January 22, 1979

SECRET/SENSITIVE

TO : Mr. Newsom
FROM : Marshall Shulman
       Paul H. Kreisberg
       Robert L. Barry
SUBJECT: The Mini-PRC on Pakistani Nuclear Intentions, January 22

All of us have serious reservations about the recommendation included in the Discussion Paper for the NSC and in the OES/NEA memorandum to you for the meeting January 20, that we propose to Dobrynin the desirability of a Russian demarche to Pakistan.

Precisely because our interests lie in avoiding the deterioration in US-Pakistani relations which their continued nuclear efforts will inevitably produce, it is a risky proposition to attempt to unleash the Soviets. The Pakistanis already feel under pressure from Moscow; we are under public scrutiny in our efforts to constrain Soviet influence in that area of the world; under these circumstances, do we want to feed and encourage Soviet pressure on Pakistan? We are giving first priority to urging the Chinese to lean on Islamabad; what would Chinese reactions be to our linking their efforts to persuade the Pakistanis in tandem with Soviet efforts? Would we not risk "losing" the Chinese on this -- or arousing their suspicion of our motives -- if we called on the Russians for help?

Finally, we should ask ourselves if a US approach to the Soviets is necessary to affect their attitude on Pakistani nuclear intentions. We suggest it is not and that the
Soviets are capable of pursuing their own interests, whether in response to their own intelligence about Pakistani intentions or Pakistani request for assistance -- without prompting from us.

In short, a Soviet demarche stimulated by us would hurt our interests, not help them, and should not be pursued at this time beyond the general informational, low-key expression of concern about the Pakistan program we have already apparently expressed to the Soviets.

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cc: T - Ms. Benson
OES - Mr. Pickering
NEA - Mr. Saunders