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Pakistan: External and Internal Concerns

1. Evidence of Soviet-Afghan collusion in the recent hijacking of a Pakistani airliner by Pakistani dissidents has strongly reinforced the Zia regime's basic belief that outside powers will exploit Pakistan's internal weaknesses.
2. Pakistan remains extremely concerned about the Soviet threat from Afghanistan and believes the ultimate Soviet aim is to gain overland access to the Arabian Sea through Pakistani territory.
  - It fears a future Soviet ground or air incursion of major proportions to punish Pakistan for its support to the Afghan insurgents--and to demonstrate the Zia regime's inability to defend Pakistan--but believes Moscow will first attempt to pressure Pakistan through India or by meddling in Pakistan's domestic troubles.
  - Islamabad is deeply worried about Indo-Soviet collaboration against Pakistan and sees evidence that Moscow and New Delhi are preparing joint pressure against Pakistan's overland link to China--the Soviets by putting troops in Afghanistan's Wakhan Corridor and the Indians by building up on the Kashmir ceasefire line.
  - Zia is concerned that the Soviets are becoming involved

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in supporting Baluch dissidents and is convinced that the Soviets have had a hand in recent and continuing efforts by radical students and opposition leaders to bring about the violent overthrow of the Zia regime.

3. We do not believe Zia and his advisers are ~~not~~ now prepared to concede ground <sup>ON</sup> ~~of~~ Afghanistan in response to Soviet pressure.

-- Zia believes the Soviets will not withdraw from Afghanistan.

-- Islamabad holds that the US and Pakistan have parallel interests in keeping the Soviets off balance and bogged down in Afghanistan.

4. Zia wants a strong US-Pakistan security relationship that will guarantee Pakistan's territorial integrity against Indian as well as Soviet designs and provide for the rearming of Pakistan's armed forces.

-- Such a relationship would gain broad support in Pakistan if it provided a shield behind which the country could turn to solving its political and economic problems. Half measures, however, will strengthen those who argue that the US is unreliable and who advocate a degree of accommodation with the USSR.

5. The regime is reacting carefully to domestic unrest.

-- Too soft a response will encourage the opposition, while too hard a crackdown could make Zia a hated

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rather than a respected--if unloved--leader.

- The regime worries about the coalescing of a broad opposition front that can force the Army to defend the regime in the streets.
- The Army would rather replace Zia with another general than use force to keep Zia in power.
- The opposition has not coalesced and, most importantly, shows no sign of arousing mass support.