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A/ISS/IPS, Department of State Authority

E.O. 12958, as amended

October 11, 2007

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NAD 969039

By D NARA Date 9/9/03

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NEA/INS:JHHAWES:NM
3/15/73, EXT 22351
NEA:JJSISCO

NEA/INS:DTSCHNEIDER

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IMMEDIATE NEW DELHI

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, MASS, IN, PK, US
SUBJ: JHA CALL ON ASSISTANT SECRETARY SISCO

JJS
JHH
DTS

1. SUMMARY: INDIAN AMBASSADOR L.K. JHA CALLED ON ASST
SECY SISCO ON INSTRUCTIONS MARCH 15 TO DISCUSS NEW US ARMS
DECISION FOR SOUTH ASIA. GONSALVES AND SCHNEIDER (NEA/INS)
ALSO PRESENT. JHA MADE CALM PRESENTATION, NOTING GOI'S
"GRAVE CONCERN AND UNHAPPINESS" AND EFFECT OF DECISION ON
INDO-US BILATERAL RELATIONS AND TENSIONS ON SUBCONTINENT.
SISCO STRESSED LIMITED NATURE OF DECISION, U.S. VIEW THAT
DECISION SHOULD NOT IMPEDE IMPROVEMENT IN INDO/US RELA-
TIONS OR SIMLA PROCESS, AND HOPE THAT GOI WOULD VIEW
DECISION IN PERSPECTIVE. END SUMMARY.

2. JHA SAID INDIAN CONCERN AT US DECISION WAS BASED ON
GOI VIEW THAT POLICY DERIVED FROM PAST MISUNDERSTANDINGS
WHICH HAD LONG AFFECTED INDO-US RELATIONS AND CONTRIBUTED
TO TENSIONS IN THE SUBCONTINENT. IT SHOULD BE CLEAR TO
ALL, HE SAID, THAT INDIA HAD BEEN DOING EVERYTHING POSSIBLE
TO BRING PEACE AND TRANQUILITY TO SOUTH ASIA. THE SIMLA
PROCESS HAD ADVANCED SLOWLY BUT SURELY THROUGH THE
DELINEATION OF KASHMIR LINE OF CONTROL AND TROOP WITHDRAWAL
DELINEATION OF KASHMIR LINE OF CONTROL AND TROOP WITH-
DRAWALS. NOW THINGS WERE STALLED ON THE QUESTION OF
BANGLADESH RECOGNITION BY PAKISTAN. BHUTTO HAD ORIGINALLY
GIVEN PROMISES ON RECOGNITION AT SIMLA. THEN HAD HAD
INDICATED THAT THE BANGLADESH ELECTIONS MIGHT PROVIDE AN

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OPPORTUNITY. THE GOI HAD HOPED THAT PAKISTANI RECOGNITION OF BANGLADESH WOULD HAVE TAKEN PLACE BEFORE THE US ARMS POLICY DECISION. IF PAKISTAN FELT DEFENSELESS WITHOUT ARMS, BY WHOM DID THEY FEEL THREATENED? IF, HOWEVER, THE PURPOSE WAS POLITICAL RATHER THAN MILITARY SUPPORT, WHAT POLITICAL POSTURE OR POSITION WAS BEING SUPPORTED BY THE NEW US POLICY, JHA ASKED?

3. TURNING TO INDO-US BILATERAL RELATIONS, JHA REFERRED TO THE "VERY DISTURBED AND ANGRY RESPONSE IN PARLIAMENT" WHICH, HE SAID, HAD IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ENTIRE RANGE OF INDO-US RELATIONS. HE COMMENTED THAT INDIAN PUBLIC WOULD NOTE THAT PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF ARMS DECISION BENEFITTING PAKISTAN PRECEDED ANNOUNCEMENT OF RELEASE OF SUSPENDED ECONOMIC AID TO INDIA, WHICH WOULD RAISE QUESTIONS IN THEIR MINDS CONCERNING US PRIORITIES AND INTENTIONS. HE NOTED THAT ECONOMIC AID TO PAKISTAN HAD BEEN RESUMED LONG AGO, AND OPINED THAT LIFTING OF INDIAN AID SUSPENSION SIX MONTHS EARLIER WOULD HAVE PUT MILITARY SUPPLY DECISION IN DIFFERENT LIGHT. PROCEDURALLY, JHA SAID HE FELT THERE HAD BEEN INADEQUATE CONSULTATION PRIOR TO THE DECISION AND THAT WHILE GOI HAD BEEN INFORMED IN ADVANCE IN NEW DELHI, INDIAN EMBASSY HAD NOT BEEN SO INFORMED. SISCO REPLIED THAT WE HAD KEPT INDIAN EMBASSY INFORMED OF DIRECTION OF OUR THINKING PRIOR TO DECISION AND HAD TAKEN PARTICULAR PAINS TO INFORM GOI OF DECISION PRIOR TO OUR PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT.

4. SISCO SAID THAT THE US DECISION WAS A "CLEAN UP" EXERCISE. US ARMS SUPPLY ROLE HAS BEEN RELATIVELY MINOR. WE RECOGNIZE THE SPECIAL POLITICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL MEANING WHICH IS ATTACHED TO THE QUESTION OF ARMS SUPPLY IN THE SUBCONTINENT. WE DO NOT BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT THIS DECISION CAN BE CONSTRUED TO HAVE ANY SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON THE RATIO OF MILITARY STRENGTH IN THE AREA. WE HOPE THAT THE US DECISION DID NOT REALLY COME AS A SURPRISE TO THE GOI. WE BELIEVE IT IS IN OUR MUTUAL INTEREST THAT IN THE CASE OF SPARE PARTS AND OTHER ITEMS INCLUDED IN THE DECISION PAKISTAN BE ABLE TO TURN IN OUR DIRECTION, AND NOT LOOK EXCLUSIVELY IN ANOTHER DIRECTION. WE BELIEVE THAT THIS CONTRIBUTES TO OUR MUTUAL OBJECTIVE OF STABILITY IN THE AREA. SISCO REAFFIRMED US SUPPORT FOR THE WHOLE SIMLA PROCESS, CITING THE ACHIEVEMENT WHICH HAD ALREADY BEEN MADE IN REDUCING TENSIONS AND DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK FOR RELATIONS.

5. SISCO SAID HE HOPED THE US DECISION WILL BE VIEWED BY THE GOI IN A VERY MODEST PERSPECTIVE, AND THAT IT WILL NOT BECOME A MAJOR DIFFICULTY BETWEEN INDIA AND THE US, AND

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THAT IT WILL NOT IMPEDE THE CURRENT MOVEMENT TOWARD BETTER RELATIONS. HE SAW NO REASON WHY IT SHOULD INTERFERE WITH THE SIMLA PROCESS. SISCO SAID THAT THE US HOPED TO GET ON WITH SIGNIFICANT, SPECIFIC MATTERS IN OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS.

6. REFERRING TO JHA'S COMMENT ON THE ORDER OF ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE MILITARY DECISION AND THE END OF THE AID SUSPENSION, SISCO SAID THAT THE PUBLIC INTERPRETATION GIVEN THESE DECISIONS DEPENDED VERY MUCH ON HOW THE GOI DECIDED TO HANDLE THEM. WE BELIEVED IT WOULD SERVE OUR MUTUAL INTERESTS FOR THE GOI TO PLACE THE DECISIONS IN PROPER PERSPECTIVE. THE LIFTING OF THE AID SUSPENSION SHOULD BE SEEN AS A FIRST BONA FIDE OF THE US DESIRE TO MOVE FORWARD ON SPECIFIC QUESTIONS INVOLVED IN IMPROVING OUR RELATIONS.

7. JHA NOTED SISCO'S REITERATION OF US SUPPORT FOR SIMLA AND EXPRESSED VIEW THAT THERE WAS NEED FOR STRONGER PUBLIC STATEMENT OF THIS SUPPORT AND THAT THE US POSITION WAS NOT PART OF "THE PUBLIC CONSCIOUSNESS" IN INDIA. SISCO DEMURRED, NOTING HIS OWN TESTIMONY TO THE HAMILTON SUB-COMMITTEE MARCH 12, AND NOTED THERE HAD BEEN MANY EARLIER OCCASIONS ON WHICH WE HAD EXPRESSED OUR SUPPORT FOR SIMLA.

8. JHA SAID THAT IT HAD BEEN AND REMAINED HIS ENDEAVOR TO IMPROVE RELATIONS BETWEEN INDIA AND THE US. THIS WAS A TASK TO WHICH HE WAS DEDICATED BOTH PROFESSIONALLY AND PERSONALLY. HE WOULD CONTINUE IN THIS LINE, ALTHOUGH HE NOTED THAT CIRCUMSTANCES HAD ON OCCASION NOT MADE THE JOB EASY. 44