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# Pakistan: Tough Choices on Afghanistan

An Intelligence Assessment

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# Pakistan: Tough Choices on Afghanistan [REDACTED]

An Intelligence Assessment

This assessment was prepared by [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] Office of Near East-South Asia Analysis.  
Comments and queries are welcome and may be  
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## Pakistan: Tough Choices on Afghanistan

### Key Judgments

Pakistan supports the Afghan insurgents in order to prevent the Soviets from controlling Afghanistan and using it as a base to threaten Baluchistan and meddle in Pakistani politics. The support to the Afghan insurgents also allows Islamabad to secure increased military and financial assistance from the United States, China, Saudi Arabia, and Western Europe. Moscow blames its failure to control Afghanistan in part on Pakistan's support for the insurgents and has warned Islamabad that its policies could threaten Pakistan's security. The Soviets retain options to increase their support for opposition groups in Pakistan and to step up military pressure along the border.

Some Pakistani officials have advocated a more flexible policy toward Kabul and Moscow because they believe the Soviets will not withdraw from Afghanistan and that continued opposition endangers Pakistan's security:

- Pakistan cannot successfully defend against a major Soviet incursion.
- India is still Pakistan's principal security threat, and sustained tensions along the Afghanistan border leave Islamabad vulnerable to coordinated pressure from Moscow and New Delhi.
- Tensions between Pakistani citizens and the Afghan refugees in the border regions are mounting because of ethnic, religious, and tribal differences and the greatly increased burden on local resources.
- Foreign support could weaken if the European Community, the non-aligned movement, and even the United States decide that reducing tensions with Moscow is more important than continued confrontation over Afghanistan.

Islamabad's participation in UN-sponsored indirect talks with Kabul is intended to relieve the pressure from Moscow, to show sufficient diplomatic flexibility to preserve Pakistan's broad international support, and to put the onus on the Soviets and Afghans for the failure of the discussions. Islamabad would probably adopt a slightly more conciliatory policy if intensified Soviet pressure threatened Pakistan's security or political stability or if foreign security assistance—especially from the United States—was perceived as inadequate for Pakistan's needs.

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*Information available as of 15 July 1982  
has been used in the preparation of this report.*

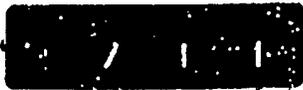
The Pakistanis view US military assistance as the necessary underpinning to their Afghanistan policy. They believe a strengthened military capability made credible by the acquisition of modern weapons is essential to mitigate Soviet pressure and to deter Soviet—and Indian—attacks on Pakistan.

The sale of advanced weapons is the yardstick by which Islamabad measures US support for Pakistan's political and security interests. Failure by the United States to meet Pakistan's perceived security needs would confirm Islamabad's doubts about the reliability of the United States as an ally and arms supplier and harm US interests in the region:

- Such a development would strengthen those in Islamabad who are arguing for an accommodation with Moscow and Kabul, which would diminish the security of the insurgents' base and propaganda platform in Pakistan.
- Saudi and Chinese confidence in US resolve to protect its interests and allies in the region would be undermined.
- Moscow might be encouraged to intensify its pressure on Islamabad and would question US willingness and capability to protect its interests elsewhere in South Asia and the Middle East.

US willingness to provide modern arms to Pakistan would reinforce Islamabad's policy of supporting the insurgency and would be well received in Beijing and Riyadh. Extensive US arms supplies to Pakistan, however, would also increase regional tensions:

- Relations between New Delhi and Islamabad would become more strained, and the likelihood of an Indo-Pakistan war would increase until Pakistan's defenses were strengthened with the delivery of most of the US weapons in the mid-1980s.
- India would become more vocal in its opposition to US policies in the region and might give greater support to Soviet policies and seek additional Soviet arms.
- Moscow would still not compromise on Afghanistan and might increase its support for the political and subversive opposition to the Zia regime.



## Pakistan: Tough Choices on Afghanistan

### Pakistan's Strategic Perceptions

Most diplomatic, political, and military observers agree that the Soviet presence in Afghanistan has increased Islamabad's sense of vulnerability and has led it to reassess its security policy and foreign relations. The Pakistanis, for the first time, face a serious threat from the northwest in addition to the longstanding threat from India to the east. Afghanistan was once regarded as a weak buffer state between the USSR and South Asia and no great threat to Pakistan's security.

Islamabad believes a fundamental improvement in its military capability is necessary to deter Soviet and Indian aggression and has emphasized acquiring modern weaponry—principally from the United States—to build a convincing defense.

Pakistanis conclude that the Soviet move into Afghanistan was part of a long-term strategy to gain access to the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean.

Soviet pressure on Baluchistan and meddling in Pakistani politics will inevitably follow Soviet success in Afghanistan. The Pakistanis worry that by 1985 the Soviets will want to launch a major attack on Pakistan with the aim of seizing Baluchistan and simultaneously cutting the strategic Korakoram highway to China in the north and linking with Indian forces at the Indus River in central Pakistan.

India's close relations with the USSR greatly increase Pakistan's anxieties. Many on-the-scene observers have reported Islamabad's fears that Moscow and New Delhi are conspiring to weaken and neutralize Pakistan so that its policies do not threaten their interests. India's arms buildup, primarily with Soviet-supplied weapons, is seen as preparing for an eventual war to establish its hegemony over Pakistan. Discussions between Pakistanis and various US officials indicate Islamabad's worst nightmare is that the USSR and India intend to dismember Pakistan into ethnically based vassal states in Pashtunistan, Baluchistan, Sind, and the Punjab.

### Pakistan's Support for the Insurgents

Islamabad's support for the Afghan insurgents, in our view, is premised on the strategic imperative of neutralizing the Soviet threat from Afghanistan while strengthening Pakistan's defenses. Support for the insurgency allows Islamabad more time to improve its armed forces while simultaneously preventing the Soviets from consolidating their hold on Afghanistan and using it as a base to threaten and destabilize Pakistan. Islamabad has secured increased military and financial aid from the United States, China, Saudi Arabia, and Western Europe—all of which want to strengthen Pakistan to contain Soviet political and military expansion in South Asia. Islamabad's policy, however, risks greater Soviet pressure that could threaten Pakistan's security and stability before Pakistan could finish improving its defenses.

Islamabad's support for the insurgents is crucial to denying the Soviets control of Afghanistan. Pakistan is a supply base and a sanctuary for the insurgents, and Islamabad has allowed them to establish training camps and receive foreign arms in the border regions. The cross-border infiltration of men and weapons has contributed significantly to the insurgents' success. At least one of President Zia's closest advisers—General Iqbal Khan, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee—has recommended that Pakistan increase military training and assistance for the insurgents. General Iqbal and other senior Pakistani officials believe that a sustained and effective insurgency could cause Moscow to reassess its policy in Afghanistan and seek a political accommodation acceptable to Islamabad, including the withdrawal of Soviet troops and the establishment of a genuinely nonaligned government in Kabul.

Pakistan's policy of giving sanctuary to over 2 million Afghan refugees and its support for the insurgents has broad public backing. Much of Pakistan's population in the Western Tribal Areas is ethnically related to

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the Afghans and would support their Afghan brethren in their fight against the Soviets even if Islamabad did not. Some of the domestic groups that most strongly back President Zia's government have traditional political ties with several of the Peshawar-based insurgent groups.

#### Pakistan's Military Capabilities

Islamabad has made only modest improvements in its military capability along the Afghan border since the Soviet intervention in December 1979. Most of the Army is deployed in the east against India, which Islamabad still sees as the primary threat. Only two of Pakistan's seven army corps and four of its 18 divisions are opposite Afghanistan, and they generally are even more under-equipped than Army units opposite India. No major units have been moved from the Indian border since the Soviet intervention, and Pakistan's plans to increase forces opposite Afghanistan depend on sizable arms purchases from abroad.

We believe Pakistan could defend against limited Afghan or Soviet border incursions, but it could not withstand large Soviet operations. Army units in the North-West Frontier and Baluchistan Provinces occupy defensive positions, generally well behind the border, where they protect major supply lines.

Reinforcements from the Indian border would be needed to deal with a major Soviet thrust from Afghanistan.

Pakistan is unable to cope with Soviet and Afghan airspace violations and could not maintain air superiority or provide effective close air support in border

clashes.

Pakistan has improved its air defenses in the west.

The ability of the Pakistanis to coordinate air defenses, however, is greatly circumscribed.

Most of the improvements Pakistan has made in its western defenses have been in strengthening the lightly armed, paramilitary Frontier Corps, which is responsible for border security and for maintaining order in the Western Tribal Areas. The Frontier Corps is commanded by Army officers and is organized into some 70 battalion-size "wings" of 750 men each.

Since December 1979 Pakistan has added over 15,000 men in 20 new wings to the Frontier Corps.

and has reinforced some border units with Army battalions at the major border crossings. We believe the expansion of the Frontier Corps may have been as much to help control the large number of Afghan refugees as to strengthen border security.

#### Soviet Pressure on Pakistan

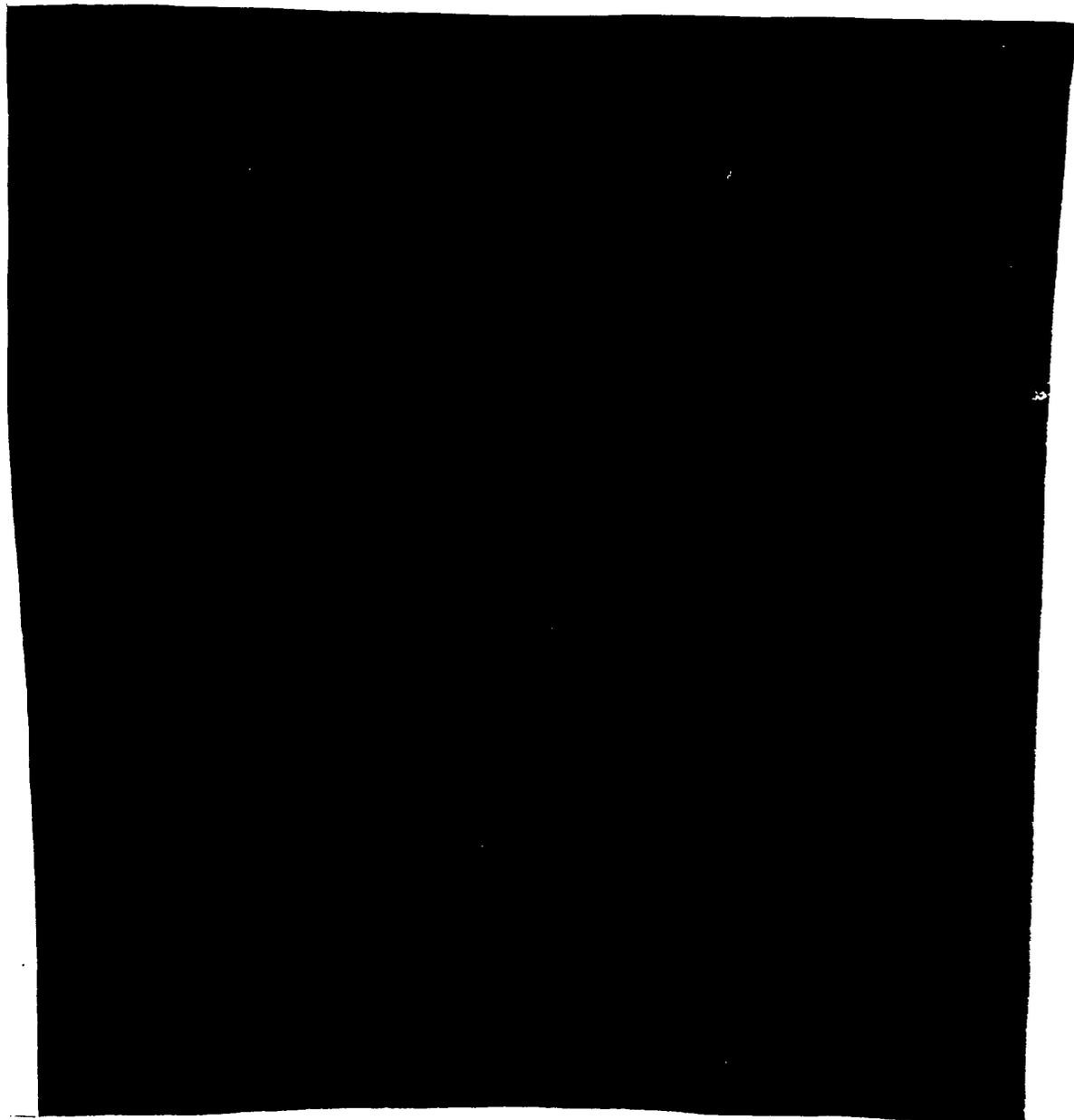
It is clear from their public statements that the Soviets put part of the blame for their failure to control Afghanistan on Pakistan's support for the insurgents and are using a combination of pressure and blandishments to try to change Islamabad's policy. Moscow has frequently warned Islamabad to end its support for the insurgents and negotiate a solution

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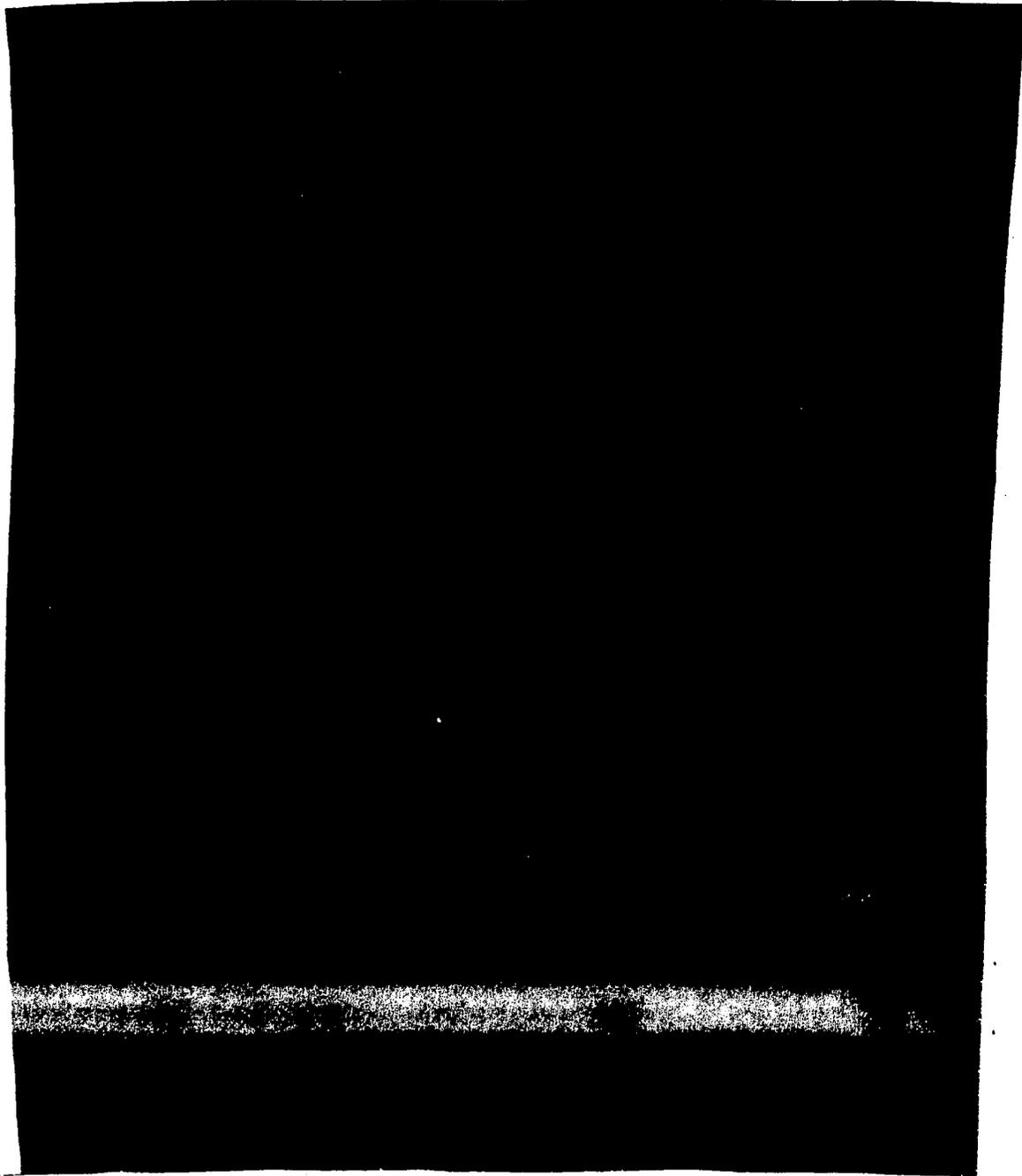


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to the Afghanistan problem with the Kabul government. The Soviets insist, both publicly and privately, that an end to foreign support for the insurgents must come before any withdrawal of their forces and that, in any case, the subject of Soviet forces is a matter exclusively for Moscow and Kabul.

*Political Pressure.* In our view, Moscow believes that Islamabad's policy on Afghanistan is personally linked to President Zia.

[redacted] Nusrat Bhutto, chairman of the PPP and widow of populist Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, has pleased Moscow by saying she would recognize the Kabul government, stop insurgent infiltration from Pakistan, and send the Afghan refugees home if she gained power.

[redacted] pro-Soviet elements in the MRD are supported by Moscow, and they hope to provoke violent antigovernment acts that would threaten Zia's tenure. [redacted] the Al-Zulfikar terrorist group, led by Bhutto's sons, receives arms and money indirectly from the Soviets through the Kabul government and uses Afghanistan as a sanctuary from which to operate against Pakistan. The Soviets, however, have been careful in public to avoid identification with Al-Zulfikar and other terrorist groups, and we believe they realize that their activities hurt the credibility and popularity of the MRD.

[redacted] the Soviets have long maintained contact with Pakistani Baluch and Pushtun separatist groups and might try to use them to gain leverage over Pakistan's policies. In our view these groups, unlike the PPP, are too weak to threaten the survival of the Zia regime, but they are capable of costly acts of subversion and can exploit traditional tribal rivalries along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. We believe Moscow is aware that its support for the separatist groups would be opposed just as strongly by a PPP-led government as by Zia. [redacted] the separatist groups have been reluctant to accept help from the Soviets, who are trying to suppress their tribal relatives in Afghanistan.

Soviet intervention in Pakistan's domestic affairs by supporting opposition political groups or ethnic separatist elements in their activities against the Zia regime has little prospect for immediate success, in our view. Moscow's subversion—especially if it is not well concealed—promotes still closer ties between Pakistan and the United States. The Soviets generally have focused on trying to change Pakistan's policy by a combination of political and military pressure and offering economic aid and an easing of tensions. We believe the Soviets hope at least to encourage debate among Zia's advisers about the wisdom of Pakistan's Afghanistan policy.

*Military Pressure.* The Soviets have warned Islamabad on many occasions that continuing to support the insurgents, and strengthening security relations with the US, would threaten Pakistan's own security. Foreign Minister Gromyko said publicly in February 1980 that Pakistan risked its independence by aiding the insurgents. US diplomats in Pakistan were told that Islamabad's Ambassador in Moscow was bluntly warned by a ranking Soviet official in the Foreign Ministry in June 1981 that Pakistan's policy would eventually lead to war with Afghanistan in which Moscow would support Kabul.

[redacted] President Zia was told by Deputy Foreign Minister Firyubin in August 1981 that Soviet support for the Afghan revolution was firm and irreversible and that it was up to Pakistan to ease tensions by recognizing the Kabul government.

The Soviets have not systematically attacked targets in Pakistani territory, but reconnaissance flights along the border are routinely flown by Soviet and Afghan aircraft and there are frequent airspace violations and occasional bombing and strafing attacks across the border. [redacted] Pakistan has counted over 450 airspace violations and a much smaller number of border violations on the ground since the Communist coup in Kabul in April 1978. Until last fall we believed few of the violations were deliberate and that many occurred because the border is ill-defined. Some of the border violations last fall—which involved aerial mining and bombing and strafing incidents—seemed deliberate, however, and appeared aimed at intensifying pressure on Islamabad to

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come to terms with the Soviet-dominated government in Kabul. No serious border violations have occurred since then. [REDACTED]

Although the Soviets have been unable to close the porous frontier by using combat patrols and mining border trails and have also been unsuccessful in intimidating Islamabad politically, they could increase military pressure on Pakistan with more frequent and severe airstrikes and artillery fire across the border or with quick, airmobile assault raids against insurgent bases in Pakistan's border regions. We believe the Soviets would probably try to control the escalation by limiting their attacks to insurgent bases and supply lines, not striking deeply into Pakistan, and trying to avoid clashes with the Pakistan Army that could trigger a larger conflict and provoke sharp international censure. [REDACTED]

Cross-border operations, in our view, would disrupt the stability and security of insurgent supply lines and staging areas in Pakistan and increase pressure on Islamabad to curtail its support for the insurgents, but they would not stop insurgent infiltration into Afghanistan. The failure of such operations to appreciably dampen the insurgency might convince frustrated Soviet military planners that larger cross-border operations were necessary, perhaps including the seizure of Pakistani territory. We believe Soviet policymakers would weigh the dubious military benefits of such escalation against the risk that gross violations of Pakistan's territory would provoke greater US political and military involvement in South Asia. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Islamabad believes that the Soviets want to increase Indo-Pakistan tensions to prevent Pakistan from strengthening its defenses in the west and to force the Pakistanis to reduce tensions with Afghanistan in order to concentrate on the Indian threat. They also believe that the Soviets have discouraged New Delhi from serious negotiations on Zia's proposal for a nonaggression pact between India and Pakistan and have reinforced New Delhi's belief that Islamabad's purchases of modern US arms reveal an intention to settle accounts with India. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] We do not believe New Delhi would be willing to increase pressure on Pakistan to serve Soviet interests. [REDACTED] New Delhi told the Soviet Defense Minister during his visit in April that India had no present intention of going to war with Pakistan and would strongly oppose Soviet plans to dismember Pakistan. Prime Minister Gandhi has not openly opposed Soviet policy on Afghanistan, but [REDACTED] she has [REDACTED] urged Moscow to make token withdrawals. [REDACTED] she is concerned that the conflict is threatening India's policy and security interests by contributing to the US decision to sell modern weapons to Pakistan. New Delhi's position on Afghanistan in our view also reflects its belief that Moscow will not accept any government in Kabul that threatens its interests—even if this requires a Soviet military involvement of many years. [REDACTED]

#### Worrying About the Future

Pakistani officials believe the Soviets will become more aggressive in trying to press Islamabad to recognize the Kabul government and end its support for the insurgents. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the Soviets will increase their assistance to Pakistani terrorist groups and escalate military tension along the border. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Islamabad expects the Soviets to conduct an increasing number of cross-border artillery and airstrikes against the refugee camps and isolated border outposts. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] President Zia last February told the new commander of the Frontier Corps that Islamabad did not want a military confrontation with the Soviets, even though an increase in Soviet military pressure was expected along the border. Aware of their military weaknesses, the Pakistanis lack confidence in their forces opposite Afghanistan. [REDACTED] Islamabad has authorized only border units to react to [REDACTED]

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shallow border violations and has restricted the Army and Air Force to defending only against deeper Soviet or Afghan penetrations. [REDACTED]

An escalation of Soviet and Afghan military pressure along the border would present Islamabad with hard choices on how and where to respond, especially if the Soviets began a concerted effort to attack insurgent base camps in Pakistan on a regular basis. In our view, failure to defend Pakistani territory would have severe political consequences for any government in Islamabad. It would undermine public confidence in the government, erode Army support for Zia, and endanger his regime. A serious military defeat, however, could have equally severe consequences, particularly if it resulted in territorial losses. A forward defense of resisting Soviet attacks in the border regions might deter further attacks, but it could also provoke an unwanted escalation of force against which Pakistan could not defend. A defense-in-depth strategy would allow the Soviets to operate in the border regions with virtual impunity and could embolden them to apply greater military pressure on both the insurgents and Islamabad. [REDACTED]

We believe that so long as Soviet and Afghan airstrikes or border incursions are small and limited to attacks on insurgent targets in the border area, Islamabad probably would not risk defending the insurgents. The Pakistanis could inflict serious losses on small Soviet or Afghan forces operating in the border region in chance encounters or if there were time enough to use their better knowledge of the terrain to set up ambushes, but it is clear from reporting by many reliable sources that Islamabad fears such clashes would provoke a large Soviet response. We do not believe that small border skirmishes involving mostly Frontier Corps units would be seen by Islamabad as a major provocation that would cause the Soviets to escalate, and Pakistani border posts would be expected to fire on attacking aircraft and ground forces as in the past. We expect the Pakistanis will keep Army units deployed in defensive positions away from the border to guard against deep incursions. These units could be more easily reinforced with additional manpower, artillery, and air defense weapons. [REDACTED]

#### Pakistan's Policy Debates

Most Pakistani officials do not believe the Soviets will withdraw from Afghanistan, and some influential policymakers and a significant number of middle-level Army officers believe that Islamabad should seek an accommodation with Moscow to reduce political and border tensions. [REDACTED] General Arif, the Army Chief of Staff, General Rahimuddin, the Governor of Baluchistan Province, and former Foreign Minister Agha Shahi are among those who have urged consideration of a conciliatory policy on Afghanistan. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] General Arif, reflecting the views of a large number of Army officers, has frequently advised Zia to moderate his policy because, Arif believes, no amount of US political support and military aid would be sufficient to stop a major Soviet attack. Agha Shahi and General Rahimuddin both question US reliability in a crisis and worry about Moscow's increasing pressure on Islamabad to come to terms with Kabul. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] many Pakistanis believe that a reduction in tensions with the Soviets is needed to allow Islamabad to better cope with the more serious threat to Pakistan's security—India. President Zia told a US Congressional delegation to Islamabad last January that many Indian officials have not reconciled themselves to Pakistan's existence—a belief shared by many Pakistanis. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Pakistani officers are concerned that Islamabad's new emphasis on Afghanistan allows India to increase the pressure on Pakistan as well as allowing Moscow and New Delhi to threaten Islamabad implicitly with a two-front war. A more conciliatory policy toward Afghanistan, based on the prevalent view that Moscow will not withdraw its forces, could induce the Soviets to press New Delhi to ease tensions with Pakistan and would enable Islamabad to concentrate on improving its defenses against India. [REDACTED]

Some Pakistani officials, concerned that the 2 million Afghan refugees in the border region are straining local economic resources and exacerbating ethnic and religious tensions, are also urging a more flexible

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policy. [redacted] Pakistan's population in the North-West Frontier Province and in Baluchistan has accepted the Afghan refugees with tolerance and support, but some disturbances have occurred between the refugees and the local population in the Kurram Agency in the North-West Frontier Province.

[redacted] Pakistani officials in Baluchistan Province are concerned about underlying tensions between the predominantly Pushtun Afghan refugees and the Pakistani Baluchis. The large number of refugees also is beginning to compete with the local population for employment, food, water, and fuel, thus straining available resources in the border regions.

Islamabad could, in our view, try to mitigate tensions between the refugees and the local population by tightening regulations on the refugees to minimize the insurgents' freedom of movement and permitting only UN-administered refugee camps—and no insurgent camps—to function on Pakistani territory.

[redacted] the governor of Baluchistan Province plans to move many of the refugees away from the border to minimize both the prospect of local disturbances and the likelihood of Soviet strikes across the border. Many Pakistanis living in the border region believe that there would be no Soviet threat from Afghanistan if it were not for the refugees, according to on-the-scene observers.

[redacted] the governor of the North-West Frontier Province was warned by the Soviet Ambassador in Islamabad that border tensions would remain high so long as Islamabad continued to allow the insurgents to operate from Pakistani territory.

Pakistani officials also worry that the longer the Soviets occupy Afghanistan, the more readily the occupation will be accepted by other nations—particularly in the European Community and in the non-aligned movement—which are more intent on reducing tensions with Moscow than adhering to a position of principle that aggravates international tensions.

[redacted] Islamabad is especially concerned that the United States, perhaps acting to assuage domestic and foreign concern about its Soviet policies and to minimize policy differences

within NATO, might reach agreement with Moscow that leaves Pakistan without any superpower support in its backing of the insurgents.

[redacted] The Pakistanis still harbor persistent doubts about US reliability as an ally and especially as an arms supplier—a legacy of the US arms embargoes in the Indo-Pakistan wars of 1965 and 1971. We believe that US inability to assure promised delivery to Pakistan of some sophisticated weapons—which are protected by US national disclosure policy—and the prospect of annual congressional review of the foreign military sales program both reinforce Islamabad's concern that the US arms supply relationship would not endure. [redacted] US unwillingness to commit itself to Pakistan's security beyond the assurances contained in the 1959 Executive Agreement also causes some Pakistanis to question Islamabad's policy of relying on US backing against the Soviets.

[redacted] many Pakistani officials suspect US support for Pakistan is only a temporary expedient to oppose the Soviets and that an improvement in US-Soviet relations would leave Pakistan alone to confront the Soviets, and their Indian allies, in South Asia. [redacted] former Foreign Minister Agha Shahi told Pakistan's ambassadors abroad last January that the history of unreliable US support forced Islamabad to retain the option of changing its policy on Afghanistan, perhaps to include even recognition of a Soviet-installed government in Kabul.

At the same time, Islamabad has failed to secure a much-hoped-for commitment from Beijing to defend Pakistan, despite China's strong support.

[redacted] Beijing told Islamabad that China would consider deploying troops to Pakistan in a military crisis, but it stressed it could not fight a sustained conflict with the Soviets or India in another country. Instead, Beijing has advocated that the United States provide a firm commitment to defend Pakistan and has implied that Chinese troops would deploy to Pakistan only after US troops had arrived.

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#### Pakistan's Diplomatic Strategy

Despite these misgivings, Pakistan has been resolute in maintaining its conditions for an Afghan settlement, which have been endorsed by both the UN General Assembly and the Islamic Conference and which have the support of Islamabad's principal allies. Islamabad's substantive proposals, given both publicly and privately to various audiences, call for the immediate withdrawal of Soviet forces, the creation of the political conditions necessary for the return of the Afghan refugees in Pakistan and Iran, self-determination for the Afghan people, and nonalignment for Afghanistan. Islamabad does not recognize the Kabul government and insists that negotiations only include representatives of the Afghan Communist Party—not the government—in addition to the governments of Pakistan and Iran and representatives from the insurgent groups.

Islamabad, because it is uncertain about the depth of foreign backing and feels vulnerable to Soviet pressure, has nevertheless maintained diplomatic channels to Moscow and has been careful not to close policy options. Pakistan and the USSR exchange high-level delegations to discuss Afghanistan, although they have made no progress in resolving their differences. It is clear that the Pakistanis have not compromised their position on Afghanistan despite Soviet threats and offers of economic and even military aid and hints that Kabul would recognize the Durand Line as Afghanistan's border with Pakistan. In our view, Islamabad's hints that it might some day seek an accommodation with Moscow and Kabul and perhaps recognize a different government in Afghanistan represent not only genuine consideration of policy alternatives, but also subtle efforts to elicit more foreign support. Their support for the insurgents requires assurances of foreign backing for Islamabad, especially in military aid.

We do not believe Islamabad's involvement in the UN-sponsored indirect talks with Afghanistan at Geneva last month means that Pakistan has softened its conditions; instead it was intended to show diplomatic flexibility and to increase political pressure on Moscow.

Islamabad believes the talks,

which were held through a UN intermediary, were necessary to relieve the pressure from Moscow and to preserve the strong diplomatic support it has received from the UN, the Islamic Conference, the nonaligned movement, and the European Community. Even though the format was designed to avoid prejudicing Islamabad's nonrecognition of the Soviet-backed government, the Pakistanis risked conferring a modicum of respectability on the Kabul government. They hoped that adherence to their widely backed conditions for an acceptable Afghan settlement and Iran's willingness to be kept informed on the progress of the talks would deflect criticism of Pakistan and preclude early movement to direct talks between the governments. Small progress was made when the Afghans agreed to discuss the withdrawal of Soviet troops and return of the refugees, but the talks do not seem to have brought a political solution to the Afghanistan problem any closer.

If Islamabad believed that intensified Soviet pressure threatened either Pakistan's security or political stability, we expect Pakistan would attempt to modify its Afghanistan policy without seeming to abandon its support for the insurgency. Pakistan could restrict insurgent activities in the border region but still claim it supported the political objectives of the Afghan insurgents. Islamabad could discreetly begin diplomatic contacts with the Kabul government at UN-sponsored proximity talks but still publicly insist its conditions for a political settlement had not changed. Sensitive to US, Chinese, and Saudi concerns, Pakistan, in our view, would probably not dramatically change its policy but gradually shift toward conciliation instead of confrontation. Such a shift could emphasize supporting a UN-brokered solution—which would have implicit international backing—that could include the refugees returning to Afghanistan, Afghan opposition groups negotiating with, and perhaps joining, a Soviet-backed government in Kabul, and Soviet troops being withdrawn by bilateral agreement with a more broadly based Kabul government as Pakistan ended foreign support for the insurgents.

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#### Implications for US Policy

Islamabad has played the key role in supporting the insurgents and in focusing international attention on the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, and any movement by Pakistan toward political accommodation with Moscow and Kabul would be a severe blow to US policy in South Asia. Pakistan's willingness to negotiate with a Soviet-backed government in Kabul would give that government a legitimacy it could not otherwise attain. Because achieving the political and military goals of the Afghan insurgency depends on Pakistan's support, Islamabad's implied acceptance of the Soviet fait accompli in Afghanistan would be a major setback for the insurgents and erode the international consensus against the Soviet intervention there. The insurgents would be denied a secure sanctuary and supply base in Pakistan, and the activities of Afghan political exiles there could be greatly circumscribed.

US policy toward Pakistan will be the key determinant in the direction of Islamabad's Afghanistan policy because of the Pakistani belief that US support is crucial to resisting Soviet pressure. It is clear from Pakistani officers and government officials that the sale of advanced weapons is the yardstick by which Islamabad measures US support for Pakistan's political and security interests. In our view, US willingness to meet Pakistan's perceived security requirements would reinforce Zia's policy of supporting the insurgents. A perception of inadequate US support for Pakistan's security interests, however, would strengthen arguments in Islamabad for a more conciliatory policy toward Afghanistan.

A stronger US commitment to Pakistan's security to encourage Islamabad's firm opposition to the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan would almost certainly further sour US relations with India and further strain relations between New Delhi and Islamabad, particularly if it involved more military sales. It is clear from both their public and private statements that the Indians view the US-Pakistan security relationship as both threatening their political and military predominance and inviting increased superpower competition in South Asia and the Indian Ocean. More US support for Pakistan might cause India to heighten military tensions on Pakistan's eastern border and would increase the likelihood of an Indo-

Pakistan war within the next few years. India distrusts Islamabad's intentions and may believe a preventive war would be necessary before US arms sales could greatly improve Pakistan's military capabilities in the mid-1980s. India might also strengthen its relations with the USSR and give more support to Soviet policy in Afghanistan.

US policy in the event of intensified Soviet pressure on Pakistan would likewise be subject to close analysis by regional powers in the Middle East—notably Saudi Arabia. The Saudis have close security relations with Pakistan and would welcome increased US support for Islamabad. We believe a stronger US commitment to Pakistan's security would reassure Riyadh of the US resolve to protect Saudi security interests in the Persian Gulf region. The Saudis were disconcerted about the US failure to support as important an ally as the Shah of Iran, and a similar failure to support Pakistan would shake their confidence in the credibility of US commitments. Even so, we expect Riyadh would continue its close relations with the United States because of its dependence on the United States for arms and its fears about Iranian intentions in the Persian Gulf. Saudi Arabia might, however, put further distance between itself and US policy in the Arab-Israeli conflict as well as US efforts to build regional support for the use of the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force in the Persian Gulf.

Soviet policy in Afghanistan would also be affected by the US response to intensified pressure on Pakistan. In our view, if Moscow believed there was no strong US commitment to Pakistan's security, the Soviets would probably conclude that they could conduct deeper incursions into Pakistan without much risk of a strong US response. They might also question US willingness and capability to protect its interests elsewhere in South Asia and the Middle East. On the other hand, increased military assistance to Pakistan and a reaffirmation of the 1959 US-Pakistan Executive Agreement might lead the Soviets to refrain from deep incursions and possibly reduce tensions along the border, although it would not cause them to compromise on Afghanistan. But a stronger US commitment to Pakistan's security would encourage increased Soviet support for subversive and political opponents of President Zia's regime.

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