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PA/HO, Department of State ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

E.O. 12958, as amended

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

June 9, 2005

4 JUN 1970

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

In reply refer to:
I-22720/70

470-7
470-7

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Discussion with Ambassador Kenneth B. Keating

Participants:

Department of Defense

Secretary of Defense - Melvin R. Laird
Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA) - G. Warren Nutter
Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA) - Robert J. Pranger
ISA Assistant for South Asia - Colonel Seymour Kravitz

Department of State

U.S. Ambassador to India - Kenneth B. Keating
Country Director for India - David T. Schneider

Time: 1530 - 1600 hours, 27 May 1970

Location: Office of the Secretary of Defense

1. Military Supply Policy

After greetings were completed, Ambassador Keating said that his views on the U.S. military supply policy for South Asia were expressed in a cable he had sent in earlier and that those views have not changed. He added that it would be hard to describe adequately the intensity of feeling and the obsession of the Indians with the Paks and vice versa. Mr. Keating stressed the unfavorable publicity given in India to the possibility of a transfer of U.S. tanks from Turkey to Pakistan and added that even those newspapers normally friendly to the U.S. editorialized against the transfer. The Ambassador expressed concern at the fact that in countries like India and Pakistan, which receive military and economic aid from Russia and Communist China, the younger officers train on and are conversant only with communist equipment. He felt that giving a little U.S. aid would make no sense but if the U.S. decided to give large amounts of equipment to Pakistan and to provide much military aid to India it might be useful. He caveated this by saying it was not feasible in the present Congressional climate. It is the Ambassador's opinion that even if the U.S. Government should adopt a compromise position which entails

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making some military supply gesture to the Paks accompanied by a promise to consider their additional needs in the future, the effects in India would be devastating and the results would strain Indo-US relations to the utmost. Mr. Keating recommended that the present status, keeping the policy under review, is a correct stance for the President of the U.S. He said the Administration would be castigated in the Indian and U.S. newspapers if we do something for Pakistan and that he does not believe that this is a good time to have to fight this issue.

2. Tanks for Pakistan

Mr. Laird said that President Johnson had made a commitment to provide some tanks to Pakistan and that he can see no change in this. The Secretary asked Mr. Keating how he would handle the tank matter in view of the U.S. commitment. Ambassador Keating opined that the new Administration ought to be able to change the commitment. He considers that the tenuous political situation in Pakistan should facilitate changing the commitment since there is a good possibility that after the elections the government will be leftist with a communist as Secretary of Defense. If this should occur the new Pak government will permit speeches in its parliament which will pillory and attack the U.S. much worse than we are treated in the Indian parliament now. Ambassador Keating reflected on his own pique at the method used by the Indians to close our cultural centers but added that we should not take any action merely to get even with the Indians. He summed up by saying that anything the U.S. did in this regard for the Paks would have devastating results in India.

3. India and North Vietnam

Mr. Laird questioned Mr. Keating about India helping the U.S. on the POW issue. The Ambassador replied that Mrs. Gandhi had met with the POW wives in New Delhi and her government has made representations three times in Hanoi on this issue. It is his opinion that the Indians believe North Vietnam will be victorious and will become the major power in Southeast Asia. For this reason, their Foreign Minister is pushing to raise Indian representation in Hanoi to embassy status. Mr. Laird asked why India had been unwilling to attend the recent Indonesian Conference. The Ambassador said that they believed that since only non-communist nations will attend, the Indians could not go and keep their non-aligned status. They would go to such a conference only if both sides were represented. The Ambassador then said that convincing the Government of India to hold off raising the status of their representation in Hanoi had been a minor success for the U.S. He believes that unless the U.S. does something to change their conviction in ultimate North Vietnamese victory eventually they will open an embassy in Hanoi.

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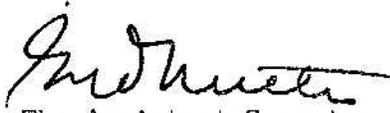
4. Reaction to Cambodia

Mr. Laird asked if the Indians had given the U.S. a hard time over Cambodia. The Ambassador replied in the affirmative but said that it was not as bad as had been expected. Mrs. Gandhi and the Foreign Minister had publicly regretted the U.S. incursion into Cambodia and called for withdrawal of all foreign forces. When asked if this meant the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese also, Mrs. Gandhi and Mr. Kaul refused to answer. While no one in the Indian Parliament defended the U.S. move the Indian Government refused to condemn it and left it at "regret" only.

5. Conclusion

The discussion ended with the Ambassador offering his assistance in any way he could be helpful.

Memorandum of Conversation
Prepared by:
Colonel Seymour Kravitz
OASD(ISA)NESA Region

Approved by:  The Assistant Secretary
of Defense (ISA)

Date: 1 June 1970

Approved by: Sec Def's Office
Date: 5 June 1970

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