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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: Indian Ambassador Lakshmi K. Jha
Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the
President for National Security Affairs
Peter W. Rodman, NSC Staff

DATE AND TIME: Monday, January 29, 1973
Luncheon - 1:15 - 2:20 p.m.

PLACE: Dr. Kissinger's Office
The White House

Dr. Kissinger: I am glad we finally have this chance to review our relations. In fact our relations have improved since we started these discussions. Let's have a general talk today and then a more specific conversation in a couple of weeks.

I am sorry you are leaving. I really am. You were here during a difficult period and conducted yourself . . . Unfortunately! . . . with great skill, and great dignity. During the crisis you handled the press better than I did!

Ambassador Jha: Where do we go from here?

Dr. Kissinger: I think the evolution that has now started will have its own momentum. Don't you?

Ambassador Jha: Yes.

Dr. Kissinger: Within the next month something will be done on this \$87 million.

Have you had a preliminary discussion with Williams on how to conceive this?

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Ambassador Jha: He had some ideas. We had a quite workable arrangement on the economic aid. He went on to discuss phase II on military supplies, some to Pakistan and some to us. That I told him would be difficult for us to say yes to.

But on the economic and cultural side, it was okay. A linkage of any kind between the economic and military side would be impossible. It would create more problems. But the economic package he was putting together was okay.

On the military side, the question is not so much what you are supplying and where, but what is your view of the subcontinent on which you are supplying these arms. In other words, what does it mean? Let me put it this way: While publicly we both say we are bound to be friendly, there is no basis to think that democracies can be more friendly to each other than others.

Dr. Kissinger: We have proved that!

Ambassador Jha: Right. So the question is, what is the kind of view you have that would be the real basis of building better relations? The fact that there is no area of conflict between us is helpful. But this is negative. I thought you as a philosopher could tell me!

Dr. Kissinger: Chou En-lai said of me that I am the only one who can talk for a half-hour without saying anything.

The restraint you showed during the period of the bombing, we very much appreciate.

The immediate irritant, military supply to Pakistan: There are three categories of issues. First, Pakistan equipment that was caught here in the pipeline, which we have no right to keep. This is a matter of title. This is a million dollars worth. Second, contracts unfulfilled, about another \$13 million. Three, the onetime exception, which is \$40 million. And four, equipment beyond that. I can tell you there is no intent to establish a continuing military supply relationship with Pakistan. On the other hand, we must certainly release what belongs to them -- the one million. So the question is, what do we do in relation to categories 2 and 3?

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You know that even all of it would not affect the strategic situation one iota. There is no intention of engaging or encouraging an arms race.

With respect to the first two categories, when we clear those up, we could do the same for India. I am not committing us to it, I am just thinking out loud.

But this is the kind of military thing that could happen. You will not be confronted with American pressure taking the form of a continuing military supply program to Pakistan.

On the general thing, you know I think the events of last year, while painful, had a salutary effect. They eliminated some immature emotions. We had always treated you with a mixture of narcissism -- seeing things in you that flattered ourselves. The noble savage. I am being very candid. Then you acted like a great power; you got in our way and we had to oppose you.

But now we can deal in a mature way with each other. We recognize you as a major power in South Asia -- from Indochina to the Middle East. Therefore, your concerns have to be taken seriously by us. And your concerns and interests are rather parallel to ours. We do not want any outside power to dominate South Asia. So I think we can deal on the basis of genuine reciprocity.

We should exchange, as we do with a very few others, general perceptions of where we stand. We should discuss our major moves in advance so that neither of us is taken by surprise.

So we look upon you as a major element of order and stability in the area. This does not preclude having good relations with any other country. But you should not be an extension of any other country either. Again that is in your interest as much as ours.

Ambassador Jha: Yes.

Dr. Kissinger: As I told you, we will continue our relations with the Chinese -- but we do not pursue Chinese objectives in the subcontinent.

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Ambassador Jha: That's important, because the Chinese are acting contrary to us.

Dr. Kissinger? Where?

Ambassador Jha: In Bangladesh.

Dr. Kissinger: With respect to Bangladesh our interests are like yours, that is, in the stability of the country. We do not want a communist Bangladesh, nor do you.

Ambassador Jha: No.

Dr. Kissinger: And it would have a catastrophic effect on West Bengal.

Ambassador Jha: Yes.

Dr. Kissinger: Nor do we want economic dislocation there. What do you refer to? Do you mean their military supply policy toward Pakistan?

Ambassador Jha: Chinese influence is very far forward.

Dr. Kissinger: Are they trying to do that?

Ambassador Jha: They are trying to test their strength in the Bangladesh elections in March.

Dr. Kissinger: The Chinese have no veto over our policy. Whatever community of interest exists between China and the United States, it extends to South Asia only to the extent that South Asia should not become an extension of one superpower.

Ambassador Jha: The Chinese believe that India is an extension of the Soviet Union.

Dr. Kissinger: We do not believe that.

Ambassador Jha: Can the Chinese be disillusioned about that?

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Dr. Kissinger: They have a pretty profound suspicion of you, which has always surprised me. Their perception is pretty much the same as the Maxwell book. I don't think you want us to intercede for you.

Ambassador Jha: No. But you should have your own assessment.

Dr. Kissinger: Can we pass that on to them when we have a general exchange of views?

Ambassador Jha: Yes.

Dr. Kissinger: That we are prepared to do. As our own assessment, not as a message from you.

Ambassador Jha: Yes. What role do you see for India in Indochina?

Oh, first, one more thing about arms supplies. I would accept -- but many in my government would not -- that the arms you supply to Pakistan will not affect the strategic situation. But the thing which would be of concern to my mind, is that it implies a certain political support to Pakistan, at a time when Pakistan is still in a negative phase, trying to create tensions, rather than build bridges. I mean, if the Simla Agreement had been carried through -- that is, recognition of Bangladesh -- none of this would have happened.

Dr. Kissinger: Is that what is holding it up? Bangladesh recognition?

Ambassador Jha: Yes. The prisoners are not really a problem. We have no interest in them. The problem is only because it is a slap in the face of Mujib -- he would lose face. They are trying to drive a wedge between us and Bangladesh. If Pakistan would do something, it would be quickly worked out. Instead, Bhutto has launched a press campaign, to which we are not responding.

Dr. Kissinger: I have the impression that Bhutto is willing to recognize Bangladesh but his domestic opinion is a problem.

Ambassador Jha: He is a clever man. When he whips up public opinion one way or the other, he can get support. If he wanted to grant recognition, he has not insuperable difficulty.

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Dr. Kissinger: Then why is he not doing it?

Ambassador Jha: It is what worries us. He is trying to get something more out of India, and playing the domestic game. This is a different course from what he showed at Simla.

He is telling your Senators that he wants American arms as a sign of a political commitment.

Dr. Kissinger: A commitment to what? We have a certain commitment to the independence of Pakistan.

Ambassador Jha: What concerns us is that he is blocking a political settlement -- for which we would make concessions.

Dr. Kissinger: About the military supplies, you know the background. You know about the one-time exception. The President felt he had a moral obligation.

For us, it is important to separate essentially subsidiary problems from the basic ones. I don't know what political support is implied in keeping old commitments. I have given you the worse situation that could happen.

With respect to Pakistan's position, we are not encouraging Pakistani intransigence on Bangladesh recognition. We have no interest in it. We have not pushed Pakistan on it, and we can express our view. We in fact have not had a consistent dialogue with Pakistan on any subject in recent months.

I understand your point. But there is something to be said for lancing the boil and getting it over with. We are in favor of the prisoner of war releases and are against the use of force against Pakistan. But this is not a prospect.

Ambassador Jha: What about Southeast Asia?

Dr. Kissinger: We think you can play a useful role in Laos and Cambodia in the ICC. In Cambodia, your interests and our interests are congruent. We are not in favor of seeing Peking dominate Phnom Penh, because we

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don't want any great power to dominate Phnom Penh. Therefore, if some accommodations could be reached between Lon Nol and the Khmer communists, with the North Vietnamese already agreed to withdraw, we could get a neutral Cambodia in which no great power exercises a dominate influence. If we could get that Commission reconstituted, we think it could be useful. We are doing the same in Laos. It is easier in Laos to get a political arrangement; which could make it easier to get the ICC back.

With respect to South Vietnam, if the agreement is maintained there may be enough tranquility to perhaps get a political accommodation.

Ambassador Jha: What is your judgment? I am frankly worried about Thieu.

Dr. Kissinger: We will use our maximum influence to see that it is complied with. Most violations are on the communist side. It is too early to tell.

Ambassador Jha: Thieu's utterances are skeptical.

Dr. Kissinger: Every Vietnamese party has its own constituency. It is a tremendous change for all the parties to go to peace. We have to be patient.

Ambassador Jha: With respect to great power dominance, which is the greater threat, Russia or China?

Dr. Kissinger: I think geographic proximity counts. Therefore, the Chinese in the long run. I don't see why Russia would want to invest great resources or prestige. I

Ambassador Jha: Bill Sullivan spoke about China on Meet the Press, saying the Chinese helped in promoting the settlement. I see no evidence of this.

Dr. Kissinger: Even if it were true, it is a stupid thing to say, and it is not true. There is no evidence of it. He believes it, but he doesn't have access to the information. My view is that the Soviet Union was more helpful than the Chinese.

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Ambassador Jha: Yes.

Dr. Kissinger: I don't know why he said it.

Ambassador Jha: Apart from peacekeeping, to what extent do you want us to become involved economically?

Dr. Kissinger: It depends. If you become an ally of Hanoi, we have no reason to throw our hats in the air, but we don't see why you would have an interest in Hanoi dominating Indochina. You could certainly play a useful role in Laos and Cambodia economically.

Ambassador Jha: Thieu has hurt himself with his anti-Indian actions, such as burning the Indian flag. It hurt a lot of people who might have thought that South Vietnam has a right to its own future, and so forth.

Dr. Kissinger: What is your perception of Southeast Asia?

Ambassador Jha: Our Foreign Minister said in his speech that we would like to do what we can to help economic reconstruction. With respect to peacekeeping, if there exist the basic political conditions for it, the ICC can do a very useful job. One thing being discussed in Delhi is whether the ICC can be made more active in Laos.

Dr. Kissinger: You don't know what decision has been made? Souvanna wanted to discuss it there.

Ambassador Jha: Yes. There has not been a decision yet.

You know that Haksar retired?

Dr. Kissinger: I didn't know that.

Ambassador Jha: He took a leave, with the understanding that he would not come back to the same position. His replacement is a man named Dhar. He is a professor of economics, not the same Dhar who signed the treaty with the Soviet Union. Dhar has been running the office when Haksar was away. So my channel is a bit dislocated because Haksar is not

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there, so I have no feedback on what happened between the Prime Minister and Souvanna. What the Foreign Office tells me, I am not sure of. I don't want to mislead you.

There are two possibilities: Kaul, who would rather have that job than come here. The other fellow is someone who was in our UN delegation once, and is now dealing with Kashmir.

It depends totally on the Prime Minister.

Dhar is a very sensible guy. On foreign policy issues, he has been detached from the rigmarole of the Foreign Office. The present indications are he will get it.

Dr. Kissinger: You won't leave until April?

Ambassador Jha: The end of April.

Dr. Kissinger: Then to Kashmir?

Ambassador Jha: I expect so. You can spend your summer vacation there!
Dr.

Dr. Kissinger: With all my friends within a stone's throw? I will infuriate several countries at once.

Ambassador Jha: On the 28th, you are dining with us. The four ceasefire people will be there. The four ICCS people.

Dr. Kissinger: Are you going to invite Huang Hua down?

Ambassador Jha: I am prepared to!

Dr. Kissinger: And Prime Minister Meir. She will be here then.

Ambassador Jha: It is too bad we could not have good relations with Israel, but we had to worry about the Moslem reaction -- or at least neutralize the Moslems on the Pakistan question.

There are many Jews in India. They are very happy. One of the oldest synagogues is in Kerala.

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Dr. Kissinger: Where does the Indian Christian or Jew fit into the caste system?

Ambassador Jha: The caste tradition is so ingrained that it is carried forward even in other religions. There is a church in Madras with separate sections for Brahmin Christians and non-Brahmin Christians!

Dr. Kissinger: A very complex but very resilient society!

Ambassador Jha: Yes, we have survived a lot. It is interesting that these castes are now voting for radical reform, for example, the laws against the barriers against the untouchables.

Dr. Kissinger: How do you think Moynihan will do?

Ambassador Jha: He will do all right. But I will have to warn him. The Indians do not have a profound sense of humor [laughter]. He should not go by the Indians he meets here! At a dinner I gave for Moynihan, I invited Galbraith, John Sherman Cooper and Keating. Galbraith said that the way to be a successful ambassador is to ignore State Department instructions. Our newspapers reported this with great solemnity.

Dr. Kissinger: But Galbraith meant it!

[On this note the meeting ended.]

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