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Department of State

TELEGRAM

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-2- ISLAMABAD 1113 3 FEB '72

HAD SAID THEY WERE PREPARED TO PROCEED ALONG SAME GENERAL LINES AS GOP TO EXTENT BHUTTO WISHED. CHOU HAD SAID SPECIFICALLY THAT CHINA WOULD WISH BE GUIDED BY BHUTTO'S VIEWS ON RECOGNIZING BANGLA DESH. ALTHOUGH CHINA HAD INTEREST IN DEVELOPMENTS IN BANGLADESH IT COULD AFFORD TO GET ALONG WITHOUT AN AMBASSADOR IN DACCA IF THAT WAS BHUTTO'S DESIRE. CHOU HAD SAID THAT CHINESE WOULD, IN THAT CASE, BE PREPARED TO USE OTHER RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO THEM WITHIN BANGLADESH, IMPLYING RELIANCE ON PRO-CHINESE ELEMENTS.

4. BHUTTO SAID HE WAS VERY MUCH AWARE AND DEEPLY APPRECIATIVE OF UNDERSTANDING WHICH USG HAD SHOWN HIM AT THIS CRITICAL TIME. HE ACKNOWLEDGED SPECIFICALLY OUR DECLARED INTENTION NOT TO CAUSE UNNECESSARY PROBLEMS FOR HIM OVER RECOGNITION ISSUE. AS HE HAD TOLD ME IN OUR LAST MEETING, HE WOULD NOT WISH USG POSITION IN SUBCONTINENT, WHERE WE HAD A VERY IMPORTANT ROLE TO PLAY, TO BE DAMAGED OVER BANGLADESH RECOGNITION.

5. BHUTTO SAID THAT TIME WAS NOW CLOSE AT HAND WHEN HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE FOR USG TO REVISE ITS POSITION ON BANGLADESH RECOGNITION. BRITISH AND GERMANS WOULD BE ANNOUNCING RECOGNITION THE NEXT DAY (FEB 4) AND PRESUMABLY LARGE NUMBER OF OTHER COUNTRIES WOULD ALSO DO SO AT SAME TIME OR SOON THEREAFTER. HE APPRECIATED THAT USG WOULD SUFFER IF WE LAGGED TOO FAR BEHIND. AN ACTIVE USG PRESENCE WAS NEEDED IN BANGLADESH. IN THIS CONNECTION, POSITIVE USG PRESENCE WAS ALSO NEEDED IN INDIA TO HELP SORT OUT SOME SERIOUS PROBLEMS IN AFTERMATH OF RECENT WAR. I SAID I AGREED FULLY WITH VIEWS HE HAD JUST EXPRESSED, WHICH SEEMED TO ME MOST STATESMANLIKE. I NOTED THAT SOME OF OUR PEOPLE HAD EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER OUR ABILITY TO MAINTAIN CONSULAR OFFICE IN DACCA OVER AN EXTENDED PERIOD WITHOUT RECOGNIZING BANGLADESH; MEANWHILE, OUT OF CONCERN TO AVOID ANY IMPLICATION OF RECOGNITION, OUR REPRESENTATIVES IN DACCA HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED TO ESCHEW CONTACTS WITH BANGLADESH OFFICIALS; FOR EXAMPLE, USG HAD NO CONTACT WHATSOEVER WITH MUJIB.

6. BHUTTO SAID HE WAS GRATEFUL FOR EFFORT WE HAD MADE TO AVOID EMBARRASSING HIM ON THIS MATTER. HE BELIEVED TIME HAD NOW COME WHEN WE COULD AND SHOULD REVISE OUR POSITION AND MOVE TOWARD EARLY RECOGNITION BANGLADESH. MEANWHILE, HE DID NOT SEE WHY, IF WE WISHED, OUR CONSUL GENERAL IN DACCA COULD NOT FORTHWITH BE AUTHORIZED TO EXPAND HIS CONTACTS UP TO AND SPECIFICALLY INCLUDING CONTACTS WITH MUJIB. IF USG WERE WILLING TO MADE

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-3- ISLAMABAD 1113 3 FEB '72

DECISION TO RECOGNIZE BANGLADESH IN FAIRLY NEAR FUTURE, BHUTTO THOUGHT IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF OUR CONSUL GENERAL WERE AUTHORIZED TO TELL MUJIB VERY SOON THAT WE WERE PLANNING EARLY RECOGNITION. THAT SHOULD PRESERVE USG POSITION UNTIL RECOGNITION ACCORDED, AND SHOULD ALSO PERMIT AMERICAN OFFICIALS IN DACCA TO PLAY MORE NORMAL ROLE GENERALLY IN ADVANCE OF RECOGNITION.

7. MUJIB NEEDS AMERICAN HELP, BHUTTO WENT ON, AS HE HAS TERRIBLE PROBLEMS. HE IS BASICALLY A MODERATE MAN, ALTHOUGH AS POLITICIAN HE HAS BEEN INCLINED TO KEEP ONE STEP AHEAD OF THE EXTREMISTS IN HIS PARTY. HE WILL PROBABLY WANT TO KEEP AHEAD OF THE EXTREMISTS IN FUTURE, BHUTTO SAID, BUT FUNDAMENTALLY HE IS NOT EXTREMIST HIMSELF. IN THIS GENERAL CONNECTION BHUTTO SAID HE BELIEVED THAT US CAN BE MORE HELPFUL TO MUJIB THAN ANYONE ELSE. DESPITE SOVIET PRODDING ON SUBJECT OF GOP RELATIONS WITH BANGLADESH, BHUTTO SAID, HE HAD NOT SPOKEN TO SOVIETS AT ALL ALONG POSITIVE LINES WHICH HE WAS NOW DISCUSSING WITH ME REGARDING OUR RELATIONS WITH MUJIB.

8. I ASKED BHUTTO AT THIS POINT IF HE HAD ANY PARTICULAR TIME FRAME IN MIND. HE RESPONDED THAT HE THOUGHT USG MIGHT NOT WANT TO FOLLOW WITH RECOGNITION OF BANGLADESH IMMEDIATELY ON HEELS OF COUNTRIES WHICH WILL BE ANNOUNCING RECOGNITION ON FEB 4 OR NEXT FEW DAYS. ON OTHER HAND, HE DID NOT SEE, FROM HIS POINT OF VIEW AT LEAST, WHY USG WOULD WANT TO DELAY MORE THAN COUPLE OF WEEKS. HE THEN COMMENTED THAT HE EXPECTED TO BE ANNOUNCING LAND REFORM MEASURES ON FEB 20. HE THOUGHT THAT ANNOUNCEMENT OF USG RECOGNITION OF BANGLADESH MIGHT BE APPROPRIATE AT THAT TIME BECAUSE, AMONG OTHER THINGS, ATTENTION HERE WOULD BE ON LAND. THIS WOULD TEND TO MINIMIZE LIKELIHOOD OF ANY ADVERSE CRITICISM OF USG ACTION AMONG PUBLIC HERE. (IMPLICATION OF THIS PART OF DISCUSSION WAS THAT WE COULD EXPECT BHUTTO'S SYMPATHETIC ASSISTANCE IF NEEDED TO DAMPEN SUCH CRITICISM.)

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-4- ISLAMABAD 1113 3 FEB '72

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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2918  
BT  
~~SECRET~~ SECTION 2 OF 2 ISLAMABAD 1113

~~NOPTS~~

SUBJECT: BHUTTO'S SUGGESTION FOR EARLY USG RECOGNITION OF BANGLADESH

9. SEC GEN AZIZ AHMED INTERJECTED THAT WE MIGHT ASK GOI TO WITHDRAW ARMY BEFORE USG RECOGNITION OF BANGLADESH. BHUTTO SHOOK HIS HEAD AND SAID HE DID NOT AGREE. HE DID NOT MIND IF INDIAN ARMY REMAINED IN THE EAST FOR SOME TIME LONGER.

10. I ASKED BHUTTO IF HE COULD GIVE ME SOME INDICATION OF HIS APPROACH TO QUESTION OF BANGLADESH RECOGNITION BY GOP ITSELF. HE SAID HE WAS THINKING THAT GOP RECOGNITION WOULD BE TAKEN UP IN CONTEXT OF INDO-PAK NEGOTIATIONS TO RESOLVE PROBLEMS LEFT FROM WAR. HE SUGGESTED THAT USG COULD TELL GOI THAT GOP DECISION TO RECOGNIZE BANGLADESH WOULD FOLLOW IN COUSE OF INDIAN NEGOTIATION WITH PAKISTAN. BUT IT WOULD BE DISADVANTAGEOUS FOR GOP TO ANNOUNCE RECOGNITION BEFORE BEGINNING NETOTIATIONS WITH INDIA, AS SOME IN GOI HAD BEEN DEMANDING. IF GOP CAME TO NEGOTIATING TABLE AFTER HAVING ALREADY RECOGNIZED BANGLADESH, BHUTTO SAID, INDIA WOULD BE IN ADVANTAGEOUS POSITION PERMITTING IT TO DEAL WITH PAKISTAN FROM EVEN GREATER STRENGTH.

11. BHUTTO SAID HIS BASIC INTEREST IN FORTHCOMING NEGOTIATIONS WITH INDIA LAY IN GETTING BACK THE PAKISTANI POWS. (HE AGREED WITH AZIZ AHMED'S SUGGESTION THAT GOP ALSO HAD VERY STRONG INTEREST IN GETTING BACK WEST PAK CIVILIAN OFFICIALS NOW IN INDIAN HANDS.) BHUTTO SUGGESTED THAT WE MIGHT AT SOME APPROPRIATE EARLY TIME SAY TO MUJIB THAT THERE WAS NO POINT IN INDIA'S HOLDING ON TO THE POWS.

*Handwritten notes:*  
RC 16 Bangladesh desk

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12. I ASKED BHUTTO HOW HE APPROACHED QUESTION OF LIKELY INDIAN INTEREST, DURING NEGOTIATIONS, IN "RECTIFICATIONS" ALONG CEASEFIRE LINE IN KASHMIR, AS HAD ALREADY BEEN STIPULATED BY SOME INDIAN LEADERS. FONSEC SULTAN KHAN COMMENTED THAT, IN HIS OPINION, SOME OF PAKISTAN'S POSITIONS WHICH HAD BEEN TAKEN OVER BY INDIAN FORCES WERE OF SUBSTANTIAL IMPORTANCE; HE MENTIONED HEIGHTS IN KARGIL REGION THAT THAT CONNECTION. BHUTTO SAID THAT INDIA'S DEMAND FOR CHANGES ALONG CEASEFIRE LINE WAS ONE REASON WHY HE DID NOT WANT TO BE AT DISADVANTAGE BY RECOGNIZING BANGLADESH BEFORE BEGINNING NETOTIATIONS WITH GOI. HE RECALLED THAT SWARAN SINGH HAD REQEUSTED CEASEFIRE-LINE RECTIFICATIONS DURING INDO-PAK DISCUSSIONS IN LATE 1962 AND EARLY 1963, AND THAT PAKISTAN HAD REJECTED THEM AT THAT TIME. BHUTTO SAID HE COULD NOT BE PUT IN POSITION WHERE INDIA WOULD BE NIBBLING AWAY AT PAKISTAN'S SIDE OF CEASEFIRE LINE. HE HAD ENOUGH PROBLEMS AS IT WAS IN COPING WITH PAKISTAN'S MANY NEEDS, AND IT WOULD BE UNREASONABLE FOR HIM TO HAVE TO TAKE ON ANY INDIAN DEMAND TO WEAKEN PAKISTAN'S POSITION ALONG CEASEFIRE LINE. RECALLING HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH ME IN PAST SEVERAL MONTHS, BHUTTO SAID HE WAS SERIOUS ABOUT MOVING FROM CONFRONTATION WITH INDIA, BUT HE COULD BE EXPECTED TO RETREAT FROM CEASEFIRE LINE. [not]

13. I RECALLED HAVING DISCUSSED WITH BHUTTO LAST WEEK THE QUESTION OF HIS READINESS TO MEET MUJIB. I HAD NOTED THAT SINO-PAK COMMUNIQUE ISSUED FEB 2 HAD QUOTED BHUTTO AS MAINTAINING THAT NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN MUJIB AND HIMSELF SHOULD TAKE PLACE BUT ONLY AFTER INDIAN FORCES WITHDREW FROM EAST PAKISTAN. I WONDERED HOW THE ADVANCE IN BHUTTO'S POSITION, AS REFLECTED IN OUR DISCUSSION TODAY, RELATED TO HIS READINESS TO MEET MUJIB. BHUTTO SAID THAT HE WAS READY TO MEET MUJIB "ON NEUTRAL GROUNDS, AS SOON AS POSSIBLE." SPECIFICALLY, HE HOPED WAY COULD BE FOUND TO GET INDIANS TO TELL MUJIB THAT HE SHOULD MEET WITH BHUTTO SOONEST. THIS SPECIFICALLY INCLUDED MEETING BEFORE INDIAN FORCES WITHDREW FROM THE EAST TO THEIR OWN TERRITORY.

14. I TOLD BHUTTO I APPRECIATED HIS INITIATIVE IN SUGGESTING WAY IN WHICH HE BELIEVED USG COULD MOVE IN POSITIVE WAY AT THIS TIME OF CRISIS IN SUBCONTINENT. I TOOK HIS SUGGESTION AS REFLECTING HIS DESIRE TO "TURN OVER NEW PAGE" IN PAK-US RELATIONS AND TO MOVE TO A MORE STABLE AND PEACEFUL SITUATION IN SUBCONTINENT. I

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-6- ISLAMABAD 1113 3 FEB '72

SAID I WAS CERTAIN HIS SUGGESTION WOULD BE RECEIVED WITH CONSIDERABLE INTEREST IN WASHINGTON. TO BE PERFECTLY SURE OF MY POSITION, I SAID, I WANTED TO CONFIRM THAT IT WAS BHUTTO'S INTENTION THAT COURSE HE OUTLINED TO ME SHOULD BE PUT UP TO USG AS REPRESENTING HIS OWN ASSESSMENT OF WHAT USG COULD USEFULLY DO ON THIS PARTICULAR SUBJECT. BHUTTO AFFIRMED THAT THIS WAS INDEED HIS INTENTION AND SAID HE HOPED IT WOULD RECEIVE CAREFUL ATTENTION OF PRES NIXON AND SECRETARY OF STATE. I SAID I WOULD REPORT OUR MEETING AND HIS PROPOSAL PROMPTLY. VARIOUS CONSIDERATIONS HAD TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT, BUT I HOPED TO BE ABLE TO REPORT WASHINGTON REACTION SOON.

15. COMMENT: ONE THING THAT IS PERFECTLY CLEAR FROM THIS DISCUSSION IS THAT BHUTTO HAS IN FACT GIVEN UP HOPE OF PRESERVING SOME POLITICAL LINK WITH "EAST PAKISTAN" AND THAT HE HAS ACCEPTED THE REALITY OF BANGLADESH. I BELIEVE HE HAS BEEN MOVING TOWARD THAT POSITION FOR SOME TIME. IT NOW APPEARS THAT HE MAY HAVE WANTED TO CHECK THE MATTER OUT WITH CHINESE AND GET THEIR GENERAL BLESSING BEFORE MOVING FURTHER. (HE HIMSELF RECALLED TO ME HAVING ASKED BRITISH HICOMER TO REQUEST HMG TO WAIT ON RECOGNITION DECISION UNTIL AFTER BHUTTO RETURNED FROM PEKING.) IN MY OPINION, BHUTTO'S SUGGESTION FOR OUR MOVING TO REGULARIZE OUR POSITION IN DACCA AND TO ANNOUNCE REASONABLY EARLY RECOGNITION OF BANGLADESH IS STATESMANLIKE AND MERITS OUR SUPPORT. I BELIEVE THE COURSE WHICH HE PROPOSES IS IN AMERICAN INTEREST. FROM THIS VANTAGE POINT, IT SEEMS WE HAVE OPPORTUNITY NOT ONLY OF ACCOMMODATING TO SUGGESTION OF PAKISTANI CHIEF OF STATE, BUT ALSO HELPING TO RETRIEVE OUR POSITION IN BANGLADESH AS WELL AS IN INDIA.

16. I HOPE I CAN BE AUTHORIZED TO GIVE BHUTTO REPORT OF (HOPEFULLY POSITIVE) USG REACTION IN NEAR FUTURE. IF WE DECIDE TO MOVE ALONG COURSE HE SUGGESTS, APPROPRIATE INSTRUCTIONS SHOULD BE ISSUED TO OUR CONSUL GENERAL IN DACCA TO INITIATE CONTACT WITH MUJIB. EMBASSY DELHI SHOULD ALSO, IN THAT CASE, BE INFORMED APPROPRIATELY.

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