

Department of State

TELEGRAM

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 CCO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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O 030713Z JAN 72
FM AMCONSUL DACCA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5004
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE

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THIS MESSAGE IN THREE PARTS - PART THREE

SUBJ: MEETING WITH BANGLADESH FOREIGN MINSITER ABDUS SAMAD

1. SAMAD THEN TURNED TO QUESTION OF PARTIALLY-COMPLETED PROJECTS BEGUN UNDER USAID. HE SAID THAT BDG, IN ORDER TO BE ABLE TO DECIDE ON ALLOCATION OF ITS OWN RESOURCES, WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHAT PROSPECTS WERE FOR COMPLETION OF FUNDING OF THOSE PROJECTS. (IN THIS CONNECTION, ASSUME HE WAS REFERRING TO PROJECTS REFERRED TO IN DACCA 5861).

2. AT CONCLUSION OF INTERVIEW, WHICH LASTED JUST OVER ONE HOUR, SAMAD ASKED ME IN FRIENDLY FASHION, "NOW, WHAT SHALL WE TELL THOSE PRESS FELLOWS OUTSIDE?" I SUGGESTED THAT HE MIGHT WISH TO FINESSE QUESTION OF WHO INITIATED VISIT BY USING INNOCUOUS WORD "MET" RATHER THAN "CALLED ON" OR "SUMMONED". IN MATTER OF SUBSTANCE OF CONVERSATION, I SUGGESTED THAT SAMAD COULD SAY THAT HE HAD EXPRESSED TO ME VIEWS OF BDG ON NUMBER OF QUESTION, SPECIFYING THEM, IF HE SO DESIRED, AND THAT I HAD UNDERTAKEN TO TRANSMIT THOSE VIEWS TO MY GOVERNMENT. SAMAD READILY AGREED TO BOTH THESE FORMULATIONS, AND I SAID THAT I WOULD MAKE NO STATEMENT TO THE PRESS BUT WOULD REFER THEM TO HIS OFFICE FOR ANY COMMENT. YESTERDAY'S PRESS PROMINENTLY FEATURED MY MEETING WITH SAMAD AND WAS COMPLETELY IN ACCORD WITH AGREEMENT OUTLINED ABOVE.

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3. COMMENT. I FOUND SAMAD THOUGHTFUL, SENSITIVE, AND ENTIRELY REASONABLE. HE MADE NO SET SPEECHES AT ME, REFRAINED FROM COMMON BENGALI PROPENSITY FOR TALKING LARGELY FOR SOUND OF HIS OWN VOICE, AND LISTENED ATTENTIVELY AND WITH OBVIOUS INTEREST TO WHAT I HAD TO SAY. IT IS CLEAR THAT, OF VARIOUS TOPICS HE BROUGHT UP, MOST IMPORTANT IN HIS MIND WAS BDG DESIRE FOR SOME PUBLIC EXPRESSION OF USG CONCERN FOR LIBERATION OF SHEKH MUJIB. WHILE I UNDERTOOK TO CONVEY ALL OF HIS VARIOUS POINTS TO WASHINGTON, I MADE NO SPECIFIC COMMITMENT AS TO WHETHER, WHEN, OR IN WHAT FASHION I WOULD BE ABLE TO RESPOND TO HIM ON THEM.

4. PRESS AND TELEVISION COVERAGE OF MY MEETING WITH SAMAD WAS EXTENSIVE (BY BANGLADESH TERMS) AND WELL WITHIN BOUNDS OF MY UNDERSTANDING WITH SAMAD SET FORTH PARA 2 ABOVE. I BELIEVE THAT THIS EXPOSURE HAS HAD A FAVORABLE EFFECT HERE WITHOUT IN ANY WAY COMMITTING THE USG ON ANY SENSITIVE MATTERS. DURING PAST TWO WEEKS, AS WE HAVE REPORTED, SOVIETS AND SOVIET BLOC REPS HAVE MADE NUMEROUS AND WELL PUBLICIZED VISITS TO WIDE RANGE OF BD OFFICIALS AND POLITICIANS. PROMINENT PRESS AND T.V. PLAY GIVEN MY MEETING WITH SAMAD REFLECTS, I BELIEVE, DESIRE OF BDG TO ESTABLISH SOME SORT OF BALANCE.

5. I WOULD APPRECIATE ADVICE FROM DEPARTMENT AS TO NATURE OF RESPONSES, IF ANY, I SHOULD MAKE TO VARIOUS QUESTIONS RAISED BY FOREIGN MINISTER SAMAD AS WELL AS INDICATION OF WAY I SHOULD GO ABOUT MAKING THEM. WHILE I BELIEVE IT WILL BE POSSIBLE TO ARRANGE INFORMAL AND OFF-THE-RECORD DISCUSSIONS, I BELIEVE IT IS INEVITABLE THAT THESE WILL ATTRACT MEDIA ATTENTION. ON OTHER HAND, IT SEEMS TO ME THAT THIS KIND OF LIMITED EXPOSURE CAN SERVE USEFUL PURPOSE WITHOUT COMMITTING US TO ANYTHING WE WISH TO AVOID. END OF MESSAGE

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