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AMB 12-08-86  
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AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI  
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DOS REVIEWED 18-Apr-2007: DECLASSIFIED IN FULL

*JGDean*

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR  
TAGS: PREL, IN, PK, US  
SUBJECT: MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER GANDHI, DECEMBER 6

- 1. C - ENTIRE TEXT.
- 2. AT A WEDDING RECEPTION ON DECEMBER 6 HOSTED BY ONE OF THE BIGWIGS IN CONGRESS (I) PARTY, I MET BY CHANCE PRIME MINISTER GANDHI. HE ASKED ME TO JOIN HIM IN A CORNER AND WE SAT DOWN FOR WHAT TURNED OUT TO BE A 15-MINUTE TALK. THERE WAS NOBODY ELSE NEAR US DURING THIS CONVERSATION.

3. AFGHANISTAN:  
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- I STARTED THE CONVERSATION BY ASKING HIM WHETHER HE HAD HAD A CHANCE TO TAKE UP PRESIDENT REAGAN'S LETTER OF NOVEMBER 21 REGARDING AFGHANISTAN. THE PRIME MINISTER REPLIED THAT THE SUBJECT HAD COME UP IN THE PRIVATE TALKS WITH GORBACHEV. GANDHI SAID HE WOULD EITHER PASS ON THE GIST OF THIS DISCUSSION THROUGH FOREIGN SECRETARY VENKATESWARAN OR BRIEF ME AT A LATER DATE. THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT THE TALKS IN DELHI TWO WEEKS AGO MARKED THE SECOND TIME HE HAD MET WITH GORBACHEV. THEY HAD MANY HOURS OF PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS AND HE IS CONVINCED THAT GORBACHEV IS

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"A VERY DIFFERENT MAN THAN THOSE WHO PRECEDED HIM." WHILE MOST OF THE PREVIOUS SOVIET LEADERS WERE RELATIVELY UNIMAGINATIVE AND PURSUED THE ORTHODOX COMMUNIST PARTY LINE WORKED OUT IN THE KREMLIN, GORBACHEV WAS "A MUCH MORE PRAGMATIC LEADER, WILLING TO EXPLORE NEW APPROACHES TO OLD PROBLEMS." GANDHI OBSERVED THAT GORBACHEV OBVIOUSLY PURSUES THE SAME SOVIET GOALS AS HIS PREDECESSORS, BUT IN HIS TACTICS HE IS VERY DIFFERENT. GANDHI SAID GORBACHEV IS "A MODERN MAN WHO IS WILLING TO TAKE CHANCES BY EXPLORING NEW FORMULAS TO RESOLVE PROBLEMS." GANDHI HAD MET THROUGH HIS MOTHER PREVIOUS SOVIET LEADERS AND HENCE WAS ABLE TO COMPARE THE DIFFERENCE IN STYLE OF LEADERSHIP. AS AN EXAMPLE, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT GORBACHEV OFFERED TO MAKE AVAILABLE TO INDIA HIGH TECHNOLOGY TO ASSIST INDIA IN BECOMING MORE SELF-RELIANT, SOMETHING THE PREVIOUS SOVIET LEADERS NEVER HAD AGREED TO DO.

4. WEINBERGER VISIT, AWACS, AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER:  
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- THIS LED THE PRIME MINISTER TO SAY THAT "HE WAS DISAPPOINTED" BY THE COMPLETE SILENCE ON THE ISSUES WHICH HAD BEEN RAISED WITH THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE DURING HIS VISIT MORE THAN TWO MONTHS AGO. THE PRIME MINISTER MENTIONED THAT SPECIFIC TECH TRANSFER ISSUES HAD BEEN DISCUSSED DURING THE SECRETARY'S VISIT AND THE INDIANS HAD NOT EVEN RECEIVED A REPLY AFTER MORE THAN EIGHT WEEKS DESPITE PROMISES MADE THAT THESE ISSUES WOULD BE HANDLED EXPEDITIOUSLY IN WASHINGTON. THE PRIME MINISTER SAID HE HAD REPORTS FROM WASHINGTON THAT THERE WAS DISAGREEMENT IN WASHINGTON OVER THE ISSUE OF DEFENSE-RELATED HIGH TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER TO INDIA WITH THE PENTAGON GENERALLY OPPOSED TO THE TRANSFER. (THE NEXT DAY ARTICLES APPEARED IN THE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PRESS PROMINENTLY FEATURED ON PAGE ONE TO THE EFFECT THAT THE PENTAGON IS AGAINST KNOW-HOW TRANSFER TO INDIA.)

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5. THE PRIME MINISTER THEN MENTIONED THE PUBLICITY WHICH HAD BEEN GIVEN IN THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS TO STATEMENTS REGARDING AWACS FOR PAKISTAN. INDIA COULD NOT REMAIN INDIFFERENT TO THESE REPORTS. (COMMENT: THE AVAILABILITY OF AWACS TO PAKISTAN WAS DISCUSSED BY GANDHI WITH HIS KEY ADVISORS WHO INTERPRETED IT AS AN INDICATION THAT THE U.S. WAS NOT TRULY INTERESTED IN AN IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS WITH INDIA. IF THIS WERE NOT THE CASE, THE USG COULD HAVE USED THE OPPORTUNITY OFFERED BY THE VARIOUS AMERICAN VISITORS TO DELHI WHICH HAD PRECEDED THE AWACS ANNOUNCEMENT TO INFORM THE INDIAN AUTHORITIES OF OUR PLANNED ACTION.)

6. ARMS SHIPMENTS TO IRAN:  
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- GANDHI NOTED THAT THERE HAD APPARENTLY BEEN "CO-MINGLING" OF FUNDS DERIVED FROM THE PROFITS OF THE ARMS SALES TO IRAN WITH U.S. FUNDS FOR THE MUJAHEDIN RESISTANCE AND A MATCHING SAUDI CONTRIBUTION FOR THE RESISTANCE FIGHTERS. HE THEN RETURNED TO THE AWACS DISCUSSION NOTING THAT APPARENTLY THE SAUDIS WERE SUPPOSED TO COME UP WITH THE MONEY TO FINANCE THE AWACS FOR PAKISTAN. I REPLIED THAT IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF I COULD GET A READ-OUT ON HIS DISCUSSION WITH GORBACHEV ON AFGHANISTAN SINCE THE SOVIET OCCUPATION OF AFGHANISTAN IS A MAJOR FACTOR IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH PAKISTAN.

7. CONGRESSMAN SOLARZ' VISIT TO INDIA:  
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- THE PRIME MINISTER ASKED WHEN SOLARZ WAS COMING HERE. I GAVE HIM THE DATES OF HIS DELHI STAY. THE PRIME MINISTER SAID HE WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO MEETING WITH HIM. (COMMENT: ON MONDAY, DECEMBER 8, THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE CALLED TO SAY THE P.M. WILL BE OUT OF DELHI DECEMBER 17-20 SO THE MEETING WITH SOLARZ MAY NOT BE POSSIBLE UNLESS SOLARZ MAKES CHANGES IN HIS SCHEDULE. SEE SEPTTEL.) DEAN##

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