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CIA/ONE/STAFF MEMO/55-61  
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

19 September 1961

STAFF MEMORANDUM NO. 55-61

SUBJECT: Pakistani-Afghan Relations (Internal O/NE Working Paper -  
CIA Distribution Only)

1. Relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan have been troubled ever since Pakistan came into existence in 1947. The crux of the problem is the "Pushtoonistan" issue -- Afghanistan's demand that some five million Pathans in Pakistan be given a chance to opt for independence. Within the past month, tension has reached an all time high. When Pakistan withdrew its consulates and expelled Afghan consulates and trade agencies a few weeks ago, Afghanistan broke off diplomatic relations. Transit trade through Pakistan has been halted. Both sides have moved troops into the border area.

Pakistan's Attitude

2. Pakistani sensitivity to Afghan agitation on the "Pushtoonistan" issue eased to some extent when President Mirza

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headed the Pakistan Government in 1957-1958. Afghan and Pakistani leaders exchanged visits, a US-inspired and supported transit agreement was signed, and the quarrel seemed to be moving slowly toward a negotiated settlement. After General Ayub came to power, however, both sides stiffened their attitudes and Pakistan reverted to a strong and uncompromising line aimed at proving to the Afghans the futility of their "Pushtoonistan" demands. The Pathan areas were, more closely integrated into the governmental structure. Military force was used to put down tribal unrest and to crush Afghan intrusions. Diplomatic approaches toward Afghanistan were cold and sometimes provocative.

3. Pakistan's attitude is simple. Ayub is convinced that the Afghans will give up "Pushtoonistan" only if Pakistan makes continuation of their claim exceedingly costly to them. He is encouraged by his own military training during the British period (when "a whiff of gunpowder" was the standard prescription for trouble on the frontier,) and by his legalist foreign minister, who emphasizes the technical weaknesses of the Afghan claim. In addition, Ayub apparently does not like Afghan Prime Minister Daud personally and probably still hopes that one day the entire Afghan ruling family will be overturned. On the question of Soviet

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influence in Afghanistan, Ayub's attitude varies: when seeking US support for Pakistan, he emphasizes the growing Soviet threat through Afghanistan; when applying unilateral pressure on Kabul, he ridicules the idea that the Afghans would allow themselves to come under Soviet domination rather than surrender in their quarrel with Pakistan.

The Afghan Attitude

4. Afghan motivations are somewhat more complex than those of Pakistan. Prime Minister Daud and most of the royal family are emotionally attached to the "Pushtoonistan" cause. The bulk of the Afghan people care little about "Pushtoonistan" as such but many are interested in matters of "face" and honor in the quarrel with Pakistan. Almost all Afghans know that while the majority of Pakistan's Pathans are loyal to Pakistan, there is serious unrest and agitation in parts of the tribal territory which can be exploited to Afghanistan's advantage. Finally, the Afghan leadership almost certainly hopes that by continuing intransigent, it can induce the US to exert pressure on Pakistan for concessions in order to keep Afghanistan from falling completely under Soviet influence.

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Outlook and Implication

5. The actual situation in the border area is not difficult to predict: transborder trade will probably be abstracted if not actually cut off, for some months at least; both sides will continue to increase their activities aimed at turning the Pathan as the Afghan fruit crop, denied its normal market in Pakistan tribes against each other; tension will build up/and India, riots, and as the 200,000 Afghan nomads who regularly winter in Pakistan are turned back or harrassed at the border.

6. We believe that there is a better than even chance that fighting will occur in the border area this Fall. The possibility of something close to an actual war cannot be excluded. It is more likely, however, that the violence will be limited in scope, although regular military, as well as tribal and irregular forces may be involved. After the present cycle of bitterness and recrimination has run its course both Pakistan and Afghanistan will probably become somewhat more susceptible to efforts aimed at reducing tensions and a kind of modus vivendi may emerge again. In the absence of Pakistani willingness to discuss "Pushtoonistan," however, any real progress toward settlement of the conflict is unlikely.

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7. The long-term consequences of the crisis are less clear, Afghanistan is already heavily dependent on the USSR. Stoppage or obstruction of transborder trade with Pakistan and continued unrest on the border will increase this dependence. At the moment, the Afghan regime is apparently ready even to see US aid programs stopped and the US presence greatly reduced rather than modify its posture toward Pakistan. However, after the situation has cooled off a bit, Afghanistan's fundamental awareness of the threat to its independence inherent in its relationship with the USSR will almost certainly reassert itself, and we believe that Kabul will be eager to continue fairly substantial relations with the US as a counterbalance to those it has with the USSR.

8. The latest phase of the Pakistani-Afghan quarrel may also have some significance for Pakistan's relations with the US. President Ayub, who has been following an increasingly independent (though still pro-Western) foreign policy, during the past year or so has deliberately refrained from consultation with the US, in regard to the crisis. He knows the US disapproves of his policy, but will almost certainly persist in it, except in the face of very heavy and persistent US pressure. Under the circumstances, the road ahead for Pakistani-US relations may also be less smooth than it has been in the past.

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