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NEA/PAB: RAPECK: MRC  
5/8/73 EXT 20466  
NEA: JJSISCO

NEA/PAB: LBLAINGEN  
NEA/IRN: MMICHAUD (DRAFT)

NEA/INS: DKUX

ROUTINE DACCA

ROUTINE LONDON, NEW DELHI, TEHRAN,  
ISLAMABAD, USUN NEW YORK

E.O. 11652 GDS  
TAGS: PFOR, BG, IN, IR, PK  
SUBJECT: BANGLADESH AMBASSADOR'S CALL ON SISCO

1. AMBASSADOR ALI AT HIS INITIATIVE CALLED ON ASSISTANT SECRETARY SISCO ON THE LATTER'S RETURN FROM SOUTH ASIA. ALI ASKED FOR SISCO'S IMPRESSIONS FROM THE TRIP.

2. SISCO SAID VISIT WAS BOTH USEFUL AND TIMELY, COMING ON THE HEELS OF THE BANGLADESH-INDIAN INITIATIVE ON REPATRIATION OF POWS AND STRANDED CIVILIANS. SISCO REITERATED THAT U.S. NOT IN THE MIDDLE ON THIS U# ISSUE AND HAD NO INTENTION OF DEALING WITH THE DETAILS OF SPECIFIC PROPOSALS. THERE SHOULD BE NO DOUBT, HOWEVER, OF OUR SUPPORT FOR THE SIMLA PROCESS. THE BANGLADESH-INDIAN INITIATIVE WAS IMPORTANT STEP FORWARD, ESPECIALLY WITH RESPECT THAT THE POLITICAL ISSUE OF RECOGNITION WAS DELINKED FROM POW QUESTIONS. SISCO SAID HE WAS PLEASED THAT IT HAD BEEN RECOGNIZED AS SUCH BY PAKISTAN.

3. ALI REMARKED THAT PAKISTAN UNFORTUNATELY STILL WITHHELD RECOGNITION; EVEN THE PAKISTANI REPLY TO HIS GOVERNMENT'S INITIATIVE HAD AVOIDED MENTION OF BANGLADESH. AS TO FUTURE MOVES, ALI ACKNOWLEDGED THAT INDIA MUST REPLY TO THE PAKISTANI INVITATION TO FURTHER TALKS IN ISLAMABAD, BUT WAS UNINFORMED ON HIS GOVERNMENT'S ATTITUDE.

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4. SISCO OBSERVED THAT ANOTHER SUBJECT DISCUSSED IN DACCA WAS THE DELICATE MATTER OF DIVISION OF DEBT. DEPUTY SECRETARY RUSH AND HE HAD POINTED OUT WE HAD TRIED TO BE HELPFUL WITH OUR ASSISTANCE EFFORT AND BELIEVED IT WAS IN OUR MUTUAL INTEREST THAT WE REMAIN INVOLVED. THOSE LEADERS IN BANGLADESH WITH WHOM WE HAD TALKED HAD MADE IT CLEAR THAT THEY ALSO WISH TO SEE US CONTINUE TO PLAY A ROLE. WE WOULD, HOWEVER, BE PLACED IN A DIFFICULT POSITION IF THE DEBT ISSUE WERE NOT PROPERLY RESOLVED.

5. SISCO SUGGESTED WE SHOULD LOOK AT THE PROBLEM FROM THE PRACTICAL POINT OF VIEW. IF BANGLADESH WOULD ASSUME SOME RESPONSIBILITY FOR A PORTION OF THE DEBT, THE CREDITOR NATIONS WERE PREPARED TO CONSIDER GENEROUS RESCHEDULING. SISCO POINTED OUT THAT THE DONOR NATIONS AT THE RECENT DACCA MEETING HAD TAKEN STRONG POSITION ON THIS ISSUE. FOR OUR PART, THE USG HOPED THE MATTER COULD BE RESOLVED, FOR THE JUNE 30 DEADLINE WAS NOT FAR AWAY.

6. IN RESPONSE TO THE AMBASSADOR'S REQUEST FOR A GENERAL APPRAISAL, SISCO SAID HE AND THE DEPUTY SECRETARY HAD RETURNED WITH AN IMPRESSION THAT A GENUINE SPIRIT OF RECONCILIATION EXISTS IN BANGLADESH, INDIA AND PAKISTAN. THE SIMLA AGREEMENT WAS A RATHER REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENT TO EMERGE SO SOON AFTER THE END OF A BITTER WAR. HE THOUGHT THAT THE NATIONS IN SOUTH ASIA NOW WERE ALL MOVING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION, AND IN A DIRECTION WHICH WAS IN THEIR MUTUAL INTEREST. HE THOUGHT HE COULD ASSURE THE AMBASSADOR THAT BANGLADESH WOULD FIND A GENUINE DISPOSITION IN PAKISTAN TO MOVE TOWARDS MORE NORMAL RELATIONS.

7. A SECOND GENERAL IMPRESSION HE AND THE DEPUTY SECRETARY FORMED WAS THAT ALL THE CONCERNED PARTIES IN THE SUBCONTINENT--EACH IN HIS OWN WAY--WERE KEENLY AWARE THIS IS A REGION IN WHICH THE MAJOR POWERS HAVE AN INTEREST. ALL SEEMED TO AGREE THEY WISHED TO SEE THE UNITED STATES REMAIN INVOLVED. FOR OUR PART, WE HAVE ONE MAJOR INTEREST IN SOUTH ASIA: TO DO WHAT WE CAN TO CONTRIBUTE TO STABILITY. WE SEEK NO SPECIAL INFLUENCE; NEITHER IS IT IN OUR NATIONAL INTEREST TO SEE ANY ONE POWER DOMINATE THE AREA. WE WISH TO PLAY A PART IN THE EVOLUTION OF COMPLEMENTARY RELATIONS AMONG THE MAJOR POWERS AND THE REGIONAL POWERS IN THE SUBCONTINENT.

8. SISCO ALSO SAID HE WAS ENCOURAGED BY THE POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION THE BANGLADESH GOVERNMENT AND THE LEADERS OF BANGLADESH HAD MADE IN THE SEARCH FOR PEACE AND

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STABILITY. HE WAS HOPEFUL THAT BANGLADESH WOULD REMAIN FLEXIBLE AS NEGOTIATIONS DEVELOPED. HE FIRMLY BELIEVED THAT PAKISTAN WISHED TO WORK OUT THE KIND OF RELATIONSHIP WITH BANGLADESH WHICH WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF BOTH COUNTRIES.

9. ALI POINTED OUT THAT TIMING WAS AN IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION. PAKISTAN HAD STILL NOT BROUGHT ITSELF TO RECOGNIZE THE EXISTENCE OF BANGLADESH. BHUTTO WAS ALSO ARGUING THAT WAR CRIMES TRIALS WOULD STAND IN THE WAY OF RECONCILIATION. BANGLADESH HAD BROUGHT CHARGES AGAINST ONLY A MINIMUM NUMBER OF PAKISTANIS. MANY MORE WERE CULPABLE, BUT HIS GOVERNMENT HAD ONLY CHARGED THOSE AGAINST WHOM INCONTROVERTIBLE EVIDENCE WAS AVAILABLE.

10. SISCO OBSERVED THAT THIS OBVIOUSLY WAS A MATTER WHICH MUST BE WORKED OUT BETWEEN BANGLADESH AND PAKISTAN, BUT POINTED OUT THAT IT WAS A DIFFICULT PROBLEM FOR BOTH SIDES. CLEARLY THERE WERE EXCESSES DURING THE PERIOD. NO ONE DENIED THIS; BHUTTO HIMSELF HAD ADMITTED AS MUCH. MUJIB FELT HE COULD NOT JUST WIPE THE SLATE CLEAN; BUT BHUTTO WAS ALSO IN A DIFFICULT POSITION. HE HAS DONE A REMARKABLE JOB OF CUSHIONING THE LOSS OF THE EAST. HE HAS BEEN PREPARING THE GROUNDWORK FOR THE EVOLUTION OF A POSITIVE NEW RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. THIS WAS A DELICATE PROCESS AND ONE WHICH REQUIRED TIME. THE PROBLEM WAS HOW TO PROCEED WITH THIS EFFORT WITH THE PROSPECT OF WAR CRIMES TRIALS STIRRING UP EMOTIONS ON BOTH SIDES. THOUGH WE COULD NOT COUNSEL EITHER SIDE HOW TO WORK THIS OUT, WE HOPED THIS WHOLE MATTER WOULD BE RESOLVED IN SOME MUTUALLY SATISFACTORY MANNER.

11. ALI ALSO POINTED TO THE BIHARI QUESTION AS AN ISSUE ON WHICH THE PAKISTANIS WERE NOT BEING HELPFUL. SISCO REMARKED THAT THIS WAS ANOTHER PROBLEM ON WHICH THERE WOULD HAVE TO BE SOME GIVE AND TAKE. HE WAS CONVINCED THE PAKISTANIS WOULD BE FORTHCOMING ON THE ISSUE OF REPATRIATION OF BENGALIS IN PAKISTAN. HE WAS ALSO HOPEFUL THE BIHARI PROBLEM COULD BE RESOLVED BECAUSE OF THE SPIRIT OF RECONCILIATION SHARED BY ALL THE PARTIES.

12. ALI, IN A GENERAL COMMENT, SAID HE HAD SPENT MOST OF HIS ADULT LIFE EITHER ABROAD OR IN WEST PAKISTAN SERVING HIS COUNTRY IN THE DIPLOMATIC SERVICE. HE HAD ALWAYS CONSIDERED HIMSELF TO BE A GOOD PAKISTANI. THERE WERE MANY BENGALIS LIKE HIM WHO HAD BEEN DRIVEN TO SEEK SEPARATION ONLY BY THE ATROCITIES INFLICTED BY THE PAKISTAN ARMY. HE STILL RECOGNIZED THAT EVENTUALLY GOOD

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RELATIONS WOULD NEED TO BE DEVELOPED, BUT THE EVENTS OF 1971 WILL BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO FORGET. THE PROCESS, HE THOUGHT, WOULD REQUIRE AT LEAST A GENERATION. OBVIOUSLY PAKISTANI RECOGNITION WOULD HELP. IF PRESIDENT BHUTTO HAD TAKEN THIS MOVE RIGHT AWAY, BY NOW NORMAL RELATIONS WOULD ALREADY HAVE STARTED TO DEVELOP. SISCO COMMENTED HE WAS CONVINCED THAT, IF THE POW ISSUE COULD BE SETTLED, IT WOULD LEAD TO FURTHER CONCRETE STEPS TO IMPROVE RELATIONS.

13. COMPLETING HIS REVIEW OF HIS VISIT, SISCO SAID THAT THE SHAH HAD EXPRESSED CONCERN REGARDING SOVIET INTENTIONS IN THE REGION. THE SHAH FELT HE COULD NOT IGNORE SUCH DEVELOPMENTS AS THE SOVIET TREATIES WITH IRAQ AND INDIA, THE IRAQI ARMS INCIDENT IN PAKISTAN, AND SOVIET ACTIVITIES IN SOUTH YEMEN, THE INDIAN OCEAN AND THE IRAQI PORT OF UMM QASR. THE SHAH HAD FURTHER SAID IRAN WOULD BE CONCERNED AT ANY MOVE TO DISMEMBER PAKISTAN. SISCO OBSERVED THAT DURING HIS CALL ON INDIAN FOREIGN MINISTER SINGH THE DEPUTY SECRETARY HAD MENTIONED IRAN'S CONCERN WITH SOVIET INTENTIONS. SINGH HAD COMMENTED THAT TO THE EXTENT THAT INDIAN POLICY WAS A SOURCE OF IRANIAN CONCERN, HIS COUNTRY WOULD NEED TO TRY TO DISPEL IRANIAN APPREHENSIONS. 44