

September 23, 1978
US Embassy Paris cable 31540 to State Department,
'Elysée Views on Reprocessing Issues'

Citation:

"US Embassy Paris cable 31540 to State Department, 'Elysée Views on Reprocessing Issues'", September 23, 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/112845>

Summary:

A source in President Giscard's staff informed the US embassy that Pakistan was determined to complete the reprocessing plant and was searching for another country willing to supply the necessary technology. Also discusses a developing nuclear deal between West Germany and Brazil.

Credits:

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English

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Original Scan

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TIDN THAT THE PAKS HAVE MADE PROBES IN ROME, TOKYO, AND MADRID; AND HE ASSUMES THAT THEY ARE PROBABLY MAKING EFFORTS IN OTHER COUNTRIES AS WELL. HE THEORIZES THAT THE PAKS MAY BE SEEKING TO MAKE A BOMB WITHOUT TESTING IT, IN THE HOPE THAT THEY CAN AVOID THE INTERNATIONAL OUTCRY THAT A NUCLEAR EXPLOSION WOULD PROVOKE WHILE AT THE SAME TIME GIVING THEMSELVES THE MEANS TO RESIST POSSIBLE NUCLEAR BLACKMAIL BY INDIA. SOURCE WAS LESS OPTIMISTIC THAN OUR MFA CONTACTS THAT THE PROSPECT OF FRENCH AND US MILITARY AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE COULD DISSUADE THE PAKS.

3. REFLECTING SOMEWHAT GREATER SENSITIVITY THAN OUR MFA CONTACTS TO DOMESTIC FRENCH CONSIDERATIONS, SOURCE SAW LITTLE PROSPECT THAT THE GDF WOULD REVERSE ITS DECISION NOT TO PROVIDE THE US OFFICIAL ASSURANCES THAT THE PAKISTAN DEAL IS DEFINITELY OFF. HE EXPRESSED GREAT SKEPTICISM THAT FRENCH ASSURANCES COULD BE KEPT PRIVATE ONCE THE US GOVERNMENT HAD BEGUN ITS CONSULTATION PROCESS WITH THE CONGRESS. HIS COMMENTS INDICATED THAT THE ELYSEE IS WORRIED THAT, IF SUCH FRENCH ASSURANCES BECOME PUBLIC, THE GAULLISTS WOULD BE ABLE TO CHARGE US-FRENCH COLLUSION AND BREACH OF CONTRACT BY FRANCE (FOR DOMESTIC POLITICAL REASONS THE ELYSEE

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BACKGROUNDING OF THE FRENCH DECISION HAD STRESSED THAT THE GOF HAD OFFERED THE PAKS VARIOUS ALTERNATIVES CONSISTENT WITH THE CONTRACT).

4. ELYSEE SOURCE SAID THAT GISCARD HAD NOT MENTIONED THE BRAZIL DEAL WITH SCHMIDT AT THEIR MEETINGS IN AACHEN SEPTEMBER 14 AND 15, ALTHOUGH NOTHING HE SAID INDICATED THAT THE FRENCH ARE ANY LESS CONCERNED ABOUT COMPLETION OF THE FRG-BRAZIL DEAL. THE IMPLICATION WAS THAT MONETARY ISSUES HAD TAKEN UP TOO MUCH TIME FOR OTHER QUESTIONS TO BE DISCUSSED. SOURCE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT HE DOUBTED GISCARD WOULD RAISE THE ISSUE WITH THE BRAZILIANS DURING HIS EARLY-OCTOBER VISIT TO BRAZIL. WHILE SOURCE DEPLORED THE PROLIFERATION POSSIBILITIES IN LATIN AMERICA IF BRAZIL WERE TO MAKE A BOMB, HE SAID THAT FRANCE, NOT BEING A PARTY TO THE CONTRACT, WAS IN NO POSITION TO OPPOSE IT AT THIS POINT. IN ANY CASE, FRANCE HAS LITTLE LEVERAGE ON BRAZIL, WHILE THE US (HE ADDED) HAS MUCH MORE. HE ASKED IF THE US HAD RECENTLY EXPRESSED ITS CONCERN TO THE /FRG OR TO BRAZIL, WE ANSWERED THAT IT HAS DONE SO

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