

NOTE OF A CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY AND THE
INDIAN FOREIGN MINISTER IN LUSAKA ON FRIDAY 3 AUGUST

File *mm*
7/8

Present:-

Lord Carrington

Mr Mishra

Mr G G H Walden

Mr Jagat Mehta

1. The conversation began without Mr Mishra, who arrived late. Mr Mehta said that his Foreign Minister had thought Mrs Thatcher's speech on Rhodesia very conciliatory. He asked what lay behind the Nigerians' sudden action against BP. The Secretary of State said that it was probably connected with the imminent handover to civilian government. The Nigerian military wanted to lay down an immutable line on policy towards South Africa. The Nigerians had also supported the Anglo-American proposals, and were disappointed when these had failed. Mr Mehta commented that there was a great contrast between Nigerian actions at that time, when they had helped to arrange the secret meeting between Mr Smith and Mr Nkomo, and the line they had taken today. Lord Carrington said that the Nigerians' statement about the takeover of BP had been entirely untrue and the Nigerians must have known this.

2. When Mr Mishra arrived, the Secretary of State asked him about the internal situation in India, and whether it would lead to changes in Indian foreign policy. After describing the state of the parties, Mr Mishra said that there would be no change in Indian foreign policy and that the strength of the traditional consensus there had been illustrated by his decision to attend the Commonwealth Conference. Mr Mehta added that the greatest problem in Indian foreign policy was that of the possible Pakistani development of a nuclear weapon and the associated question of American supplies of nuclear fuel to India. Lord Carrington asked how worried the Indians were about the Pakistanis. Mr Mehta said that everyone agreed that their nuclear development did not seem to be for peaceful purposes only, though there were differences about whether a nuclear explosion could come in three months or three or four years. The political consequences of any explosion would be serious, including for the Pakistanis themselves. The Indians could have had their own explosion before the Chinese if they had developed their own nuclear programme for non-peaceful purposes. There were problems about Indian signature of the Non-Proliferation Treaty: the Indians were in favour of non-discrimination. Since the Americans had mentioned the possibility of a safeguards agreement between Pakistan and India, public opinion had focussed on the fact that China already had nuclear weapons, and people had begun talking about "nuclear apartheid".

3. The Secretary of State asked whether the Pakistanis were developing an Islamic bomb or a Pakistani bomb. Mr Mehta said that he could not see any integrated Islamic political strategy behind this development. Lord Carrington commented that, if it nevertheless proved to be an Islamic bomb, it would make the Middle East even more unstable. Mr Mehta said that the Pakistanis were in a bad political state, following the Bhutto affair. The economy was also in a bad way. President Zia had inherited the nuclear bomb programme from Mr Bhutto. Given the interest of the military, it was possible he was unable to stop it.

4. Mr Mishra mentioned that he had seen the newspaper reports that Pakistan might rejoin the Commonwealth. He did not comment.

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5. Lord Carrington asked whether Mr Mishra would be going to Havana for the non-aligned summit. Mr Mishra said that he and the Indian Prime Minister would probably go. Lord Carrington said that he hoped the summit would indeed be non-aligned. Cuba's claim to non-alignment made less and less sense. Mr Mehta said that the Cubans distinguished between their role as chairman of the conference and their own views. Mr Mishra said that one could object to their membership of the non-aligned movement but not to their chairmanship once they were members. Lord Carrington said that the Cubans made no secret of the fact that in their view non-alignment meant identification with Soviet foreign policy. He himself found it easier to be aligned.

6. On Rhodesia, Lord Carrington stressed that the UK was on a tight-rope, and that if we were pushed too hard at the Commonwealth Conference we would be accused of having "sold out to the black Commonwealth". This would make it impossible to sell any agreement to Salisbury. Presidents Nyerere and Kaunda understood this.

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