

Closing of U.S. Intelligence Monitoring Stations

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United States intelligence outposts in northern Pakistan, near the borders with the Soviet Union and Communist China, have been closed by Pakistan in reprisal for the suspension of military aid.

The reopening of the electronic outposts, which monitor military activities in the Soviet Union and China, has become part of the question of resumption of military and economic aid to Pakistan.

The issue was touched on briefly today in a meeting between Secretary of State Dean Rusk and Pakistan's Finance Minister, Mohammed Shoaib, who is discussing with officials

of the Administration and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the prospects of new economic aid to Pakistan.

Mr. Shoaib informed reporters that he had no information about the curtailment of activities at the monitoring outposts, but he said that the subject had been mentioned by Mr. Rusk.

The outposts were part of a network maintained by the United States to monitor atomic tests, rocket firings and military activities in the Soviet Union and Communist China.

According to American sources, Pakistan withdrew permission for operation of most of the stations after the United States suspended military aid following the outbreak of the Indian-

Pakistani war over Kashmir last fall.

In taking this action, Pakistan presumably believed that she was exerting pressure on the United States to resume the military aid. In the past one of the principal, if unstated, justifications for large military aid to Pakistan was that it permitted the United States to have intelligence outposts in a country close to the Soviet atomic testing range in central Asia, as well as to China.

Some representatives of the armed forces and the Central Intelligence Agency were reported to be urging a quick resumption of military aid to permit reopening of the stations. But there is a division within the Administration over

whether, on technological and political grounds, the outposts are worth the price of the aid.

The prevailing view at the Defense Department level — with which the State Department agrees — is that the outposts have lost much of their value because of technological developments. For example, the U-2 reconnaissance planes, which once flew from Pakistani airfields, have been replaced by reconnaissance satellites capable of taking detailed pictures of the Communist territory.

The elimination of the Pakistani stations admittedly would cause a gap in the monitoring network. But it is felt that this gap could be closed by more sensitive instruments stationed

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in other countries such as Turkey and Iran, and that some functions of the Pakistani stations could be taken over by the Ferret satellites, which are capable of monitoring Communist radio traffic.

The Defense Department, therefore, is not pressing for the reopening of the stations, and, in fact, it has ordered some of them closed permanently.

In the opinion of both Defense and State Department officials, a more important question is whether renewed military aid is needed to maintain Pakistan's pro-Western orientation. On this question, there is no agreement within the Administration.

Defense officials are inclined to emphasize the danger that

Pakistan may turn to Communist sources, such as China, for arms, and to stress the political usefulness of military aid in asserting some influence in Pakistan. But they say that Pakistan is making a military rapprochement more difficult by parading jet planes and tanks supplied by Communist China, as she did last month.

State Department officials, on the other hand, are reluctant to be drawn into another arms race between Pakistan and India. The State Department has been strengthened in this position by the Indian view, communicated during the visit of Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi, that India did not desire military aid if the price were renewed military aid to Pakistan.