

By JB NARA Date 10-19
 FO 12958

MEMORANDUM

JAN 29 1970

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

INFORMATION

January 26, 1970

SECRET/NODIS/EYES ONLY

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger *HK*

SUBJECT: Private Conversations with the King and
 Prime Minister of Afghanistan

Attached are reports by the Vice President of his conversations with the King (Tab A) and the Prime Minister (Tab B) of Afghanistan. King Zaher indicated, inter alia, :

- that his principal worry is the long-standing dispute with Pakistan over the frontier tribal area of Push-tunistan, but he felt it could be resolved peacefully;
- a desire to insure that the sensitive Afghan relationship with Russia, from whom the Afghans receive a very substantial amount of aid, was understood;
- his commitment to maintain the independence of Afghanistan. The "presence and interest" of the U. S. were considered important by Afghanistan;
- that U.S. aid was appreciated. Subtle reference was made to declining assistance levels;
- that U.S. technical investigation of the water problem with Iran had been very helpful and that difficulties can be worked out;
- that relations with China are proper, but there is "no love lost";
- that the Afghan initiative to create regional cooperation between Iran, Turkey, India and Pakistan was being thwarted by the absolute refusal of Pakistan to enter into economic or developmental schemes with India.

The Vice President will report the substance of his conversations with the Prime Minister in a later, detailed report. He found the Prime Minister to be an impressive and sympathetic man.

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THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON

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January 21, 1970

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MEMORANDUM FOR

THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT:

PRIVATE CONVERSATION WITH THE
KING OF AFGHANISTAN

Following the private dinner, the King invited me into his study, where we talked for approximately an hour with only his interpreter present.

A quiet, rather intense person, with great dedication to his country, the King appears to be very well versed in world affairs. His first effort was to make certain that I understood the sensitive Afghan relationship with Soviet Russia. He explained that his country was the first to have diplomatic rapport with the Soviet government, and that the Afghans had received a very substantial amount of Soviet aid. He nevertheless made clear his commitment to maintain the independence of the Afghan people and implied that the presence and interest of the United States were important to his country. He subtly mentioned the declining levels of United States assistance while at the same time expressing appreciation for the aid. He indicated that his "experiment in democracy" launched through constitutional reform in 1964 was proceeding satisfactorily, but had raised the expectations of his people and created some unrest.

There was an indirect reference to our possible altered stance with reference to the Chicoms, and I was led to believe that while the present Afghanistan relations with China are proper and correct, there is no love lost and that the Afghans feel much closer to the Soviet Union.

There was some discussion of the water problem with Iran, (Helmand River), but apparently the Afghan government feels it can work out the difficulties with the Iranian government. The King said that the United States commission and its activities of technical investigation in this area have been very helpful.

The principal worry on the King's mind was the long-standing Pushtoonistan dispute with Pakistan. Knowing the United States position favoring the Pakistanis, I simply expressed sympathy with the problem and indicated

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that while the United States had expressed an opinion, our new Asian policy was not to be persuasive, but to leave the Asian nations to work out their problems bi-laterally without undue influence from America.

The King said that even though the dispute with Pakistan was an emotional one, there was no evidence of any breakout of hostilities; and he felt that so long as both sides continue to suggest new bases of settlement the matter could be eventually resolved.

He stressed that the Pakistanis and Afghans have a great deal in common and that their economic and social interests are quite closely related. In short, he indicated that there was more to unite them than to divide them.

I indicated that since his country enjoyed excellent relations with both the Soviet Union and the United States he was in a position to encourage new accord between the great powers. I expressed disappointment that the official Soviet news media, regardless of the progress of diplomatic relations between the United States and Russia, continued to exacerbate and inflame the situation through vicious characterizations of American policy and personnel. Perhaps, I suggested, the Soviets could be affected by a subtle indication by the Afghan government that these tactics were really not helping to solve the problems. The King appeared to be interested in these observations and stated that whatever his country could do to lessen the tensions between the great powers would be a profitable venture for mankind.

The King did not raise the question of military aid.

There was mention of the Afghan initiative to create regional cooperation between Iran, Turkey, India, Pakistan and Afghanistan. This regional effort, the King stated, was being thwarted by the absolute refusal of the Pakistanis to enter into any economic or developmental schemes with the Indian government. He felt it was tragic that all the other governments were willing but that without Pakistan the plan could not be properly implemented.

cc: Dr. Kissinger

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