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DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

15 July 1985

US-Pakistan: Implications of an Aid Cutoff

SUMMARY

A suspension of US security assistance to Pakistan would probably cause Islamabad to intensify its nuclear program and move towards a test. Pakistan's support for the Afghan resistance almost certainly would decrease dramatically, which eventually would lead to a Soviet victory in Afghanistan. [Redacted]

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Zia's policy is staked on the premise that US security assistance is essential to enable Pakistan to withstand Soviet pressure for accommodation on Afghanistan. By strengthening Pakistan's military capabilities and implying a US commitment to Pakistan's security, US aid also reduces Islamabad's incentive to test a nuclear device. [Redacted]

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Effect on Nuclear Proliferation

In the event of a US aid cutoff, Pakistan almost certainly would try to escalate its nuclear weapons development program. Without new deliveries of advanced US weapons, a nuclear weapons capability would become an even greater strategic imperative for Pakistan to compensate for India's conventional force superiority. [Redacted]

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This paper was prepared by [Redacted] Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis. Comments and queries are welcome and may be directed to the Chief, South Asia Division, NESAs, [Redacted]

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An aid cutoff would remove the major political obstacle to a Pakistani test of a nuclear device:

- Islamabad would view a test as important to validate its nuclear weapons capability and to achieving nuclear deterrence.
- A Pakistani test would be a stark failure of US nuclear nonproliferation policies and could serve as an example to other potential proliferators. 


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Effect on the Afghan Resistance

Suspension of US aid programs to Pakistan probably would cause Islamabad to decrease its support to the Afghan insurgents:


- Without US backing, Pakistan would be exposed and vulnerable to increased Soviet pressure.
- Islamabad might feel it had no choice but to accept Soviet domination of Afghanistan and gradually to phase out its support for the resistance. 

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Pakistan might continue to provide some aid to the Afghan resistance with the support of China and Saudi Arabia, but would be unwilling to risk a confrontation with the Soviets. 

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The diminution of Pakistani support would not end the resistance in Afghanistan:

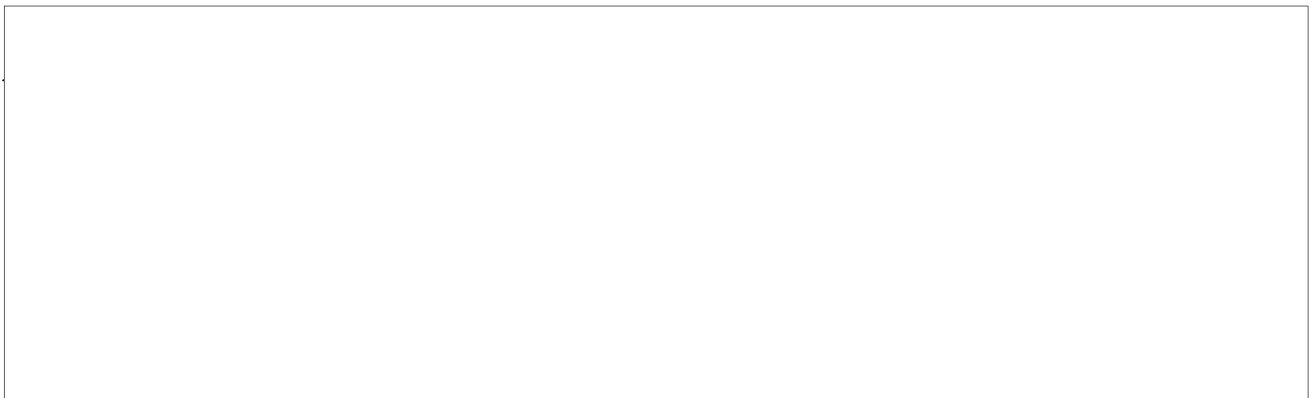
- Many insurgent groups would continue to fight the Soviets and to use Pakistani territory to move arms and supplies into Afghanistan.
- Islamabad could seriously impair the Afghans' ability to move across the border but could not seal the frontier, where Islamabad's governing authority is poor. 

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Nonetheless, without major Pakistani (or Iranian) aid to the Afghan guerrillas, the Soviets eventually would crush the resistance. 

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Political Impact on Pakistan




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