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Original letter hand delivered
to Prime Minister Gandhi by
Ambassador Dean on March 25, 1987.

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

Your letter of January 7 was very helpful for our continuing dialogue on matters of mutual interest. I am taking advantage of Ambassador Dean's presence in Washington to share with you the progress we have recently made in developing new areas of cooperation between our two countries.

First, in our past conversations, you expressed a strong desire for the purchase of a supercomputer. We informed you that we would agree to the sale, contingent on an appropriate safeguards agreement, which was negotiated last December in New Delhi by our officials. I am pleased to tell you that we have carefully reviewed the agreements package initialed in New Delhi and have determined that they provide a satisfactory base for the export of a supercomputer to India. I believe that the sale will lay a strong foundation for a new era of collaboration, utilizing some of the more modern technology available for advancing India's development.

Second, despite the problems which we have confronted in the space launch program after the Challenger disaster, we have given high priority to your request for an early launch for the INSAT 1-D satellite. It is indeed gratifying that a U.S. company has offered to launch the satellite well in advance of the earliest possible shuttle date, with of course the continuing cooperation of NASA.

Third, there is the question of participation by American companies in elements of the Light Combat Aircraft which you are developing. The Department of Defense has completed an exhaustive review of technologies which we will be able to release for that project. Ambassador Dean will be prepared to discuss a detailed list with your officials.

Mr. Prime Minister, we strongly support all efforts which help ensure peace and security in South Asia. I want to take this occasion to welcome the disengagement agreements reached between India and Pakistan, which have helped lower tensions from the high level of late January. I hope that it will be possible to complete the de-escalation following conclusion of the military exercises now underway. To help prevent similar unfortunate misunderstandings in the future, we have provided

some background on procedures in effect between Eastern and Western Europe. We are offering both your government and that of Pakistan additional information that may help alleviate future tensions. Our purpose is not to be intrusive but to stress ways to improve relations and increase regional stability.

In this regard, I was pleased to hear that India and Pakistan have agreed to consider means to deal with important border problems such as smuggling, drug trafficking, and terrorism which often go together. As you recall, this was discussed in a letter from Vice President Bush to Indian and Pakistani leaders. I was particularly interested in the proposal in your letter of January 7 that American drug liaison agents be associated with your bilateral narcotics consultations. I know combatting the evil of narcotics is as high a priority with you as with me, and I assure you we will be happy to assist in whatever ways you and the Government of Pakistan find helpful.

With regard to Afghanistan, I appreciated learning of your discussions with General Secretary Gorbachev. The Soviet Union has indeed stated its desire for a political settlement and withdrawal of their troops. We welcome the statements and are closely following the ongoing Geneva negotiations where Soviet intentions will become manifest. What is needed is a short withdrawal timeframe which would permit the Afghans themselves to resolve the question of a new government. Alternatively, a transitional government acceptable to all concerned could be established to oversee Soviet withdrawal and a free act of Afghan self-determination. Peace will come only when there is a government in Kabul that enjoys the authentic support and confidence of the Afghan people.

Our skepticism about Soviet intentions is based on the disparity between their actions and their words. The current Soviet scheme for national reconciliation seems to have as its chief purpose the preservation of the Najibullah regime. Moreover, coincident with the resumption of the UN-sponsored talks between Pakistani and Afghan officials in Geneva, Soviet and DRA military actions violating the Pakistan border have reached unprecedented levels this year. This is most disturbing, not only because of the human cost to Pakistan and the Afghan refugees, but equally because of the dangers of an expanding war with very threatening consequences for all in the region.

We hope you will intensify your dialogue with the Soviet Union as soon as possible, using your considerable influence at this important moment to urge the Soviet leadership to address urgently and realistically the difficult but essential issues it faces in Afghanistan. It is time for all concerned governments to join together in working toward an early and just peaceful settlement in Afghanistan. An acceptable political settlement in Afghanistan would contribute immensely to international peace and stability and to the broader U.S.-Soviet dialogue. The United States has often emphasized to the Soviets that we seek no strategic advantage in Afghanistan, and we recognize their interest in a secure southern border. We have made clear our willingness to lend our political support to an agreement which is consistent with United Nations resolutions and which brings about the speedy and complete withdrawal of Soviet troops. ✓

We have also discussed the nuclear issue, and as you can imagine, the dangers of nuclear proliferation are very much on my mind these days. I do not want you to misunderstand the meaning of Ambassador Hinton's recent speech in Islamabad on nuclear issues. It was not made because of any new developments in Pakistan's program, but was an expression of my belief that potential problems in this sensitive area should be addressed and dealt with. Ambassador Hinton's speech is fully consistent with the long-standing, strenuous U.S. effort to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons in South Asia. I have kept my word to you that the U.S. will continue to do everything to press Pakistan on the nuclear program. At the same time, I would urge that you give careful consideration to the proposals for mutual action which President Zia has put forward or make suggestions of your own. Once again, I ask your help in furthering the regional dialogue which provides a vital context for success in dealing with the Pakistan program and ensuring that nuclear weapons do not become a reality in South Asia.

With warmest regards,

Sincerely,

Ronald Reagan

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