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WA16

ATLANTIC -- FRANCE GETS U. S. OFFER ON A-SALES

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WASHINGTON, OCT. 8 (SPECIAL) - THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE BY JIM HOAGLAND APPEARS IN TODAY'S WASHINGTON POST:

PARIS, OCT. 7 - IN RETURN FOR FRENCH COOPERATION IN CURBING NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION, THE FORD ADMINISTRATION IS SUGGESTING THAT THE UNITED STATES WILL SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL SHARING OF THE COMMERCIAL MARKET FOR ATOMIC TECHNOLOGY, ACCORDING TO INFORMED SOURCES.

FRENCH SUPPORT IS VITAL TO THE NONPROLIFERATION PROGRAM DUE TO BE OUTLINED BY PRESIDENT FORD LATER THIS MONTH, WHICH HAS ALREADY BEEN ATTACKED BY DEMOCRATIC CHALLENGER JIMMY CARTER AS A POOR COPY OF CARTER'S OWN IDEAS. FRANCE HAS NOT SIGNED THE NUCLEAR NONPROLIFERATION TREATY.

THE ISSUE OF NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION HAS BEEN THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT SOURCE OF TENSION RECENTLY BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES, WHICH GENERALLY HAVE MENDED RELATIONS OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS.

THE FRENCH INSIST THAT ANY NEW ARRANGEMENTS, HOWEVER, COULD NOT BE APPLIED RETROACTIVELY TO EXISTING CONTRACTS. THIS WOULD MEAN THAT FRANCE COULD PROVIDE TO PAKISTAN EQUIPMENT THAT WASHINGTON CONTENDS MIGHT BE USED TO MAKE ATOMIC BOMBS.

IN FACT, PRESIDENT VALERY GISCARD D'ESTAING SAID IN IRAN TODAY THAT FRANCE WOULD GO AHEAD WITH THE SALE TO PAKISTAN.

IN EFFECT, THE UNITED STATES IS SEEKING WAYS TO GUARANTEE TO FRANCE SALES THAT WOULD OFFSET THE COMMERCIAL LOSS INVOLVED IF FRANCE DROPPED THE PAKISTAN DEAL AND OTHER SUCH SALES IN THE FUTURE.

SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT UNDOUBTEDLY WOULD PROMPT CHARGES BY THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES, WHICH WANT FREE ACCESS TO NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY, AND OTHERS OF AN INTERNATIONAL NUCLEAR EXPORTERS' CARTEL TO PARCEL OUT MARKETS AND IMPOSE MORE RIGID CONTROLS ON FUEL AND REPROCESSING PLANTS. BUT THE FRENCH REPORTEDLY HAVE NOT COMPLETELY REJECTED THE AMERICAN SUGGESTIONS.

THE PAKISTAN SALE HAS BECOME DEEPLY EMBROILED IN FRENCH DOMESTIC POLITICS WITH GISCARD'S OPPONENTS ON THE RIGHT AND LEFT READY TO ACCUSE HIM OF SURRENDERING TO AMERICAN PRESSURE IF THE DEAL IS CANCELED.

THE UNITED STATES IS NOW PURSUING A TWO-PRONG STRATEGY, FOCUSING ITS PRESSURE ON PAKISTAN AND OFFERING THE COMMERCIAL INDUCEMENT TO FRANCE.

AMONG THE SIGNS THAT THE FORD ADMINISTRATION DOES NOT WANT THE PAKISTANI DEAL TO LEAD TO A NEW CRISIS IN RELATIONS WITH FRANCE, WHICH HAVE WARMED CONSIDERABLY SINCE FORD AND GISCARD CAME TO POWER IN 1974, IS AN APPARENTLY DELIBERATE AMBIGUITY IN FORD'S NON-PROLIFERATION PROGRAM ON THE STARTING POINT FOR AN INTERNATIONAL MORATORIUM ON EXPORTS OF REPROCESSING PLANT....

GISCARD, SPEAKING IN TEHRAN AT THE CLOSE OF AN OFFICIAL VISIT BEFORE RETURNING HOME TONIGHT, WAS REPORTED BY REUTER NEWS AGENCY TO HAVE WITHHELD APPROVAL FOR ONE OF THE FORD PROGRAM'S KEY PROVISIONS, THE HALTING OF THE COMMERCIAL USE OF PLUTONIUM BY ALL GOVERNMENTS WHILE INTERNATIONAL CONTROL MEASURES ARE REVIEWED.

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OFFICIALS HERE LIMITED THEIR COMMENT TO SAYING THAT WHILE FRANCE WOULD MAKE ITS OWN DECISIONS, ITS ACTIONS WOULD MEET INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS.

THE FRENCH ARE SHOWING SIGNS OF MORE FLEXIBILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS TO INTERNATIONAL CONCERN OVER NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION, ACCORDING TO EXPERT SOURCES AND FRENCH OFFICIALS. GISCARD HAS ESTABLISHED A HIGH-RANKING NUCLEAR REVIEW COMMITTEE THAT LAST MONTH ADOPTED THE FIRST FORMAL NATIONAL CRITERIA FOR NUCLEAR EXPORTS. IN THE PAST, THESE HAVE BEEN HANDED ON AN AD HOC, ALMOST ENTIRELY COMMERCIAL BASIS.

OFFICIALS DECLINE TO SAY WHAT THE CRITERIA ARE, BUT THEY ARE THOUGHT TO PARALLEL A "CODE OF CONDUCT" DRAWN UP IN SECRET MEETINGS

IN LONDON THIS YEAR BY THE NUCLEAR SUPPLIERS GROUP, WHICH INCLUDES THE SEVEN COUNTRIES EXPORTING NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY.

U.S. EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH A CARTEL ARE LIKELY TO BE DIRECTED THROUGH THE SUPPLIERS GROUP, WHICH WANTS ITS MEMBERS TO CUT BACK ON NUCLEAR EXPORTS AND TO ESTABLISH STRONGER CONTROLS OVER THE FUEL FACILITIES THAT POSE THAT DANGER NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION.

GISCARD SAID BEFORE LEAVING TEHRAN THAT IRAN WOULD SPEND \$8 BILLION ON FRENCH EXPORTS OVER THE NEXT DECADE. INCLUDED WERE FIRM ORDERS FOR TWO 900-MEGAWATT NUCLEAR POWER STATIONS AND STUDIES FOR SIX OTHER NUCLEAR REACTORS.

THE UNITED STATES DOES NOT OPPOSE THE EXPORT OF REACTORS AS LONG AS STRICT CONTROLS ARE USED TO MONITOR FUEL SUPPLIES AND WASTE MATERIAL. IRAN WILL RECEIVE FUEL OVER THE NEXT 15 YEARS THROUGH ITS PARTICIPATION IN A FRENCH-BASED INTERNATIONAL CONSORTIUM.

1625/26/54