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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

July 23, 1987

INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR ROBERT B. OAKLEY

FROM: SHIRIN TAHIR-KHELI *SK*

SUBJECT: Dealing with Pakistan's Nuclear Program:
A U.S. Strategy

The Pervez case has changed the standoff between the Pakistani nuclear program and ongoing U.S. security assistance. Throughout the life of the current program, we have pressed Zia and, later, Junejo, to maintain the nuclear red lines on no enrichment beyond five percent (5%), nontesting, nontransfer, nonmanufacture and no unsafeguarded reprocessing of spent fuel. To this list was added the Solarz Amendment of 1985 which required no GOP procurement of items destined for the nuclear weapons program.

There are some within the USG who have argued that because enrichment and procurement are not part of the original red lines laid down personally by the President with Zia in his December 1982 visit to the White House, they are considered by the GOP to be in a less serious category. However, the record of Presidential letters sent to Zia is indicative to the GOP of the President's seriousness about the additional red lines on enrichment and procurement. Since the Pervez case, the focus (in the Administration and in Congress) of corrective measures required from the GOP has been on reliable assurances on enrichment and on illegal procurement activities. The first is the harder of the two.

CURRENT ASSESSMENT: The state-of-play in terms of our non-proliferation efforts and the post '87 security program for Pakistan can be summed up as follows:

Pakistani Policy. GOP's continued pursuit, albeit at a slower pace, of its nuclear weapons option, ensured that at some point it would risk a serious clash with the U.S. The assumption in Islamabad is that Afghan policy considerations have expanded the tolerance level in the U.S. of Pak transgressions vis-a-vis the nuclear red lines. The President's annual Certification to Congress is narrowly focused on the assembly of a device -- which is interpreted by Islamabad as allowing the program to remain a "turn screw" away from the manufacture of a bomb.

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Zia has been President long enough to know that Congress is utterly serious about the Solarz Amendment. Yet, the Pervez case happened. Why? A number of possible explanations obtain. First, competition between Zia and Junejo across a broad spectrum including for the loyalty of the military. The bomb is one of the few universally popular issues in Pakistan, although a lot of people do not believe that Pakistan is developing one. Over the past year more and more stories have begun to circulate about conflicting instructions from the President and the Prime Minister. It could be that one was pushing for the continuation of the program while the other was reining it in. Or, that given the growing confusion in the decision-making process, someone decided to move without authorization but knowing one or the other would support the procurement effort.

Second, it is remarkable that even after six years of steady support and assistance, support for the U.S.-Pakistani relationship remains very limited. Some Pakistanis believe that U.S. interest will be short-lived and consists mainly in keeping Pakistan tied down toward the Soviets and Afghanistan; others believe that India will always be a more attractive option for the U.S.-- Carter's predilections in this direction are still well remembered; yet others -- and this is a growing number -- believe that Pakistan should more closely follow the more "respectable" Iranian model of independence from the superpowers rather than be drawn closer to the U.S. These same individuals, many of whom are in senior positions in the Ministry of Affairs (MFA), consider that the main reason for the American connection is Afghanistan. If this issue was resolved -- which they believe to be possible -- then the need for American largesse would decrease.

The above attitude is likely to intensify if Yaqub leaves for UNESCO and Noorani becomes Foreign Minister. Already, there has been a complete turnover at the MFA (except for Aziz Khan who is now Additional Secretary for the U.,S. and Europe and was in charge of Administration before. He too is expected to be posted abroad shortly). The new Secretary for the Soviet Union and Afghanistan comes to the post from a long term as Ambassador to Iran and was Charge in Kabul -- a Pathan who see the U.S. link as mainly buttressing the Punjabi Army and forcing two million plus Afghan refugees onto the Northwest Frontier Province.

Third, the steady pursuit of the bomb has given the Pakistani scientific community its first real taste of national importance. Consequently, this group -- of which A. Q. Khan is the most flamboyant example -- is loath to give up the option which, in any case, is believed by most Pakistanis to be in the national interest. If the relationship with the U.S. suffers, so be it -- an attitude which severely constraints how far Zia or Junejo can go in dealing with A. Q. Khan today.

Thus, Pakistan's fundamental policy of pursuing both the U.S. relationship and the bomb can shift only within very narrowly defined margins. However, the GOP did not want the showdown at this crucial juncture in the process of obtaining the Symington waiver for the post '87 program.

U.S. Policy. There is agreement in the Administration and in Congress that the Pervez case requires something new and something different from the GOP on the nuclear issue. Everyone recognizes the dilemma of having to chose between U.S. non-proliferation and Afghan policies. Senators and Congressmen in the last two days of hearings on the Pervez case have all voiced the difficult choices confronting them. The burden however has been shifted to the GOP to take concrete steps to end violations, at least on enrichment and procurement. We have all accepted that if Pakistan were simply to "stand down" from these activities, other aspects of the nuclear program can remain intact. As Solarz said yesterday: "The best compromise would be some agreement that would give us confidence that Pakistan is not converting to highly enriched uranium." Solarz accused Pakistan of "flagrant violation and arrogant contempt" for U.S. export control laws and nonproliferation policy.

I understand that per your request, State is doing a paper on where the Congressional debate stands.

NEXT STEPS

Managing the Congressional Debate:

Our strategy vis-a-vis Congress has to ensure that we do not allow the Symington Waiver simply to lapse on September 30, which a number of legislators are threatening to have happen. Instead, we need to: (a) delay all action until Congress convenes after Labor Day; (b) use the time we have to obtain concrete actions to correct procurement violations by the GOP and, (c) get the GOP to move on the enrichment issue.

Armacost/Oakley Trip to South Asia: Nuclear Dialogue.

The July-August trip becomes a key element in getting the GOP to move on the nuclear issue. While the constraints against far-reaching action continue, Zia and Junejo do not want a breakdown of the relationship at this point. Hence, they may be more amenable to giving the minimum they believe to be necessary. In approaching the GOP, we need to take a two-track approach in which we; (a) lay down the full menu of nuclear restraints, including a comprehensive test ban and the NPT as ultimate goals, recognizing here GOP's point that these steps involve joint Indo-Pak action; (b) focus only on U.S.-Pak steps to deal with the current situation and emphasize that both Administration and Congress feel that the President has been embarrassed; U.S. law has been violated; that something substantial has to be done.

The key here to shift the onus of maintaining the relationship onto the GOP. The constant talk of the U.S. dilemma should be stilled. Instead, the GOP has to focus on the dilemma it faces: keep U.S. assistance for the follow-on program or keep its enrichment and procurement going -- better not to say "nuclear program" going because that raises the stakes. Also, few in Pakistan would sacrifice the entire weapon's option even for the U.S. security assistance. More may support limited measures on enrichment and procurement given existing capability and stockpiled enriched uranium. Moreover, shifting the burden of tough choices away from us to the GOP helps us get away from questions of U.S. reliability to questions of Pakistani reliability.

The range of options we can discuss include:

- verification of limits on enrichment -- visits, even one-time will be most difficult to obtain.
- identification of parties responsible for illegal procurement.
- action against those responsible.
- GOP decision (which it should know we monitor through intelligence) and adherence to its own limit of five percent (5%) enrichment.
- institutional measures, e.g., Pak legislation or Junejo/Zia written directive to relevant GOP agencies on procurement, to be shared with the USG and with Congress.
- written commitment on the five percent (5%) enrichment limit by Zia/Junejo formally to the USG.

Indo-Pak Steps.

Despite Kaul's query this week on reviving discussion of a variety of CBMs, it is clear that India will not move fast on what would benefit the GOP most with Congress -- progress on nuclear measures. Gandhi's internal problems, while they may entice him into discussions at this point, preclude progress on the nuclear issue as a starting point. Additionally, progress on the Indo-Pak front alone will not sufficiently satisfy Congress at this juncture. Finally, it is unlikely that India will help get Pakistan off the hook and save the U.S. assistance program.

Presidential Involvement

Depending on what the GOP gives, direct Presidential involvement in our nonproliferation policy may become warranted. The range of actions include:

- Briefings of Congressional leaders.
- Speech on nonproliferation.
- A White House statement.