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Department of State

TELEGRAM

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 /026 W

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Islamabad 1834  
2-25-72

R 251117Z FEB 72  
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3260  
INFO AMCONSUL KARACHI  
AMCONSUL LAHORE  
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI  
CINCPAC FOR POLAD

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ ISLAMABAD 1834

EXDIS

SUBJ: CONVERSATION WITH PRES BHUTTO: DEFENSE

REF: ISLAMABAD 1823 AND 1833

1. SUMMARY: BHUTTO ALLUDED TO HIS INTEREST IN SEEING WHETHER DEFENSE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PAKISTAN AND US CAN BE STRENGTHENED. REPLYING NONCOMMITTALLY, CHARGE TOOK OCCASION TO NOTE VERY DIFFICULT POLICY DECISIONS THAT GOPI MUST FACE UP TO WITH REGARD TO MILITARY BUDGET AND SUPPLY. END SUMMARY.
2. DURING MY DINNER MEETING WITH HIM FEB 24, PRES BHUTTO ALLUDED TO HIS INTERVIEW BY C. L. SULZBERGER OF NY TIMES ON FEB 7. HE SAID WHAT HAD COME OUT IN PRINT ON QUESTION OF DEFENSE RELATIONSHIP WITH US HAD BEEN SOMEWHAT MISLEADING. HE HAD TOLD SULZBERGER THAT PAKISTAN ALREADY HAD DEFENSE AGREEMENT WITH US (REFERENCE WAS TO BILATERAL OF MARCH 1959). THAT AGREEMENT HAD LAIN PRETTY MUCH DORMANT FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS. NOW HE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN SEEING WHETHER THERE WAS CHANCE IT MIGHT BE BROUGHT BACK TO LIFE. HE HAD ADDED TO SULZBERGER THAT HE RECOGNIZED DIFFICULTIES OF REVIVING THE DEFENSE AGREEMENT DURING US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION YEAR. ALTHOUGH BHUTTO DID NOT SPECIFICALLY REFER TO ANY PAK DESIRE FOR ARMS FROM US, THAT WAS IMPLICIT IN ABOVE REMARKS.

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E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.4  
NND 968042  
By HRM/VSW Date 1/12/98

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PA/HO, Department of State  
E.O. 12958, as amended  
June 9, 2005

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3. I STATED THAT, AS BHUTTO PROBABLY KNEW, VARIOUS ASPECTS OF OUR POLICY TOWARD SUBCONTINENT WERE UNDER REVIEW IN WASHINGTON. VARIOUS DECISIONS WOULD STEM FROM THAT REVIEW, AND I WAS NOT IN POSITION TO ANTICIPATE THEM. I DID ACKNOWLEDGE PROBABLE VALIDITY OF HIS REMARK CONCERNING SPECIAL DIFFICULTIES OF ELECTION YEAR. I SAID I WOULD, HOWEVER, HAZARD PREDICTION THAT PRINCIPAL EMPHASIS IN OUR OVERALL POLICY TOWARD SUBCONTINENT WOULD REMAIN ON NEED FOR PEACE THAT WOULD ALLOW COUNTRIES OF THE AREA TO DEVOTE THEIR FULLEST RESOURCES TO PROGRAMS OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL IMPROVEMENT WHICH THEY WANTED FOR THEIR PEOPLE. SPECIFIC DECISIONS, I THOUGHT, WOULD TEND TO REVOLVE AROUND THAT CENTRAL POINT.

4. I THEN REMARKED THAT IT SEEMED TO ME THAT GOP HAD NOT YET COME TO GRIPS WITH PROBLEM OF ITS FUTURE MILITARY POSTURE. THERE HAD BEEN SOME TALK THAT ARMY WOULD REMAIN SAME SIZE AS PREWAR. THAT INVOLVED PROBLEM OF CONFLICTING NEEDS, FROM LIMITED RESOURCES, OF MILITARY BUDGET AND OF ECONOMIC PROGRAMS TO WHICH BHUTTO AND HIS PARTY WERE COMMITTED. THERE WAS ALSO THE SERIOUS PROBLEM OF VERY SCARCE FOREIGN RESERVES TO BE DIVIDED BETWEEN MILITARY AND NONMILITARY NEEDS. I SAID I KNEW THAT GOP, LIKE OTHER COUNTRIES, WOULD FACE DIFFICULT CHOICES. THE BEST DECISIONS, I SPECULATED, COULD BE MADE IN THE FRAMEWORK OF EFFORTS TO ARRIVE AT A DURABLE PEACE IN THE SUBCONTINENT. BHUTTO TOOK ALL OF THIS IN WITHOUT OBJECTION OR COMMENT.  
SOBER

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