

Authority EO 12958By JB NARA Date 5-9-01

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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting Between the President and Pakistan President
Yahya

TIME & PLACE: October 25, 1970; The Oval Office

President Yahya was in the United States on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the United Nations. Yahya is tough, direct, and with a good sense of humor. He talks in a very clipped way, is a splendid product of Sandhurst and affects a sort of social naivete but is probably much more complicated than this.

The President began the conversation by saying that we have had difficult times in our relationships with our allies produced by Congressional opposition, but that we will stick by our friends. And we consider Pakistan our friend. He mentioned the hundred million dollar program loan of AID.

President Yahya thanked the President for the Military Assistance Program, particularly for the release of some B-57s and the equipment.

The President said, "There is a psychosis in this country about India; we will keep our word with Pakistan however; we will work with you; we will try to be as helpful as we can."

Yahya said, "We appreciate this; our friendship is not new. We were surrounded by enemies when we became friends. We are no longer surrounded by enemies but we will still remain friends. We are a sentimental people and we will never do anything to embarrass you, and I will try to be helpful to you on our visit to Moscow." He said it would be unthinkable that in Pakistan people would deliver a broken alarm clock to Keating, to an American Ambassador because he overslept when he should have seen the Indian Prime Minister off at the airport. (This referred to the fact that Keating overslept when Madame Ghandi left for the United States and, contrary to diplomatic custom, was not at the airport.)

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The President said, "Your people are too proud to do a thing like that." Yahya said, "We will never put you in an embarrassing position. Your gesture to give us military assistance against all advice is appreciated by our people. I hope your consortium can make a major contribution. Sato has told us he would be willing to help if you make a significant contribution."

The President asked me to comment on this. I said that the hundred million dollar program loan comprised 80 million dollars of economic aid and 20 million dollars to help with devaluation, and it was a larger program than of the previous year. We were doing what we could and we hoped that this would be enough to elicit a substantial Japanese contribution. The President turned to me and ordered me to do what I could to encourage assistance to Pakistan.

Yahya then said elections are set for December 7. He had been accused by Bhutto of delaying so that he could deal with Mrs. Gandhi in New York and sell out Pakistan. It was absurd the levels to which political opponents would stoop. The President said, "I hope you keep a strong Presidency as in France." Yahya said, "Without it Pakistan would disintegrate. Our people like the Parliamentary system only because they have been ruled by Britain for so many centuries, but they cannot make it work and they do not have the basic prerequisite, namely a two-party system; we have about 35 parties."

The President said, "I understand you are going to Peking." Yahya explained how it came about. He said Chou En-lai had originally been slated to go to Pakistan and had said he would make no other foreign visit until he had visited Pakistan. However, he had had to go to North Korea for a ceremonial visit and had communicated with Yahya before leaving, telling him that he was aware of his promise and apologizing for not keeping it. He had, however, hoped that Yahya would pay him a visit and therefore he was going to Peking. The President said "It is essential that we open negotiations with China. Whatever our relations with the USSR or what announcements are made I want you to know the following: (1) we will make no condominium against China and we want them to know it whatever may be put out; (2) we will be glad to send Murphy or Dewey to Peking and to establish links secretly."

Yahya said he had once been told to establish secret links and had communicated it to the Chinese who had replied whether this meant that the United States was thinking of a hot line to Peking similar to the one that existed to Moscow. The President said, no, that wasn't what he meant; he was willing to send ambassadors.

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I interrupted to say when we talked about secret links we meant a form of communication less visible than Warsaw. One more susceptible to enabling the parties to say what was really on their minds and yet have absolute discretion. If we could find some mutually convenient capital such as, for example, Rawalpindi or conceivably Paris, the President might consider sending a senior person. The President said he would be prepared to send me, or since I was too busy he might send somebody else, but at any rate he was prepared to establish a high-level contact.

Yahya said he would explain this to the Chinese. He continued, "The Chinese are going to change with affluence. Mao talked to me on my previous visit to Peking of permanent revolution; he had said 'Americans hope we will die out, but no, I will teach every child from the day he is born to be a revolutionary.' And I must say he kept his word in the cultural revolution." Yahya said he had been fascinated when he was in China, but when he left Canton he said, "Thank God." It was an oppressive experience.

Yahya then turned to the Middle East and said, "They will have a shaky period to get over the settling down." He had had a chance to meet Sadat. He's no Nasser. He's more reasonable and not as strong. Nasser had taken a bold step in recognizing the Rogers plan; Sadat cannot possibly go beyond what Nasser did. Why don't we go on with the talks. We can go on only with what Nasser had promised to do. The President said, "What is needed is a face-saving device for both sides. Israel can't accept breach of promise; Sadat can't accept going beyond Nasser. What is needed is time to bring Israel around."

The meeting ended with the President again assuring Yahya of his friendship.

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