

March 5, 1979

**Memorandum for the Secretary from Harold
Saunders and Thomas R. Pickering, 'A Strategy for
Pakistan'**

Citation:

"Memorandum for the Secretary from Harold Saunders and Thomas R. Pickering, 'A Strategy for Pakistan'", March 5, 1979, Wilson Center Digital Archive, NARA, RG59, Records of Warren Christopher, Box 56. Contributed by Malcolm Craig.
<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/280734>

Summary:

This is a memo authored by Thomas Pickering (Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs) and Harold Saunders (Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Affairs) pertaining to Pakistan's nuclear program. In the piece, Pickering and Saunders advocate a policy of the U.S. sending financial aid and arms to Pakistan, in order to assuage the country's security fears. Warren Christopher's assistant Steve Oxman thought Pickering and Saunders were "dreaming" if they imagined the package would look like anything other than a bribe for Pakistan and if they believed Congress would permit such a package in the face of persuasive evidence of Pakistani nuclear ambitions

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Carnegie Corporation of New York (CCNY)

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Original Scan

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY
SECRETARY OF STATE

3/5

March 5, 1979

Chris:

Herewith Tom Pickering's ideas on where we should now go with Pakistan. This paper is being cleared around. I gather David Newsom generally agrees with it.

The paper basically proposes an audacious buy-off, premised on the "need" to maintain Pakistan's stability and security. That need is not analyzed or questioned, however, and I think it ought to be before we take the kind of plunge this memo suggests.

A.C.V.
Steve

Chris - This ~~is~~ ^{is} wrong. David thinks this memo should be "killed".

Christopher's trip we strategy for an increasing Asia region in and the need program.

Whether one of and dealt with we conclude they the major common th Asia. To ar weapons problem

... a punitive and restrictive policy toward Pakistan thus ignoring the major need also to enhance through assistance programs its security and stability. Similarly, ignoring Pakistan's nuclear ambitions is most likely to set off a nuclear arms competition with India rekindling its "explosives" program. The bomb

SECRET/NODIS

D

WFS
50

OBE

SECRET/NODIS

March 5, 1979

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Secretary

THROUGH: P - Mr. Newson
T - Mrs. Benson

FROM: NEA - Harold Saunders
OES - Thomas R. Pickering

OBE

WE
50A Strategy for Pakistan

With the completion of Warren Christopher's trip we are urgently in need of a comprehensive strategy for Pakistan. We face two major issues: (1) an increasing and security requirement for stability/in the South Asia region in which Pakistan is a key actor and (2) and the need to deal with Pakistan's nuclear weapons program.

The first issue we must decide is whether one of these questions should be given priority and dealt with separately. For the following reasons, we conclude they both must be dealt in tandem as part of the major common problem of security and stability in South Asia. To deal alone and separately with the nuclear weapons problem is likely to push us into a punitive and restrictive policy toward Pakistan thus ignoring the major need also to enhance through assistance programs its security and stability. Similarly, ignoring Pakistan's nuclear ambitions is most likely to set off a nuclear arms competition with India rekindling its "explosives" program. The bomb

SECRET/NODIS

SECRET/NODIS

2

program will also make it enormously difficult for the Congress to provide the assistance necessary to support Pakistan's need for security and stability. The likelihood of an "Islamic bomb" with its consequences in the Arab-Israeli dispute will increase Congressional concern over anything we might propose doing for Pakistan. The key to making a joint strategy work will be our judgment about whether we can, and if so with how much effort on our part, persuade Zia to drop his plans for a bomb. The answer rests in how much we might be able to do to strengthen Pakistan's security and stability. We think there is still a chance and that we should make a major effort to do so.

STAGE ONE

We envisage a three-stage approach, the first step of which is crucial. We will have to introduce some elasticity to both our conventional weapons and non-proliferation policies. Zia will have to be shown what sort of a package we are prepared to provide to stabilize Pakistan's position in South Asia. These programs must be presented to him as directed to that end. At the same time he must also be given a clear view of: (1) the major difficulty we will have in securing Congressional approval for such a program if he persists with building a nuclear weapon, (2) our wide and continuing knowledge of his nuclear program including such details as the sites in Pakistan being used to pursue the program, (3) our determination, with other nuclear suppliers, to do all we can

Zia
knows?

SECRET/NODIS

SECRET/NODIS

3

by cutting supply to ensure that such a program will not succeed, (4) the major diplomatic efforts we have and will continue to undertake among states which are key to Pakistan's survival--China, Saudi Arabia, the major Europeans and Japan--to ensure that Zia knows of their concerns, and (5) finally our evaluation that a nuclear weapon capability in Pakistan will result in a race with India

for a similar capability and a consequent lowering of security and stability for Pakistan and the region.

AID PACKAGE

The key to our success will be in the quality of the stability and security package which we are prepared to offer. The most important item which we can provide is conventional armament to deal with Pakistan's deep security concerns regarding India, Afghanistan, Iran and Baluchistan. We will have to make a hard decision, in the face of the collapse in Iran, that provision (for cash) of modern conventional weapons in Pakistan, such as the F-16, should take priority over the proliferation of a nuclear weapon there. Iran's shift would help with the arms ceiling problem and India's acquisition of the Jaguar might reduce, but will not eliminate, traditional Indian concerns with arming Pakistan. Some provision of American technicians to maintain the weapons for a reasonable period of time should also serve to reassure Zia of our continuing support. In addition to F-16's, we should consider favorably the provision of Cobra helicopters with TOW missiles, some sophisticated

SECRET/NODIS

SECRET/NODIS

4

air defense and other modern weapons. FMS credit at about the \$50m. level for FY 1980 (through a supplemental) and FY 1981 should be part of the military package.

In the economic area, we should continue our high level of PL 480 assistance and consider an immediate economic assistance program by reprogramming current development aid and ESF (SSA) funds at about the \$30m. level (\$11.8m. in Afghan money, \$8m. in Latin American Development aid and \$11.0m. in MESRF funds).

More importantly will be the need to consider supplementary economic aid to Pakistan this year through a \$60m. ESF package allocated in the main to projects in Baluchistan, with an FY 1981 package to follow at the \$100m. level. Debt rescheduling should also proceed on the basis that Pakistan can be expected to be persuaded to accept the IMF stabilization program. We should seek to get other creditors to join us and, through consultations, bring the Congress along with this approach both on the basis of the current political and security needs of Pakistan and the fact that if debts are not rescheduled now we are certain to face the unavoidable need for rescheduling within six to twelve months in any event. Debts should be rescheduled at the 70 percent level which means that Pakistan would be relieved of paying the U.S. this year \$70m. out of the \$100m. owed to us. Other consortium members, if they could be brought to follow suit, could relieve Pakistan of any additional \$70m.

SECRET/NODIS

SECRET/NODIS

5

In sum the package would include: (a) willingness to sell for cash F-16's (2-3 squadrons--36-48 aircraft) and other modern weapons (Cobra with TOW): (b) \$50m. in FMS credits (guarantees); \$30m in immediate DA and ESF reprogramming, with \$60m. in an ESF supplemental for FY 80 and \$100m in FY 81; (c) continuing PL-480 assistance with perhaps an immediate \$10m. reprogramming action; and (d) debt rescheduling of \$70m. by the US and \$70m. by others for the next two years.

<u>New Items</u>	<u>FY 80</u>	<u>FY 81</u>
FMS credit (guarantee)	50m	50m
Reprogramming DA, ESF	30m	
ESF supplemental	60m	
New ESF		100m
Debt reschedule (50% US)	140m	140m
PL-480 reprogramming	<u>10m</u>	<u> </u>
TOTAL	290m	290m

STAGE TWO

A second stage of the strategy, provided Zia showed interest in the idea of abandoning his weapons program, would be to approach the Indians to revive the idea which Zia first advanced of a "no weapons-building, no weapons use" agreement between India and Pakistan. It is likely that India if at all receptive would press for pledges by the major outside outside nuclear powers that they would not use or station nuclear weapons in the subcontinent. In such case we should undertake to approach the Soviets and the Chinese--assuming

SECRET/NODIS

SECRET/NODIS

6

that the British and French would be prepared also to join. This should be a definite second step and not be part of the first effort we make given India's continuing aversion to dealing with Pakistan on this issue and the fact that the failure of such an effort, if attempted prematurely, would be likely and that such a failure could well be used by the Indians as an excuse to restart their own nuclear explosive program.

STAGE THREE

A third stage could well follow in which we might consider a waiver of the March 1980 nuclear fuel cutoff date for India if it adhered to the "no nuclear weapons" pact, would consider positively adhering also to future CTB and also maintained a safeguards dialogue with us that could include the idea eventually of some form of Indo-Pak mutual inspection of peaceful nuclear facilities. The third stage is visionary and certainly not essential. However we must in the aftermath of Iran set our sights high or we will achieve neither our larger security goals for South Asia nor our non-proliferation policy.

THE CONGRESS

The Congressional strategy will be crucial. We will need to ensure that we do not allow ourselves to be whip-sawed on the Hill between the non-proliferators and those more deeply concerned about South Asian and world security. The strategy attempts to do this. It will also be crucial for us to provide enough time to make the strategy effective and here a premature cut-off of aid to Pakistan under the Symington or Glenn amendments should be avoided by working closely with Senator Glenn and others on the Hill on the

SECRET/NODIS

Walker
Whittaker

Whereas the people of the United States have had people of

D

SECRET/NODIS

MARCH 7 1979

necessary changes or revisions of those laws if such is required. Finally, in pursuing this strategy we will need to work carefully to avoid giving the impression that we are buying off Zia's weapons program--the way to accomplish this will be to put primary emphasis with Zia and others on the need to assure South Asian and Pakistan security and the fact that the bomb program stands squarely in the way of achieving this objective.

?
Dreaming?

RECOMMENDATION: That you approve this strategy and our developing an action plan to carry it out as the next step.

APPROVE _____ DISAPPROVE _____

What precisely is that need?

Drafted by: OES:TRPickering:rrs

Clearances: P:JForbes
T:LWBenson
D:JSiegal
NEA:JCMiklos
NEA:PLande
OES:LHBrown
OES:LVNosenzo
S/AS:BKelley

RY

Walker
Whittaker

Young, Fla.

CONGRESSIONAL RESOLUTION
H. Res. 186
Whereas the people of the United States

Whereas the continued development and prosperity of Pakistan is important to the people of Pakistan to Pakistan's friends in

7

SECRET

DECLASSIFIED
Authority *AND 48608*

March 2, 1979

MEMORANDUM

TO: T - Lucy Wilson Benson
THRU: OES - Thomas R. Pickering
FROM: Consultant to OES - J. S. Nye

A Strategy for Pakistan

If events continue on their current course, we are likely to wind up with (1) a nuclear Pakistan and (2) a cutoff of our economic and security assistance to Pakistan. If we are to avoid such a situation, we need a strategy which reconciles rather than counterposes our non-proliferation and general security objectives in South Asia. The strategy suggested below, however, will require a bit of elasticity in our conventional arms transfer and non-proliferation policies.

1. Delay Capability. A top priority is to continue working with Suppliers to delay Pakistani access to weapons materials. The longer the time between their current situation and a workable weapon, the more room there is for diplomacy to work and the more attractive our alternatives can be made to appear.

SECRET

RY

SECRET
-2-

DECLASSIFIED
Authority NND 48608

2. Coordinate Diplomatic Pressure. The Deng letter is a good start. We should ask other key governments to indicate that there will be considerable displeasure at a nuclear explosives program. Particularly important are Saudi Arabia and members of the consortium concerned with aid and debt rescheduling. (The incentives for Saudi participation depend in part on the third step.)

3. Facing Up to the Dove's Dilemma. A sense of insecurity is central to the Pakistan problem. We have tried to have our cake and eat it; but in the crunch a conventional arms escalation will be less destructive of our security goals than a nuclear one. Efforts to provide the Pakistanis with a meaningful conventional defense package have foundered in the twin rocks of (1) our arms transfer policy and (2) our India policy. In the light of recent events, neither need be an insurmountable obstacle.

-- In the aftermath of Iran, there are strong pressures for the U.S. to demonstrate its capability to meet security needs in the area of Southern Asia. In addition, ceiling restraints are relaxed. A U.S. package which included weapons systems to meet the Baluchistan and Afghanistan problems and included American technicians as a symbol of our concern might be helpful in Turkey and

SECRET

SECRET

-3-

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND 48608

Saudi Arabia as well as Pakistan.

-- India concerns should be met by putting the Dove's Dilemma in India's lap. Does India prefer an unstable Pakistan with a soft unstable nuclear capability or a non-nuclear Pakistan with enhanced (but still inferior to Indian) conventional capability? We should indicate our view that the latter is preferable, and a non-nuclear status is the quid pro quo for serious conventional assistance to Pakistan.

4. India-Pakistan Non-Nuclear Agreement. We could approach the Indians to suggest that they offer Pakistan a non-nuclear agreement in which each side would pledge not to develop weapons or to launch explosions. As inducement to the Indians we could offer to try to persuade the USSR and PRC to join us in pledging no nuclear attack against either country and no stationing of nuclear weapons in parties to the pact. As a further inducement, we could indicate that if India adhered to such a pact (and eventually to a CTB), and continued safeguards discussions with us, (including exploration of mutual India-Pakistan inspections as a first step) we would consider a waiver of the March 1980 fuel cutoff date.

The fourth part of the strategy involves a number of problems and may seem too visionary. (It is not a necessary part of the package.) But unless we raise

SECRET

SECRET

-4-

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND 48608

our sights and develop a Pakistan strategy in the larger context of Southern Asia after Iran (and explain it to the Congress in those terms), we will achieve neither our non-proliferation nor our larger security objectives.

cc: S/AS - Ambassador Smith
INR - Mr. Gallucci
ACDA - Mr. Van Doren

SECRET