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The Director of Central Intelligence
Washington, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

NIC 02436-86
16 May 1986

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

FROM: Graham E. Fuller
Vice Chairman, National Intelligence Council

SUBJECT: Shift in Pakistani Thinking on Negotiations with Moscow?

1. [redacted]

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Pakistan may be in the process of reconsidering its options in negotiations with Kabul and the Soviet Union on the Afghanistan question. While we need to be keenly alert to such a strategic shift, I do not believe Zia's regime is so naive as not to see the pitfalls. At the same time I do not believe the objective circumstances are yet present in Pakistan to occasion a major shift.

2. [redacted]

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why Zia might reconsider his Afghan policy include the following:

- The change of leadership in Kabul conceivably could offer new opportunities.
- Moscow may be "more sincere" about an intention to withdraw.
- The Mujahidin may be doing less well and possibly beginning a long term decline in capabilities.
- Zia has told Mujahidin leaders that they may have to come to an understanding with Kabul.
- The Soviets' performance on the ground in Afghanistan may be increasingly effective.
- Moscow may be stepping up military pressure against Pakistan along the border.
- There may be dwindling support for the present Afghanistan policy within Pakistan.



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3. I believe we must take a more careful look at the balance sheet however. I have been convinced over the past few years and have noted in memos that the Afghan conflict will be resolved in Pakistan, not on the battlefields of Afghanistan. Once Pakistani support to the Mujahidin is broken the game winds down soon thereafter. I am not certain, however, that the serious problems--that one day will come in Pakistan causing Zia's collapse--are here yet.

- There are many different calculations involved in Pakistani thinking which have traditionally caused them to speak out of several different sides of their mouths on the problem.
- Pakistan has never wanted to see the resistance truly united or powerful enough to exert independent influence in Pakistani policy formulation.
- The Pakistanis are clever enough to keep the US nervous about their intentions in order to keep maximum economic and military support flowing.
- Islamabad wants to appear reasonable and flexible to the world on this issue.
- Zia wants to avoid the direct confrontation with Moscow which negotiating rigidity would imply.
- The Paks deeply distrust Najibullah and his intentions toward Pakistan.
- It is in Zia's interest to avoid being seen as the instrument of the US; a certain coolness toward the insurgency issue helps him there.
- Zia probably believes that his "open-mindedness" about the nature of a future Kabul regime is clever: once the Soviets are gone there is no reason for confidence that the Communists can maintain a hold on power, or that the internal resistance can't get weapons from across porous borders.

4. There are still a number of factors which need to be balanced against seeming Pakistani melting of resolve.

- Pakistan cannot survive without US economic and military support. It is largely the Afghanistan issue which has helped keep Pakistan in the US good graces.
- Zia must realize that it is only his support for the Mujahidin which enables this Administration to try to put the best face on Pakistani delinquency on nuclear weapons development. When

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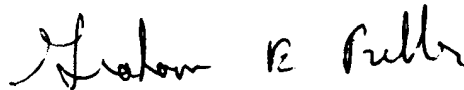
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Islamabad stops playing ball with the Mujahidin, Congress will descend on perceived Pakistani nuclear violations like a pack of banshees--strongly supported by the pro-Israeli lobby which has deep anxiety about any "Islamic bomb."

- I do not yet sense that Zia's Afghanistan policy in itself is an object of criticism in Pakistan. Most Pakistanis fear Moscow and Kabul and consolidation of Soviet power there. The real problem is that Zia's domestic opponents perceive that Zia is vulnerable to charges of doing America's bidding and to being kept in power by the US; if Pakistani support to the Mujahidin is broken, Zia will be much more vulnerable to the domestic opposition.
- The economy has not yet deteriorated seriously--but the longer term outlook is not encouraging.
- The refugee issue is not yet a serious problem for Pakistan.

5. In short, there are very many good reasons for Pakistan to avoid any true shift of policy on Afghanistan now. Tactical maneuvering is likely to continue, and we must continue to be extremely alert for signs of strategic shift in Islamabad's thinking. That said, the potential ingredients for the eventual collapse of Zia's regime are present, and probably cannot be avoided over the long term. Over the shorter term, however, I still believe we have some time to work with.

- It is conceivable Zia may believe the nuclear issue will soon bring him to grief with the US anyway. But he has no reason to hasten that day.
- Nonetheless, Benazir Bhutto's return is a real wild card which--if mishandled--could greatly accelerate domestic deterioration.



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