAR TREATMENT FOR INDIA. IN SUMMARY

4. MR. SOLARI DISCUSSED THE NUCLEAR ISSUE WITH THE PRESIDENT, PRIME MINISTER, MINISTER OF STATE NOORANI, AND CHIEF HUKAM KHAN AND, INFORMALLY WITH THE CHARGES OF THE UK AND AUSTRALIA. HIS PRESENTATION, WHICH WAS GENERALLY ALONG THE same lines, IS SUMMARIZED BELOW, FOLLOWED BY SUMMARIES OF THE POINTS MADE BY EACH OF THE CONGRESSMAN'S INTERLOCUTORS.

5. THE CONGRESSMAN BEGAN BY NOTING THAT ALTHOUGH THE GOP HAD CONTINUALLY MAINTAINED THAT THE PAK NUCLEAR PROGRAM WAS PLENTY PEACEFUL, THE USG BELIEVED THAT A SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF THE PROGRAM WAS DEVOTED TO DEVELOPING A NUCLEAR WEAPONS CAPABILITY. THE US INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY FELT THAT THE TAMO FACILITY HAD BEGUN PRODUCING WEAPONS-GRAD ENRICHED URANIUM, WHICH WOULD GIVE PAKISTAN THE ABILITY TO PRODUCE NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN FAIRLY SHORT ORDER. IF THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD TAKE THE POLITICAL DECISION TO DO SO, SOLARI CONCEDED THAT THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY MIGHT BE WRONG, BUT CONGRESS WOULD HAVE LITTLE CHOICE BUT TO GO WITH THEIR ASSESSMENT.

6. SOLARI NOTED THAT THE NUCLEAR ISSUE COULD DERAIL THE PROPOSED FOLLOW-ON AID PROGRAM. IN LIGHT OF US SECRET
NON-PROLIFERATION CONCERNS, HIS COMMITTEE WOULD HAVE TO
CLOSELY EXAMINE WHETHER THE US COULD PROVIDE ASSISTANCE
TO A NATION WHICH APPEARED TO BE PRODUCING FISSILE
MATERIAL FOR NUCLEAR WEAPONS. "I HAVE THE IMPRESSION
PAKISTAN HAS CROSSED THE RUBICON," SOLARZ TOOK NOTE OF
THE GOP INSISTENCE THAT ANY SOLUTION MUST BE A REGIONAL
ONE BY NOTING THAT THE INDIANS DID NOT APPEAR PREPARED
TO COOPERATE ON PAK PROPOSALS -- THUS, THE GOP WAS IN
ESSENCE GIVING THE GOI A VETO OVER PAK-US RELATIONS.
He urged that the GOP find some way to allow
INDEPENDENT VERIFICATION OF THEIR ASSERTIONS, NOTING
THAT ON THIS ISSUE TRUST ALONE WOULD NOT SUFFICE.

1. PM JUNEJO ON MAY 24 TOLD SOLARZ THAT AN
ANTI-PAKISTAN LOBBY WAS VILIFYING HIS COUNTRY'S NUCLEAR
PROGRAM. PAKISTAN DID NOT HAVE THE CAPABILITY TO MAKE
MAIL, THOUGH INDIA, WHICH HAD TO BE A FACTOR IN
PAKISTAN'S CALCULATION, HAD ALREADY SHOWN IT COULD
EXPLODE A BOMB. JUNEJO ALSO NOTED THAT THE GOP HAD TO CONSIDER THE MASSIVE INDIAN ARMS PURCHASES WHEN TRYING
TO EVALUATE GOI INTENTIONS. HE ENDED BY
STRESSING THAT A U.S. GOVERNMENT WHICH HAD ACCEPTED THE
WRONG-OF A PARTIAL LAW REGIME SHOULD BE WILLING TO
ACCEPT THE WRONG OF AN ELECTED GOVERNMENT. AN EMBASSADOR
SAID THIS ARGUMENT WOULD NOT WORK ON SUCH A CRITICAL
ISSUE WHEN INTELLIGENCE ASSUMPTIONS REMAIN IN DOUBT.

2. PRESIDENT ZIA ON MAY 25 TOLD SOLARZ THAT
GOVERNMENTS SOMETIMES GET EMOTIONAL ON CERTAIN ISSUES,
IRRESPECTIVE OF WHO IS IN POWER. NO PAKISTAN
GOVERNMENT WOULD ALLOW ITS SOVEREIGNTY TO BE
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TAGS: MNUC, PREL, PK
SUBJECT: NUCLEAR: SOLARZ CONVERSATIONS WITH GOP

CHALLENGED, AND VERIFICATION BY THE U.S. WOULD
CONSTITUTE SUCH A CHALLENGE, ZIA ASSERTED THE U.S. AND
PakISTAN HAVE A MUTUALITY OF INTEREST. IF, DESPITE
THIS, THE U.S. WERE SUBSEQUENTLY TO CONCLUDE THAT IT IS
IN AMERICA'S INTEREST TO BREAK UP THE PRESENT STATE OF
AFFAIRS -- BECAUSE, AS HE PUT IT, OF INDIAN
INTRANSGENCE -- THAT IS A DECISION FOR THE U.S., ZIA
SAID PAKISTAN IS NOT ENRICHING URANIUM ABOVE THE FIVE
PERCENT LEVEL. IT HAS NO INTENTION OF DOING SO.

S. ZIA REFERRED TO HIS CONVERSATIONS LAST FALL WITH
PRESIDENT REAGAN AND NOTED HE HAD GIVEN THE PRESIDENT
CARTE BLANCHE, IN TERMS OF NEGOTIATING ON PAKISTAN'S
BEHALF A REGIONAL NUCLEAR ACCORD WITH INDIA. THAT IS
ANYTHING WE COULD ACCEPT, HE COULD ACCEPT. THE ONLY
QUALIFICATION WAS THAT BOTH INDIA AND PAKISTAN HAD TO
BE TREATED EQUALLY. INDEED, WE CONTINUED TO SOLARZ,
INDIA, BEING THE LARGEST PARTNER, SHOULD BE PREPARED TO
TAKE CERTAIN MEASURES. TO SOLARZ QUESTION,
PAKISTAN BELIEVES INDIA DOES HAVE NUCLEAR WEAPONS. HE
DENIED, HOWEVER, THAT INDIA'S MEMBERSHIP IN THE NUCLEAR
CLUB HAD LED TO A DECISION TO GO NUCLEAR, SAYING
PAKISTAN'S POLICY ON NON-PROLIFERATION IS ONE OF
CONVICTION — "IN THE INTEREST OF HUMANITY." HE
REPEATED, HOWEVER, THAT ANY SOLUTION MUST PLACE EQUAL
OBLIGATION ON BOTH PAKISTAN AND INDIA TO VERIFY THEIR
PEACEFUL INTENTIONS.

15. MINISTER OF STATE KOOPMAN ON MAY 25 TOLD THE
CONGRESS THAT SOLAIR'S SUGGESTION FOR A PRIVATE
INSPECTION OF PAKISTAN'S NUCLEAR FACILITIES WAS NOT
POSSIBLE BECAUSE IT WOULD NOT REMAIN PRIVATE.
EVERYTHING IN THE U.S. LEAKS SOONER OR LATER. IF THE
U.S.-PAKISTAN RELATIONSHIP IS TO WORK, IT HAS TO BE ON A
BASIS OF TRUST. IF THE WRITTEN ASSURANCES PROVIDED BY
PRESIDENT ZIA ARE HOAXED, WIBYAL
MNA AND REVITALIZE ITS ARYAN
ACTIVITIES, WHICH MIGHT NOT CONTINUE IN THEIR PRESENT
FORM, BUT WHAT CHANGES WOULD BE THE COULD NOT SAY. SOMETIMES
AT THIS TIME, ANY ASSISTANCE GIVEN BY THE U.S. HAS TO
BE WITHOUT ANY STRING ATTACHED. NO GOVERNMENT IN
PAKISTAN CAN DO SOMETHING ON NUCLEAR QUESTIONS THAT
INDIA DOES NOT DO.

16. MURID KHAN, DURING A MAY 25 MEETING, SOLAIR SAID AT
THE FOREIGN MINISTRY WITH SENIOR OFFICIALS, THAT
- PAKISTAN HAS NOT ENRICHED URANIUM ABOVE 3 PERCENT
AND HAS NO PLANS TO DO SO IN THE FUTURE.
- ALL PAK NUCLEAR FACILITIES, INCLUDING NAKHUR, ARE
UNDER THE AEGIS OF THE PACE, AND PACE OFFICERS UNDER
SECRET INVESTIGATION.
Minister Ghulam, who holds the portfolio of Minister for Nuclear Energy.

-- To Bolarz's question about hypothetical uses of nuclear enriched above the five percent level, Khan noted Pakistan's research reactor currently uses ninety percent fuel -- under IAEA safeguards -- but Pakistan, in the context of an IAEA project, is now considering retrofitting the reactor to use twenty percent fuel. He said, as well, enriched uranium could be used for material testing, e.g., reactor materials. Finally, he noted that, but for U.S. opposition, Pakistan would have already completed a thousand megawatt light water reactor, which would be using 3-5 percent enriched uranium. He noted Pakistan would not want the fuel supply for such a reactor to be subject to outside manipulation.

-- He had gotten little positive reaction from Indian Atomic Energy Chairman Banana on any of Pakistan's proposals. India had rejected the NPT and full scope
SAFEGUARDS AS DISCRIMINATORY AND AN INFRINGEMENT OF SOVEREIGNTY; RAMANA TURNED DOWN THE IDEA OF RECIPROCAL INSPECTIONS; ON A NUCLEAR FREE ZONE IN SOUTH ASIA (LAND AREAS ONLY), HUWIN HAD A SENSE RAMANA DID NOT COMPLETELY RULE OUT THE IDEA; SIMILARLY, WITH A JOINT DECLARATION -- MORALLY BINDING -- ON NON-AQUSITION, NON-MANUFACTURING, HUWIN HAD A SENSE THERE MAY BE ROOM FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION. RAMANA, HOWEVER, HAD NO COUNTER PROPOSAL THAT COULD HAVE MOVED THE DIALOGUE ALONG, THOUGH RAOJIV MADE HIS NO ATTACK ON NUCLEAR FACILITIES PROPOSAL TO ZIA THE FOLLOWING DAY.

13. SOLARZ HAD A FURTHER PRIVATE MEET A FEW WEEKS AFTER HUWIN KLAN AT RESIDENCE MAY 29. IN A BROADER DISCUSSION, INCLUDING THE BRITISH AND AUSTRALIAN CHARLES, THE LATTER TWO BOTH POSITIVE TO SOLARZ'S RESPONSE TO HIS QUESTION ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES OF NON-ASSISTANCE. ZIA TOLD SOLARZ THE FOLLOWING YEAR, THAT THE BOMB COULD BE SUPPLIED AND ACCESSIONED ON AFGHANISTAN -- PERHAPS SOONER THAN EXPECTED.
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IMMEDIATELY, BUT IN SHORT ORDER.

SOURCE

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