

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
AMBASSADOR AT LARGE  
WASHINGTON

~~SECRET~~

March 15, 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

ISRAEL:

I am glad that Bob Komer was able to work out arrangements with Israel satisfactory to you. I was sorry to leave in the middle, but as there was so much publicity about my presence, I felt it better to leave, particularly as I gained such confidence in Komer's skill in handling the negotiations. Ambassador Barbour also was most helpful.

My talks did some good in bringing Eshkol and his colleagues around to understanding the need for our continuing military assistance to Jordan. They also now clearly understand that we will oppose their use of force under any circumstances in connection with the Jordan water diversion. We must, however, make every effort to block Arab diversion, if in fact it ever comes off.

The Israelis are very sensitive on the subject of their water rights, which I know you will understand. We will have, I believe, continuing difficulty in restraining them if peaceful means don't produce results. I therefore stated bluntly that if the Israelis ever used force they would be up against United States opposition. This was somewhat of a shock, but I am satisfied it was useful.

The Israelis feel that the military balance with the Arabs has deteriorated since Eshkol's visit last June and they want to discuss this subject again.

Eshkol asked me to convey to you his strong hope that we would move our Embassy to Jerusalem. I explained the difficulties but he persisted in his request. NEA believes it would be most inadvisable to make such a move at the present time. If you agree, I will write Mr. Eshkol informally that you feel this matter should be deferred under the present circumstances.

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AFGHANISTAN:

I have been keen to go to Kabul to try to understand how this country is working right under the Soviet guns. The Soviets have poured in money for military as well as economic aid, and yet as a result of some assistance from us and other Western countries, the Afghans have been able to retain their independence. Although much of their trade goes to the North, they maintain considerable trade with the West.

The country is politically stable at the present time, without any communist infiltration. The King and his Ministers are strongly pro-West in their orientation.

The big question is why the Soviets have left this country alone. My own view is that the Soviets don't see any advantage in taking it over at the present time. There would be international adverse reaction if they did. At the same time, it acts as a comfortable buffer, as the country is not aligned with the West and they do not have to fear an unfriendly neighbor.

I gave the King your warm good wishes. He expressed disappointment that he had not had an opportunity to meet you when he was in the United States in September 1963. He referred to the fact that you were on a trip to Scandinavia at the time. I told him you were much interested in and congratulated him on the new Constitution with its democratic features, as well as the general economic development.

We then discussed at some length his relations with the Soviet Union, his trip to Red China, and what he saw in the future. He appears quite confident that Afghanistan can hold its own, and he believes the Soviets are becoming increasingly interested in their own development.

The Embassy believes that to maintain our position we must continue our aid program and if possible make our decisions more rapidly because of the more expeditious Russian procedures. Our aid program is largely directed towards education and the agricultural development of the Helmand Valley.

I was impressed by the capable job Ambassador Steeves and his staff are doing, and the excellent relations they have with Government officials at all levels.



INDIA:

Prime Minister Shastri is looking forward to his visit with you in early June.

He and his colleagues are continually concerned over Red China's aggressive attitude. They recognize a Southeast Asia dominated by Red China would be a grave threat to India's independence. They therefore want us to succeed in supporting South Viet-Nam's independence.

They fear, however, that our actions may bring Moscow and Peiping together. They still have rose-colored glasses when they look at Moscow. I maintained that Moscow's first pre-occupation was its conflict with Peiping for leadership of the international communist movement, and since North Viet-Nam was one of the points of conflict, there would continue to be the divisive effect of their competition for influence with Ho Chi Minh and the North Vietnamese Communist Party.

Shastri agreed that in his visit to Moscow he would not join DeGaulle in support of Moscow's call for a conference on Viet-Nam without preconditions. He fully understands that no conference would be of value without adequate preconditions. He explained that he had refused the request of the Czech Prime Minister, who had just left New Delhi, for a reference to a Viet-Nam conference in their joint communique.

He is anxious to cooperate with you in nuclear nonproliferation and that will be one of the subjects he will want to discuss with you. He hopes to gain some clue in Moscow as to Soviet attitudes.

He will want also to talk about India's military and economic programs and needs. The military have as their top requirement ground support aircraft, which they believe our F-5's would fill.

Our Embassy team believes that economic assistance at the present level is a minimum that India needs if the plans for development are to be effective. India's industrial output increased by 9% during the fiscal year just closing, and gross national product by 6%. Agriculture is correctly receiving more attention. The Embassy is working hard to help foreign private investment, and improvement in this should be expected.

There is no expectation of another Red Chinese attack in the near future, but there is real concern over Nepal.

Indian Government policy is to remain un-aligned, but as Chief of Staff General Chaudhuri put it, "We have found out who our friends are."

PHILIPPINES:

Unfortunately, I could not see President Macapagal as he was already out of town campaigning -- a tiring prospect with the election eight months away. He sent me a telegram which included the following in best Philippine traditional flower:

"Please convey to President and Mrs. Johnson affectionate greetings from Mrs. Macapagal and myself for President Johnson's continual success in his great responsibilities. Our prayer for his good health and my assurance that the Filipino people and I with God's grace will not fail expectations to do our part for democracy and freedom in our country and in our region. Warm regards."

BAGUIO MEETING:

The Baguio meeting of our Far East Chiefs of Mission was most interesting to me, as I had held one three years ago. We have made progress in some areas, and of course there are increased difficulties in others. Viet-Nam is the all-absorbing problem.

Deterioration in our relations with Indonesia is extremely worrisome. Because of its vital strategic position, we cannot afford to let it slide into communist hands.

I hope that some decisions can be made before long on our policy toward the Chinese Nationalist Government in the UN. Thailand is of special interest to me as the counter-insurgency program started some years ago is beginning to be effective.

We need to give constant attention to the sensitive problems of each country if we are to avoid increased difficulties. We have a first-rate group of Ambassadors who are working well on your team. I understand you have a capable man in mind to fill the vacancy in Canberra.

  
W. Averell Harriman

*Dean Rusk*