

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

*Afghan*

Date: June 30, 1976  
Time: 4:00-5:00 p.m.  
Place: The Secretary's Office

SUBJECT: Meeting with Mohammad Naim of Afghanistan

PARTICIPANTS

U.S.

The Secretary  
Ambassador Eliot  
Deputy Assistant Secretary Dubs  
(Notetaker)

AFGHANISTAN

Mr. Mohammad Naim  
Ambassador Malikyar  
Foreign Ministry Director General  
Samad Ghaus

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THE SECRETARY            It's good to see you again. I remember Kabul with the greatest warmth and the tremendous hospitality you gave us.

MR. NAIM                 We were happy to have you. Everyone who met you remembers you well.

THE SECRETARY            The scenery of Afghanistan is lovely.

MR. NAIM                 Afghanistan is a country without too much beauty, but it is a very interesting place.

THE SECRETARY            I have flown over Afghanistan and once visited the Khyber Pass on the Pakistani side. That was a long time ago. But I was impressed with the beauty of the country.

MR. NAIM                 I believe it is getting easier to pass between Pakistan and Afghanistan. We have entered a new period of trying to discuss our problems. President Daoud of Afghanistan decided to take a step toward improving relations by inviting Mr. Bhutto to Kabul.

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October 11, 2007

THE SECRETARY

That was very courageous and useful for the peace of the area.

MR. NAIM

A friendly atmosphere has been created. We hope that a future meeting will provide an opportunity to deal with every problem and to eliminate the long-standing misunderstanding between us. We consider good relations with Pakistan to be very important. And on the other side, we are seeking to develop friendly and cooperative relations with Iran. All this will help to create stability in the region.

THE SECRETARY

I agree with you completely. We thought the results of the meeting were very good.

MR. NAIM

With respect to Afghanistan's particular situation, we are not without apprehension. This requires some explanation. There was a time in the recent history of world politics when emphasis was placed on the formation of military alliances. At that time, there were tensions with Pakistan. During that period, I was Ambassador to the U.S. In view of the tensions between Afghanistan and Pakistan, we thought that our defenses had to be improved. We presented a request to the State Department for very limited arms. This request was refused by the U.S.

THE SECRETARY

What year was that?

MR. NAIM

Late 1949 or early 1950.

THE SECRETARY

You must remember that this building was then populated by people who in previous centuries would have been missionaries. They believed in goodwill.

MR. NAIM

Afghanistan was cornered in a situation where the people expected the government to do something and the question of Afghanistan's security was widely discussed. A decision was finally made to seek help from whatever

source to ease the country's security problems. That is why Afghanistan began contacts with the Soviet Union. The Soviets were prepared to give Afghanistan arms. This then led to economic cooperation which brought with it people and technicians from the Soviet Union. I remember well my first visit with the Soviet Ambassador in Kabul many years ago. I told him that we wanted to be good neighbors but that we have a different ideological outlook from that of the Soviet Union. I said that if the Soviet Union intended to have a continuing good relationship with Afghanistan aid and ideology must be separated. I was, of course, expressing views of only one Afghan. In the first few years they tried to control the ideological and political side of our relationship. The situation, however, changed afterwards. The former regime in Afghanistan brought about an anarchical situation with a new constitution. The Soviet Union then found it easy to forget what had been said before. After the recent revolution in Afghanistan nearly all the world, including Russia, mistook events in Afghanistan. When I first visited the Soviet Union after the revolution to tell them about it, I found Brezhnev receiving me as though I were an emissary of a state which was establishing communism. This perception was not unique to the Russians but evident among others. This created more and more problems for us. The Soviets were more and more willing to see a situation develop along lines favorable to them. But, clearly, this perception was completely opposed to the outlook of the Afghan government and the Afghan way of life. We have, of course, received Russian arms. To man them properly, we have had to have officers and men trained in the Soviet Union. In the area of economic development, such as oil research, for example, we also had to send people to the Soviet Union for training. Now the Soviet Union is counting on these people who were trained there. As a result, we feel that the security situation

vis-a-vis our Soviet neighbor is becoming more and more undesirable. It is not easy to counteract the huge intelligence network they have in the area, as well as many other means they possess, including Afghans who are trained in the Soviet Union. We are interested in balancing the situation.

THE SECRETARY

In principle, I agree fully with what you have said. What should we do?

MR. NAIM

We want American friendship and cooperation to be more apparent. It should be seen by everyone.

THE SECRETARY

What can we do specifically?

MR. NAIM

The U.S. could participate more actively in such fields as agriculture and education and in areas in which your technology is needed.

THE SECRETARY

What is the obstacle?

AMBASSADOR ELIOT

These are the fields in which AID is concentrating, that is, agricultural and educational and health services. I don't quite know whether Mr. Naim is suggesting additional assistance in this field.

MR. NAIM

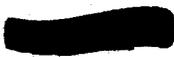
By tradition, the U.S. has always been interested in providing assistance in fields of education and agriculture. We welcome any aspect of the American presence in Afghanistan. On the other hand, we have to consider other things that might be done but approached in a very careful manner. Our intelligence is absolutely insufficient to counteract the Soviet presence.

THE SECRETARY

Would you like some assistance in this field?

MR. NAIM

Afghanistan would like assistance in this field.



THE SECRETARY

It depends against whom the intelligence is directed. If it is against the Soviet Union we can be of help. If it is against Pakistan and Iran, we can't help.

MR. NAIM

Intelligence against Pakistan and Iran is not the question. The security of Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan is interlinked.

THE SECRETARY

In principle, we are willing to help. But concretely what would it require?

MR. NAIM

We want to be more informed about the intentions of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. Allow me to tell you from what we feel and see that the Soviet Union has no intention of applying in any way the process of detente toward Afghanistan. From their viewpoint, this process has absolutely no value in this connection. Whatever information can be given to Afghanistan with respect to the intentions of the Soviet Union toward Afghanistan would be of great help. This help, of course, should not be visible.

THE SECRETARY

I agree fully that such assistance should not be visible.

MR. NAIM

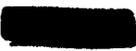
But, on the other hand, your open presence and your declared friendship will support a lot the idea of preserving Afghanistan from sinking into another ideological system.

THE SECRETARY

We can do a thing or two. First, we can give you information through a chosen channel. Secondly, if you want help to train people for your internal security needs, we can be of assistance.

MR. NAIM

During this visit I have had the possibility of meeting with different people to talk about



the subject of aid to developing countries such as Afghanistan. We would like to see America more dynamically engaged in our economic development.

THE SECRETARY           What is the extent of our present program?

AMBASSADOR ELIOT       We have about 100 Americans in our technical assistance program in Afghanistan, and the program is worth \$6-7 million.

MR. NAIM                As I previously indicated, the tensions between Afghanistan and Pakistan created a situation which led us to seek arms from the Soviet Union. Now we know that the consequences were not as simple as we thought.

THE SECRETARY           Do you want to change your arms supply policy?

MR. NAIM                For the moment that is quite impractical. What concerns us is the number of officers and civilian personnel who have been trained in the Soviet Union. When young men go to the Soviet Union for training they are inevitably influenced by Soviet ideology.

THE SECRETARY           Do you want your people to be trained in other countries?

MR. NAIM                We have asked India to train some of our officers but the possibilities there are limited. The same is also true with respect to Turkey. We will have to resolve this problem over the long run. Immediate action in the field of arms supply would not resolve the situation but create difficulties because of the suspicions of the Soviet Union. I hope that serious thought will be given to the overall situation of Afghanistan. There could be invisible intelligence cooperation and more visible evidence of friendship between Afghanistan and the U.S. This would create a sense of balance with respect to our security.

THE SECRETARY How do we do this? Invisible intelligence is easy.

MR. NAIM A more active participation in our development efforts will make the U.S. presence visible to all concerned.

THE SECRETARY What happened to the dam that we spoke about when we last met in Kabul?

AMBASSADOR ELIOT We have started up a project in the Helmand River Valley. There is a team of 10-15 Americans working there.

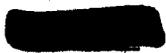
MR. NAIM We have a long way to go in the field of development. Perhaps the most important problem is that of education in Afghanistan. If we can get assistance in the field of education we could develop young people less susceptible to a foreign ideology.

THE SECRETARY I agree in principle with what you have said, but what can we do concretely? I agree with your perception of the danger you face. Now the problem is what can we do?

MR. NAIM A larger number of American experts to help us would be welcome. By doing that more possibilities are created of seeking and acquiring information indirectly.

THE SECRETARY The U.S. is not interested itself in intelligence gathering in Afghanistan but we are willing to help do those things which would stabilize your government.

MR. NAIM When you say there is no direct intelligence interest on the part of the U.S. in Afghanistan, the situation there should not be dissociated from the fact that developments in Afghanistan affect Afghanistan's neighbors and U.S. regional interests. It is not purely an Afghan internal matter.



THE SECRETARY

I agree with you completely. I merely said that the intelligence we would acquire for ourselves is not of crucial importance to us but that the stability of Afghanistan is what is significant.

MR. NAIM

The visible parts of our relationship we could discuss in detail between various agencies of our two governments.

THE SECRETARY

If you can survive until we reach firm conclusions in the U.S. Government; you are in no danger. We could send more senior Americans to Afghanistan. That will demonstrate U.S. interest. We can study together how we can cooperate and perhaps Ambassador Eliot could do this in Kabul. We are also prepared to send somebody out if this is needed.

AMBASSADOR ELIOT

I have tried to respond as quickly as possible to requests made by the Afghan government. I have always felt, however, that we should let Afghanistan set the pace regarding requests for further cooperation.

MR. NAIM

If you, Mr. Secretary, are in agreement in principle with what I have mentioned, our technical people in the departments concerned could study the possibilities of cooperation and set limits.

THE SECRETARY

I agree. Ambassador Eliot can represent the U.S. and, when needed, we can send additional people out to Kabul. You see to it on your side and I will on our side, although it is much more difficult for me than it is for you to get things done.

(TO ELIOT) See to it that this matter does not get lost in an endless morass. Let them decide what they need and let me know.

(TO NAIM) Will you initiate this matter when you go home?

MR. NAIM

I am here for just that purpose.

THE SECRETARY Is Mr. Naim seeing the President?

AMBASSADOR ELIOT Yes, at 4:30 p.m. tomorrow.

THE SECRETARY I will be there. I will be there for the meeting because it would be dangerous to let Presidents operate under the illusion that they can make decisions on their own. This would create confusion in the government. If you mention this to the President, I will retire.

MR. NAIM Since I spoke to you about various facets of cooperation, I won't have to repeat myself to the President.

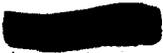
THE SECRETARY I will talk to him but it would be useful for you to repeat what you have told me. What you have said about history and your present concerns is very important. There will be no need to go into technical details. The President will turn that over to me anyway. Since you will have about a half hour with the President it would be helpful if you could summarize your points.

MR. NAIM To clarify what we have said, we want to create cooperation between the U.S. and Afghanistan in two ways. We would like invisible cooperation on intelligence matters. Secondly, we want very visible U.S. cooperation to give our people and others the strong impression that we have the U.S. as an active friend.

THE SECRETARY I'm sorry that we didn't have the Vice President stop in Kabul in connection with his recent trip to Iran. I am going to Iran in August. Maybe I will stop in Afghanistan for a day.

MR. NAIM You will be very welcome.

THE SECRETARY Why don't I keep this in mind. We will do it the same way as before, that is, arrive in the morning and leave in the afternoon or evening. I will have to look at my schedule.



MR. NAIM

I lunched today with a number of prominent Senators. Senator Percy told me that he had been in northern Afghanistan looking at a fertilizer complex built with Soviet assistance. It was not on schedule or finished at the time. Percy asked why the U.S. and the Soviet Union couldn't cooperate to complete the complex. The problem is that many people do not understand that such a project has many other facets of an invisible nature. It seems that our problem is not fully understood in the U.S.

THE SECRETARY

That is not true.

MR. NAIM

Afghanistan's security is important to the security of this region. If we sink, others will be in trouble. Increased cooperation between Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan will improve the general security in the area. Neither Pakistan nor Afghanistan have the ability to counteract Soviet intelligence in the region.

THE SECRETARY

We will see you for lunch tomorrow.

MALIKYAR

We are having a reception-buffet for Mr. Naim this evening and hope that you can attend.

THE SECRETARY

It is not on my schedule. I will try but I am not very optimistic. We will see you tomorrow.