

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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November 4, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: DR. KISSINGER

FROM: HAROLD H. SAUNDERS
SAMUEL M. HOSKINSON *Hal*

SUBJECT: Gandhi Visit--Advisors' Meeting in
Cabinet Room

The Advisors' Meeting in the Cabinet Room while you were with the President and Mrs. Gandhi covered the full range of issues concerning the current situation in South Asia. Joe Sisco did most of the talking on the US side and T. N. Kaul for the Indians. The general tone was friendly but firm on the issues.

Much of the time was spent by Kaul explaining at length the standard Indian positions. Beyond those, the major operational points to emerge were:

--Sisco described Yahya's favorable response to the idea that he open a dialogue with certain Awami League or Bangla Desh representatives, perhaps speaking on behalf of Mujib, and urged India to react positively to such ideas for getting a political process started. He told Kaul it seems to us asking the impossible to insist that the process start with Mujib. Kaul's "tentative" response was that under any conditions this probably would be a non-starter since the Bengalis are bent on independence and only Mujib would have a chance of settling for less, and even he might not now. Kaul did concede-- in response to an idea presented by Ambassador Keating--that it might be "worth trying" to have someone talk to Mujib in jail if Yahya would go along with it. The general thrust of his response, however, was skeptical and negative. Mujib, he felt, had been out of touch and it might not be very meaningful to involve him unless he were out of jail and free to re-establish himself with his colleagues.

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--Sisco also described Yahya's acceptance of the idea of a unilateral Pakistani military withdrawal. Kaul's response was tentative but negative, saying that India could not afford to take security risks until the political problem in East Pakistan was resolved. He added that India had no territorial designs and was not trying to dictate the terms of a settlement between East and West Pakistan but if attacked, India was determined that it would be a "decisive war with decisive results."

--Kaul stressed that it was putting the "cart before the horse" to suggest Indo-Pak talks or the exercise of good offices between India and Pakistan. This was a problem between West and East Pakistan and could only be settled by them. Moreover, India has little influence.

--Kaul stressed that "all" the refugees, irrespective of their religion, "must" return.

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