

U.S. Closing 3 A-Stations In Pakistan

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RAWALPINDI, Oct. 14—The United States has quietly decided to close down three nuclear-test detection centers which the Pakistan government has kept padlocked against American entry and operation, for more than year.

Two of the centers are in the West Pakistan provincial capital of Lahore. The other is in Karachi. They had been used to take seismographic readings and measure the fallout of Soviet atomic tests.

Not affected by the close-down orders is the main U.S. intelligence-monitoring center in Pakistan at Peshawar, near the Afghanistan border. This installation remains intact and in full operation.

The decision reportedly was reached after unannounced conversations last month between Pakistan President Mohammad Ayub Khan and the new American Ambassador to Pakistan, Eugene Locke.

The United States began putting up these installations in Pakistan in 1958 at a time when Pakistani-American relations were warmer and Pakistani-Soviet relations consid-

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erably cooler. Pakistan's relations with both were affected by the outbreak of the India-Pakistan war last fall and the abrupt cut-off of American aid, both military and economic. Then, right after the ceasefire with India, Pakistan suddenly padlocked the Lahore and Karachi installations leaving their American operators on the outside. Since then it has been an uneasy situation for both sides.

Base to Be Closed

The U.S. Army's installation in Lahore was to be phased out anyway, and had only a few soldiers standing outside the locked gates ready to enter and dismantle and ship out the equipment once the Pakistanis let them in. However, the Air Force installation at Lahore, with a crew of 15 to 20 men, had not planned on throwing in the towel.

Both properties should be vacated by the end of this month.

Similarly, the U.S. Air Force installation in Karachi is expected to be out of business very soon.

Although the much larger installation at Peshawar presumably would cause Pakistan the most concern in its efforts not to antagonize an increasingly friendly Soviet Union, the Pakistan government so far has taken no notice of the mounting Soviet pressure to close it down.

Didn't Press Case

The United States obviously wanted to get back into its centers in Lahore and Karachi. But since Pakistan had been silent about the main base at Peshawar, the United States didn't want to press its case too hard on the lesser bases.

Moreover, the agreement on the installations was verbal, not written.

President Ayub's government undoubtedly was aware that if American relations soured too much and Pakistan found itself being forced to

padlock the big Peshawar base as well, Pakistan would have played its last trump in trying to get its American aid program back at the old level and obtain U.S. spare parts for its American jet planes.

President Ayub publicly ordered all his cabinet ministers a month ago to confine their speeches to their own areas, thus reducing the possibility of anti-American attacks. Pakistan's anxiety over American aid possibly prompted this order.