

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: President's Meeting with Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan (S)

PARTICIPANTS: U.S.
The President
James Baker III, Secretary of State
John Sununu, Chief of Staff
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs
Marlin Fitzwater, Assistant to the President
for Press Relations
James A. Kelly, NSC, Notetaker

Pakistan
Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto
Yaqub Khan, Foreign Minister
Egbal Akhund, Adviser on Foreign Affairs
General N. Barbar, Presidential Adviser
Khalid Maholud, Notetaker

DATE, TIME February 24, 1989, 4:51-5:22 p.m.
AND PLACE: American Ambassador's residence, Tokyo, Japan

President Bush welcomed the Prime Minister, noting that it was a new beginning for each country. (U)

Prime Minister Bhutto offered her thanks and immediately began serious discussion. She said there was one area which was complicating relations between the countries very seriously. She wanted to start with this critical topic, the nuclear issue. The Prime Minister referred to an earlier letter from President Ronald Reagan in which the President said he had been following certain trends and that if these trends in Pakistan were not restrained it would not be possible to certify the country under American laws involving nuclear matters. The Prime Minister continued that for this first meeting she wanted to give to the President the assurances of her democratic government. She said, "We intend to follow the message of President Reagan's letter." She continued that she hoped the sources which the U.S. has available to it will be able to verify these assurances that she gave on behalf of her government. (S)

Without interruption the Prime Minister continued that she wished to confide in the President her assessment of the internal

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situation in Pakistan. For better or worse, she said, the nuclear matter is a touchy issue. It has been the focus of some election propoganda that has been used against her, and it is also tied to a sense in Pakistan that that country not be second to India. Some in Pakistan have accused the PPP (her party) of a sell-out to India on nuclear matters. In fact, she said there is a perceived irony of pressure on the smaller, non-nuclear country, unmatched by pressure on India, a nuclear weapons state. She and her government wish to promote a regional approach which can enable them to handle the problem. The Prime Minister asks that the U.S. support this regional approach. She said Pakistan has to handle its own situation, and she again expressed hope that America's own sources -- over time -- can verify the truth of what she says.

Non-certification, the Prime Minister continued, would have extremely serious consequences for Pakistan. It would cause a new government to have to fend for itself. Worse, she continued, it would imply "that we have the bomb." That in turn, she said, would put pressures on Rajiv, might prompt a nuclear arms race, and that would be the last thing that either she or Rajiv want. The Prime Minister said she had been encouraged by discussions that had gone on with India. She felt that Prime Minister Rajiv had a good attitude, but that some of his advisers remained more rigid.

On this main (nuclear) issue, the Prime Minister wanted to reassure the United States. She wants the relationship of the two countries to grow in its strength, and not diminish. This controversy, she said, harms Pakistani security, it does not enhance it.

The Prime Minister continued that she is hoping for Secretary Baker to visit Pakistan, and hopes that he can take up this and other issues then. She hopes the present levels of U.S. aid can be sustained. She understands that there are resource constraints in the United States, but this assistance is an important signal to a newly democratic country. Pakistan is, moreover, an example of modern Islam, a place with a more humane kind of Islam. It is a very useful role model for other countries in that part of the world.

The President responded that Pakistan and Prime Minister Bhutto have much goodwill in the United States. This one problem had exacerbated over time. Somewhere in the past, perhaps, the problem had not been handled so well. Now it could cause a disconnect between the two countries. The President said that the Prime Minister had properly identified this problem, but that she needed to understand that it was a significant issue and one over which the President of the United States cannot exert total

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control. Certification has become more difficult, and nuclear issues are very tough, continued the President. The President said that certification is strongly in American interest, and not only because Pakistan has become what it is. He had been delighted to hear the Prime Minister's remarks. The President hoped that we could do as she suggested in objective verification. No one should tell Pakistani officials that this is less than a serious matter. The President had visited Pakistan, himself, and he had a sense of Pakistani feelings. He is delighted at the Prime Minister's approach, but there must be mutual satisfaction on this point because the American Congress is serious and independent, and it needs assurances as well.

The President continued that he was inclined to agree with her judgment of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. Pakistan, said the President, feels with some justification an inequity in this situation and therefore her frankness in raising this one contentious issue is particularly appreciated. The President was prepared, he said, to raise it had she not done so. The President continued that Secretary Baker would need to engage her government on certain specific steps. He would explain what these items are and what specifically both countries need to do together. These steps will be what will be needed to be able to make the certification on the 30th of September of this year.

The President said that he is optimistic about the vigorous young new leadership of India and Pakistan, and the new development of the Chinese talking to India, and on some improvements in the Soviet outlook as well. The U.S., the President said, is not naive on the Soviets. We are pleased at the removal of troops from Afghanistan, but remain cautious.

The Prime Minister noted that she had been recently discussing the Soviet Union with Ambassador Oakley. Commenting on Afghanistan, she hoped the extremists would soon be excluded from the interim government now being formed in Afghanistan. After six months she felt a second government, which might be more moderate, would be established. She thanked the President for United States' support. She said she was looking to working with the U.S. on Afghan matters as well.

The Prime Minister commented that Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan was a friend of the President's.

The President responded warmly. He said that yes, the Prince was indeed a good friend of his. His funds for Afghan relief seem to have too many rubles, a currency that he cannot exchange, but he is a strongly motivated man who knows how to be successful. The President asked how well the Prime Minister knew him.

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Prime Minister Bhutto said that it was her mother who knew Prince Sadruddin best, but he had been at her wedding and she had had a good talk with him then.

The President recalled the effort, which barely fell short, in which Prince Sadruddin almost became Secretary-General of the United Nations. He had had effective Third World support against an Argentina representative and against Mr. Waldheim, the eventual winner. He almost became Secretary-General, but the Soviet delegate, Mr. Malik, said that no prince could be accepted. In the end it was not possible for Prince Sadruddin to become Secretary-General.

The Prime Minister then said that there was one more matter which she wished to raise with the President, the matter of narcotics. She hoped that some help could be provided for intelligence training needed by the Pakistani forces.

The President responded enthusiastically and indicated that the U.S. would look into ways in which this assistance could be enhanced.

The Prime Minister said she hoped the President's Cabinet-level leader on narcotics control, former Secretary Bennett, could visit Pakistan.

The President said indeed he should. The President said that there are some countries that claim that drugs are merely an issue of the "rich and decadent" United States; if the U.S. cleaned up there would be no drug problem. The President pointed out that the U.S. is determined to clean up its drug problem, but as some South American countries are finding out, it is not just an American problem. It is one for many other countries as well, which threatens bodies, souls and governments. The President expressed strong appreciation for the Prime Minister's interest and said that he would try to maximize our assistance for intelligence training and other needs that Pakistan may have to fight narcotics.

The Prime Minister called on Foreign Minister Yaqub Khan concerning Afghanistan, who noted that it is a joint triumph of trust and confidence. There is much more work to be done on the reconstruction of Afghanistan, which will need all the assistance it could be given. He mentioned the current Afghan leader, Najibullah.

President Bush asked Pakistan's assessment of Najibullah.

Foreign Minister Yaqub indicated that he believed that the resistance would soon tear apart the existing Afghan government,

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that there would be a need for a new start, and the resistance was not much concerned with Najibullah.

The President noted that for ten years Pakistan had stood up with courage, and had taken a lot of heat, but that it also generated the respect of most of the family of nations. The President scoffed at the ridiculous recent story that Pakistan might invade Afghanistan and asked its source.

Foreign Minister Yaqub said that Najibullah had put the story out, apparently as a part of his paranoia which, as the President had said, is probably related to his loneliness.

The Prime Minister asked if she could visit the United States sometime soon. She expressed the desire to come by this summer.

The President responded very favorably, and mentioned Ambassador Oakley. He noted the Ambassador has the strong confidence of the President, and that this is not a routine endorsement. After asking about the health of the Prime Minister's mother, the meeting concluded.

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