

Mr. Saunders

The President has seen ^{B)}

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

01403

ACTION

February 16, 1972

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MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT
FROM: HENRY A. KISSINGER *AK*
SUBJECT: Humanitarian Assistance for
Bangladesh

As you know, we agreed in late December to provide Pakistan with PL 480 assistance as a form of postwar budgetary support. Shortly, the UN will tell us of requirements in Bangladesh. The Senior Review Group had discussed what the share and quantity of our participation should be, and we would now appreciate your guidance.

There are three general issues in connection with the UN effort:
(1) What share of the total international effort should the US assume responsibility for? (2) What quantities of assistance should we commit? (3) What financial support should we provide for UN administrative costs? With your views on these, we can sort out the details as they come up.

The US Share

The SRG considers that the US share should not be more than about one-third of the UN effort. The actual amount and percentage can be determined when we see what the UN concludes the needs may be. We certainly do not want to be in a position of an open-ended commitment.

The practical problem with announcing a specific limit derives from two factors: (1) The US has a much greater capacity because of our food resources to contribute grain than other contributors, so there is an argument for a low share for financial contributions but perhaps a higher share of contributions in kind. (2) Tying ourselves too rigidly to a strict share publicly could put us in a position later where we would be refusing to feed starving people because others would not contribute. The experience during the Indian famine years of 1965 and 1966 was that the US agreed to match other contributions but then had to ignore its own formula in the end because the quantities became so great that only the US could respond.

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E.O. 12958, as amended
June 9, 2005

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There are two ways to handle the computation of a share: (1) We could say that we will give one-third of the total international contribution. (2) Or we could agree to provide one-third of the total requirement as judged by the international community. The latter would give us greater flexibility. We could pace our contributions to go along with the contributions of others, but we would not be tightly restricted by them at any given time if we chose not to be.

RECOMMENDATION: That you approve in principle US contributions in the multilateral effort of 33-1/3 per cent of the total international contributions. If we decide later to make a larger contribution, we can always do so.

Approve  _____

Other _____

The Quantity

The US had in the pipeline before the war some 725,000 tons (about \$75 million) committed to the UN relief effort in East Pakistan. Some of this was already formally committed; other quantities were simply earmarked on our own books. Now the UN has asked us to release 175,000 tons, the amount formally committed to the UN effort before the war. Of course, the situation has changed, and these figures are cited only to note the background with the UN and what is available within our own programming.

RECOMMENDATIONS: (1) For internal planning purposes, that we keep ourselves in a position to contribute 33-1/3% of the internationally judged requirement up to 725,000 tons of grain, the amount which had been previously earmarked for release in this area. (2) For the time-being, however, that we release only 175,000 tons as our 33-1/3% share in the context of substantial contributions by others.

Approve  _____

Other _____

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Financial Support

Before the war we committed \$2 million to the financial support of the UN operation in East Pakistan. Some \$300,000 of that remains unspent, but the situation, of course, is changed. The SRG decided that we could hold off for a short time because others were making contributions and the UN did not need the money immediately. However, the feeling was that it would be appropriate to commit this eventually provided it were clearly within the range of our 33-1/3% share.

RECOMMENDATION: That the US provide this \$300,000 in financial support when it is clearly within the framework of a 33-1/3% share.

Approve



Other _____

US Voluntary Agencies

There is one additional question apart from the multilateral framework. Bilateral aid is not an issue before recognition, and even after recognition is a matter for political decision. However, some private US voluntary agencies like CARE, Catholic Relief, Church World Service have been operating alongside UN agencies in East Bengal. The normal practice is for AID to provide small amounts of assistance to those agencies, partly in the form of help in buying and shipping specialized foods such as those needed in child nutrition programs.

RECOMMENDATION: That you authorize continued assistance to the US voluntary agencies working in Bangladesh apart from the multilateral effort.

Approve



Other _____

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