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PAGE 01 NEW DE 02394 201326Z

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE IM/IPS/CS/IR 1/8 Date: 8/2/91  
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UNCLAS NEW DELHI 2394

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PFOR,IN,PK,US  
SUBJECT: INDIAN PRESS REACTION TO REPORTED LIFTING OF US ARMS  
EMBARGO TO PAKISTAN.

BEGIN SUMMARY: SEVERAL INDIAN NEWSPAPERS ON THURSDAY BRIEFLY REPORTED THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF FOREIGN MINISTER CHAVAN'S LETTER EXPRESSING CONCERN ABOUT LIKELY RESUMPTION OF ARMS SUPPLIES TO PAKISTAN. SOME NEWSPAPERS PROMINENTLY FRONTPAGED WIRE DISPATCHES THAT ARMS EMBARGO TO INDIA AND PAKISTAN MIGHT BE LIFTED SOON. AS EXPECTED, CRITICAL EDITORIAL COMMENT BEGAN ON THE REPORTED U.S. DECISION TO LIFT EMBARGO. END SUMMARY.

1. EIGHT OUT OF NINE DELHI DAILIES CARRIED BRIEF ITEMS SAYING THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAD RECEIVED CHAVAN'S LETTER BEFORE BHUTTO'S WASHINGTON VISIT AND THIS WOULD BE REPLIED TO IN DUE COURSE. TYPICAL HEADLINE: " US RECEIVES INDIA'S NOTE" (MOSCOW-LINING PATRIOT)

2. BASED ON THE PRESS TRUST OF INDIA WIRESERVICE, NEWS-UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 NEW DE 02394 201326Z

ACCOUNTS WERE FRONT PAGED. SOME QUOTED AN OFFICIAL SPOKESMAN THAT KISSINGER WOULD TALK TO AMBASSADOR T.N. KAUL ON ARMS SUPPLIES TO PAKISTAN.

3. FOUR NEWSPAPERS PROMINENTLY FRONT PAGED STORY QUOTING US OFFICIALS THAT PRESIDENT FORD IS EXPECTED TO TAKE DECISION ON REMOVING EMBARGO IN A FEW DAYS. INDEPENDENT HINDUSTAN TIMES RAN THE STORY AS SECOND LEAD WITH THE HEADLINE "US DECISION ON ARMS SUPPLY EXPECTED SOON." STATESMAN HEADLINE, SIMILAR TO OTHERS READ: "FORD MAY OFFER ASSURANCES TO INDIA ON ARMS".

4. BASED ON ASSOCIATED PRESS WIRE REPORTS, NEWS ITEM SAID THAT IF DECISION IS POSITIVE, "INDIA WILL BE GIVEN NEW ASSURANCES IN ADVANCE THAT THE US WILL NOT CONTRIBUTE TO AN ARMS RACE NOR ALTER THE STRATEGIC BALANCE OF POWER IN SOUTH ASIA BY ITS ARMS SHIPMENTS TO PAKISTAN."

5. THE INDIAN EXPRESS FRONT PAGED ABOVE FOLD THREE-COLUMN CARTOON SHOWING A SURPRISED PEACE DOVE (WITH CHAVAN'S FACE) LOOKING DOWN AT RAISED BAYONETS CAPTIONED "US ARMS AID TO PAKISTAN" IN SITUATION MARKED "DESTABILISATION."

6. EDITORIAL COMMENTS CONTINUED TO EXPRESS CONCERN AT THE REPORTED US DECISION TO RESUME ARMS SUPPLIES. IN ITS EDITORIAL, "THE ARMS DEAL", MOSCOW-LINING PATRIOT ADVISED THAT CHAVAN SHOULD CANCEL HIS VISIT TO THE US UNLESS WASHINGTON "UNAMBIGUOUSLY ASSURES NEW DELHI THAT THERE WILL NO MORE BE SECRET OR FORMAL GUN-RUNNING BY THE USA INTO PAKISTAN." NOTING THAT THE "ALLEGED FUNCTION" OF THE IND O-  
US JOINT COMMISSION IS TO HELP NORMALISE INDO-US RELATIONS, EDITORIAL COMMENTED THAT NO COMMISSION CAN SUCCEED "AS LONG AS THE US INSISTS ON STARTING AN ARMS RACE IN SOUTH ASIA."

7 THE INDIAN EXPRESS EDITORIAL, "DANGER SINGAL," WORRIED ABOUT THE OPENING OF A US BASE OR PORT FACILITIES AT GWADAR SAYING THAT THE REPORTED US-PAK AGREEMENT (ON ARMS AND BASE) WILL HAVE SERIOUS REPERCUSSIONS ON THE COURSE OF EVENTS IN THE SUBCONTINENT AND "THE PROCESS OF NORMALIZATION (IN THE SUBCONTINENT), ALREADY PAINFULLY SLOW, MAY SUFFER SERIOUS SETBACK."

8. PARTY-ORIENTED MOTHERLAND EDIT PAGED LENGTHY J.D. SETHI  
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PAGE 03 NEW DE 02394 201326Z

PIECE, "DELHI BLIND TO DANGERS," ACCUSING INDIA OF INACTION IN THE FACE OF POSSIBLE RESUMPTION OF US ARMS AID TO PAKISTAN. WONDERING WHETHER "US POLITICO-MILITARY STRATEGY IN WEST ASIA IS CONSISTENT

WITH PEACE IN THE SUBCONTINENT, ARTICLE SAID " THE HISTORY OF THE PAST 25 YEARS SHOWS THAT EVERY GLOBAL AND REGIONAL STRATEGY OF THE UNITED STATES HAS GONE AGAINST THIS COUNTRY'S INTERESTS." BYLINER NOTED THAT US HAS BILLIONS OF DOLLARS WORTH OF SURPLUS ARMS WHICH IT WOULD LIKE TO USE TO ECONOMIC OR POLITICAL ADVANTAGE. CONCEDED, HOWEVER, THAT ARMS SUPPLIES TO PAKISTAN WOULD NOT BE VERY LARGE, SETHI ADDED THAT "WHAT INDIA CANNOT ACCEPT IS THE NEW AMERICAN STRATEGY OF GIVING PAKISTAN THE FEELING THAT A MIGHTY POWER IS AT ITS BACK AND IT CAN ADOPT AGGRESSIVE POSTURES TOWARDS INDIA SO AS TO CREATE UNCERTAINTY...."

9. YESTERDAY ALL INDIA RADIO SPOTLIGHTED INDIAN EXPRESS RESIDENT EDITOR R.D. KWATRA'S TALK ON RESUMPTION OF ARMS SUPPLIES TO PAKISTAN SAYING THAT THE WASHINGTON MOVE WILL "CAUSE A SETBACK" TO PEACE EFFORTS IN THE SUBCONTINENT AND "WILL REVIVE TENSIONS" IN THE AREA. SCHNEIDER

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