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August 11, 1971

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

PARTICIPANTS:

The President
Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President
John Irvin, Under Secretary of State
Thomas Moore, Chairman, JCS
Robert Cushman, Deputy Director of Central Intelligence
Maurice Williams, Deputy Administrator, AID
Joseph Sisco, Assistant Secretary of State
Armistead Seldon, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, ISA
Harold H. Saunders, NSC Staff

DATE AND PLACE:

3:15 - 3:40 p.m. Wednesday, August 11, 1971,
in the President's Old Executive Office
Building Office

At the opening of a scheduled Senior Review Group meeting on Pakistan, Dr. Kissinger said that the President would like to see the principal members of the SRG in his office to talk about Pakistan.

When the group had moved from the Situation Room to the President's office, the President began by saying that he had had a chance in San Clemente to discuss the South Asian situation with Admiral Moore, Mr. Helms and, of course, he had been in continuing touch with Secretary Rogers. But he had not had a chance to talk with other members of this group.

The President said that he felt it was important that he state his views on just how the emphasis must be played in the South Asian situation. It is "imperative" to play it this way, he said. He then spoke along the following lines:

First, we must look at this situation above all in terms of US interests. The interests of the US would be "very much jeopardized" by any development that could break into open conflict. "We will have to do anything-- anything--to avoid war." We will do "anything--all we can--to restrain" those who want to be involved in a war.

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On the public relations side, the media no longer have a great deal to write about on Vietnam. The big story is Pakistan. The political people--Democrat and Republican--are "raising hell" about this issue. "And they should from the standpoint of human suffering."

While there are great differences between the situation in South Asia and that in 1969 in Nigeris, the US in connection with Biafra stayed out of the political side of the problem. We are deeply concerned about the suffering in East Pakistan and about the refugees in India. We must increase our effort on that front. We have already done a lot, but we must think of the "most massive" program possible in terms of our budget. And we must encourage other international support.

Dr. Kissinger interjected that there are two aspects to the humanitarian problem. First, there is the problem of potential famine in East Pakistan. Maury Williams is working on our programs to avert that. Second, there is the problem of the refugees that already exist in the Indian refugee camps.

The President continued:

Whether we help in a bilateral or an international framework, we must do the most that can possibly be done. Indian Ambassador Jha had been in a month or so ago. The Ambassador was "bullyragging me" about the great statements the French and British had made with regard to the Pakistani situation. He had told the Ambassador not to talk about what they had said but to look at what they had done. The US has contributed more to refugee relief than all the rest of them combined in terms of simply aiding the refugees in India.

We have to press other European countries to contribute. We are "not going to get very much" but we should "make a little issue of it." Embarrassing them a little bit will make it easier for us to dramatize how much we have actually done.

He doubted that this problem would generate a great deal of enthusiasm in the US. It would not generate as much response as the catastrophe in Chile had. Still we must "go all out--all out--on the relief side."

Turning to the political part of the problem, he could not emphasize his position too strongly. India's interest, some Indians think, would be served by war. Some Pakistanis would be willing to have a war. "The USSR--I don't know what they want." The interests of the US would not be served by a war. The new China relationship would be

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imperiled, probably beyond repair, and we would have a "very sticky problem" with the USSR.

"Now let me be very blunt." He had been going to India since 1953. Every Ambassador who goes to India falls in love with India. Some have the same experience in Pakistan--though not as many because the Pakistanis are a different breed. The Pakistanis are straight-forward--and sometimes extremely stupid. The Indians are more devious, sometimes so smart that we fall for their line.

He "holds no brief" for what President Yahya has done. The US "must not--cannot--allow" India to use the refugees as a pretext for breaking up Pakistan. The President said with a great deal of emphasis that he is "convinced" that that is what India wants to do. That is what he might want to do if he were in New Delhi.

Now, as far as the US is concerned, the US has to use its influence in the other direction. The USSR has "this little deal" with India. [Reference to USSR-India Friendship Treaty signed August 9.] Some think that the Russians want to punish the Pakistanis for their relationship with China. In his view, the Russians are looking at this situation as they looked at the Middle East before the June war in 1967. The danger is that they may unleash forces there which no one can control.

The problem is that if the Indians "romp around in East Pakistan" or send guerrillas, the Pakistanis may well go to war even though they feel that would be suicidal.

Returning to his basic point, he said to Mr. Sisco and Mr. Irwin that we "have to cool off the pro-Indians in the State Department and out in South Asia." We want to help India but we will not be parties to their objective [of breaking up Pakistan]. "If there is a war, I will go on national television and ask Congress to cut off all aid to India. They won't get a dime."

We have to keep some leverage in Pakistan. Our concerns must be communicated to the Pakistanis through Ambassador Farland. If we go along with the Congress and cut off all assistance to Pakistan, then we will lose what influence we have on the humanitarian problem.

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Perhaps the worst we fear will happen anyway, but certainly the US-- while the Soviet Union is fishing in troubled waters--must use its influence to keep the war from happening.

In summary, publicly our position is that (1) we will go all out to help the refugees and to help people in East Pakistan; (2) there must not be a war because war would help no one; (3) we will not publicly exacerbate the political situation. We will deal with the political problem in private. It is not our job to determine the political future of Pakistan. The Pakistanis have to work out their own future. We will not measure our relationship with the government in terms of what it has done in East Pakistan. By that criterion, we would cut off relations with every Communist government in the world because of the slaughter that has taken place in the Communist countries.

The President concluded by asking whether there were any questions.

Mr. Sisco said that we had followed the three-pronged approach that the President had outlined. He would like to make an observation on one point. He hoped that the President did not intend to preclude having Farland go to President Yahya when we have concrete suggestions to communicate on steps that might help with the overall political settlement. Given our overall objective--admitting that the real Indian political objective is probably to establish an independent Bangla Desh by peace or by force--he hoped that within the framework of friendship with Yahya where we have concrete suggestions and could help Yahya move a little bit toward political accommodation, Farland could mention the suggestion.

Mr. Sisco expected serious repercussions from the Soviet-Indian Treaty. The Indians may feel constrained from conventional military moves across the border, but they may feel encouraged to support guerrilla crossings. "Relief alone won't do the job." President Yahya may not be able to go far enough. But if there is not some progress on the question of political accommodation, the guerrilla warfare would continue, Pakistani military reprisals would continue and the refugees would be unlikely to return to their homes. More important, Yahya may feel he has to attack guerrilla camps in India.

Mr. Sisco continued, noting that the Indians have behaved very badly. They have prevented the UN from working with the refugees on their side. He agreed that their real policy is one establishing an independent Bangla Desh. We don't care how that turns out. Our interest is that, if it happens, it happens by peaceful means.

Mr. Sisco concluded by asking whether it will be all right if in a friendly posture--noting that we have no blueprint for a political solution--to make suggestions when we have them. One of these might be not to execute Mujibur Rahman [Awami League leader now on trial in West Pakistan for treason].

The President replied that in view of the fact that we have not cut off aid and have a good personal relationship with Yahya, it is possible that unless he is totally trapped he might be responsive. Yahya considers Ambassador Farland his friend. Any suggestions that we might have--such as "not shooting Mujib"--Farland might point out to him. The President said he had felt from talking to Ambassador Farland that it was his intention to try to persuade President Yahya to be "more flexible or more sophisticated" on the question of political settlement.

Dr. Kissinger interjected that we should not ask the President in this meeting to arbitrate the nuances of what we might ask President Yahya to do. The basic problem is not some specific proposition. It is whether India links the return of the refugees to a political accommodation. If we go along and play that Indian game, then we are participating in the break-up of Pakistan. If the Indians genuinely need an excuse for calling off the guerrillas and some conciliatory move by Yahya would evoke that Indian response, then we might be justified in making that point to Yahya. But asking him to deal with the Awami Leaguers in Calcutta is like asking Abraham Lincoln to deal with Jefferson Davis."

The President said we can't ask Yahya to do that. We can't allow India to dictate the political future of East Pakistan. Parenthetically, the President noted that the West Pakistanis probably could not dictate the political future of East Pakistan either. The President said that Ambassador Farland could talk privately with Yahya if we have some concrete suggestions.

Dr. Kissinger said that he thought Yahya would listen if the point were "hooked to" a refugee resettlement proposal. It is the kind of thing Maury Williams could say if he goes to Pakistan. If Williams can hook proposals to the refugee problem then Yahya might listen to him. The proposal could be put in terms of maintaining the integrity of the people of Pakistan.

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The President assented, agreeing that Mr. Williams could give Yahya an opportunity to "do something political in the name of humanitarian relief."

Dr. Kissinger illustrated by recalling that Mr. Williams had earlier made the point that the army had never had a big civil function in Pakistan. Now that a substantial civil effort in food distribution is necessary, one could argue that the restoration of civil administration is essential to food distribution. The emphasis could be put on restoration of civil administration by talking in terms of food distribution, yet in the knowledge that the restoration of civil administration would also have political implications.

Mr. Williams agreed that that might be a good entering wedge.

The President, returning an earlier theme, said that the other side of the coin is that Mr. Irwin and Mr. Sisco should "tell your people that it isn't going to help for them publicly to take a stand on the political issue. Our people have got to stay neutral on the question of political accommodation in public! Privately, we can tell President Yahya that he should not shoot Mujib.

Mr. Irwin summarized Mr. Sisco's presentation by making the point that the degree to which we can get Yahya to move toward a political accommodation will increase the ease of moving toward a successful relief program. He noted that we could move behind the scenes in doing this.

The President asked Dr. Kissinger whether he had found "any give in Yahya."

Dr. Kissinger replied that he felt that Yahya would listen if we could put our suggestions in the form of suggestions on a refugee program. The issue is whether we are going to use relief to squeeze Yahya to set political conditions or whether we are going to use relief to deprive the Indians of an excuse to attack.

The President said that we do not care "who runs the place out there." We can't answer that problem.

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Dr. Kissinger noted that President Yahya is "not the brightest man in the world." But asking him to deal directly with the Awami League would be hard to do.

Mr. Irwin said that they had discussed with Secretary Rogers that morning the question of dealing with the Awami League. We have had reports in recent days of the possibility that some Awami League leaders in Calcutta want to negotiate with Yahya on the basis of giving up their claim for the independence of East Pakistan. The question being discussed is whether Ambassador Farland could talk to Yahya just suggesting that if the Awami League is serious about withdrawing its claim to independence Yahya might consider talking with them.

The President said that we have to remember that Ambassador Farland is the man on the spot. He suggested that Ambassador Farland not be ordered to say certain things to President Yahya. He suggested checking any ideas with the Ambassador to get his thoughts. We don't have to give him the final say because we might come up with some good ideas here but we ought to check with him.

Mr. Sisco said, changing the subject as the group rose to go, that he and Secretary Rogers had been reassured by what they had found at the United Nations Monday. The UN's organization for the Pakistan relief effort is in better shape than anyone had thought.

Mr. Williams said that we would go all out in East Pakistan. The international contributions now according to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees or the refugees in India now total \$170 million of which the US had contributed \$70 million. AID would be presenting to the President their recommendation for an additional package of assistance. The President said that he would be glad to receive it.

Harold H. Saunders

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