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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

15 October 1954

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT: Prospects for Afghan-Pakistani Confederation

1. Afghan Foreign Minister Naim's recent appeal to Ambassador Lodge in New York, urging US encouragement of Afghan-Pakistani confederation as the "only way" to keep his country securely in the Free World, is one of several indications that important Afghan and Pakistani officials are considering this possibility. We believe that the idea of confederation does and will continue to have a certain attraction to leaders on both sides. As indicated in our 4 October memorandum to the DD/I, however, we consider the chances less than even that the two governments will reach any formal agreement on the desirability of a confederation and, in any event, believe that the practical difficulties involved, both internal and external, would make actual implementation of such an agreement highly unlikely.

2. This assessment of the confederation question is substantially accepted by the working level specialists in O/CI,

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Memorandum for DCI

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DD/P, and OIR, and is reflected in the draft estimate on Afghanistan passed by the IAC representatives on Tuesday. A final draft of the estimate, in which we plan to insert a greatly expanded discussion of the confederation question, will be ready for presentation to the IAC after a cleanup session of the IAC representatives today.

3. A summary-evaluation of the evidence available on the confederation question is given below:

a. Within the last year there have been several indications that the confederation question has been under discussion in Afghan and Pakistani official circles:

- (1) In February 1954 the Agha Khan wrote Governor General Ghulam Mohammed of Pakistan strongly urging a confederation in which the King of Afghanistan would also serve as President of Pakistan.
- (2) In April a New York Times Karachi dispatch stated that a merger of the two countries had been under secret consideration for a year and was reportedly imminent. This report was denied by the Pakistani and Afghan Governments but follow-up cables indicated that Pakistani Ambassador Shah had discussed confederation in

Kabul and Atig, his Afghan opposite number in Karachi, had done the same with Pakistani officials.

(3) In September Pakistani Prime Minister Mohammed Ali reportedly told the Agha Khan in France that six months after Pakistan became a republic it would confederate with Afghanistan, with the King of Afghanistan becoming President of the Pakistan Republic. This report was rated possibly true.

(4) On 9 October Prince Naim asked Ambassador Ledge to have the US exert its influence on Pakistan in favor of federation. Contrary to the previous report, he said that Mohammed Ali had been cool and suspicious toward the scheme when Naim had broached it to him.

b. The idea of confederation almost certainly has a certain attraction in both capitals. Afghan leaders may see in it a means of escaping not only from the dangers posed by the USSR's heightened interest in their country but also from the difficulties they have brought on themselves through their espousal of the Pushtoonistan campaign; they may further hope

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that under confederation the Pathan tribal areas of Pakistan will once again fall into Kabul's sphere of influence.

Various Pakistani leaders, for their part, may see in confederation a means of advancing their anti-Soviet defenses to the north side of the formidable Hindu Kush range.

Religious-minded men in both countries may share the Agha Khan's unhappiness over the spectacle of two Islamic states engaged in fraternal bickering and may be attracted by his vision of a united Moslem nation stretching from the Oxus to the sea.

c. We are impressed, however, by the lack of evidence that the confederation question is being seriously and officially considered in any practical fashion. Despite the importance and complexity of the subject, the four episodes summarized above represent the only major indications we have that the subject is under active consideration at all, and the information they provide is far from conclusive. Both Shah and Atig, in their pro-confederation activity last spring, appear to have advanced the idea on an informal and personal basis. The report that Mohammed Ali not only talked sympathetically to the Agha Khan about the latter's confederation scheme but actually promised to put it into effect is at least indirectly contradicted by Prince Naim's testimony

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and is otherwise completely uncorroborated. Even Prince
aim's plea for US support for the confederation was ad-
vanced on a personal rather than an official basis. We
are left with the impression that at most various Afghan
and Pakistani statesmen are talking inconclusively and
somewhat wishfully about the desirability of confederation,
much as Arab leaders in Iraq, Syria, and Jordan have talked
about the ideal of Arab unity ever since World War I.
There is no indication that either the Afghans or the
Pakistanis have considered confederation as a practical
proposition.

d. Even if responsible Afghan and Pakistani officials
do reach agreement on the desirability of confederation,
the scheme would be extremely difficult to put into effect:

- (1) The USSR would almost certainly regard such
a development as threatening its position
and rights in the area and would take determined
action to prevent it. Under its treaty with
Afghanistan, which is considerably more sweep-
ing than that with Iran, it could argue that
the new state had inherited obligations in-
consistent with the Turk-Pakistani agreement
and Pakistan's acceptance of US military aid

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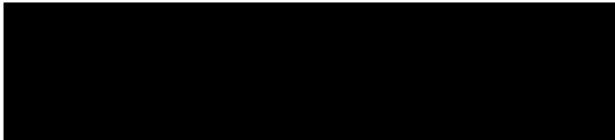
and that Soviet military intervention was therefore justifiable. At a minimum, the USSR would probably increase its subversive activities in Afghanistan.

- (2) India would almost certainly oppose a union of Afghanistan and Pakistan, both because it would remove an impediment to Pakistani freedom of action - the Pushtoonistan dispute - which India has covertly encouraged in the past, and because it would further stimulate Soviet military interest in the area. India would probably use diplomatic pressures in an effort to prevent a confederation by diplomatic means and might also seek to bribe key Afghan government and tribal leaders in an effort to wreck the scheme.
- (3) Finally, there would be difficult internal problems to work out. The Afghans would almost certainly want to have the Pathan tribes of Pakistan's northwest frontier province released from direct Pakistan Government control - an Afghan aim which Karachi has stoutly resisted

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ever since its establishment. Frictions would arise over the division of spoils and office in the new governmental and economic structure. In addition, the new setup would greatly increase the problems of unwieldiness and regionalism in Pakistan and, while the idea of confederation might be acceptable to some Pakistani leaders it would almost certainly be vigorously and possibly violently opposed by others.

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National Estimates