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FEBRUARY 7, 1975

Office of the White House Press Secretary

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THE WHITE HOUSEJOINT STATEMENT ON THE OCCASION OF  
PAKISTANI PRIME MINISTER ZULFIKAR ALI BHUTTO'S  
OFFICIAL VISIT TO WASHINGTON

President Ford and Prime Minister Bhutto held cordial and useful discussions during the Prime Minister's visit to Washington February 4-7. They welcomed the opportunity to establish a personal relationship in the spirit of cooperation and understanding which has traditionally existed between leaders of the two countries. The President and the Prime Minister stressed their commitment to the strengthening of the close ties which have been maintained between the United States and Pakistan for many years.

The two leaders discussed the important international political developments of the past eighteen months with particular emphasis on the significant steps taken in furthering international detente, the vital efforts to secure a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, and proposals to increase cooperation between developing and developed countries.

They also reviewed the important steps taken to bring about more normal relations among the nations of South Asia. The Prime Minister expressed Pakistan's determination to continue to play a constructive role in the search for peaceful solutions to regional disputes, so as to promote the establishment of durable peace in the Subcontinent. President Ford assured the Prime Minister that support for the independence and territorial integrity of Pakistan remains an enduring principle of American foreign policy. The two leaders also discussed their mutual security concerns in the context of the commitment of their Governments to the strengthening of regional and world peace.

President Ford expressed his deep sympathy over the loss of life resulting from the devastating earthquake which recently struck northern Pakistan. The Prime Minister expressed his appreciation for the contributions of the United States Government toward the relief efforts now underway.

The Prime Minister discussed the serious shortfall experienced by Pakistan in foodgrain production in recent months. He noted his concern with drought conditions which persist throughout the wheat-producing areas, a problem which has been accentuated by the unexpected delay in commissioning the Tarbela Dam. He noted, in this regard, his appreciation for the substantial assistance rendered Pakistan under the PL 480 program during the past several years. President Ford told the Prime Minister that the United States Government was pleased to be able to offer 300,000 tons of wheat under PL 480 Title I for immediate delivery, in addition to the 100,000 tons already made available during this fiscal year. The President assured the Prime Minister that Pakistan's needs would continue to receive priority consideration in determining additional allocations this year and next.

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The two leaders also reviewed economic cooperation between the two countries. Prime Minister Bhutto described the important economic development programs now underway in Pakistan, including the high priorities placed on agricultural development and population planning -- areas in which assistance from the United States and other donors has made a valuable contribution. President Ford pledged continued priority attention to Pakistan's development assistance requirements.

Prime Minister Bhutto renewed his invitation to President Ford to visit Pakistan. President Ford expressed his warm appreciation for this invitation and reiterated his hope that the visit would be possible later this year.

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