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October 17, 1973

TO: AMBASSADOR HELMS, TEHRAN
FROM: HENRY A. KISSINGER

Approved for release
Date: Mar 2008
1. Thank you for reftel. Bhutto is correct that this channel is best for these matters. Messages should go through you ideally and through SRF in any case.

2. We would like you to respond to Bhutto as indicated below. If he has departed Tehran, can you reach him through discreet channels of your own? Or should we repeat message directly to station chiefs in Jidda or Ankara?

3. You should tell Bhutto the following: The President and I extend our warm personal greetings, President deeply appreciates Bhutto’s analysis of situation, his desire to exercise helpful positive influence, and his courageous stand against pressures. This is in spirit of our talks in September and common US-Pakistani interest. Bhutto can assume we is following strategy we discussed in September. Principle that military action sponsored and supplied by Soviet Union can succeed is of course exceedingly dangerous, not only for Middle East but also for South Asia and indeed globally.

4. Whether to go to Damascus or not is decision for Bhutto to make. On balance we do not think it a good idea, but if he should decide to go, we could convexe following to Syrian leaders:

   a) The US intends to use aftermath of this crisis as opportunity to vigorously promote a rapid, comprehensive, and just settlement. The guarantee of the seriousness of the US side will be found in the objective situation as well as in the formal US commitment to engage itself fully.

   b) However, if this diplomacy is to be given its full opportunity, a ceasefire must precede it. Ceasefire should be accompanied by undertaking of parties to start talks under aegis of UN Secretary General with a view to achieving settlement in accordance with resolution GWRW in all its parts. Neither side can expect or insist upon guarantee of its maximum objectives as precondition of talk. The US is convinced, however, that commencement of process will establish momentum and provide us with best context of exerting vigorous influence.

5. Warm regards.

[signature]

[Date]

[Redacted]