


MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON


 October 28, 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT
FROM: BRENT SCOWCROFT *B*

Secretary Kissinger asked that I pass the following report to you of his initial discussions in India:

"I met this morning in the royal splendor of the former British Viceroy's palace in New Delhi with Prime Minister Gandhi in private and with Foreign Minister Chavan for a brief word in private and then with his senior aides. My talks were frank but very warm. It is evident that they are very pleased by the visit and our recognition of India as an important country in the world and the predominant power in the sub-continent. Despite Mrs. Gandhi's almost pathological need to criticize the United States, she, too, desires to see relations between us improve on this new and more equal basis. She and her minister very much want you to visit India next year. As you approved, we will announce your acceptance of her invitation in the joint statement at the end of my Delhi visit. In addition, the Foreign Minister wants to visit Washington, symbolizing our better relationship, and we will also announce this for early next year.

"The Indian leaders are aware of our concerns over their nuclear policy which I raised privately with the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister, in order not to embarrass them before others on a very sensitive subject. With Mrs. Gandhi I said very frankly that their nuclear explosion was a bomb no matter how India described it; that her undertaking not to produce nuclear weapons did not mean the next government would not do so; and that we were not interested in recriminations but in how to prevent further proliferation. By our second meeting, she seemed to have reflected on this and asked if we had any specific proposals. I have asked Moynihan to follow up this possible opening with her. The Foreign Minister has reaffirmed that India will not develop nuclear weapons, and this point will be included in the joint statement. In addition, at the Foreign Minister's request, I stated in my speech tonight that we take this pledge seriously, which makes their commitment even more binding.


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"They are eager to see our new relationship transformed into specific, material forms of cooperation, and welcomed the formal establishment this afternoon of a US-India Joint Commission. We set up three sub-commissions to develop concrete programs in the fields of economy and commerce, science and technology, and education and culture. With the subcommissions and the new trade bill our troublesome economic relations with India ought to improve. While clearly welcoming what economic and food assistance we can provide and disappointed that we cannot make more available under PL 480, they remain sensitive about letting what the Foreign Minister called an "aid complex" dominate our relationship and did not press me on this subject.

"Their preoccupation with our never providing lethal weapons to Pakistan is obsessive. I tried to reassure them and place the matter in perspective by stating that we will not become part of an arms race in the sub-continent and will never engage in any action which would threaten India's superior military relationship with the other countries of the sub-continent. In private with Mrs. Gandhi, I made the point that at most what would be involved would be limited cash sales to Pakistan and that she should reflect on the risk that, if frustrated on conventional arms purchases, Pakistan would be under even greater pressure to go nuclear. In brief, I kept our options open on possible future changes in our South Asian arms supply policy, which I expect Bhutto to press very hard. I hope that the dialogue I began today will make this issue a less overshadowing one in India's perception of our relationship. I also reminded them that Pakistan and Iran have been anxious about India's attitude toward Pakistani minority tribes.

"They asked us to assure Pakistan of their concern for its independence and territorial integrity. I assured them our relations with Russia and China do not in any way impinge upon India's interests but I warned them of the long-term danger of the so-called non-aligned appearing to seek a confrontation with the developing countries at a time when the latter are experiencing difficulties and less able to ignore provocation.

"Tomorrow I will continue with talks in India, and travel on to Bangladesh Wednesday."