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EXCISE

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H-01 INM-02 TEDE-00 INR-00 IO-16 L-01 ADS-00
NEA-01 NRC-01 NRRC-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 OES-09 OIC-02
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SECTION 01 OF 03 ISLAMABAD 004166

CENTCOM ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR
TAGS: PARM, MNUC, KNNP, PREL, PGOV, PK
SUBJECT: GEN. BEG GOES PUBLIC ON HISTORY OF PAKISTAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM

1. SUMMARY. IN A SURPRISING ARTICLE IN THE PAKISTANI

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[REDACTED]

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ENGLISH LANGUAGE PRESS, FORMER CHIEF OF THE ARMY STAFF AND
BUDDING POLITICIAN, GEN. ASLAM BEG, PROVIDED DETAILED
BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON PAKISTAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM. THE
ARTICLE [REDACTED] PURPORTS TO
PUT ON THE PUBLIC RECORD MANY ASPECTS OF THE PROGRAM INCLUDING
COMMAND AND CONTROL, STATE OF DEVELOPMENT AND POSSIBLE DELIVERY
SYSTEMS. BEG SUGGESTS THAT COMMAND AND CONTROL IS EXERCISED
EFFECTIVELY BY A NATIONAL NUCLEAR COMMAND AUTHORITY (NNCA),
WHICH HE CLAIMS IS CURRENTLY CONTROLLED BY THE PRIME MINISTER
BUT INCLUDES OTHER MILITARY AND CIVILIAN LEADERS. HE ADDS THAT

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THE NNCA DECIDED IN 1989 THAT PAKISTAN HAD REACHED MINIMAL DETERRENCE AGAINST INDIA AND THUS COULD LIMIT FURTHER PRODUCTION OF ENRICHED URANIUM TO LEU. BEG SAYS THAT THE MINIMAL DETERRENT PAKISTAN HAS IS IN THE INTEREST OF BOTH INDIA AND PAKISTAN AND SERVES TO PREVENT WAR BETWEEN THEM, DESPITE INDIA'S CONVENTIONAL FORCES ADVANTAGE. ARGUING THAT ADDITIONAL LEU CAN BE ENRICHED TO HEU QUICKLY. BEG SAYS THAT CONTINUING THE CAP SHOULD CAUSE NO PROBLEM, BUT THAT PAKISTAN SHOULD ONLY AGREE TO A FORMAL CAP IN CONJUNCTION WITH INDIA. THIS WILL KEEP THE TWO PROGRAMS IN ROUGH SYMMETRY WHICH PRESERVES DETERRENCE.

2. [REDACTED] BEG SAYS IN HIS ARTICLE THAT BENAZIR KNEW ABOUT AND HELD THE "KEY" TO PAKISTAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM DURING HER FIRST TERM OF OFFICE, A POINT WHICH SHE SOMETIMES DISPUTES. HE ALSO ALLEGES THAT THE DECISION TO CAP THE PROGRAM WAS TAKEN WHEN SHE WAS PRIME MINISTER, WHICH SHE DENIED DURING LAST YEAR'S DEBATE IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. WHILE NOT OPPOSING A CAP ON HIGHLY ENRICHED URANIUM FOR THE NUCLEAR PROGRAM, BEG SAYS OTHER ASPECTS OF THE PROGRAM ARE AND SHOULD CONTINUE TO DEVELOP. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN BEG SAYS THAT PAKISTAN IS

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[REDACTED]

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GETTING CHINESE M-115 WHICH COULD BE A DELIVERY SYSTEM FOR THE
NUCLEAR WEAPONS.

END SUMMARY.

SUMMARY OF ARTICLE

3. (U) FORMER CHIEF OF THE ARMY STAFF, GEN. ASLAM BEG HAS PUBLISHED AN ARTICLE IN THE APRIL 23 ISSUE OF "THE NEWS," A MODERATE ENGLISH LANGUAGE PAKISTAN DAILY NEWSPAPER, ON PAKISTAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM. BEG SAYS THAT HIS INFORMATION IS BASED ON HIS SERVICE FIRST, AS VICE CHIEF OF THE ARMY STAFF UNDER GEN. ZIA UL-HAQ, AND THEN AS CHIEF OF THE ARMY STAFF UNDER SUBSEQUENT CIVILIAN GOVERNMENTS. BEG ALLEGES THAT PAKISTAN ACQUIRED "NUCLEAR CAPABILITY" IN 1987 AND THAT THE U.S. CHOSE NOT TO MAKE AN ISSUE OF IT UNTIL 1990 BECAUSE OF PAKISTAN'S IMPORTANCE TO THE "AFGHAN PROBLEM."

4. (U) SINCE 1990 BEG SAYS THAT THE COMBINATION OF THE END OF THE AFGHAN WAR AND THE START OF THE UPRISING IN OCCUPIED (INDIAN HELD) KASHMIR RAISED U.S. CONCERNS THAT PAKISTAN WAS PREPARING A NUCLEAR ATTACK ON INDIA. THIS LED TO DEPUTY NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR GATES' MISSION TO PAKISTAN. BEG SAYS

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HE BLUNTLY TOLD GATES THAT HE WAS "TALKING ABOUT SOMETHING WHICH JUST DID NOT EXIST ON THE GROUND." THE EVIDENCE ON WHICH THE U.S. BASED ITS CALCULATION, ACCORDING TO BEG, WAS MOVEMENT OF MATERIAL FROM KAHUTA, READING F-16S AND ACTIVITIES AROUND QUETTA, WHERE THE U.S. THOUGHT PAKISTAN HAD NUCLEAR FACILITIES. BEG SUGGESTS THAT ALL OF THIS INFORMATION WAS MADE UP BY THE "INDIAN LOBBY IN THE U.S."

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5. (U) TO REFUTE THE ALLEGATIONS, BEG PROVIDES THE HISTORY OF WHAT HE CALLS THE "NATIONAL NUCLEAR COMMAND AUTHORITY" (NNCA). BEG SAYS THAT THE NNCA WAS FOUNDED BY THE LATE PRIME MINISTER ZULFIQAR ALI BHUTTO AND WAS CHAIRED THEN BY THE PRIME MINISTER AS "CHIEF EXECUTIVE." UNDER ZIA UL HAQ, ZIA AS PRESIDENT WAS CHAIRMAN AND LATER THE NEXT PRESIDENT, GHULAM ISHAQ KHAN, REMAINED INVOLVED IN THE NNCA. THE NNCA, BEG SAYS, IS THE LOCUS OF COMMAND AND CONTROL FOR PAKISTAN'S NUCLEAR CAPABILITY AND OPERATES OUT OF THE JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER (JOC) IN THE JOINT STAFF HEADQUARTERS IN RAWALPINDI. (NOTE: IT IS THE INDIVIDUAL SERVICES AND NOT THE JOINT STAFF WHICH RETAIN MOST OF THE MILITARY AUTHORITY IN PAKISTAN. HOWEVER, BEG CLAIMS THAT IN WARTIME THE JOINT STAFF WOULD COMMAND ALL THREE SERVICES AND IT IS FOR THAT REASON THAT THE NNCA IS LOCATED THERE. END NOTE.) BEG SAYS THAT THE NNCA PRESERVES POLITICAL CONTROL OF THE CHAIN OF COMMAND AND ARGUES THAT SINCE THE DEATH OF ZIA UL-HAQ, IT IS THE PRIME MINISTER WHO CHAIRS THE GROUP AND THUS HAS "PAKISTAN'S KEY." OTHER FUNCTIONS OF THE NNCA INCLUDE POLICY MAKING, DETERMINING THE NUCLEAR CAPABILITIES PAKISTAN NEEDS, AND ENSURING MANAGEMENT, CONTROL AND SAFEGUARDS FOR THE PROGRAM. BEG ARGUES THAT PROGRAM SAFEGUARDS, WHILE TIGHTLY HELD SECRETS, ARE HIGHLY RELIABLE.

6. (U) BEG STATES THAT THE NNCA DECIDES THE "STATE OF

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READINESS" OF PAKISTAN'S NUCLEAR CAPABILITY AND IMPLIES THAT

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THE COMPONENTS OF THE CAPABILITY ARE NOT NORMALLY ASSEMBLED.
AT A JANUARY 1989 MEETING OF THE NNCA, WITH BOTH PRESIDENT
GHULAM ISHAQ KHAN AND PRIME MINISTER BENAZIR BHUTTO IN
ATTENDANCE, BEG SAYS THAT IT WAS DECIDED THAT PAKISTAN HAD
ACQUIRED THE "MAXIMUM DETERRENCE LEVEL THAT IS NEEDED TO AVERT
THE THREAT" IT PERCEIVED AND THUS COULD ADOPT "A POLICY OF
RESTRAINT TO LIMIT OUR NUCLEAR PROGRAM." BEG SAYS THAT HE
ATTENDED THE MEETING AS ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF BUT IMPLIES THAT
HIS ROLE WAS TECHNICAL AND ADVISORY. ONE ASPECT OF THE
RESTRAINT WHICH HAS BEEN ADOPTED, ACCORDING TO BEG, WAS NOT TO
PRODUCE URANIUM ENRICHED BEYOND THREE TO FIVE PERCENT (LEU).

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THE AMOUNT REQUIRED FOR THE KANUPP NUCLEAR REACTOR. THIS HE COMPARES WITH WEAPONS' GRADE URANIUM OF 95 PERCENT (HEU). ON THE OTHER HAND BEG MAKES CLEAR THAT OTHER ASPECTS OF THE PROGRAM INCLUDING R AND D FOR THE NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVE DEVICE, REFINEMENT OF THE DELIVERY SYSTEM, LAB TESTING AND DEVELOPMENT OF SAFETY, SECURITY AND CONTROL MEASURES HAVE CONTINUED. DELIVERY SYSTEMS FOR THE CAPABILITY. BEG SUGGESTS, INCLUDE F-16S, MIRAGES, AND M-11S WHICH HE CLAIMS PAKISTAN "IS NOW GETTING FROM CHINA."

7. (U) LOOKING AT THE FUTURE OF THE PROGRAM, BEG QUOTES INDIAN MILITARY AUTHORITIES AS ACKNOWLEDGING THAT "PAKISTAN'S POSSESSION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS MAKES A LARGE INDIAN CONVENTIONAL CAPABILITY UNEXPLOITABLE." THIS HAS LED THE INDIAN MILITARY TO ADMIT THAT A GENERALLY LOW LEVEL NUCLEAR SYMMETRY BETWEEN INDIA AND PAKISTAN EXISTS AND HAS LED TO A SUBSTANTIAL DEGREE OF NUCLEAR STABILITY. CONTINUING THIS STABILITY BASED ON NUCLEAR CAPABILITY IN BOTH COUNTRIES, BEG ARGUES, IS ALSO IN THE INTERESTS OF BOTH AND MAKES THE POSSIBILITY OF WAR MUCH LESS LIKELY.

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8. (U) FROM PAKISTAN'S POINT OF VIEW BEG ARGUES THAT THE PROGRAM IS COST EFFECTIVE SINCE RUNNING KAHUTA FOR A YEAR COSTS LESS THAN A SINGLE F-16. HE ALSO STATES THAT PAKISTAN PAID PREMIUM PRICES FOR THE F-16S TO GET AN ADVANCED DELIVERY SCHEDULE. BEG'S CONCLUSION IS THAT THERE IS NO ADVANTAGE IN TRADING THE NUCLEAR PROGRAM FOR F-16S. BUT BEG ADDS THAT LIMITING THE PRODUCTION OF URANIUM DOES NOT "CAP" THE PROGRAM SINCE GOING FROM FIVE PERCENT ENRICHMENT TO NINETY-FIVE PERCENT WOULD REQUIRE ONLY 15 DAYS. SINCE THE CAPABILITY THAT PAKISTAN HAS NOW IS SUFFICIENT, ACCORDING TO BEG, CONTINUED RESTRAINT IS POSSIBLE. HOWEVER, PAKISTAN SHOULD ONLY FORMALLY AGREE TO CAP ITS PROGRAM IF INDIA AGREES AS WELL.

COMMENT

9. (S/N)

10. (C)

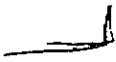
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END COMMENT.

16. (C) FULL TEXT OF BEG'S ARTICLE IS BEING TRANSMITTED THROUGH DAO CHANNELS. MONJO

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*** Current Classification *** [REDACTED]

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