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Last wish: To read Nixon book

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RAWALPINDI, Pakistan — Emaciated and highly depressed, former Pakistan Premier Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who has been sentenced to death on charges of political murder, is refusing all solid food and has only one "last wish" — to be able to read Richard Nixon's memoirs, according to his lawyer.

D. M. M. Awan, former advocate general of the Punjab province and now one of the deposed leader's senior counsel, Friday became the first visitor to see Bhutto since he was moved last Wednesday to Rawalpindi from a jail at Kot Lakhpat, near Lahore.

A full bench of nine Supreme Court justices began hearing an appeal by Bhutto against his death sentence yesterday.

But Awan told reporters Friday that when he sought to show Bhutto the 93-page document titled "Additional Grounds for Appeal," the condemned leader said: "What is the use of all this? The authorities want to kill me before my appeal is heard . . . If the authorities want to kill me like this, that is entirely their choice. There is nothing I can do."

Speaking in what Awan described as a whisper in his death cell near the gallows where condemned prisoners are executed in the Rawalpindi prison, Bhutto had only one request — a copy of Nixon's memoirs.

"I would like to read it before I die," said Bhutto.

— The book is not available in Pakistan and will have to be obtained from abroad.

Bhutto is reported to have played a key role in arranging former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's secret trip to Peking, which led to Nixon's own historic

visit to China and started the process of normalizing Sino-U.S. relations.

Awan said he expects that the appeal proceedings will last about six weeks.