DECLASSIFIED
A/ISS/IPS, Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
October 11, 2007

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

[redacted])

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION September 18, 1973

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President and Secretary of State Designate
Harold H. Saunders, NSC Staff

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Prime Minister of Pakistan
Aziz Ahmed, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Defense
Sultan Khan, Ambassador of Pakistan

DATE AND PLACE: Tuesday, September 18, 1973, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. in the President's Oval Office on the first day of Prime Minister Bhutto's Official Visit

The President and the Prime Minister had been alone during picture-taking by the White House press photographers. As the remainder of the group entered, the introductions led to the following conversation:

Kissinger: Ambassador Khan put me on the plane to Peking [for Dr. Kissinger's secret visit from Rawalpindi in July 1971].

President: You were most helpful and discreet. We are extremely grateful for what you did.

Khan: When I later saw Chou En-lai, he said I could tell my US friends that Dr. Kissinger's visit was the best kept secret since D-Day.

Bhutto: When I came for President Kennedy's funeral, I was Foreign Minister. Ayub Khan was in Dacca at the time, and by the time I got his consent to go, it was late and I had to use a chartered plane. I met President Johnson, and the first thing he said to me was, "So, you are going to break bread with Chou En-lai." I was taken aback. It is a good thing I knew

XGDS - 1
DECLAS - Date Impossible to Determine.
BYAUTH - Dr. Henry A. Kissinger

[redacted]

Photocopy from Gerald R. Ford Library

DECLASSIFIED
A/ISS/IPS, Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
October 11, 2007

[redacted]

my Bible; otherwise I would not have known the phrase "breaking bread." Here I had come simply to bring the condolences of my people, and I was confronted with that statement. Times have changed.

President: He was a very direct man.

I am sorry our visit had to be postponed from July. However, more things have happened and we can discuss them.

The important point I want to emphasize is what I said in my welcoming remarks--that the independence of Pakistan is a cornerstone of US foreign policy. I chose the word "cornerstone" deliberately; I spoke with Dr. Kissinger about it as we walked over to the ceremony. We have always felt this way. We have not always been as successful in our policies as we might have been. However, this is the situation now. We hope your visit will reemphasize our dedication to that principle. Everything else will fit into that proposition. Our relations with Iran and with the PRC fit into that framework. We will not compromise on that principle. Our new Secretary of State [pointing to Dr. Kissinger] understands this.

Kissinger: We have told Chou En-lai this is our view. We have encouraged China to give military supplies to Pakistan, and we will find out through what means it is possible for us to help. We had extensive talks with the Shah, and we urged him to make contingency plans and his own deployment in ways that would help Pakistan, as well as to transfer equipment when possible. We have also made it clear to India that this is our policy.

President: Making this clear to India has been at considerable domestic cost. We have a number of people in the US who are enthusiastic supporters of India.

Kissinger: The Soviet Ambassador approached me on Afghanistan. I told him that if the recent coup in Afghanistan remained an internal Afghan affair, that would be one matter. But if it resurrected the Pushtunistan dispute, the US would be engaged. This is the basic policy of the President.

[redacted]

Photocopy from Gerald R. Ford Library

DECLASSIFIED
A/ISS/IPS, Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
October 11, 2007

President: We can talk candidly about this. When you were here before [December 1971], I explained to you that domestic public opinion in the US is somewhat difficult to handle. At the time of the India-Pakistan war in 1971, no one could understand why we did not back India. It is ironic that our great newspapers like the New York Times and our columnists argue that we should back India simply because it was "bigger." The world will not be safe for anybody but the very big and very strong if we adopt that as a principle of our foreign policy.

While we seek good relations with all nations, we consider Pakistan to deserve our continued friendship regardless of India or the USSR. This is not just because we are pro-Pakistan, although I admire the guts and courage of the Pakistani people. But this is not just a matter of friendship; it is a matter of the interests which the US has in a peaceful world. It is our interest that a nation not be overrun. On this our policies are in agreement. When we get down to particulars in our relationship, there may be some problems. But on the big issues we agree.

Bhutto: Thank you very much. This is a rare opportunity to talk with you. Please allow me to be candid because we do not have the opportunity to talk frequently.

First, I know that some people think there is a highly subjective element in South Asia, that emotions blind people there to cold logic. It is true that we have had personal regimes in Pakistan; there has been too much of that. Having said that, however, we know that you understand the subcontinent extremely well. You have been there. There is no naivete in this office on the situation in South Asia. You also come from a party that has long experience in Asia. You have had your own personal experiences there. That helps a great deal.

We Pakistanis would like to make our humble contribution to your effort to bring peace around the world. The Middle East problem is interconnected with the South Asian one.

Photocopy from Gerald R. Ford Library

DECLASSIFIED
A/ISS/IPS, Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
October 11, 2007

[redacted]

Pakistan cannot be unaware of that, and every day we find new emphasis being put on the importance of the Persian Gulf.

India is claiming to be a big power, but it is not clear what being a big power means. There are more people starving today in India than in Pakistan. There are many contradictions in India and we feel sorry for the Indian people and the economic privations they suffer.

The recent floods have set Pakistan back. Otherwise, we would have been looking forward to self-sufficiency in wheat and sugar and we have already been exporting rice. If it had not been for the floods, the prospects of our going ahead would be bright. In contrast, India is disillusioned with its own lack of progress.

India also seems disillusioned with what has happened in Bangladesh. If Pakistan had followed a "Nehru policy" there would have been a number of Bangladeshs in India in the 1960s.

President: Dr. Kissinger made the same point to me the other day.

Kissinger: It has been my feeling that India started a process in Bangladesh that would work to the long-range disadvantage of India itself.

President: Not that we wish India to have trouble. I simply want to note that Dr. Kissinger and you have each raised the same point.

Bhutto: India has burned its fingers in the furnace of Bengal. Over the years we have had Sikhs, Nagas, Nizos approach us for help against India. They wanted our support in their fight for autonomy within India. We did not give them our support.

There are other factors than "bigness" involved in being a big power. There is the strength of economy. India's legs are hollow. They are building a huge military colossus at the same time. But that is India's look-out.

[redacted]

Photocopy from Gerald R. Ford Library

DECLASSIFIED
A/ISS/IPS, Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
October 11, 2007

Another element one must assess is geographic position. Pakistan is stiuated at the mouth of the Persian Gulf. Any state that has access to the Karachi coast can dominate the Gulf. That is why the Soviet Union is so interested in that coast.

Pakistan has been committed to Western civilization. We have been committed to the US. In earlier days, there was a simplistic approach to world affairs in which the choice was between God and Satan, and we chose God. Nehru used to say that Pakistan was the most allied ally of the US. Pakistan supported the UK in the Suez crisis, and the Egyptians say they have not forgiven us yet. We have always tried to make our contribution. We kept away from Third World non-alignment sentiments.

Meanwhile, Nehru visited the Soviet Union, and the India-USSR relationship grew closer. That was in the 1950s.

In the 1960s, our relations with the US on a people-to-people level remained profound. There was only one consideration that caused difficulties in the relationship--Pakistan's relationship with the PRC. That relationship was rooted in the fact that the Soviets were pressing on Pakistan since they had an interest in a warm water outlet. That being the case, we did not want bad relations with China at the same time. Apart from our relationship with China as a neighbor of South Asia, we felt that the problems of Southeast Asia would not be solved without Chinese participation.

President: It is only fair to say, too, that the fact that the US at that critical time seemed to cool its relations with Pakisfan forced Pakistan to revise those relations. I was in Pakistan in 1964. I saw Ayub Khan then. He said to me, "Trust is like a thin thread; once it is broken, it is hard to put together again." The initiative to China had to develop.

Bhutto: For Pakistan the changing relationship with the US was more painful. There was a romanticism in the relationship. This was wrong, stupid. But it was there.

Photocopy from Gerald R. Ford Library

DECLASSIFIED
A/ISS/IPS, Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
October 11, 2007

The changing mood also coincided with the Sino-Indian conflict of 1962, along with the Soviet pressure in Pakistan. At that time, Averell Harriman came to Pakistan with Duncan Sandys. Pakistan could have walked into Kashmir. Harriman told us not to move. He told us that the US supports a full settlement of the Kashmir problem. Then, Harriman and Sandys went to New Delhi and told Nehru that the US was eager to help India and India pulled back.

President: He pulled back when India didn't need us anymore.

Kissinger: Or at least he could take us for granted.

President: He thought he could get something for nothing.

Bhutto: The US jumped the gun. We urged restraint, but the US felt Nehru was forthcoming and responded. The US provided $60 million in credit without consulting with Pakistan. Pakistan asked why the US was in such a hurry. That was in December 1962. In March 1963, another $60 million for India was announced. The US said that its global interests required this. Pakistan asked how India had modified its views. Then Pakistan began negotiating with India. Pakistan advised the continuation of negotiation, but while these were going on, the White House issued a statement saying that a Kashmir settlement was not necessary. After that, Pakistan did not say any more, but the US went on to provide long-term assistance to India.

India took advantage of this. India is an important nation, but India needs US economic assistance and PL 480. The US does not need India. There is no reason why the euphoria toward India should continue. The Secretary of State Designate has said that the days of that kind of euphoria are finished and that your policy would be pragmatic from here on.

Pakistan is not the only neighbor of India that has suffered--Nepal, Sikkim, Burma and China have all suffered similarly. So it is not that Pakistan is wrong and India is right. And it is not that Pakistan does not want good relations with India.

Photocopy from Gerald R. Ford Library

DECLASSIFIED
A/ISS/IPS, Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
October 11, 2007

Pakistan is determined to have good relations because we have promised a better life for our people. We have shown our bona fides. But living in peace with India does not mean Indian hegemony in South Asia.

The experience of 1971 was a freak. There were a couple of morons in power in Pakistan. Now, Bangladesh is in difficult straits.

President: What do you project for Bangladesh?

Kissinger: We have seen intelligence reports to the effect that there are Pakistani flags from time to time flown in Bangladesh. Do you see the same reports?

President: This is just for our information. They are good people. Many top Pakistani leaders were from Bengal, and I have met some of them. What do you think is going to happen? Do you think Bangladesh will survive?

Bhutto: Of course, the people will survive. But they are a most unfortunate people. We want good relations with them and we will have them. But, as I see it, it is inevitable that they will come under Chinese influence.

President: I'm sorry. I did not mean to interrupt.

Bhutto: We are prepared to have good relations with Bangladesh. If it had not been for the floods, we would have the most viable unit in South Asia. If Bangladesh wants a loose relationship with us in the future, we are prepared to have some kind of loose confederal relationship with them.

We are going to have a problem with the Afghans. Now they lay claim to two Pakistani provinces. This keeps raising the question: Is something wrong with the basic concept of Pakistan? I don't think this can be. Two million people have given their lives for the idea of Pakistan. But people keep calling it into question.

President: The tragedy of the early days was in not settling the Kashmir question right at the outset.

Photocopy from Gerald R. Ford Library

DECLASSIFIED
A/ISS/IPS, Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
October 11, 2007

Bhutto: Pakistan must have some meaning. Two million people have given their lives for it. Why do we have these problems? It is easy to stir up secession anywhere in the world. The Indians seem to be concentrating on that.

Pakistan now has 65 million people and is moving ahead. It is not that Afghanistan wants to revive its claim from the past; there is more to it than that. We believe that the USSR is interested in reviving this problem. Afghanistan by itself is no problem for Pakistan.

Now, when we talk about this, the US Government position has been that there is no concrete evidence of Soviet involvement.

Kissinger: The brother of the President of Afghanistan has just been to Moscow.

President: I am totally aware that the leadership of Afghanistan is tilting toward the USSR.

You have made a fundamental point--that the fragmentation of nations is not just a problem for the subcontinent. It is a problem in Africa, of course. Even Britain has this problem in Ireland. Having countries torn apart this way can create nothing but chaos. We will support the integrity of Pakistan against either Afghanistan or India. [To Dr. Kissinger] Be sure your friends in the State Department understand that, Henry.

Kissinger: In three months, they will be your friends, too, Mr. President.

President: We'll see about that.

Bhutto: The Soviet Union has its eyes glued to the coast. Afghanistan alone would not fulfill Soviet ambitions. India alone would not fulfill Soviet ambitions. I am not saying that the Soviet Union wants to dismember Pakistan. They want to win us to the Asian Collective Security Pact. The former Afghan government was not accepting that approach.

Photocopy from Gerald R. Ford Library

DECLASSIFIED
A/ISS/IPS, Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
October 11, 2007

[redacted]

President Daud of Afghanistan does not have roots in the coup which brought him to power. The majors and colonels under him trained in the USSR. Those young boys are difficult to predict. They will not rest until we get harpooned and lassoed.

There is no use comparing European collective security to the proposal for Asian collective security. Europe may be ripe for that kind of arrangement, but Asia is not ripe for it. There are still territorial disputes and wars going on. There is a tenuous cease-fire in Southeast Asia. Asia is in a state of flux. The objective conditions for this kind of approach to security have not crystallized. We do not feel that any approach to Asian security should be spear-headed by the USSR. We do not see why others who have interest in Asia like the US should not be involved. The Soviets are unhappy about us. They are trying to ginger up Afghanistan.

Iran agreed to a communique in which they accepted in principle the idea of Asian collective security. The Shah explained that he had only given in on the words and would remain cautious about the idea and about any practical steps. I told him that the principle itself was offensive to Pakistan.

I know Chou En-lai feels that the Soviets are concentrating on the middle of Asia--Persian Gulf, Pakistan and Iran--and then after directing everyone's attention to that area, Chou feels that the USSR will hit China.

President: Mrs. Gandhi told us that the friendship treaty did not mean anything.

Kissinger: She offered the same kind of treaty to the US.

Bhutto: In the Persian Gulf, Pakistan has very good relations with the Emirate states. Pakistan also has good relations with the Arab states, even with the new messiah in Libya. Pakistan has had some pilots in Libya until they were asked to take off against the Sixth Fleet and we told them nothing doing.

[redacted]

Photocopy from Gerald R. Ford Library

DECLASSIFIED
A/ISS/IPS, Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
October 11, 2007

President: It is important that Pakistan, to the extent it can, play a leavening role with the new states like the Gulf states.

Bhutto: Relations with Iran are good. It is something of a feat to have good relations with both Iran and with the Arab states.

But we do have good relations with Iran--the best of relations. I have great admiration for the Shah. However, there are one or two aspects of our relationship that we need to talk about. In the past we had contingency plans with Iran for Iran's help in case of trouble. But when trouble came, help did not materialize. Iran had to consider how the Soviets would react. It is very well for Iran to say that Iran will come to Pakistan's aid. However, this sometimes creates a bad reaction in Pakistan. Our people are a strong people, and they respond by asking why Pakistan needs Iran's aid. For the Shah to talk that way suggests that Pakistan is going to disintegrate tomorrow and Iran will bail us out. Instead of contributing to our ability, that kind of statement creates a feeling of inferiority.

President: I understand. Those offers of help should be made privately and executed publicly.

Henry, when you go to State, I want you to tell them to knock off discussion of further dismemberment of Pakistan. I do not know whether there is much of a problem on that in State or not.

Our problem is that the attitude in the US is that Pakistan is essentially governed by military dictatorship, and there is a love affair between the American liberal establishment and India.

One of the things you can do here, Mr. Prime Minister, is to talk to people and to let them see that you are a liberal in your own right. Your record helps you here. You can speak not just as a spokesman for the interests of your country but as a leader of thought. The Indians have made their appeal in the US on the basis of a higher morality. But their actions have shown them to be something else.

Photocopy from Gerald R. Ford Library

DECLASSIFIED
A/ISS/IPS, Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
October 11, 2007

Dr. Kissinger caught the devil before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in his confirmation hearings.

Kissinger: India is so dependent on Soviet military equipment.

President: You can be persuasive here, Mr. Prime Minister. One of the problems Pakistan has in the US, frankly, is the public relations problem. Sometimes your candor proves to be a detriment. But your credibility with the liberal establishment will be very helpful. You can help to develop more support in Congress for our helping you. In the military area, our hands are tied. We bit the bullet in the spring by returning to a policy of providing spare parts. We need to create a climate now so that when we take another little move, the roof won't cave in.

On other issues, you have a debt problem, and we want to be very helpful on that.

Kissinger: The Prime Minister was very helpful with Senator Percy when he visited Pakistan this summer, and you know, Mr. President, how pro-Indian Percy has been.

President: You have a strong moral case. You can be persuasive. But don't make them choose between India and Pakistan. What we would like to do over the next three years is to be in a position to help Pakistan in a crunch if a crunch comes--economically or otherwise. Humanitarian assistance is no problem except for wheat, which is a problem of availability. Our problem is the Congress.

Kissinger: What we need to do is to help Pakistan through a series of individual programs.

President: Yes, rather than one big package. The US must have at least an even-handed policy toward South Asia rather than a pro-Indian policy.

Kissinger: We have to lay a consistent base over a period of time.

Photocopy from Gerald R. Ford Library

DECLASSIFIED
A/ISS/IPS, Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
October 11, 2007

President: Public relations is important to us in getting that base established.

Bhutto: We are aware of your Congressional problems. Thus we have not really pressed the military supply issue. We do not want to embarrass you or burden your position. But our need is really dire. Iran--and even a great power--has so many complications when it tries to go to the aid of another country. You can choose your time for acting, but who are we to say when we will need assistance. We need to be self-reliant.

We are your allies and will continue to be your good friends. But if Kuwait and Saudi Arabia are entitled to military sales, now that there is peace between India and Pakistan, perhaps we are entitled to the same. If we take an initiative with India to insure peace--we may even offer a reduction of military forces--we must have the psychological and political advantage of knowing that we can stand on our own feet.

Please consider our needs. It is your choice and your decision. But we believe we can appeal to you. We do have a case.

President: There is total agreement with you on that. There was great agonizing in this office during the 1971 war. We were hopeful that we could have provided more. I know that many of our friends are concerned that the US initiative with the USSR is so important that the US would not stand by its older friends. But as our declaration on avoiding nuclear war indicated, you can be sure that improvement of US-Soviet relations will never be at the expense of friends or third countries. Our Chinese friends must realize this too. I think they do.

Kissinger: I think so.

President: The Soviet leaders realize that we are not talking about a condominium. In our talks with Brezhnev, we have never given an inch on South Asia. On the contrary, in 1971 some

Photocopy from Gerald R. Ford Library

DECLASSIFIED
A/ISS/IPS, Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
October 11, 2007

[redacted]

very stiff messages went to Moscow. Henry, do you want to describe the conversation we had in San Clemente with Brezhnev on this point?

Kissinger: We called the attention of the Soviets in 1971 to a letter from President Kennedy to President Ayub saying that we would help Pakistan if it were attacked by India. We told the Soviets that we regarded that letter as in full force and as applying to that situation in 1971. This was at the time when we received reports that the Indians were shifting their troops to move against Pakistan.

We also told the PRC that if they came into the war in support of Pakistan and if they were attacked, they would have our full support. As it turned out, they could not do this. The winter prevented them, and they were not ready.

We have told Brezhnev that we would consider an attack on Pakistan in any form as inconsistent with the detente between us.

President: As a footnote to our conversation in San Clemente, I referred to Soviet aid to India as one way the Soviets commit aggression through using third countries.

Kissinger: The President instructed me to tell Ambassador Dobrynin after the coup in Afghanistan that any outward projection of the Afghan crisis would not be in the spirit of detente.

President: I will tell Gromyko the same thing. It is in the interest of world peace that the US try to have a modus vivendi with the USSR. The Soviets sometimes don't appreciate what this means. It is also necessary for us to have a relationship with the PRC.

Pakistan is a critical country. It is in the road to warm water ports. US interests are served by a strong and independent Pakistan.

Henry, you may want to tell the Prime Minister about my conversation with Mao Tse-tung.

[redacted]

Photocopy from Gerald R. Ford Library

DECLASSIFIED
A/ISS/IPS, Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
October 11, 2007

[redacted]

Kissinger: The President began his conversation with Mao by saying that it was not sentimentality but parallel necessities and commonality of interests which had brought the US and China together. The Chinese are an attractive people but they are not sentimentalists. In February, when I saw Mao again, he picked up this theme. When I go to China, we will synchronize our views further about our common interests in your part of the world.

In short, we see a need for detente.

Bhutto: The Europeans do not need to worry about detente.

President: Henry, the difference between Europe and Asia is important. The Prime Minister is making an important point. It had not come home to me before how different the situations are.

Kissinger: We have not taken up the Soviet position on Asian collective security. We are opposed to it. There cannot be a conference which does not include the PRC, Japan, the US, India, Pakistan.

President: Southeast Asia is not ready yet.

Kissinger: It is true that in Europe there is a clearly defined military balance.

Ahmed: I was just recently in Peking. The PRC sees detente as a Soviet effort to put Europe under chloroform.

Kissinger: Ironically, detente has made the Europeans more alert.

Our strategy is to force the Soviets, if they do mischief, to do it from a position of peace so that we can mobilize domestic support for our response.

President: We fully recognize that it is possible to have the appearance of detente at the top with games being played underneath. In Afghanistan, for instance, the Soviets can say, "Who, me?" We are going to be watching very carefully and will not be taking anything on faith. But the Soviets have no illusions about how we feel.

[redacted]

Photocopy from Gerald R. Ford Library

DECLASSIFIED
A/ISS/IPS, Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
October 11, 2007

Kissinger: Concretely, what have they gotten away with since the President took office?

President: The Prime Minister might say that they had gotten away with Bangladesh.

Kissinger: But your policy was tougher than any conceivable policy that anyone else could have followed, Mr. President.

Bhutto: That is why we do not want you to be in that position again. We want to get our inherent strengths mobilized. We do not want to embarrass you.

Kissinger: Ambassador Helms will be coming to Pakistan in November. He will want to talk with you about some of the possibilities of transferring arms.

President: As former head of our CIA, he understands about that sort of thing.

Bhutto: To sum up, in our conversation tomorrow there are three things that I would like to talk about a little more: (1) I would like to say a little more about military assistance. (2) I would also like to talk further about our flood needs. (3) Also, we want a port in Baluchistan. The Iranians are building a port at Chah Bahar. We need one on our coast. The Soviets are deeply interested in this coast and they have offered us to help with oil exploration, geological survey and that kind of thing. We would rather have a US presence. The port would be at Ormara. If the US is interested, there could even be a US presence there.

[At this point, Sultan Khan produced the attached map of Baluchistan, opened it up and showed where the port of Ormara would be.]

Ahmed: This is a map put out by the movement for an independent Baluchistan. You will see how the borders include areas of not only Iran and Pakistan but also a little area into the Soviet Union. Thus, the Soviets could say that they had given up a little bit to Baluchistan, too, but the main purpose would be to provide open access directly from the Soviet Union through Baluchistan to the coast.

Photocopy from Gerald R. Ford Library

DECLASSIFIED
A/ISS/IPS, Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
October 11, 2007

[redacted]

President: Let me say in summing up that we welcome you as a friend. In the 1950s we found ourselves on opposite political sides, but that is past. [Reference to Bhutto's role while at UCLA as a supporter of Helen Douglas, political opponent of the President.]

Bhutto: That was my only mistake [laughing].

President: The interests of the United States require fulfilling our promise of support to you. In 1971, considering what we were up against, we did about what we could. We used and will continue to use our influence with the USSR. They have to understand that they will place in jeopardy their new relationship with the US if they pursue subversive activities in this area.

During the war in Vietnam, the real question came down to whether they wanted to jeopardize their relationship with the US by needling Hanoi to escalate the war.

In conclusion, to recall what President Ayub said, I hope you will leave feeling that you can trust us and that we will have begun rebuilding the very delicate thread of trust and confidence.

We can get into specifics tomorrow.

[The President escorted the Prime Minister to his car.]

HS.

Harold H. Saunders

TOP SECRET/EYES ONLY/[redacted]

Photocopy from Gerald R. Ford Library