

September 1, 1978

**'Next Steps on Pakistani Reprocessing Issue,' US
Embassy Paris cable 29233 to State Department**

Citation:

"'Next Steps on Pakistani Reprocessing Issue,' US Embassy Paris cable 29233 to State Department", September 1, 1978, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Mandatory Declassification Review request. Obtained and contributed by William Burr and included in NPIHP Research Update #3. <https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/112837>

Summary:

Summary of a meeting with French non-proliferation advisor Andre Jacoment. Discussion of the consequences of the French government's cancellation of a project to build a plutonium reprocessing plant at Chashma, Pakistan.

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DEAL IS DEFINITELY OFF WITHOUT WAITING FOR AN OFFICIAL RESPONSE FROM THE PAKS. (WHICH HE THINKS MAY NEVER COME).. HE SPECULATED THAT FOREIGN MINISTER GUIRINGAUD COULD PERHAPS CONVEY THE FRENCH NOTIFICATION ORALLY TO AMBASSADOR HARTMAN, OR TO SECRETARY VANCE WHEN HE SEES HIM LATER THIS MONTH. FINALLY, JACOMET FEELS THAT THE GAULLIST REACTION IN FRANCE TO THE CANCELLATION WILL BE QUITE MANAGEABLE. END SUMMARY.

2. WE CALLED ON JACOMET TO SEE IF THE FRENCH HAVE ANY STRONG VIEW ON THE US CONSULTATION PROCESS WITH CONGRESS. HIS PERSONAL FEELING IS THAT THE US SHOULD MOVE QUITE FAST, SINCE HE BELIEVES THAT THE PAKISTANIS HAVE DECIDED TO MAKE THE BEST OF A BAD BARGAIN. THE FASTER US ASSISTANCE CAN BE UNBLOCKED, THE GREATER WILL BE ISLAMABAD'S INCENTIVE TO CONTINUE ITS RELATIVE MODERATION IN THE WAKE OF ZIA'S PRESS CONFERENCE. AS FAR AS FRANCE IS CONCERNED, HE ATTRIBUTES THE RESTRAINED PAKISTANI ATTITUDE TO THE DESIRE FOR MIRAGES. INCIDENTLY, HE CONSIDERS ZIA HIMSELF THE LEADING MODERATE ON THE REPROCESSING ISSUE.

3. WE NOTED THAT THE ELYSEE BACKGROUNDER AUGUST 23 (REFTEL) HAD LEFT OPEN THE POSSIBILITY OF NEW NEGOTIATIONS FOR A REVISION OF THE CONTRACT AND REFERRED TO THE FRENCH CO-PROCESSING OFFER. WAS THIS A LOOSE

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END MAKING IT DIFFICULT FOR THE GOP TO GIVE US NOTIFICATION THAT THE DEAL WAS DEAD? JACOMET SAID IT WAS NOT. HE SAID THAT THE BACKGROUNDER HAD BEEN TAILORED TO SOFTEN THE BLOW FOR ISLAMABAD AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, TO DRAW THE TEETH OF GAULLIST CRITICISM IN FRANCE. IN FACT, HE WENT ON, THE GISCARD LETTER MADE NO MENTION OF CO-PROCESSING AND SIMPLY REFERRED TO SOME SORT OF POST-INFCE DISCUSSIONS; BUT IT WAS CATEGORICAL IN SAYING THERE WOULD BE NO MORE DELIVERIES FOR THE PLANT. THUS, JACOMET BELIEVES THERE IS NOT BAR TO THE GOP'S NOTIFYING US THAT EVERYTHING IS FINISHED.

4. WE DISCUSSED POSSIBLE SCENARIOS FOR SUCH A NOTIFICATION. THE BEST, OF COURSE, WOULD BE AN OFFICIAL RESPONSE FROM THE GOP TO THE GISCARD LETTER, IN WHICH THE PAKS ACKNOWLEDGED THE TERMINATION. (A BILL FOR INDEMNIFICATION WOULD PRESUMABLY SERVE THE SAME PURPOSE.) JACOMET IS NOT AT ALL CONVINCED, HOWEVER, THAT THERE WILL BE ANY PAK RESPONSE. NOR DOES HE BELIEVE THAT THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT NEEDS ONE IN ORDER TO NOTIFY US. AS TO THE FORM OF THE NOTIFICATION, JACOMET DID NOT

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THINK THAT THE GDF WOULD BE PREPARED TO DO IT IN WRITING. HE SPECULATED THAT PERHAPS FOREIGN MINISTER GUIRINGAUD COULD CONVEY IT ORALLY TO AMBASSADOR HARTMAN, OR POSSIBLY TO SECRETARY VANCE WHEN HE SEES HIM NEAR THE END OF THE MONTH. CLEARLY, THE FRENCH WILL BE INTERESTED IN OUR VIEWS ON WHAT WE NEED FROM THEM.

5. JACOMET SEEMED CONFIDENT THAT THE GDF COULD HANDLE ITS DOMESTIC, I.E. GAULLIST, OPPOSITION ON THE ISSUE. HE SAID THIS WOULD BE ESPECIALLY TRUE IF THE PROSPECT OF FRENCH SALE OF MIRAGES BECAME A LIVE ONE; THEN CHIRAC WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO ARGUE THAT FRANCE WAS LOSING BUSINESS.
HARTMAN

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