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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

INFORMATION

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November 20, 1970

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger *AK*
SUBJECT: Pakistan Relief--Situation as of 10:30 a.m. November 20

Latest Actions

Since my situation report to you yesterday afternoon, there have been the following developments:

- The Pakistani Government has accepted the U.S. offer of 50 16-foot motor launches each with a carrying capacity of two tons. These will be sent from a California depot today with a transit time of two days.
- Two more chartered planes (Pan Am and Seaboard World Airways) left JFK Airport in the past 12 hours carrying packaged food.
- The Pakistani Government informed our mission in Islamabad this morning that with 17 plus foreign helicopters in East Pakistan by early next week there is no present requirement for more helicopters. The Government was told that four more U.S. ^[from] helicopters have been prepared for momentary departure for the U.S. and will remain on standby. Six U.S. helicopters will be operational in East Pakistan today.

The British, at President Yahya's request, are moving three naval ships from Singapore which will provide 7 helicopters, some small boats and a water distillation plant.

Remaining Requirements

It is Ambassador Farland's assessment from Dacca that the urgent need is transport to move supplies now in Dacca out into the disaster areas. Hence the concentration on the helicopters and cargo boats.

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The principal issue is whether to remain in our present posture of telling the Pakistanis what we can do to help meet each of their needs (e. g. the offers of helicopters and boats) and responding fully to each Pakistani request, as has been done so far. This is a combination of quietly injecting our assessments of need by making specific offers yet of deferring to the Pakistani Government's definition of requirements, taking into account other contributions it is receiving.

The argument for asserting a firmer U. S. influence is that the Pakistanis so far have not projected an image of effectively managing this situation. This may improve as the helicopters and other transport become increasingly active over the next 3-4 days. On the other hand, a certain amount of inefficiency is likely to continue in the face of such massive need.

The argument for maintaining our present posture is that the east-west issue within Pakistan is an extremely delicate one for President Yahya, especially in this election period. While we want to provide whatever help he needs, he is the ultimate judge of how to manage this issue politically. A highly visible appearance that the U. S. was injecting its independent management would carry the implication that President Yahya's government in West Pakistan could not or would not effectively manage this situation in East Pakistan.

Press Treatment

The State Department spokesman and head of the AID Disaster Relief office briefed the press extensively yesterday on what the U. S. has done. A telegram was sent to Ambassador Farland in Dacca last night instructing him to try to inject into the reporting from East Pakistan increased coverage of the U. S. contribution. The beginning of U. S. helicopter operations today and the arrival of two more supply flights will provide occasion for some coverage, although gruesome pictures from the disaster area will probably continue to dominate.

Press treatment will continue to be affected by the fact that the East Pakistani press and politicians are exploiting the natural antagonism in East Pakistan for the central government in West Pakistan. The planned election, as you know, is two weeks off.

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PA/HO, Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
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Talking points will be provided separately this morning to Messrs. Klein, Zeigler and Timmons for their respective briefing needs.

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