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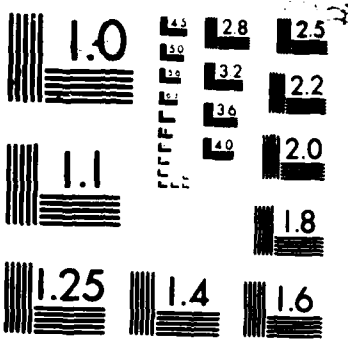

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RESEARCH REPORT

No. AU-AWC-86-115

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THE UNITED STATES-PAKISTAN SECURITY RELATIONSHIP

By GROUP CAPTAIN KHALID IQBAL, PAKISTAN AF

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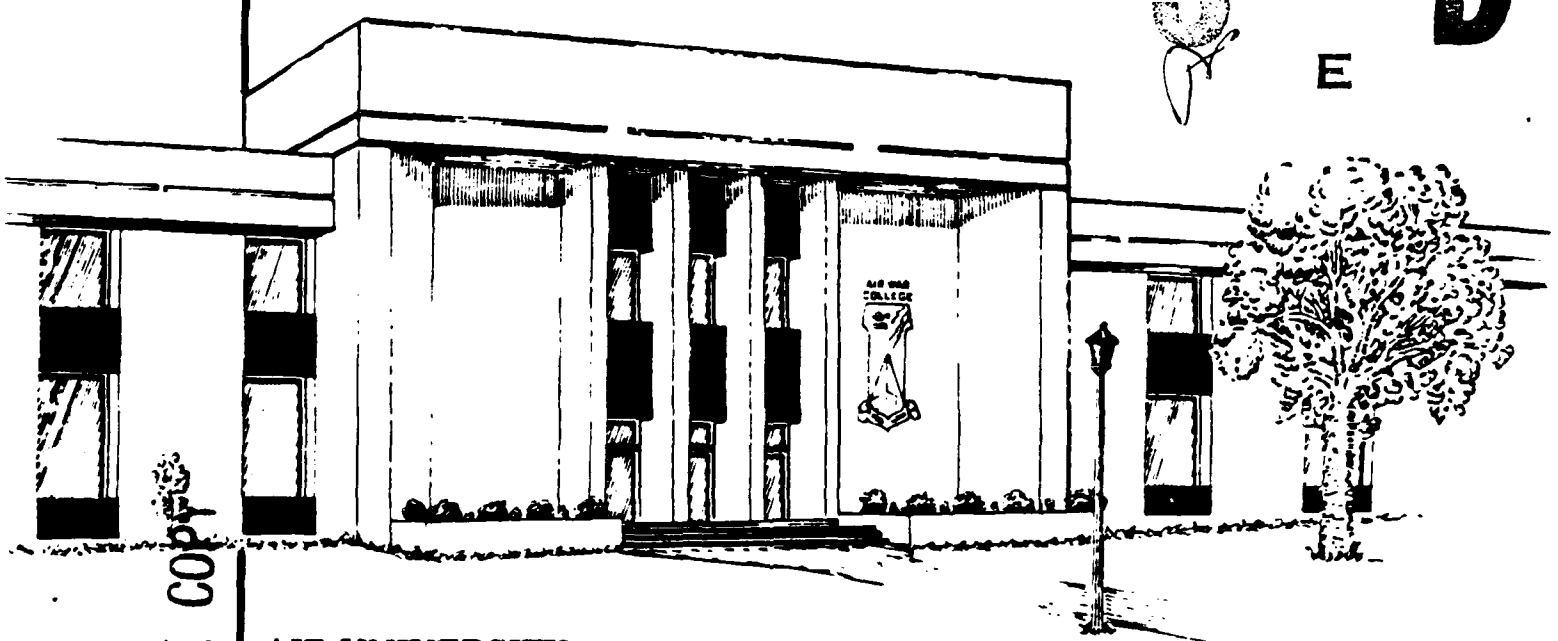

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THE UNITED STATES-PAKISTAN SECURITY RELATIONSHIP

by

KHALID IQBAL
Group Captain, Pakistan AF

A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY

IN

FULFILLMENT OF THE RESEARCH

REQUIREMENT

Research Advisor: Lieutenant Colonel Harry F. Johnson

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

March 1986

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AIR WAR COLLEGE REPORT ABSTRACT

TITLE: The United States-Pakistan Security Relationship

AUTHOR: Khalid Iqbal, Group Captain, Pakistan AF

The security relationship between superpower USA and third world developing country Pakistan has seen many ups and downs in the last four decades. This relatio.ship has not only varied with varying national interests but also with the change of administrations and political parties in the USA. The future of this relationship is dependent upon the harmony of national interests of the two countries and also the turn of events in South West Asia.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Group Captain Khalid Iqbal is a widely travelled officer of the Pakistan Air Force. He received his pilot training in the USA returning to Pakistan to fly fighters in two Indo-Pakistan wars. He has served with the air forces of Iraq, Syria, Egypt and the U.A.E. Apart from USA, Group Captain Khalid received training in France and China. He has been decorated twice by the President of Pakistan with the medals Sitar-e Basalat and Sitara-e-Imtiaz (military). He is a graduate of the PAF staff college.

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THE UNITED STATES - PAKISTAN SECURITY RELATIONSHIP

INTRODUCTION

1. Relations between the world's number one super-power, the USA and the young country Pakistan--born in 1947, fighting for its survival, have seen many ups and downs in the last four decades. Each country has tried to influence the other with its own particular needs. This tactic has varied from one extreme that of completely ignoring the other to that of urgent action as was seen immediately after the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviets in December 1979. The aim of this paper is to outline this security relationship between the two countries through the years 1947 to the present time and attempt briefly to predict its future. In accomplishing this aim, the paper will discuss the various events that took place in Pakistan and its neighbouring countries along with the reaction of the United States of America under the various administrations.

PARTITION OF THE SUBCONTINENT

2. The two soverign countries of Pakistan and India emerged when in 1947 the British, plagued by independence movements and weakened by the second world war, finally granted them independence. The division of the area vacated by the British, however, left scars and a major bone of contention, that of Kashmir, between Pakistan--predominantly muslim, and India with a majority Hindu population. Kashmir with a

majority muslim population was forced to accede to India by its Hindu ruler. Thus Kashmir became the reason for fierce hostilities between the newly formed countries. From the very outset Pakistan found itself deficient of arms and ammunition as almost all of the ordinance factories and depots went over to India. Pakistan, however, had an abundance of fighting manpower and the proper ingredients being a martial race long influenced by the invasions from the north by the Aryans, Greeks, Mongols, Persians and the Turks. To be able to survive, Pakistan therefore badly required to build up her armed strength. After independence, the top leadership both civil and military was western educated, therefore it was but natural that they looked to the Western leader, the USA, for help. In the early years, 1947 to 1954, Pakistan received very little response to the overtures made to the United States. The thinking in the USA about Pakistan is reflected clearly in the words of Lawrence H. Ballistini in his book, the United States and Asia:[1] "What of the immediate future of American relations with Pakistan? Since Pakistan is considerably weaker than India, it is likely that she will court America on her own account. Since Islam plays a vital role in the life of the people of Pakistan, and since it appears to be quite incompatible with communism, it is also very unlikely that the Pakistan government will be attracted by the Communist bloc." The writer further observes "How far, however, and in what areas, can America aid Pakistan without alienating her nervous neighbour India?" The words of the above writer therefore rightly reflected three important areas:

(a) Circumstances viz a viz India would force Pakistan

towards the USA.

(b) There was no internal communist threat to Pakistan and therefore to the region.

(c) If Pakistan was to be given any aid, India was to be considered as an important factor.

On the other hand, the interests of Pakistan were primarily to defend against her larger and hostile neighbour, to generate adequate and effective support at the United Nations on the Kashmir Issue and to counter the long term and historical communist threat from the north through Afghanistan. USA therefore was not willing to consider a worthwhile relationship with Pakistan as she felt that her national interests were not in harmony with those of Pakistan.

THE KOREAN WAR

3. On the 12th of January, 1950, US secretary of state stated that US would not defend Taiwan or South Korea against a communist invasion excluding them from the defense parameter of the United States. It was only the Korean War that brought about a rethinking and reassessment of the aims and objectives of the Communist powers in Asia. According to an Indian author,[2] the US Ambassadors to India, Pakistan, Ceylon and ambassador designate to Afghanistan met with Assistant Secretary of State G. McGhee and Donald P. Kennedy in Ceylon and the following was concluded on the subject of US strategic interests in South Asia on 3 March 1957:

"A. Conclusions

1. The most effective military defense of South Asia would require strong flanks. Turkey, Iran and Pakistan are of primary importance to the West and Indochina on the East.

2. Pakistan could provide important ground forces now, for use in South Asia or on the Western Flank. It would, therefore, be useful to the US and the UK to bring about an early build-up of Pakistan ground forces assisted by the provision of military equipment to Pakistan.

3. Unless its foreign policy changes, India will not give the free world military assistance in war.

4. Ceylon and Pakistan contain a number of bases, which could make an important contribution to the military operations of the free world from the very outset of war.

B. Recommendations

2. The US military authorities should consider on an urgent basis the desirability of the US entering into an early understanding with Pakistan, which would provide for equipping and building up Pakistan's military forcess and insure availability of Pakistan ground forces on the western flank at the outset of war.

3. A similar understanding should be offered India.

4. If a Middle East pact should be developed which includes Iran, Pakistan should be offered membership--such action, however, should not delay the understanding with Pakistan proposed in Number 2 above.

5. Consultations should be undertaken with the UK with respect to recommendations 2, 3, and 4 before entering the consultations with Pakistan or India."

US MILITARY AID TO PAKISTAN

4. History indicates that the level of US-Pakistan relations have been directly proportional to firstly convergence of national interests and secondly the quality and quantity of military aid and later military sales provided to Pakistan by the United States. The economic assistance has always been a corollary to the above. Thus, once there occured a similarity of national interests between the two countries, a US-Pakistan Mutual Defense Agreement was signed on May 19, 1954. Soon after Pakistan also joined the South East Treaty Organization (SEATO). Pakistan's commander in chief of the army, however, managed to avoid granting of full access rights to Washington insisting that facilities and manpower could only be provided if the price was right. The main disagreement that has in the past and even presently plagued the relationship was the definition of "threat." To the US the threat was from the Soviets whereas to Pakistan, although Soviet threat was present, the immediate and most dangerous was from India. On the other hand, US leaders would never accept the existence of the Indian threat to Pakistan, not wanting to annoy the larger prize India, which needed to be wooed away from the USSR. Therefore, according to a researcher referring to the Mutual Defense Agreement of 1954, the US came up with an ambiguous settlement that left the

nature of the threat deliberately vague. This was to complicate the relationship in later years. During the years 1954 to 1965 the United States provided 650 million dollars grant assistance, defense support assistance of 619 million dollars and cash or commercial basis purchases worth 55 million dollars. Pakistan was able to build up a credible deterrence against both India and Afghanistan during this time period. It equipped four infantry divisions, one and a half armoured divisions, and modernized and expanded its Air Force and Navy. The administration of President Eisenhower, who appreciated greatly Pakistan's geostrategic location, however played a major role in Pakistan's military build up. Pakistan joined South East Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO) in September, 1954 and Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) in September 1955. A Bilateral Agreement of Cooperation with USA was signed in March 1959 which declared,[3] "Government of the United States of America regards as vital to its national interests and to world peace, the preservation of the independence and integrity of Pakistan." Pakistan's President Ayub Khan assured the United States that[4] "Pakistan will stand by you, if you stand by Pakistan." The use of the base at Peshawar was leased out to the USA for a period of ten years from 1959 to 1969.

THE KENNEDY ERA

5. The glorious period of US-Pakistan relations which had culminated in the signing of the Bilateral Agreement of Cooperation in 1959 sharply declined with the death of its main architect, John Foster Dulles, in May of the same year. This was followed further by

improving of US-Soviet relations through the "spirit of Camp David" after the Eisenhower-Khruschev meeting at Maryland. Relations between the two countries were soured further by unfavorable congressional reviews of US commitments to Pakistan in 1959. Next came the reduction of the rent for Peshawar base and decreased military assistance program. In late 1959, the US senate cut the foreign aid bill authorization for 1960 by $383 million. Matters took a turn for the worst when President Ayub raised the point that Pakistani commitment to the United States was dependent upon continued aid. After years of rejecting Soviet offers, the Pakistani Foreign minister made the following statement,[5] "Pakistan would welcome aid from any quarter provided it did not affect the ideology, integrity and solidarity of Pakistan." Inspite of all the differences the hierarchy in Pakistan was western educated and their natural tendencies were to maintain close relations with the West. The last hopes of Pakistan improving relations were dashed to the ground with the election of J.F. Kennedy and the Democratic Party. A Pakistani author wrote,[6] "The victory in November 1960 elections of the Democratic Party (which had 'lost' China to the US, according to some analysts and was to 'lose' Iran and Afghanistan in the 1970's) and Kennedy's efforts to win over "non-aligned" India was a watershed in Pakistan-US security relations." The already low in US-Pakistan relations was further adversely affected when the Kennedy administration poured in massive military aid to India during the 1962 Sino-Indian Border Conflict--initiated by India. Fifteen Air Force squadrons and six additional army divisions were raised with American help. This

military build-up completely nullified the military balance with India that Pakistan enjoyed through US military assistance. This step also forced Pakistan to turn to China and mend fences. The 300 miles of Pakistan-China border was demarcated and an air-link established much to the annoyance of the USA (this step was to prove advantageous later not only to Pakistan, but to USA). This change in US policy with a democratic government, which again repeated itself during the Carter Administration probably had roots in having a closer relationship with the so-called largest "democracy" India compared to the military regime in Pakistan.

THE 1965 INDO-PAKISTAN WAR

6. As mentioned earlier the main bone of contention between India and Pakistan was and has been the disputed territory of Kashmir. In 1962, during the Sino-Indian conflict, the Kennedy administration pressurized Pakistan not to force the issue and make a no war pledge to India (but later failed to support a settlement of Kashmir in UN). President Ayub of Pakistan having given up hope of settling the issue on the conference table acted on the ill advise of his foreign minister to "wrest control of more of Kashmir through an admixture of military subversion, and covert assitance." This flared up into a short but fierce war between India and Pakistan. USA and the Soviet alarmed at this destabilization in the area stopped all military and economic aid to Pakistan and India respectively. The Soviets lifted this ban within seven days while hostilities were in progress. On the other hand, the USA enforced the ban until 1967 when it was partially

lifted only for the sale of some spare parts. This US embargo on arms to Pakistan forced Pakistan to turn to China which agreed to equip three newly raised Pakistani divisions and provide tanks and Mig-19 aircraft and some fast patrol boats. Pakistan also purchased Mirage aircraft and submarines from France. In 1968, the Soviet Union offered $30 million worth of guns, M18 helicopters and vehicles. The Soviet offer of setting up a steel mill was accepted after the US and West Germany rejected a feasability report for the above project. The US-Pakistan relations continued to remain cool as President Johnson did not want to meddle into the "perpetual hassles" of the subcontinent at a time when US involvement in Vietnam was escalating.

THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION

7. The election of Nixon to the US Presidency came as a relief to the people and leaders of Pakistan bringing in a sense of euphoria. Nixon had always been a close friend of Pakistan and his visit to Pakistan in August 1969 was to counter Soviet in roads into the region. A "one time" exception was made to sell 300 armoured personnel carriers which after many imposition and removal of embargoes were eventually delivered in 1975. The A-7 aircraft was offered, but under Indian pressure, promptly withdrawn and instead the inferior F-5 substituted but not accepted by Pakistan. The US through Nixon, however, used Pakistan's influence with her neighbour China to initiate the "China Card." Meanwhile according to a US author,[7] "the Soviets in connivance with India through the Military Alliance signed in August 1971 became instrumental in breaking up Pakistan." Therefore, on one

hand, the USA had in 1962 pressurized Pakistan not to attack India and also had refrained from providing security assurance to her, on the other hand the Soviet's not only aligned totally with the supposedly "non alligned leader" India but also neutralized China by massing her armies on the Chinese border. Therefore, the Soviet's succeeded in spreading her influence in South West Asia and teaching a lesson to the only "unfriendly" country, Pakistan in that region by severing her Eastern part. The timing and planning was magnificant as the USA was deeply involved in Vietnam. In return for playing her role in the US-China reapproachment and earlier close relationship with the USA, Nixon ensured that the integrity of the remaining part of Pakistan was not violated by deploying Task Force 74 into the bay of Bengal pressuring the Soviets and India. A greater role may have been played by the USA had not the US public opinion been adversely affected by the "tilt" towards Pakistan by Nixon. Furthermore the new Pakistani President Bhutto had been elected on socialist slogans and not fully trusted by the Americans. Bhutto visited the USA in 1973 and again in 1975 in search for arms. Meanwhile the Watergate scandal had surfaced and it was only in 1975 that Republican President Ford lifted the arms embargo on sales to Pakistan.

CARTER AND HUMAN RIGHTS

8. Henry Kissinger is on record as having said "to be an enemy of the US can be dangerous but to be a friend is downright hazardous." After 1965 Pakistan had suffered continued embargoes, partial embargoes, "one time exceptions" and again embargoes. During this time India had

implemented three five-yearly defense development plans and by 1977 emerged with the fourth largest Army, fifth largest Air Force and the eighth largest Navy on earth. On the Western border of Pakistan, Afghanistan armed forces had been modernized a large number of officers trained in the Soviet Union and modern equipment provided for the Army and Air Force. The democratic US President Carter meanwhile zeroed his signts on Pakistan for Human Rights violations (because of martial law) and charges of pursuing a nuclear option which in July 1979, resulted in cutting off all military and economic aid. During the years of 1975 to 1979 Pakistan purhcased only 37 million dollars worth of arms from USA (two aging destroyers, self-propelled horvitzers, torpedoes and munition). It was no surprise, therefore when the Russians invaded Afghanistan in 1979 as US interest in South West Asia had reduced to the same extent it had waned in South Korea and Taiwan in 1950 with a similar initiative by the Soviets there. President Carter responsed immediately with a verbal reaction "any attack by an outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America." President Carter's offer of 400 million dollars was described by President Zia as "peanuts." The Pakistani president observed that it was[8] "not the quantity of aid but the quality of US commitment that was important." Further some analysts commented that "the US has foreign relations but no foreign policy." Pakistan did not want a relationship that was neither militarily formidable nor politically reassuring.

THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION

9. The bold and decisive attitude of President Reagan has once again brought in a new era of US-Pakistan relations which in his own words states, "somewhere, somehow, US foreign policy will have to find a way of rewarding friends and penalizing opponents." After fifteen years and the Indian and Russian invasions of East Pakistan and Afghanistan has it dawned on USA and Pakistan that their vital national interests coincide. A shift in US arms policy is evident in the shape of F-16 aircraft and other modern arms and ammunition. Military contacts and training between the two countries have revived. Pakistan has become "an essential anchor of the entire south west region." The US has reconfirmed the 1959 mutual defense agreement thereby making the Pakistani policy makers perceive, "We do believe in the determination of the new US administration to strongly support the independence of Pakistan."

THE FUTURE OF US-PAKISTAN RELATIONS

10. Before attempting a look into the future of US-Pakistan relations a brief description of the present threat to Pakistan is necessary. India between 1974 to 1984 has increased her defense budget by 200 percent to 6.8 billion dollars in 1984. Her Army, the fourth largest in the world, has 3000 tanks including T-72 and T-80, her fifth largest air force has the latest French, British and Soviet aircraft including Mirage 2000, Jaguar, Mig-25 with Mig-27 and Mig-31 in the pipeline. She has the eighth largest navy with modern Soviet sub surface and surface vessels. Her indigenous armament industry is the largest in the Third World. In the last ten years, she has concluded.

modernization deals with USSR, UK, West Germany and France to the tune of 15 billion dollars. Whatever her intentions, her miliary might including her nuclear capability is enormous--specifically in the light of the absence of any appreciable threat. Does she have expansionist designs? Only the future will reveal her intentions. Afghanistan has been armed to the teeth by the Soviets and her presence there has become one of the pillars of Soviet Union's Asian collective security system--the other one being India because of the military alliance of 1971. The Soviets have eight mechanized divisions and two air assault divisions plus four independent helicopter borne air assault brigades in Afghanistan. The Afghans have nine Infantry Divisions, two mechanized divisions, two armoured divisions and five commando brigades in various stages of reequipping and training. The Soviets have another six air assault divisions available in USSR when required. These (VDV) air assault divisions have the capability to be deployed 3000 KM into enemy territory within 24 hours and are self sustaining. Additional Soviet forces are available in Soviet central Asian Republics bordering Afghanistan.

11. What of the Pakistani military might sandwiched between these two countries both of which have a similar military treaty with the USSR? The 1.5 billion dollars of the six-year package has provided 100 M-48 tanks, 64 self-propelled guns (155MM), 40 self-propelled 8" horwitzers, 75 towed 155MM horwitzers and 1005 tow anti-tank missiles. Also 20 cobra attack helicopters and 40 F-16 aircraft. Pakistan armed forces still have 200 obsolete aircraft and 300 obsolescent tanks no match for the Soviet Mig-23, Mig-25, SU-25 and T-72 tanks in

Afghanistan. Pakistan can field only four understrength and ill-equipped divisions on the 2500 KM border with Afghanistan. As for infra structure Pakistan has very few airfields, lateral roads, ports and depots on the west. She needs to raise at least an additional 8 to 10 divisions to give her the capaiblity of successfully carrying out a holding action against a Soviet onslaught before the US could deploy the RDF--if the American public opinion is favourable. What then of the future of US-Pakistan relations? The optimistic view or the good news is that since US-Pakistan vital national intersts are in harmony, that is, defense of vital oil resources and shipping lanes of the Persian Gulf to the free world for the US and national integrity and independence for Pakistan there is likely to be close cooperation and coordination between USA and Pakistan. Secondly, Saudi Arabia which has a special relationship with both USA and Pakistan will be a cementing factor because of her own security concerns. She would probably utilize her wealth, Pakistan's manpower and US technology in helping build up a credible defense against the common enemy communism. What of the Soviets? They are likely to eventually stabilize to a certain extent the situation in Afghanistan. If she succeeds in overcoming the will of the Afghans, she would start intensifying subversion in Baluchistan and NWFP (North Western Frontier Province), specially the bordering areas of Afghanistan. She is likely to get support from the opposition political parties and some opposition leaders who may subjugate for reasons of self interest and instead of national interest. In any case the Soviets would plan with patience and remain ready to initiate action whenever the

opportunity presents itself politically or geostrategically whether in USA or in the region. And what of the USA? It would depend entirely upon which party, Republican or Democratic, and upon the quality of the Presidental encumbent and his popularity and need for support. The media and therefore public opinion has historically not been always favourable to Pakistan. Pakistan does not have a strong lobby nor can she expect to in the future; therefore there is always a possibility of US commitment reducing or terminating in South Asian affairs. Further the Soviets have the capability, because of larger conventional forces, alone or with India's assistance to open multi-trouble spots or conflicts to divert US attention towards areas of greater interest like Europe or Central America. In the final analysis, the US must have a strong ally in South Asia, one with large standing forces armed with modern conventional weapons. Even if Pakistan becomes as strong as India (which she cannot possibly) there is no contingency where Pakistan could attack India. The two factors restraining her would be first a threat on two fronts and secondly India's military alliance of 1971 with USSR.

CONCLUSION

12. The ups and downs of US-Pakistan security relations have largely depended upon the quantity and quality of military assistance and sales provided by USA to Pakistan. The economic aid to Pakistan has always been a corollary to the above. The relations have bloomed or cooled down depending upon the similarity or divergence of national interests of USA and Pakistan. The US policy towards Pakistan has

been dependent upon the administration and personalities in power and has largely been favoured by the Republicans. The policy has also been reactionary to the unfolding of events in the South Asian region. Because of the similarity or convergence of national interests of both countries the security relations between the two countries are likely to remain good in the short term future.

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