UNITED STATES ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT AGENCY
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE DIRECTOR

June 16, 1986

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT
FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

SUBJECT: Pakistan's Nuclear Weapons Program and
US Security Assistance

Pakistan's decade-long pursuit of nuclear weapons continues apace despite US efforts to stop it. We thus face three questions: (1) Do we stand by the President's "red lines" to contain the Pak weapons' drive? (2) On what basis can we convincingly make the statutorily-required certification about Pak nuclear activities and the impact of US aid this September? (3) How best can we convince Congress to renew the waiver permitting US aid to Pakistan after September 1987?

These three are related. The sooner we take steps to uphold the "red lines," the better off we will be in the other two.

"Red Lines." The US gave a non-paper in May 1984 to Foreign Minister Yaqub Khan stating "that the U.S. would be obligated to terminate security assistance if Pakistan assembles or tests a nuclear device, transfers technology for such a device, violates international safeguards or undertakes unsafeguarded reprocessing." The paper also stated these were "the points made by President Reagan in his December 1982 meeting with President Zia."

President Reagan wrote Zia in September 1984 "that enrichment of uranium above five percent would be of the same significance as those nuclear activities such as unsafeguarded reprocessing which I personally discussed with you in December 1982 and would have the same implications for our security program and relationship." Zia specifically pledged not to enrich uranium beyond five percent.

That pledge has been violated. When we confronted Zia last April with the evidence, he lied to us again and denied any

production of high enriched uranium. Since our demarche, Pakistan has continued to produce such uranium.

US failure to do more than "jawbone" risks the President's credibility and has virtually no prospect of convincing Pakistan to cease its enrichment activities. This threatens to undermine Congress' support for our security assistance, needed both to maintain the present program and to ensure its continuation after September 1987. Unchecked Pak stockpiling of nuclear weapons material also heightens pressures on India to accelerate its nuclear weapons activities.

September 1986 Statutory Certification. Congress last year prohibited aid unless the President certifies annually that Pakistan "does not possess" a nuclear explosive device and that US assistance "will reduce significantly the risk that Pakistan will possess a nuclear explosive device." Since last year's certification, the situation has become much worse. It is clear now that Pakistan has overcome the last major obstacle to nuclear weapons by producing enough high enriched uranium for one or more nuclear devices.

This calls into question the basis for future certification, since we have defined possession as including "either a fully assembled device or all the elements which would give it the ability to assemble a nuclear device in a short period of time." Moreover, Pakistan's continuing nuclear weapons efforts undermine the conclusion that our aid program significantly reduces the risk of such possession. Due to these two factors, it is not clear to me what basis we in ACDA would have to make a convincing statutory certification.

September 1987 Renewal of Legislation. Because of Pakistan's nuclear weapons program, we needed a special amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act in 1982 to permit us to provide security assistance to respond to Soviet actions in Afghanistan. To continue security assistance beyond September 1987, we will again need new legislation exempting Pakistan from certain provisions of that Act. Zia's actions significantly weaken our hand in trying to convince Congress to pass such legislation.

Recommended Next Steps. I hold to three premises: (1) we need to go beyond just "jawboning" if we are to have any chance of convincing Zia to honor his pledges; (2) abiding by the "red lines" will best advance all our interests in the region; and (3) Zia will blink if we give our warning some "bite."

Our repeated warnings and demarches to Pakistan on nuclear issues have had little significant effect so far. Still more

words, without some action to back it up, will only further reinforce Zia's belief that he can lie to us with impunity.

We may eventually be forced to conclude that the "least bad" alternative is to accept Pakistani enrichment while toughing it out with Congress on the aid relationship. Even so, we should attempt to force Zia to face the choice between enrichment and security assistance before conceding him both. If successful, the payoffs are high: Presidential credibility strengthened, the prospects for favorable Congressional action on aid enhanced, and the risks of an overt nuclear arms race in South Asia reduced.

Increasing pressure on Pakistan has risks. Should Zia "stonewall," we may well have to reverse ourselves, thereby damaging our credibility. I assume we would not want to terminate aid, thereby damaging our Afghan interests. Moreover, if we start doing more than jawboning, Congress might overreact. And if the issue were forced publicly, Zia might reduce assistance to the Afghan rebels to show his independence from US pressures.

These risks, however, can be minimized if we apply pressure on Pakistan discriminately. Moreover, I believe these risks are less than the risks associated with not making this effort.

Finally, if confronted with a stark choice, I believe Zia would now stop production of high enriched uranium, in part since he already has some bomb-grade material and in part because the strategic payoff of military sales and the aid relationship is high for him.

Consequently, I recommend that the President tell Prime Minister Junejo, when he is here next month, that he has ordered a review of what to do about Pakistan's continued production of weapons material. This review will be concluded by September 30, 1986, and that pending the outcome he has halted all actions involving military sales. President Zia should be informed simultaneously via a Presidential message. I also recommend that we approach some key Congressional leaders to reinforce the message that Zia should stop production of bomb-grade uranium.

Ken

Kenneth L. Adelman