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PAKISTAN
Relations Sept. 79



10 DOWNING STREET

13 March 1985

From the Private Secretary

Dear Sir,

PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH PRESIDENT ZIA-UL-HAQ
ON WEDNESDAY 13 MARCH at 1045

The Prime Minister met President Zia in the British Embassy, Moscow this morning. The President was accompanied by his Foreign Minister and Private Secretary. The Foreign Secretary was also present.

Situation in Pakistan

The President gave an account of recent developments in Pakistan mentioning in particular the good turnout in the recent elections to the National and Provincial Assemblies. The election of the Senate was now in progress. The first meeting of the Senate and National Assembly would be on 23 March. Thereafter, he would wait for a few months for the new system to shake down and then lift martial law. He believed that a good basis would be established for five years of stability.

Bilateral Relations

President Zia said that the frigate deal was going well, thanks to the Prime Minister's intervention. Indeed, to all intents and purposes, it was settled. The Prime Minister asked whether there were any further steps to be completed. President Zia seemed slightly surprised that the Prime Minister did not know that it had all been settled.

President Zia said that he was grateful to us for providing the specialised military training which he had requested when he and the Prime Minister had met at the time of President Andropov's funeral. He was pleased, too, with the help which we had given Pakistan on narcotics detection. Pakistan had virtually eliminated the poppy crop which had declined from 800 tons to 40 tons. But there was still a major problem with drugs from Afghanistan.

Afghanistan

President Zia said that he was grateful for Britain's moral and political support over Afghanistan. Over the last twelve months, the Soviet Union had shown itself more aggressive and had sent in some 50,000 more troops, bringing the total up to 150,000. There had been a number of major

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offensives last year and he was concerned about what might happen this summer. Pakistan was unable to meet as much of the freedom fighters' requirements as he would like. He had seen Vice-President Bush the evening before and had urged the Americans to give more help to the Afghan resistance but, above all, to camouflage it more effectively. Otherwise, it just gave the Russians more cause for complaint against Pakistan, and made Pakistan look like an American puppet.

The Prime Minister asked about the situation of the refugees. We hoped to be able to provide some additional food and medical aid for those in the affected areas in Afghanistan. President Zia said that he wished more countries would follow Britain's lead over Afghanistan. He also hoped that we would do what we could to keep up press interest and publicity for what was going on there. It was important that the conflict there should not be forgotten or become a backwater for international opinion.

President Zia said that Pakistan had been trying to analyse the consequences for Soviet strategy in Afghanistan of Gorbachev's appointment as General Secretary. Their conclusion was that he would be bound to concentrate, at least for two or three years, on the Soviet Union's economic problems. The result would be that in foreign policy generally, and in Afghanistan in particular, the present strategy - which appeared to be set by Gromyko and the military - would continue and Gorbachev would not interfere. Indeed, there might well be further escalation by the Russians in an attempt to crush the resistance completely. Certainly, the Soviets were under no pressure to compromise. The Prime Minister said that she did not dispute President Zia's analysis. More generally, she was concerned about the isolation of Soviet leaders, even those of the younger generation such as Mr. Gorbachev himself. That was why she wanted to encourage as many as possible of them to travel to the West.

Pakistan/India

The Prime Minister asked about the development of Pakistan's relations with India. President Zia said that he would be meeting Mr. Gandhi immediately after seeing the Prime Minister. He had pinned considerable hopes for a more reasonable Indian attitude on Mr. Gandhi but had been disappointed by some of his recent remarks about the military equipment which Pakistan was procuring from the United States. It seemed that he did not want Pakistan to be armed at all. The trial of the Sikh hijackers was in progress and its conclusion should remove an irritant in Pakistan/India relations. He believed that Mr. Gandhi was basically more open-minded than his mother had been. His visit to the United States would be an important opportunity to influence him.

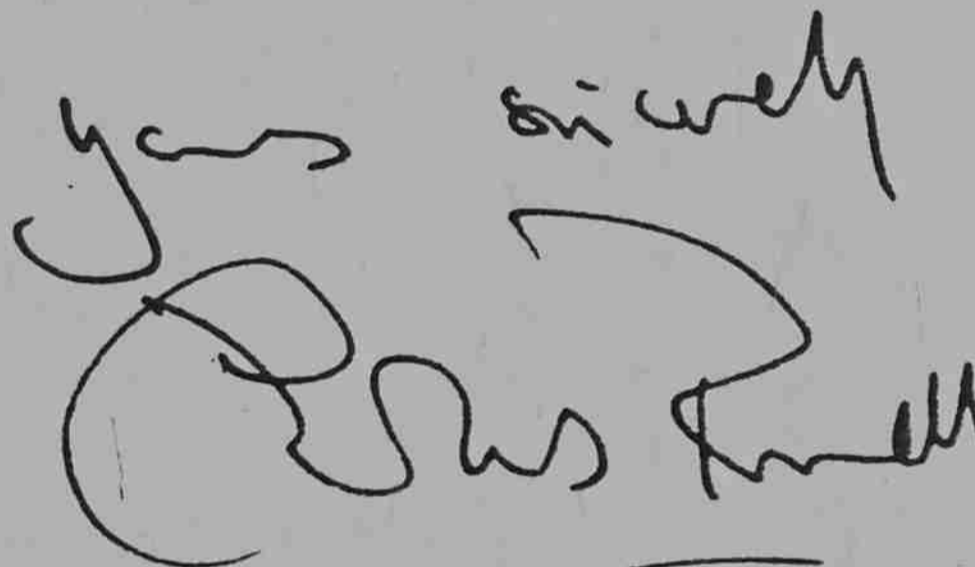
The Prime Minister remarked that India remained heavily dependent upon the Soviet Union for arms. President Zia said that he very much hoped that Britain would sell more

arms to India to reduce this dependence. The Prime Minister referred to Britain's problems with India stemming from the activities of Sikh extremists in the United Kingdom.

Commonwealth

President Zia said that with the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting coming up in the autumn, he hoped there could be renewed impetus towards Pakistan's re-entry into the Commonwealth. The Prime Minister asked what President Zia himself was doing to promote this. President Zia said that he thought it would be a mistake for Pakistan to be too active. Their policy was to mention it casually to a few key countries. There had been a positive response from Australia. He hoped that the matter could be discussed unofficially at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. The Prime Minister said that Pakistan would have to do some lobbying and would have to start now. She thought that President Zia would find New Zealand and Canada helpful. He should mention it to Mr. Mulroney.

I am copying this letter to Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

Yours sincerely


C.D. POWELL

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office.