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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: October 6, 1975
TIME: 11:30 a.m.
PLACE: The Secretary's Office

SUBJECT: Visit of Foreign Minister Chavan

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PARTICIPANTS: India

Y.B. Chavan, Minister of External Affairs
Kewal Singh, Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs
J.S. Teja, Joint Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs
T.N. Kaul, Ambassador to the United States
A.P. Venkateswaran, Minister (Political), Embassy of India

United States

The Secretary
Alfred L. Atherton, Jr., Assistant Secretary, NEA
William B. Saxbe, Ambassador to India
Dennis Kux, Country Director for India, Nepal and Sri Lanka

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Reviewed by: <u>Gleason</u>	
Date: <u>9/18</u> 1975	

The Secretary: I was sorry I was late. I was delayed by the President.

Chavan: Perhaps we will be able to find time to talk further tomorrow if we are unable to complete our discussions today.

The Secretary: Yes.

Chavan: I really welcome this opportunity to meet again and continue the exchanges we began in Delhi. Basically, we have many common points of interest and no clash

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(Drafting Office and Officer)

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of national interests. While differences arise, these are because of differing geographic locations and geo-political positions. At least we can analyze and understand these differences. They should not come in the way of strengthening relations. The differences should not be blown out of proportion. I can tell you that we greatly appreciate your efforts for detente, the way you have defused so many crises, including Vietnam, Helsinki, and the Middle East. You have a deep perception of the problems and the consequences of the potentially disastrous effects of modern technology and war. We appreciate this because our policy has the same basic directions. We believe coexistence is necessary. It is not an accident that we appreciate your efforts. Both India and America have a basic interest in peace, stability and cooperation in economic matters. This should give a broader base for relations whatever differences may arise. At the Joint Commission meeting you rightly said that India was a major potential economic power. We think we can help other developing countries. Also, our basic policy is not chauvinistic. We don't want to disrupt people, we want to live at peace with our neighbors. Our interests correspond with those of other mature powers. When you make a basic assessment of India, I hope you will understand the forces that underlie our policy. In this connection, especially our role as a member of the Non-Aligned.

The Secretary: You belong to the largest block that exists. We are jealous.

Chavan: We use our position in a constructive manner. We are a force for moderation in the Non-Aligned. You must have noticed that in Lima we were a moderating element on Puerto Rico and the Middle East. The role of India in the Non-Aligned is constructive. I hope the U.S. takes note of this.

The Secretary: We agree that the U.S. and India share an interest in peace, stability and economic progress. I see no sign of clashing interests. In fact, since we have no clash of interest, our relationship should be cooperative, recognizing that each country has

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its own geo-political position. Therefore, there will not be total congruence but we should be able to handle differences privately through dialogue. We appreciate your position on Puerto Rico. We have expressed some concern about the tendency toward block rigidity in the Non-Aligned but we have no complaints in recent months about India's position. We don't expect you to agree with all U.S. positions. I thought the Seventh Special Session had a moderating effect.

Chavan: Yes, it succeeded in creating a better atmosphere between the developed and developing countries.

The Secretary: I agree. We should continue the dialogue and be sure each knows how the other is thinking.

Chavan: Regarding the subcontinent, our policy is based on peace, understanding, stability and non-interference in each other's internal affairs. The situation in Bangladesh is a new factor.

The Secretary: Did you have advance word of the coup?

Chavan: No.

The Secretary: We didn't either.

Chavan: We were shocked by what happened. We expressed our sorrow about the killing of Mujib and his family but we have treated this as an internal matter. The new President has sent us assurances that he was standing by the same policy but we are concerned, in particular, whether the new government will take an extreme Islamic posture. This would create problems for the minority in Bangladesh. If the Hindus again feel insecure, there might be a new wave of refugees.

The Secretary: Is there a large minority group in Bangladesh?

Chavan: About 15%. It is a major factor. So far the new government has given assurances it would follow the same policy as Mujib, but we are naturally worried about the influence of Pakistan on Bangladesh.

The Secretary: What is your impression?

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Chavan: They have just announced diplomatic relations. This is a good thing. Even under Mujib we recommended this. We never wanted an exclusive relationship with Bangladesh. Our worry is only this: That they might try to give a different connotation to the situation by giving an Islamic twist to things. Also the Chinese recognized [Bangladesh] only after the coup. Frankly, we are worried. There are radical communist elements in Bangladesh which the Chinese might try to help. Here we hope the U.S. and India will have a common approach.

The Secretary: As I said before, we believe India and Bangladesh require good relations. We have no interest in seeing Bangladesh as part of a complicated power game. This would be futile. Bangladesh should concentrate on economic development. To the extent we have influence there, we will encourage good relations with India. I had one talk with the new foreign minister and did not gain the impression he was antagonistic toward India.

Chavan: I agree, but who are the policy makers in Dacca?

The Secretary: What is your intelligence?

Chavan: It is basically still the military although the President has been managing the military fairly well so far but --

The Secretary: What is the tendency of the military? Is it anti-Indian?

Chavan: Frankly, there is some anti-Indian tendency, I am sorry to say.

Singh: Some people hostile to Mujib were brought back. We don't want to give the impression we are concerned but pro-Islamic and pro-radical groups have some strength.

Chavan: We think the USA can play a role as a major aid donor.

The Secretary: Certainly, we will use our influence in the direction I have indicated. We will keep you informed on our economic programs. We might have a minor increase in food aid, but I am not sure this will be possible.

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Singh: Economic aid for Bangladesh is vital for any regime.

Chavan: They have a very difficult economic situation.

The Secretary: They threw out one of my students as foreign minister there.

Singh: That is not certain.

The Secretary: What was he doing when the coup took place?

Chavan: He was in Yugoslavia as foreign minister. We expected him in Delhi. He has stayed on in Europe and we are not sure about his plans. Now talking about Pakistan, we are continuing our efforts toward normalization but the pace is limping and slow. We do not know what to do but we are patient. They do not miss an opportunity to stir up trouble. Regarding the Security Council race, they jumped in a month after we announced our candidacy. This is unnecessarily creating a bad atmosphere. If we had known they were interested, we would not have gotten into the race. It is too bad since this creates an atmosphere of confrontation. But our efforts will continue. Their emphasis seems to be in trying to get arms.

The Secretary: So far we have not sent anything. We are not rushing in.

Chavan: I must say frankly that any significant supply of sophisticated equipment would create tension in the area. We are worried about it.

The Secretary: As I said in India, we have no reason for upsetting the basic power relationships on the subcontinent. We recognize India as the dominant fact on the subcontinent and any attempt to upset this, particularly in the military field, would be self-defeating. We will undoubtedly sell some things to Pakistan but we are thinking of a rather modest program.

Chavan: After the lifting of the embargo the process of improving relations has had a setback.

The Secretary: We made the decision in February and so far there have been no sales so we have not been rushing into things.

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- Chavan: I don't want to belabor the issue but did want to mention it in a frank manner.
- The Secretary: We keep hearing from the Pakistanis that you are threatening them. The Pakistanis now say that you have changed the language in your notes on Kashmir. In the past you always talked of resolving the problem by peaceful means. Your latest note speaks only of "whatever means."
- Singh: I don't know what they are driving at. There is no change in Indian policy. There is no statement threatening Pakistan by Indian leaders. The past few months they have been running around saying we are going to attack them. I wrote my friend the Pakistan foreign minister, and said we should have a dialogue. Let's talk out our problems if they have concerns.
- The Secretary: So you don't see anything new in your Aide Memoire?
- Chavan: No, I saw Aziz Ahmed in New York. When he met me he made friendly noises. He said he stood by Simla. I find it absurd that the Paks are talking of an Indian threat.
- The Secretary: I would like to tell you that I am going to China on October 19 for a general review and to discuss the possible Presidential trip.
- Chavan: We find that you and China have a different approach to problems. How do you look at the Chinese world view? What is their view of South and South East Asia? We feel they are interested in instability, although we are not opposed to your developing friendly relations with them.
- The Secretary: Their primary concern is fear of attack from the USSR. They would like to get free protection from us by saying that war between the U.S. and USSR is inevitable. This is a nice game as long as they can play it.
- Chavan: You seem relaxed. But we are worried where we sit.
- The Secretary: I am having lunch with the Soviet Ambassador and don't feel that they have an aggressive policy toward China. We are not going to fight a war for the benefit of any third country. Of course, if the Soviet Union attacks China, this would have a major impact on the world balance of power, but we
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see no evidence of this. In Southeast Asia the Chinese are somewhat worried about having Indo-China dominated by Hanoi and Hanoi working with the Soviets against China. That is their problem, not ours. I once told an Indian friend, I think it was Ambassador Kaul, that Hanoi's neighbors had better enjoy U.S. involvement in Indo-China. We now have a general interest in the independence of the Indo-China states. We are willing to have talks with the Cambodians and I do not exclude talks with Vietnam. Our attitude on their UN membership application is a special case, not a test case of our relations with Vietnam. We would just as soon see the states of Indo-China remain independent.

You asked whether China would deliberately try to create turmoil. I think there is a disparity between Peking's words and its deeds. In South Asia, they may decide to play games with Bangladesh. They look at India as an extension of Soviet policy. Our one common interest with China is that they not be taken over by a major country, including India (laughter). We do not coordinate our policy in South Asia with China. Whatever mischief they do in Bangladesh we will not know about it in advance.

Chavan: You should be worried about that.

The Secretary: Our interest in China is confined to its not being taken over by another power.


Kaul: And also that China does not take over others.

The Secretary: That is right. But we have never had evidence that the Soviets are trying to take over China. We have strongly discouraged any Chinese adventures. What I said about the Soviet attitude toward China also goes for a Chinese attack on India. We would look upon this with extreme disfavor.

Chavan: The Chinese view of India as a Soviet appendage is wrong.

The Secretary: They believe it.

Chavan: Maybe they believe it but it's not true. We have a long history of friendship with the Soviets even when we were friends with China.

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Kaul: I think that but they put out this position for internal reasons. If the Chinese are worried about India, why do they not try to wean us away from the Soviets.

The Secretary: Maybe they think they will not be able to.

Singh: We have made every effort to improve relations with China but we get no response. Moreover, they tell some leaders they do not believe India is a Soviet stooge.

Chavan: There is feeling in the UN that South Vietnam should become a member.

The Secretary: We have nothing against Vietnam. If others would vote for South Korea we would be happy to vote for South Vietnam. It is much more a state than South Vietnam. It seems to us wrong that a country like South Korea formally established since 1948 is excluded and that a country like South Vietnam, where one hardly knows who the leaders are, can come in.

Chavan: I just wanted to mention to you that the feeling is there.

The Secretary: I know the vote will be 123-0. The New York Times and Post will have heart attacks. But it is a totally separate issue from our relations. We are ready to talk with Vietnam. I predict they will want normal relations with us.

Chavan: I know we have worked out the problem caused by our proposed aid to North Vietnam but there is still sentiment in India to help in South Vietnam's reconstruction.

The Secretary: Yes, this will take time but I thought this problem was resolved. On the UN question, we are not trying to win the war retroactively. You can tell this to North Vietnam.

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