

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/EYES ONLY~~

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: Dr. Henry A. Kissinger
Ambassador Lakshmi Kant Jha

DATE AND TIME: March 10, 1972 - 4:00 p.m.

PLACE: Dr. Kissinger's Office
The White House

The meeting took place at Ambassador Jha's request.

The Ambassador opened the meeting by saying that he had been fascinated by the communique from Shanghai, which he considered a very subtle document. He had two questions: (1) Why was the phrase "hegemony in the Asia-Pacific region" confined to that area? Did this mean that we were approving hegemonial ambitions in other areas of the world? (2) Why was there a need to include anything about India-Pakistan at all, and why did we not exercise the apparent right we had to discuss and seek some accommodation in each other's texts?

I said that obviously he had been briefed by the Secretary of State. What answers had he received from the State Department? Jha replied that he had received very unsatisfactory answers with respect to the phrase "Asia-Pacific area." He had been told that the Secretary did not know why that phrase was chosen; it could be something that Prime Minister Chou slipped past Henry Kissinger. With respect to the discussion of India-Pakistan in the communique, he had been told that the Secretary did not know why that had been included.

I told Jha that I could answer both questions. The phrase "Asia-Pacific region" was chosen in order to avoid an implication that the Chinese and the United States were making pronouncements about Europe. As far as we were concerned, we were opposed to the hegemony of any country over the subcontinent, and our cooperation with the Chinese did not extend to that point. With respect to including India-Pakistan in the communique,

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PA/HO, Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
June 9, 2005

TS-HA-HH 1502

I was frank to say that we saw no overwhelming necessity to include it; on the other hand, each side had the right to introduce any topic it wished, and neither side could veto the other side's introduction of a topic or even its formulation. Therefore, when the Chinese side insisted on saying something about the India-Pakistan problem, we were forced to express our own view. I hoped that it had been noticed in India that the U.S. formulation was much milder than the Chinese formulation. Jha said that this had been very favorably noted.

We then turned to U.S. -Indian relations. Jha wanted to know where I thought we stood. I said that the Administration that had managed an opening to its old enemy in Peking should be able to find a basis for dialogue with its old friend in New Delhi. So in principle we were prepared to have serious talks. The question was how to conduct them. Jha replied that Delhi was agreed that they should be conducted between him and me on a very confidential basis. He asked me what bothered us most. I said that what bothered us was primarily the issue of the degree of Soviet influence in India. We recognized that India did not willingly want to become anybody's satellite. At the same time, with its extraordinary dependence on Soviet arms aid, there was the danger that India could slide against its wish into a position where it had no real policy options left. Jha said this was fully understood, and when Mrs. Gandhi spoke about no country having the right to dictate Indian policy, she never singled out the United States -- for very obvious reasons. With respect to the arms, India wanted to be in the position to produce its own arms, and therefore looked on foreign arms only as an interim stop-gap measure.

I asked Jha to tell me what India's concerns were with respect to the United States. He said their primary concern was that we might re-arm Pakistan, and secondarily that we might inject ourselves into the Pakistan-Indian negotiations. I noted that it was very odd for India which was receiving massive infusions of Soviet arms to protest about arms to Pakistan, but I added that we were not actively considering arms supplies to Pakistan at the moment. Jha replied that since India was superior to Pakistan now anyway and had established its superiority, it did not really make any sense to build up Pakistan since it would never reach equality anyway. Moreover, India had other security problems. Finally, India wanted to return to the task of economic development.

I asked him in what way we could give effect to their concern about the Pakistan problem. He said by keeping it out of the U.N. or at any rate

not encouraging it, and also by a policy of frankness towards the Indian Government; that was to say, if we did sell arms to Pakistan we were better off telling India ahead of time. I said that if India curtailed its arms purchases in the Soviet Union or eliminated them altogether, we would have no difficulty or much less difficulty on the problem of arms to Pakistan. Jha said he would transmit this to his government. He was frankly not informed about the magnitude of arms deliveries to India from the Soviet Union.

We decided that we would meet every two weeks with a particular topic to be picked for each meeting. We agreed that there would be a meeting in the week of March 26 and the topic would be subcontinent relations.

I told Jha that I thought in the long term our interests in Bangladesh were more parallel to those of India than to those of any other country. We strenuously opposed the manner in which Bangladesh came into being, but we had no interest in seeing Bangladesh used to upset the situation in West Bengal or to raise the nationality issue all over India. Jha asked me what we meant in the communique in Shanghai when we spoke for self-determination of the peoples of the subcontinent. Was this an indirect way of raising the Kashmir issue? I said no, it was our way primarily to face the fact that Bangladesh had not yet been recognized but we were not opposed to self-determination in principle. However, I noted to Jha that his question indicated the Pandora's Box that India may have opened. However, we would not take advantage of India's difficulties since a stable subcontinent was a major American interest.