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DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

29 December 1987

Pakistan: Update on Afghanistan Game-Plan [redacted]

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SUMMARY

President Zia and senior Pakistani policymakers remain skeptical that Moscow will quickly and irrevocably withdraw from Afghanistan. Islamabad believes Soviet signals that it would accept a 12-month withdrawal timetable are credible but is wary of Soviet hints about delinking the timetable from agreement on an interim government. Zia fears the Soviets would wait for supplies to the resistance to be cut off and then find an excuse to resume hostilities. He wants prior agreement on a transitional government headed by Zahir Shah with resistance and Kabul regime representation. Islamabad seeks a withdrawal timetable under 12 months, but would accept 12 months if the interim government issue is resolved and the bulk of the Soviet troops are withdrawn swiftly. Pakistan would try to assist the withdrawal by encouraging the resistance not to harass the departing Soviets and to refrain from taking revenge on Kabul regime officials. Zia believes he can gain the Peshawar-based alliance's consent for such an agreement and is ready to use Pakistan's control over supplies to press reluctant leaders to acquiesce. [redacted]

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We believe President Zia and senior Pakistani policymakers remain wary of Soviet intentions in Afghanistan. Prior to the Reagan-Gorbachev summit, Zia noted to Ambassador Raphel the Russians have a way of increasing expectations on Afghanistan before key meetings then not delivering. After the summit Zia asked the Ambassador to convey to President Reagan his warning that we should remain on our guard. Senior Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials have recently contrasted Soviet rhetoric about Moscow's desire to withdraw with evidence that the Soviets are augmenting fortifications in Kabul and Jalalabad and with their continuing efforts to

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undermine Pakistani resolve by border shellings, bombings and terrorist attacks inside Pakistan.\* The Pakistanis attach great significance to the planned, but as yet unscheduled, talks in Islamabad with Soviet First Deputy Foreign Secretary Vorontsov. Zia believes that if these talks take place they will force Moscow to prove its sincerity. If the talks do not occur, Pakistani suspicions will be reinforced and the Pakistanis will go to Geneva in February anticipating little Soviet flexibility. [redacted]

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The post-summit statements by Zia and his advisors suggest they are wary of agreeing to a withdrawal timetable before the composition and implementation of an interim government is worked out. Zia sees the bilateral talks with Vorontsov and the next round of Geneva talks as crucial to the possibility of securing a Soviet withdrawal in 1988. We think Zia has concluded that in Geneva the Soviets will table a 12-month timetable while details of the interim arrangement remain unclear. The Pakistanis are skeptical of Soviet hints that they are willing to delink the two. They doubt that the Soviets will withdraw until they are certain that the transitional government will prevent a rapid takeover by the resistance and will protect the safety of those members of the Kabul regime who remain in Afghanistan. [redacted]

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Zia has stressed that under the draft Geneva accords, military aid to the Afghan resistance must end 60 days after the agreement is signed. He and former intelligence chief General Akhtar maintain that the Soviets could renege a few months after beginning a withdrawal and after supplies to the resistance had been halted. They argue that it would then be extremely difficult, and entail major logistical and political problems, for Pakistan to resume supplying the resistance. [redacted]

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Zia may be overstating the logistical difficulties in resuming aid but not the political problems. Zia and the military's resolve to continue supporting the resistance fighters in the field remains high in our judgment. Prime Minister Junejo and other senior Muslim League leaders, however, are more susceptible to signs of war weariness among Pakistanis. We believe that if Islamabad formally commits itself to ending assistance and the pipeline is shut down, Junejo would be extremely reluctant to agree to reopen it. In the end we think that he would succumb to pressure from Zia and the military to restart aid, but the debate could provoke a major political crisis. [redacted]

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\* In fact, the construction and expansion of Soviet military facilities in Afghanistan continues at a steady pace despite recent hints the Soviets might withdraw. [redacted]

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Pakistani Views on a Timetable

Zia's objective is a swift Soviet troop withdrawal from Afghanistan with guarantees that Soviet forces will not be reinserted.

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[redacted] we believe that Islamabad is prepared to accept 12 months if Soviet military activities are "restrained" during the withdrawal phase and if the bulk of Soviet troops are withdrawn quickly. Foreign Secretary Sattar told reporters last week that the time frames proposed by the two states are so close that they are "negotiable."

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We believe the Pakistanis envision that the Soviets would limit military action strictly to self-defense. The Pakistanis would use their influence with the Peshawar resistance leaders in an attempt to secure a similar commitment.

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Pakistani Views on an Interim Government

We believe Pakistani linkage of agreement on the timetable with agreement on an interim government is grounded on three assumptions:

- only after both have been negotiated can Pakistan be reasonably assured the Soviets will honor a withdrawal commitment;
- Pakistan can persuade the resistance alliance to support a settlement only after both the withdrawal timeframe and the composition of an interim government are clear,
- only then will large numbers of refugees trust a cease-fire and return to Afghanistan.

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We do not anticipate Islamabad will significantly alter this position.

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Islamabad has not, in our view, thought through its position on the composition of a transitional government. We think the Pakistanis intend their consultations with the US to assist them in formulating their position. Zia will be seeking Washington's input into devising a formula to increase his leverage over the alliance when it comes time to impose a settlement on the resistance. Zia's approach to an interim government appears to be based on his assessment of what he can persuade the resistance alliance to accept. Implicit in the Pakistani approach is the calculation that the Peshawar alliance can be used to control the field commanders in Afghanistan.


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We anticipate that any interim government arrangement Zia agrees to will contain the following elements:

- it will be headed, at least nominally, by former King Zahir Shah as a figure acceptable to Moscow;
- the present Kabul regime will be represented, probably through secondary figures, but it will not be allowed a dominant role;
- the resistance alliance will receive representation at least equal to that of the Kabul regime;
- an interim government and its successors will be pledged to be neutral and non-aligned, guarantees essential to secure Soviet agreement. 

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We speculate that Zia also will offer a pledge to use Pakistan's influence on the resistance to persuade it to refrain from reprisals against Kabul regime officials. Foreign Secretary Sattar's statements to Ambassador Raphel indicate the Pakistanis believe fear of a "bloodbath" is a major factor in Soviet reluctance to withdraw. We judge Pakistani leverage over the resistance on this issue is limited and speculate that Islamabad may seek to augment any pledge by securing from resistance leaders a list of regime figures the Soviets must take into exile. 

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How Does Cordovez Fit In?

Islamabad, in our judgment, sees the Geneva process headed by UN Special Negotiator Diego Cordovez as serving two useful functions. The process helps focus world attention on Afghanistan thereby increasing pressure on Moscow to leave. It also demonstrates the government's commitment to the Pakistani public to seek an end to the war and the repatriation of Afghan refugees in Pakistan. Publicly, Islamabad is

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[redacted]

committed to full cooperation with Cordovez. [redacted]

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We believe the Pakistanis have concluded privately that there is little Cordovez can do to bring about a settlement. We judge Islamabad will continue to cooperate with Cordovez but will resist his efforts to expand his role into issues of substance. Islamabad is convinced that an end to the war lies in Moscow, not Geneva or Kabul. Moreover, the Pakistanis appear to be growing wary of Cordovez.

[redacted]

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Islamabad also is skeptical of Cordovez' ongoing talks with Afghan exiles in Europe and his efforts to meet directly with resistance leaders in Peshawar. The Pakistanis think that he has exaggerated the importance of the European exiles and has little grasp of the realities of Afghan politics. [redacted]

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