

Comments on Helmand see pp. 3, 6 and 7

Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Volume E-8, Documents on South Asia,  
1973-1976 the Office of the Historian

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS:

Mohammed Naim, Foreign Policy Adviser to President Daoud,  
Deputy Director of the Legal and Treaties Department, Ministry  
of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan

Waheed Abdullah, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs

Samad Ghaus, Director General of Department of Political  
Affairs, MFA

Dr. Henry Kissinger, Secretary of State and Assistant to the  
President for National Security Affairs

Theodore L. Eliot, U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan

Alfred Atherton, Jr., Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern  
& South Asian Affairs

L. Bruce Laingen, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near  
Eastern South Asian Affairs

Peter W. Rodman, NSC Staff

DATE AND TIME: Friday, November 1, 1974  
10:10 - 11:30 a. m.

PLACE: Foreign Ministry  
Kabul, Afghanistan

[The meeting began with Deputy Minister Abdullah alone, in his  
office.]

Abdullah: Once again on behalf of the Afghani Government, I  
welcome you to Kabul.

Kissinger: Thank you.

Abdullah: When Ted [Eliot] informed me -- or I informed Ted --  
that you were coming [laughter], I was very happy.

Eliot [to Kissinger]: I think you informed their charge in New  
York.

Abdullah: I think your talks will be fruitful and positive for the  
future of Afghani-US relations. When I was in Washington and

future of Afghani-US relations. When I was in Washington and had talks with Mr. Ingersoll and other colleagues in the State Department, I was very pleased. I think now the US understands our views on international affairs better. Really, the only problem we have is Pakistan. I'm sure your visit will further strengthen our relations and will give you better ideas of our views.

Kissinger: I'm sure it will further strengthen a good relationship. And also I'm here to meet the leaders personally, which is better than through cables. We know your views and we respect your nonalignment. We are always told you are worried about your other neighbors.

Abdullah: We want only peace and tranquility in the region and to use our resources for development, economic and social. War is no good for us.

Kissinger: This is clearly true.

Abdullah: One of our neighbors doesn't want to settle the problem.

Kissinger: You have to explain what you want. Because the Pakistanis won't give up any territory.

Abdullah: We don't want any territory. That is a misconception of the Pakistanis.

[At 10:15, the group moved to Mr. Naim's office where they were greeted by Mr. Naim and Mr. Ghaus. The press was admitted briefly for photos.]

Kissinger: I already met an Afghan student of mine at the airport. He was at Harvard.

Naim: We welcome you here. Our only regret is you can't stay longer. You are a very busy man and it is perfectly understandable. But we are happy to have you here.

Kissinger: I'm very grateful for the warmth of the reception.

Naim: Because you are going to stay only for a short period of time, I'm going to only mention briefly the items of interest to us.

The first item is relations between Afghanistan and the United States. From the very beginning of our relations, it was the wish of the Afghani people always to have cordial relations with the American people and understanding and goodwill. This was not only a wish, but the geopolitical situation of Afghanistan always required that we have good and close understanding with the United States. Because of the politics prevailing in the region, sometimes a misunderstanding might have occurred in our relations, but it is always our wish to remove the misunderstandings and have really close and friendly relations with you. The remoteness of our country -- we are not big and we are far away -- may make it that Afghanistan falls outside the interest of the United States. But because of the geographic situation of Afghanistan, we always have been of the opinion that the presence of the United States was needed. So we hope the visit of the Secretary of State will promote this understanding, in accordance with both our wishes

**As Afghanistan is a small developing country and it is quite natural for it to attract the assistance of the developed countries, and we always had the desire to attract the assistance of the United States, which is always welcomed and we value it very highly. As you know, sir, we have in Afghanistan with the assistance of the United States started a large project in the Helmand. In spite of all assistance, it has not yet been brought to completion. We believe, without an enormous sum of money, it should be brought to fruition, and will not be a burden but a success. This project, related to the upper Helmand Valley, should be a complex of electricity, irrigation and power. This project, at a time when the world faces an enormous food crisis, is for Afghanistan of fundamental importance. Because for Afghanistan every drop of water is life, and we need it for food. Essentially, we seek assistance for the development of this project. In spite of the fact that this is termed a long-term project, it was initiated 30 years ago; even as a long-term project, 30 years is a long time. It is our hope that for the completion of this within this coming ten years we will have the help of the United States.**

Naim(cont.): I wish now to inform the Secretary of Afghanistan foreign policy and in the region.

First I want to state the bright side of it [Laughter] -- then I'll

mention the difficulties.

Our relations in the region, with our western neighbor Iran, are extremely close and cordial. We've reached an understanding to cooperate very closely in various fields, and it is our hope and expectation that this friendship will be a factor for stability in this part of Asia.

Another country of great importance in the region is India. We have very close relations, and the closeness of views leads us to think we can expand this closeness and bring friendship closer.

With our northern neighbor, which is at the same time a great power, we have a very close relationship, and over the years, we have built friendly relations, so that we can say from that side we feel quite secure. Cooperation between Afghanistan and the Soviet Union has been very close; they have assisted us on many projects in Afghanistan, and over the years they have learned and we have learned that our close cooperation does not mean any ideological interference in our country.

Our other neighbor is China. With China we can say our relations are correct. The People's Republic of China has invited me for an official visit, and I hope within a month my visit will lead to a greater understanding.

Kissinger: We may meet there [Laughter].

Naim: I'd be happy to meet you there.

Now, with your permission, I'll say a few words about the darker side.

Kissinger: He said relations were "good" about the Soviet Union and "correct" about China. Can he give one adjective about Pakistan? [Laughter].

Naim: Conforming to what you just said, as far as it depends on Afghanistan, our relations are correct. Owing to the fact that we don't have much time, I want to give you the details of the historical background. I'm sure it is all in the files of your Embassy.

Kissinger: So many other things are found there, we can't sort it

out. It will take the Ambassador six months to recover from this visit. [Laughter]

Naim: We don't speak of the past but of the future. In the last months, Pakistan brought accusations to Afghanistan which are absolutely false. One of the first accusations is they claim we are working for the disintegration and breakup of Pakistan. We are categorically rejecting this claim. We in no way expect or foresee or wish the disintegration of Pakistan, and we cannot do anything in this regard.

Because of the lack of time, I can't give the historical background, but one thing should be said plainly -- the pressure being brought there on Pushtunistan and Baluchistan cannot leave Afghanistan indifferent. The power used by Pakistan against these people every day deteriorates the situation further. Pakistan, instead of seeking ways to solve this peace fully within its own Constitution, is using force to solve the problem. The sentiments of the Afghani people, because of the historical background, cannot remain indifferent about the situation. We should not forget these two regions were part and parcel of Afghanistan and were severed by colonialism from their motherland. This notwithstanding, we don't have any territorial claims on Pakistan and we don't want the disintegration of that country. If on one hand the Government of Pakistan accords rights according to the Constitution to these people and with the other hand takes them away, we can't be indifferent.

Secretary Kissinger was being very active in his peacekeeping role lately throughout the world, and also achieved successes. We hope his trip here will also be successful to help find an understanding between Afghanistan and Pakistan to find a solution to this problem.

Kissinger: No one ever asks me to deal with problems that are less than a thousand years old. [Laughter]

Naim: From the results you have in the Middle East and your successful trips, we hope you can do something. also for this thousand-year-old problem [Laughter].

Naim (Cont.): If Pakistan succeeds in bringing understanding between the various masses of people living in Pakistan, there is a greater scope of understanding and greater scope of cooperation

between our two countries. This was briefly the situation between us and Pakistan, and we hope Pakistan can find its own people a solution, which will lead to the satisfaction of the sentiments of our people.

This was the bad side of our story. [Laughter] And you can see, to the extent that it belongs to us, it's not really very bad.

Kissinger: An airline pilot once said: "The bad news is we're lost. The good news is, we're making very good time." [Laughter]

Kissinger: I appreciate your presentation very much, and it gives me a very rapid and a very good insight into the thinking of Afghanistan. Let me make a few observations about our views, and I may ask a few questions about your relations with Pakistan.

First of all, the United States interest in Afghanistan is its independence and sovereignty. We have no interest in any dominant or exclusive or unique position. I say this to indicate we consider it absolutely natural that you have good relations with your northern neighbor. For that matter, we have good relations with your northern neighbor. For the leaders of Afghanistan this is all unavoidable and necessary policy.

We also understand why you would want some American presence here, and we are willing to cooperate with this. And I also agree my visit here can perform a useful role in this respect.

So the basic orientation of the policy of Afghanistan we understand.

We know if Afghanistan is part of a nonaligned grouping, the only point I have to make about this is that soon the nonaligned will become the largest single bloc in the world. And those of us who are not part of it will soon begin agitating against the danger of bloc politics. [Laughter] And our only concern is it shouldn't be carried to the point where no matter what happens, bloc votes as a unit, because then it is almost impossible to conduct a constructive foreign policy.

But Afghanistan has not been particularly bothersome in this respect, and I say this to every nonaligned leader. So you can bear in mind that we don't welcome the nonaligned to vote against every American position. Although I say this isn't directed at Afghanistan.

**To return to the American presence: We are in principle prepared to maintain this.**

**On the particular project, let me say two things: I don't want to pretend I know about every project we have in Afghanistan or that has been put before us. I have some general knowledge about the Helmand Valley project. I think the best way to deal with this is to**

**send some senior official from our AID agency out here, to whom you can make specific requests. And our basic attitude is sympathetic. Within the next few weeks. And then you can develop together with our Ambassador and him some specific projects. We have some Congressional problems but our basic attitude is sympathetic. We will try to keep the bureaucracy to a minimum, but I can't promise anything, because we have many frustrated missionaries who can't resist reforming everyone. As far as we can do it from my office, we'll try to keep the paper work to a minimum. Ted, can you try?**

**Eliot: I will try.**

Kissinger: I have to tell the former Executive Secretary of the Department that I'm in awe of the system I found there. [Laughter]. The other day, someone wanted me to make a phone call to a Senator and sent me a memo which had been endorsed by eight different bureaus in the Department of State. Since my colleagues thought my intelligence has its limits, they called the Senator beforehand and told him what I was going to say. [Laughter]. When called attention to this, they removed the endorsements from the memo. But I'm sure they haven't changed the system [Laughter]. You might learn something in bureaucracy from us.

The other day I met a senator at dinner party who was getting nervous. Four different offices at the State Department had told him I was going to call him, and I hadn't called him yet. So he wondered what he'd done wrong [Laughter]. In fact I had no intention to call him.

The reason I tell you is, when the paperwork gets excessive remember what I have to suffer. It's not directed against Afghanistan. Seriously, we want to be helpful to you within our means and in as helpful a way as possible.

Naim: I'm very grateful for what you just said. If the bureaucracy is such a degree in advanced country, imagine it in a developing country.

Kissinger: You're hopeful, I imagine you do it on the basis of more personal decision.

I gave a lunch for the African Ambassadors at the UN, and they had a spokesman for the Organization of African Unity, a very attractive girl, who was not selected for her brains. [Laughter]. My colleagues had drafted a toast for me, despite the fact I have never in my year as Secretary of State given a toast that was drafted for me. They gave it to her before they gave it to me. So she prepared an eloquent reply. Of course in my toast I said nothing that had been prepared. And since she didn't have a very quick mind, she read her toast, which was written several days before, praising me for things I never said. [Laughter]

Now, with respect to foreign policy....

Naim: In connection with quicker decision, personal decision, I want to tell you that in a few short years we have embarked on planning for economic and social development, which we thought would lead in a few years to a democratic set-up. In spite of the fact that the Afghani way of life is a democratic way of life and our people are living their daily lives in a democratic set-up, our intelligentsia did not understand well -- our responsible people did not react responsibly.

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Kissinger-Daoud Kabul 8 Aug 76

(Part on Helmand)

Kissinger: We have no interests in disturbing this policy.

Daoud: With respect to the assistance we seek from the United States, I would like to mention, as was mentioned I'm sure by our envoy [ Mr. Naim], that it cannot be described as effective assistance such that people of Afghanistan will notice its size and importance. Some are projects that were begun by the United States, and we would want to see the completion of these peace projects.

Kissinger: What does your Executive have in mind specifically?

Daoud: Today our Minister of Planning will explain in detail how we view assistance from the United States. But I will mention, for example, the central Helmand Valley, the Kajakai drainage system that goes with it, electric generators. All this has been started by the United States and we want this to be effectively achieved by you. The electric power extension of Kandahar, Lashkargah, Girishk, and the extension of the line between Kandahar and Kabul.

In the field of education, we have a faculty of engineering in mind and would like to see the expansion of it, and an increase in the number of experts. This has been already started by the US and we would like it strengthened.

Kissinger: As a former professor, I can say a country that increases its number of professors increases the number of its troubles. [Laughter]

Daoud: At the same time, strengthening of the faculty of agriculture. We also are in dire need of management, and if the United States could assist us in setting up a managerial institution, this also would be very much appreciated.

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