



DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BRIEFING MEMORANDUM

S/S

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January 20, 1979

DIST:
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TO: P - Mr. Newsom

THROUGH: T - Mrs. Benson *LWB*

FROM: NEA - Harold H. Saunders *Wnc*
OES - Mr. Pickering *JP*

SUBJECT: Mini-PRC Meeting on the Pakistan Nuclear Problem

DELIVERED DIRECTLY TO P
HSE REVIEWED BY S/S

The purpose of this meeting is to engage the PRC in the Pakistan nuclear problem and obtain its endorsement for both our diplomatic and Congressional strategy.

We face two distinct but inter-related problems: 1) how do we best prevent Pakistan from acquiring nuclear capability, and 2) how do we deal with the problem of the Symington Amendment which could require us in the not too distant future to terminate aid and further complicate our position in the turbulent Persian Gulf region?

Those attending the PRC will have received the attached paper entitled "Pakistan Nuclear Program: Policy and Legal Implications for the United States". There is no agenda.

I. Introductory Remarks

You may wish to open the meeting by briefly describing Pakistan's nuclear program and its implications for US policy.

Talking Points

-- We face a critical dilemma in our relations with Pakistan, which could have serious ramifications throughout the region.

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-- Pakistan is moving rapidly and secretly toward the construction of facilities which could give it nuclear explosive capability perhaps within two to four years.

-- It is obtaining some equipment necessary for the enrichment plant from abroad. Although our analysis is not conclusive, current indications suggest that a serious question is raised with regard to the Symington Amendment which could require us to cut off aid to Pakistan. Although not legally affected, military sales under these circumstances would be extremely difficult.

-- Given the situation in Iran, a near rupture in our relations with Pakistan would further add to regional instability and could pose serious political problems for us.

-- Our European allies and regional moderates want us to move toward a more supportive relationship with Pakistan at this critical time and would be deeply disturbed by American withdrawal of support of Pakistan. This concern could certainly be echoed by domestic observers of our policy in the region.

-- Pakistan might seek compensating assistance from other oil rich Arab countries and acquiesce in some accommodation with the Soviet Union.

-- A cut off of aid would confirm India's suspicions of Pakistan's nuclear intentions, and increase domestic pressure in India for resumption of a nuclear explosive program.

II. Proposed Strategy

Background

We do not believe US leverage alone is sufficient to turn the Pakistanis around. Given the probable short time fuse on the Symington Amendment, we need urgently to seek the diplomatic support of others who have influence in Islamabad. We are not certain that our proposed multi-pronged strategy will work, but believe we must make every effort to turn Pakistan around.

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Desired PRC Action

Endorsement of our strategy of bringing diplomatic pressure to bear on Pakistan.

Talking Points

-- China is Pakistan's most influential friend. We recommend a strong approach to Teng Hsiao-Ping pointing out the danger that Pakistan's nuclear program will provoke India nuclear weapons development and that our support of Pakistan depends on turning Pakistan off.

-- We propose to approach the Saudis who also have considerable influence in Islamabad, urging them to weigh in.

-- We propose to suggest to Ambassador Dobrynin the desirability of a Russian demarche to Pakistan. The USSR shares our non-proliferation concerns and presumably would not wish to see a nuclear arms race on the subcontinent. We recognize that Pakistan might well consider that the Soviets were in collusion with India, which could produce a negative reaction. However, Pakistan is currently very sensitive to the extension of Soviet influence through Afghanistan and we believe on balance that Soviet pressure would have a strong desirable impact.

-- Until now, we have kept separate our nuclear problems with India and Pakistan. Fundamentally, however, the two are linked and we risk in the near term the generation of domestic pressure in India which could force the Desai government to resume an explosives program. We believe that Desai himself is genuinely opposed to such an Indian program and might be susceptible to a very quiet overture on the Pakistan problem. If he were prepared to accept the joint declaration on non-use of nuclear weapons, it might give President Zia an essential rationale for reversing his present course.

-- We propose to seek the political support of our major western allies in a coordinated approach to Pakistan.

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-- We plan to work actively with other suppliers on ways to inhibit sensitive exports to Pakistan and we will need the cooperation of the intelligence community to utilize sensitive information in this effort.

-- Finally, we recommend that President Zia be invited to Washington as soon as the dust has settled from the Bhutto case. We would stress our willingness to be supportive of Pakistan but make it clear that constructive ties with the US require assurances that Pakistan will forego its nuclear weapons program.

III. Congressional AspectsBackground

We believe that key members of the Congress will wish us to be helpful in managing the Pakistan problem if they receive a candid explanation of the situation, taking into account overall US security interests in the region and the fact that we have a coherent strategy to deal with the Pakistanis proliferation threat within a reasonable time frame. We plan to explore the possibility of a relatively minor change in the law would provide us with somewhat greater flexibility or at least more time than the Symington Amendment is likely to give us.

Desired PRC Action

Endorsement of our proposal.

Talking Point

-- We kept key members of Congress informed while the French reprocessing drama was played out. They were concerned but consistently supportive of our efforts. We plan to brief key members on a highly confidential basis about the current problems and explore with them the possibility of changing the law to give us somewhat greater flexibility and time.

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