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NSC BRIEFING

13 April 1954

REPORT OF AFGHAN-PAKISTANI
CONFEDERATION PLANS

- I. Karachi despatch dated 10 April to New York Times alleges that a plan for confederation of Pakistan and Afghanistan has been under consideration for a year and is now near fruition. Core of plan is said to be a "jointly administered foreign policy." A distorted version of this article has already been broadcast by Tass from Moscow.
- II. There are no intelligence reports which would tend to confirm existence of such plan. Internal evidence in Times article suggests that it originates with Pakistani ambassador to Kabul, Col. A.S.B. Shah, who is believed to hold flamboyantly optimistic views on future Pakistani-Afghan relations.

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III. It is true that there have been recent indications of improvement in Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan. Afghanistan has intimated interest in defense pact similar to that made by Pakistan and Turkey on 2 April, if dispute over Pushtoonistan settled. Violence of Afghan press campaign on Pushtoonistan issue has moderated slightly in recent months, and possibility of settlement of this dispute now appears better than any time since 1947.

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IV. Col. Shah told Ambassador Ward in Kabul in late March that Pakistan was prepared to make technical assistance worth \$12,000,000 annually available to Afghanistan and, if practicable, to sign a joint defense pact, in return for settlement of Pushtoonistan. Not known whether Shah has made this offer to Afghans, nor certain that Karachi would subscribe to details of Shah's plans. Times article cited above is probably expansion or distortion of what Shah is reported to have had in mind about three weeks ago.

Given political and geographical position of Afghanistan, long-standing determination to maintain independence and antagonism toward Pakistan, confederation of two countries appears to be out of question under present conditions.

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