



DEPARTMENT OF STATE
ACTION MEMORANDUM

S/S

3/21/79 - Lead to
Grom

SECRET/NODIS

To: The Secretary

Through: P - Mr. Newsom
: T - Mrs. Benson

From: OES - Ambassador Pickering *PKM TP*
S/P - Paul Kreisberg *PK*
NEA - Jack Miklos *PK for SM*

Presidential Letter to President Zia
on Nuclear Issues

As you know, the Pakistan program has been exposed by the Indian and British press, and it will probably be a few days at most until our freedom of maneuver is increasingly curtailed by public and Congressional concern.

While there is an uncertain prospect that we can deflect Pakistan with any of the proposals under consideration, given the importance of the issue, we think it is worth asking the President to take a personal hand in trying to slow or stop the Pakistanis before the political atmosphere deteriorates further.

The attached draft letter makes this attempt. The letter asks Zia to suspend his uranium enrichment program as a first step in a process of preserving and improving relations between Pakistan and the US. If he agrees, senior level US officials would go to Pakistan and begin a dialogue about future US economic and military assistance and the conditions, in terms of Pakistani nuclear activities, under which it could be provided. We have not explicitly told the Pakistanis that we have terminated our aid programs, nor have we addressed their resumption or continuation. This is partly to avoid unnecessarily disturbing

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the political atmosphere, and partly because there is still some uncertainty over the criteria to be applied for resuming aid.

The letter also includes an invitation to visit Washington -- if the dialogue with Zia over Pakistan's sensitive nuclear program is fruitful -- without reference to how the Bhutto case comes out. This represents a shift in our approach to a Zia visit but we believe the urgency of the nuclear issue is such as to warrant such an invitation as soon as possible if Zia responded positively to the President's letter.

There are some risks associated with this course for the President:

- Zia could publicly reject the proposal, possibly causing some damage to the prestige of the Presidency.

Although we are not in a position to fully evaluate this concern, it seems to us that with South Asian stability and our non-proliferation policy at issue, the stakes are sufficiently high to justify a Presidential initiative. In addition, the Pakistanis now seem to want to continue to keep their program under wraps.

- Zia could respond with an assurance that Pakistan will not develop nuclear weapons, putting the President in the position of finding Zia's personal commitment to be an inadequate basis for continued US aid.

We think this outcome can be avoided by deflecting assurances in the direction of verifiable commitments, resting in part on an interpretation of the requirements of US legislation.

- If Zia accepts the proposal, the US will be committed to develop a new economic and military assistance package.

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That may prove to be a difficult package to construct, but if Zia expresses a willingness to negotiate over his sensitive nuclear programs, extraordinary efforts should be made to engage him seriously.

-- There is good chance the issue will become public in Islamabad and Washington before long, and with it the President's letter and Zia's response, making useful discussions very much more difficult.

Since this is a problem no matter what policy we pursue, it only suggests that we move as soon as possible to try and establish a serious dialogue before public pressures begin.

At a minimum, the Presidential invitation will show Zia that we are still trying to find a solution, despite the bleak results of Warren Christopher's trip. We recognize that this strategy draws on the prestige of the Presidency sooner rather than later, and thus makes future escalation more difficult, but we do not think we can afford to delay the initiative and reduce its chance for success nor do we think it will stop future actions we should take in our own interest. Indeed, in the near certain event of publicity there will be inquiries from the Hill and the public about what we have done.

We have also prepared letters for the President to send to Schmidt, Giscard, Callaghan and Trudeau, asking them to weigh in with the Pakistanis. (In addition Gerry Smith believes we should also consider approaching Brezhnev. We think we should consider this idea, but not at this time.) Their support would blunt any impression that the US alone is pressing Zia. It would also demonstrate that other world leaders share our non-proliferation concerns.

Action requested: That you approve the attached letters for forwarding to the White House with the accompanying cover memorandum.

Approve _____ Disapprove _____

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Attachment:

Memorandum for the President with Attachments

Clearances: S/AS - Ambassador ^{OS}Smith PM - Mr. ^{JK}Kahan
 L - Mr. Michel ^{MA} ACDA - Mr. Van Doren ^{CD}
 EUR - Mr. Vine ^{RV}

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THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON**SE** **ET**

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Cyrus Vance

SUBJECT: Letter to President Zia on Pakistan's
Nuclear Issue

Pakistan is rapidly building a secret uranium enrichment plant which by 1983 will begin to yield sufficient quantities of fissile material to support a nuclear weapons program. Warren Christopher told President Zia and other senior Pakistani officials in early March of our concern that Pakistan may be developing nuclear weapons and that such activity would force us to cut off aid under Section 669 of the Foreign Assistance Act (the Symington Amendment). (We have directed AID and Defense to wind up the assistance that is covered by the Symington Amendment, but we have not conveyed this to the Pakistanis.) The Pakistanis did not specifically deny the existence of an enrichment program, and by implication related it to their security concerns as well as to future energy needs.

India has detailed knowledge of the Pakistani enrichment program, and Desai has written Zia of his concern about Pakistani nuclear activities. The Indian and British press have already begun to carry stories about the program.

An interagency paper is being prepared for PRC consideration assessing a variety of options for dealing with the Pakistani problem and its implications for stability in South Asia. While we are working out the specifics of our approach I believe it is essential that we now inform President Zia of the depth of US concern over their activity. If we delay our efforts

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to have the Pakistanis suspend their enrichment program, we may lose the opportunity to engage Zia before the political atmosphere becomes poisoned by public debate and accusation.

The attached letter sets out our concern about the direction of their nuclear program and its impact on US-Pakistani relations. It urges suspension of the enrichment program as a means for the US to enter discussions of matters of mutual concern and consequently to avoid serious disrupting of our aid program. It also holds open the possibility of a future invitation to Washington, without reference to the outcome of the Bhutto affair, if he responds favorably to your initiative.

There are some risks attached to this initiative. It is quite possible that the whole matter, including your proposal and Zia's response, will become public before a serious dialogue can begin.

The result could be a public rejection by Zia and further damage to US-Pakistani relations. Without minimizing these risks, it seems nevertheless that our best chance of drawing Zia into a negotiation over Pakistan's sensitive nuclear programs and avoiding a major disruption of South Asia stability is to move quickly to demonstrate our serious desire to address their economic and security concerns and reach agreement over the redirection of their nuclear program.

We have also prepared letters for you to send to Schmidt, Giscard, Callaghan and Trudeau, asking them to weigh in with the Pakistanis. Their support would blunt any impression that the US alone is pressing Zia. It would also demonstrate that other world leaders share our non-proliferation concerns.

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Dear Mr. President:

Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher has reported to me on his recent discussions with you and other senior officials of the Government of Pakistan. He told me that he had conveyed to you my profound hope that the close and productive relationship between our two countries should be strengthened and reaffirmed and that Pakistan's security be assured in these critical times.

While I maintain this deep concern, I am very much troubled by the clear evidence that your government is proceeding, in secret, with sensitive nuclear programs which could enable Pakistan to develop a nuclear explosive and weapons capability in the relatively near future. Continuation of these programs severely limit my government's ability to develop our mutually desired bilateral relations.

I know that you are aware of the requirement in US law that compels my government to halt most of our economic assistance to Pakistan under such circumstances.

His Excellency,
General Zia ul-Haq,
President of the Islamic Republic,
of Pakistan,
Islamabad.

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While I have no choice but to implement this law, I do so with profound regret and remain hopeful that you will be able to reconsider your future efforts in these sensitive nuclear programs.

I urge that as a first step you suspend the program you are undertaking for uranium enrichment. This will permit us to discuss this issue in a political atmosphere that will ease our dialogue and facilitate the finding of a mutually-acceptable solution.

Our shared objective should be to pursue a course that will both strengthen Pakistan's security and avert the spread of nuclear weapons to the Subcontinent and beyond. Failure to avert such a development would severely jeopardize Pakistan's real security and undercut the ability of the US to help Pakistan with its most urgent problems.

In response to your willingness to consider taking the measures I have suggested, I would be ready to send senior officers of my Government to discuss with you and your officials ways in which the US might assist Pakistan in strengthening its economy and security in the context of the termination of current sensitive nuclear activities.

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On the basis of those discussions, I would hope that you and I could review these and other issues of urgent interest to our two countries in a personal meeting here in Washington.

Sincerely,

Jimmy Carter

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Dear Helmut [Jim, Giscard, Pierre]:

I am increasingly concerned by Pakistan's program to build a secret uranium enrichment plant and to pursue a reprocessing capability both of which could yield sufficient quantities of nuclear material to support a weapons program in a few years. We have to stop the Pakistanis now. If they succeed in their effort to develop nuclear weapons, the stability of South Asia will be imperiled, and with it our own security. A nuclear arms race between Pakistan and India is in no one's interest, but that is the threat we are facing. The implications for the Middle East are potentially even more alarming.

Moreover, our mutual efforts to block nuclear proliferation around the world would be seriously undercut. If Pakistan succeeds, others will be encouraged to follow its example.

You and I are firmly committed to the purposes of regional stability and non-proliferation. We must do everything possible to bring the Pakistani program to an end before it is too late. I have written to President Zia

His Excellency,
Helmut Schmidt,
Chancellor,
Federal Republic of Germany.

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to urge him to take a first step to suspend his nuclear enrichment program so that we can continue to discuss the issue in an atmosphere that is not charged with a threat to stability and to non-proliferation. I indicated our hope that we could continue the close relationships between our two countries and to assist Pakistan in strengthening its economy and security at this critical time in the context of an end to Pakistan's sensitive nuclear programs. I emphasized that the spread of nuclear weapons to the Subcontinent and beyond would jeopardize Pakistan's real security and undercut the ability of the US to help Pakistan with its most urgent problems.

I hope you might convey a similar message to Pakistan in whatever way you think best.

The implications of a Pakistani nuclear weapons capability are so threatening that each of us must bring to bear in his very best thinking on how to turn the Pakistanis around. I would welcome your thoughts on how you and I -- and other like-minded world leaders -- can work together to solve this problem. I am writing in the same vein to Jim Callaghan, Giscard and Trudeau.

Sincerely,

Jimmy Carter

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