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Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: July 2, 1976

**SUBJECT:** Secretary's Meeting with Bangladesh Naval Chief Khan  
**DATE, TIME AND PLACE:** July 2, 1976; 12 noon; Secretary's Office

MODIS REVIEW

**PARTICIPANTS:** BANGLADESH  
Rear Admiral M. H. Khan  
Ambassador to the United States M. R. Siddiqi  
Humayun Kabir, Minister, Bangladesh Embassy  
US  
The Secretary  
Deputy Assistant Secretary Adolph Dubs  
AID Assistant Administrator Arthur Z. Gardiner, Jr.  
Mr. Robert A. Peck (Notetaker)

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The Secretary: I particularly wanted to see you to tell you of our interest in your country. I received a report from Mr. Robinson of your talks with him yesterday and know the nature of your concerns. What are your specific problems at the moment?

Admiral Khan: We have not yet had a full picture as to the intentions of the Government of India. Once we know what these are, there will be goodwill on the part of the Bangladesh side. Without goodwill from India as well, however, there cannot be any progress. We did not get a specific answer to our recent proposals.

The Secretary: Do you have any specific requests other than in regard to stopping the border incursions?

Admiral Khan: Of course we want the border incidents stopped. I discussed the situation in detail with Mr. Robinson and Senator Percy. The Bangladesh Government would like to know the extent of support from the United States Government in regard to a solution to these problems.

The Secretary: What sort of support do you want?

Admiral Khan: We need goodwill and hope you will use good offices so that India understands where she stands.

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The Secretary: You can count on diplomatic support against aggressive acts and we will certainly encourage a peaceful solution. We would not take lightly a campaign of pressure against Bangladesh. Military assistance is a different question.

Admiral Khan: We are in a defensive posture. It is important that our people have confidence that we have a minimum of military strength. If something happens we will do everything possible not to allow anyone to interfere, but we must have some instruments in hand. We do not want to change the military balance. It is a matter of protection. We are very grateful for the development assistance you have kindly given but it would be all nullified at a stroke if something happens.

The Secretary: Have you approached other countries?

Admiral Khan: We have had discussions with Britain.

The Secretary: What do they say?

Admiral Khan: The problem is finances.

The Secretary: [to Mr. Dubs] Will you make sure I take this up with Crosland next week?

Mr. Dubs: Yes.

The Secretary: It is lucky India is a pacifist country. Otherwise you could be in a great deal of trouble.

Admiral Khan: They keep on shouting about non-violence and yet they are exploding nuclear devices.

The Secretary: Will you need from us military equipment on credit?

Admiral Khan: We want to continue to devote our resources entirely to development. We need military assistance.

The Secretary: Where do you get equipment now?

Admiral Khan: We have nothing. After liberation 15 ships sailed to India with military equipment.

The Secretary: You ought to get it back.

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Admiral Khan: Yes. Now we are in a position to tell you frankly what the situation is. I am proud to say we want to live like free men and to defend ourselves.

The Secretary: Have you talked with the Chinese?

Admiral Khan: Just now we were talking of Chinese intentions to help us in the area of water resources and irrigation.

The Secretary: Have you talked with them about military equipment?

Admiral Khan: No.

The Secretary: Let's study the problem. We will look into it. We are interested in the continued sovereignty and independence of Bangladesh. We are opposed to any pressure and will have no hesitation to make this clear. This is the major thing I wanted to tell you--you have a friend here.

Admiral Khan: Thank you.

The Secretary: You are going to be in the naval review?

Admiral Khan: Yes.

The Secretary: I will be on the Wainwright. I'll look for your ship. What kind of a ship do you sail?

Admiral Khan: I don't have a ship, Mr. Secretary. I will only have a ship if you give me one.

The Secretary: You will be on the Forrestal, then?

Admiral Khan: Yes.

The Secretary: Well, I'll be on the Forrestal part of the time and will look for you there.

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