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ACTION NODS-00

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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1103

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E.O. 12065: XDS-1 24 JAN 1999 (HUMMEL, A.W.) DR-M  
TAGS: MNUC ENGR TECH PINR PK  
SUBJECT: (S) PAKISTAN NUCLEAR PROGRAM: PRESIDENT ZIA UL-HAQ  
MEETS WITH AMBASSADOR

REF: STATE 011800

1. (S) ENTIRE TEXT.

2. GENERAL ZIA CALLED ME IN TODAY TO DISCUSS SITUATION IN AREA AND PAK NEEDS FOR INCREASED SUPPORT (REPORTED SEPTTEL). I TOOK OPPORTUNITY TO READ TO HIM TEXT CONTAINED REFTEL ON SUBJECT OF PAK ENRICHMENT AND NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVES RESEARCH. I DID THIS AFTER ASKING TO BE ALONE WITH IM WITHOUT ANYONE ELSE PRESENT. I READ TO HIM THE TEXT AS GIVEN TWICE, OMITTING ONLY THE PHRASE IN LINE 15 PARA 3 CONCERNING "SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES FOR STABILITY OF REGION."

3. ZIA REACTED SHARPLY, EMOTIONALLY, AND WITH SEEMING CONVICTION. HE SAID I SHOULD REPORT THAT, "GEN. ZIA NOT ONLY CONTRADICTED THE ALLEGATIONS, BUT SAID THEY ARE OUTRIGHT LIES." HE SAID SUCH REPORTS COULD ONLY BE FABRICATIONS BY PERSONS WHO WISHED TO HARM US-PAK RELATIONS AND THAT IF WE COULD TELL HIM THE SOURCE, AND/OR INDICATE SPECIFICS THAT COULD BE CHECKED, HE WOULD

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TAKE ME TO WHATEVER PLACES ARE NAMED AND SHOW ME THAT NO SUCH ACTIVITY IS UNDER WAY. HE ASSERTED THAT HE IS NOT IN FAVOR OF HAVING NUCLEAR DEVICE, AND HE CITED AS EVIDENCE HIS KNOWLEDGE THAT PAKISTAN BY 1985 WOULD BE VERY BADLY IN NEED OF ADDITIONAL ELECTRIC POWER GENERATION WHICH COULD ONLY COME FROM NUCLEAR POWER REACTORS: IF PAKISTAN WERE TO ENGAGE IN WEAPONS ACTIVITIES, HE SAID, THERE WOULD BE NO CHANCE TO OBTAIN THE ESSENTIAL POWER REACTORS FROM FRANCE OR ANYWHERE ELSE.

4. I SAID I WOULD REPORT HIS COMMENTS. I SAID I DOUBTED THAT WE WOULD BE ABLE TO IDENTIFY SOURCES, EMPHASIZING THERE ARE MORE THAN ONE. I ASKED IF IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THERE ARE ACTIVITIES ALONG THOSE LINES OF WHICH HE MIGHT BE UNAWARE, TO WHICH HE RESPONDED THAT IS IMPOSSIBLE BECAUSE HE HIMSELF HOLDS MINISTERIAL PORTFOLIO CONCERNED; NOTHING COULD BE GOING ON WITHOUT HIS KNOWLEDGE. HE CLOSED WITH REQUEST FOR SPECIFIC INFORMATION THAT WE COULD CHECK SO AS TO DISPROVE THE ALLEGATIONS.

5. COMMENT: I COULD DETECT NO FALSE NOTE IN HIS DENIALS, BUT HE COULD OF COURSE BE A BETTER ACTOR THAN I HAVE GIVEN HIM CREDIT FOR. IN ANY CASE, DEPT SHOULD MAKE ABSOLUTELY SURE OF VALIDITY OF OUR ASSESSMENTS, WHICH I UNDERSTAND COME MAINLY FROM SINGLE BRITISH SOURCE, AND FROM DATA ON PURCHASES OF EQUIPMENT, WHICH COULD HAVE MULTIPLE PURPOSES.

6. ZIA'S OFFER TO OPEN SITES FOR INSPECTION GIVES US AN OPENING THAT WE SHOULD FOLLOW UP BEFORE TAKING OTHER STEPS. DEPT SHOULD CONSIDER MERITS OF HAVING A US

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NUCLEAR EXPERT COME HERE WITH ZIA'S APPROVAL TO LOOK AT REPORTED CENTRIFUGE ENRICHMENT SITE AND PERHAPS OTHER SUSPECTED INSTALLATIONS. AT MINIMUM, WE WOULD THUS UNDERLINE THE SERIOUSNESS OF OUR CONCERN, AND THE LIKELY REPERCUSSIONS. WE COULD ACCOMPLISH PERHAPS SOME DISRUPTION OF WHATEVER IS REALLY GOING ON HERE, AS WELL. SINCE OUR OBJECTIVE IS A CESSATION OF SUCH PAK ACTIVITIES, I NOW THINK IT BETTER TO REFRAIN FROM TALKING TO OTHER PAK OFFICIALS UNTIL WE DECIDE WHETHER A QUIET UNPUBLICIZED VISIT BY US EXPERTS IS THE APPROPRIATE NEXT STEP.  
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