

JCS Views on Wrkg Gp Paper re 360/10  
3/25/49

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STATE-ARMY-NAVY-AIR FORCE COORDINATING COMMITTEE  
Washington, D.C.

25 March 1949

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Ray L. Thurston - 2 copies  
 Mr. John W. Auchincloss  
 Lt. Col. Charles M. Iseley  
 Comdr. R. E. Stanley  
 Lt. Col. Raymond N. Lipscomb

Enclosed herewith for consideration of the Working Group are the views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on the Working Group paper in response to SANACO 360/10.

Information regarding an early meeting of the Working Group to discuss the JCS views will be communicated by telephone.

*Thurston*

MAX V. BROKAW,  
Secretary

1 Enclosure  
 Memo fr. JCS  
 24 Mar 49.

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**TOP SECRET**STATE-ARMY-NAVY-AIR FORCE COORDINATING COMMITTEE  
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E N C L O S U R E

MEMORANDUM FROM THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

24 March 1949

Subject: Appraisal of United States National Interests  
in South Asia.

As requested in your memorandum dated 8 February 1949, the Joint Chiefs of Staff have reviewed the report forwarded therewith entitled "Appraisal of United States National Interests in South Asia" (Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Burma, Nepal, and Ceylon), and submit the following comments from the military point of view:

With reference to those conclusions in the basic paper having military implications (briefed below for convenience), the Joint Chiefs of Staff are in general agreement that the following would be in our national interests:

a. Orientation of South Asia toward the United States and other Western democracies and away from the USSR;

b. An endeavor by the United States to meet the legitimate requirements for spare parts and replacements for military equipment of United States origin already possessed by South Asian countries to assist those countries in the maintenance of internal security and freedom from Communist domination; and

c. United States collaboration and consultation with the British to determine the military requirements for internal security, the extent to which the British can meet such requirements, and the implications to British strategic interests in South Asia if United States military assistance were provided to the countries of that area.

In agreeing that the furnishing of military equipment for maintenance and replacement of items of United States origin now in the hands of the South Asian countries would be in the United States interest, the Joint Chiefs of Staff would point out that such equipment, if provided, should preferably be made available

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on a reimbursable basis and, further, that such aid must be considered in connection with over-all requirements for United States military assistance.

Current United States policy with respect to Western Union and the proposed North Atlantic Pact can be expected to result in heavy demands on the United States for military strengthening of the Western European countries. These, together with current commitments designed to counter active Soviet encroachment in other areas, will have high priority and will probably tax United States capabilities to the utmost. Any provision of military aid to countries of South Asia would, therefore, of necessity be extremely limited. Policies and priorities for the implementation of foreign military assistance programs are in process of formulation by the Foreign Assistance Correlation Committee (FACC) which, when approved, will govern.

Paragraph 5 of Appendix "A" of the basic study states, "Our basic strategic objectives with respect to South Asia have, however, not been clearly defined, and we have yet to make basic policy decisions on the desirability and practicability of military cooperation with the countries of the area."

The Joint Chiefs of Staff, therefore, submit the following brief summary of strategic considerations and a statement of basic military strategic objectives applicable to the countries of South Asia:

From the military point of view, the countries of South Asia excepting Pakistan have, under present and prospective conditions, little value to the United States. Their remoteness from the United States, their difficult terrain, and the lack of communications and other essential facilities required by modern combat forces would pose a difficult logistical problem if military operations of consequence by either Western or indigenous forces were to be supported in the South Asia area, particularly in the light of probable heavy commitments elsewhere. The South Asian countries contiguous to the USSR, however, do offer the possibility of ideological and intelligence penetration of the USSR because the peoples of Soviet Central Asia have national and personal affinities with the peoples of the South Asian countries and those of the Near and Middle East rather than with those of the USSR.

The Karachi-Lahore area in Pakistan may, under certain conditions, become of strategic importance. In spite of tremendous logistic difficulties, this area might be required

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as a base for air operations against central USSR and as a staging area for forces engaged in the defense or recapture of Middle East oil areas.

While the countries of South Asia, excepting Pakistan, are of negligible positive strategic importance to us, encroachments by the USSR would endanger our national policy of Communist containment. Furthermore, domination of the area by the USSR would deny to us and make available to the USSR certain sources of raw materials and would threaten sea routes which are now relatively safe. On the other hand, the inaccessibility of the area from the north and the fact that more remunerative objectives exist in Europe, the Middle East, and the Far East, make it unlikely that, in the event of war, the USSR would expend any substantial military effort in South Asia, particularly if these countries had the means to maintain their internal security and stability.

In the light of the above considerations, our basic strategic objectives relative to South Asian countries are as follows:

- a. Prevent Soviet encroachment or domination;
- b. Prevent the USSR from obtaining military support or assistance from these nations either directly or through the use of their facilities;
- c. Develop, without commitment to military action on our part, a cooperative attitude in these countries which would facilitate obtaining the use of areas or facilities which might be required by the Western democracies for possible covert operations in time of peace and for military operations against the USSR in the event of war; and
- d. With reference to Pakistan, endeavor to make commercial arrangements which would, in emergency, facilitate development for operational use of base facilities in the Karachi-Lahore area.