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By 720 NARA Date 8/19/03DECLASSIFIED
A/ISS/IPS, Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
October 11, 2007THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON~~SECRET~~

April 15, 1974

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATIONPARTICIPANTS:Swaran Singh, Foreign Minister of India
T. N. Kaul, Indian Ambassador to the US
Sumar Sen, Ambassador of India at the
United NationsHenry A. Kissinger, Secretary of State
Alfred L. Atherton, Jr., Assistant Secretary
of State - Designate
Harold H. Saunders, NSC StaffDATE AND PLACE:Monday, April 15, 1974, 6:20 p.m. - 7:05 p.m.
in Suite 35-A, Waldorf Towers, New York

At the beginning of the meeting, Secretary Kissinger introduced Mrs. Kissinger to Foreign Minister Singh, and the Foreign Minister offered his best wishes. He said that he was looking forward to the visit of the Kissingers to India, and Mrs. Kissinger indicated her enthusiasm for the trip. The Indians noted that the time of year they had chosen was not the best. The Foreign Minister said early June is "a little hot." There followed a discussion of just how warm it would be, and the Secretary recalled his own visit to New Delhi in January when it had been quite cold. The Foreign Minister said India is a large country and there are some places that can be quite pleasant, such as Kashmir. The Secretary jokingly said that he would "infuriate three countries" if he went to Kashmir but he said he would like to see it some day and noted that he had never been there. Ambassador Kaul asked the Secretary how long he thought he might stay, and the Secretary felt that three days was about the maximum. Ambassador Kaul suggested that one day might be spent at Agra and two in New Delhi. At this point, Mrs. Kissinger left, and the following conversation took place.

Kissinger: Mr. Foreign Minister, your Ambassador in Washington is very effective. He uses terror tactics on me. He continually puts me under moral pressure.

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Singh: We feel that relations between India and the US are on their way to improvement. This is happening slowly, but both sides are doing everything possible. There has been a turn for the better.

If I may say so, the general situation in our part of the world has contributed in great measure to this improvement. A war took place which should never have taken place. But now we are trying to stabilize the peace.

Kissinger: The outcome of the recent negotiations in New Delhi was quite pleasing to us.

Singh: They were not easy. They paved the way for complete normalization of relations. The Pakistani recognition of Bangladesh did make the meeting possible. This had taken place much later than we had hoped, but we were glad it came. President Bhutto is fond of choosing a moment for a dramatic step. Sometimes he gets himself into a situation where he loses control over his choice of timing. But that is a style that we are getting used to.

Kissinger: Maybe he had his domestic reasons for choosing the timing that he did.

Singh: That is one of the reasons the Pakistanis give, but I am not sure. I recall that at Simla he said that he should have recognized Bangladesh early in 1972. He sometimes creates a near crisis then tries to recover the situation. That is just his style.

It was an act of generosity on the part of Bangladesh to release the last Pakistani prisoners of war. Atrocities such as the people of Bangladesh suffered are not easy to forget.

Kissinger: I didn't think in 1971 that Bangladesh would soon be able to muster the wisdom it has since shown.

Singh: The repatriation will be completed soon. Practically all of the Bengalees have come out of Pakistan. There were 120,000 less than expected. Maybe there are 2-3,000 who will turn up, but essentially that operation is completed.

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The question of the Pakistanis in Bangladesh is more ticklish. This is a large group which collaborated with the Pakistani military in 1971. The Pakistanis, however, are not responsive to their desire to live in Pakistan. Bangladesh did not make a major issue of this in New Delhi. It was agreed that there would be a process of review and joint consultation on additional members of this group who might want to leave. The Prime Ministers of Bangladesh and Pakistan will meet to decide on how many more of these people should leave. It is not of major importance, but it is unfortunate that the Pakistanis have resisted so much taking more of these people because their resistance creates suspicions in Bangladesh that Pakistan is leaving this group in Bangladesh as a potential fifth column. Let's hope the Pakistanis will not use these people for future subversive action.

Kissinger: I can't imagine that this would serve Pakistan's interests. They were not able to control the situation when they were in charge. I cannot believe that they would consider trying to manipulate it from outside.

The Chinese have told us that they are now planning to recognize Bangladesh and that they plan to be quite active there. I assume that their activity will probably not be all that constructive from the Indian point of view.

Whatever our views in 1971 were, now that Bangladesh is independent we want it to be stable. In any case, our position in 1971 had nothing to do with India or Bangladesh. It was affected by our opening to China and our relationship with the USSR.

Singh: We also have information that the Chinese are keen to come to Bangladesh soon. We assume that they will use the internal situation for their own advantage.

Kissinger: I have the same impression. They talk in terms of the closeness of the Bangladesh and the Chinese people.

Singh: They have some people who will be quite active there. They will use their presence there to generate anti-Indian acts. But we will have to live with that problem. We are neighbors of China, and there is nothing we can do with the fact that they are there and will be active in their own neighborhood. In any case, American and Indian interests and objectives are the same.

~~SECRET (CDS)~~

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Kissinger: Yes. They are parallel. We want a stable, progressive and democratic Bangladesh. There is no need for us to fight again the problems of two years ago. They had nothing to do with Bangladesh.

Singh: You are aware that the Naxalites' headquarters are not very far from Bangladesh. There is contact between them and extremist elements in Bangladesh. I am sorry to say that there have been some political killings in Bangladesh which are traceable to them.

The problems of Bangladesh are immense. They have no reserves, and they have been given no share of the assets that belonged to united Pakistan.

Kissinger: Should I stop in Bangladesh when I am in South Asia? I have an invitation to go there. [To Kaul] I suspect that you put the Bangladesh Ambassador up to this.

Kaul: No, I didn't.

Singh: That is for you to decide.

We have a correct relationship with Bangladesh. India had 300,000 soldiers in Bangladesh when the ceasefire took place. By March 15, 1972, all Indian soldiers had been withdrawn. Bangladesh was pleading with us to leave them there. We said that we did not want an Indian army involved in maintaining law and order in Bangladesh. We told them that we didn't want influence there. Even in these recent talks in New Delhi, we played a friendly, sober, cooperative, mature role. The talks went best when the three Foreign Ministers were alone. We did not try to influence the Bangladesh Foreign Minister at all.

We know what will happen when the Chinese and the Pakistanis are in Bangladesh. They will exploit forces unfriendly to the government. But, as I said, China is nearby, and we have to learn to live with its presence.

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Kissinger: [Smiling] This worried you, did it?

Benhima: I would like to see what is behind it.

Kissinger: They want \$1 billion which our Congress voted and which we have been holding up. That is what is behind it.

On the question of disengagement between Israel and Syria we know two things:

--Israel must move back behind the October 6 line. They have not even agreed to go back as far as the October 6 line yet.

--Then the question is whether President Asad can be persuaded to get less than he would like. At present, he is proposing that three-fifths of the Israeli-occupied territory be returned to Syria. This is unattainable.

The major objective, as we see it is to get a first step-- to get some withdrawal. We hope that, if some withdrawal could be achieved, this would create a new situation. It is not surprising to me that the Israeli position has evolved the way it has. In October, Golda Meir literally turned her back on me at a dinner in Washington because I had proposed the idea of separation of Egyptian and Israeli forces and an Israeli pullback.

I hope the Syrians will be reasonable. But I will not even discuss the final line with them until I have an Israeli line which I feel begins to meet Syrian interests. I might at some point ask His Majesty to send an emissary to President Asad. On the whole, I am relatively optimistic.

Benhima: Khaddam [Syrian Foreign Minister] is not an easy man.

Kissinger: That is putting it mildly. He is a very difficult man. I believe Boumediene will help. President Sadat and His Majesty will help.



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Singh: We have taken soundings in Europe on the question of debt rescheduling, and the responses are generally not negative.

Also, we have made an effort with some of the oil suppliers--Iran and Iraq so far--to lighten the burden of the increased oil costs.

Kissinger: Does that diminish the deficit?

Kaul: It spreads the burden out over time.

Singh: It is a form of relief for the time being. Broadly, of the total price, we put down about the amount equivalent to the price a year ago. The remainder reflecting recent increases is deferred until after five years.

Kaul: If these changes in the economic situation affect development, then they will have a profound impact in India.

Singh: With one stroke, our development is impaired.

Kaul: We have a special problem on the purchase of fertilizer in the United States. Its export is banned until July.

Kissinger: How much are we talking about?

Kaul: We have ordered 240,000 tons. 160,000 tons are being held up.

Kissinger: I will talk with Mr. Dunlop about this.

Singh: You struck the right chord in your speech. The green revolution has taken root in India, and the farmers are getting used to the new techniques. Now if a farmer does not get the things he needs to use the new methods, he is thrown off. Fertilizer is one of the things necessary to make the new seeds work. We have made significant progress in production. We are almost self-sufficient. The problem is that we still have a shortage of about 2-3%. Because this is at the margin, it creates distress out of proportion to the relative quantity and it pushes up prices.

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Kissinger: Ten years ago we used to think that it was inconceivable that India could ever feed itself. You have made remarkable progress.

Kaul: You raised the possibility of food exports under PL 480. Last fall I went to Secretary Butz and he told me to hold off buying because he thought wheat prices would go down. Then the prices went up.

Singh: If it were possible to make some sort of financial accommodation on these purchases, it would be very helpful.

Kissinger: It is possible to investigate providing CCC credit. The problem is not the principle of credit but the availability. It has been extraordinary. Ten years ago, our objective was to get rid of surpluses. When the Russian wheat deal came up nobody ever dreamed that we could wipe out our surpluses. In fact, we were proud of selling so much grain.

Singh: We are told that the Soviets are not in the market this year. Is that true? The Chinese are not in the market either?

Kissinger: The Soviets want a 5-year deal. As far as the Chinese are concerned, they buy so indirectly that it is difficult to tell.

Kaul: There ought to be some correlation between your foreign policy and your export policy.

Kissinger: One of the advantages of our improved relations is that we will move consideration of Indian issues out of routine bureaucratic handling.

Singh: We want to get away from the aid business. But we do need help now. We are not thinking of this as a long term basis.

Kissinger: I'll talk to McNamara about the general problem.

Kaul: What is the status of the IDA replenishment?

Kissinger: I think we have a good chance of getting it through the Senate. I have talked with Congressman Wayne Hays. He said that he would withdraw his opposition if it passes the Senate.

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Singh:

The economic argument is that there are so many people in India who live on the margin of the economy, or even below the margin. The problem is one of maldistribution. This means that the reality is actually worse than the statistics. Thus, when there are shortages and problems of distribution, the people below the margin are hurt even more than the statistics show.

Kissinger:

When the IDA appropriation comes to a vote, you [Ambassador Kaul] might want to unleash some of your friends, like Senator Percy. The situation is not ripe yet. Perhaps it will be by May. Sometimes some of these arguments coming from people outside the administration carry more weight.

Singh:

I don't want this necessarily to be part of the record. But I have explained how we have approached the Iranians and the Iraqis to help us meet the increased cost of oil imports. We would like to approach the Saudis next. But we thought perhaps you might mention this to them when you next see them. Our relations with the Arab countries have gradually been improving since our 1971 war with Pakistan. But it would be helpful if someone could help pave the way with the Saudis.

Kissinger:

I will talk to the Saudis when I am next in Riyadh. I am almost certain to be there sometime in the next few weeks. [Rising] Good. It has been a pleasure to see you again, Mr. Foreign Minister. Ambassador Moynihan will be discussing aid questions in New Delhi, and we can talk about the commissions in Washington. Do you think that is a good idea to do that here, or would you rather do it in New Delhi?

Singh:

I think it is better to do it in Washington.

Kaul:

Let's do it here.

H.S.
Harold H. Saunders

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