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November 9, 1972

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS:

Sultan Khan, Ambassador of Pakistan
Richard T. Kennedy, NSC Staff
Harold H. Saunders, NSC Staff

DATE AND PLACE:

4:30 p.m. Thursday, November 9, 1972
in Dr. Kissinger's Office

After initial pleasantries, Mr. Kennedy indicated that we had received confirmation from our Charge in Islamabad of Pakistan's recognition of North Korea and North Vietnam. We had also heard that consideration is being given to the recognition of the Sihanouk "government."

Mr. Kennedy noted that these steps were cause for some concern to the US at this juncture. He said that Dr. Kissinger wanted to be sure the Ambassador understands our problems. We understand Pakistan's problems and fully respect Pakistan's right to make decisions in its own interests. As these decisions are made, however, we would hope that we might see things together and work things out together.

In particular, Mr. Kennedy continued, these steps by the Government of Pakistan come for us at a difficult time--a time when the negotiations in Southeast Asia are at a sensitive stage and a time when we are bending all our energies to ending a conflict that has gone on too long. In short, these steps come at a particularly difficult time for the US.

Mr. Kennedy went on, noting that, as the Ambassador is aware, the Administration has been working very hard to be as helpful as possible to Pakistan--in economic assistance and in the arms matters which Dr. Kissinger had discussed with him. On this latter issue we are trying to work out ways of being helpful. We are concerned that steps of the kind taken in the last two days will make it that much more difficult to do the things we want to do. It is clearly difficult in the very complex matter of arms supply to get even the acquiescence if not the support of the Congress for the things the President wants to do.

In summary, Mr. Kennedy concluded, we would hope that the government of Pakistan could take these thoughts into consideration should there be any further deliberations on these subjects--for instance, the possible recognition of the Sihanouk government. We realize that the recognition of North Vietnam and North Korea are settled issues. If other actions such as the recognition of the Sihanouk government have not been taken, we hope that our concerns may be taken into account.

XGDS - 3

DECLAS - Date Impossible to Determine.

BYAUTH - Major General Alexander M. Haig, Jr.

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Ambassador Khan said that he would transmit these thoughts to Islamabad. He expressed hope, however, that there was no misunderstanding in the White House about the recognitions. These actions were to have been taken last spring, but President Bhutto delayed a decision during the American election campaign so as not to embarrass the President. It was simply not possible to delay further beyond the election.

Mr. Kennedy indicated that we realized that this was background to the current decision.

Ambassador Khan said that he was not aware of any further communication from the US Government on the need to delay beyond the election. He asked that Mr. Kennedy convey this general background and this particular point to Dr. Kissinger and the President.

The Ambassador further explained the difficulty Pakistan faces. India already has embassies in these places. Pakistan has relations with the other countries of Asia which flow from their relationship with China, and it has been difficult to delay these recognitions as long as Pakistan has.

The Ambassador promised to convey our views on the question of Pakistan's recognition of the Sihanouk government.

The Ambassador said he hoped that the US views on these steps would not be related to Pakistan's very real requirements for military supply.

Mr. Kennedy interjected that he had not been suggesting that the Administration was making a direct linkage between the two steps. He wanted to make very clear that he had been saying that reaction in the US would make it more difficult to take the steps that the President would like to take. This is a difficult problem in the Congress.

Ambassador Khan said that the difficulty of the problem depends on which way the Congress chooses to look. India has relationships with both of these countries. He admitted that he could see a "political twist" to the problem to Pakistan's disadvantage if someone wished to make it. He felt that this event alone would not govern Congressional action but he recognized that it might provide an excuse. He felt that with or without these steps, the Congress was generally opposed to military assistance for Pakistan.

~~SECRET (XGDS)~~

- 3 -

Mr. Kennedy reiterated that steps like this might make it more difficult for the President to cope with those Congressional problems.

The Ambassador said he simply hoped that it would not be an insurmountable problem. Turning to humor, he noted that there had been an article in the Washington Post this morning by Lewis Simmonds noting that Pakistanis had been "praying for President Nixon's election victory." He noted that, since the Democrats still control the Congress, Pakistan's "goose would be cooked in any case."

Mr. Kennedy indicated that the President and Dr. Kissinger are aware of and appreciate Pakistani support for the President.

The Ambassador, repeating, asked that Mr. Kennedy please convey to the President and Dr. Kissinger that this is an old decision, that it has been held for some months until November. He pointed out that President Bhutto faces a strong leftist lobby that has pressed for the evolution of Pakistan's relationships with these countries.

The Ambassador also surmised that perhaps the acceleration of US negotiations with North Vietnam has had its effect in Islamabad. Pakistan's experience in relations with East Germany had been an example they did not want to repeat. Since Pakistan did not develop a relationship with East Germany while it was "out in the cold.", the East Germans are not very interested in relations now that they have normalized relations with West Germany. Pakistan perhaps did not want to face that situation in Hanoi. That is why he had said that the rapid progress in US-North Vietnamese negotiations may have been a factor in Pakistan's moving as quickly as it had after the election.

In response to a question from Mr. Saunders, the Ambassador described briefly the present negotiating situation between India and Pakistan over the Kashmir line of control. He said that the Indians are clearly stalling. Each time agreement appears to have been reached, Indian negotiators open a new subject. What is holding up the agreement now is that Pakistan has stood on a matter of principle. The principle applied throughout negotiations has been that the line of control will be drawn for the most part according to the actual line of physical control. Now in the final sector under negotiation, the Indians are trying to persuade the Pakistanis to give up an area which they control. The Pakistanis fear that if they give on this issue in that circumstance, the Indians will have a reason to reopen the whole negotiation.

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June 9, 2005

~~SECRET (XGDS)~~

- 4 -

Returning to the issue addressed by Mr. Kennedy, the Ambassador said that he had speculated on reasons why he had been asked to come into the White House.. He thought that it might be the subject which Mr. Kennedy had broached. On the other hand, he hoped that perhaps Mr. Kissinger had moved with great rapidity and was prepared to provide an answer on the question of the blocked military supplies in New York. He noted that Dr. Kissinger promised him an answer in the month of November and hoped that perhaps this meeting was for the purpose of conveying that answer. The Ambassador said that Pakistan would be the last to want to create difficulties for the United States. He hoped that Dr. Kissinger and the President understood this.

Mr. Kennedy said that we are confident that the Government of Pakistan has not taken a step calculated to cause the US inconvenience. We did, however, want to note that the step does come at a time when it is particularly difficult for us.

H.S.

Harold H. Saunders

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