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PA/HO, Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
June 9, 2005

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

INFORMATION 7627

7627

Pakistan

Let me see my memo

Action

He must move this.

~~SECRET~~

February 20, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM: Harold H. Saunders

SUBJECT: Pakistani Views on Our South Asian Arms Supply Policy

Recent indications suggest that Pakistan is increasingly concerned over the timing and nature of our long awaited decision on military supply to South Asia. Ambassador Hilaly recently approached Assistant Secretary Sisco on this matter and now has asked to see you (on this as well as to deliver a message from Yahya on China). Ambassador Farland is also coming under increasing pressure from President Yahya on down and has sent in a long cable (attached) presenting the Pakistani case for the special attention of you, Acting Secretary Richardson, Assistant Secretary Sisco and Secretary Laird.

Views of our Ambassadors: There is a long history of our ambassadors to India and Pakistan strongly advocating changes in our arms policy favorable to the countries to which they are accredited. In the last Administration this contributed substantially to a paralysis of decision-making on this contentious issue. Thus far the Nixon Administration, with new teams in New Delhi and Rawalpindi, has been largely spared from this counter-productive exercise and Ambassadors Keating and Farland have stated their opposing positions only infrequently and with restraint.

Ambassador Farland has now broken his "self-imposed moratorium" on arguing the Pakistani case to advocate strongly the resumption of "limited and selected" sales of military equipment. [This is essentially the second of the main options in the memo I have given you to send to the President on this decision.] As a "fallback" position, he recommends going through with the Turkish tank deal, and supplying some aircraft as an interim measure pending a "basic decision" which could then be delayed until a more politically propitious time for Pakistan. [This is very close to sub-options 1 and 2 in your memo to the President.] He makes the following points to back his recommendation:

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--President Yahya's personal prestige and his ability to carry through on his liberal political program will suffer if he is rebuffed by us on the arms supply issue. This could contribute to the breakup of the country.

--He doubts the thesis that any resumption of U.S. sales of "lethal" equipment to India and Pakistan would by itself stimulate an arms race on the subcontinent.

--Yahya is expected to visit the USSR, and Chou En-Lai is to visit Pakistan this spring and military supply will rank high on the agenda. Persistent pressure from the military could force Yahya to increase his purchases from the Soviets and especially the Chinese if he has not had some positive signal from us by then.

--Willingness to consider selling some arms to India and Pakistan within carefully controlled limits would appear consistent with the Nixon Doctrine.

--Should we decide to sell more aircraft to Israel while denying lethal end items to Muslim Pakistan, negative Pakistani reaction would be "intense." The Pakistanis could even get more deeply involved in the Arab cause against Israel.

Ambassador Keating may cable a counter argument to that presented by Ambassador Farland. Past reporting indicates that he feels we should maintain our current restrictive arms policy (a view shared by Secretary Rogers) without substantial change. According to this line of reasoning, any modification of our arms policy runs the serious risk of marring bilateral relations with India, the larger and more important country in terms of U.S. interests in Asia.

Conclusion: Ambassador Farland's argumentation is overstated but his recommendations approximate one of the options we have identified for the President (Option 4--Permit continued sale of replacements for Pakistan) and his fallback position is very close to what I have suggested you recommend to the President, except that I have envisaged it as a basic decision rather than as a delaying tactic. As the memo to the President points out, the main problem with restarting a sales

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program is that it contains the seeds of future tension since we would constantly be in the position of fending off Pakistani requests. Moreover, Ambassador Keating is probably right that this policy would raise serious problems with India that are inconsistent with our interests in South Asia.

On balance, I still think that the recommendation I suggested is the best. It splits the difference by giving the Pakistanis something of real value without at the same time re-involving us on a continuing basis in Indo-Pakistani hostility. The Pakistanis would not be entirely happy, but I seriously doubt that this would jeopardize President Yahya's democratization program (our arms policy is only one small element at best) or force him into the arms of the Soviets and Chinese (there are built-in limitations as to how far these relationships can go). Moreover, the fact is that--however much India may irritate us--India is the larger and potentially more influential power in the Asian context.