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Archer K Blood

THE CRUEL BIRTH OF BANGLADESH

the CRUEL BIRTH of BANGLADESH

Memoirs of an American Diplomat

ARCHER K BLOOD

The Cruel Birth of Bangladesh is an account of the emergence of Bangladesh seen through the eyes of a sympathetic American diplomat based in Dhaka during the gathering of the storm in 1970 leading to the War of Liberation in 1971. Archer Blood glorifies the independence struggle of Bangladesh as a "Transformation of seemingly forlorn Dream into a bright shining Reality".

The book reflects a deep commitment to freedom on the part of the author and reads like an epitaph for the martyrs of struggle of the Bengali people. In 24 chapters the author chronicles the events of 1971 as he and the staff of the United States Mission in Dhaka saw them unfold.

Blood had to wait until December 1998 for the State Department to declassify the documents, telegrams and other messages related to this period before he could use them. The story that emerges, portrays large and vastly important drama of the real protagonists of the period: General Yahya Khan, Z.A. Bhutto and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Blood attempts to explain how the three men handled the enormous pressures from onrushing events — from their own constituencies, from the other two, and

Continued on next flap

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ARCHER K BLOOD

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ALPHABET SOUP AND OTHER SHORTCUTS: A GLOSSARY

In the State Department and its field posts we used a profusion of initials and abbreviations, both in writing and speaking, thereby saving much time for typists and communicators and giving the rest of us a high professional gloss.

Some of those initials can be quite ephemeral. The all-out favorite in 1999 is WMD (Weapons of Mass Destruction). I wonder how long it will retain pride of place. In reviewing telegrams in the National Archives in January 1999 I came upon a set of initials which baffled me for a moment. What did UDI mean? Could it have to do with family planning, say uterine device installed? No, upon reexamination of the context in which it was used, I decided UDI must mean unilateral declaration of independence.

Below is a list, with meanings, of such abbreviations which appear, perhaps all too frequently, in the narrative:

AID	Agency for International Development
AL	Awami League
ConGen	Consul General or Consulate General, depending on the context; when used as an adjective, usually Consulate General, e.g. ConGen officers
DCM	Deputy Chief of Mission (The officer next in rank to the Ambassador at an Embassy
DPO	Deputy Principal Officer (second ranking officer at an American Consulate General or Consulate
EPSL	East Pakistan Student League (Awami League student affiliate at Dacca University)
EPR	East Pakistan Rifles-paramilitary force officered primarily by West Pakistanis, used primarily for border control
FonSec	Foreign Secretary (senior career officer in Pakistani Ministry of Foreign Affairs

FSO	Foreign Service Officer
GOEP	Government of East Pakistan
GOI	Government of India
GOP	Not Grand Old Party, but Government of Pakistan
Hicomer	High Commissioner
LFO	Legal Framework Order
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MLA	Martial Law Administration
MNA	Member, National Assembly
MPA	Member, Provincial Assembly
NA	National Assembly
PAF	Pakistani Air Force
PAK	Pakistani
PPP	Pakistani People's Party (Bhutto's party)
Septel	Separate Telegram
SYG	Secretary General (of United Nations)
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
USAF	United States Air Force
USIA	United States Information Agency
USIS	United States Information Service (The field organization of USIA)
VOA	Voice of America (a branch of USIA)

PREFACE

Archer K Blood was a popular name in Bangladesh during the War of Liberation. He was the American Consul General who disagreed with US handling of the 'crisis' and sent a message through what was known as the dissent channel. In Washington where Bangladesh crisis became a topic of great interest Blood received considerable attention. There we used to get a lot of real as opposed to sanitized information on the situation in Bangladesh through the grapevine of the State Department and the source of the grapevine was Archer Blood. It was also quite a gossip in Washington at the time that all that you hear about Bangladesh is "blood, butcher and kill". Archer Blood was the Consul General, Scott Butcher was his political officer and Andy Killgore had left Dhaka just before election and was working in the area office in the State Department.

Archer Blood landed in Dhaka in March 1970 and left well before the conclusion of his normal tour of duty in June 1971 witnessing and playing an important role in tumultuous developments in Bangladesh. Blood knew Bangladesh quite well. In his own words, "my bittersweet romance with the country now known as Bangladesh began in June 1960 when I arrived in East Pakistan." In Pakistan period the US maintained a consulate general in Dhaka, the capital of the province of East Pakistan, and Blood was posted as Deputy Principal Officer in the 1960s. That was when we became friends. But our friendship actually was renewed in 1971 and since then we have been in touch by fits and starts. Archer Blood above all is a deep and committed friend of Bangladesh.

The Cruel Birth of Bangladesh is the name of the book chosen by its author and his wife has attempted its cover design. This reflects a deep commitment of a foreign friend to this country and its people. He has also indicated that any payable royalty should be used for some charitable purpose in Bangladesh. Before the author expressed his choice I had coined the manuscript as "Transformation of a seemingly forlorn Dream into a bright

shining Reality". That is how Archer glorifies our struggle for independence in his Foreword. That is also how Archer and under his leadership the staff of the US mission in Dhaka visualized the emerging reality at so early a date as 6 April 1971, even before the Bangladesh Government-in-exile was formed. That story is told in details in the chapter on Dangerous Dissent.

As the author mentions he got the idea of writing the book when in 1996 his memories and experiences of 1971 and of Bangladesh were revived on the occasion of the celebration of the silver jubilee of our Liberation. I have personally been pressing him since then to write a book on Bangladesh and at last he showed interest in 1999 when he responded positively to a request for an article for the Bengali Daily *Prothom Alo*. As explained in the Foreword he wanted to be accurate and so he waited for the declassification of official documents of 1971. I was very pleased when Archer requested me to make arrangements for the publication of his book and I am, indeed, very proud to introduce this book to our readers.

In twenty-four chapters we get quite a story on the emergence of Bangladesh seen through the eyes of a sympathetic foreign diplomat who happened to be on the scene as the storm gathered and then broke. The book is heavily sprinkled with wires and messages that passed between the US mission in Dhaka and Washington and also some excerpts from Congressional hearings. These archival materials aptly portray the mood and considerations of the time without any embellishments. Even though the book is about what happened in Bangladesh when Archer was there, it could not neglect the US policy stance towards the independence struggle in Bangladesh. And it confirms the very frightening theory that during the War of Liberation foreign policy of the mighty superpower was so personalized a decision-making process in which only President Richard Nixon and his Security Assistant Henry Kissinger mattered.

At the outset the author in an interesting style introduces the three main characters of the unfolding story. The chapter on Dramatis Personae is brief but pregnant. General Yahya and Z A Bhutto are carefully sketched. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is covered elaborately because he is the central figure of the story. Surprisingly the life story is one of the most accurate versions I have come across that successfully puts together reality bereft of myth. Also please note that the portrait was drawn up in 1971. An interesting part of this portraiture of Bangabandhu rightly relates to an analysis of the Six Point Programme. I like the chapter on Evacuees, Thin-outs or Miscreants. How important are niceties of nomenclature and how ridiculous are the euphemisms. Are the foreigners being evacuated from a dangerous war zone or a simple thinning out operation is being executed? Are the freedom fighters challenging the Pakistani military or is it simply the miscreants who are active? The military mind seems to be so meticulous about presence and presentation and so engrossed in cover-up of the truth.

Archer begins a chapter with the expression "March 1971 was the most horrible month of my life." Then he reproduces the full statement of General Yahya delivered on 1 March. While US Ambassador welcomed "the announcement as possibly providing a cooling-off period." "In Dhaka our reaction was quite different" he says. His report on the situation is very incisive and his perception is based on much more than meets the eye. We have three chapters beginning with The Die is Cast and ending with Countdown to Disaster with A Step Back From the Brink in the middle to narrate the developments of March up to the 25th. This leads to Man's Fury describing the terror, destruction and murder of the military crackdown in no-nonsense terms. Then we have spread over the book small episodes on high-handedness and harassment by the Army, which did not even spare consular personnel. In this way the author chronicles the nature of the wild and evil regime that tried to subjugate Bangladesh. The military rulers, indeed, went berserk. Why did they undertake what the author calls selective genocide? "Could not the Army see that a mass exodus of Hindus to India would give the Indian Government, egged on by their public's opinion, even greater incentive to aid the Awami League in its struggle and turn world public opinion irreversibly against Pakistan?" asks Archer Blood.

In the chapter on Birth of a Nation the author points out similarities between the history of the independence of USA and that of Bangladesh. Being a member of the diplomatic service he devotes some extra space to the Bengali diplomats of Pakistan who switched allegiance to Bangladesh in 1971. In the book there is a fairly detailed recounting of the dreadful cyclone of November 1970 and the related relief efforts. It is interesting that the helicopter episode should attract that much attention after a lapse of three decades. It was all a matter of handling the sensitive press engaged in covering a disaster. At one time they said that Pakistan was not allowing US pilots to fly and at another time they reported that Ambassador's helicopter was attacked and it had to leave in a hurry. Both news stories happened to be false. A very interesting chapter is the Epilogue. The brevity of the piece and the coverage of subjects is simply exquisite. He dwells on the inevitable Indo-Pakistan war and faults US policy for its tilt towards Pakistan. Despite all the maneuvers US really played no role in bringing about the cease-fire; it came when Pakistan Army in Dhaka surrendered to India-Bangladesh command. The ultimate tragedy that befell on the three actors in Bangladesh Liberation War is briefly discussed. And then there are some biographical notes on others who featured in the book.

As we get a story on the emergence of Bangladesh, we also learn a little about the Blood family and friends. The author with creditable artistic skill weaves into his narrative tidbits of his diplomatic life in other parts of the world, small episodes from the lives of his growing children and the expert management of the household by his wife Margaret. The appeal and authenticity of the book is enhanced by the emotive relationship that the author displays between himself and the Bengali resistance to Pakistani repression and terror.

When I met Archer in 1960, he was eleven years my elder but a very congenial company. I learnt that a handsome young man with a broad smile and a lovely wife he was an up and coming diplomat with bright prospects. The foreign population in Dhaka at the time hardly hit a century. Incidentally he was one of the very few foreign families who were my wedding guests in 1961. His early career reflected the promise he held out; he was promoted to FSO I in 1968. The most shining period of his career was his second assignment in East Pakistan for just fifteen months in 1970-71. The critical times of Bangladesh showed the mettle he is made of. He was doubly recognized for his meritorious services in 1971. First came the Meritorious Honour Award of the US State Department for service during cyclone relief operations in Bangladesh. Then came the prestigious Herter Award meant for senior foreign service officers of the US State Department for "extra-ordinary accomplishment involving initiative, integrity, intellectual courage, and creative dissent". However, he was marked for his non-conformist views and boldness that make lesser individuals somewhat uncomfortable. Feeling considerably let down eleven years after his glorious performance he took an early retirement in 1982. Thereafter he enjoyed eight fruitful years teaching in Allegheny College. Archer developed a fondness for Dhaka and through Dhaka for South Asia. Besides Dhaka he spent memorable years in Kabul and Delhi.

I wished very much that the book should be published in celebration of the thirtieth anniversary of our Liberation War. But for various reasons not one of which can be laid at the door of the author we got delayed. *Prothom Alo*, however, published one chapter of the book on the occasion of the celebration of the victory day last December. Thanks to Shahudul Haque of Syscom, another old-time friend of Archer Blood, for reminding me about the schedule of the publication. The University Press Limited took interest in the book and ensured that it is published. Thanks to Mohiuddin Ahmed for a job well done. *Prothom Alo* did a lot to induce the author to undertake this creative work. Thanks to Matiur Rahman for his abiding interest in the work.

Archer will be an octogenarian next year. At his age and with failing hearing and eyesight he has ploughed through documents, recollected memories

and carried out the necessary research in a very painstaking manner. The product is an excellent and authentic book on Bangladesh. Simply written in direct language it is easy to read despite the abundance of wireless messages. These are very critical times for Bangladesh. The core values of the nation and its liberal orientation are under threat. Perhaps three decades after the great movement and where the nation is on crogs-rods, it is opportune that this book should be released. It will shed bright and shining light on the true history of our freedom struggle.

I believe this publication will be a very unusual addition to the literature on Bangladesh Liberation War. A diplomat working in Dhaka at the time has written it and he has used his official reporting on the situation extensively in the text of the book. Then again not many books have been written on emergence of Bangladesh by US scholars or political observers. This is one by a US scholar-cum-diplomat who felt emotionally close to the struggle as he served in Dhaka in 1970/71. A hearty welcome to good reading!

Dhaka October 2002

Abul Maal A Muhith

FOREWORD

This book came to be written in consequence to my visit to Dhaka in December 1996 as one of the guests of the Prime Minister at the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the liberation of Bangladesh. I had been the American Consul General in East Pakistan in 1970-71, and Bangladeshi and American friends, both old and new, urged me to set down my memories of the liberation struggle. I knew my memory by itself was inadequate for such a task, but I resolved to put pen to paper once the telegrams and other documents relating to this period were declassified by the State Department. I had to wait until Christmas of 1998 before the material I wanted was made available to the public.

These telegrams turned out to be a wonderful jog to my memory, actually constituting something of a newly discovered diary for those hectic and stressful days. Sometimes the telegrams are paraphrased into the narrative, sometimes quoted in part, and sometimes, if particularly important, reproduced in their entirety. I have not altered the telegrams in any way; they read exactly as we wrote them, stripped of unnecessary articles and replete with initials and abbreviations in order to save time and space. Hopefully, the glossary will help make sense of the abbreviations.

In structure the book is a hybrid, being both an intensely felt personal memoir and, from one perspective, a serious account of many aspects of the Bangladesh crisis, later described by Henry Kissinger as perhaps the most complex and difficult issue to confront the first Nixon term. But it is not a 20-20 hindsight history. It portrays exactly what my staff and I were thinking and reporting during the Bangladesh crisis. In this "warts and all" rendering our anger, mixed with alternating hope and despair, is all too evident, and I have tried to be evenhanded in recording mistakes in judgment (too many) as well as insightful predictions (not enough but right on target with respect to the ultimate outcome of the liberation struggle).

Throughout, I have sought to subordinate my own personal story to the much larger and vastly more important drama of the book's real protagonists: President Yahya Khan; Zulfikar Ali Bhutto; and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the leader of the Awami League and the one with whom I had much interaction.

These three men truly held the fate of Pakistan in their hands. Each was under enormous pressure from onrushing events, from their own constituencies, from the other two, and from their own sense of personal duty and responsibility. Admittedly I have been unambiguous in asserting who was first to break under the pressure and precipitate Pakistan toward disaster and East Pakistan toward independence — the tough soldier, the sophisticated representative of the West Pakistani elite, or the man of the soil from East Bengal.

Finally, I wanted to emphasize the unusually isolated situation in which we at the American Consulate General in Dhaka found ourselves immediately after the military crackdown on March 25, 1971. A thousand miles separated us from the Embassy in Islamabad and for some weeks no one from the Embassy was allowed to visit East Pakistan and none of us was allowed to leave. Inter-wing telephone service was cut off, as was the telephone service within East Pakistan. Mail was delayed and uncertain. Our only method of communication, the wireless, was for a while in jeopardy. Like everything else, we lived under a strict curfew. The silence from Washington was deafening, suggesting to us that less credence was being given to our reporting than to the Pakistani claims that little more was involved than a police action to round up some "miscreants" led astray by India.

These were, indeed, cruel days. While writing the book I often found myself obstructed by the tears in my eyes, when I recalled the faces of Bangladeshi friends who have been martyred in the liberation struggle and tried to comprehend the tremendous suffering of the valiant people of Bangladesh. I also saw again the many members of the American community, especially doctors and missionaries who risked their safety in compassionate service. I will be greatly pleased if some will see this book as a heartfelt statement of admiration for all those who in their own way helped transform a seemingly forlorn dream into bright, shining reality.

Archer K. Blood

May 6, 2002
1719 Brentford Lane
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book is gratefully dedicated to the true-blue trio who encouraged me to take pen in hand, helped me to weather the frustrations often inherent in such an effort, and provided invaluable suggestions and corrections at every step. The appearance of their names off and on in the narrative is no coincidence, they were indeed fellow actors on this stage.

The first is Abul Maal Abdul Muhith, a loyal friend since 1960, who played a key role in 1971 in rallying American Congressional and public support for the Bangladesh cause. He has subsequently served his country with distinction, and, more than any other person, helped to bring the book to publication. His splendid preface is but the latest of his many acts of friendship.

The second is Shahudul Haque whom I also came to know in 1960, when he was a neighbor of ours in Ramna and a constant playmate of our children. Over the years we have remained in touch, and he and his family have become truly "family" in the sense of being a vital part of our extended family. Now a successful businessman in Dhaka, "Gullu" has helped me in many ways and on many occasions as the book made its long journey from "a gleam in the eye" to consummation.

Last, but most certainly not least is Meg, my wife of 54 years. At the same time both my severest and my gentlest critic; she deftly steers me between my personal Scylla of bright expectation and Charybdis of black despair. And, almost as importantly, she turned out to be an excellent proofreader. Her steady involvement is testimony to her sincere affection and concern for the people of Bangladesh.

CHAPTER ONE

FIRST ENCOUNTER

My bittersweet romance with the country now known as Bangladesh began in June 1960 when I arrived in East Pakistan to take up my duties as Deputy Principal Officer and Political Officer at the American Consulate General in Dacca. I had never before set foot in South Asia. My previous field experience in the Foreign Service had been in Greece (Thessaloniki and Athens), West Germany (Munich and Bonn) and Algiers (then considered part of metropolitan France). In the State Department, where I had just completed four and a half years, my work was in the Executive Secretariat, which handles the paper going in and out of the offices of the Secretary and the Under Secretary, and in the Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (NEA) as Desk Officer for Cyprus.

NEA was then composed of three offices: Near East, concerned with the Arab world and Israel; South Asia, covering India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka; and GTI, handling Greek, Turkish and Iranian affairs, plus Cyprus. Because of my two tours in Greece and my service on the Cyprus desk, I considered myself an NEA man, and I wanted to extend my experience in the Bureau. I ruled out the Arab world because I was not an Arabist and it was too late in my career to request Arabic language training. Stories of the British Raj had long held a particular fascination for me, which was heightened two weeks after my entry into the Foreign Service when I watched the flags of India and Pakistan raised above their embassies in Washington.

Thus, an assignment in South Asia seemed right for me at the moment. I was given a choice of Madras in India or Dacca in East Pakistan. I chose Dacca because it seemed to have more autonomy than Madras, separated as

it was from the embassy in Karachi by a thousand miles of India. Dacca was also a considerably larger post because of the large USAID mission, and was due to be further enlarged by a Peace Corps contingent.

East Pakistan also promised a more challenging and potentially more significant field for political reporting than did the prospect of covering three states of South India from Madras. The hurried partition of British India had resulted in two new nations, India and Pakistan, the latter created as a homeland for the Muslims of the subcontinent. Pakistan was itself divided into two separate wings. The West Wing comprised the provinces of Sind, Baluchistan, Punjab and the Northwest Frontier. The East Wing was what had been called East Bengal in the days of British rule. In the West the lingua franca was Urdu; in the East it was Bengali. In the 1960's a favorite quip in East Pakistan was that three things held Pakistan together: Islam, the English language and PIA (the Pakistani National Airline) and the greatest of these was PIA.

The two wings were separated not only geographically but also ethnically and culturally. Their outlook on foreign affairs was quite different. West Pakistan was strongly antagonistic toward India and bent on regaining all of Kashmir. The people of East Pakistan were much more relaxed about India. Calcutta, the capital of the Indian state of West Bengal, was still the favorite city of Muslims in East Pakistan, their place of choice to spend the winter holiday season. Kashmir had little interest for East Pakistan.

East Pakistan was approximately the size of Florida, and in 1960 had a population of forty million, a population somewhat greater than that of much larger West Pakistan. Since independence, real political control of Pakistan had been in the hands of the Pakistani military, the upper ranks of the civil service and a small number of wealthy industrialists, with all three groups predominantly from West Pakistan. East Pakistan's numerical superiority was nullified by the failure of parliamentary democracy to take effective root in Pakistan, as it had in India. The highly centralized, often authoritarian, structure of Pakistan's government, headquartered in the West Wing, resulted in West Pakistan getting the lion's share of foreign assistance and internal development funds.

Consequently, most Bengalis favored a speedy end to the Martial Law Administration (MLA) which had ruled Pakistan since October 1958, first under President General Iskander Mirza and then more permanently under General Ayub Khan, the commander in chief of the Army, who assumed the

presidency. Bengalis wanted a return to constitutional government following nationwide elections which would reflect East Pakistan's population advantage. Bengali political influence had, however, been greatly weakened over the years by the innate Bengali tendency toward factionalism. Bengalis were dubbed "the Irishmen of the sub-continent" and a common joke claimed that if three Bengalis were stranded on a desert island, their first action would be to establish four political parties.

While promising an early return to constitutional government, Ayub really had a contemptuous view of politicians and the people's ability to establish a stable government on their own. In 1959 Ayub had introduced a new political system called Basic Democracies. Years later, when I was teaching a course on South Asia at Allegheny College in Pennsylvania, I used to describe Basic Democracies as a tutelary form of government. Ayub's intention was to educate a largely illiterate population in the workings of government by affording them limited representation and associating them with decision-making at a "level commensurate with their ability." The Basic Democracies structure was concerned essentially with local government and rural development.

Basic Democracies was a multi-tiered system. The lowest but most important tier was composed of union councils, one each for groups of villages or sections of towns and cities with a total population of about 10,000. The next highest tiers were at the subdivisional level and the district level, chaired by civil servants and composed of persons nominated by the Civil Service and the elected chairmen of the union councils. At the top was a development advisory council for each province. Its members were appointed by President Ayub and its chairman was the governor of the province, also appointed by Ayub.

Actually, the Basic Democracies system represented a turning backward of the clock to the days of British rule when the British were slowly granting the people a greater but still strictly controlled voice in government. Ayub looked like a proper British officer. He spoke with a clipped British accent and he had been a cadet at Sandhurst. He had absorbed much from the British except, apparently their strong attachment to parliamentary government and the tradition of the military staying out of politics.

I always thought that Basic Democracies was a non-starter. The people of Pakistan had experienced periods of constitutional government after independence and despite their sorry record with the parliamentary

system, most of them, certainly most Bengalis, wanted that system back and resented being considered unable to govern themselves.

Ayub had served as GOC (General Officer Commanding) in East Pakistan in 1948-1949, and he was aware of Bengali sentiments. He made some effort to address their complaints that they always received the short end of the stick. Nonetheless, the Bengalis continued to feel slighted and became increasingly suspicious that Ayub intended to prolong the Basic Democracies system indefinitely. Throughout my time in Dacca, from 1960 to 1962, Ayub was very unpopular in East Pakistan. In sharp contrast, his appointed governor, General Azam Khan, was extremely popular. A gregarious hearty type, Azam seemed genuinely interested in trying to address the concerns of the people of the province. Probably because he was jealous of Azam's popularity, Ayub removed him as governor in 1962.

In 1960-62 U.S.-Pakistani relations were closer than they had ever been before or were ever to be again. Pakistan had allied itself with U.S. interests by joining the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO). Of course, Pakistan's primary motivation in joining these defensive pacts was to acquire military equipment from the U.S. in order to bolster its position against India. SEATO and CENTO were conceived by the U.S. as bulwarks against the so-called Sino-Soviet bloc, but Communist China and Pakistan became close friends.

At this time Pakistan was receiving large amounts of economic and military assistance from the U.S. Near Peshawar in the Northwest Frontier Province Pakistan allowed the U.S. to establish a base providing communication and intelligence gathering facilities. It was from Peshawar that Gary Powers' ill-fated U-2 flight over the Soviet Union took off. Moreover, Ayub was highly thought of in Washington, both at the White House and in the Congress, where Ayub's "I'm just a simple soldier" approach was particularly effective.

* * * * *

Indeed, from many points of view, it was a good time to be posted to Dacca. However, before my family (wife Meg. daughters Shireen and Barbara, aged 11, 10, and son Peter, aged 8) and I could settle down and enjoy life in East Pakistan, we had to adjust quickly to conditions vastly different from those we had known in Greece and Germany.

My wife's first impression, as our plane approached Dacca, was that our new home to be was under water. The average elevation of East Pakistan was twelve feet above sea level. Not surprisingly, since the province was the delta of the Ganges and Brahmaputra Rivers and their tributaries, the land seemed to be competing unsuccessfully with a dominant river system. Moreover, as the plane descended, we noticed that each village and each small neighborhood of Dacca had its own man-made pond, called a tank, where people procured drinking water, swam, washed themselves, their dishes, and their animals, did their laundry, and caught fish. To me there was a magical quality to this ubiquitous water, which heightened the green of the rice paddies and the purple of the water hyacinths and furnished a shimmering mirror for the famed golden sun of Bengal. I suppose I was learning the first lesson in adjusting to life in South Asia — focus on the beautiful aspects and push the ugly sights into the back of your mind.

The latter was sometimes hard to do. On the way in from the airport to our temporary lodgings a driver had to stop at a railroad crossing. The car windows were rolled down because of the heat. Suddenly, my wife was face to face with a woman who had no nose. We were told later by Bengali friends that her husband had probably cut off her nose and forced her into begging because he suspected her of adultery. We quickly learned to keep the windows rolled up and we forced ourselves to ignore the beggars, even the children, many of whom had deliberately been disfigured in order to improve their chances of getting coins.

Some aspects of the adjustment process were less traumatic but still disconcerting. Since my predecessor at the post had no children, his house, to which we were assigned, needed to be enlarged by adding a second story with three bedrooms and a bath. The construction was almost completed when we arrived and appeared to be quite satisfactory. I did worry whether water could successfully be pumped to the second level. "Not to worry," the administrative officer assured me. "We have arranged with a local firm, National Electronics, to set up an efficient pump. The National Electronics pump turned out to be a half-naked twelve-year-old boy, his head sheltered against the sun by some wet banana leaves. He was seated on a stool along the outside wall of the house, laboriously pumping water with his slender arms. My children were intrigued; I was embarrassed and demanded the immediate installation of an electric pump.

We soon came to love our new home. The noise of rain on the roof was incredibly soothing and the sight of the brick courtyard glistening in the rain was a delight. The garden was quite large, with many trees, new to us, such as banana, mango, papaya, litchi and custard apple. The new second floor roof became a shuffleboard court, and we had fun introducing West Pakistani and Bengali friends to the game.

For the first time we had to keep a sizeable staff of servants. At our European posts we had employed servants, but only a cook/maid and a part-time cleaning woman or laundress. When the children were babies, we had a German nurse in Munich and a Swiss nurse in Athens. Now we had a cook, three bearers, a sweeper to do the really dirty work, two malis (gardeners) and a driver. For a while we also kept an ayah (nurse) because local friends urged the need to have a female servant around to protect our daughters from any molestation by the servants, all of whom were male. As far as I could see, the ayah's only contribution was to sleep on the floor outside the door to the girls' room. The ayah was middle-aged, stout and a bit slow, so slow that our children took delight in making her life miserable. We saved the ayah from further torment by letting her go.

In South Asia there is no such thing as social security or medical coverage. Our servants looked to us to take care of hospital expenses for themselves and their families. Occasionally, we had to straighten out any difficulties they had with the police or creditors, or problems which their children might have in school. Most of the servants lived in rooms above the garage.

Meg quickly became very skilled in running a larger staff, which included Muslims, Hindus and Christians. She had a light but firm touch which made for a smoothly run household. To the servants she was the boss, the memsahib who assigned the tasks, meted out the penalties and refereed their disputes. I was just a semi-amiable fellow who perhaps had some authority in the family but virtually none over them. Our children were genuinely fond of the servants, but in my view they could often be too demanding.

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The American school where we had enrolled the children left much to be desired. Still, the children were never bored in this wondrous new place. We lived in an older neighborhood, Ramna, whereas most of the American

community lived further out in an area called Dhanmondi; and some were moving even further out to a newly developed area named Gulshan. Except for the British Deputy High Commissioner who lived across the road, and two wonderful, but childless couples next door who were with the agricultural section of AID, all our neighbors were Bengalis.

From this happy circumstance sprang a friendship which has lasted to this day. Shahudul Haque, whom we always called by his nickname of Gullu, was just the right age for our three children. They hit it off famously. Along with his younger brother and his cousins, Gullu taught our three how to play cricket, and our son introduced his Bengali friends to baseball. Gullu was also introduced to that exciting American institution, the slumber party, which greatly intrigued him. It was very interesting for my wife and me to watch this cultural exchange at work, and gratifying to see how both sides profited from it. Gullu became part of our family and he still addresses Meg and me as *Khala* and *Khalu* (aunt and uncle).

When we left Dacca to return to the United States, Gullu was presented with two ducks which had been part of our household for many months. Our daughter, Barbara, who spent many happy hours in the kitchen getting in the way of the cook, had discovered the ducks in a basket in the godown (storage area). Learning from the cook that the ducks were destined to be the next night's dinner, she burst into tears and successfully lobbied her mother into granting the ducks a stay of execution. From then on Jennifer and Veronica lived in our compound. They earned their keep after a fashion by keeping down our snake population.

Each morning they would waddle to the front gate and quack until they were let out to cross the road to a large pond where they spent the day. At dusk they returned and demanded to be readmitted. I thought, and secretly hoped, that two fat ducks would sooner or later disappear from the pond which was always surrounded by people bathing or doing laundry. After all, the ducks had no claim to diplomatic immunity. But they were never carried off. Despite both having feminine names, they managed to produce several squads of ducklings. Gullu insists that he continued to maintain Jennifer and Veronica in the style to which they were accustomed.

In another instance Barbara's penchant for befriending the fauna of Dacca did not turn out so happily. Disregarding her parents' strict orders, she struck up a friendship with one of the pye dogs which by day roamed the streets of Dacca. At night the roamers were jackals from the

countryside. Pye dogs were animals of no fixed address which slunk around acting as scavengers. The municipal authorities considered them a health menace, which indeed they were. One morning Meg discovered Barbara's "Bronco" on top of a pile of other pye dogs. They had been knocked over the head by people from the sanitation department and left for later removal. Fortunately, we were able to shield Barbara from any knowledge of the dog's fate.

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At the office I had problems of adjustment of my own. The Consulate General occupied the worst quarters of any I have seen in the Foreign Service. We rented the sixth floor of a dilapidated office building called Adamjee Court. The AID offices were on the fourth and fifth floors. On the outside the building, like many in Dacca at that time, had originally been painted white but the ravages of several monsoons gave it the mildewed appearance of an ancient ruin. The elevator was out of order about one third of the time.

The Consul General at the time of my arrival was Nat B. King, who had been a lawyer in Laredo, Texas before going to work for the State Department in the Law of the Sea negotiations. He did well in the negotiations and won lateral entry to the Foreign Service at the FSO-1 (Foreign Service Officer, Class 1) level. In the Service, the rank number gets smaller as you climb the ladder. Officers entering through the examination route, as I had, started as an FSO-8 and, if lucky and competent, might rise to FSO-1. Shortly after my arrival I learned that Mr. King had protested my assignment but had been told by Ambassador Bill Rountree in Karachi that he was lucky to get me. Mr. King's objection was that my predecessor had been an FSO-3, while I was an FSO-4.

Because Dacca was Mr. King's first regular Foreign Service assignment, he was unfamiliar with many Service practices. In the Foreign Service rank is in the man (or woman), not in the position, as is the case in the Civil Service. Promotion does not follow an assignment to a higher rated job but derives solely from the decision of annual promotion panels, termed Selection Boards. A Selection Board bases its promotion recommendations on a review of an officer's file, primarily the annual ratings prepared by an officer's superior. Not knowing the system, Mr. King was writing cursory, non-committal ratings. His

comments were honest and well-intentioned but so brief that in the highly competitive world of the Foreign Service they could not but be damaging to the rated officer.

I asked Mr. King if he would allow me to write the performance ratings of the middle grade officers at the post, reminding him that he could still add a reviewing officer's statement to what I had written. He readily agreed. It was more work for me but I actually enjoyed doing the ratings. Besides, my authority as Deputy Principal Officer was immediately strengthened, and I took on more and more management responsibilities. My primary responsibility, political reporting, was not very burdensome in those halycon days, and I enjoyed spreading my wings in a new field. I was consciously trying to prepare myself for the coveted assignment some day as DCM (Deputy Chief of Mission) at an embassy.

It was not long before I discovered that Mr. King was a lonely and unhappy man. His wife had accompanied him to the post but after a short stay she had left for Switzerland where she was living. Mr. King always spoke of her imminent return, but that never happened. My wife acted as his hostess when he entertained, and consequently I was always present at his dinners and receptions.

Mr. King's relations with the Embassy in Karachi and with the NEA Bureau in the State Department were less than felicitous, largely due to a running argument about such matters as furniture for the office and his residence and other alleged failures of administrative support. Frequently, on a Sunday afternoon, I would get a telephone call from Mr. King, asking me to come to his house. When I arrived, he would show me an angry telegram he had drafted to either Embassy Karachi or the Department. I soon realized that he really wanted me to talk him out of sending the message which would have served only to irritate its recipients. I almost always succeeded in accomplishing my assigned task, but those were long, strenuous afternoons which I would have preferred to spend with my family.

The Consul General was also on hostile terms with the AID provincial director in Dacca, and on this score I was in complete sympathy with him. In Karachi the AID Director for Pakistan had come to overshadow the Ambassador in the eyes of the Government of Pakistan. AID was the purveyor of "goodies" and President Ayub saw the AID director far more often than he saw the Ambassador. Here in Dacca the provincial AID director was playing the same role. He had

much greater access to the Governor, Azam Khan, than did the Consul General. Moreover, he often declined to tell us the gist of his meetings with Azam. The provincial AID director also took delight in trying to upstage Mr. King by being the first of the Americans to leave an official function, although by protocol, the Consul General, who alone had the right to fly the flag on his vehicle, should have gone first. The AID director had been a supply sergeant in the Air Force in his previous life and, in our view, had few qualifications for his present job. Our view was shared by many of the AID staff.

Slightly over halfway in my tour, Mr. King was transferred and was replaced by Charles P. O'Donnell. Like Mr. King, Mr. O'Donnell had not entered the Foreign Service at the bottom. He had previously been a professor of political science at Marquette University. But unlike Mr. King he already had several postings, in Copenhagen and Colombo, and had been director of the Senior Seminar, the State Department equivalent of the National War College. Mr. O'Donnell was accompanied by his wife, Kay, and their teen-age son. They were a happy family and they ran a happy post. Perhaps because of his academic background, Mr. O'Donnell was more interested than Mr. King in the details and nuances of political life in East Pakistan. Those of us engaged in political reporting were kept on our toes and encouraged to concentrate more on analysis. After he retired from the Foreign Service several years later, Mr. O'Donnell wrote an excellent book: Bangladesh: *Biography of a Muslim Nation*.

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A bright day for me was the arrival of the Peace Corps in East Pakistan, the first Peace Corps contingent in the mainland of Asia. Their arrival was greeted with much skepticism on the part of the AID director. He was sure that those "kids" who were going to live out in the countryside, existing like most of the people, would never finish their two year tour of duty. I myself was intrigued by all that youthful vitality and confidence. I toured the province by plane with Sargent Shriver, the Director of the Peace Corps, on his preliminary reconnaissance, and Meg and I greeted the group upon their arrival. The group's leader, Bob Terry, was a truly impressive fellow, who exhibited an unusual blend of inspirational leadership and down-to-earth common sense. He and his group did exceedingly well, defying predictions to the contrary.

Another U.S. organization, bright in promise and performance, made its debut in East Pakistan, when the Pakistan SEATO Cholera Laboratory was inaugurated in 1960. The name was something of a misnomer, since most of the funding and medical staff came from the United States. My wife and I visited the Lab's field station some fifty miles from Dacca. Cholera inoculations were given the villagers of the area, and records maintained on the incidence of cholera. To ensure the villagers' cooperation, the team's pediatrician provided health care to the children. We were struck by the doctor's detailed records which showed that the babies at birth had normal measurements (head size, weight, etc.) but their measurements fell sharply below the normal curve after a year or two. The doctor attributed the decline to malnutrition, usually brought about when a younger sibling came to have first call on the mother's milk.

The young doctors from the Cholera Lab were to play an important role in the relief operations following the cyclone of November 1970, in the humanitarian stretching out to the victims of the civil strife of 1971, and in the lobbying of Congress in favor of the Bengali cause later that same year.

During this tour in Dacca I received my baptism in fire in cyclone relief operations. Cyclones, often accompanied by tidal bores (or waves), were almost a seasonal fact of life in East Pakistan, hitting the off-shore islands and coastal areas in May or November. The cyclone of 1960 was a relatively minor affair by East Pakistan standards; only 12,000 people were estimated to have lost their lives. But it did bring a sizeable international relief effort, including U.S. Army helicopters, and close Pakistani military cooperation with the foreign aid donors.

The experience also brought home to me the incapacity of the civilian government in East Pakistan to respond quickly to an emergency. When Washington asked us to find out how the U.S. could help, I went uninvited to the first meeting of the GOEP Disaster Relief Committee. The meeting was chaired by the Revenue Secretary, a Britisher left over from the days of the Raj. He was generally regarded as a "character" in part because he spent his Sunday afternoons chasing butterflies with a net in the city parks. It did not help, either, that his name was Hatch-Barnwell, which was corrupted to Snatch-Barnsmell by the irreverent members of the Dacca foreign community.

For forty-five minutes the meeting was taken up with arguments over the exact wording of leaflets which would inform the people of the cyclone-

afflicted area where they could go for relief supplies. Finally, in some exasperation, I got up and said that the U.S. Government was prepared to help. What were their most urgent needs? Blankets? How many? Tents? How many? Rice? How much? With the information received, I went back to the office and got off an initial request to Washington.

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One of the greater rewards of a Foreign Service career is the opportunity to travel, at Uncle Sugar's expense, throughout your country of assignment. The purpose, of course, is to learn more about the country by talking with journalists, businessmen, academics, officials and politicians who resided outside the capital. Equally important to me was the personal satisfaction of getting away from the desk for a few days and exploring the natural wonders and beauty of the countryside. In 1960-62 I made a number of trips in East Pakistan criss-crossing the entire province except for the northeast sector around Sylhet, the center of tea farming, on the border of the Indian state of Assam.

I went up to the northeast corner bordering Nepal for a primarily personal reason. As a hillbilly from Virginia, I longed to see again some rocks and a clear flowing stream. In deltaic East Pakistan the rivers were brown with silt and sand. There were no rocks. To obtain aggregate for making cement women, always women, would sit patiently for hours, breaking bricks into little pieces. I also traveled down to the Burmese border along the narrow coastal plain extending south of Chittagong. Together with the O'Donnells' son, I visited the jungles of the Chittagong Hill Tracts and spent several days with the Chakma tribe. Years later, in the late 1980's, this remote area was the center of a long-lived insurgency pitting a Chakma guerrilla group known as the *Shanti Bahini* (Peace Force) against the Bangladeshi Army.

Travel in East Pakistan was generally by train or riverboat. I love trains, even the rather tired trains then in use. I would board the train with a duffel bag containing my clothing and personal gear, plus a bedroll which I would stretch out on one of the train's board bunks or on a charpoy (a bed made of woven strings strung on a wooden frame) in a Dakbunglow. Built in the days of British rule, these bunglows were scattered throughout the province for use by traveling officials and persons carrying the mail (Dak means post). For a few rupees one could

get the bungalow caretaker to go out and buy a scrawny chicken which could be turned into a palatable curry, especially when washed down with some Murree beer from West Pakistan. Train travel was often interrupted by wide, unbridged rivers or a change in the gauge of the railroad track. These interruptions merely added zest to the adventure. I was never really in a hurry to get anywhere.

By far my favorite mode of transport was the river steamer, particularly the Rocket, a large paddle-wheeler which made an overnight run from Narayanganj, Dacca's river port, down to Khulna near the port of Chalna which was accessible to ocean-going vessels in the Bay of Bengal. Carrying large quantities of cargo, often jute and lumber, and several hundred passengers, the Rocket offered a comfortable and relaxed look into the bustling river commerce of East Pakistan. When the Rocket was cruising the Padma, a tributary of the Ganges, the river was so wide that one could not see either shore. Here, hundreds of country boats, large and small, dotted the broad expanse of water, their colorful, patched sails making a remarkable sight. I felt as if I was one of Drake's sailors watching the Spanish Armada bearing down upon him.

Further south the Rocket made its way through narrow, meandering rivers. We knew then that we were on the edge of the Sunderbans, a huge watery jungle, home to the Royal Bengal Tiger. In East Pakistan in those days tigers were a favorite topic of conversation. We heard many an account of a tiger spotting or a man-eater's attack, told by people who had probably never seen a tiger in the wild. As the Rocket slowly moved through parts of the Sunderbans, we passengers would line the rails hoping in vain for a glimpse of a tiger, possibly swimming from one sandbar to another.

Meg and I were able to broaden our South Asian horizon by traveling outside of East Pakistan. Calcutta in West Bengal was an easy half-hour flight from Dacca on a Fokker Friendship, either with Indian Airlines or PIA. We could leave Dacca in the morning, do some shopping in Calcutta, have lunch in a nice restaurant like Firpo's, see a movie or do some sightseeing, and catch a plane back to Dacca in time for dinner.

Partway through our tour, we were allowed to purchase furniture in Calcutta for our house in Dacca, to be paid for by U.S. Government holdings of excess Indian rupees derived from the sale of PL-480 wheat to India. (Although our houses in Dacca were rented, the basic furniture in them was the property of Uncle Sam. From the U.S. we brought only books, bric-a-brac, and things such as record players and radios.) We accomplished

this pleasant shopping task by giving the Calcutta cabinet makers magazine pictures of prize Heritage-Henredon pieces. In two months, the skilled workers rendered the pictures into beautiful sideboards and cabinets of teak and rosewood. When we returned to Dacca in 1970, we again acquired this furniture because one of the Consul Generals had in the interval removed them from the deputy's (our) house for his own use.

Our most ambitious trip was to Kashmir. I say ambitious because it was impossible to write or telephone to Kashmir for houseboat reservations. Indian regulations forbade any direct communication between Pakistan and Kashmir. Consequently, we had to fly to Lahore in West Pakistan, take a taxi to the Indian border, then take another taxi to Amritsar where we spent a night in a guest house. From Amritsar we took a train to Pathankot where we caught an Indian Airlines flight to Srinagar. For several nights we stayed in he Oberoi Palace Hotel, formerly the palace of the Maharajah of Kashmir, while we picked out a houseboat.

Our children loved living in a houseboat, and Meg liked having vendors in small boats pull up alongside of the houseboat to ask if they could come aboard and display their wares. After a week on the houseboat I was becoming a little stir-crazy. For a change of scenery the entire household, servants and all, moved up to Gulmarg in the mountains. The servants pitched several luxurious tents along the bank of a stream, and we spent the time fishing for trout, hiking, or riding ponies along the mountain trails.

We also, without the children, visited Nepal for a week. Kathmandu still remains for me the most exotic city in South Asia. We stayed in a pension run by Christian Indians and biked happily throughout the Kathmandu valley.

In the 1960's Calcutta, Kashmir and Nepal were the usual places where members of the American community took R & R (rest and recuperation). Some who had more currency at their disposal than I, or a smaller family, might travel to Sri Lanka or Thailand, or even as far as Hong Kong.

Not only did we get to travel but we also had the pleasure of welcoming some important travelers. At an isolated post like Dacca, the Consular Corps was automatically included in the functions for visiting dignitaries. The Crown Prince and Princess of Japan and the Agha Khan were among the visitors, but the most memorable visit was that of Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip. Together with Bengali and West Pakistani

women, my wife was invited by the wife of the British Deputy High Commissioner to help decorate the guest quarters for the royal pair. The ladies contributed not only their ideas and hours of work, but also the loan of some of their own furnishings. To spare Her Majesty the sight of some slovenly neighborhoods, the authorities built a bamboo fence, ten miles long, along the route in from the airport. Dacca became a Potemkin village as in the days of Catherine the Great of Russia.

Our neighbors, the British Deputy High Commissioner, Robin Adair, and his wife, Diane, hosted a reception for members of the Commonwealth. Meg and I listened to the festivities from our verandah, but our children were invited to join the Adair son in observing the Queen from a balcony directly above the garden.

Easily our favorite visitors were Admiral Andrew Jackson and his wife. The Admiral was COMMIDEAST, or Commander of U.S. Forces in the Middle East, with headquarters in Bahrein. In those days his force was small, consisting of two destroyers and a seaplane tender converted into a communications ship, which was his flagship. However, his area was large and included Pakistan. One of his predecessors had raised Pakistani hackles by declaring "Pakistan comes under my command," but Admiral Jackson was a consummate diplomat and avoided any such boners.

I acted as control officer for his visit, meaning that I coordinated arrangements with the Pakistani civil and military authorities. Perhaps for that reason, the Admiral invited Meg and me to fly with him to Chittagong after his official calls in Dacca. His flagship was in Chittagong and it was, as always, a thrill to go aboard a U.S. Navy ship in a remote corner of the world. We then accompanied the Jacksons on their launch up the scenic Karnafuli River to the Kaptai Dam in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The Dam, a U.S.-assisted project, was designed to provide power to that part of the province. Admiral Jackson subsequently became President of the Naval War College and somewhat later we had an enjoyable reunion with them in their quarters in the Washington Navy Yard.

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Social life in Dacca was very relaxed. It was easy and natural to strike up friendships with both Bengalis and West Pakistanis. Since at first there was no Consul General's wife at the post, Meg was for a good while the

ranking wife in the official American community, a situation which opened up opportunities to establish contacts at a higher level than we ordinarily might have expected.

For instance, we became close friends with the GOC (General officer Commanding) and Martial Law Administrator in East Pakistan, Major General Rahim Khan and his wife Imtiaz. Much of Dacca's social life centered around the cantonment and the GOC's residence, Flagstaff House. The President of Pakistan, Ayub-Khan, was always entertained at Flagstaff House when he visited East Pakistan. Ayub liked to relax with the young Army officers, indulging in such horseplay as being carried around the garden in a chair or participating in wild dances from the Northwest Frontier. On one such occasion, Ayub was whirling around in a frontier dance, the object of which seemed to be to hurl one's partner to the ground. Suddenly, Rahim Khan thrust me into the arms of Ayub, a tall, strong man. I had a sudden premonition of finding myself flat on my back, to the great amusement of the Army officers surrounding us. But Ayub was kind and after several whirls he released me unharmed. My wife likes to remember that in 1951 King Paul of Greece had asked her to dance at his fiftieth birthday ball at the palace in Athens. Now I could claim that I too had danced with a Chief of State.

Rahim was instrumental in arranging another of my memorable dance moments. During a dinner party at the Dacca Club he proposed a Western dance contest. I found myself out on the floor, paired with the engaging but quite stout wife of the Indian Deputy High Commissioner. I was never a good dancer, but I labored dutifully at engineering my partner about the floor, hoping every moment for a judge to tap me on the shoulder and send us off the floor. But no tap came. Meg, who is a good dancer, had already been erased from the contest. Finally, with only three couples left on the dance floor, the welcome tap came. The West Pakistanis at the party were greatly amused; I was exhausted.

The Rahim Khans had two daughters close in age to our own. Shireen and Barbara attended many children's parties and bazaars at the cantonment, so many that they began to complain that this aspect of their social life was beginning to override all other aspects. As Martial Law Administrator Rahim Khan had censorship responsibilities, he used to invite numbers of the Consular Corps to join him in viewing Brigitte Bardot or Martine Carol films to ascertain whether they were appropriate for Muslim audiences. We infidels did not have a vote but we enjoyed ourselves immensely.

Rahim was transferred from Dacca before we were, maybe for the same reason Azam Khan was. We remained in touch for a number of years. In 1969 Rahim visited us in Athens and in 1978, after his death, Imtiaz came to see us in New Delhi. Some years later, we learned of the tragic death of Rahim's son by an earlier marriage. An Army officer like his father, he was a passenger on a PIA flight within Pakistan. The plane was hijacked by supporters of the West Pakistani political leader, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who is to have a significant part in this narrative. When the hijackers discovered Rahim's son, a political foe of Bhutto's, they shot him and threw his body out of the plane on to the tarmac.

In 1962 we became acquainted with Hussain Shahid Suhrawardy, the grand old man of Bengali politics. At the time of partition he was Chief Minister of United Bengal and in 1956-57 he served as Prime Minister of Pakistan. After Ayub became president, Suhrawardy was one of many political leaders who were EBDOed. The Elective Bodies Disqualification Order (EBDO) set up special tribunals to try former politicians for "misconduct." To avoid prosecution an accused person had to agree not to be a candidate for elective office for a period of seven years. Always a fighter, Suhrawardy risked prosecution and was arrested.

At the time we met, Mr. Suhrawardy was 69 years of age. He was living quietly in Dacca and was closely watched by the Martial Law authorities. He liked parties, particularly where he could relax and avoid political talk. Sometimes he would telephone to suggest that my wife and I go to the movies with him, but I preferred to have him come to the house in the more open setting of a small cocktail party or dinner. Suhrawardy was a marvelous raconteur and I never tied of hearing him talk about his early experiences before partition. As if by neutral agreement, we never discussed the current situation. Shortly thereafter, he moved to Beirut where he died the following year. His body was returned to his beloved Bengal and given a hero's honors.

In the summer of 1960 I met A.M.A. Muhith, a young Bengali officer in the Civil Service of Pakistan, on detail as protocol officer in the GOEP. We often had business to transact. For example, if Ambassador Rountree was coming for a visit, I would arrange through Muhith for the use of the VIP room at Dacca airport for the Ambassador's arrival or departure. Or if important American officials, such as Peace Corps Director Sargent Shriver, were about to pay a visit, I would arrange their programs with Muhith. We fast became good friends; Meg and I were

one of only two foreign couples at Muhith's wedding. We are friends to this day. Incidentally, Muhith will appear several times later on in this story, and particularly so in the grand finale.

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Sports and amateur theatrical productions helped enliven our Dacca experience. Americans had introduced the young people of our host country to softball, and they were such fast learners that we soon had an active softball league in Dacca. I played third base on the Consulate General team, with other teams fielded by USIS, Notre Dame (not the Fighting Irish from South Bend, but an eponymous school run by American priests for Bengalis), our own American school, the East Pakistan Police, the East Pakistan Rifles, and the Pakistani Army. The Bengalis and West Pakistanis were a bit careless in their base running but with their experience in cricket they could hurl the ball to the infield in a straight trajectory from any place in the outfield. The soldiers and policemen liked to make a contact game of it, but they were very good sports. The only team that roused my ire was the American school team. Its players, a bunch of cocky teenagers, kept up a steady abusive tirade toward the opposing team. Unfortunately, some of the other teams began to follow suit.

I have a habit of recalling bad moments in my life in my dreams. One recurrent dream centers on a misplay on my part in a game with Notre Dame. It was the last inning and the score was tied, with two outs and a runner on third. Notre Dame was the last to bat and Father Tim, their best hitter, was the batter. He hit a high bounding ball down the third base line. I timed the bounce perfectly, and then so hurried my throw to first base that the ball hit the dirt well in front of our first baseman. The runner scored, the game was lost, and I was the goat. (Father Tim was probably the most admired person in the American community.

Amateur theatrics loom important in places where you often have to manufacture your own entertainment. Everywhere I have served the British were notable for staging plays, and the British Council in Dacca ran true to form. The Consulate General and USIS would also produce plays from time to time. Since so many West Pakistanis and Bengalis were fluent in English, they were often drafted to fill roles. One of my favorite memories was the performance of Steinbeck's "Of Mice and

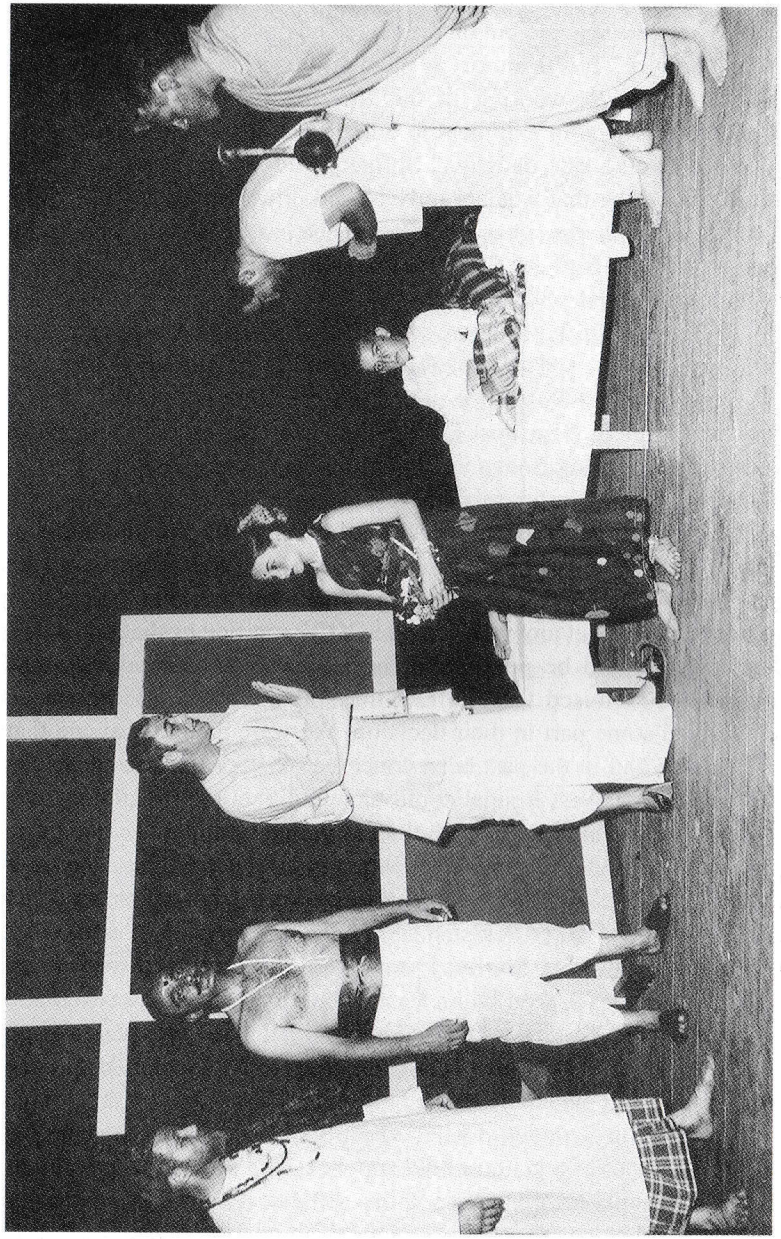
Men" where at one point a small Bengali, dressed as a cowboy complete to six-shooters, swaggered out on the stage and drawled with a Welsh lilt, "Howdy partners." It was almost as incongruous as the sight of Bengalis enveloped in parkas working in the freezing plants which prepared shrimp and frog legs for shipment to Seattle in hotel-sized packs.

At age twelve our daughter, Shireen, had the dubious honor of appearing in a play that was abruptly closed down by the GOEP. USIS had come up with the idea of helping celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of Sir Rabindranath Tagore, the great Bengali poet, playwright and philosopher, with the performance of one of his plays. To Bengali speakers Tagore stands in roughly the same position as Shakespeare does to speakers of English. In 1913 Tagore had been the first Asian to win the Nobel prize for literature. The piece chosen was a one-act play called "The Post Office" and was performed in English. Shireen played a young Bengali girl of the village, and if I say so myself, looked very fetching in her sari.

"The Post Office" played to large, enthusiastic Bengali audiences in Dacca. It then went on the road, up north to Mymensingh, one of the larger cities in East Pakistan. Audiences were even greater.

Suddenly, without any warning, the GOEP notified us that no further performances would be permitted. The GOEP gave no reason for its action but we surmised that the fact that Tagore was a Hindu and an Indian played some part in their decision. We were naturally aware that West Pakistan had in the past been concerned that cultural ties between East Pakistan and West Bengal could have political ramifications. Still, we thought, or perhaps just hoped, that West Pakistan had become more understanding about East and West Bengal cultural ties since the days when an unsuccessful attempt was made to have Urdu confirmed as the official language of all of Pakistan.

Together with my family I appeared in a production which, fortunately, was never seen by an East Pakistan audience. The Bell and Howell-sponsored TV series "Close Up" decided to do an hour program called "Our Durable Diplomats" to show that a diplomat's life was not all champagne and caviar. The first half hour dealt with a young couple at our Embassy in Santiago, Chile, whose problems were primarily the high cost of groceries and household supplies. The second half hour was to focus on a family trying to cope with a difficult environment. Bombay was the original choice for the second segment, but the Director decided



Author's daughter, Shireen in the all-American USIS Dhaka production of Tagore's *The Post Office*, 1961.

that Bombay was too civilized. The Deputy Principal Officer in Bombay, Sid Sober, who had been a member of my entering class in the Foreign Service, suggested Dacca as an alternative. When the TV team came to Dacca, our family was chosen to be featured, not in accordance with my wishes, but because my wife dimpled at the director.

Those parts of the show picturing us were filmed on the roof of our house in May, the hottest month of the year. I learned that the TV crew had been busy about town, filming fly-ridden meat in the bazaars and swarms of beggars in the streets. The questions put to us seemed designed to elicit horror tales, such as kraits and cobras in the garden and kites (large hawk-like birds) dropping baby mongooses on our heads. I could see how the program was turning out and argued that we were not in Dacca merely to survive hardship conditions but were here to represent the U.S. This meant working with the local population. Couldn't they show us in interaction with the people of the host country? In reply the director asked if we enjoyed our contacts with the local people. When I said yes, of course, he maintained that the program would lose all impact if it were not all black. I tried to phrase my answers in a positive way when we were asked about our living conditions, but the ABC crew simply chopped out anything that portrayed Dacca in a favorable light.

Luckily, television had not yet reached Dacca so the program was never seen there. My family and I never saw it ourselves until many years later. Upon learning that the program was used at the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) as a training film, I requested a showing. After seeing it, I was not sure whether the FSI thought the film could demonstrate to new recruits some of the hardships of Foreign Service life or whether it wanted to illustrate how not to act in front of the camera.

Dacca was, of course, a bona fide hardship post, not as difficult, I suppose, as many African posts but certainly more difficult than Kabul, which also was a 25% differential post. Those of us who had been in Dacca for six months or so were quite acclimated, but Dacca could have a powerful first impact. I had heard Service stories about employees arriving at a hardship post and being so overwhelmed that they turned around and went home. In Dacca I was witness to an actual case of profound cultural shock. A 35-year-old USIS officer arrived on his first overseas assignment. He had been a Marine officer and had served in Southeast Asia, but not Vietnam. While working in Hollywood, he heard

President Kennedy's famous words, "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country." He upped and joined USIS, and, according to him, was evaluated as one of the most highly motivated people ever to enter that organization.

He got off the plane, took one look about him and declared he was resigning and returning home immediately. He refused to go to the office and for sustenance took only canned tuna fish and bottled American soft drinks. When his boss to be, the Public Affairs Officer, and I urged him to give the place a few days' trial, he said that we were fools to live and work in Dacca. His decision to leave immediately was very costly; he was forced to cable home to his family for money to pay his passage home, and he was required to reimburse the U.S. Government for the cost of sending his automobile and personal effects to Dacca.

Some years later, when I was serving in Kabul, an American secretary remained only a few days before resigning and returning home. Her reason was a good natured "Asians are just not my bag."

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Our time in Dacca had gone by quickly. Dacca had been good for me professionally. I was promoted to FSO-3 in 1961 and in the spring of 1962 I learned that my next assignment was senior training at the Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Meg and the children departed post in May, six weeks before I did, because she was expecting our fourth child and wanted to be sure of being home for the birth. We had thought our family was complete, the youngest being already ten years old, but Dacca ruled otherwise. Several other wives in the American community also learned that they were expecting after a gap of some years. The ladies jokingly attributed their pregnancies to the boiled water that we all conscientiously drank. I credited the pervasive fecundity of East Pakistan which you could not escape, even if you wanted to do so.

CHAPTER TWO

RETURN TO EAST PAKISTAN

In the latter half of March, 1970 I was back in East Pakistan, this time as an FSO-1 and Consul General. The intervening eight years had been smooth and happy ones, except for the last two in Athens, which helps to explain why I was pleased, maybe even grateful, to be returning to Dacca.

Upon leaving Dacca in June 1962 I joined my family on home leave in Point Pleasant, New Jersey, where Meg had rented a house near her parents. I arrived in time for the birth of our fourth and caboose child, a son whose real name is Archer Lloyd (my wife's middle name) but whom we have always called Cubby or Cub. Point Pleasant is a beach resort, but our time there was short because I had to report to the Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania early in August.

I thoroughly enjoyed my year at the War College. We lived on the base in small, somewhat cramped quarters, but then so did everybody else. At that time the student body numbered 218, made up primarily of Army officers but including contingents from the Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force, plus a handful of civilians like myself. The class was organized in sixteen seminars, the membership of which rotated during the academic year. The goal was to have a civilian, a Navy or Marine officer, and an Air Force officer in each seminar.

The average age of the officers in the class was forty. Most were lieutenant-colonels or commanders, if from the Navy, but there was a smattering of full colonels. They were an articulate, confident group, very good in oral presentations because of having constantly been called upon to deliver briefings. A very active social life centered around the

individual seminars, which were shuffled at the end of each major segment of the academic course. My favorite segment was the first, which dealt with domestic U.S. issues and foreign affairs, and included a class trip with spouses to New York City on our own train. My next favorite was the last segment covering military strategy and planning. I did not find the middle segment on management too interesting, in part because it was so heavy on Pentagon budget practices.

Each student had to write a long research paper, and this effort took up about one third of one's time for the last six months of the course. I chose to use this requirement as a way of instructing myself in a completely new area, rather than to write on a subject with which I was already familiar. My thesis title was "Some Foreign Policy Problems Inherent in the Anticipated Wider Diffusion of Nuclear Weapons," and I was able to use the paper as my qualifying thesis for an M.A. in International Affairs from George Washington University.

My onward assignment after the Army War College was in the State Department Bureau of Personnel, as Chief of the Near Eastern and South Asian (NEA) Branch. In a service where the personnel are moved every couple of years the assignment process takes on great importance. The Foreign Service has always believed that assignments cannot be left to career personnel officers but must be controlled by officers involved in substantive work such as political or economic. An assignment to Personnel is generally a coveted one, because it provides a wonderful opportunity to learn much about the Service and the people in it. And of course it would take a real dolt to spend two years in Personnel without grabbing a good onward assignment.

Negotiation is considered to be an important diplomatic function, but the only negotiating I did in thirty-five years in the Foreign Service was during my time in Personnel. My job was to get the best people possible to staff positions in the NEA Bureau in the Department and in the NEA posts abroad. Each assignment involved negotiation with the individual officers and the NEA Bureau, specifically the Executive Director of the Bureau and his post management subordinates. In effect, I was in the Personnel Bureau but working for NEA.

Assignments were made by a panel composed of the chiefs of the various geographic bureau branches, such as EUR (Europe) FE, later EA (Far East/East Asia), AF (Africa), ARA (America Republics or Latin America), NEA and a Washington assignment branch concerned with

State Department positions other than in the geographic bureaus, plus counselors representing the interests of officers in the various functional specialties (we call these specialties "cones") such as political, economic, commercial, administrative and consular.

At the weekly panel meetings competition for the best officers was fierce. Each member of the panel had a vote, so you had to convince a majority of the panel members that it would be best for the officer and the service if such and such an officer were assigned to such and such an NEA job rather than to another bureau's job. My AF colleague and I jokingly referred to ourselves as the "barefoot end of the table," because we had to work harder to attract people to our many hardship posts. We envied our EUR colleague who had no end of candidates for openings in posts like London, Paris or Rome.

Joe Egert, the NEA Executive Director, and I worked closely and well together. Early on, he told me that the job I should try for after my stint in personnel was the Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) position in Kabul, Afghanistan. He had been administrative officer in Kabul after serving in Rome as deputy administrative officer. Kabul, urged Joe, was a pleasant post with the greatest climate in the world, despite being rated a 25% differential post, like Dacca. I am convinced that he saw to it that I was NEA's first choice for the Kabul job when it opened in the summer of 1965. Fortunately, I had just been promoted to FSO-2, thus moving me into the senior ranks and making me eligible for a DCM job at a good-sized embassy. After the Ambassador, John M. Steeves, bought NEA's recommendation, I was assigned to Kabul.

Fulfilling my high expectations, Kabul turned out to be my favorite post in the Service. The climate was indeed wonderful. Kabul has a mile-high elevation, the same as Denver, and the atmosphere is clear and sparkling. Even in winter, when there is snow on the streets, the sun is so bright and warm that one does not need a topcoat. Our housing was of simple construction, plastered-over mud walls and tin roofs, but very comfortable inside. As in other Muslim countries, each house had its own sizeable compound with vegetable plots and, in our case, stalls for two horses.

The American International School of Kabul (AISK) was brand new, with excellent facilities and a good staff. Our two daughters graduated from AISK and are proud of being a Scorpion, the school's mascot. Kabul is the only one of my posts which periodically holds reunions of

old hands, generally combined with reunions of AISK alumni. Whenever I am asked the reasons for this continuing closeness, I can think of two in particular. First, we were a large but closely knit community in an isolated place at a time when life was good. Kabul was predominantly a family post. Second, the tragic fate of Afghanistan since the days of our service there serves to make our memories all the more poignant. The Embassy is closed; the school has reverted to the Afghan Government; and our Afghan friends must be having a miserable life under the present Taliban rule, at least those who have not escaped to the U.S. or Western Europe. Since the book was written afganistan is the bigger under Taliban rule.

In the period 1965-68, when King Zahir was still on the throne, Afghanistan was a most interesting place from a diplomatic viewpoint. The Soviet Union provided Afghanistan with virtually all of its military equipment and was also the largest donor of economic aid, followed closely by the U.S. and the Federal Republic of Germany. The Afghan Government wanted to see pacific U.S.-Soviet relations in Afghanistan, and generally we complied with its wishes except for occasional CIA-KGB sparrings. Our people in Embassy Moscow envied us our easy access to Soviets in Kabul. We held a monthly U.S.-Soviet "bash," strictly a stag affair which involved a lot of drinking and good-natured poking of fun at each other. These get-togethers proved a useful way of introducing our junior officers to the species, Sovieticus — KGBus, teaching our boys to understand that these Soviets could be charming, possessed of a marvelous sense of humor, bright, and quite dangerous.

The official American community in Kabul was quite sizeable, being one of the 35 largest U.S. missions in the world. In addition to the Embassy proper and USIS, there was a large and competently led AID Mission with many contract groups attached to it, as well as a large Peace Corps contingent. Another AID group was located in the Helmand Valley, southwest of Kabul. The Embassy building in use when I arrived was nothing to write home about, but during my tour we, or rather a West German construction firm, built a splendid new Embassy. I was Chargé d'affaires, in between ambassadors, when we first occupied the new Embassy. With its white marble facing and decorative windows, it resembled a prosperous bank.

I loved that Embassy building, having watched it rise stone by stone. Every evening after work the administrative officer, Andy Mair, and I

would stroll around the building site, checking to see how far the construction had progressed that day. Andy was one of several people in Kabul who hailed from Fort Collins, where I now live. Some are dead now, but there remains a small Afghan alumni nucleus here in Colorado, including Andy; Jim Oxley, who was head of the University of Wyoming Agricultural Team in Kabul, and his wife, Helen; and Ed Rau, who was Assistant Air Attaché in Kabul. Peter (a nickname) McClure, widow of the AID Mission Director, is on the phone with us from Washington State every other week, and her oldest son, Charlie, frequently comes through Fort Collins on business.

The Embassy also had its own aircraft, especially designed for high altitude flights over the Hindu Kush mountain range. Always sensitive to Soviet concerns, the Afghan Foreign Office would only allow the plane to fly north of the Hindu Kush if the Ambassador or I were on board. Consequently, if the Air Attaché needed to fly north to meet some intelligence requirement, he would often ask me if I wanted to make a trip to Kunduz or Mazar-i-Sharif. I accepted with alacrity since I could not only take my wife along but also invite colleagues such as the British, German or Japanese to join me, together with their wives.

Much of Afghanistan was open to travel by foreigners in those days, and travel, while arduous, was quite safe. A group of us from the Embassy made the long circle tour of Afghanistan, and later the journey through the Hazarajat, the mountainous center of the country. We went in two jeeps, and for the first time were able to come out in the same two jeeps. Earlier travelers had been forced to abandon their vehicles in that mountainous terrain. Of course, all of us frequently made the trip down to Peshawar in Pakistan through the Khyber Pass in order to shop at the PX and the local bazaar or to visit a dentist at the U.S. Base.

In Kabul I had my first opportunity to act as Chargé d' affaires during the Ambassador's absence from the country. My first ambassador, John Steeves, left in 1966 to become Director General of the Foreign Service. It was seven months before his successor, Robert Neumann, arrived. Ambassador Neuman had a long tour in Kabul, gaining in seniority while he became Doyen (or Dean) of the Diplomatic Corps, an unusual distinction for an American ambassador. He later served as Ambassador to Morocco and Saudi Arabia.

To my great delight I was promoted to FSO-1 in March 1968, shortly before I was due to leave Kabul upon completion of a three-year tour. I

was offered the position of Political Counselor in Ankara but I did not express any enthusiasm. Then suddenly, to my surprise, I was assigned to Athens as Political Counselor. What had happened was that Mike Crosby, DCM at an African embassy, had been assigned to the Athens job, but the assignment had to be canceled when his Ambassador was called back to Washington to take a Deputy Assistant Secretary position in the Bureau of African Affairs. Meanwhile, I had heard from Bill Hall, the former DCM in Karachi, who was now Ambassador in Addis Ababa. He asked if I would like to be his DCM. From a career point of view Addis would have been ideal, but I could not shake free of the Athens assignment into which I was virtually railroaded.

I had to depart Kabul in April, leaving my family behind so that the boys could finish the school year (the girls were already in college in the States). I proceeded on direct transfer, stopping in Athens for consultation and then further consultation in the Department. While in Athens my reservations about the assignment were confirmed, even reinforced. The small political section staff had been further reduced by transferring the political-military officer to work directly under the DCM. Even the traditional Political Counselor's house had been given to this same political-military officer. I got the house back, but not the position.

In April 1967 a military junta had seized power in Greece just before parliamentary elections were to be held. Proclaiming fidelity to NATO and flaunting their anti-communist credentials, the Junta choked off all political activity. The average American tourist saw no problem with this military dictatorship; after all, law and order prevailed and there were no strikes or work stoppages. To those who, like myself, had served in Greece before, the colonels' rule was painful. We found most Greeks sullen and in despair, and many of our former friends and contacts were either in prison or in internal exile, i.e., restricted to some small inland in the Aegean.

In its attitude toward the Junta the Embassy was split asunder. On the one hand, the CIA personnel, the military attachés, and any Greek-Americans in Athens were staunchly pro-Junta. The political section was anti-Junta, as was USIS. The economic section was able to maintain a benign neutrality. For most of the time I was in Athens we had no ambassador. Phil Talbot, who was ambassador when I arrived, had resigned and left not long after the November 1968 elections which

brought Nixon to the White House. Ross McClelland served as Chargé d' affaires from then on until the arrival of a new ambassador, which kept being postponed while the new administration formulated its policy toward the Junta.

The key issue was whether or not to resume the supply of heavy military equipment, such as tanks and aircraft. To do so would be a signal that the U.S. accepted the legitimacy, or at least durability of the Junta, but it would also lose our principal leverage in prodding the Junta toward the restoration of a democratic civilian government. As time passed, it seemed increasingly clear that Washington was going to resume the military assistance, which of course could be justified because of Greek membership in NATO, but without demanding any quid pro quod from the Junta. The announcement that Nixon had finally appointed an ambassador to Greece was an even more positive sign that the administration was going to cozy up to the Junta.

The new ambassador was Henry Tasca. I had already been giving some thought to asking for a transfer from Athens when I received a letter from a respected colleague and friend who had himself served with Ambassador Tasca. After asking me to destroy the letter after reading it, my friend warned me that I would not get along with Tasca. I took the warning to heart and in the late fall of 1969 advised the Department that I would welcome a transfer.

The Consul General's job in Dacca was coming open in 1970, and I said I would be pleased to take it. I knew that a new military government in Pakistan had announced its intention to hold elections as the first step toward restoration of constitutional government, something that I was not likely to see in Greece. With three children now in college, I could certainly use that 25% differential pay. The DCM of the Embassy in Pakistan was Sid Sober, the same classmate who had steered the ABC television crew to Dacca, and the Consul General in nearby Calcutta was Herb Gordon, a friend from our days together in Athens in the early 1950's. I did not know the Ambassador in Pakistan, Joe Farland, a political appointee, but I had heard good reports of his earlier stint as Ambassador to Panama. Thus, Dacca seemed to promise a welcome change from Athens. Little did I know that I was jumping from the frying pan into the fire.

When Ambassador and Mrs. Tasca arrived in Athens early in 1970, I was acting as Chargé due to the absence of the DCM, on home leave in

The author is sworn in as American Consul General, Dhaka on March 3, 1970. In the centre is William Macomber, Under Secretary of State for Administration.

the States. It is a fixed Service custom for all members of the Country Team, i.e., the heads of the various components of the Mission, together with their wives, to go to the airport to greet their incoming chief. I thought it would be appropriate to include as well, the senior Greek employee in the economic and in the political section, whom I had known for years and greatly respected. When Mrs. Tasca came across the two and their wives in the welcoming line, she snarled, to my utter surprise and mortification, "What are you doing here? You are Greeks." Italian born, Mrs. Tasca was known to be less than enamored about her husband's assignment to Athens; she had hoped he would get the Rome embassy.

I never had any difficulty with Ambassador Tasca, but then I was a certifiable lame duck just waiting for the DCM's return before I could get off to my next assignment. I departed in February, again on direct transfer with consultation in the Department. Our older son, Peter, was a senior at the American school in Athens, and president of his class, and our younger son was in the second grade. Meg wanted to stay on with them until the end of the school year, and the Embassy kindly allowed her to continue to occupy our house. My replacement, Morris Draper, was due in from Amman, Jordan but a crisis situation kept him at the post. His first wife, Nancy, and her son came out ahead and lived in the house with Meg and our two sons. Morris never made it to Athens; his wife antagonized the Tascas, and the Ambassador had his transfer canceled. By then, however, I was already in Dacca.

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My consultation in the Department enabled me to get myself somewhat up to speed on all that had transpired in Pakistan since my departure from Dacca in the summer of 1962. And much had happened. The political landscape was drastically altered, with some leading figures out and some new stars on the rise.

First of all, President Ayub Khan was out; discredited and under house arrest. His downfall was largely of his own making. Egged on by his Foreign Minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Ayub in mid-1965 instigated a conflict with India. Pakistan sent guerrilla forces into Indian-held Kashmir in the hopes of rousing the Muslim majority in rebellion. The Pakistani forces did not find as much support among the Kashmiris as they had

expected, and India retaliated by launching a full-scale offensive against Lahore, which lies close to the Indian border. After several intense but inconclusive tank battles a UN-sponsored cease fire brought the three-week war to a close. East Pakistan escaped any fighting.

When the shooting stopped, each side held prisoners and some territory belonging to the other. At the Soviet-sponsored Tashkent conference in January 1966 Ayub and his Indian counterpart, Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri, agreed to a mutual withdrawal to lines held before the war. West Pakistanis blamed Ayub for what they saw as unnecessary capitulation to India; the people of East Pakistan criticized Ayub for having risked East Pakistan's security through his gamble in Kashmir.

In the next several years Ayub's position seriously deteriorated. In 1967 Bhutto, who had resigned from Ayub's cabinet, founded an opposition party, the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), with the avowed aim of bringing down the Ayub government. In 1968 Air Marshal Asghar Khan, a former chief of the Pakistan Air Force, announced his entry into politics as an opponent of Ayub's. In January 1969 several opposition parties in East Pakistan formed the Democratic Action Committee for the stated purpose of restoring democracy through a mass movement. In West Pakistan students launched an agitation for educational reform which turned into widespread rioting after police killed a student during a demonstration. Ayub arrested Bhutto on charges of inciting the students. The student revolt was followed by a massive wave of strikes in West Pakistan.

In East Pakistan the situation fast approached anarchy. The basic democracy system collapsed, as throughout the province peasants tried to settle old scores with local officials whom they saw as symbols of Ayub's authority. Dacca came under the virtual control of the students. The police refused to intervene in disputes, and there were frequent strikes and "gheraos" in which strikers locked managers inside their offices until they met the workers' demands.

As the violence and agitation continued throughout the nation, Ayub tried unsuccessfully to seek a political settlement. He promised a new constitution and said he would not stand for reelection in 1970. Finally, the Army had enough of chaos. Ayub was induced to resign and on March 25, 1969 General Yahya Khan, the Army Commander-in-chief, assumed the presidency and the title of Chief Martial Law Administrator.

Yahya moved quickly to restore order and hope. Most people believed him when he said in his first broadcast to the nation, "My sole aim in imposing martial law is to protect the lives, liberty and property of the people and put the administration back on the rails." He also said that the Army had no political ambition; it simply aimed to provide a "sound, clean and honest" basis for an eventual return to civilian government. Yahya's words had the ring of sincerity, and the disorder that had gripped the country quickly evaporated. Strikers returned to work; schools and universities reopened; and the armed forces returned to their barracks.

On July 25, 1969 President Yahya appointed a chief election commissioner, promising elections within eighteen months. He also appointed a civilian cabinet of ten, which included five Bengalis. He warned of serious problems concerning the framework for the forthcoming elections and the new National Assembly, because those in the East Wing wanted voting on the basis of population while those in the West Wing wanted the two wings to have equal representation. The President then made a considerable gesture toward East Pakistan when he said, "One of the reasons for dissatisfaction in the East Wing was a feeling that they were not being allowed to play their full part in the decision-making process at the national level and in certain important spheres of national activity. In my view, they were fully justified in being dissatisfied with this state of affairs."

On November 28 Yahya announced his decision on the question of whether or not to have voting parity between the two wings. He opted for East Pakistan, saying that voting would be on the one-man (and one-woman) principle, thus giving East Pakistan, with its larger population, a permanent and assured majority of votes. As a sop to West Pakistan, Yahya said that West Pakistan would cease to be an administrative unit on a par with East Pakistan, but divided into four provinces, Sind, Baluchistan, Punjab and Northwest Frontier, each of equal status with East Pakistan.

In an oblique reference to the East Pakistani demand for autonomy, set forth in the Awami League Six Point Program (of which much more anon), Yahya promised "maximum autonomy" to both wings, but warned that autonomy would have to be consistent with the integrity and solidarity of the nation. He said that he could see no reason why it should not be possible to work out a satisfactory relationship between the central government and the provinces, giving the regions, notably East Pakistan,

control over their own resources and development without affecting overriding national interests controlled at the center.

Finally, the President announced that the election for the National Assembly would be held on October 5, 1970. The voters would choose a constituent assembly, the members of which would have 120 days to frame a constitution. If they failed to do so within this strict time frame, the assembly would stand dissolved and new elections would be held. Political activity would be unrestricted, beginning in January 1970.

The 1965 war between India and Pakistan had other repercussions, one of which was a distinct cooling of the hitherto warm U.S.-Pakistani relationship. The U.S. thought the war was largely Pakistan's fault and issued a statement declaring its neutrality, while cutting off military supplies to both Pakistan and India. Since Pakistan was much more dependent on U.S. military assistance than was India, whose major supplier was the Soviet Union, Pakistan felt betrayed and determined never again to rely on a single source of supply. After 1965 China became Pakistan's principal military supplier, and France sold Pakistan submarines and Mirage aircraft. More to home, Pakistan refused to renew the lease on the U.S. military facility in Peshawar, which was terminated in 1969, and the Peace Corps was asked to leave Pakistan.

I was very sorry to hear of the Peace Corp's departure. To me, the volunteers had been exciting colleagues and good representatives of our country. I have always thought that the Peace Corps was more valuable to the U.S. than to the developing world. Its contributions to economic development were, frankly, minimal and often quite transitory, but the Peace Corps experience opened the world to American youths, many of whom, as a result of this experience, came to choose AID, USIS or the Foreign Service as a career. Unfortunately, the Peace Corps is an inviting target for any country that wants to indicate its unhappiness with American policy without seriously jeopardizing its ties with the U.S.

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After consultation in Washington I had time to visit Barbara, who was attending Briarcliff College in New York, and Shireen, who had transferred at the end of two years from Skidmore College, also in New York, to the University of Colorado in Boulder. Then I flew out to Dacca, stopping two days in Bangkok to catch my breath.

I arrived in Dacca to find that, apart from a drastically changed political situation in which an election campaign of tremendous import was about to begin, and the demographic reality that the East Pakistan population had risen from forty million in 1960-62 to seventy million in 1970, I did not perceive too many changes. The Consulate General offices were still in the Adamjee Court building. After several years in the brand new Embassy in Kabul and the nearly new Embassy in Athens, it was something of a jolt to be housed in such dingy, mildewed space. The AID offices were also still in Adamjee Court but destined to move shortly to better accommodations at the nearby Purbani Hotel. USIS had kept their old offices, which were located apart from the Consulate General and AID.

The lease on our old house in Ramna had been allowed to lapse, and I moved into the Consul General's residence on Road No. 8 in the Dhanmondai area. It was a large, relatively attractive house, albeit with a small garden, which stood across the street from an oval, grassy plot often used by school children as a soccer field. The house occupied by Mr. King and Mr. O'Donnell had been given up some time previously. I did inherit their cook, Mohammed, whom my younger son affectionately called Cookie, and one of our malis from before, Ram Prit, came to us when he heard of our return, and we happily re-engaged him.

The Dhanmondai house had many bedrooms and, as was customary in the houses rented to foreigners, a bathroom for each bedroom. This extra space was vital because I soon learned that Ambassador Farland would be a frequent visitor to the East Wing. In South Asia it was the Service practice always to take visiting colleagues into your house; we never thought of putting up a visitor, who was often a close friend, at a hotel. In our house one bedroom was reserved for the Ambassador, and was complete with a set of flags, the Stars and Stripes, and the ambassadorial flag.

Ambassador Farland was a delightful guest. He was the most courteous of men and not at all demanding. Occasionally his wife, Ginny, would accompany him to Dacca. She never seemed to be happy in the Foreign Service, but rather to be doing what was expected of her out of loyalty to her husband. The Ambassador was *always* accompanied by his Press Attaché, Eddie Deerfield. Him I could have done without. Deerfield had an aggravating habit of playing up to the Ambassador by trying to make him feel in danger. Once at my house Deerfield urged the

Ambassador to change his seat on the sofa because "somebody might try to shoot you through the window." On a trip on the Rocket Deerfield became all excited when he noticed a bulge under the coat of a nearby Pakistani. The Pakistani was a security officer assigned by the Pakistan Government to guard the Ambassador. Deerfield's USIS colleagues in Dacca hated his guts. They put his picture on a dart board so they could use his face for target practice.

Very early on I assessed my American colleagues in Dacca as considerably superior to those in my first tour. The provincial AID director, Eric Griffel, was a young bachelor, full of drive and competence. He was extremely hard working and knew his business. While he could sometimes be abrasive in pushing his ideas, he was a pillar of strength in an emergency, as he proved during the cyclone relief operations and the post-March 25, 1971 violence.

The PAO, Brian Bell, was also an officer of competence and initiative. Besides, he made a marvelous Caesar's salad. I have always found it easy to get along with USIS types, probably because USIS is a career service very similar to the Foreign Service and because political officers and USIS officers are basically performing the same functions, i.e. representing the U.S. and in so doing, trying to influence their foreign contacts. USIS does not have the same reporting responsibilities, and we do not have their public affairs responsibilities, at least not to the same extent. After all, USIS was once part of the Foreign Service and is now about to be blended back into the Service.

My own deputy, at first, was Andy Killgore, an Arabist who had already served in Dacca for almost two years, the latter part of which he was Consul in Charge following the departure of the previous Consul General. In the three months we were together Andy was very helpful in introducing me to his contacts, including political leaders whom I had not known before. (These included Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, leader of the Awami League, and easily the most prominent political figure in East Pakistan. While I had heard of him in 1960-62, I never met him for the simple reason that he was always in jail.) Andy was highly thought of by Ambassador Farland, and was to become the Ambassador's Political Counselor in Teheran when Ambassador Farland moved there from Pakistan.

His successor was Bob Carle whose assignment I had approved while on consultation in Washington. I had known Bob when he was

Consul in Peshawar and I was DCM in Kabul, and was pleased to get his services. The junior political officer was Scott Butcher, an excellent drafter with a real flair for analysis. The economic officer, Rich Wilson, and his assistant, John Nesvig, were both fine officers, and brave to boot, as they were to demonstrate the following year.

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Only ten days after my arrival, Yahya addressed the nation on the anniversary of his assumption of power, and announced the details of his long-awaited "legal framework order," the blueprint for the return to civilian government and the creation of parliamentary democracy. His speech, in English, was carried on television, which had finally come to Pakistan. The office had provided me a TV set for my house, and I invited some of the Consulate General officers to join me in watching this historic event.

Yahya came across as very sincere as he added to his earlier announcement of November 28. The new National Assembly would have 300 elected seats (plus 13 reserved for women). Of these, East Pakistan would have 162, compared with West Pakistan's 138. The legal framework order or LFO also stipulated that the new constitution must be Islamic, and that Pakistan must remain a federal unity, allowing as much provincial autonomy as possible but retaining a strong central government.

The LFO confirmed Yahya's earlier statement that the National Assembly would have 120 days to frame a constitution, failing which the President would dissolve the Assembly and call for new elections. What was new was that Yahya explicitly reserved to himself the right to accept or reject the constitution drafted by the Assembly. Also, according to the LFO "The President and not the National Assembly" would have the sole power to amend the LFO. The Assembly, thus, would initially be a deliberative body with the power only to draft a constitution and send it to the President for approval.

The LFO drew some unfavorable reactions in West Pakistan. Bhutto, for one, denounced the subordination of the Assembly to the President and the slighting of provincial autonomy. In East Pakistan the reaction was much stronger. The two most prominent Bengali leaders, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Maulana Bhashani, threatened to boycott the elections and take the issues to the streets if the East's demands for

provincial autonomy were disregarded and if Yahya retained the right to veto the Assembly's draft constitution.

Our own initial assessment was that the Bengali politicos, despite their objections, would continue their participation in the elections. To us the major problem with the LFO was its ambiguity over the division of power between the central government and the provinces. "Maximum autonomy" to the provinces and "adequate powers" to the center, as stated in the LFO, left a huge potential for disagreement once the National Assembly was required to spell out a delineation of federal and provincial jurisdictions in their constitution-making. Still, in our view, East Pakistani politicians, particularly Mujib, would stick with the process launched by Yahya, trusting that their political clout would be much greater once the elections were held and Yahya found himself a step closer to handing over power to them.

On April 12, I called on the GOP Minister of Communications, G. W. Choudhury, whom I had known quite well in my previous incarnation in Dacca when he was the head of the Political Science Department at Dacca University. Choudhury's special field was constitutional law, which we surmised was Yahya's reason for including him in the Cabinet, that and the fact that he was a Bengali. In the course of our conversation Choudhury spoke like a reconstructed Bengali, indicating a sharp suspicion of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his Awami League.

I commented that Yahya seemed to have successfully defused the confrontation over sections 25 and 27 of the LFO during his recently concluded visit to Dacca. (Section 25 stated that the National Assembly should stand dissolved in the event that authentication of the constitution is refused by the President; Section 27 says that the President and not the National Assembly has the sole power to amend the LFO.) In response Choudhury said that Mujib had refrained from criticizing Articles 25 and 27 since his meeting with Yahya. It was Choudhury's information that Mujib himself had never really been exercised about these sections but had been forced to speak out by militant Awami Leaguers. Choudhury said he had met with Awami League student activists and had pointed out to them that the wording of Sections 25 and 27 was a compromise, constituting a watering down of stronger language urged on Yahya by "Punjabi generals." In Choudhury's view Mujib would do nothing to risk elections which he needed to demonstrate he was one of three or so political leaders in Pakistan, instead of one of twenty-two.

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It has been said that optimism is to a diplomat what courage is to a soldier. I found in my search of the archives that our hedged optimism was shared by the Intelligence and Research Bureau (INR) of the State Department which circulated an assessment of the LFO in Washington. That assessment ended thusly:

> While the Legal Framework Order has exposed a few political nerves, the damage can be corrected. Clearly, most Pakistani politicians have a fundamental interest in the elections and in the early adoption of a constitution, since this is their only road to power. Also, Yahya has given no reason to doubt his sincerity in working toward the goal of constitutional representative government. With this coincidence of interest, and the momentum established over the past year, we still feel that another crisis in the relations between the Center and East Pakistan can probably be avoided, that the elections can be held as scheduled, and that a duly constituted National Assembly can start its task of constitution-making.

The prediction turned out to be partially accurate on one count.

CHAPTER THREE

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

It is time to introduce the three principal characters of our drama: President Yahya Khan; Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, leader of the Pakistan People's Party; and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, leader of the Awami League. Each of these three totally different people, two from West Pakistan and one from East Pakistan, held the power to plunge Pakistan into chaos, either through miscalculation, pique grounded in a massive ego, jealousy, or sheer impatience with the pace or direction of events.

* * * * *

Agha Mohammed Yahya Khan was then 53 years of age and had been President of Pakistan and Chief Martial Law Administrator for just over a year. In appearance Yahya was no way as impressive as his predecessor, Ayub Khan. Yahya was short, heavily built and verging on fatness, with thick, black eyebrows and a small, pinched mouth. Perhaps his most striking feature, almost feminine in appearance, was the white patch which parted his black but graying hair. Yahya was rather proud of his hair. He was known to claim, like Samson, that his strength lay in his hair. His face had begun to reveal the telltale signs of a life of heavy drinking.

Like so many of the Pakistani Army's senior generals, Yahya spoke with a clipped British accent and always carried a silver-topped swagger stick. He had a brusque, strutting way about him. Yahya had a close and warm relationship with Ambassador Farland, whom he often asked to

join him for drinks or for a shooting excursion. President Nixon also liked Yahya's gruff, seemingly frank approach. As it had for Ayub, the "I'm just a simple soldier" routine worked well for Yahya, particularly with those Americans who thought they discovered a difference between Yahya's "simplicity" and the intellectual superiority and "deviousness" of Indian leaders.

Yahya was born on February 4, 1907 near Jhelum in Northwest Pakistan. Little is known of Yahya's father but in later years Yahya liked to claim descent from Nadir Shah of Persia, he who had incorporated many warriors from what is now Afghanistan and Northwest Pakistan into the army with which he sacked Delhi in 1740, carrying off as loot the Peacock Throne and the Koh-i-Noor diamond. While Yahya's claim is probably about as valid as the last Shah of Persia's boast that he was a direct descendant of Cyrus the Great, one of Yahya's ancestors might well have fought in Nadir Shah's army. The name Yahya is the Arabic form of John, referring especially to John the Baptist. The name carries the connotation of steadfastness, a characteristic of Salome's victim.

The young Yahya attended Government College in Lahore and obtained a B.A. degree from the University of the Punjab in 1936, at the age of nineteen. Deciding on a military career, Yahya entered the Indian Military Academy at Dehra Dun, graduating at the head of his class. During the period between the two world wars the British sought to produce an indigenous officer corps by training native officer candidates at either the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst, where Ayub studied or at Dehra Dun where the majority trained.

Yahya was commissioned in 1938 and assigned to the Worcester Regiment, transferring a year later at his own request to the Baluch Regiment. During World War II Yahya served with his regiment in the British Eighth Army in Egypt, Sudan, Iraq, Libya, Cyprus and Italy, where he was captured by the Germans but succeeded in escaping to France. Somewhat surprisingly, he did not rise above the rank of captain during the war.

In 1944, while back home on leave, Yahya married the daughter of an army officer. They had a daughter and a son. Over the years Yahya developed the reputation of being a great womanizer. He did little to disguise his affairs, often appearing with a mistress on his arm at night clubs. In Dacca I had some attractive married Bengali women pointed out to me as mistresses of Yahya. Outside of the military and women,

Yahya's only known interest was birds. He kept Australian parrots around President's House in Islamabad, as well as a number of cranes and swans in a specially built pool.

Yahya's speedy rise began after independence when the new nation of Pakistan had quickly to build large army around the nucleus of a relatively small number of officers inherited from the old British Indian Army. Muslims had formed a small minority in the Indian Officer Corps under the Raj. At partition Pakistan had only one major general, two brigadiers and six colonels. The first two Commanders in Chief of the Pakistani Army were British. In 1951 Ayub became the first Pakistani Commander in Chief.

At the age of 30 Yahya was the commandant of the new staff college with the rank of lieutenant-colonel. A couple of years later he was a brigadier commanding an infantry brigade. When Ayub Khan became Commander in Chief of the Pakistani Army in 1951, Yahya was Deputy Chief of the General Staff. Ayub made Yahya the first chairman of the Army Planning Board, which over the next several years carried out a complete reorganization of the Army.

In the several years since Ayub became Army Commander in Chief and Yahya moved into the Army's top inner circle, the parliamentary system had performed poorly. The leaders of the political parties were losing their power to the two national institutions widely perceived as competent — the bureaucracy and the military. On October 7, 1958 the President, General Iskander Mirza, who was a member of the Political Service recruited from the army, annulled the constitution by proclamation, dissolved the national and provincial assemblies, and barred political parties. When Mirza asked for the Army's support, Ayub pledged it to him and was named Martial Law Administrator.

According to Ayub, Mirza tried immediately to move against the Army by attempting the arrest of three senior generals, one of whom was Yahya. The Army high command stuck together and packed Mirza off into exile in London, with Ayub assuming the presidency. Eleven years later Yahya, then himself Commander in Chief of the Army, forced Ayub out of office and became President and Chief Martial Law Administrator.

Yahya had gotten off to a good start in his first year in office. He made no significant mistakes, and had managed to conceal the contempt that he and most Army officers felt for Pakistani politicians in both wings. For their part, the political leaders, while harboring suspicions

about the sincerity of Yahya's professed desire to return the nation to civilian government, were prepared to give him the benefit of the doubt, at least for the time being.

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If anybody can be said to have been born with a silver spoon in his mouth, it was Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. He was born on January 5, 1928, the son of Sir Shahnawaz Khan Bhutto, who possessed enormous estates in Sind and had been knighted for his services to the British Raj. Sind, the southeastern most province in West Pakistan, presented a vivid contrast between the great wealth of feudal landholders, like the Bhuttos, and the poverty of their tenant farmers who existed almost in a state of servitude.

After partition in 1947 Bhutto enrolled at University of California, Los Angeles when he studied economics, public administration, history and French. While not a particularly eager student, he did well on the debating team. In his senior year he transferred to the University of California at Berkeley, and in 1950 entered Christ Church College, Oxford, obtaining an M.A. degree in jurisprudence two years later. He was called to the bar the same year and, for a brief spell, was a lecturer in international law at the University of Southampton in England.

Returning to Pakistan after his education abroad, Bhutto slipped easily and naturally into public life. He was bright and charming, fiercely ambitious, and a charter member of the West Pakistan establishment. It is no wonder that he began near the top. At the age of 30 he was Minister of Commerce of the government of Pakistan. In the next five years the precarious youngster was successively Minister of Kashmiri Affairs, Minister of Information, Minister of Fuel and Minister of Industries and National Resources.

In 1965, at the age of 37, Bhutto was Ayub's foreign minister. He encouraged Ayub in his reckless policy toward Kashmir that was to bring about war with India and help pave the way for Ayub's downfall. Bhutto's loyalty to Ayub was short-lived. As Ayub faced trouble, he asked Bhutto to resign as foreign minister in early 1966. After remaining quiet for a period Bhutto launched a new political party with the avowed purpose of bringing down Ayub's government. Bhutto displayed, as he was once again to do in 1971, the ability of a clever and unscrupulous politician to jump from the deck of a ship of state which he had helped

to steer on to the rocks, and then immediately project himself as the logical replacement for the ship's disgraced captain.

The political party founded by Bhutto as the vehicle for his political ambitions was the Pakistan People's Party or PPP. Its slogan was "Islam our Faith, Democracy our Polity, Socialism our Economy." Like its founder, the PPP was full of contradictions. While espousing a leftist, populist philosophy, the PPP drew much of its strength from the wealthy, landed elite of which Bhutto himself was a prime example. But Bhutto was an excellent speaker and he soon began to win broad support for such policies as land reform to help the peasants, nationalization of industries to lessen the power of the industrialists, and administrative reforms to curb the power of the bureaucracy. Bhutto's PPP was the "new kid on the block" in West Pakistan, exhibiting much more dynamism than the tired, older parties.

During the wave of disturbances and rioting directed against the Ayub government in 1968, Ayub interned Bhutto for several months on charges of inciting students to revolt. Bhutto was released in February 1969 when Ayub freed a number of political prisoners, in a futile effort to stem the rising tide against him.

Bhutto was darkly handsome, with a sardonic manner. He almost always dressed in well-cut Savile Row suits, certainly so when in East Pakistan, and looked just like what he was, a Western educated, wealthy man of the world. In a sense, Bhutto sometimes seemed a younger version of Mohammed Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, although Jinnah's manner was more reserved and dignified. Both leaders spoke Urdu, the lingua franca of West Pakistan, with difficulty, preferring to use English. Both were single-minded in their goals: Jinnah seeking the creation of a Muslim State in the subcontinent and Bhutto fixed on advancing Bhutto.

I had only met Bhutto once, back in 1961 when he visited Dacca and was entertained by Nat King, my first Consul General. The two of them had worked together in the Law of the Seas Negotiations. Mr. King invited Bhutto and his second wife, Nusrat, a handsome woman of reputedly Iranian ancestry, to lunch at his residence. My wife and I were the only other guests. The Consul General and Bhutto spent most of the time reminiscing over their negotiating days, while I observed Bhutto attentively. Today, my memory of him, which admittedly may be colored by subsequent events, can be summed up in one word: malevolent.

Bhutto was universally disliked and mistrusted in East Pakistan, but so was Mujib disliked, even feared, in West Pakistan. From the snide remarks they made it was clear that the Pakistani military was suspicious of Bhutto; after all, he was a politician par excellence. If Yahya was forced to choose between Bhutto and Mujib, which would it be?

* * * * *

In a telegram written shortly after the elections I posed this question: "What are the characteristics, attributes and views of this man (Sheikh Mujibur Rahman) who most probably will exercise a dominant influence on Pakistan for months and perhaps years ahead?" and then answered it as follows:

1. Mujib is a life-long, full-time politician. As near as we can tell, he has never really been gainfully employed since leaving school without a law degree. His visible income is derived from his status as advisor to the Great Eastern Life Insurance Company. His administrative experience consists of a two-year stint beginning in 1956 as Provincial Minister of Commerce, Labor and Industry in AL government of Ataur Rahman Khan with whom he later broke in struggle for control of Awami League (Mujib eventually won). Since 1948 Mujib has spent almost ten years in Pakistani jails, climaxed by the Argatala conspiracy case which martyrized him in the eyes of the East Pakistani people and guaranteed his rise to power. After a long struggle, Mujib can now savor the sweetness of success and power.

2. Mujib, the man, is hard to characterize. In private meetings he is charming, calm and confident. While not a worldly sophisticate of Bhutto's stripe, he is well traveled and urbane. He knows Europe, particularly the U.K., as well as China and the U.S. (thanks to a far-sighted Congen who sent him to States on a Leader Grant in 1958). On the rostrum he is a fiery orator who can mesmerize hundreds of thousands in a pouring rain. As a party leader he is tough and authoritative, often arrogant. Mujib has something of a messianic complex which has been reinforced by the heady experience of mass adulation. He talks of "my people, my land, my forests, my rivers." It seems clear that he views himself as the personification of Bengali aspirations.

3. Mujib has also shown himself to be impulsive and emotional when talking of Bengali grievances. He doesn't appear to be a systematic thinker nor to have a reflective temperament. He is primarily a man of action — a mass leader. A favorite theme of his detractors is his lack of intellectual depth, unprincipled opportunism, and lust for power. That he strongly desires power is beyond question. Opportunism is a common charge against any politician. Mujib the politician appears no more or no less guilty of the charge than most politicos. While he may not be an intellectual, Mujib demonstrates considerable mental ability in private meetings. He also has a sense of humor.

4. Mujib has concerned himself little with foreign affairs. Officially he is for "genuine neutrality, withdrawal from CENTO and SEATO, and improved relations with India." Better relations with India will probably in fact be his most pressing concern since he sees at least partial solution for East Pak problems in expanded trade with neighboring India. Mujib, like many Bengalis, is not (except for record) particularly hard on Kashmir. Also like many Bengalis he believes the Farakka issue could be resolved in the context of a general improvement in Pak-India relations. In conversations with Congen officers he has shown himself well disposed toward U.S. Mujib has visited China on two occasions: to attend the Peking Peace Conference and in 1957 as member Pak goodwill mission. He admits to finding the Chinese experiment impressive but notes that as a political observer the restrictive and oppressive nature of the society was very apparent to him.

Mujib's very appearance suggested raw power, a power drawn from the masses and from his own strong personality. He was taller and broader than most Bengalis, with ruggedly handsome features and intense eyes. A no-nonsense moustache gave added strength to his face, as did the heavy-rimmed dark glasses he invariably wore. I never saw him in Western clothes; his dress was that of a native politician.

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Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was born on March 17, 1920 in the small village of Tungipara in Faridpur district of East Bengal. His was a middle

class family; his father, Sheikh Lutfur Rahman, was a civil court clerk and a landowner with over 35 acres. At the age of seven, Mujib started in the public school in the nearby town of Gopalganj, transferring after a couple of years to a mission school. When he was fourteen, he developed an eye ailment serious enough to keep him out of school for three years. At age eighteen, after he returned to school, Mujib had his first brush with the law and was jailed for seven days, the first of what was to be many imprisonments. Mujib later said, "Boyhood seemed to end on the day I went to jail."

In 1942 Mujib went to Calcutta to study at Islamia College. He was already married to a daughter of his father's first cousin. His wife was soft spoken and competent, as she had to be when left alone with a growing family during Mujib's frequent sojourns in jail. The pair had five children, three sons and two daughters. The oldest, born in 1948, was a daughter, Hasina, who at this writing is herself the leader of the Awami League and Prime Minister of Bangladesh. After Hasina came two sons, Sheikh Kamal born in 1949 and Sheikh Jamal, born in 1953, than a daughter, Rehana, born in 1956, and finally a son, Sheikh Russel, named after the British philosopher, Bertrand Russell, and born in 1966. The term Sheikh is an honorific more or less self-bestowed and in long use by Mujib's family. When speaking to Mujib, I always addressed him as Sheikh Sahib.

Calcutta in the latter half of World War II was an exciting place for a young Muslim Bengali with a flair for politics. Mujib's studies suffered because politics soon became his passion. He was active not only in student politics but in provincial politics, first as secretary of the Faridpur District Association in Calcutta and then in 1945 as the person responsible for running the election campaign in Faridpur District for the Muslim League, working on behalf of H. S. Suhrawardy.

In 1947, when Pakistan achieved independence, Mujib left Islamia College and enrolled as a law student in Dacca University. The following year he took an active part in the language movement protesting the Government of Pakistan efforts to promote Urdu as the national language. Mujib was arrested and held for six days by the Government of East Pakistan, then led by Khawaza Nazimuddin. While at Dacca University Mujib founded the East Pakistan Muslim Student League, and began a strike for better privileges for University peons (those performing menial jobs). The University expelled him, but agreed to revoke his expulsion if he signed a bond of good behavior. Other expelled

students signed the bond and were readmitted, but Mujib refused and remained expelled. Mujib left the University for good, saying, "I shall return but it may not be as a student."

Not long afterwards, Mujib was again imprisoned by the Muslim League government there headed by Nurul Amin, this time for two and a half years. Mujib was in jail when the Awami League, the political party that was to become identified with Mujib, was formed in 1949. The first president was Maulana Bhashani; Mujib was its Joint Secretary. In 1952, after he had left prison, Mujib was elevated to the post of General Secretary.

The Awami League splintered from the Muslim League, which had been founded in 1906 to further the interests of the Muslims of British India. Under the leadership of Mohammed Ali Jinnah, the Quaid-i-Azam or great leader, the Muslim League dominated the movement for the creation of an independent homeland for the Muslims of the sub-continent. At independence the Muslim League was the only major party in Pakistan but, unlike its Indian counterpart, the Congress party, it soon weakened and began to split apart. In East Pakistan the Muslim League was seen as dominated by West Pakistani interests.

In 1954, in the first election held in East Pakistan after independence, the Awami League, now led by H. S. Suhrawardy, and the KSP or Krishak Sramik (Workers and Peasants) Party led by Fazlul Huq, formed the United Front which swept the Muslim League out of power in East Pakistan. Mujib was rewarded for his hard work in the election campaign by being appointed Minister of Commerce and Industries in the provincial government headed by Fazlul Huq. Later the KSP and the Awami League engaged in a bitter struggle for control of the East Pakistan provincial government, to be ended only when President Iskander Mirza on October 7, 1958, abrogated the constitution, dismissed the central and provincial governments, the National Assembly and Provincial Assemblies, and proclaimed Martial Law.

During the 1954-58 period Mujib made several trips abroad. In January 1957, as provincial Minister of Industries and Commerce, he accompanied the Chief Minister in a delegation headed by the Commerce Minister of Pakistan to New Delhi to discuss trade relations with India. On that visit he had the opportunity to meet Jawaharlal Nehru, the Indian Prime Minister, and discuss the problems of East Pakistan. Later, in 1957, after Mujib had resigned as Minister and returned to full-time work as General Secretary of the Awami League, H.

S. Suhrawardy, then Prime Minister of Pakistan, sent him as a personal envoy to some European countries. By the time Mujib reached Geneva, Suhrawardy's government had fallen and Mujib returned home.

Mujib was one of the very first targets of the Martial Law regime. He was arrested on October 12, 1958 and detained without trial until the end of 1959. In 1962 he was again arrested and detained without trial for six months. After Suhrawardy's death in 1963, Mujib became the leader of the Awami League.

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The famous Six Points of the Awami League were first introduced publicly by Mujib at an all-party national convention in Lahore in February 1966. All parties in opposition to the Ayub government sent delegations, but of the 700 attendees only 21 were from East Pakistan. The central issue under discussion was the Tashkent Agreement after the 1965 Indo-Pakistan War, which most of the politicians, but not Mujib, castigated as an unnecessary capitulation to India by Ayub.

The Lahore convention is best remembered, however, for the public unveiling of the Six Points. They had the effect of a bombshell. Mujib called them a program for the constitutional solution of East Pakistan's problems with West Pakistan through the establishment of full regional autonomy for both East Pakistan and West Pakistan. East Pakistanis looked on the Six Points as a kind of Magna Carta which would free them from domination by West Pakistan. In West Pakistan the Six Points were derided as a blueprint for the disintegration of Pakistan.

The Six Points consisted of the following demands:

Point 1
The Constitution should provide for a federal and parliamentary government based on the Lahore Resolution (the 1940 resolution calling for the establishment of Pakistan), with its members elected by universal adult suffrage with legislative representation on the basis of the distribution of the population. The legislature was to be supreme.

Comment: Yahya had already in the Legislative Framework Order agreed to all these particular demands, except for the supremacy of the legislature over the executive. The details of their relationship were left to be spelled out in the process of drawing up a constitution.

Point 2
The federal government shall deal with only two subjects, i.e. defense and foreign affairs, with other subjects coming under the authority of the federating states, i.e. East and West Pakistan.

Comment: Such strict limits on the federal government's power would be difficult to reconcile with President Yahya's stipulation that the center should remain strong.

Point 3
Each wing should have its own currency and separate fiscal accounts, or one currency for the whole country could be retained, provided that provisions were made to halt the flight of capital from East to West Pakistan.

Comment: This appeared to be a negotiable demand.

Point 4
The federating units alone would have the power of taxation and revenue collection; the federal government would be funded with constitutionally guaranteed grants from the two wings.

Comment: Again, hardly compatible with Yahya's desire for a strong central government.

Point 5
Each unit of the federation should control its own earnings of foreign exchange, with the government of each wing empowered to set up trade missions abroad and enter into trade agreements with foreign countries. The foreign exchange requirements of the federal government would be met by grants from the two wings.

Comment: This would turn out to be the single most contentious point. Trade policy is an integral part of foreign policy. How could a nation maintain a coherent and consistent foreign policy if its component units were free to follow their own foreign economic policies? India was Pakistan's foremost foreign policy concern and trade restrictions or even embargos had frequently been used by both countries for non-economic reasons. East Pakistan's desire for friendlier relations and greater trade with India was bound to run counter to the center's overall foreign policy.

Point 6
Each unit could raise its own militia or paramilitary forces.

Comment: While conceding that defense remain the responsibility of the central government, East Pakistan wanted to be more self-sufficient in matters of defense. The center should be able to live with this demand, provided East Pakistan paid for the forces out of its own pocket and the forces were small in size and not equipped with sophisticated weapons. Since East Pakistan had no natural enemies, any militia or paramilitary force would really be responsible for internal security.

I always conceived of the Six Points as Mujib's opening and maximum bargaining position. If he were to persist in demanding acceptance of each and every point, he would be sure of forcing a confrontation over the issue of whether Pakistan could remain a unified country. In my view, the Six Points were never a viable program, even if greatly modified in direct negotiations with Yahya or with West Pakistani political leaders like Bhutto. Even a modified Six Points promised not much more than a temporary band-aid over the intractable wounds of the East-West Pakistani relationship, but one that might lead to both wings agreeing to an amicable divorce after the experiment proved unworkable.

* * * * *

After the Lahore Convention the Awami League voted to adopt the Six Point program and began to hold public meetings to mobilize public opinion in its favor. In May 1966, Mujib was arrested and detained for eight months in the Dacca central jail, from which he was moved to solitary confinement in the Dacca cantonement. Mujib was brought to trial and charged by Ayub with treason in the famous Argartala (capital of the Indian state of Tripura where the plot was allegedly hatched) conspiracy case. Briefly stated, Mujib and 35 others were accused of trying to suborn various officers in the Pakistani armed forces into an armed revolt designed to bring about the secession of East Pakistan, with Indian support.

The charges were patently phoney. Ayub's clumsy attempt to discredit Mujib as a political force served to discredit Ayub himself and confer a martyr's aura about Mujib. The trial was never brought to any formal conclusion, being withdrawn by the Ayub government in

February 1969, thus enabling Mujib to attend the Round Table Conference called by Ayub in a futile, last-ditch attempt to stave off his downfall. A month later, Yahya replaced Ayub.

The Awami League, Mujib's party and the banner-carrier for the Six Points, is hard to describe in a relatively few words, but the Consulate General tried to do so at a political officers' conference a Islamabad in January 1971. (The capital of Pakistan was switched from Karachi to Islamabad, a new city near Rawalpindi in northwest West Pakistan during 1970.) This capsulized portrait of the Awami League was written by Bob Carle and Scott Butcher:

> The Awami League is a vast umbrella sheltering many disparate elements — poor peasants, militant students, workers, middle class professionals, and wealthy businessmen and industrialists. One theme only, binds them together — Bengali nationalism or, put another way, anti-West Pakistan feelings. This was the entire thrust of the political campaign.
>
> One might wonder, then, how such an incompatible collection can long remain a cohesive political force. In our view, feelings are so deep and dedication to running their own affairs is so strong that it provides enough momentum for quite some time, even if the party is totally unsuccessful in attacking the almost overwhelming basic problems of East Pakistan. In addition, there is the formidable organization of the party and its extraordinary leader.
>
> There is no doubt that the Sheikh is the undisputed leader, demanding and receiving total loyalty from his subordinates. The party is organized on a province-wide basis down to the union level. The organization is largely vertical with authority coming from the Sheikh through a few close lieutenants down to all levels.
>
> The Sheikh plays his cards close to his chest, confiding wholly in no one but effectively using everyone. Somehow the system works. Without him it would rapidly disintegrate.
>
> The party claims to be committed to parliamentary democracy. How it will work in the future, given the Sheikh's authoritarian ways and the lack for the present of opposition, remains to be seen. How the militant students and restless workers will behave in a one-party state will be something else to watch.
>
> On the economic side, there is a theme of fuzzy socialism running through the party manifesto and the Six Points. At the same time

the manifesto suggests that nationalization will have to proceed slowly due to the shortage of Bengali managerial talent. This theme is also echoed by some of the Sheikh's advisors. The rate of nationalization and to what extent this may tend to erode the AL's very important middle class support will be something else to watch.

Based on numerous conversations inside and outside the AL structure, it is possible to venture some observations on Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's leadership style. It appears that the Sheikh acts mainly from instinct rather than from advice. Twenty-five years or more of full-time politics have given him confidence in his own instincts. He is not a thinker or theorizer, but a man of action. Of advisors he has many and listens politely to all. None of his advisors, however, is ever sure to what extent he has gotten through. He tends to assign specific tasks to an advisor on a confidential basis. Rarely under this need-to-know system does one advisor know what another is doing. Somehow, he manages to keep everyone happy, talking to one man, looking at another, and patting a third on the shoulder.

As a coda, illustrating the occasional militancy of Awami League students and the authoritarian, sometimes even arrogant, attitude displayed by the League's followers, I append the following airgram (a report submitted by diplomatic pouch, and thus less urgent than a telegraphic report):

The April 9 edition of *Pakistan Observer* reported that on April 6 some twenty to twenty-five youngsters belonging to a political organization and its student front had severely assaulted a man after his car slightly brushed a car belonging to them at Dacca Airport. According to the *Observer* report, the victim of the assault had damaged his car's parking light in inadvertently backing into another car which was not damaged. Thereupon the group of infuriated youngsters dragged the man out of the car and beat him in front of his wife and other members of his family.

The April 12 issue of left-wing *Holiday* in an article entitled "City in Grip of Hooliganism" mentioned this same incident. According to *Holiday*, the youngsters decided to give the victim "a taste of cooperative and concentrated muscle power as it flows out of the fists strengthened by the confidence that they were immune to the process of law because of their affiliation with a particular political party."

At a social event on May 11, M. A. Choudhury, Ministry of Foreign Affairs representative in Dacca, told the reporting officer that car brushed against at the airport had belonged to the Awami League chieftain Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and that Mujib's son had been involved in the assault. According to Choudhury, both the *Pakistan Observer* and *Holiday* had received a number of threatening letters following the incident warning them against any further mention of the matter.

* * * * *

These three men truly did hold the fate of Pakistan in their hands. In the succeeding months each would be under enormous pressure from onrushing events, from their own constituencies, and from the other two. Who would be the first to break under the pressure: the tough soldier, the sophisticated representative of the West Pakistani elite, or the man of the soil from East Pakistan?

CHAPTER FOUR

LULL BEFORE THE STORM

My initial three months in Dacca were taken up primarily with establishing contact with the leaders of the political parties which were expected to do well in the forthcoming elections. The most important was Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, leader of the Awami League, who was introduced in the previous chapter. Strangely enough, I was unable to find in the National Archives any telegram earlier than June 2 reporting on a meeting with Mujib. I know I must have met Mujib several times earlier than that, either on my own or in accompanying Ambassador Farland or the DCM on their calls, but I have no memory of an earlier meeting or of my first impressions of Mujib.

The telegram regarding the June 2 meeting is quoted in its entirety because it portrays Mujib's state of nerves at the beginning of the election campaign.

1 When Killgore and I called on Sheikh Mujibur Rahman this morning, we found the Awami League chief less ebullient, more preoccupied, and more earnest than usual.

2 Sheikh said he was fast running out of patience with the military and civil intelligence officers who were advising industrialists not to support him. He said he had complained on this score to Yahya during the President's last visit to Dacca and also told Yahya that it was an intelligence officer who had persuaded the Pir of Pagaro (a West Pakistani religious and political figure) to defect from the Awami League and join the Muslim League. "If the Army, Civil Service, and 'vested interests' continued to play this game," threatened Mujib, "I will proclaim independence and

call for guerrilla action if the Army tries to stop me. It is primarily fear of Communist exploitation of a Vietnam type situation which has kept me patient this long."

3 Mujib said that he would be touring West Pakistan for fifteen days beginning the last week of June and would visit Karachi, Lahore and Peshawar. He said he anticipated some trouble but had warned that if he runs into serious trouble in West Pakistan, the Jamaat-i-Islam (the largest of the religious parties in Pakistan) will be burned out overnight in East Pakistan.

4 According to Mujib, the Awami League will run candidates in every National and Provincial Assembly constituency in East Pakistan. He said that the Awami League had established committees in every thana (a small administrative area) and in 80 percent of the unions. Money continued to be his major problem. He was collecting considerable sums, mostly through small donations gathered at rallies, and if he could get enough money, he could win 90 percent of the seats in the province.

5 Mujib hoped to draw 4,500,000 people to his June 7 rally at the Dacca race course. At this time, he said, he would warn those industrialists and others who were not supporting him that their time would come after the elections when the Awami League was certain to establish a one-party rule in the province. On this score, he said, "I am not going to be very generous: in fact, I am going to be quite vindictive."

6 Referring to his chance meeting with Bhashani (leader of the NAP-L, a leftist party) on the road in Mymensingh District May 30, Mujib said Bhashani had asked him why he was going to such trouble to prepare for elections when "there were not going to be any elections." At this point Mujib charged Bhashani with being hand in glove with the intelligence services.

7 In a somewhat curious aside, Mujib seemed to take credit for the rash of industrial unrest which has affected East Pakistan in the past four days. Mentioning the clashes at Postagla, the Adamjee jute mills, Khulna and Siddhirganj, Mujib said there would be trouble whenever Awami League interests were affected.

8 *Comment*: The principal impression we took away from this meeting was that Mujib, while still confident of electoral victory, was genuinely irritated at what he believes to be GOP efforts to whittle him down to less formidable size. It is tempting to dismiss his thinly veiled threats as braggadocio, but the fact remains that Mujib and his Awami League, and they alone, have the strength to plunge East Pakistan into chaos if they choose to do so.

I should note here that Mujib's remark about "possible Communist exploitation of Vietnam type situation" was a common ploy of Bengali politicians who seemed to think that a warning couched in those terms was sure to excite a knee-jerk American interest. We were always careful to maintain a blank and thus, we hoped, a disbelieving, look in response.

At this stage in the election campaign we were estimating that Mujib could command about 60 percent of the electorate and Bhashani about 15 percent. Very soon we were to revise this estimate considerably.

* * * * *

On the afternoon of May 25 I accompanied Sid Sober, then on a visit to East Pakistan, and Andy Killgore in a call on the semi-legendary Maulana Bhashani at his home in the village of Santosh, in Tangail District, some sixty miles northwest of Dacca. I was anxious to meet *Maulana*, as the Bengalis generally called him, because he had been variously described as magnetic, lovable, a mystic, a Communist, the patron saint of leftists, a senile old fool, and a revered hero to the villagers of East Pakistan.

Bhashani was born into a poor peasant family in Pabna District in 1883. His father, who died when Bhashani was nine, had run a small shoe store. He had little formal education except for a few years' study in a village religious school. *Maulana* was an informal title denoting some degree of religious standing in the community. In his youth Bhashani demonstrated a talent for agitation and became an ardent defender of peasant rights. He was forced to leave the province (then East Bengal) and went to Assam.

After independence Bhashani, who had gravitated to politics, was one of those who broke away from the Muslim League, and founded the Awami Muslim League, which soon became known as the Awami League. Sheikh Mujib was one of the leaders of the new party, but Bhashani was its first president. It was H. S. Suhrawardy, and not Bhashani, who rose to the leadership of the young Awami League. In 1957 Bhashani left the

Awami League and formed his own party, known as the National Awami Party or NAP. A major reason for Bhashani's defection was his unhappiness over Suhrawardy's espousal of closer relations with the U.S., including Pakistan's entry into SEATO and CENTO. The NAP was later joined by the fervid Pushtun nationalist, Khan Abdul Wali Khan, but in 1965 the NAP split into two factions, a pro-Moscow faction led by Wali Khan and a pro-China faction led by Bhashani.

As he grew older, Bhashani became more and more of a fringe revolutionary seemingly bent on overthrowing not only Ayub's government but the entire social fabric as well. His incendiary rhetoric was famous; during the disturbances of 1969 he told a mass meeting in Dacca:

> Oh, my children, why have you come here? Have you come here to see my beard? Go out to the countryside and spread fire.

Bhashani met us on the porch of his house, clad in a not very clean lunghi. His most impressive feature was his bushy white beard. Bhashani did not speak English so the two-hour meeting was conducted through an interpreter. In our report we said the meeting was not quite a monologue and could not qualify as a conversation. It could best be described as a happening.

It was, frankly, very hard to make much sense of what Bhashani said. As expected, he gave voice to threats such as launching guerrilla warfare or a movement to overthrow the existing order in favor of "people's socialism." He frequently contradicted himself, and we gained no idea of how actively he intended to participate in the forthcoming elections. He remained, as the King of Siam would say, "a puzzlement." In my own mind I began to think of him as "the rabble rouser who sometimes walks like a politician."

Bhashani was perhaps best summed up by a friend of mine, the Dacca barrister and political historian, Kazi Ahmed Kamal. In his book *Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Politics in Pakistan*, Mr. Kamal had this to say about Bhashani:

> Maulana is a paradox — a mixture of sincerity and absurdity, a Muslim, a rebel and anarchist dressed up as a revolutionary socialist, a tragic and unfulfilled man. Meanwhile, he stands with the unflung weapon of chaos and destruction in his hands.

Kamal also quoted Mujib's pithy remark in 1969:

> Maulana is inconsistent. He should retire from politics. He is 86.

I know that it is easy for a Westerner to undervalue the influence of a charismatic Muslim figure who is both a religious and a political leader. Witness the Ayatollah Khomeini. Still, I found it hard to see how Bhashani, without a specific program to rally the people and without any organizing skill, could compete in any meaningful way against the tougher, much more focused Mujib. Bhashani might still command the respect, even veneration, of large numbers of Bengalis, but as a politician he was being totally eclipsed by Mujib.

* * * * *

We were temporarily distracted from coverage of the incipient election campaign by a couple of incidents involving attacks against USIS facilities. Outbursts of anti-American feeling occasionally erupted in East Pakistan, usually caused by some alleged insult to Islam, such as the discovery of American-made textiles decorated with calligraphy from the Koran or reports of a book published in the U.S. which depicted the face of the Prophet. Leftist student agitation against the U.S. was more frequent, but was less vociferous and less sustained than the religion-based protests. My own instinctive feeling was that weather played some role in the students' behavior. The incidents often occurred in May, the hottest month, just before the monsoon began, or in September, the next hottest month when the jute moths were spreading their skins — irritating dust. The incident reported below seemed unconnected with any cause except perhaps early election fever. Consequently, we were not unduly concerned.

1 All windows in USIS movie van were deliberately broken by students around mid-day April 16 at Daulatpur College near Khulna. Van suffered no other damage. Nothing was stolen, and USIS officer and two local Pakistani USIS employees have returned safely to Dacca. USIS officer George Deligianis, who has made 121 trips into every section of East Pakistan during past three years, reports this is first time he has experienced any hostility toward USIS movies or other programs. Real cause of incident remains obscure but Daulatpur College principal blamed "outside Communist agitators."

2 Films being shown were Apollo 10, 11 and 12 before audience of perhaps 700 in College Hall. Program started as usual with Deligianis seated in front row next to college principal and

faculty members. Helicopter was returning Apollo 10 astronauts to deck of carrier when one or perhaps two persons began shouting slogans "Down with American imperialism," "Get out of Middle East," and "Get out of Vietnam." During pandemonium which ensued principal and faculty vanished. Meanwhile, outside three or four students, later joined by perhaps twenty others, began breaking van windows. Principal eventually returned, absolved his students of responsibility and blamed agitators.

3 USIS officer reported incident to local authorities who apologetic and who urged going ahead with Khulna Club movie showing evening April 16. USIS officer declined and returned to Dacca. In Deligianis' view, which shared by ConGen, speed and efficiency of attack on mobile van suggests clear premeditation and plan.

4 *Comment*: I intend bring incident in some appropriate fashion to attention of GOEP Home Secretary who is chief civil officer and who is responsible for internal security of province.

Another Joint ConGen - USIS message.

1 At approximately 1930 hours May 5, a bomb exploded directly in front of door of USIS library. No damage resulted to library and only injury was one unidentified library patron who received scratches on leg. Library was on point of closing and all protection grills had been lowered except over library door.

2 Immediately preceding throwing of bomb at USIS library, an unidentified young man threw two Molotov cocktails inside Pakistan Council library located on second floor of building immediately adjacent to American Center (USIS). Ground floor of Pakistan Council library building contains three display windows rented out to British Information Services. These windows were not attacked.

3 Upon receiving word that bomb thrown at library, PAO Bell, Center Director Horan and I went down to USIS and also took look at Pakistan Council library. It is our admittedly inexpert opinion that bomb thrown at library door was not Molotov cocktail type, but rather "country" bomb consisting of metal cylinder holding black powder and wrapped in jute. We surmise that bomb thrown at USIS library, as well as third Molotov cocktail thrown on lawn of Press Club opposite USIS, was tossed as after-thought from jeep which was carrying away young man who threw Molotov cocktails at Pakistan Council.

4 Following USIS and Pakistan Council incident, police established small guard detail at my residence, although not at my request. Small police detail also guarding USIS premises.

5 Considerably more annoying is strike of Adamjee office workers which means that elevator service in Adamjee Court building (location of ConGen and AID offices) is suspended and we have to walk up six flights to work. Police also detailed to Adamjee Court.

6 *Comment*: Pakistan Council for National Integration is autonomous organization under GOP Minister of Information and National Affairs. Its avowed purpose is to achieve greater cultural integration of two wings. Council could, therefore, have been target of group favoring Bengali independence or autonomy.

Rereading the message about the Apollo movies brought back to mind another effort to mine public relations gold from the Apollo launches. Noticing the profusion of bicycle rickshaws on the streets of Dacca, Ambassador Farland conceived the idea of putting stickers on the rickshaws in order to publicize the Apollo program. The films were a big hit with East Pakistan audiences (Daulatpur being a lone exception), and the stickers would continue to remind one and all of the prowess of American science. Both USIS/Dacca and the Consulate General were cool to the idea; frankly, we thought it was corny. But then we were tradition-bound career types who would not recognize a great opportunity if we saw it in front of us. The Ambassador persisted; a large quantity of stickers were printed and shipped to Dacca; and USIS officers and local employees fanned out in the city to get the rickshaw drivers to affix the stickers to their vehicles. The drivers were willing enough, but they did not own the vehicles. The owners insisted on the rickshaws being washed down every night, with the result that in a few days the streets of Dacca were filled with rickshaws bearing tattered, almost illegible stickers.

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The arrival of the monsoon brought welcome cooler weather and the even more welcome arrival from Athens of Meg and Cubby. Our family

was almost complete when Shireen and Barbara joined us to spend part of their summer break in Dacca. After graduation from high school in Athens our son Peter had gone off on a tour of the Soviet Union and Mongolia, arranged by faculty members of the American school in Kabul. Both girls had made the Soviet Union trip upon their graduation from high school. After the trip, Peter went on to enroll in the American College (now University) in Paris.

I put both girls to work, Shireen at the USIS library and Barbara in the Consular section of the Consulate General, working for Vice Consul Joe Malpeli. Barbara's job was to bring the evacuation plan up to date and involved many phone calls and some trips to nearby areas to verify the whereabouts of U.S. citizens, mostly missionaries. She thought her job was make work, but the bringing up to date of the evacuation data base was to come in handy the following year. The girls were paid in excess rupees which I then converted into dollars at a rate quite favorable to them so that they would have some extra spending money at college.

During their stay the girls accompanied Meg and Cubby on a week's visit to Kathmandu, the purpose of which was to find a Lhaso Apso puppy. Carol Laise, the Ambassador to Nepal, was most gracious to the family, even arranging a dinner for them with members of the Diplomatic Corps with children of college age. And the mission was accomplished. When I met them at the airport upon their return to Dacca, Cubby came running across the tarmac in great excitement, carrying his mother's handbag with the puppy inside. Named Perky for its disposition, the dog was soon to become Meg's dog and was to remain with us for the rest of our Foreign Service career. She went out in style, dying on the QE2 upon our return from India in 1981.

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In low-lying East Pakistan, criss-crossed as it was by mighty rivers, every monsoon season brought some serious flooding. The August 1970 floods were somewhat more severe in their consequences than usual. Yahya flew to Dacca and toured the flood-affected areas, probably at the request of the Governor, Vice Admiral Ahsan. Then, after several days of consultation with officials and political leaders, Yahya announced that the elections, originally set for October 5, would be postponed to December 7. By so doing, he risked raising a hue and cry that he had

wanted all along to prolong military rule, and had grabbed at the first opportunity to put off the elections. But the confidence that Yahya had already built up helped to transmute the politicians' initial dismay into mere grumbling.

During an August 17 lunch with Governor Ahsan, Ambassador Farland and I gleaned some interesting information about Yahya's decision.

1. The Governor emphasized that postponement decision had been an agonizing one for President Yahya. Ahsan said that Yahya wanted, if at all possible, to adhere to the original schedule and had decided on postponement from October to December only when presented with the election schedule which convinced him that key officials of the GOEP administration, particularly subdivisional officers who were the returning officers for the elections, would have to abandon their flood relief activities and start concentrating full time as of now on election preparations if October 5 date was to be met. With 16,000 polling places in East Pakistan and thousands of civil servants and school teachers involved in the election process, the president was convinced that effective flood relief work and election preparations could not proceed simultaneously. He was strengthened in his decision by warnings that East Pakistan might suffer a secondary inundation between middle of August and early October.
2. Ahsan said that Yahya had settled on the minimum possible delay by scheduling elections immediately after the end of Ramazan, and had turned a deaf ear to the pleas of numerous EP political leaders that he defer the elections until February or March 1971.
3. Ahsan also threw some interesting light on Yahya's two recent meetings with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. At their first meeting on August 7 Yahya had assured Mujib that he was determined if at all possible to adhere to the October 5 date and Mujib had gone away believing that elections would not be postponed. Subsequently, Yahya asked Mujib to come see him again on August 11, when he told him he was wavering in his resolution to stick with an October date, and informed him there was a strong possibility of a postponement. Ahsan, who was present at this second meeting, said that Mujib did not go away very happy but he thought the Sheikh was at least convinced that Yahya was not playing any games with him.

4 Ahsan said he doubted that the postponement of elections would result in any significant change in the outcome in East Pakistan. He thought the incidence of Ramazan would to some extent help the conservative Islamic parties but thought the spillover effect would be greater in West Pakistan than in the East Wing. While disavowing any political views, Ahsan noted with some satisfaction that Bhutto's campaign could be adversely affected now that the election would follow immediately upon Ramazan.

5 In a side comment about Mujib, Ahsan said that the Awami League chieftain was basically "a decent chap" but that he personally had considerable misgivings about Mujib's "lack of intellectual depth."

In a meeting with Mujib on October 21 he told me with some acerbity that the election had been postponed, not because of floods, but in order to harm Awami League chances. In his view the postponement had not hurt his party except for putting added strain on its finances. In our view the postponement had played into Awami League hands because alone among the East parties the Awami League had the stamina and the funds to profit from a longer election campaign. The other parties were already beginning to run out of steam and money.

Admiral Ahsan was much respected in East Pakistan. He was not as gregarious as General Azam Khan, who had been Governor in 1960-62, but his thoughtful, courteous manner impressed the Bengalis who came to know him and to trust him. Their trust would be justified in 1971.

One might ask why did not Ayub or Yahya appoint a Bengali as Governor of East Pakistan, if they wanted to seek the support of the Bengalis. Actually, Ayub had appointed a Bengali lawyer from Mymensingh named Monem Khan, but he was not a man of desired stature or competence. Monem was considered Ayub's toady by virtually all East Pakistani politicians, who thought of him, and with good reason, as their enemy. Mujib called him "a repulsive man," and demanded his removal. In March 1969, when East Pakistan was verging on anarchy, Monen Khan fled ignominiously to West Pakistan.

In the latter part of 1971, in a futile effort to curry support in East Pakistan, Yahya also appointed a Bengali, Abdul Malik, as Governor. Again, the appointment was too little and too late. Within a couple of months, as Indian and Bangladeshi forces closed the noose around the Pakistani Army cornered in Dacca, a frightened Malik was to seek refuge at the Intercontinental Hotel from fellow Bengalis who considered him a Quisling.

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The postponement of the elections by two months was a personal boon to me. I was able to get away on vacation for three weeks. Because of my two direct transfers in a row I had not had any real vacation since 1968. Meg was suffering with an ear problem and the regional State Department medical officer had recommended that she go to a military hospital in Europe for treatment. We were able to catch a U.S. Air Force flight from Karachi to Torrejon Air Base outside of Madrid. Cubby, who accompanied us, objected to the windowless cargo plane that was to take us to Spain, and demanded to be let off the plane. I said, "Kiddo, remember this flight is free," but he was really persuaded to stay when the crew brought him some American ice cream.

At the Torrejon Hospital the Air Force doctor decided that Meg did not need an operation and indeed, her problem dissipated quickly, enabling us to take off on a very pleasurable trip through Spain and France. Western Europe is a good antidote for East Pakistan.

After several days in Madrid we flew via Barcelona to Nice, where we rented a car. At Villefranche we found a delightful small hotel and had Peter come down from Paris to stay with us a week. He arrived looking scruffy and emaciated, explaining that he had not received from me any money for food. Meg berated me for abusing "her poor little boy," who of course never wrote and told us that he had not received the sizeable check I had sent him. When I returned to Dacca and raised the matter with the British manager of the American Express Bank, I was told that the check had been stolen in the Dacca post office and sent on to Abu Dhabi where it was cashed by an Arab using his own name. When I asked how could a bank let somebody cash a check obviously made out to someone else, I learned that the bank in Abu Dhabi did that all the time. While I was promptly reimbursed by American Express, the bank and/or accomplice in Abu Dhabi had the use of our money before having to reimburse American Express. From then on I used more secure ways of keeping my son in Croque Monsieurs.

After some day trips along the Côte d'Azur we all traveled to Paris by train. We stayed at the Hotel Gare d'Orsay, part of the train station which in the 1980's was metamorphosed into the beautiful Musée d'Orsay. We saw Peter's lodging, a handsomely finished room in a home just a hop, skip and jump away from the Eiffel Tower, and we met his landlady, the elegant but reserved Madame LeMaire. Breakfast was

included in the room rent but two thin pieces of double-baked toast and a cup of thin cocoa were insufficient morning fuel for an American 18-year old.

In a visit to the American College in Paris we learned that the film actress, Olivia de Havilland, who was a trustee of the College, had noticed the name Peter Blood on the list of students. She had played the feminine lead opposite Errol Flynn in the 1935 movie "Captain Blood" about the adventures of a doctor turned pirate named Peter Blood. Miss de Havilland asked to see Peter and he was produced for her scrutiny. Our son, who had never heard of the actress, was unimpressed. Such opportunities are wasted on the young.

From Paris Meg, Cubby and I went by train to Tours, where we rented a car and spent a wonderful week touring the chateau country of the Loire Valley. It was the time of the grape harvest and the early autumn sun was golden. Returning to Tours, we took a train back to Madrid and then boarded the windowless aircraft to fly back to Pakistan, with a stop in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia.

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We arrived back in Dacca completely refreshed. I was ready to return to work, and particularly anxious to take the measure of Mujib's confidence now that another three weeks of the campaign had gone by.

On October 21 my deputy, Bob Carle, and I called on Sheikh Mujib at his Dhanmondi residence. The report of that meeting follows.

1 In confident relaxed mood Mujib claimed he would win at least 140 National Assembly seats in East Pakistan (140 out of the 162 total would be a percentage of just over 86%, very close to the 90% predicted by Mujib back on June 2. Mujib's confidence was holding steady). Sheikh Sahib asserted he should easily be able to form government with these 140 seats as base, plus 7 East Pak seats reserved for women (their indirect election virtually assumes AL (Awami League) all 7 seats, plus 4-6 AL seats in West Pakistan, plus some West Pak independents who will declare for AL after elections (Mujib said 10 such types were in field), plus scattering of MNAs from Sind, Baluchistan and NWFP. Cavalierly, he said no other party in East Pakistan would win more than 5 seats.

2 Mujib said that AL was preparing draft constitution embodying 6 points and that he would present draft to Constituent Assembly. Professing willingness to be flexible on "less important matters," he said virtual economic independence for East Pakistan was non-negotiable demand.

3 As usual, Mujib rehearsed in forceful terms catalogue of East Pak economic grievances. This was last chance, he said, and alternative to acceptance East Pak demands would be "civil war." The Sheikh emphasized that East Pakistan was part of Southeast Asia, not the Middle East. While he and Bengalis would prefer to remain peacefully in one Pakistan, their patience was now exhausted and there were other options. East Pak economic improvement, the Sheikh agreed, required closer economic ties with India. He observed that just as the Indus Waters Agreement did not await a Kashmir solution neither should East Pak flood control, which requires Indian cooperation, await a Kashmir settlement. He said he would also insist on normal trade relations with India and cited the example of expensive Chinese coal as opposed to inexpensive, easily available Indian coal. In this connection he claimed that inadequate and expensive coal supplies to East Pakistan were causing destruction of forests and thus further aggravating the fuel problem.

4 The Sheikh admitted that the AL did not have specific answers to every problem but added that neither had any other political party. The AL did, however, have the will and the dedication and once in power would tackle problems successfully.

5 He said that he would push for an independent and neutral foreign policy for Pakistan. In this connection, he said he was neither pro-Indian, pro-American, nor pro-Chinese. He was, he said, pro-his people.

6 He would not speculate on the timing of the Constituent Assembly, asserting that convening would depend on the outcome of the elections. He believes that a strong AL showing might lead to delays because of fears of the Punjabi clique in the MLA. On the other hand, he thought a weak AL turnout would lead to an early constituent assembly. The Sheikh said that he personally liked General Yahya, whom he found "partially" sincere. By way of explanation, he said he thought

Yahya was sincere as a man but very much constrained by his Punjabi military colleagues in the MLA in terms of his attitude and freedom of action toward East Pakistan.

7 *Comment*: The Sheikh claimed to be tired from Western campaign activity. He is off tomorrow for a week or ten days in North Bengal. He appeared, however, relaxed and confident. He was very agile mentally.

8 Repeatedly he presented himself as almost the personification of Bengali aspirations, speaking of "my party," "my people," "my country," "my economy." While he seemed to believe sincerely that he does embody Bengali nationalism, its hopes and its demands, at this point it is hard to say where the dividing line, if any, lies between his personal desire to exercise power and his no doubt sincere desire to exercise power on behalf of East Bengal. We had, of course, assumed that the AL brain trust had been giving thought to a draft constitution but the Sheikh's statement was the first formal confirmation that the AL is readying a draft constitution for presentation to the Constituent Assembly.

Sheikh Mujib's reference in Paragraph 3 of the above quoted telegram to the relationship between the Indus Waters Agreement and "East Pakistan flood control" bears some explanation. Next to Kashmir, the distribution of the waters of the Indus River system in West Pakistan had been the main source of friction between Pakistan and India. As the upper riparian power, India controlled the headworks of the irrigation canals built by the British during the Raj. Moreover, since partition India had constructed several multipurpose projects on the eastern tributaries of the Indus. Pakistan feared that India might, as she had done once in 1948, curtail the water supply as a means of coercion. The water was vital to both Pakistani Punjab and Indian Punjab, which are the two countries' principal bread baskets. In 1960 the Indus Waters Treaty, brokered by the World Bank and the United States, embodied a compromise agreement allocating use of the three Western Indus rivers (the Indus itself and its tributaries, the Jhelum and the Chenab) to Pakistan, and the three eastern Indus tributaries (the Ravi, Beas and Sutlej) to India. The irrigation canals in Pakistan that had been supplied by the eastern tributaries would be able to draw water from the western rivers through a system of dams and link canals.

The Indo-Pakistani water dispute affecting East Pakistan was generally referred to as the Farakka Barrage (dam) issue. When the port of Calcutta on the Hooghli River began to silt up, the Indian government began to develop plans for a dam at Farakka, near the border with East Pakistan, for the purpose of diverting water from the Ganges into the Hooghli during the dry season in order to flush out the accumulating silt. Pakistan, particularly East Pakistan, was concerned that the diversion would reduce the flow of water along the course of the Ganges through East Pakistan, where it was needed to irrigate dry season crops. (Bangladesh and India were not to reach a final agreement on the Farakka issue until December 1996, the dam having gone into operation in 1975).

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As October phased into November, we supposed that we would be concentrating full time on covering the last five weeks of the election campaign. But while man supposes, nature disposes.

CHAPTER FIVE

NATURE'S FURY

Saturday, November 14 looked as if it would be a pleasant, relaxed day. I might not even have to go to the office; the duty officer would call me if anything important occurred. I was having a second cup of coffee when I noticed a small article on the bottom of the front page of the *Pakistan Observer*. The caption read "Several hundred feared lost as cyclone hits coastal areas." Remembering how such a relatively innocuous report had been the first indication of the 1960 cyclone, I immediately telephoned the Provincial AID Mission Director, Eric Griffel. (AID has primary responsibility in disaster relief operations.) I was told that he had already left for the office, and I joined him as quickly as possible.

Intuitively we assumed that we were probably faced with a major disaster. All weekend Eric and I were on the phone or sending off cables, seeking further information from the Meteorological Service and the GOEP and alerting the Embassy and the Department. Recalling the earlier experiences with disaster relief in East Pakistan, I wanted to avoid any friction or crossed wires between the Embassy and those of us in Dacca, and urged the Ambassador to come to the East Wing. We knew that we would be faced with the need to make important decisions and recommendations within the next several days. Should the disaster warrant only nominal U.S. involvement, such as a contribution from the Ambassador's discretionary fund and support from U.S. voluntary agencies, or should it call forth a major effort involving air and sea lift from the U.S.? We expected to be showered with offers of help, once media coverage started in the U.S., and we would have to make instant decisions as to which of these offers should be accepted.

By Monday morning it was clear that the disaster was indeed of vast proportions. The *Pakistan Observer* printed a firsthand account by its correspondents who had survived. On the night of November 12 the cyclone struck the coastal areas with winds up to 150 miles per hour, and was followed by a tidal wave 20-30 feet high. The latter was probably responsible for the bulk of casualties. During a visit to Hatiya, an off-shore island which received the brunt of the storm, bodies of victims were observed strewn throughout the area. Many families were completely wiped out. Almost all seasonal workers, who were harvesting rice in low-lying fields close to the Bay of Bengal, were drowned. Coastal embankments provided some protection for those living behind them, but many had been breached.

The *Pakistan Observer* account included some preliminary casualty estimates of its own, contrasted with equally preliminary GOEP estimates. The *Observer* estimate totaled 233,000; the GOEP's 16,000. We thought the GOEP figures were exceedingly conservative, while the *Observer* estimates might be inflated. One problem with determining how many persons actually perished was the lack of good statistics on the population living there before the storm hit. Also, the influx of seasonal workers just before the cyclone complicated any estimation.

Our first substantial report on the disaster, sent on November 16, summarized the *Observer* report and went on as follows:

5 Government relief operations: Disaster area has been divided into three regions, each under supervision of divisional commissioners who have set up their headquarters in worse hit parts of the devastated area. Naval vessels and Army helicopters are being used to transport relief items to more remote areas. Army medical teams, Health Department medical teams and Red Cross medical teams have been dispatched to stricken area.

6 Thus far, neither USG or CARE have received any official request for help.

7 *Comment*: We believe this latest disaster might well be most severe in history East Pakistan in terms of loss of human life. Undoubtedly, Government estimates of losses are highly conservative. Discussions with Americans who made aerial survey with GOEP officials substantiate magnitude of disaster.

We were soon to learn that the account of the actions being taken by the civilian and military authorities in Paragraph 5 above, particularly

with respect to the use of Pakistani Army helicopters, was, to put it mildly, quite fanciful. We realized the mistake of accepting such information on face value. We also decided to take the initiative and ask the GOEP what assistance the U.S. could render. On that very same day, November 16, we sent off the following message:

1 After consultation East Pakistan Governor and GOEP Relief Commissioner have request for following:

2 Group 1 - Immediate need

A. 10-90,000 blankets.

B. As much warm clothing as possible.

C. Tents.

FYI: At this time of year East Pak climate changes and warm clothing most suitable. Building materials for housing scarce throughout East Pakistan and especially in affected areas. End FYI.

3 Group 2 - Two to four helicopters with crews. GOP in process internal clearance question whether foreign armed force crews acceptable. Anticipate favorable position. They will let us know. This request of utmost urgency. Request you ascertain availabilities pending GOP internal clearances.

4 Group 3 - A. Rupees five crore (one crore equals 10 million) for local purchase building materials.

B. Rupees five crore to repair coastal embankments.

C. 50,000 tons wheat.

We can consider these requests on their merits in next several days. Request essentially non-emergency in nature, especially building materials which will have to be brought in from other parts East Pakistan and West Pakistan.

5 Request represents first tranche only. List will also be presented to other governments but thus far only U.S. has been asked. Recommend VOLAGs (Volunteer Agencies) clothing contribution be air freighted ASAP. Urge U.S. air freight 10,000 blankets and at least token tent contributions immediately. Demands for clothing and blankets will be sufficient to absorb U.S. and other possible contributors and still leave large unrequited demand.

On November 17 we reported:

1 Press reports indicate that death toll from November 12 cyclone continues to mount. Unofficial figure is now put at over 350,000 while official figure has grown to 53,000. Head of Pakistan Red Cross Society, Justice B. A. Siddiky, estimates that sustained relief will be necessary for about 500,000 people.

2 President Yahya Khan made aerial reconnaissance of stricken area November 16 accompanied by Governor Ahsan and GOEP Relief Commissioner Anisuzzaman. He ordered provincial government to give all-out help and to spare no efforts to assist victims.

3 Governor Ahsan has established his headquarters in heart of devastated area. All naval resources available and an amphibian plane are at his disposal. Inland Water Transport Authority launches and EPWAPDA (East Pakistan Water and Power Development Authority) motor boats have also been requisitioned.

4 According to GOEP authorities another seven to ten days will be required to finish assessment of the damage and loss of lives. Communication has still not been established with some areas. According to preliminary estimates 2,231,000 people (277,000 families) were affected, with loss of family or property over an area of 2,338 square miles. 234,000 houses were completely demolished: 117,000 partially damaged. (Comment: These figures are highly questionable. We include them in absence of any other estimates. In case of houses, all or most are thatch or other non-pucca material.)

5 Criticism of Government's handling of crisis beginning. A) *Pak Observer* printed strong criticism of way Meteorological Department warned coastal areas of impending storm. Weather bulletin was not in usual form (i.e., in usual number system which indicates severity) and consequently "confused people." Department also failed to comment on tidal bore so people on shore and ships at sea did not take adequate precautions. B) Survivors in hard-hit areas complained lack of prompt action on part of government in spite of messages sent from disaster areas by wireless last Friday. Officials claimed they minimized initial reports because of incorrect info from Meteorological Department on size of cyclone and tidal wave. Comment: GOEP was caught off base by storm. Governor had called conference of senior district officials, so junior officials were in charge when disaster hit.

President Yahya had stopped in Dacca on November 16 en route back from China where he had a very successful visit, winning a commitment for larger amounts of military assistance. It was reported, and widely believed in East Pakistan, that he had celebrated heavily on his flight back and had spent his one day in East Pakistan in something of an alcoholic daze. His aerial reconnaissance was not by helicopter but in a plane flying at 3,000 feet. Back at the Dacca airport before returning to Islamabad, Yahya made a few comments indicating his sorrow but, according to some press accounts, was heard to say, "It didn't look so bad."

* * * * *

A disaster relief operation seems to have two clearly defined phases. First comes the period of maximum shock which brings forth an outpouring of offers of aid from foreign countries. For those of us on the receiving and processing end there can be too much immediate assistance to handle, all of it well-intentioned but some of it not very useful or redundant. In Dacca we found ourselves practicing a kind of triage, rejecting advice we considered unrealistic, turning down offers we felt had little relevance to problems caused by the cyclone or were of low priority, while concentrating our efforts on getting the most immediately needed items.

But international interest in natural disasters is ephemeral, and easily distracted by other crises or dulled by the prosaic task of long-range rehabilitation, such as the provision of shelter and livestock. Then it becomes more difficult to wring out a sustained commitment from Washington. The interest of the press and the Congress, those potent spurs to government action, quickly wanes and outside the government's disaster relief community and the voluntary agencies, there is scant support for longer term aid.

As early as November 19 we were reporting that there were now sufficient blankets and clothing on hand or in pipeline from various

sources to meet the immediate demand and distribution capacity. With regard to children's clothing we suggested that no further shipments be made for the time being because the indications from the disaster area were that most casualties involved women and children, and children's clothing, tragically enough, were the least needed items.

We were so deluged with offers that later that same day we were forced to reiterate that we believed there were enough blankets and clothing on hand or in pipeline to meet immediate needs. We noted that the GOEP supported this position. We urged no immediate shipments of blankets or clothing of any kind, emphasizing that the immediate need was for transportation of goods already available, for money, and for pre-packaged food which can be dropped and eaten without further preparation. We stressed that an airlift of such food would make much greater sense than clothing or blankets for the time being.

One inevitable knee-jerk reaction to natural disasters around the world is an immediate chorus of predictions that the disaster-affected areas will immediately have to cope with cholera and typhoid epidemics. Western newsmen who invaded East Pakistan in the wake of the cyclone filed stories to this effect, and ill-informed medical groups in the U.S. voiced warnings of severe outbreaks of cholera. We were offered medical teams from the U.S. to innoculate the people of the affected area against cholera. Luckily, we had available to us in the persons of the Cholera Lab arguably the best cholera experts going and without a doubt the best informed experts on cholera in East Pakistan. The Cholera Lab's opinion was that there would be no increase in cholera as a result of the cyclone and tidal wave, and their view was proven correct. Nor was there any outbreak of typhoid. Foreign countries are generally quite sensitive about reports of cholera among their people, because cholera bespeaks unsanitary conditions and poor public health procedures. President Yahya told Ambassador Farland that he had been considerably disturbed by the fallacious cholera scares emanating from foreign journalists in Dacca. In a press conference Yahya went so far as to claim that not one death from cholera had occurred.

The GOEP initially took a cautious attitude toward the need for medical assistance, but on November 21 the Relief Commissioner reversed himself and said that a crying need for foreign self-contained mobile field hospital units had developed. The Commissioner told us that one Kuwaiti medical team was already in the field, with two West German

field hospitals promised, as well as one Japanese. He asked if the U.S. could provide 3-4 such units, which, to be effective, would have to operate entirely on their own resources, pitching camps in the disaster area. We were informed by CARE that Medico was anxious to send teams.

We were most fortunate in having available to us the talents of Colonel Davis of the Army Surgeon General's staff. He had a practical, common-sense approach to issues. Together with Dr. John Moseley of the Cholera Lab, he made a helicopter trip throughout the disaster area and reported that there was no need for the U.S. to move hospitals to East Pakistan for surgical or medical patients. The survivors of the cyclone-tidal wave, i.e. those who did not drown, were cold and hungry, and some suffered abrasions from clutching to palm trees, but virtually none suffered broken arms or legs. Drs. Davis and Moseley urged that our emphasis remain on getting rice to those areas where 100% of the food had been washed away. With their solid judgment to back us up, we were able to stave off Washington's eagerness to dispatch a couple of mobile hospital units.

Of course, hospital units could have kept busy indefinitely in treating persons afflicted by ailments endemic to East Pakistan, such as intestinal disorders or glaucoma, but these were not cyclone-related medical problems. Belgium and Singapore sent mobile hospitals staffed by military doctors, and we were later informed by both groups that they had been under-employed.

On February 10 and 11 I was fully occupied, mostly on the telephone, with arranging the medical evacuation of the head of the Belgian medical mission, Commandant Chardon, who had been diagnosed by his fellow officers as suffering from an abscessed liver. We had been asked to make available an aircraft belonging to the Commander, Middle East Forces, which was then in Chittagong, to carry the patient to Calcutta, whence he could be flown to Brussels for emergency surgery. The Indian Government at first refused to grant flight clearance for the aircraft, but after much frantic back and forth the clearance was granted and Commandant Chardon was safely evacuated.

* * * * *

Helicopters! As already mentioned, the GOEP's initial request on November 16 had included two to four helicopters. We immediately

submitted the request to Washington with our strong endorsement. On the following day we reported that the GOEP Relief Commissioner kept telling us that the top priority was helicopters in order to make immediate deliveries of life-saving materials (pure water, medicine, dry food, warm clothing) to the disaster areas not readily accessible to other forms of transportation. While a helicopter's load-carrying capacity is limited, it was the best, and sometimes the only, way to reach coastal areas and off-shore islands where there are few roads, no railroads or airstrips, and where most boats were destroyed in the storm. In all of East Pakistan there was only one helicopter, belonging to the Pakistani Army, in working order, and it was being used to ferry officials about.

The GOEP also approached the British here for helicopters. We were told that the British were relaying the request but without any recommendation for a positive response.

Our reporting cable made the following additional points:

4 Local press today reports GOEP has asked USG for helicopters: press reports based on Relief Commissioner's press conference.

5 GOEP pressing hard for helicopters and it is clear that they look to us to provide them. In our view two to four helicopters are in fact top priority need and their availability during next couple of weeks would help save numerous lives and relieve much suffering. Their high visibility would also dramatize prompt U.S. response to disaster needs.

6 Query: Might not two helicopters under contract AID/Nepal be considered as alternative to military aircraft?

On the following day, November 18, I sent this telegram:

1 GOEP Chief Secretary, who sounded truly desperate, phoned me 0900 this morning to say that relief efforts had virtually come to standstill because of inability GOEP to get urgently needed relief supplies to off shore islands and isolated coastal areas. He said adequate supplies for immediate relief available but in absence helicopters GOEP found itself completely frustrated.

2 GOEP relief efforts coming under attack from local press. *Pak Observer* carried headline this morning: "Foreign relief goods remain dumped in Dacca: No airdropping yet."

3 Again, I cannot urge too strongly importance of getting helicopters here today or tomorrow at latest.

In a separate message that day we reported that questions were beginning to arise about why Pakistan Army choppers in West Pakistan were not being sent to the East Wing.

We had assumed that U.S. helicopters would come from Vietnam, but we learned that the first four helicopters, followed soon by another four, would come from Pope Air Force Base in North Carolina. The helicopters were dismantled, put in C-141s and flown to Dacca, where they were reassembled and flown to their operating base in Begamganj in Noakhali District. We were not the only ones to wonder why helicopters could not be brought in from places nearer to East Pakistan. The press, both in Dacca and in Washington, were asking the same question, as was Senator Ted Kennedy.

In response to our request for guidance in fielding such questions we received the following response from the State Department:

1 On press queries as to why helicopters sent East Pakistan from U.S. rather than SEA (Southeast Asia), respond as follows:

Quote: Given present relative requirements worldwide, it was found more expeditious to airlift helicopters from U.S. rather than elsewhere. On other hand, we constantly reassessing our worldwide assets in event heavier requirements are levied from any source. Unquote.

2 Should further explanation be necessary, add:

a When DOD receives request for emergency assistance it surveys supplies of men and machines and determines most efficient way of meeting need. Helicopters in SEA committed to military operations and need there continuing and critical. Helicopters in U.S. more readily available for complex process of disassembly, packing and shipment. The only time possibly saved by shipping from SEA would be flight time, but this saving largely offset by additional time required in field to identify helicopters available for disaster relief, in addition to supporting equipment and manpower. Airlift from U.S. therefore is usually best means meeting helicopter requirements.

b Response by DOD to emergency request from Pakistan was immediate and most expeditious under governing circumstances.

It will continue to be so. Viz. dispatch from U.S. of four further helicopters six hours after receipt at DOD of request from GOP.

The Department informed us that at its noon briefing on November 23 the press appeared to have accepted the spokesman's explanation as to why helicopters had been sent from U.S. rather than Vietnam. At the following day's noon briefing the spokesman made these additional comments: "I'd like to begin by straightening out the record on helicopters from Vietnam to Pakistan. The question of bringing helicopters from Vietnam into Pakistan has neither been raised by the Pakistanis nor by our mission. The situation was that the Pakistanis asked urgently for helicopters without making any conditions or suggestions."

On November 22 we sent a message slugged "Helicopter Roundup." Following helicopters now either in operation or on way in to East Pakistan:

A Ten U.S. Four Army helicopters here: four more now scheduled arrive November 23. Two USAID Nepal small helicopters here.

B Ten UK helicopters. Two of these are small and already here (arrived November 20). Rest due November 24.

C Five German helicopters due during course of week of November 23.

D Three French helicopters expected East Pakistan November 23.

E Four Pakistani military helicopters one of which small. Pakistani helicopters were all in East Pakistan at time disaster: originally only one was in working condition. All now operating.

With respect to Paragraph B above, the British had airlifted from Singapore forty troops, one dozen land rovers, and two Sioux helicopters to be used in reconnaissance of the disaster struck areas. The helicopters were too small to carry relief goods. Interestingly, the British troops were in battle dress and carrying weapons. They immediately set up a defensive perimeter around their assigned space at Dacca airport. By contrast, the U.S. helicopter crews, expecting a friendly and grateful reception, adopted no such military posture and were soon handing out candy to the many Bengali youngsters who clustered about their landing

area. The eight larger UK helicopters arrived off Patuakhali on the mini-carrier Intrepid, which also brought one company of Royal Engineers, one company of riflemen, and equipment such as bulldozers.

According to our calculations, the total number of helicopters that became available for disaster relief finally reached thirty-eight, which included later arrivals from Iran, Saudi Arabia and the Soviet Union. The Soviet helicopters were among the last to arrive and the last to leave.

The U.S. helicopter force, designated Task Force 182, was commanded by Colonel Charles H. Parsons, USAF. He and his fellow officers and men did a superb job, working tirelessly to transport as much relief supplies as they could and succeeding admirably in keeping their choppers and the two small Bell helicopters on loan from AID/Nepal in flying condition. Our helicopters were the first relief-carrying helicopters to be operable, and in the course of 23 days of flying moved over one million pounds of urgently needed supplies. Colonel Parsons remained calm and good-natured throughout, despite being deluged by importunate members of the press claiming priority space on his helicopters. We tried to shield him from the press as much as possible, because we shared his view that his principal mission was to get relief supplies to where they were urgently needed.

At the beginning of December we sensed that the peak requirement for our helicopters might be over within a couple of weeks. I told Governor Ahsan that I would appreciate an early opportunity to discuss the timing of the helicopter phase-out with him. I saw him on December 10:

1 He apologized for delay in coming back to me on timing of helicopter phase out, saying that delay caused by need to canvas views his military and civilian colleagues in East Pakistan. Governor said he had no doubt in his mind, and neither had Pak military, that Pak helicopters were sufficient to handle job of distribution of emergency relief stocks to outlying points after mid-December. Pak Army now has available to it two M1-8s, plus six Alouettes, two of which were gift from Saudis. According to Governor some civilian officials, notably Chief Secretary, were concerned that departure of U.S. helicopters in near future would leave GOEP vulnerable on two counts: First, that USG might think that Paks were pushing them out; and second, Awami League politicos might attack GOEP for not keeping our helicopters on job for longer period. Chief Secretary had

suggested to Governor that perhaps four helicopters might stay on duty as long as January 30.

2 I assured Governor GOEP need not have any concern about U.S. sensitivities on this score. We were prepared to help as long as possible but not anxious to stay day longer than needed. We both agreed that window-dressing involved in keeping some helicopters here for another six weeks made little sense and that determining factor for fixing departure should be GOEP estimate of duration of need for type of distributive capacity best performed by helicopters.

3 On this basis we agreed on following phase out schedule based on Governor's estimate of requirement and linked to imperatives of helicopter maintenance. U.S. helicopters will cease flying operations on staggered basis commencing December 14 and ending December 15, with helicopters and personnel to be airlifted out of Pakistan beginning December 15 and ending December 18.

4 We also agreed that concerns voiced by Chief Secretary could be satisfactorily addressed in joint statement to be issued on or about December 15.

5 At no time did Governor indicate any interest in permanent acquisition of helicopters.

6 Governor did, however, ask if two small Bell helicopters from Nepal might not be kept on here for little while after December 18. I told him that I thought this very unlikely since Kathmandu was pressing for their return, but we would explore possibility.

7 We plan, therefore, commence phase down operations December 14 when we will begin redeploying force from Noakhali to Dacca and preparing equipment for shipment. Recommend first C-141 arrive Dacca 14/2400 Z December and second arrive at 15/0500 Z December. Plan dispatch two helos on each C-141. Remainder of aircraft and equipment to be withdrawn December 16 and 17. Remaining personnel to depart morning of December 18.

8 We have discussed with Islamabad possibility of getting one Bell assigned to USAID Dacca for one year to help assess and implement rehabilitation program. This would, however, need to be separate arrangement with Arizona (the contracting organization). Keeping two Bells here for little longer would not meet our problem and would be unfair to Nepal. Recommend therefore that Nepal Bells be phased out by December 18 with arrangements to be made between Dacca and Kathmandu. Islamabad will handle long-term request separately.

9 For Islamabad: We will submit to you our suggestions for joint statement December 11.

The schedule agreed to above was followed. As the choppers moved in stages from Noakhali to Dacca, Colonel Parsons thoughtfully offered short helicopter rides in and around Dacca to interested members of the American community, including wives and children. My wife and younger son took advantage of this opportunity, although my son, aged eight, who had objected to a windowless USAF aircraft earlier in the year, found a doorless helicopter no less forbidding. On December 15 Meg and I hosted an early Christmas party for the entire Task Force 182, and for a number of the Dacca people with whom they had worked. One crewman, who was scheduled to go on direct transfer to Vietnam, stared a long time at our decorated Christmas tree and then said wistfully to my wife, "This may be the last Christmas tree I'll see."

In a meeting with the Ambassador over a month later Governor Ahsan said that the Soviet helicopters were underemployed, simply moving rice from one storage area to another, performing a function which could easily and more economically be performed by boats. The Governor said he had hinted broadly to Soviets several times in last ten days that it was time their helicopters departed. In this connection he noted that the Soviets had a problem in getting their helicopters flown out of East Pakistan because AN-22 aircraft which had brought helicopters to Dacca were grounded as a result of the crash of one such plane on the way back to the Soviet Union in December.

* * * * *

Ambassador Farland came over to Dacca on November 18 and remained for the better part of three weeks. He was accompanied, as always, by his press attaché, Eddie Deerfield, and stayed at our home, as always. In fact, our home became his very busy command post, with much coming and going of people involved in disaster relief. Meals became very much an elastic feast. Meg scarcely knew from hour to hour how many people she needed to feed. Breakfasts were often business sessions, with maps and

notepads strewn over the dining table. Our young son once tearfully asked his mother, "Why do we have to have so many uniforms at breakfast?

The Ambassador was an excellent executive. He delegated authority freely and he backed his subordinates to the hilt. He also made crisp unequivocal decisions. His presence in Dacca ruled out any chance of conflict between the Consulate General and the Embassy, because the Embassy knew that messages coming from Dacca had the approval of the Ambassador. Once, toward the end of November, the Ambassador told me that he was going to bring over the Embassy Political and Economic Counselors for a few days so that they could observe the disaster relief operation at first hand. When I expressed some concern that their presence might complicate matters for us in Dacca, he said, "Don't worry, Arch. I'll see that they don't get in your hair." And he was true to his word.

By the time the Ambassador arrived in Dacca the U.S. organizational structure for handling disaster relief in East Pakistan was fully in place. The Dacca working group was chaired by the Ambassador when he was in residence here; otherwise it was run jointly by Eric Griffel and myself. A joint task force had been established in Islamabad under the leadership of the Political Counselor, Steve Palmer. In Washington a special East Pakistan Disaster Operations Center had been functioning since November 16 within the AID Disaster Relief Division, staffed by AID and State officials. The Center was concerned with relief actions such as the air shipment of blankets and tents and the provision of helicopters. It also served as an information source for private voluntary agencies and the public.

In addition, a special Inter-Departmental Working Group chaired by AID Deputy Administrator Maurice Williams was established to coordinate activities within the Government relating to East Pakistan disaster relief. Finally, a week or so later, a Citizen's Pakistan Relief Committee, headed by former Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Robert Murphy, with Mrs. Nixon serving as honorary chairman, was set up to encourage cash contributions for disaster relief.

* * * * *

When I reviewed the material on the disaster relief operation in the National Archives, I was surprised to discover how complex a story it

was. I found that I had remembered primarily the good and satisfying aspects, while forgetting much of the criticism levied at the operation in its earliest days by Western, primarily American, journalists and the problems we encountered in seeking to set the record straight.

This chapter is basically a one-dimensional account of our hectic activity during the first few days of the operation, although lengthened to complete the helicopter story. It makes only passing reference to two other very important dimensions: Western press criticism of both U.S. and Pakistani relief efforts and even more virulent East Pakistani criticism of the Government of Pakistan and the Pakistani military attitude toward the disaster. The latter took on tremendous importance since the first three weeks of disaster relief coincided with the last three weeks of the election campaign. These other two dimensions are the subject of the next two chapters.

CHAPTER SIX

BLOT ON THE ESCUTCHEON

I am firmly of the view that two themes invariably dominate the reporting of foreign journalists who descend upon a developing country struck by a great natural disaster: 1) horror stories of human suffering, and 2) horror stories of botched disaster relief operations. These are the stories they are looking for, and unless they exercise discretion with regard to their sources, double-check the information they obtain, and try to appreciate the difficulties under which the local relief officials are operating, they are bound to come up with some doozies.

Disaster relief in a land like East Pakistan, not surprisingly, presented a chaotic picture in the first few days. A disaster of that magnitude could hardly be anticipated; government officials had been preoccupied with other matters, i.e. elections; communication with the disaster areas ranged from difficult to impossible; locally available relief supplies were strictly limited. We could sympathize with the GOEP's frustration at being unable to get relief out to where it was needed; that is why we so strongly urged the immediate dispatch of helicopters.

The dozens of print journalists and TV crews who came to East Pakistan were asking some bona fide questions such as why the failure to bring in Army helicopters from West Pakistan or why was not the Army supporting the relief efforts. Often, however, their reporting seemed grossly unfair and even self-serving. For example, listen to the words of David Loshak, the South Asia correspondent for the *London Daily Telegraph* and a prime example of these know-it-alls from out of the West:

> The situation in Dacca was extraordinary. The administration was paralyzed. Officials as hapless as the cyclone victims themselves

gaped open-mouthed at press conferences and left it to foreign journalists to put forward suggestion after suggestion for improving — or, more accurately, for initiating the relief efforts. Vice-Admiral Ahsan, East Pakistan's governor, a humane and thoughtful man, seemed as woefully afflicted with paralysis as his minions.

Washington reacted quickly and strongly to the press criticism emanating from Dacca. The following telegram from the State Department was dated November 19, the day after Ambassador Farland's arrival in Dacca:

1 As you may already know from international press feedback, Wireless File summaries of domestic press coverage, and other sources, U.S. media tending emphasize negative rather than accentuate positive in East Pakistan disaster relief situation. Press, radio and TV (now beginning feature distressing film clips from scene) have been focusing on failure of local distribution relief supplies, alleged outbreak cholera and typhoid, purported dispute among Pakistanis and Americans over who shall operate helicopters as cause for breakdown of emergency flights. Relatively less prominence and coverage accorded U.S. and other country assistance in providing relief supplies, transport and funds.

2 Examples of foregoing are front page story in *NYT* today headlined "Copter Shortage Balks Cyclone Aid" and insider in *Washington Post* slugged "Pakistan Flood Relief Stalled." Radio past two days has played up reports of alleged conflict over helicopter piloting and GOP failure deploy helicopters to east wing. Popular Huntley-Brinkley TV show this evening strongly criticized inadequacy of relief to disaster survivors.

3 Department and AID have been putting out positive news to press regularly re U.S. relief efforts, and answering press inquiries on situation. We made special effort deal with situation through Department noon press briefing today (reported SepTel) and detailed AID press release November 18. Regrettably, media have been picking up less of this than of sometimes sensationalized reporting from newsmen in Dacca.

4 Tendency discernible among public here to begin blame USG for inadequacies of GOP relief measures and insufficient response to needs of situation — not knowing we still lack definitive GOP statement of requirements and request for aid beyond what already extended. Official sources including White House beginning receive phone calls from concerned citizens making such charges.

5 Realize Ambassador, now in Dacca, will be seeking ensure more accurate press coverage.

Washington was truly nervous for the Department weighed in the next day, November 20, with the following message:

Dacca for Ambassador

1 Media treatment of disaster situation today continues emphasize low level of relief supply due lack of transport, although increase in official death toll to 150,000 (based on Ahsan statement) captured most headlines and leads including front page *NYT* story. *Washington Post* insided death toll story with secondary stress on subhead "Lack of Copters Stalls Aid," while reporting offers of assistance pouring in from abroad.

2 Harshest handling is *Washington Daily News* story this afternoon under bold front page headline "Pakistan Aid Flop a Tragic Scandal" featuring Dacca dispatch from Ian Brodie of *London Express Service,* reporting idle Pak Army trucks, continuation of commercial air service heedless of disaster, grounding of only available helicopter, non-employment of military forces for relief, alleged GOP refusal of foreign aid offers, etc. (Summary by SepTel).

Cannot underscore strongly enough adverse impact and emphasis is producing on attitude of public, members of Congress, and others here prone to transfer blame to us for insufficient response. Inquiries and complaints being heard with increasing frequency by Department, White House. Urge mission 1) do all possible encourage Pakistanis put forth maximum effort not only in disaster relief but also in press relations in Dacca, and 2) make most of our own and other friendly countries' aid efforts on the spot. Assume you are personally doing everything possible with the press.

* * * * *

To urge Ambassador Farland to embark upon an aggressive public relations campaign to set the record straight on our disaster relief

operation was somewhat like urging the Pope to act more like a Catholic The Ambassador prided himself on his PR skills, and enjoyed that aspect of his job. To such work he brought the advantages of a frank, outgoing manner, never-ending courtesy to one and all, and a marked photogenic quality. I once asked him why all his photographs turned out well. He answered that he had a simple trick: he always kept the smile on his face for ten seconds after the camera shutter clicked.

Despite his affinity for the media the Ambassador had occasionally been savaged in the West Pakistan press, but virtually never by the press in East Pakistan. The charges levied against the Ambassador were completely phoney and generally strained credulity to the extreme. For example, he was several times accused of plotting the murder of some West Pakistani politicians. Like other political appointees I have known Ambassador Farland took these charges as a personal insult to his honor, not realizing that the people who made these accusations had their own agendas and could not care less who the American Ambassador was if an attack on the U.S. served their purpose.

Egged on by Deerfield, the Ambassador would respond publicly to each and every such charge. USIS/Dacca and I were of the view that a benign indifference would have scotched such stories, which continued despite, or perhaps because of, the Ambassador's angry reaction. Nobody likes to be insulted or defamed, but considering the source of the insults, it is sometimes more productive to shrug them off rather than engage in a running battle to secure retraction or vindication.

The Ambassador was quick to respond to Washington's nervous telegrams. On November 21 he sent the following telegram:

1 You can fully assume that we are acutely aware of need to ensure active and most favorable coverage of U.S. relief efforts, and have been taking all appropriate measures. Unfortunately, our press activities hampered by aggravated East-West antagonisms. Accounts by U.S. correspondents here have reflected Bengali charges that Pak Government in Islamabad not sensitive to situation and need for significant effort to assist and coordinate aid for cyclone survivors. Apparently, this aspect has overshadowed U.S. emergency aid actions in media accounts in U.S., although Dacca papers critical of what they considered lack of GOP help have given U.S. aid wide publicity in local papers.

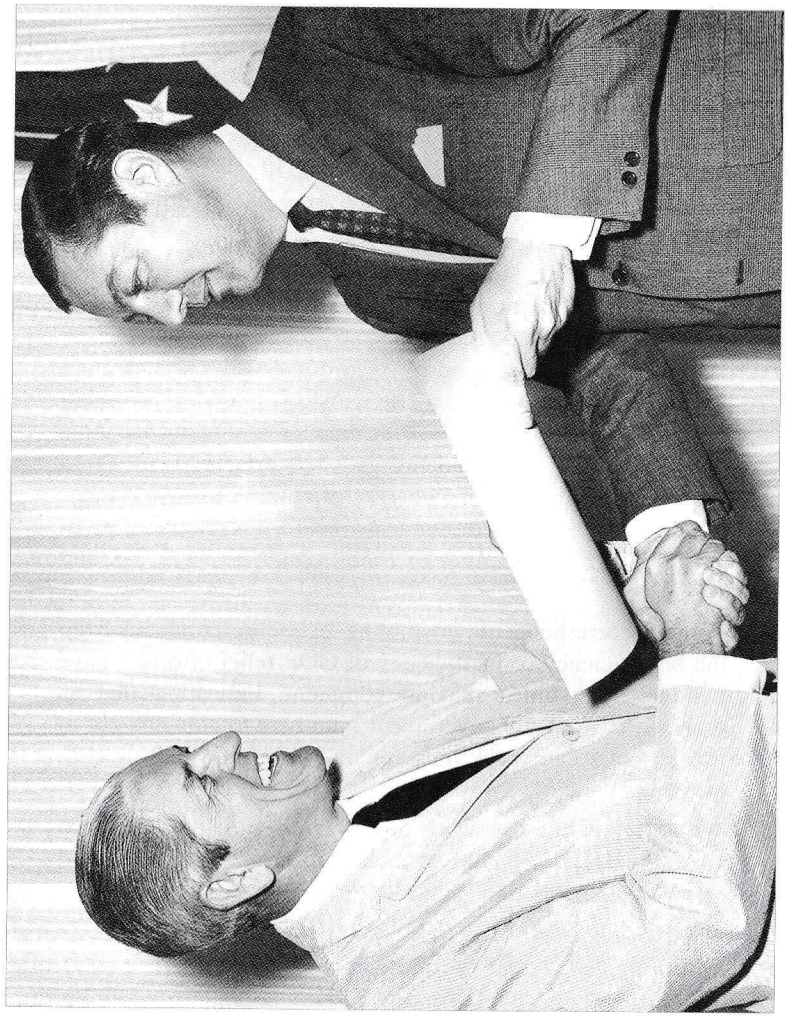
2 Most immediate problem seems to be need to counter distortions in U.S. media. Last night I was interviewed by Steve Bell of ABC as I returned from first operational flight of helicopter. The interview pointed at offsetting the negative press situation described in your messages by correcting fallacious story about alleged USG-GOP altercations over helicopter pilot arrangements and by emphasizing full range of U.S. relief efforts.

3 This morning, I took sixteen foreign correspondents on reconnaissance flight over disaster areas in Embassy attaché plane. Before flight, in the air, and on ground immediately after landing I participated in on-the-record interviews accentuating the extent of massive aid by USG, and commenting favorably upon our relations with GOP in disaster arrangements. At a time when all correspondents gathered around, I answered specific questions refuting charges of conflict over helicopter piloting. American correspondents included representatives of *Washington Post, Los Angeles Times*, UPI, *Newsweek, Life* and ABC.

4 Foreign correspondents attempting to secure comment from me on efficiency or inefficiency of GOP relief efforts. I have assiduously avoided making comment, indicating that as representative of my government I am here to help and not to judge, that I can speak only for that segment which is U.S. assistance.

5 We are continuing to work closely with U.S. press to keep correspondents fully and accurately informed on present aid efforts and upcoming activities.

At this time we were able only to deny that an altercation over helicopter piloting had taken place, but we were soon able to shed further light on the story and quash it for good. On November 22 Arnold Zeitlin, the AP correspondent based in Islamabad, told me that he had filed the AP story, which appeared in the *New York Times*, charging that the question of which country's pilots should fly relief helicopters had delayed the delivery of urgently needed helicopters from the U.S. While Zeitlin declined to identify his informant, who presumably was a GOEP official, he admitted that his informant may have confused U.S. with U.K. Checking with the British, we were told that the Pakistanis had initially quibbled over who would fly the British helicopters.



The author receiving Meritorious Honour Award from Ambassador Farland in Islamabad, April 27, 1971. The Award was for work in disaster relief following the November 1970 cyclone in East Pakistan.

Earlier that same day, Air Commodore Masud of the Pakistani Air Force had telephoned the Ambassador to say that a member of the Pakistani Air Force staff had advised him that President Nixon had complained to President Yahya about the alleged initial unwillingness of the GOP to agree to U.S. pilots for the U.S.-provided helicopters. The Ambassador told Masud that we were of course aware of this completely unfounded report which appeared in the press, and which he had frequently publicly denied.

On the next day the *Pakistan Observer* carried a story quoting a Pakistani Air Force spokesman that "It may be also clarified that a certain rumor alleging that attempts were made to persuade the American relief helicopter force that their helicopters must be flown by Pakistani pilots or with Pakistani pilots is utterly baseless. After consulting with American Ambassador in Dacca, it appears that rumor was started by a section of the foreign press for reasons unknown."

Later, on November 29, in a meeting with Yahya after the President had returned to Dacca, Ambassador Farland learned from Yahya that he had been particularly disturbed by the helicopter piloting story, not only because it was totally false but because he had heard that President Nixon "was upset" as a result of the report.

I did not come across any confirmation that President Nixon had expressed any unhappiness to Yahya, but I could not blame him if he indeed had done so. It would have been unconscionable for the GOP to demand that the U.S.-provided helicopters be flown by Pakistanis, when the Pakistani military were refusing to send large helicopters to East Pakistan on the grounds that it was inconvenient and expensive to dismantle the helicopters and fly them over in C-141s. That was exactly what we had to do, all the way from North Carolina, halfway around the world.

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On November 23 Embassy Islamabad sent the following EX DIS (a very restrictive distribution) telegram to the State Department:

1 Naik, head of MFA disaster group, called in Pol Counselor late Nov. 23 to confide following, which FonSec Sultan Khan asked to be relayed urgently to Ambassador.

2 Amb Hilaly had reported again to Islamabad on various negative repercussions in U.S. re disaster relief operations. Hilaly's cable continued that, perhaps in connection with these problems, Dr. Kissinger had called him to suggest that a high ranking U.S. official or high level delegation might travel urgently to East Pakistan for on-the-spot assessment. According to Hilaly's cable, sections of which Naik read, Dr. Kissinger thought that such visit could inter alia give added impetus to efforts of U.S. voluntary agencies in marshaling relief assistance.

3 After consulting President Yahya, MFA replying to Hilaly along following lines:

A) GOP and GOEP are Quote more than completely satisfied with the tremendous effort Ambassador Farland, the Embassy here and the AID Mission, and all your people in Dacca have been making since the cyclone struck. Unquote. GOP extremely grateful for all the Ambassador and his mission are doing. Their personal and official help has exceeded all GOP's expectations.

B) Thus, in terms of assessment and effective bilateral coordination, GOP perceives no need for high level official or delegation from U.S. However, if USG perceives utility in such visit because of other factors, GOP would welcome it. Hilaly is instructed to stress that should such visit eventuate, this should in no Rpt no way derogate from GOP's high estimation of outstanding job being done night and day by Ambassador and his staff.

I never saw the foregoing message until twenty-nine years later. I know my staff and I would have been gratified by Yahya's stout defense of our efforts, and even happier to hear that he had rebuffed Kissinger's suggestion. Yahya, of course, had good reason to do so. Any such visit was bound to pick up the strong indications that the criticism of the disaster relief effort had much less to do with the extent and efficiency of the U.S. contribution than with the widely perceived feeling that the Government of Pakistan was clearly not doing all it could or should do.

At the time I was beginning to sense that Ambassador Hilaly was playing a deceitful game in Washington. Sure, I realize that he was probably under instructions to obtain the maximum response from the

U.S., but I doubt that he was encouraged to accomplish that by suggesting his government's disappointment with the U.S. effort. Hilaly was very energetic in his missionary zeal for more and more American aid. He was often on the Hill and President Nixon even invited him to the White House to discuss disaster relief. I remember receiving a telegram from the Department reporting that Senator Ted Kennedy had, after a talk with Hilaly, urged that more be done to help Pakistan.

A little later on November 29, Ambassador Farland reacted, somewhat indirectly, to the Pakistani Government's reply to Kissinger's unhelpful suggestion. In an Eyes Only message for the Secretary of State (Kissinger was then Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs) the Ambassador stated:

1 I am unreservedly satisfied with the competent and unstinting efforts in speeding East Pakistan's cyclone disaster relief exerted by all the activity involved members of my Embassy, spearheaded by ConGen Blood here in Dacca and backstopped by my Political Counselor Palmer heading my task force in Islamabad, and by Colonel Charles H. Parsons, USAF, CINCSTRIKE Control Group, Dacca. My AID Mission, notably Director Wheeler and East Pakistan Director Griffel, have functioned superbly.

2 The United States has led all other nations in the magnitude of its relief expenditures for East Pakistan disaster relief. We had the first foreign helicopters operational. Our second delivery of helicopters was airborne in the U.S. six hours after GOEP requested additional assistance. We played second fiddle to none. As of 1800 hours Friday, November 27 U.S. Army helicopters had conducted 300 sorties and had delivered 282,000 lbs of emergency supplies into widely separated areas of disaster zone, and had conducted numerous and intensive medical surveys.

3 While operation is in high gear during next ten days maximum, I would have no hesitancy whatsoever in receiving members of the House Sub-Committee on Asian and Pacific Affairs. I am personally knowledgeable that William T. Murphy of Illinois, Lester L. Wolff of New York, William S. Broomfield of Michigan, and J. Herbert Burke of Florida are greatly interested in this area. You may care to mention this idea to the White House staff, particularly Dr. Henry Kissinger and Bryce

N. Harlow. We have nothing to apologize for or cover up. We can show positive success. I, for one, am proud of what the United States has done and is doing in this great humanitarian effort.

This suggested Congressional visit never materialized and perhaps all for the better because nothing ties up a Foreign Service post more than a CODEL (Congressional delegation). From the Ambassador's perspective, however, such a visit, coming at a time when disaster relief was moving smoothly would have been sweet vindication.

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For the remainder of his sojourn in the East Wing, Ambassador Farland was engaged on two fronts: 1) producing, with our help, assessments of (a) the cyclone's damage and the need for further assistance, (b) the efficiency of the GOP and GOEP relief effort, and (c) a summary assessment of the relief effort up to December 18; 2) a full throttle continuation of the public relations effort to bring about more realistic coverage on the part of the foreign press. Since these two activities were conducted in tandem, I am reporting them together in chronological order.

Our first overall assessment of the storm's damage was submitted on November 22, based on numerous overflights and some landings in the area:

1 There are still thousands of bodies of cattle and hundreds of bodies of people strewn on beaches and countryside. In low flying helicopter trip down fifty miles of eastern coastline of Bhola and then up the same island about two miles inland situation appalling. On landing villagers estimated up to 50 percent of certain villages wiped out. There are few wounded: those who were caught by the tidal wave are dead. Housing less damaged. A few villages wiped out but for the most part only 25 percent or so houses destroyed. Houses are already going up again. Rice crop devastated. We have taken samples — USAID agronomist estimates that damage in Bhola in two mile coastal strip almost one hundred percent: further inland from fifty to one hundred percent and elsewhere affected area Bhola from 25 to 50 percent. We will report further on this

scene in which dead and alive cattle and dead and alive humans all mixed in one area probably best described by military colonel of four years Vietnam battle experience who says it worse than anything he saw there.

2 Needs: Villagers we talked to stress need for food. Blankets, clothing and shelters less repeat less of a problem. School teacher we talked to, pointing at bodies within a few feet, said health was going to become major problem. Peasants apparently still not hungry, using reserves of rice most of which are wet but fearful, with justice, of future.

3 Relief supplies and relief efforts: Villagers we talked to spoke of only one small shipment of rice. No evidence on Bhola of Army although newspapers speak of Army repairing roads. We saw relief team from air, apparently Scandinavian Red Cross. As yet no government officials have visited.

Also on November 22 the following assessment of the organization, performance to date and capability of the Pakistan disaster relief effort was submitted:

1 GOP was simply not in position either physically or psychologically to deal with disaster of scope of East Pakistan cyclone or to handle in-flow of large-scale foreign assistance. Initial reaction was to invoke traditional relief machinery which made for slow reaction, over-modest estimates of casualties, damage and relief needs. Pak military has clearly not made major effort of which it is capable and this fact, plus surprising failure of Yahya and cabinet to display more "heart" has embittered East Pakistanis and fueled East Pak criticisms of GOP aid effort. Ironically, tremendous outpouring of foreign assistance and on spot relief efforts of U.S. and others have intensified East Pak resentment by putting West Pak concern and GOP efforts in poorer light.

2 Pak military and civilian relief operations, although slow in getting off the mark, are beginning to pick up momentum. In assessing Pak effort we should refrain from evaluating it against standard of International Red Cross or CARE or U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. In terms of their own experience, skills and resources they have been performing somewhat better than in recent past, and we must remember that unprecedented world response is putting tremendous strain on

Pak absorptive capacity. They are overwhelmed, emotionally and logistically.

4 Involvement of Yahya himself: Yahya made on-spot inspection of situation immediately upon return from China. However, he remained only one day, has not returned and has not dispatched single GOP minister to East Pakistan. This limited response on the spot stands in sharp contrast to his vigorous activity in East Pakistan in wake flood situation in late summer.

I know that Yahya has been leading cabinet discussion on disaster relief. For example, he was unable to see me November 19 because he was presiding over all-day session. He has also directed establishment of task force and assignment of key officials mentioned following paragraph.

5 Effectiveness of Inter-Ministerial Task Force, Islamabad: GOP in Islamabad making belated effort organize and coordinate foreign relief activities. MFA has working group headed by efficient Director General Naik, who has ready entree to Fon Sec. However, to our knowledge he assisted by only one director level officer on full time basis. While we have found MFA well disposed to our suggestions and believe it is attempting to cope with such political problems as unfavorable image of GOP relief efforts, it seems not well informed on current relief operations in East Pakistan. November 21 M. M. Ahmad, who now designated as GOP Relief Coordinator, convened meeting of Ambassadors and announced that Economic Coordination and External Assistance Joint Secretary Zafar Iqbal would become contact point for foreign assistance offer.

6 Apparently no effective GOP clearing house for relief info exists.

7 Involvement of Governor Ahsan: Ahsan is completely involved in relief effort, and appears to be providing competent direction. His spending several days on Manpura Island in disaster area was well received. He is personally supervising airport operations and expediting shipment of relief goods from Dacca. Despite his heavy load of coordinating relief activities he has been accessible to me at all times. He is also extremely grateful to U.S. as witness his handwritten note to me saying American response has been overwhelming in every way.

8 As far as Manpura operation is concerned, it is our understanding that this operation was short-term, designed to collect information and plan relief operations. Governor has not returned to Manpura, which makes sense since Dacca should be his command center.

9 Role and effectiveness of East Pakistan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission: Picture mixed. Relief Commissioner and staff have been putting in extremely long hours: are available to us and other foreign representatives at all times: have cut red tape in sense they are making requests for direct assistance without consulting GOP or anyone else.

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Ambassador Farland, while anxious to convert the Western, and particularly American, newsmen to more responsible (and favorable) reporting, was not necessarily eager to welcome additional media people to East Pakistan. In response to a request from the office of the Secretary of Defense to allow newsmen to accompany continuing flights of C-141s conveying relief supplies, the Ambassador told the Secretary of Defense that he had no objection if members of news media came along on the flights but pointed out that Dacca had been inundated by press, radio and TV people, not only from U.S. but from other countries, and the accommodations in Dacca to meet their specialized requirements were limited. His soft answer successfully deflected the request.

On January 22, to meet the needs for improved and better informed U.S. press accounts of the disaster relief situation, we established a press center at the U.S. helicopter base camp at Begamganj. High hopes were pinned on the following day's relief mission, which was carefully planned, and included fifteen U.S. news correspondents. The Ambassador's glowing account of the mission follows:

1 Today's mission, in which I participated, was first delivery by any nation to survivors at Char Chubia, a zone particularly hard hit by the tidal bore. U.S. newsmen were positioned in the area in advance of ground delivery and airdrop of tons of ten-pound bags of emergency supplies. Doug Kiker, heading NBC-TV crew, told me later, Qte This is the most dramatic TV film I have ever shot. Unqte. Other newsmen on the scene were Jack Sheahan heading

CBS-TV crew, Steve Bell heading ABC-TV crew, Lee Lescaze of *Washington Post,* Jack Foisie of *Los Angeles Times*, Harry Koundajian of Associated Press, Maynard Parker of *Newsweek*, Larry Burrows of *Life* and Dick Swanson of *Time*. In interview and commentary I emphasized fact that U.S. relief supplies reaching the people and will continue reaching them in increasing quantity. I reviewed U.S. emergency aid deliveries to date and deliveries expected momentarily. Again, I reported specifically on our harmonious working relationship with the GOP during the entire course of disaster relief arrangements.

2 Early this evening, after returning from base camp, I held press conference with Pakistani, U.S. and third country reporters immediately after they returned from over-flight of disaster area in the Attaché aircraft. While in the air, they saw our copters below them in an actual relief mission.

3 Last night, I was interviewed by CBS-TV for tonight's Walter Cronkite show.

4 We are increasingly optimistic that positive stories of our relief effort will be told and that negative publicity based on fallacious sources is on the wane. Please provide us with a detailed media account this coverage in the U.S. It will prove helpful in our ongoing media activities.

Negative publicity was indeed on the wane, but it was not at an end. The Ambassador's optimism was shaken by the appearance the following day of an Associated Press story, filed by an AP photographer, which alleged that at Char Chubia 1) survivors were instructed to shake hands with the Ambassador, 2) in the bedlam two Bengalis were slashed by helicopter rotor blades, and 3) the Ambassador retreated into the helicopter to escape the mob. None of these allegations was true.

What had happened was that the AP photographer had heard of an incident which occurred on Char Chubia the day after the Ambassador's visit, and had assumed the Ambassador was involved. The photographer did not check with his own bureau chief nor with any of the U.S. officials who were available. He simply put two and two together and got nine.

Our account of the November 24 Char Chubia incident read as follows:

1 At approximately 1115 hours local time small Bell helicopter from USAID/Nepal received damage to tail rotor and remains

grounded on Char Chubia (near Hatiya Island). Mishap occurred when medical observation team comprising Dr. Moseley, interpreter and pilot John Hook had landed but rotor blades were in motion. Seeing hundreds of people approaching, Pakistani official suggested helicopter be moved to less crowded area. Crowd, believing helicopter carrying relief supplies and fearing it leaving, grabbed hold of landing gear, pulling copter down and causing tail rotor to strike three men.

2 Following incident, which sheared tail rotor shaft of helicopter, occupants sent "Mayday" message to which one of Hueys responded. They were evacuated to Begamganj base and the helicopter was left under police guard on Char Chubia.

3 Most seriously inured of three Pakistanis was man struck in leg, who received deep laceration. Additional Deputy Commissioner, Noakhali, requested ConGen arrange for their evacuation. However, PAF Air Commodore Masud, to whom request relayed, advised against evacuation by U.S. We understand injured taken to local rural medical center.

4 Hope to airlift disabled helicopter to Begamganj where repair attempt will be made.

5 *Comment*: Crowd reaction was one of excitement, not repeat not of hostility. Government officials adopted "Incidents will happen" attitude and have played incident in low key. Dacca Bengali daily *Dainik Pakistan* carried brief description of accident in November 24 edition but did not mention casualties. USIS has decided to respond to press inquiries on individual basis, rather than by releasing press note. We understand Vanzi of UP has already filed story.

Ambassador Farland was furious about this canard, all the more so because *Newsweek* promptly picked up the story and ran it, giving it much wider coverage in the U.S. He embarked upon a lengthy and mostly frustrating effort to win a retraction. When the AP was unwilling to make a retraction, the Ambassador arranged a meeting with the AP Pakistan Bureau Chief, Arnold Zeitlin, and several American officials who had accompanied the press on the November 23 mission. These eye witnesses reaffirmed that there was no truth to any of the three allegations in the AP story, but Zeitlin thought that there was little chance of AP's making a retraction.

It was not until January 14, 1971 that the General Manager of the Associated Press, in a letter to the Ambassador, admitted that the AP had erred in its reference to the handshaking instructions, and had placed an erroneous interpretation on the Ambassador's return to the helicopter. (Remember, the Ambassador had been nowhere near the helicopter mishap on November 24.) In something like a public retraction the AP on February 9 released a story to its members admitting that the photographer was mistaken in his report. This story was published in the *Washington Star*, the *Chicago Tribune*, and some other newspapers.

Secretary of State Rogers addressed a personal letter to the Ambassador commending him on his performance during the disaster emergency and expressing regret over the fallacious news story. In a meeting with the Ambassador in Dacca on November 29 President Yahya said he was "greatly exercised by the absurd and irresponsible AP press dispatch which had done an injustice to the Ambassador, to the U.S. Relief effort generally and could mitigate against the work (raising money in U.S. for disaster relief) of the Murphy Committee.

The Ambassador did not find himself alone in East Pakistan as a victim of sloppy U.S. press reporting. On November 25 Governor Ahsan spoke to the Ambassador with some bitterness about a *Time* magazine story which quoted him as saying soon after November 12 that there had been only 14,000 casualties. The Governor expressed his unhappiness that *Time* had not published his clarifying letter to the editor. He even allowed as how he had given some study to libel laws in the U.S. The Ambassador said that as a fellow victim of press distortion he could readily sympathize with him.

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Newsweek did subsequently run a flattering report of a voluntary relief organization called HELP, formed by Cornelia (Candy) Rohde and Martha (Marty) Chen, wives of Drs. Jon Rohde and Lincoln Chen of the Cholera Lab. The January 4, 1971 *Newsweek* story told of the genesis of the HELP effort, which focused on a Manpura Island, and included a picture of my wife, Meg, and Marty Chen loading relief supplies on to a plane. Meg really was piggy-backing on to the story, because she had not been directly involved in HELP. Given that she was the mother of three children in college, Meg was tickled at being described by *Newsweek* as one of a trio of "attractive women in their mid-20's."

Like all the wives in the American community, Meg had spent days in packing saris, lunghis, tea, sorghum and other relief supplies in jute bags as individualized family packets for helicopter delivery to the disaster area. This effort was a component of a larger activity organized by the all-Pakistan Women's Association. I remember that Marjorie Allen, wife of the Australian Deputy High Commissioner, Jim Allen, played a key role in this endeavor.

A week later *Newsweek* printed a letter from Benjamin Oehlert, a former Ambassador to Pakistan (1967-69) praising the work of "these young American women." Oehlert was indisputably the most ferociously pro-West Pakistan of any of our ambassadors to Pakistan. He had removed a Consul General from Dacca for warning that Bengali unhappiness with West Pakistan could lead to the breakup of Pakistan, and had even forbidden any Consulate General contacts with the Awami League. Would he have been so kind in his demands if he had known that the three women mentioned would later in the year be so supportive of an independent Bangladesh?

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The Ambassador also met with Governor Ahsan and President Yahya, on November 24 and 29 respectively. I accompanied the Ambassador in his call on the Governor; the reporting cable follows:

1 Governor Ahsan asked Blood and me to stop by this morning on a technical question concerning C-141 weight loads, question which being put to MAC (Military Air Command) through military channels.

2 Governor said gears of relief operation now meshing. He said he was rapidly strengthening relief organization, drawing in qualified personnel from outside. In this connection he planned put former IG (Inspector General) Police Alamgir Kabir in charge of coordinating external assistance matters.

3 Governor said Army now definitely on move into areas in meaningful size units; relief supplies moving out of airport in more orderly manner, although its size and capacity have been complicating factor; country boats moving back to devastated area; communications and transportation system, although inadequate under best circumstances, being rehabilitated.

According to Governor, preliminary survey indicates minimum of injuries among populace, which bears out our own initial impressions. GOEP plans immediate public works projects centering on breached embankments. Governor said he had directed EPWAPDA Chairman Abbas to give this task top priority in order to boost morale of survivors by getting them back to work as quickly as possible. In this connection Governor accepted affirmatively my suggestion for works projects to include airstrips in island area.

4 During conversation Governor reiterated his appreciation for USG aid and speed of its arrival, expressing his own and his government's appreciation for my efforts and those of my staff. He also said that USG cyclone shelters have proven their effectiveness, stressing that one large shelter had saved 2,000 people. In turn, I thanked Governor for full and complete cooperation which we were getting from Paks, both military and civilian.

5 *Comment*: I was struck by way in which Governor is taking charge. Senior military officers seemed to be working under his personal direction and his office is functioning as command post for entire relief effort. For example, he chaired midnight meeting to allocate specific zones of operation for U.S., U.K., French and German helicopter forces.

By way of footnote to the above, the GOEP Chief Secretary on November 29 called, for the first time, a meeting of the heads of the foreign consular establishments in Dacca at which he read out a list of requirements for immediate relief, together with figures already received and balances still needed. I thought that further such meetings, if any in fact materialized, might serve a useful purpose of providing GOEP and ourselves with accurate figures for relief items which had actually arrived, as distinct from amounts promised. As things turned out, the Chief Secretary's initiative was not pushed with much determination. We continued to reply on our established practice of comparing notes directly with our consular colleagues and then separately checking with GOEP relief officials.

On the morning of November 29 the Ambassador had a half-hour meeting with President Yahya, during which he provided the President with an overall summary of the U.S. relief effort and our organizational structure in Dacca, Islamabad and Washington. Yahya expressed his

heartfelt appreciation for "the magnificent response" of the United States Government and its people, saying that the response was such that neither he nor the people of Pakistan would ever forget the "abundant outpouring of American generosity." Yahya said that relief supplies from all over the world were arriving in adequate quantities, and that undue additional amounts would complicate rather than expedite relief operations because of the lack of infrastructure (both material and personnel) and the minimal distribution facilities in the devastated areas. He also expressed great concern for the future of the people in these areas, which were one-crop areas. Until the next year's rice crop could be harvested, a continuing relief effort would have to be maintained. He thought the arable lands, because of the onrush of saline water, would require considerable work to rejuvenate their productivity.

Ambassador Farland told the President that while the press had indicated a great deal of dissatisfaction with the Government of Pakistan's relief effort he wanted him to know that all segments of his government had fully cooperated with him and his staff. The Ambassador particularly singled out and complimented the work of Governor Ahsan.

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On November 30 the Ambassador took AID Deputy Director Maurice Williams on a long flight over the areas devastated by the cyclone. Several of the Ambassador's observations as a result of that flight are of particular interest:

A It is now obvious that politicians and newspapers were vying with each other to exaggerate death toll. In my estimation the death toll will not greatly exceed 300,000, if indeed it reaches that number. While brutal in its magnitude it is nonetheless far short of the million and a half as had been predicted by one Bengali newspaper.

B All of my available sources, a number of whom have transited various sections of the devastated areas and conversed with the inhabitants, have concluded that few, if any, of the casualties died as a result of slowness of GOP expeditiously to move relief supplies for the disaster victims. Virtually all of the dead were killed by cyclone and tidal wave and not from starvation or exposure. I have not received one report to the contrary.

C The Pakistan disaster relief operation is now definitely moving into the early stages of rehabilitation. ConGen has begun preliminary planning on the future pullout of our military contingent though no date as yet is firm. On this subject ConGen Blood has been informed by Deputy British High Commissioner, Dacca that entire British relief team expects to depart East Pakistan by December 12.

As the emergency stage phased into the rehabilitation stage, helicopters were to be replaced by assault boats as the primary GOP request levied on the U.S. The principal transport problem was distributing relief goods from supply dumps to distribution centers which were inaccessible by land. We estimated that at least three-fourths of the disaster-affected area could be reached only by boat. In the early weeks of 1971 fifty assault boats, with engines, were airlifted from the U.S. These water craft, which did yeomen work, were to become a source of controversy between the U.S. and Pakistan before the year was out.

On December 18 the Ambassador sent this summary assessment:

1 Upon conclusion of one month of relief operation and departure of U.S. helicopters I believe summary assessment of status of Pak relief effort is indicated.

2 As we see it, first phase, that of providing emergency succor to cyclone survivors, has just ended. We are now in second phase. This phase is likely to continue for another two months before we can with reasonable degree of safety state that emergency is over. Even so, most of disaster area population will be dependent on outside food until end of 1971.

3 Principal difficulty to be faced in this current second phase is distribution. We have little doubt that the quantity of relief goods, foods, blankets, tents, now in East Pakistan or en route is adequate to the need. Problem is seeing that relief goods get to inaccessible areas in regular and continuing flow.

4 Distribution organization generally still operative. Relief efforts now officially in intermediate stage with main GOEP concentration on maintaining flow of goods to distribution center. Relief organization now being strengthened through changes and improvement of logistic support. As food distribution being taken in hand, immediate shelter has become almost as high priority as food. Major bottleneck remains

transport of goods from major supply dumps to distribution center. Difficulty results from boat destruction and bullock mortality during cyclone. GOEP has known for several days of withdrawal of foreign helicopters (except Russian) and has been concentrating on improving its conventional delivery system. Some progress made but how effective system will be without foreign helicopters remains to be seen. Initial audits of U.S. goods show they are adequately safeguarded and accounted for in central warehouse, Dacca but not specifically recorded at major supply dumps. Beyond Dacca commodity receipts not noted as to donor source. Given enormity disaster this not surprising but USAID now working with Relief Commissioner to improve record keeping.

5 On the medical side we continue to believe that there is no medical problem beyond normal anywhere in East Pakistan. Moreover, there are now significant numbers medical teams all over affected areas and, if anything, people in area are getting better medical care than elsewhere in Pakistan. GOP has issued list of medical needs and mission has been reviewing these. We are informed that another list will be coming out shortly. Thus far we believe requested items are to replenish medical stocks and are not needed on emergency basis. In any case large quantities medical supplies coming in and there is no adequate record as to what has arrived, what is coming and what still to come. Should we decide later that there are items that are badly needed and that are not being brought in otherwise, we will make recommendation for further assistance from U.S. For the moment this not needed.

6 We are reasonably sure that with exception already noted for medicines, for which we may make case later, there are no further relief requirements which we should meet from USG sources. Of various government requests still outstanding, only one for which real unmet need still exists is edible oils and we understand edible oils position in U.S. precludes USG supplying further quantities beyond those included in latest PL480 agreement. Blankets continuing to come in from all sources and Governor has suggested it wasteful bring more in from U.S. Chief Secretary has told us GOEP required no more tents. We are against bringing jeeps since much of terrain not jeepable; jeeps would not be used for purpose intended; and

maintenance would prove inseparable difficulty. In any case Japanese have now told us they are supplying ten jeeps and Netherlands has already supplied smaller number. Request for VHF equipment should be deferred until matter is studied by World Bank Team currently here. Police have equipment not currently in use. Request for timber for shipping and CI (corrugated iron) sheets will be subjects of separate messages focused on longer term rehabilitation effort.Plough cattle not suitable item for shipment from U.S. In sum, we do not believe there are any outstanding relief requests from GOP/ GOEP that have not been met that the U.S. should meet.

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Just as the emergency phase of disaster relief was winding down, so was the Ambassador's emergency effort to stem and reverse the critical coverage by American newsmen. The number of foreign journalists was declining rapidly and the tenor of their reporting was more and more objective. The Ambassador did hold one final on-the-record briefing for the press on November 29 at the Intercontinental Hotel in Dacca. Questions were fielded by the Ambassador, Eric Griffel, Dr. Moseley of the Cholera Lab, Colonel Parsons, and myself. Our purpose was to refute the claim of "too little and too late."

There would always be some Pakistani newspaper stories critical of the U.S., but such stories drew no interest in the U.S. and virtually none in Pakistan. At the end of November several Pakistani newspapers alleged that the U.S. had requested a naval base in Chittagong in return for its relief assistance. The patently ludicrous story was promptly and firmly denied by the Pakistani Ministry of Foreign Affairs. On November 26 the English language *Pakistan Observer* and the Bengali language *Ittefaq*, a paper close to the Awami League, reported an "attack" on a U.S. helicopter delivering supplies to Hatiya Island by a leftist student group. The story was clearly a distorted version of the incident of November 24 on Char Chubia involving one of the small Bell helicopters. More to the point, the story condemned the alleged attack.

Ambassador Farland knew that there were risks involved in his high profile, high intensity campaign. In a telegram to the Department he said,

> I am continuing to exercise due care not to give impression that, with USG understandable humanitarian concern and desire for efficiency, we are trying to run show.

The Ambassador's highly visible movements about East Pakistan drew some snide comments from nationals of other donor countries. In his typically waspish way the earlier quoted David Loshak, a British journalist, wrote

> The United States Ambassador, Mr. Joseph S. Farland, turned the American effort into an egregious personal public relations exercise in which he was frequently photographed by the U.S. Information Services in various absurd and contrived glad-handing situations.

But then even the Pope drew Loshak's scorn:

> Even the Catholic Church got mileage out of the disaster. On his way to Manila on November 28, Pope Paul made a technically unnecessary touchdown at Dacca so that he could hand over a check for $10,000 to President Yahya ... the publicity for the Vatican was cheap at the price.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE CYCLONE AND THE ELECTIONS

Our estimate of the cyclone's final death toll remained at 300,000, the figure used by Ambassador Farland in his November 30 telegram. We estimated that the pre-storm population of the cyclone-affected area was three million, which would mean that approximately ten percent of the people there drowned on the night of November 12-13, two thirds of whom were women and children. We had thought at the time that we were faced with the most severe storm in the history of the area. In 1999, however, I discovered in the archives a reference to a cyclone and tidal wave which in 1876 struck exactly the same area and on exactly the same date, Friday, the 13th of November. Its death toll was estimated at 400,000. In those days the area was known as East Bengal and was under British rule.

In assessing the political impact of the cyclone it is well to remember that slightly less than five percent of the East Pakistan population were directly affected by the disaster, which was confined to the coastal fringes and the off-shore islands. The rest of the people gained their impressions of the destruction and loss of life, and the relief effort, from the local newspapers, primarily those in the Bengali language, and, in the case of those living in Dacca and south of Dacca, from their own observations of activity or inactivity.

There was much that was easily observable. The sky over Dacca and southern East Pakistan was full of unprecedented numbers of helicopters and cargo planes coming from all over the world. The airports at Dacca and Chittagong were operating at maximum capacity. Men in strange foreign military uniforms were a common sight in Dacca and around the

base camps set up near the disaster area to accommodate the various helicopter contingents. And a host of foreign newsmen and TV crews made their presence noisily and demandingly known. Inactivity could be just as noticeable particularly if one lived near a military cantonment. The press began to comment on the sight of bored soldiers weeding flower plots on their bases or the absence of any unusual vehicular movement from Army installations.

* * * * *

On November 21 we struck a warning note in this telegram:

1 Although it is still too early to assess full political impact of November 12-13 cyclone and tidal wave disaster and subsequent relief efforts, several themes are developing. One is nascent debate of possible postponement of date of elections, at least in affected localities. Second theme, articulated both in press, especially by *Pak Observer*, and in private, is alleged inadequacy of government relief effort.

2 Although local government officials in East Pakistan are targets for considerable criticism for alleged failure to fully alert populace to danger in advance of cyclone, underestimation of magnitude of disaster, and most other forms of bungling, potentially explosive issue is charge that GOP and primarily West Pak-based military have abdicated responsibilities for providing assistance to the suffering. East Pakistanis in private have expressed dismay for inexplicable (as they see it) absence of visible contributions by primarily West Pak-based military to relief effort, sole exception being locally-based Army helicopter and PAF C-134 transport which have been pressed into relief operations. Where, they ask, are the helicopters which are based in West Pakistan? Why, when foreign nations are so visibly helping out, is no major assistance apparently forthcoming from their brethren in West Pakistan?

3 Although National Assembly elections are only seventeen days hence, debate over question of possible polls postponement has just begun. Some people, including leaders of EPNAP (L) (Bhashani's party), EPNAP (R) (the Soviet-leaning wing of the National Awami Party), and PNL (Ataur Rahman Khan's party) have called for indefinite postponement, although office of Chief Election Commissioner Sattar has announced that elections will be held as scheduled and that postponement in immediately affected areas alone is under consideration. Political parties have responded to disaster in generally predictable fashion, urging speedy government relief efforts and establishing their own relief programs. Powerful Awami League has been in forefront, establishing central relief control room at its headquarters supplemented by Dacca University relief center sponsored by its student affiliate, EPSL. AL Chief Sheik Mujibur Rahman currently is in affected areas personally supervising his party's relief efforts. NAP (L) President Maulana Bhashani also is on scene, and has appealed to both President Nixon and Chairman Mao for helicopters and other relief assistance.

4 *Comment*: Possibility that alleged deficiencies of GOP in responding to disaster may rekindle acute sense of neglect on part of East Pakistanis is particularly disquieting. At present actual extent of disaster is far from clear and many complaints that have been voiced have been made by people sitting in Dacca far removed from stricken area. Furthermore, obvious fact of political life in East Pakistan is inbred general tendency to disparage all government authorities and to discredit West Paks in particular. Hopefully, with relief supplies now on hand, others in pipeline, and with currently enhanced means of delivery, criticism of government relief efforts will be blunted. Fact remains that regardless of whether or not it is warranted, there appears to be growing undercurrent of dissatisfaction with central government's role in relief efforts. In light of Election Commission's reaffirmation re election date, at the moment an overall election postponement seems highly unlikely, although postponement of polling dates in immediately affected localities is less remote possibility.

Criticism of the Government of Pakistan's relief efforts was not blunted. Instead, it rapidly intensified.

On November 23, according to our local employees who attended Maulana Bhashani's protest rally, the venerable leftist firebrand castigated the Government of Pakistan for its failure to meet disaster relief needs. Bhashani denigrated President Yahya's performance and

called for his resignation. Yahya, said Bhashani, should join other ex-military men as former Air Marshals Asghar Khan and Nur Khan in retirement. Yahya was a good soldier but a poor administrator, Bhashani claimed. By Dacca standards Bhashani's audience was of moderate size and unenthusiastic. As usual, Bhashani's grandstanding utterances drew no response, but what was significant was that he sensed that public unhappiness over the West Pakistani response was strong enough to warrant a call for Yahya's resignation.

The East Pakistan press became even more strident in its criticism. One of the most outspoken was the leftist English language Sunday paper *Holiday* which denounced "the total participation of the central government." It charged Yahya with failing to meet his obligation to the country, and flatly declared that Yahya's regime had failed the East Wing.

Far more important and memorable was Mujib's jam-packed Dacca press conference on November 26. Mujib, who had just returned from a nine-day tour of the cyclone affected areas, read from a prepared text in English, obviously for the benefit of the scores of foreign journalists who were present. He dwelt at length on what he termed the "criminal negligence" of the government in failing to respond effectively to the disaster, citing "failures and bottlenecks" which prevented relief from reaching the people. He declared that "the people of Bangladesh (not East Pakistan) will be eternally indebted to those countries who have so generously come to their rescue in their hour of need." He said that "the generous assistance received from abroad only underlines the tardiness and callousness of our own rulers." He also castigated West Pakistani politicians who preached the integration of the two wings but who failed to visit East Pakistan to "extend sympathy and succor to the survivors."

Waxing ever more eloquent (and extreme), the Sheikh went on to say,

> They (the West Pakistani leaders) are guilty of almost cold-blooded murder. They deserve the most severe punishment. If I had the power I would bring those responsible to trial. The textile millionaires have not given a yard of cloth for our shrouds. They have a huge army, but it is left to British marines to bury our dead.

Mujib strongly warned against "any frustration" of the polling scheduled for December 7. If the elections were postponed once more

there would be civil war, he said. Warning that East Pakistan would break away from the union with West Pakistan, Mujib proclaimed, "East Pakistan will owe it to the million who have died to make the sacrifice of another million, if need be, so that we can live as a free people."

This was strong stuff. Yahya hastened back to East Pakistan to try to stem the angry militant mood expressed by Mujib. On November 24, when the Ambassador and I were seeing Governor Ahsan on disaster relief matters, we were told that on the previous night in a meeting with Chief Election Commissioner Sattar it had been decided to postpone elections only in nine or ten of the most seriously affected constituencies in the disaster area.

On November 27, at a crowded press conference at Government House, Dacca President Yahya reaffirmed that the elections would be held as scheduled except in the cyclone-affected constituencies.

1. Yahya stated that "I have no doubt in my mind that elections would be held on December 7." Actual timing of elections in cyclone-stricken areas would be decided by Election Commission, President added, noting that elections in these areas would be like by-elections and that National Assembly would not sit until elections in all constituencies were completed. (Election Commission announced same night that elections would be postponed in nine National Assembly and eighteen Provincial Assembly constituencies.)
2. Responding to numerous pointed questions on topics of separatism, provincial autonomy, constitution-framing and martial law, Yahya stated that if draft constitution tends toward separatism it would be rejected and martial law would continue. Yahya said that it was his obligation "to see that proposed constitution assured integrity, safety and security of country," and that "all those who are participating in elections have accepted Legal Framework Order. If they reject LFO after the elections, I will treat it as if they have not participated in elections and martial law continues in that case." He soft-pedaled question of East Pak secession, citing argument often made by Awami League President Sheikh Mujibur Rahman of "How can the majority secede from the minority?" Yahya went on to contend that unlike previous leaders of Pakistan he was fully aware of geographic realities and felt therefore that East Pakistan must have maximum provincial autonomy so that East Pakistan could have "full charge of their destiny, planning and utilization of its (province's) resources"

within "concept of Pakistan."East Pakistanis could run their own affairs within framework of constitution, he added, commenting that he did not believe in so-called "strong center" but believed that all federating units should be given maximum autonomy to decide own affairs. Yahya declared that he wanted to hand over power as soon as possible to representative government, since "I am a soldier and want to return to the barracks." (According to *Pakistan Observer* account, he added in emotion-choked voice, "I know you do not like me.")

3 On miscellaneous other topics, according to local press accounts, Yahya responded as follows: (A) Re aid from India —"I am grateful to Government of India for their offer. Our relation with India is not good on many accounts. We have to accept assistance which suits us," (b) Re local criticism of Government relief efforts, in particular allegations of "criminal negligence" made by Sheikh Mujib — "People of East Pakistan were emotionally hurt because of disaster, which is only normal." In response to another question re AL criticism, he replied "I hope they come to power and do better. I have tried to do my maximum," (c) Re foreign press criticism — Yahya expressed gratitude to foreign press for focusing attention of world on the calamity, but cited "fantastic stories" that had appeared, exclaiming "why cash in on human miseries for sensationalism." Yahya also told reporters that he felt that Pakistan had responded to huge disaster as well as any underdeveloped country could be expected. He defended his administration, saying he had done his best, but pointing out that democratic order would soon be restored and representative government could more effectively administer country.

Two days after Yahya's press conference we submitted the following comments on those of Yahya's remarks which dealt with the elections and post-election matters:

1 Yahya's promise to hold elections on schedule and espousal of maximum autonomy for East Pakistan because of geographic reality defused for time being a very explosive situation. Sheikh Mujib in press conference previous day expressed in fiery terms Bengali bitterness over Government's tardy relief efforts and warned against election postponement. Yahya apparently heeded this notice and chose to calm situation by assuaging (and almost endorsing) Awami League on both elections and autonomy, if not efficacy of Government relief efforts.

2 At same time, Yahya kept his escape hatches open by reaffirming that LFO (and martial law) would remain in force as basis for political life until constitution accepted and by reiterating his "obligation" to assure that constitution preserved "integrity" of Pakistan. He was particularly tough on this point and his remarks have already provided excuse for Ataur Rahman Khan (perhaps welcome in view their weakness) to announce withdrawal his party (Pakistan National League with 115 National Assembly and 49 Provincial Assembly candidates) from election.

3 Nostalgic announcement that he desired only to return to barracks after turning over power to elected government may have been intended to quiet rumors that he has political ambitions for the future.

While succeeding in defaming the election postponement issue, Yahya was less successful in combating criticism of the role played to date by the Government of Pakistan and the Pakistani Army. He admitted that mistakes had been made. "My government is not a government of angels. Nothing is ideal. Our efforts have not been ideal. But we have done our damnedest. They were the best, the most that could be done." In reply to Mujib's complaint that he had stayed away from East Pakistan, the President said it was his job to organize and supervise and the best place to do that was the seat of government. In essence Yahya kept his temper and either shrugged off or dismissed the criticism of his government's relief efforts.

* * * * *

My staff and I were completely puzzled by the Center's initial display of indifference to the disaster in East Pakistan. We counted off some possible explanations: fear of overreacting as had been the case in the August floods; concern over using the military in the last stage of the election campaign, when the GOP had leaned over backward to avoid any suggestion of interference in the elections; Yahya's befuddled state on the occasion of his first visit immediately after the disaster struck, and his possible underestimation of the cyclone's destruction. But

none of these explanations seemed valid when weighed against other considerations.

The Pakistani government was not at the time preoccupied with any important issue, foreign or domestic. If Yahya wanted to keep Pakistan together, the East Pakistan natural disaster, which could hardly be blamed on "those infernal Bengalis" offered him a splendid opportunity to promote the nation's solidarity by a prompt and huge outpouring of help and sympathy from West Pakistan. The Army was the only organization with the discipline, skills and resources capable of a speedy and efficient effort. (In the much smaller disaster of 1960, the Army had played an important role from the very beginning).

Why did not Yahya respond differently? In hindsight I believe the underlying reason was that the rift between the two wings had grown so great that any display of real empathy between West and East Pakistan was no longer a possibility. For years the Bengalis had complained of being treated as a colony to be exploited for the benefit of West Pakistan, while West Pakistanis spoke disparagingly of the Bengalis as a bunch of whiners, not even good Muslims, who blamed all their ills on West Pakistan. In this connection Ambassador Hilaly was speaking like a true West Pakistani when he said to me after the elections, "The GOEP with the exception of Governor Ahsan is composed entirely of Bengalis and should have moved ahead immediately with relief work. Instead, it waited for the West Pakistanis to act and at the same time criticized them for not helping enough."

* * * * *

It has been said that the cyclone of November 1970 was an ill wind that blew nobody any good. That is not quite true. There was one beneficiary, which was able to turn the disaster and the relief operation to immediate advantage — the Awami League.

The Awami League electoral campaign was based squarely on the Six Points, and the rationale for the Six Points was that West Pakistan's long record of exploitation of and indifference to East Pakistan could only be set right through autonomy for the East Wing. The perceived inadequacy of the West Pakistani response to the cyclone provided ready ammunition for the Awami League's program, and just as the electoral campaign was entering its final stages. It was easy, indeed natural, for Mujib and his followers to exploit this perception to the hilt.

It could be argued that the Awami League would have won a resounding victory at the polls regardless of whether the Government of Pakistan's disaster relief record had been superb, so-so, or downright bad. True, but I doubt the Awami League's margin of victory would have been as great as it was, had not the Awami League been able to exploit the widely shared view in East Pakistan that the Center had once more clearly demonstrated its disregard for the East's needs.

To me the real tragedy of the inadequate West Pakistan response was that Yahya had been offered a golden opportunity to bring the two wings closer in the mutual enterprise of disaster relief but had muffed the chance.

There is one final political consequence of the disaster relief episode that merits notice. Bengalis, including Mujib, were greatly impressed by the world's reaction to the dreadful cyclone. Suddenly, East Pakistan had captured the world's attention. It was flattering to receive one foreign correspondent after another and to attract well-known names to your press conferences. But it could also be misleading. The outside interest in East Pakistan was entirely humanitarian and not at all political. As events moved rapidly toward a bloody crisis the following year, it would be deceptive for Bengalis to hope that the humanitarian concern, ephemeral at best, might be broadened to include a supportive interest in the political outcome.

CHAPTER EIGHT

AN ELECTION ALL TOO CONCLUSIVE

I have always found elections exciting. Perhaps it is the drama of an unknown result. Perhaps it is the feeling that the election results are going to bring about significant changes. Anyhow, I always vote in domestic elections, sometimes agonize over the outcome and follow foreign elections with keen interest. By way of contrast I have a relative by marriage, almost fifty years of age, who proudly announces that he has never in his life cast a ballot and never will. Given the generally low turnout in American elections, my relative probably has a lot of company. Yet even an election "junkie" like myself was astounded by the widespread excitement generated by the 1970 elections in East Pakistan.

Admittedly, the elections were the first to be conducted on the basis of universal adult suffrage in Pakistan, and they stood fair to being about a restoration of civilian rule after years of military government. But there was something else, something I thought I discerned in a comment by the earlier quoted Bengali political historian, Kazi Ahmed Kamal. He wrote:

> An East Pakistani does not expect much from his life. He does not know beyond his land, flood and storm — and poverty. To him death is normal, survival is odd. So long as he lives he wants a little rice and fish, a little of conjugal life and an unhurried death.
>
> The only exhilarating moment of his life was during an election in the time of parliamentary democracy when the candidates came to him, pampered his self-respect and promised to form a government with his consent. Otherwise he remains a miserable specimen of humanity — unhappy, pitiful and crushed.

That little self-respect which hallowed his being had been snatched away by Ayub and he was told day after day, year after year for the last eleven years that he does not know what is good for him and he does not know how to vote and elect a representative.

* * * * *

The 1970 elections in Pakistan involved another first, over and above the facts that these were the first nationwide elections on the basis of universal adult suffrage, the first in which all women could vote, and the first on a one-person, one-vote basis. It was also the first time, not only in Pakistan but in the Indian sub-continent, that leaders of political parties were invited to present their party programs to the electorate over television and radio. The broadcasts were prerecorded in any two of three languages — English, Urdu, or Bengali. All statements were prerecorded before any was put on the air so that the later speakers would not have the advantage of being able to rebut statements by party chiefs who had spoken earlier. Broadcasts were scheduled from October 28 through November 20 on weekdays only.

Fifteen party leaders received invitations. Five of them were from East Pakistan: Sheik Mujibur Rahman for the Awami League; Maulana Bhashani for the National Awami Party; A. S. M. Sulaiman for the Krishak Sramik Party; Nurul Amin for the Pakistan Democratic Party; Ataur Rahman Khan for the Pakistan National League. The other ten parties drew their support principally from West Pakistan. Three were Islamic parties with almost indistinguishable names; three were parties still using the name Muslim League and distinguishable by the names of their leaders, Fazlul Quader Chaudhry, Mian Mumtaz Mohammed Daultana, and Khan Abdul Qaiyum, and there were also the Pakistan People's Party of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the Sind United Front led by G. M. Syed, the Tehrik-i-Istiqlal of Air Marshal (retired), Asghar Khan, and the National Awami Party of Khan Abdul Wali, strong only in the Northwest Frontier Province.

The order of speaking was alphabetical, based on party nomenclature in English. Thus, Sheikh Mujib, speaking for the Awami League, started the process. The Embassy's report of his speech read as follows:

Awami League leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman led off a series of 15 election speeches by political party leaders on TV and radio October

28. In a half-hour address, the East Pakistan leader reiterated his catalogue of Bengali grievances and called for their remedy through the adoption of the Awami League's Six Points. Mujib also called for a "social revolution" to eliminate the inequalities and injustices of Pakistan society. In brief remarks on foreign policy, Mujib urged the withdrawal of Pakistan from CENTO and SEATO and the pursuit of a "truly independent non-aligned foreign policy." He said the normalization of relations with "neighboring countries" was in Pakistan's interest.

In discussing economic reforms, Mujib called for nationalization of banking and insurance and of the cotton and jute trade as well as the elimination of monopolies and cartels. He also urged the elimination of various landholding systems in West Pakistan and the imposition of ceilings on land holdings. Referring obliquely to Martial Law, Mujib said that the military should not carry the burden of civil administration or involve itself in politics. The Armed Forces should be left "free to devote themselves exclusively to the vital task of defending the nation's frontier," Mujib stated.

Comment: The Awami League leader's speech was essentially similar in overall thrust to the themes he has been emphasizing during the campaign. As such, it no doubt sounded a responsive chord in East Pakistan, but, by contrast, left West Pakistani listeners cold.

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Throughout the election campaign the Embassy had been submitting by airgrams a weekly status report, drawing together the contributions from the constituent posts, Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar and Dacca. The following extract on East Pakistan was contained in one such airgram toward the end of the electoral campaign:

All signs indicate the Awami League steam roller is not only maintaining its momentum but perhaps is actually accelerating. Badly divided opposition parties appear increasingly demoralized and in some cases financially desperate in the face of the AL onslaught. Although imponderables remain, such as the question of rural voting behavior, the impact of ideology versus appeals of individual personalities, etc., the information Congen Dacca has

received suggests that Sheikh Mujib and his Six Point regionalist program is as popular in the countryside as it is in Dacca, and that Mujib is effectively transferring his luster to his fellow partymen.

Whereas the AL is in perpetual motion to enhance its already predominant position, other parties are single-mindedly attempting to derail AL bandwagon. Although all agree on a "get the AL" theme, failure to adjust slates of candidates has enfeebled the conservative and "Islam Pasand" parties, while leftist parties such as the NAPs have fielded so few candidates that they constitute a relatively minor threat to the AL. In an increasingly desperate search for a noose with which to hang the AL, the opposition has variously branded Mujib as an "Indian agent," recipient of U.S. funds, or both. The AL tactic, in turn, has been blithely to ignore such allegations.

The possibility that "locally prominent men" running on the Muslim League tickets might perform well now seems less real. The finalization of nominations shows the Leagues running many candidates against each other or other conservative nominees. Independents still constitute a largely unknown factor and more prominent individuals may fare well, but in general, the lack of party affiliation would appear to be a handicap.

The despondency of the smaller parties in East Pakistan was further demonstrated in the last week of the campaign when, according to our calculations, 36 candidates from minor parties withdrew from the race. Those who gave up offered the specious and belated excuse that it was improper to hold elections to soon after the cyclone disaster. A more honest reason would be their pessimistic assessment of their chances against the Awami League tidal wave. After all, elections in those constituencies most affected by the cyclone had already been postponed.

* * * * *

Foreign Service Officers involved in political reporting spend a substantial part of their careers in covering elections. In developing countries, such as those of South Asia, election coverage presents some formidable problems. There are no polls to serve as indicators of public opinion. More importantly, the populations are huge in size and the majority of the people are located in villages where the reporting officers

have no established contacts. The local press is a help but, in the main, foreigners have to rely on their judgment of the trustworthiness and objectivity of their own contacts in the press, the academic and business communities, and in local government. Less subjective factors, of course, also come into play, such as the number of candidates fielded by each party, the parties' organizational efficiency, their finances, the clarity of their programs and their reference to known widespread grievances and concerns.

In my personal opinion the track record of our coverage of elections in South Asia leaves something to be desired. While we have rarely completely missed the boat in predicting election outcomes, we have often seriously underestimated the extent of swings in nationwide voting. I attribute this deficiency primarily to an innate Service caution and a tendency to hedge, which at least partially springs from an honest recognition that there are important "imponderable variables," such as rural voting behavior, which we are ill-equipped to analyze on a vast scale.

Our predictions of the outcome of the December 7 National Assembly elections in East Pakistan were never challenged by the Embassy, some of whose own political officers came over to join with our officers in touring the province, nor by the Department. But a challenge came from an unexpected source. Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States, Agha Hilaly, came to the East Wing at the end of November to see for himself the extent and effectiveness of the cyclone relief effort. I invited him for drinks with key members of the staff in Dacca. After a discussion of the relief effort the Ambassador asked how we thought the elections would turn out in East Pakistan. To a man we replied that all indications were that the Awami League would win a sweeping victory.

Hilaly, who was known for his tendency to get excited, especially if irritated, asked me, "Are you a Muslim?" I replied that I was not. "Do you know how Muslims think?" Again, I replied that I did not. "Do you think the Muslim villagers will listen to the students that the Awami League sends to them to win their votes? No, they will listen to their mullahs who will advise them differently." I later learned that Hilaly, upon his return to Washington, had complained at the Department that my staff and I had been "brainwashed" by the Awami League.

Presumably, Ambassador Hilaly had asked for some briefing on the elections from West Pakistan government sources. Were they as far out

of touch with reality as he was? Or was it just a matter of his being old-fashioned and conservative in his thinking? I speculated to myself whether Yahya and his military friends would allow the elections to take place if they shared our expectation of a sweeping Awami League victory, and finally decided that Yahya was so committed to fair and free elections that he would not abort them for fear of an unwanted outcome, i.e. one party rule in East Pakistan.

As befits any red-blooded American, we organized a pool on the election results. For a contribution of ten rupees any officer at any of the posts in Pakistan could guess the percentage of National Assembly seats from East Pakistan won by the Awami League and the percentage of National Assembly seats from West Pakistan won by Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party. As I recall, our Consulate General guesses ranged from a low of 70% to a high of 90%. My own guess was 85%. The winner turned out to be a woman officer from Islamabad, who submitted an estimate of 95%. Interestingly enough, the person who came the closest to guessing the number of seats won by Bhutto in the West Wing was one of our officers in Dacca. Perhaps proximity does not make for accuracy.

Just a couple of days before the election, but unfortunately after our pool guesses had been submitted, I saw Mujib and found him supremely confident of the outcome. The Awami League, he said matter of factly, would win all but two seats in East Pakistan. Nurul Amin, leader of the Pakistan Democratic Party, would win in his home constituency, and the second seat would be won by a Chakma chief running as an independent in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. I reported Mujib's words but expressed doubt that his victory would be so sweeping.

* * * * *

On election day, December 7, the voting went peacefully. The polling places were well guarded by soldiers and police, and there was no intimidation of voters, either by the security forces or by any of the political parties. Everyone agreed that the polling was fair and free. Of the 56 million on the electoral rolls throughout Pakistan, 57.7% voted. Women, who were allowed to vote for the first time, turned out in large numbers.

In East Pakistan the Awami League did win, as Mujib had prophesied 151 out of the 153 seats contested, losing only the two he had foreseen. When the elections in the cyclone-affected constituencies were

held on January 17, Awami League candidates won all nine National Assembly seats and seventeen of the eighteen Provincial Assembly seats. One Provincial Assembly seat on Hatiya Island went to an independent candidate. Awami League candidates won all three Provincial Assembly seats where elections had been postponed due to deaths of candidates.

Thus, the Awami League secured the amazing total of 160 National Assembly seats and 288 Provincial Assembly seats out of 162 and 300 respectively. The other parties won only one National Assembly seat and five Provincial Assembly seats. Independents won one National Assembly seat and seven Provincial Assembly seats.

In West Pakistan Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party won 81 out of the 138 seats. The collection of other parties, all associated with the Ayub or pre-Ayub period, were decisively spurned by the voters of West Pakistan.

The Awami League had contested seven seats in West Pakistan but lost them all. Bhutto's party did not try for a single seat in East Pakistan.

When the seven seats specifically reserved for women from East Pakistan were filled through designation by the Awami League leadership, Mujib would command 167 out of the 313 (six seats were reserved for women from West Pakistan) total seats in the National Assembly. He would have an absolute majority, and indeed twice as many seats as the next largest party, Bhutto's PPP.

Three days after the election Ambassador Farland sent the following instruction:

> For Principal Officers from Ambassador
>
> Subject: Election Reactions
>
> 1 If you have not already done so, please ensure that all of your American employees are enjoined against making "value judgement" comments, to Pakistanis or third country nationals who might cite us, on election outcome.
>
> 2 Specifically, we must take care to avoid any indication of USG dismay because of Bhutto's success, or of official gratification because of Mujib's.

Actually, I had not issued such a warning prior to the receipt of the Ambassador's telegram because at the Consulate General in Dacca we were starting to come to grips with the troublesome implications of Mujib's tremendous victory. We tried our hand at an initial assessment one day later, December 11:

1 How the Sheikh will shape up as leader of Pakistan or whether indeed a constitution acceptable to both wings and the MLA permitting him to become leader will emerge, is matter for much speculation and future reporting efforts. Certainly overcoming the first hurdle, i.e. constitution-making will be different. Mujib's entire campaign had basically one thrust: anti-West Pakistan. With his primary claim to fame as champion of Bengal, he has little to offer West Pakistan. Even if he were inclined to compromise Bengali demands, he would lose stature in Bengal and leave himself open to attack from the more militant (at times separatist) elements of his own party. One of Mujib's more oft quoted refrains to effect that East Pakistan is part of Southeast Asia and not the Middle East raises question as to whether accommodation between the two wings, now with their duly elected leaders, is possible from Mujib's standpoint, even desirable.

2 In conclusion, Mujib will remain very much a prisoner of his Six Points and "Bangla Desh." Somehow it is hard to imagine Mujib ruling in Islamabad out of touch and not fortified by his Bengali masses. If he finds himself frustrated in the role of Prime Minister of a United Pakistan, Mujib has a fall-back position which must seem even more feasible to him after December 7, 1970, to seek to strike out on his own as leader of an independent East Pakistan.

We were not alone in beginning to think of independence as a possible outcome of the predicament into which Pakistan had been thrust as a result of the sweeping electoral victories of Mujib and Bhutto. On December 9, Maulana Bhashani held a press conference in Dacca at which he urged President Yahya to hold a referendum on his (Bhashani's) demand for an independent East Pakistan. Bhashani's call was ignored by Yahya, Mujib and almost everybody else, and seen as a desperate attempt by the aged and politically impotent *Maulana* to recapture the public attention stolen from him by Sheikh Mujib and the triumphant Awami League.

* * * * *

In searching through the recently declassified documents pertaining to the period I was surprised to find that the first visit to Mujib to congratulate him on his election victory did not occur until December 30,

when Bob Carle and I called on Mujib. I know that the Ambassador was in East Pakistan in the interim because he and I saw Governor Ahsan on December 17. I can only surmise that we were "playing it cool" to avoid any appearance of great satisfaction.

The Ambassador's meeting with Governor Ahsan dealt primarily with disaster relief operations, but at the end Ahsan told us that the MLA finds itself in a difficult position after the elections, since the MLA itself (read Yahya) is lacking in popular support and faced by two politicians who obviously have a broad mandate for change from the Pakistani people. The Governor said he had been urging Yahya to suggest to Mujib and Bhutto that they form an interim government, even before the constitution had been agreed upon. By working together in an interim government Mujib and Bhutto would have a better chance of achieving agreement on a constitution.

1 DPO Carle and I called on Sheikh Mujib morning of December 30 to extend our congratulations and those of Embassy and Ambassador on election victory, as well as our best wishes for success in coping with problems ahead. I explained that Ambassador presently in U.S., but upon return would no doubt wish to call on Sheikh to convey his best wishes.

2 Sheikh was very much "in catbird seat," exuding composite aura of confidence in his star, hard-nosed determination to brook no obstructions to his program, charm and friendliness, and residual suspicion of MLA and West Pakistan "vested interests."

3 Sheikh emphasized that AL with mandate of people behind it was now more determined than ever to push through its program. He warned that any attempt to delay or thwart wishes of the people would be resisted to bloody end. He spoke heatedly of twenty-three years of colonial exploitation and said no power can prevent his party from putting an end to this. The Sheikh was particularly bitter over economic exploitation of Bengal and mismanagement of its resources. He observed that normal trade with India was vital and that joint Indo-Pak approach on flood control was not only necessary but feasible. He cited example of Indus Water Settlement which took place despite existence of Kashmir problem.

4 Turning to current political scene Mujib observed that National Assembly could meet in late January or early February. He

stipulated that it must meet in Dacca. He predicted that constitution which would call for a parliamentary form of government, more or less on British lines, would be framed in less than one month. In response to our query, the Sheikh said he would definitely seek the cooperation of other political groups in constitution-making as long as they were willing to work within framework of the Six Points. He added that if such cooperation were not forthcoming, majority (i.e. AL) would proceed to pass its own constitution which was already drafted.

5 Mujib was not specific about AL constitution except to say president would have no more power than President of India and that AL draft called for continuation of institution of provincial governors, to be nominated by Prime Minister and exercising only ceremonial functions.

6 Queried about press reports that West Pakistan leader Bhutto planned visit, Sheikh replied, "Of course, what else can he do?" He added that Bhutto would be most welcome, as would any other political leader.

7 Throughout conversation, Mujib reiterated his determination to carry out mandate which he believes has been conferred upon him. He warned that frustration of AL program would lead rather quickly to communism in East Bengal. He repeatedly denounced neglect by West Pakistan and cited cyclone disaster as case in point, claiming that "my people in disaster area" would have starved had not friendly foreign countries come immediately to their aid. He also observed that counsel of friendly foreign countries (by implication U.S. included) had encouraged GOP to carry through with elections. Mujib also waxed somewhat lyrical about his earlier visit to U.S., his love of San Francisco, his warm friendship with Burton Marshall, and generally his warm feelings for U.S.

8 The Sheikh observed that future foreign aid relations would be different. He claimed that in the past less than 20 percent of all foreign aid ever reached East Pakistan. Henceforth, he said, dealing on economic aid matters will be carried out directly between Dacca and Washington without any intermediary. Mujib also said he would set up a separate planning board for East Pakistan. He noted in passing that Dave Gordon of World Bank had called on him earlier

that day and Sheikh had advised Gordon to have Mr. McNamara pass through East Pakistan sometime in March when presumably government will be organized.

9 Mujib introduced to us newly elected MNA Syed Nazrul Islam of Mymensingh, AL Vice-President, whom he said was his chief lieutenant and had presided over AL during Sheikh's most recent jail term. (Comment: we still believe that the Sheikh has no deputy in a real sense, and that his flattering treatment of Islam in our presence was for the latter's benefit. Nevertheless, Islam will probably figure prominently in any AL government).

10 Sheikh told us that AL rally scheduled for January 3 on Dacca race grounds, in addition to an oath-taking ceremony for newly elected MNA's and MPA's, would be occasion for formal AL policy statements on economic and political matters. He noted that since the election he, unlike Bhutto, has made no official statements on policy matters and that it would be appropriate to do so now.

By way of explanation, Charles Burton Marshall was an academic member of the U.S. foreign policy establishment. He was well known in Pakistan, having served as advisor to the Prime Minister of Pakistan in 1955-57. Mujib may have met Marshall in Pakistan and/or during his visit to the States on a leader grant. I do not know whether Mujib had maintained contact with Marshall over the years.

Mujib's warning that the frustration of the Awami League program would lead to communism in East Pakistan did not frighten us. We had been told by many conservative and moderate political leaders that the alternative to them was communism. Despite its fuzzy socialist platform and rhetoric the Awami League was essentially a moderate, middle class party. If the Awami League should find itself unable to carry out the Six Point Program, there probably would be a serious "frustration with Yahya's MLA administration, and a resultant period of chaos, but leftist elements seemed too fragmented and weak to be able to take effective advantage of any Awami League difficulties.

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Some elections can be too conclusive for the polity they are designed to serve. The December 7 elections had produced one dominant party in

each wing of Pakistan, each with no strength at all in the other wing and each committed to a program of change. The two party leaders, Bhutto and Mujib, were proud men, both convinced that their mandate from the voters lessened their ability to compromise, even if they wanted to do so. How could they be expected to cooperate, first in the drafting of a constitution, then within a parliamentary government?

Yahya was already referring to Mujib as the next Prime Minister of Pakistan. What would be left for Bhutto? Foreign Minister in a Mujib government, when Mujib wanted to normalize relations with India and Bhutto talked of a thousand year war with India? Bhutto as leader of the opposition in the National Assembly? Mujib wanted maximum autonomy for East Pakistan, which necessarily meant a weak central government. Bhutto wanted a strong central government, if only to match India.

If the elections had been less conclusive, with no one party winning a majority in either wing, the possibility of compromise and for maneuvering by Yahya in an intermediary role would have been created. As it was, each of the three main figures seemed locked into a rigid position: Yahya by his insistence on sticking to the letter of the Legal Framework Order, Mujib by insisting on implementation of his Six Points, and Bhutto, although to a somewhat lesser degree, by the constraints of his personality, particularly his unwillingness to play second fiddle to anyone, whether it be Mujib or Yahya or the Army.

CHAPTER NINE

POST-ELECTION MANEUVERS

The first statements made after the elections by the leaders of the two dominant parties echoed ominously. Mujib was insisting on unconditional acceptance of his Six Points and refused to leave Dacca and go to West Pakistan for talks with Bhutto. For his part, Bhutto declared that there could be no compromise in the unity, solidarity and integrity of Pakistan, which was a not very oblique challenge to the Six Points, although he did add that he would do all he could to help write a constitution and was willing to make compromises "here and there."

On December 22 Tajuddin Ahmed, the toughest of Mujib's lieutenants, said that the Awami League, having won an absolute majority in the National Assembly, had a clear mandate, and the ability to frame a constitution and form a central government on its own. Mujib had said pretty much the same thing to me in private, but that was far different from a public proclamation. Bhutto's riposte came a week later when at a press conference he said the making of the constitution demanded consensus. While admitting the possibility of a one-party government, Bhutto threatened "If the Awami league insists on making a constitution to its own liking, we will step aside and the People's Party will not be responsible for the consequences."

The optimists among us tried to assure ourselves that these opening shots represented a staking out of maximum bargaining positions — positions which would have to be modified in the course of further reflection and direct discussions.

Sheikh Mujib made his first major policy statement since the elections on January 3 at a huge rally at the Dacca Race Course. It was

Dacca's largest ever political rally, with a crowd estimated at from one to one and a half million. Mujib made four main points in his speech. First, he said he would welcome the cooperation of representatives from West Pakistan in the making of the constitution, thereby softening Tajuddin's earlier statement. Second, in a harder tone, he stressed that there would be no compromise on principles; the constitution would have to be based on the Six Points. Third, he claimed that the Awami League's massive election victory constituted a referendum on the Six Points, and no party (including the Awami League) had the power to amend or enlarge upon the Six Points. Four, he warned that if anyone interfered with this verdict (meaning Yahya or Bhutto), there would be bloodshed and a "movement" which no one will be able to control.

The rally was notable not only for its size but for the peaceful and orderly fashion in which it took place and its superb organization. Security forces were very little in evidence; order and direction were the responsibility of Awami League workers.

As a general rule, I never attended political rallies, but sent a couple of Bengali employees who could understand the speeches and were able to make distinctions between one rally and another in terms of size, enthusiasm and organization. On this occasion some Awami League members called at my house on the eve of the rally to extend an invitation. Scott Butcher in the Political Section was also invited. After checking with some of my colleagues in the Consular Corps, I decided to attend. My British, French, Japanese, Indian and Iranian colleagues also attended. The Chinese and the Russians were conspicuous by their absence. The Consular Corps was seated in front of the dais in the form of a country boat, the symbol of the Awami League. Adjacent to us was the press section.

We were treated with great courtesy and could not help be impressed by the efficient arrangements and the decorous conduct of the crowd, which stood in vivid contrast to events, such as the Pakistan Day parade, where unruly crowds made mincemeat of the Army's efforts to maintain order.

The ceremonial aspects were equally impressive. Thousands of Awami League workers wearing green and white hats and arm bands stood and saluted. Hundreds of Awami league flags were flying and the sail of the country boat, featuring a map of East Pakistan and the Joi Bangla (Victory to Bengal) inscription, was raised to the tune of the

Awami League campaign song. Also, dozens of pigeons and hundreds of balloons were released. (I had been sufficiently impressed by the Bengali celebratory pigeon release to try one myself several months earlier on the occasion of our older daughter's twenty-first birthday. She had already left Dacca to return to Colorado and the pigeons seemed a poetic gesture at bridging the distance between us. It was a complete flop. I must not have had the Awami League touch because the rented pigeons merely circled about the yard a couple of times and then settled on the roof. Their owners had to retrieve them the next morning.

Easily the most impressive part of the rally was the solemn oath administered to the newly elected MNAs and MPAs pledging them to implement the Six Points. The oath concluded with an affirmation that a "movement" would be initiated if any attempt was made to obstruct the implementation of the Awami League program. In his speech Mujib enjoined the audience to promise to punish any member of the party, including himself, who betrayed the oath (such rhetoric was little conducive to the possibility of compromise). The most dramatic moment occurred when the mass audience responded by a show of hands to Mujib's plea that they carry on the struggle if he should be assassinated.

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On January 12 and 13 President Yahya met with Mujib and three of his lieutenants, including Tajuddin Ahmed. Together with Steve Palmer, the Embassy's Political Counselor, who was visiting Dacca, we reported what we were able to glean about the talks. Our sources were Tajuddin and Alamgir Rahman, the General Manager of Esso in East Pakistan, who was close to Mujib and was to become my principal contact with the Awami League leadership in the days to come. Some of the more interesting points in the cable are reproduced:

1 Tajuddin told us that Yahya and Mujib had agreed that the National Assembly would begin its sessions as soon as possible, which meant, he said, by middle of February, although no date has been agreed on.

2 Queried as to Yahya's statement that Mujib was going to be Prime Minister, Tajuddin said Mujib has not yet decided what role or office he would assume. Under parliamentary system

Awami League party leader in National Assembly should automatically be elected Prime Minister. While Mujib was of course acknowledged leader of party, Awami league has not yet elected its National Assembly party leader.

3 Alamgir said virtually all of January 13 session had been devoted to discussion of Six Points. Both Alamgir and Tajuddin claimed Mujib had taken position with President that sweeping Awami League mandate made it impossible to compromise on substance Six Points. While neither was specific on nature of Six Points discussion, Tajuddin said evolving Awami League position on taxation is that center budget will be financed through device of having provincial governments assign to center proportion of their revenues in accordance with their share of federal budget, such share to be determined by as yet unspecified formula. (This line would suggest that Awami league does not propose to assign any sources of revenue to center.) Tajuddin claimed center would not be discriminated against by provinces because provinces, as they collected revenues, would automatically turn over center's proportion to GOP.

4 Both Tajuddin and Alamgir confirmed tangentially that question of defense expenditures had been topic of considerable discussion. Alamgir said Awami League position now is that East Pakistan should contribute to defense budget in proportion to East Pakistani representation in defense services, not in proportion to military forces stationed in East Pakistan, since East Pakistan has no interest in seeing additional military influx into East Wing.

Governor Ahsan, who had sat in on part of Yahya's meeting with Mujib, told Ambassador Farland on January 21 that Mujib had evidenced every indication of desiring to work for the continued integrity of Pakistan and had demonstrated an awareness of the importance of achieving the broadest possible consensus on the constitution. The Governor also said, which was news to us, that the Awami league had prepared two constitutions, one predicated on their winning 75 percent of East Pakistan's National Assembly seats and one predicated on a complete landslide. He opined that the Awami league would start out with the landslide constitution and use the other as a fall-back position.

The Governor also told the Ambassador that he had not been able to devote as much time to disaster relief and rehabilitation work as he would have liked because of the many political pressures working on

him. He defined these pressures as those arising out of the long transition period between the elections and the inauguration of political government. He and his staff daily had to make judgments as to which actions or personnel changes they could appropriately make without consultation with the Awami League and which of their actions, if taken, might be revoked by the Awami League government when it came to power.

President Yahya told newsmen at Dacca airport prior to his departure for Karachi on January 14 that he was satisfied with his discussions with Mujib. When pressed for substantive details of their meetings, Yahya declared that it would be inappropriate for him to do so, since Mujib "is going to be the future Prime Minister of the country" and therefore whatever Sheikh Sahib had to say about the talks was "absolutely correct." Yahya did concede that the date of the convening of the National Assembly had been discussed. When asked if he would be meeting with Bhutto, Yahya replied that he was going bird shooting in Sind, which is Bhutto's area. "If he is there, I'll probably see him."

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Bhutto did come to Dacca for talks with Mujib at the end of January. I did not come across any telegram from Dacca about their meeting but did find a February 3 cable reporting a conversation the DCM, Sid Sober, had with Abdul Hafiz Pirzada, the head of the PPP in Karachi, who was with Bhutto in Dacca.

1 Bhutto and his followers were apparently taken aback by Mujib's firm position on Six Points. They probed for implications of Points Two through Five which go to the heart of division of power between center and provinces. According Pirzada, Mujib did indicate some possible flexibility on points two to five. Bhutto drove home need for center to have adequate assurance of fiscal support for foreign affairs and defense functions. He was not satisfied with AL proposal for constitutional guarantees that necessary revenues for these central functions will be forthcoming from provinces which alone would collect taxes. AL leaders did acknowledge that subjects like foreign trade and foreign aid (which would be reserved to provinces under Six Points) related to foreign

affairs function of center and will have to be administered accordingly, but specific AL planning unclear how this would be done. Pirzada said AL is thinking in terms of six central ministries, including four unspecified in addition to foreign affairs and defense. He took this as sign that Mujib recognizes need for more than vestigial function at center. It is his impression that Mujib is also thinking in terms of one Pakistan rather than two, and that Mujib is approaching problem in anticipation of becoming Prime Minister.

2 Pirzada denied that PPP was Qte discouraged Unqte by failure make more progress in Dacca talks, but evidenced disappointment. He told DCM that Bhutto tried to get across to Mujib that Bhutto represents West Wing opinion as Mujib represents East Wing. Bhutto emphasized his understanding and sympathy for East Wing grievances against West, which he said stemmed, however, from misdeeds of only certain West Pak elements (e.g. 22 families) which PP itself committed to oppose through its program of economic reform. Pirzada said both leaders did agree that main requirement of moment was constitutional arrangement that would end military rule.

3 Pirzada acknowledged that Mujib's call for convening of National Assembly as early as Feb 15 may be intended put pressure on PPP which favored later date to allow further negotiations before assembly meets. (PPP believes (or hopes) that Mujib is responding in part to his own domestic need to show he wants early action as demanded by militant AL followers. As for assembly date, Pirzada believes Mujib's need will be met if date for convening is fixed by Feb 21 (Language Martyrs Day in East Pakistan) even if date of first session is later. He also saw element of pressure on PPP in Mujib's announcement that he expects to meet with leaders of other West Wing parties.

4 One major value of last week's talks, according Pirzada, was opportunity for Mujib and his leading aides to renew contact with Bhutto and other PPP leaders. Both leaders and various of their followers have known each other more or less well over the years. Pirzada noted, for example, that he had known Dr. Kamal Hossain in London where latter was Pirzada's senior by couple of terms in law school.

5 DCM's impression was that, despite disappointment over failure to narrow specific differences in Six Points, PPP wishes to work out arrangement with Mujib and will continue to try. PPP leadership seems inclined believe Mujib is enough of political realist to recognize that arrangement both feasible and desirable. At some time, PPP has some worry over Mujib's possible attempt isolate PPP by working with other West Wing parties.

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Events suddenly began to pile upon one another with alarming speed. On February 11 we learned from Khondakar Mushtaq Ahmed, an Awami League Vice President, that four days before Mujib had received an invitation from President Yahya via Governor Ahsan to come to Rawalpindi to discuss convening the National Assembly and other matters of importance. Yahya's message suggested that Mujib bring his senior advisors with him. After consulting briefly with senior party leaders the Sheikh declined on the grounds that there was nothing further to discuss, noting that meetings with the President had already taken place.

Mujib was making a grave mistake, in addition to displaying discourtesy to the President. After all, Yahya had earlier come to Dacca to talk with him. Those talks had been inconclusive and there was certainly much more to discuss.

On February 13 Yahya announced that the National Assembly would meet in Dacca on March 3.

On February 15 Bhutto declared that it would be pointless for the PPP to attend the constituent assembly. They did not want to make the long flight to Dacca if they could not participate in the framing of the constitution once they got there. The Awami League was adamant on pushing through a constitution embodying the Six Points without any modification. Given its majority, the Awami league could thus deny the PPP any part in the constitution making. Mujib's rigid position left no room for negotiations but there must be negotiations if both wings of Pakistan were to frame a national constitution.

Some of the thinking behind Bhutto's decision to boycott the National Assembly was provided in a conversation Bhutto had with AP

correspondent Arnold Zeitlin the night before the decision was announced, and related by Zeitlin to an officer in our Embassy in Islamabad.

1 During wee hours Feb 14 in Peshawar Bhutto rambled on for two hours in exultant mood at end long day of politicking in Peshawar.

2 *NA session*: Bhutto told Zeitlin he would stay away from NA session and would shortly make announcement to this effect (which he did the following day). He had not made final decision about reason he would give, but was thinking of using Indian ban on overflights as rationale. (Earlier in the month Muslim Kashmiris had hijacked an Indian airlines Fokker Friendship at Srinagar, the capital of Indian-held Kashmir, and flown it to Lahore in West Pakistan. West Pakistan went wild with joy and Pakistani authorities took no action when the hijackers blew up the plane at Lahore airport. Pakistan refused to compensate the Indian government for the plane, and India retaliated by banning all flights by Pakistani aircraft over Indian territory, thus almost trebling the flight time from West to East Pakistan by necessitating an over the water route from Karachi to Dacca via a refueling stop in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Subsequently, the hijackers were later denounced as Indian agents and imprisoned.)

Bhutto indicated he had been considering this course for some time, but timing was triggered by Yahya's announcement Feb 13 that National Assembly would meet March 3. Bhutto was incensed that when Bhutto saw President Feb 12 in Rawalpindi, Yahya had failed to inform him of his intention announce NA meeting very next day. Bhutto was also angry that Yahya had not waited until Bhutto completed his round of consultations with non-PPP West Pak leaders before making announcement about Assembly session. Bhutto said he called up Lt. Gen. Peerzada and "gave him hell" when he heard news.

3 *Six Points, Mujib and PPP*: Bhutto indicated that he considered the Six Points unworkable. At end of bargaining process, he would, however, be willing accept five of six, albeit reluctantly, and would balk only at provincial control over foreign trade. Bhutto came away from Dacca talks with Awami League with belief that Mujib disliked him, both personally and because he represented West Pakistan. Bhutto sensed little interest on Mujib's part in cooperation with him or his party. The PPP, according to Bhutto, was badly split over Six Points. While some were prepared to acquiesce, others were militantly opposed and were speaking of "civil war" if the Six Points were adopted.

4 *Future of Pakistan*: Bhutto implied that the prospects for continued unity of Pakistan were poor and two wings were on collision course. Even if the AL and the PPP reached agreement, which he considered highly unlikely, Bhutto thought that at best there would be an "unhappy marriage" which would last a "few years." Bhutto did not have any clear ideas of what would happen next after he pulled his party out of NA. One possibility he was considering was to propose that he and Mujib become chiefs of West and East Pakistan respectively, while Yahya would provide a national link by serving as overall president. He said he would maintain independent provinces in West and not seek to reimpose one unit.

5 *The Army*: Bhutto seemed confident that he would not be opposed by Army. While disclaiming any specific top echelon support he thought he had backing of the jawans (troops) and doubted the generals would move against him. He implied that Yahya now merely ranked as one of the ruling military junta, mentioning Major General Umar, Secretary of National Security Council, as important behind-scenes figure. Bhutto also claimed Yahya had already made deal with Mujib to accept constitution based on Six Points.

In retrospect Bhutto's comments strike me as revelatory of this very enigmatic man's character. His mention of even thinking of using the Indian ban on overflights as a reason for not attending the opening of the National Assembly is frivolous to the extreme, although admittedly his actual statement employed a more statesman-like reasoning. His pique at not having been told by Yahya in advance of the President's date setting for the convening of the National Assembly suggests that he could be motivated to a serious action by an imagined slight to his amour-propre. So what if Mujib didn't "like" him. I am sure that Yahya and his generals did not like him either, although they would consider him a lesser evil than Mujib.

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Mujib was clearly now on the defensive. He had to respond to the charges made by Bhutto that insistence on the Six Points as the basis of the new constitution ruled out any chance of East-West cooperation in the constituent assembly. At a mid-day press conference at the Awami League headquarters in Dacca on February 24 Mujib read a prepared statement to the journalists in attendance. Herewith our report:

1 Mujib said it was time to end "deliberately fabricated" and "artificial" crisis characterized by "political histrionics" during past week. Mujib noted that his party stands fully committed to Six Points but nonetheless remains willing make necessary clarifications in order dispel misgivings. Mujib labeled as "utterly false" charge that AL sought to "impose" Six Points on West Pakistan. "If the federating units of West Pakistan do not wish to have precisely same degree of autonomy as Bangla Desh or wish to cede certain additional power to the center or establish certain required institutions, the Six Point formula does not stand in the way," Mujib declared.

2 Although probably conceived at least in part as conciliatory gesture to assuage fears of West Pak, Mujib's statement nevertheless dealt harshly with Bhutto and PPP for their alleged "tendency to subvert the constitutional processes by obstructing the normal functioning of the National Assembly" and thereby to sabotage transfer of power to people. Statement criticized delay in holding NA session and also condemned idea of bicameral legislature which allegedly would reduce Bangla Desh to "helpless minority."

3 Mujib defended provincial control of foreign aid and foreign trade envisaged by the Six Points as necessary to remove from control by center of "principal instruments required for colonial exploitation of Bangla Desh." This would not create inseparable difficulty for center's conduct of foreign policy, Mujib contended, citing that AL had stated repeatedly that provincial power over aid and trade would be exercised "within the framework of the foreign policy of the country."

4 According to statement Mujib likewise contended that Six Points do not leave federal government at mercy of federating units, but rather "express constitutional provisions" are contemplated "to empower federal legislature to impose a federal levy on federating units" which "would be a first charge on the resources of the units."

5 Mujib condemned "conspirators and vested interests" who in desperation were "willing to gamble with existence of Pakistan while pretending to be concerned with national integrity." The AL chief described constitution as "a basis for living together" which should be formulated in the National Assembly as the "only proper forum" for constitution making. Although reiterating his party's commitment to Six Points, Mujib expressed desire to elicit cooperation of all MNAs from all parts of Pakistan in task of giving country a "durable constitution."

6 Prepared text concluded with warning that even despots backed by "bastions of power could not withstand determined assaults of an awakened people." An attempt to obstruct or frustrate democratic process would be resisted. "We renew our pledge today to lay down our lives, if necessary, so that our future generations do not have to live in a colony, but can live in freedom and with dignity as the free citizens of a free country," Mujib declared.

7 Responding to newsmen's questions, Mujib emphasized that AL did not seek impose Six Points on West Pakistan. Formulation of Six Points followed 1965 Indo-Pak War which highlighted East Pakistan's isolation and weakness despite strong central government. Bangla Desh must have autonomy as spelled out in the Six Points, and its representatives have been elected on this basis. If the elected representatives of the federating provinces of West Pakistan wish to choose a different relationship among themselves or with the center, then that is up to them, Mujib reiterated.

8 *Comment*: Mujib's statement is at the same time tough and conciliatory. On one hand he referred to "mandate" received by himself and AL and warned those who allegedly seek disrupt democratic constitutional process that Bengalis stand ready to fight for their "rights." On other hand, Mujib attempted clarify certain controversial aspects of Six Points in order allay West Pakistani suspicions and emphasized that NA constituted appropriate forum for airing views. Initial reactions is that Mujib spoke out at this time to save what may look (largely as a result of current information vacuum) to be deteriorating

situation and that next initiative lies with Bhutto and West Pakistan.

Upon rereading this report after a gap of many years, I was struck by Mujib's frequent reference to Bangla Desh instead of East Pakistan. I do not recall any earlier public use of the term Bangla Desh, which means Bengali homeland. Mujib may have done so in order to convey a subtle hint to a West Pakistani audience that there was an alternative to the continual union of East Pakistan and West Pakistan. In those early days of 1971 Bangla Desh was expressed in two words; later when joined together Bangladesh carried the clear connotation of an independent country, i.e. for the Bengalis of East Pakistan.

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As the situation deteriorated, Mujib sought U.S. support to help avert a crisis. Earlier in the month Mujib had asked Alamgir Rahman to sound me out on the possibility of the U.S. playing a mediatory role if East Pakistan decided to declare independence. I had told Alamgir that the U.S. wanted to see Pakistan continue as a unified country and discounted the possibility that we could undertake a mediatory role in the constitution-making process, which role we thought was already being undertaken by Yahya. I also said that it would be inappropriate for us to involve ourselves in the internal affairs of Pakistan to the extent of advising the GOP on its handling of any possible movement toward independence on the part of Mujib.

Ambassador Farland weighed in with this EXDIS message on February 12:

1 As Awami League approach to Consul General Blood indicates, within next few months Pakistan may face fundamental crisis which we had hoped might be averted — the split between the two wings. This message offers Embassy's views on how to deal with subject of unity in contacts with East and West Paks during present, sensitive period.

2 We gratified that Department shares our belief that Consul General acted completely correctly in rejecting Awami League feeler for advanced USG commitment to play mediatory role if East Paks decide to declare independence, and in reiterating our support for one Pakistan. As Dept aware, in recent sessions with Yahya and Bhutto I have made point (as did DCM when he saw Bhutto last month) that U.S. does not want separation of wings and supports continuity of Pakistan. As current guideline, we believe we must be careful to do nothing that either side can reasonably read as signaling change or contemplated change in this position. Such public approach best serves U.S. interest at this time.

3 To extent our words have political weight in East, U.S. support for one Pakistan may give Bengalis some pause about advisability of separation. This stance may also help undercut, although cannot be expected remove, widespread suspicions in West that USG actively seeking split. We must recognize, however, that we may face situation because of local developments beyond our control, that requires us retain flexibility. Notwithstanding our preferences and words, separation of two wings may occur.

4 If split comes, we do not want to find selves unnecessarily in position of having offended Bengali wishes for independence and being accused by West Paks of having engineered split. Formulation that appears best suited to avoid this difficulty is along following lines: "This is your country and how you organize it and deal with its problems is your business. As for us, our firm policy has been, and continues to be, to support the unity and integrity of Pakistan. It has been our belief that people of Pakistan have best chance of meeting their problems effectively by working together."

5 We intend not to raise this subject in our talks with Pakistani political leaders. We would use formula in preceding paragraph only when and if pressed. Specifically, I look forward to meeting Mujib in not too distant future and intend following this line.

Dan Coggin, the *Time Life* correspondent based in Beirut, came to see me on the morning of February 25. He had an hour's conversation with Mujib the previous afternoon, during which Mujib asked him to sound me out on U.S. willingness to influence Yahya to accept a Six Points constitution or, failing any agreement on the constitution, to persuade Yahya and the military to accept a constitution of two wings, which I took to mean a confederation of East and West Pakistan under the nominal authority of the President. Coggin said that Mujib had asked

him to report back that evening on his conversation with me. I made the same response to Coggin that I had to Alamgir.

Coggin related that Mujib had made much of the danger of an eventual Communist takeover, should there be a protracted guerrilla-like struggle against Pakistani Army efforts to keep East Pakistan from separating. Coggin also said that his conversation with Mujib reinforced his view that Mujib was unwilling to make any compromise on the Six Points. According to Coggin, Moinul Hussain, editor of the Bengali daily *Ittefaq* was also asked by Mujib to sound out "the Americans" (Hussain did not make any such approach).

Mujib's diplomatic technique seemed somewhat disorderly, especially since his approach to Coggin was made despite his expectation of an early meeting with Ambassador Farland. (Their meeting took place on February 28.) I thought the Awami league leader was running a bit scared of the consequences of a continuing impasse on constitution making.

Meanwhile, Alamgir Rahman had come to see me again, on February 24. In a rambling, disjointed conversation he evidenced much of the apprehension, confusion and wishful thinking which increasingly seemed to characterize the mood of Mujib and his party in the face of the growing counter-pressure from West Pakistan. The salient points of our conversation were reported as follows:

1 Alamgir said Mujib was placing high hopes on his anticipated forthcoming meeting with Ambassador. Awami League believes U.S. was in considerable part responsible for encouraging return of democracy to Pakistan and therefore has strong stake in seeing democratic experiment work. Alamgir said Mujib had told him he hoped Ambassador might be prevailed upon to act as mediator in effort build workable constitutional compromise between Bhutto and Mujib. In reply I said I thought it highly unlikely that Ambassador would play such mediatory role which was one for Yahya to fulfill.

2 Alamgir opined Mujib might be willing make compromise on substance of Six Points but only if he could win some offsetting concessions, even of gimmick nature, which he could use to justify departure from Six Points. In this conversation Alamgir tossed up possibility of movement of capital to Dacca, making clear it was his own suggestion. I told him I thought this idea was complete non-starter.

3 According Alamgir, Awami League leadership had been convinced as late as yesterday that Yahya was about to announce delay in convening National Assembly for two months. Awami Leaguers are still apprehensive that Yahya, even while going ahead with March 3 date will move promptly thereafter to postpone further meetings for several months in view of non-attendance by West Pak MNAs and lack of consensus on constitution. Alamgir said such delay would present grave problems for Mujib because of growing pressure for secession within Awami League ranks.

4 Alamgir said Mujib had on February 19 asked him to check out reports that Pak Army was making significant troop dispositions. He had reported back to Mujib that he found no such evidence. Placement of anti-aircraft guns around airport and other nearby locations is viewed by Awami League as primarily psychological move to indicate to people that air of tension with India exists.

5 According Alamgir, Mujib had been very circumspect in his February 23 conversation with new Soviet ConGen, limiting himself to expression of determination to proceed with Six Point constitution and bland statement that blockage of constitutional process would gravely disappoint Bengalis.

6 Mujib told Alamgir that he was considerably irritated by rumor that he, Mujib, had had recent meeting with General Westmoreland and tracked down source of rumor back to Chinese.

7 *Comment*: As March 3 moment of truth approaches, Mujib and Awami League leadership appear to be losing some of their elan and confidence. Yahya's recent actions in amending LFO to permit MNAs to resign prior to March 3 and in dissolving cabinet have clearly puzzled and worried Awami Leaguers. Mujib must know by now that he has little chance of ramming through Six Point constitution. On other hand, if he backs down, his authority in the party will be seriously undermined. While we remain convinced that ultimate goal of Awami League is independence, we do not believe that Mujib sees separation now in his own interest except as somewhat desperate last effort. He and his party are casting about for alternative sources of action including, if Alamgir is to be believed, even launching of Gandhi-like non-violent movement if constitutional process is thwarted.

The reference in the Comment paragraph above to Yahya's dismissal of his cabinet had to do with his action on February 21 in dismissing his civilian cabinet of ten members. His action was widely interpreted as the Army's determination to tighten its grip and ready itself for possible strong measures in the face of the impending crisis. On the same day Yahya convened a meeting of the governors and martial law administrators of all five provinces.

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Ambassador Farland met with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on the morning of February 28 at the Sheikh's Dacca residence. The Ambassador's report of the meeting follows:

1 The Sheikh met me at my car and escorted me into his home. It was obvious that he was particularly pleased to see me and welcomed me with great cordiality. At same time he seemed somewhat nervous and slightly apprehensive as to what the conversation might generate. After a few preliminary social comments which included his reflection that "our meeting comes at a most critical juncture in Pakistan history," he precipitously barged into substantive discussions by asking me "What did I think about the situation?" I told him, as an interested observer, I was concerned about the political impasse between East and West Pakistan which all segments of the press had been reporting and suggested that since he, as chairman of Awami League, was in a better position than I to interpret current developments, it was more appropriate for me to request his observations.

2 The Sheikh said that in his opinion the political impasse which was facing Pakistan was not due solely to the machinations of Mr. Bhutto, but represented a situation which had been brought about by "those very people who had supported Ayub." He said that Bhutto could not possibly have acted on his own since he had less than an organized political party. Without the help and leadership of certain West Pakistan military officers, Bhutto's position would be untenable. It was precisely because of this situation that Bhutto favors excessive expenditures on military preparedness.

3 In reply to my question as to whether or not he thought Bhutto would attend the National Assembly, he said he thought that, because Awami League had "now boxed him in," Bhutto's appearance could be expected. However, he said he anticipated that Bhutto, whom he characterized as a "callous cowboy," would subsequently corral his MNAs and take off for the West Wing. At this moment the life struggle of Bangla Desh would begin.

4 I then asked him to tell me just how far apart were the positions taken by PPP and the AL. He said that positions were so far apart that he anticipated little or no chance of securing a consensus. More specifically, he said that Awami League and he as its "chosen leader" could not and would not compromise on Six Point program which he "had made a part of life of East Pakistan for a period of now some ten years." He said that it was Bhutto's objective to become the foreign minister and be given the right to select Pakistan's president. The Sheikh commented on Bhutto's foreign policies which he said were abhorrent to him, citing Bhutto's love for Communist China and his intransigent position vis-a-vis India. The Sheikh reflected at length upon his anti-Communist position and the dangers China portended to the area. As to India, it was imperative that Bangla Desh reestablish good relations and reopen the historic trade routes in the area. He opined that differences between what Bhutto wanted and what the people of Bangla Desh demanded appeared to be insurmountable.

5 With that concept as point of departure, Sheikh indulged in a 10-minute speech which could have been a part of his political oratory, saying that the people of "his country" were behind him to a man, that he had the small hard core of Communists very much on the run as evidenced by Bhashani's present political disarray. He said that the Communists had killed three of his leaders and that he in turn had promised the Communists that for every Awami Leaguer killed, he would kill three of theirs and "this we have done." After noting the time he had spent in prison at hands of West Pakistani leadership, he said that he had no fear whatsoever of "facing the bullet" if unity could not be maintained. He dramatically pointed out that he was unafraid of being jailed or "hacked to pieces," and that he would not deviate from the mandate which had been the will of his people. He culminated this monologue by saying that he did not want separation but rather he wanted a form of confederation in which the people of Bangla Desh would get their just and rightful share

> of foreign aid, and not a mere "20 percent as heretofore. With 60 percent of foreign exchange coming from (earned by) my country, how can Islamabad justify the crumbs which they have thrown us?" The Sheikh rhetorically asked.

The meeting between Mujib and Ambassador Farland proved something of an anti-climax. Mujib did not, as suspected, propose a mediatory role for the U.S. The Ambassador did not, therefore, have any reason to employ his carefully worked out response. It almost seemed that Mujib had resigned himself completely to a violent confrontation.

Reading this cable twenty-eight years later, I was disappointed by Mujib's grave under-estimation of Bhutto. In the course of the post-election maneuvering it was Bhutto who had "boxed in'; Mujib, not the other way around. Bhutto had always held the stronger hand and he has played his spoiler's game very effectively. His party, the PPP, may have been a new party, but Bhutto had indisputably become the most powerful political figure in West Pakistan, and his party exists today in Pakistan. The Pakistani Army at that time needed Bhutto's cooperation certainly as much as he needed theirs. Bhutto's support for large military expenditures could just as easily be explained by his intransigence toward India.

Ambassador Farland flew from Dacca to Bangkok soon after his meeting with Mujib in order to undergo some serious surgery. Because of the need for recuperation and post-surgical care he was not able to return to Islamabad until March 16. During that interval we and the Embassy sent Bangkok copies of all our telegrams, captioned for the Ambassador.

On that very same evening of February 28 Bhutto made his most striking move yet, when he declared that he would raise all of West Pakistan "from the Khyber to Karachi," in violent protest, if the National Assembly should be convened as scheduled on March 3.

Yahya was now "boxed in." If he went along with Mujib's wishes and kept to the March 3 date, he could face an upheaval in his home base of West Pakistan. If he bowed to Bhutto's threat, Mujib's angry reaction could range anywhere from a non-violent Gandhian-like movement to an outright declaration of independence. He was damned if he did, and damned if he didn't.

CHAPTER TEN

THE DIE IS CAST

March 1971 was the most horrible month of my life.

On March 1 President Yahya announced that he was postponing the opening of the National Assembly indefinitely. Because it constitutes a concise review at least in Yahya's perspective, of the events leading up to his decision, his statement is reproduced in its entirety, with only some unnecessary words omitted.

1 Today, Pakistan faces her gravest political crisis. I, therefore, consider it necessary apprise you of situation and action that I propose to take to resolve our present difficulties. But before I do that let me recount to you steps that I took from day that responsibility for administration of country devolved on me to transfer power to elected representatives of people.

2 In my very first address to nation I indicated need for smooth transfer of power. Since then we have moved forward step by step towards achievement of this aim, in spite of there being martial law in country I did not ban political parties and in fact permitted full activity with effect from January 1970.

3 Later in March 1970 the legal framework order, under which elections were to be held, was duly notified. All other work including delimitation of constituencies and preparation of electoral rolls was completed with speed.

4 Election campaign which was long and arduous, ended up in, what we may all claim with pride, one of most peaceful and well organized general elections on basis of adult franchise. As you know, elections were finally completed on 17 January 1971.

5 Just prior to elections, in my address December 3, 1970, I had suggested to leaders of political parties that it would be useful for them to employ period between elections and first session of national assembly in meeting each other and arriving at a consensus on main provisions of our future constitution. I had indicated that to be successful meetings would call for spirit of give and take, trust in each other and realization of extreme importance of this particular juncture in our history. Appreciating great significance of such exchanges of views between political leaders I tried to facilitate process by giving them enough time to do so. I, therefore, decided to fix 3 March as date of inaugural session.

6 In past few weeks certain meetings between our political leaders have indeed taken place. But I regret to say that instead of arriving at a consensus, some of our leaders have taken hard attitudes. This is most unfortunate. Political confrontation between leaders of East Pakistan and West is most regrettable situation. This has cast shadow of gloom over entire nation.

7 Position briefly is that major party of West Pakistan namely Pakistan People's Party as well as certain other political parties have declared their intention not to attend National Assembly session on 3 March, 1971. In addition general situation of tension created by India has further complicated whole position. I have, therefore, decided to postpone summoning of National Assembly to later date.

8 I have repeatedly stated that a constitution is not ordinary piece of legislation but it is agreement that is needed for healthy and viable constitution. Therefore, it is important that both East and West Pakistan have adequate sense of participation in process of constitution-making.

9 Needless to say I took this decision to postpone date of National Assembly with heavy heart. One has to look at practical aspects of such problems. I realized that with so many representatives of people of West Pakistan keeping away from Assembly if we were to go ahead with inaugural session 3 March, Assembly itself could have disintegrated and entire effort made for smooth transfer of power that has been outlined earlier would have been wasted.

10 It was imperative to give more time to political leaders to arrive at a reasonable understanding on issue of constitution-making.

Having been given this time I have every hope that they will rise to occasion and resolve problem. I wish to make solemn promise to people of Pakistan that as soon as environments enumerated earlier become conducive to constitution-making I will have no hesitation in calling session of Assembly, immediately. As for myself, I would like to assure my countrymen that I shall do everything in my power to help political leaders in achieving our common goal with even-handed justice which I have all along been doing.

11 In end, I pray to Almighty Allah to guide us all in acting according to dictum of Father of the nation, namely faith, unity and discipline. I appeal to political leaders and all my countrymen to exercise utmost restraint at this grave hour of our lives.

Our Embassy in Islamabad reacted quickly with a telegram welcoming Yahya's announcement as possibly providing a needed cooling-off period. In Dacca our reaction was quite different. As soon as we heard the announcement on the radio in the Consulate General, we began to hear loud noises outside. Some of us rushed up to the roof of the Adamjee Court building. I can still remember the amazing sight that greeted us. Hundreds of Bengalis were rushing from their shops and offices, shouting and screaming in what was obviously a spontaneous display of anger. To my mind they were like a swarm of bees that had been disturbed in their hive.

I knew what they were thinking. Yahya has broken his promise. The election was not to be honored. Yahya had yielded to Bhutto's blackmail. Once again, the interests of East Pakistan were to be sacrificed before the altar of West Pakistani concerns.

Upon returning to the office, I sent a telegram reporting what I had seen, ending with the words, "I believe I have just witnessed the beginning of the end of a unified Pakistan. I was mildly twigged by a reply from the Pakistan desk in the State Department, which thanked me for my colorful reporting but cautioned me against the employment of hyperbole. But it was not hyperbole. I felt that I had experienced a sudden, clear glimpse of what was to be.

Later that day we sent off a slightly more detailed report, as follows:

1 Initial reaction to news of NA postponement has been spontaneous formation of numerous processions in downtown

Dacca calling for independence of East Bengal. Many individuals in crowds are carrying clubs or *lathis* but thus far appear in peaceful mood. Only indication of violence to date is smoke rising several blocks away which suggests a burning car or building. General atmosphere of tension prevails throughout city. Most businesses and shops have closed down and sent home personnel. Largest concentration of people in front of Hotel Purbani where top Awami Leaguers are arriving for previously scheduled meeting of AL parliamentary board. Sheikh has just arrived. Crowd is calling on AL leader to hand over West Pak MNAs staying in hotel.

2 Future course of events depends largely on decision of AL leader and what leadership they demand from Mujib.

Later that terrible day, we took more reasoned issue with the Embassy.

1 Being closer to eye of storm we find ourselves unable to take as relaxed and optimistic view of consequences of Assembly postponement as envisaged by Embtel. Rather than setting stage for further efforts to reach agreement on constitution, Yahya's action has, in our view, in effect ruled out any possibility of East-West compromise and will force Mujib to more direct action to achieve independent Bangla Desh.

2 It would be difficult to over-estimate sense of anger and shock and frustration which has gripped people of East Pakistan. They cannot but interpret postponement as act of collusion between Yahya and Bhutto to deny fruit of electoral victory to majority. Underlying their resentment we also sense elation that Yahya's action has brought moment of independence much closer.

3 At this moment our initial and tentative estimate is that the most likely courses to be taken by Mujib within next ten days would be (1) unilateral declaration of independence or (2) launching of movement of non-cooperation (non-payment of taxes, work stoppage at vital communication and transportation facilities, boycott of West Pakistani goods) designed to convince Yahya and West Pakistan that it would be useless to attempt to keep East Wing as part of Pakistan. Second course could have more appeal as less likely to result in violence. There of course exists third possibility that militant Awami Leaguers or leftists might seize initiative if Mujib waits too long or fails to provide dynamic leadership to independence movement.

4 Viewed from East Pakistan, chances of continued unity, which struck us as 50-50 before cyclone and 75-25 against after cyclone and elections, now stand after postponement of convening of National Assembly at 100-1.

Mujib met with the press in the afternoon of March 1. In reply to questions he said Yahya had taken his action without consulting him, but allowed that he did have prior information of the decision. Mujib claimed that Yahya had allowed another voice (Bhutto) to speak for him, and that the GOP had bowed to the will of the minority led by Bhutto, thus allowing the long-standing conspiracy to maintain Bangla Desh's colonial status to continue.

Mujib said Bhutto had taken the law in his own hands but the people of Bangla Desh were expected to observe law and order. The Sheikh asserted that the people of Bangla Desh knew how to give blood and could not be sacrificed. He also urged his party to follow the democratic processes of non-violence and non-cooperation. Finally, the Sheikh announced that he would hold urgent consultation with the other leaders of the province, such as Bhashani, Nurul Amin, and Ataur Rahman Khan, and called for a mass rally on March 7 at which further plans would be revealed.

We suspected that, in fact, the Sheikh had very little prior warning of Yahya's action, and consequently the Awami League was unprepared and needed time to consult and plan their future course of action, as well as to allow for the buildup of public sentiment. We saw Mujib as being in a difficult position. To maintain leadership dramatic action would be called for. On the other hand, he was no doubt aware that he was riding a tiger, which if it got out of control, could bring a bloody repression by the MLA.

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The Awami League responded quickly by calling a *hartal* (general strike) on March 2. All shops and business establishments were closed and shuttered. The only vehicles seen on the streets of Dacca were police

vehicles, an occasional ambulance and a bicycle ridden by two Awami League volunteers in their distinctive green and white caps. The streets, however, were far from deserted. Large numbers of people were wandering aimlessly about or standing in clusters in the streets engaged in animated conversation or sharing newspapers. In the vicinity of the University of Dacca we saw a crowd of several hundreds gathered across from the controversial Bureau of National Reconstruction, the scene of a terrorist bombing attack in February. Students carrying iron bars or sticks were conspicuous throughout the city. Regular Army troops were posted at the premises of Radio Pakistan, Dacca TV and at Dacca airport.

According to press reports the local PIA employees went on strike March 1 and as of mid-morning March 2 no internal PIA flights have been observed. Efforts to contact PIA at the airport via telephone were unsuccessful, as the line was apparently disengaged. We did not know whether interwing flights were similarly affected. Trains reportedly have ceased running. We heard that the Dacca *hartal* would be extended province-wide on March 3, with the expectation that transport throughout the province will be paralyzed.

The city seemed pervaded by an air of anxiety and expectancy. The editor of *Purbodesh* told DPO Bob Carle that he feared the worst. Another ConGen officer, while walking to the office, was hailed by a youth who shouted enthusiastically, "Hello brother. You are witnessing the breakup of Pakistan."

There was an ugly side to the demonstrations which soon manifested itself in arson, looting, intimidation of West Pakistanis and foreigners, and confrontations with the Army. At the residential area "Farmgate" Bengalis attacked the homes and shops of West Pakistanis living in the area. At the Intercontinental Hotel, the abode of choice for foreigners visiting Dacca, Awami League youths tore down the English signs, including the name of the hotel in electric lettering high on one outside wall. A student armed with a pistol fired a shot in the Intercontinental, causing the hotel's Swiss manager to close the swimming pool and ask all guests to stay in their rooms except for meals. The *New York Times* correspondent and his wife were attacked by teenagers on the street but were saved by the intervention of an Awami League patrol. Also, several days later, an attempt was made, possibly by leftist students, to set the British Council on fire. The fire damaged a hundred books before it was extinguished by the fire brigade.

Some incidents were direct clashes between the Army and the people. A Bengali crowd attacked an anti-aircraft installation near the airport and several were wounded when the troops fired upon them.

At the Tongi industrial area north of Dacca four people were killed and fourteen wounded when a military officer tried to place a phone call from the Tongi telephone exchange. The operator said he was on strike and refused to place the call and their altercation drew an angry crowd.

Most ominous of all were indications of trouble between the Army and the police, suggesting that the police were siding with the Awami League and the Army could not trust them to help maintain law and order. On March 3 the police were virtually out of sight in downtown Dacca. The Divisional Commissioner's office, which is the central point for security forces in the center of town, was surprisingly devoid of police, although numerous regular army troops were bivouacked there. Consulate General personnel walking to the office were waved away from the vicinity of the Commissioner's office on the grounds that clashes between the Army and the police were taking place there. We heard subsequent unconfirmed reports that one local hospital was filled with police injured in a clash with regular army personnel, which raised the possibility that an effort had been made to disarm the Bengali police forces.

The MLA authorities had called out the Army on the morning of the first day of the *hartal*. In the next several days the troops fired upon rioters on a number of occasions. Later, on March 8, the MLA issued a press note in Dacca, stating that 172 people had been killed and 358 injured in the previous week's disturbances. The Awami League claimed the death toll was considerably higher.

On the afternoon of March 2 there was a massive rally sponsored by the East Pakistan Student League, an Awami League affiliate, and supported by Ataur Rahman Khan's minuscule National League. The rally attracted some 25-30 thousand enthusiastic people but broke up peacefully after several hours of fiery oratory, with the crowd dispersing to join roving bands filling the streets with shouts of "Joi Bangla."

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Meanwhile, Yahya and his MLA took some decisive steps of their own, over and above calling out the troops to check the rioting. On March 2 the Dacca press carried an official announcement datelined Rawalpindi

that Vice Admiral S. M. Ahsan had ceased to be the Governor of East Pakistan and that the Martial Law Administrator for East Pakistan, Lt. General Sahabzada Yaqub Khan, had become head of the civil administration for the province.

Word of Governor Ahsan's departure was greeted with dismay in Dacca. Ahsan was thought to be a well-informed and caring friend of the Bengalis, and his work in the aftermath of the cyclone was well known and greatly appreciated. In my opinion Governor Ahsan was the true hero of the disaster relief operation. General Yaqub had been the Chief Martial Law Administrator for East Pakistan but he had remained in the background and was little known to the populace.

In Dacca it was widely believed, and I suspect with good reason, that Ahsan had been opposed to the idea of a strong military response in East Pakistan. Even before March 1, the Governor had indicated to Ambassador Farland that he was weary of his responsibilities and anxious to surrender them as soon as possible. In January he told the Ambassador that he had left his daughter in school in Karachi after a recent trip to West Pakistan, adding that "as an old destroyer man, I have tied up so as to be able to make a fast, unencumbered getaway."

Governor Ahsan had also been telling me for some time that he was anxious to leave his job. I wondered whether Ahsan, as a retired, rather than active duty officer, might have taken advantage of Yahya's redesignation of governors as MLAs to leave voluntarily. Or had the GOP in the expectation of trouble in East Pakistan decided that a show of strength in the form of direct military administration was called for. Ahsan had acquired a reputation from previous confrontations between civilians and the MLA as being "soft" on Bengalis.

One of General Yaqub's first actions was the issuance of Martial Law Order No. 110 which stated that the press was "forbidden from printing or publishing pictures, news items, views, statements, comments, etc. which directly or indirectly are against the integrity or sovereignty of Pakistan." Violators would face maximum imprisonment of ten years as specified in Martial Law Order No. 25. (These tightened press restrictions were likely to impact particularly on the virulently nationalist and pro-Awami League daily *The People* whose recent editorials definitely would fall under the purview of MLO 110.)

General Yaqub's tenure turned out to be very brief. In less than a week he was replaced by Lt. General Tikka Khan. If Bengalis were

dismayed by Governor Ahsan's removal, they were close to being terrified by Tikka Khan's arrival. He was well known as the "Butcher of Baluchistan" for having suppressed an uprising in that province with absolute force and cruelty. Yahya had brought in a "killer," one of the extreme hawks in the Pakistani military.

It later became known that both Ahsan and Yaqub had been removed by Yahya for having protested a hard line against the Bengalis. Yaqub Khan was a rare bird in the upper levels of the Pakistani military, an intellectual general who was known as a brilliant and independent thinker. Born to a wealthy Indian Muslim family, he had risen rapidly to be chief of the General Staff. Immediately prior to his assignment to East Pakistan, he had attended the Imperial Defense College in London.

I had not had much opportunity to know General Yaqub, except for occasional meetings at social gatherings. Once, however, we found ourselves seated across the aisle from each other on a PIA flight from West to East Pakistan. Yaqub was a delightful conversationalist with wide ranging interests in history and literature. Somehow we gravitated to Thomas Jefferson. As a graduate of the University of Virginia, I prided myself on knowing something about Mr. Jefferson, but General Yaqub put me to shame with his detailed knowledge of Jefferson's life and writings.

At about 7:30 A.M. on March 2 regular TV and radio programs were interrupted to announce the imposition of a curfew to take effect from 9 p.m. to 8 a.m. the following morning. Subsequently the Martial Law Administrator announced that the curfew would continue on a daily basis from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. until calm was restored.

While wielding a stick, Yahya also extended a carrot. On March 3 he called for a meeting in Dacca of the leaders of twelve parliamentary parties. Yahya did not set a new date for the convening of the National Assembly but said he saw "no reason why the National Assembly should not be able to meet within a couple of weeks after the conference." Bhutto quickly announced his willingness to attend, but Mujib flatly rejected the invitation, as did Nurul Amin, the only other political leader from East Pakistan to be invited. Mujib termed the invitation a "cruel joke" since it followed "widespread killing of the unarmed civilian population."

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In a statement released to reporters early on the evening of March 2 Sheikh Mujib himself tried to apply some brakes. He called for discipline and restraint in observing the *hartal*, and condemned the attacks on non-Bengali persons and property. At the same time, however, he called for the immediate end of martial law and the removal of "obstacles to the exercise by the people's representatives of the power that is rightfully theirs." The Sheikh declared that the movement would continue "till the people of Bangla Desh realize their emancipation." Mujib also announced that the *hartal* would continue through March 6 from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m.

It seemed to us that the Sheikh was trying to walk a slippery path. On the one hand he was trying to maintain his leadership and keep the initiative by calling for an end to martial law and a continuation of the struggle. On the other hand he was seeking to cool the crowds so as to avoid a tightening of military control. The longer the *hartal* lasted the more the law and order situation would deteriorate as the street elements turned to looting and arson. It seemed problematical whether the student volunteers sent out to enforce discipline would be able to control the movement Mujib had launched.

On March 3 Sheikh Mujibur Rahman addressed an overflow crowd of perhaps 100,000. His speech was part of a "day of mourning" for the people who had been killed in demonstrations against the postponement of the National Assembly. Mujib called upon General Yaqub to return his troops to the barracks since the rationale for an army was to protect against the enemy and not to kill "their brothers." He reiterated that the *hartal* would continue through March 6, saying this was in order to disrupt communications. In this regard he urged the people to build barricades and dig ditches across roads to impeded the movements of the military. He appealed to the people not to pay any taxes to the government since it was not representative of the people. He balanced these inflammatory remarks with an appeal to Bengalis to treat Hindus, Christians and Biharis (non-Bengali Muslims who had emigrated from India) as brothers and to consider it their sacred duty to protect them. He also called for a halt to looting and arson. The meeting dispersed peacefully as the Sheikh led the crowd in chanting Awami League and Bengali nationalist slogans.

The meeting featured the flying of numerous flags purported to be the new flag of Bangla Desh (dark green with a red sphere in the center

on which was superimposed the outline of East Pakistan). For the first time Awami Leaguers equipped with rifles and shotguns appeared in public, and several speakers referred to Mujib as the "Supreme Commander of Bengal Liberation Forces."

In reporting Mujib's speech we ventured the view that "if no dramatic breakthrough occurs in the next several days to placate the Bengalis, such as setting a specific date in the near future for the sitting of the National Assembly or the West Paks conceding fully to the Six Points, it appears increasingly likely Mujib may declare independence at March 7 rally."

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By announcing the postponement sine die of the convening of the National Assembly Yahya had succeeded in greatly worsening an already very difficult situation. Of the "Big Three" the soldier had been the first to crack under pressure. By placating Bhutto he had pushed Mujib to launch a movement which gave the Bengalis a heady sense of being close to realizing their goal of emancipation from West Pakistan. It would be difficult, perhaps impossible, for the movement toward independence to be checked now. Later, in a conversation with a close associate of West Pakistan, Yahya was to admit that he had erred in his action of March 1.

Yahya had cast his fateful die and had crossed his Rubicon. Unlike Julius Caesar, however, he was not to go on to greater power and glory but to stumble down a path leading to frustration, bloody civil war and complete defeat and humiliation.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

A STEP BACK FROM THE BRINK

A *hartal* could complicate one's life. No form of transport, including even bicycles, was allowed on the streets. Enforcers of the *hartal*, who were Awami League youths in the current *hartal*, had been known to smash the windshields and cut the tires of any car seen moving in violation of the *hartal*. During some earlier *hartals* Americans walking to the office had been stopped and forced to remove their shoes.

Fortunately, most employees of the Consulate General and USIS lived close enough to their offices that they could walk to work. The USAID employees, however, lived mostly in the high rent area of Gulshan, which was too far out to permit their walking. Consequently, the *hartal* froze them in their homes. A small control group consisting of my deputy, Bob Carle, political officer Hugh Haight, a couple of communicators and myself took up residence in the offices of the Consulate General. We had earlier taken the precaution of stocking up with canned foods, soft drinks and bedding.

The official American community, of whom I was to grow increasingly proud over the next several weeks, remained calm, with all recognizing that the only possible course of action was to stay at home. Most American families had sizeable godowns (storage areas) which they kept well stocked with provisions. We began to explore the possibility of opening the commissary between 3 to 6 in the afternoon when the *hartal* was not in effect and before the curfew set in, but we realized that the number of barricades in the streets might make the commissary inaccessible even in non-*hartal* hours.

The phone system was still working but we had to prepare for the eventuality that it might be cut. As part of our emergency equipment we had a number of field telephones with ranges sufficient to connect most homes with the office. We did not have enough to supply each home, but allocated them on a priority basis. The heads of the various sections and the evacuation wardens responsible for passing the word to groups of families received the first phones. Each phone had a code name; the only one I remember was that at my home, which was dubbed "Georgetown." Although the field phones were not essential at this stage, we began to use them more and more frequently for practice. My young son loved to rush to the field phone when it rang so that he could say, "Georgetown speaking."

Because of the *hartal* it was impossible to keep the American school open. The enforced closing of the school was somewhat welcome to me because in the past several weeks I had had a problem with the school principal. He was prone to shut down the school for the day after hearing a rumor relayed by a mother or even a student that there was going to be a disturbance that day. I told him that my office was better equipped to evaluate any such rumors, and ordered him to check with me or my deputy before acting.

While the official American community remained calm, some elements of the private business community were becoming increasingly nervous. I thought it necessary to call a meeting on March 4 of representatives of the business community in order to provide them with an assessment of the situation and to reassure them that we were actively concerned for their welfare.

We informed the Embassy and the Department that as a precautionary measure we were doing some preliminary thinking against the contingency of a possible evacuation of dependents and unnecessary employees. We thought the most expeditious plan would be evacuation by USAF aircraft from Thailand, since Thailand was for planning purposes our designated safe haven. We envisaged calling for an evacuation airlift, collecting people at two or three assembly points in the city, and trying to secure military protection for a convoy movement to the airport. We estimated the total number of Americans who could avail themselves of the evacuation as nine hundred. In effect, we were already in Phase 1 of our evacuation plan since our people were restricted to their homes by virtue of the *hartal* and curfew.

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Actually, the tension in the city began markedly to lessen as early as the night of March 3. Mujib's call that afternoon for a peaceful, disciplined movement certainly helped to calm the situation. On March 4, Mujib issued "directives" which exempted from the *hartal* vehicles used by essential services, utilities and the press, and directed state and commercial banks to reopen and directed government offices to pay their employees. Mujib's action was an audacious assertion of authority without any concomitant assumption of responsibility, and was an instructive demonstration of how things stood in East Pakistan and who was in charge. Since March 1 economic, industrial, provincial and central government activity had been hamstrung by the word of one man, supported wholeheartedly by his fellow Bengalis, despite the imposed hardships. The Bengalis had the bit in their teeth and were not about to retreat.

* * * * *

Also on March 4 there occurred a set of events which cast an interesting light on Mujib's willingness to consider some way of breaking the impasse over constitution-making, as well as on his complete authority over the Bengalis of East Pakistan. Arnold Zeitlin, the Associated Press correspondent in Pakistan, told me that he had told Mujib that Bhutto had earlier indicated to him, Zeitlin, his willingness to accept separate constitutions for East and West Pakistan with Mujib Prime Minister in the East and himself Prime Minister in the West, with linkage at center to be the subject of negotiations between two virtually independent states. According to Zeitlin Mujib said that this solution was also acceptable to him.

Zeitlin filed a story based on his interview with Mujib but early in the evening he received a call from Mujib asking him to kill the story. The text of the story had been relayed to Mujib by personnel at the Post, Telephone and Telegraph Office (showing how deep Mujib's writ ran). Zeitlin went back to see Mujib who said he had been misquoted as endorsing the two constitution solution. Other Awami Leaguers told Zeitlin that the Sheikh would be harmed in party eyes if the story came out. Zeitlin sent a message to kill the story.

* * * * *

We told the Embassy and the Department that we thought Mujib might avoid throwing down the gauntlet of a unilateral declaration of independence in favor of some indirect step such as pushing for separate constitutions for East and West Pakistan and thus making it more difficult for the MLA authorities to resort to serious repressive measures. We expressed the view that the American community would not be in any real danger unless sustained fighting developed between the Bengalis and the Army, and then only if the Army was unable to control the local population.

By March 6, the fifth consecutive day of the complete *hartal*, Dacca seemed almost normal. People were moving about calmly on the streets. The barricades had either been removed or opened in order to allow the post-*hartal* traffic to pass. We saw an increasing number of "authorized vehicles," such as press vehicles, cars flying the Awami League flag, and public sanitation trucks, as well as occasional "unauthorized" bicycles or pushcarts. More tea stalls were open for business.

More importantly, the press on March 6 reported that the MLA had decided on March 5 to return the regular Army troops to their barracks on the grounds that no untoward incidents had occurred in the last two days. We anticipated that this less volatile atmosphere would hold until the March 7 mass rally called by Mujib, unless broken by some unexpected clash between the military and the people or by some challenging move by the military such as forbidding the rally or arresting Mujib.

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It had been known since March 1 that Mujib would outline his future course of action at a mass rally on March 7. Subsequently, it was announced that President Yahya would address the nation on March 6. This coming conjunction gave rise to much anxiety, hope and speculation in East Pakistan. The key question debated was whether or not Mujib would use the occasion to declare the independence of Bangla Desh, and, if so, how would the Army react.

Yahya gave a pretty unequivocal answer to the latter question in his March 6 speech, the full text of which is reproduced below. Although Yahya's speech may sound redundant, in that some of it concerns actions

which have already been related, it does afford Yahya's point of view a fair hearing.

> In my statement of March 1 I had recounted to you steps that I took to transfer power to elected representatives of the people. In the same statement I had also said that I, on my part, would do everything possible to help our elected leaders in moving towards the attainment of our common goal — which was and which continues to be, a smooth transition towards a democratic way of life.
>
> As you would recall, in this direction my latest step has been to call a conference of the leaders of all parliamentary groups to meet me at Dacca on the 10th of March. Unfortunately, however, in total disregard of my genuine and sincere efforts to bridge the gap between the various points of view, the response to my call has been rather discouraging, particularly from the leader of our majority party who, before the announcement over the radio had given me the impression that he would not be averse to the idea of such a conference. His outright rejection was therefore both a surprise and a disappointment. As you are aware, Mr. Nurul Amin has also refused to participate. This in effect means that there would be no representative from East Pakistan in the proposed conference.
>
> You will thus see that from the time the elections were completed practically every step that I took in the process of transfer of power has in one way or another been obstructed by some of our leaders. I might also mention at this stage, that after the completion of elections on the 17th of January and after I had met the leaders of the two major parties and the leaders had met among themselves at Dacca I had invited them to come and discuss the situation with me on more than one occasion with a view to working out an acceptable method of moving forward. I regret to say that the president of Awami League did not think it fit to respond to my invitations and we thus lost the opportunity of avoiding misunderstandings and of working out an amicable solution.
>
> As the resulting environments were not conducive to constitution making in that a very large number of West Pakistani representatives refused to attend the Assembly session on the 3rd of March, I came to the conclusion that having inaugural session of the National Assembly on that date would be a futile exercise and was likely to result in the dissolution of the Assembly itself. I, therefore, tried to save the situation by postponing the date of the session. I had

thereby hoped to achieve two purposes — firstly, to save the Assembly and all the national effort that had gone into its birth and secondly, to allow time for passions to cool down and a fruitful dialogue to take place. But instead of accepting the decision in the spirit in which it was taken, our East Pakistani leadership reacted in a manner which resulted in destructive elements coming out in the streets and destroying life and property. Needless to say, no government could have remained a silent spectator in such a situation. It was, therefore, my moral obligation to take the minimum essential measures for protecting the lives and property of the innocent and otherwise peaceful law-abiding citizens who in the absence of any such measures would have fallen victims to extremist elements. I am, however, sorry to say that lawlessness continues to be the order of the day in East Pakistan.

For some reason, the postponement of the date of the Assembly session has been completely misunderstood. Whether this is deliberate or otherwise I cannot say but one thing is certain — this misunderstanding has become the rallying cry for the forces of disorder. When such forces become activated the main sufferers are the innocent citizens whose daily life is seriously disturbed and who are in constant danger of suffering bodily harm and even death. While realizing that an application of adequate force can effectively bring the situation under control I have deliberately ordered the authorities in East Pakistan to use the absolute minimum force required to stop the law breakers from loot, arson and murder.

It will be seen that only one of my purposes behind the postponement of the session of the Assembly — namely the preservation of the Assembly itself, has been achieved. The other and equally important purpose of having a fruitful dialogue has, however, not been achieved. In the meanwhile innocent lives are being lost for which the bereaved families have my fullest sympathies and which in a situation that is not of my creation is the least that I can offer.

As explained earlier, my efforts to arrive at a date for the opening of the National Assembly session in consultation with political leaders have been frustrated.

I, therefore, in my capacity as President and Chief Martial Law administrator of this country, feel duty bound to resolve this unfortunate impasse by taking a decision myself. I cannot wait

indefinitely. I have consequently decided that the inaugural; session of the National assembly will take place on 25th of March. It is my sincere hope that this decision will elicit a patriotic and constructive response from all our political leaders. Since my efforts to get the leaders to arrive at a broad consensus on the process of constitution making have not succeeded, to those political parties who may have doubts about viability of the future constitution of Pakistan, I would like to say that no better assurance than the provisions of the legal framework order is needed.

Finally let me make it absolutely clear that no matter what happens, as long as I am in command of the Pakistan Armed Forces and Head of the State, I will ensure complete and absolute integrity of Pakistan. Let there be no doubt or mistake on this point. I have a duty towards millions of people of East and West Pakistan to preserve this country. They expect this from me and I shall not fail them. I will not allow a handful of people to destroy the homeland of millions of innocent Pakistanis. It is the duty of the Pakistan Armed Forces to ensure the integrity, solidarity and security of Pakistan — a duty in which they have never failed.

Let us go forth with full confidence in ourselves and faith in Almighty Allah towards the goal we have set before us for achieving a democratic way of life and enable the elected representatives of the people to fulfil their duty which the nation expects of them.

God bless you all. Pakistan Paindabad.

Yahya's tough language, particularly his vow to preserve the unity of Pakistan, brought the following Secret/EXDIS instruction from the State Department:

1 We have undertaken high-level review of options open to USG on assumption (a) Mujibur Rahman announces unilateral declaration of independence March 7; (b) Yahya implements clearly implied threat in his March 6 statement to use armed forces to defend integrity of Pakistan; and (c) Mujib appeals to USG to intercede with Yahya to prevent or halt military action.

2 While it seems clear to us here that the use of armed force in East Pakistan could not be effective in maintaining the unity of the country and could only result in bloodshed and turmoil, which the longer prolonged would be most adverse to our interests and thus should be discouraged, we do not feel that

diplomatic approach on our part is likely to dissuade Yahya if he is determined on such a course. We are also concerned that such approach could later be used by Yahya, Bhutto and other West Pakistanis to blame us for breakup of country. It would thus inhibit our ability to maintain effective relationship with them in the future. We are discussing various contingencies with British in Washington today to determine whether, in event military action, British might be willing to take lead in interceding with Yahya. We would also welcome any further thoughts on foregoing Islamabad and Dacca may have.

3 If Mujib makes unilateral declaration of independence March 7 and approaches Dacca with respect to recognition, Dacca should, of course, listen to what he has to say and refer to Washington. Similarly, if Mujib approaches Dacca to urge U.S. use influence in Islamabad to prevent military intervention, Dacca should take note of request, but carefully avoid any expressed or implied commitment.

* * * * *

Would Mujib declare independence during his March 7 speech?
I spoke to one of Mujib's lieutenants on March 5. He said the Awami League was absolutely determined to achieve Bengali freedom. When I asked him what "freedom" would mean in terms of Mujib's forthcoming speech, he said Mujib would not declare independence. His answer confirmed my own belief that Mujib did not want to declare independence in so many words, since a complete severance of ties with the rest of Pakistan would leave him with no currency, no foreign aid, no army (beyond the East Pakistan Rifles, essentially a border guard commanded by West Pakistanis), and a host of other problems. I thought that what he wanted was the substance of independence without its nomenclature.

Mujib's speech on Sunday March 7 was more notable for what he did not say than for what he actually said. He did not, as some feared and some hoped, declare an independent Bangla Desh. Instead, he called for a peaceful, non-cooperation movement to continue the struggle for independence and the emancipation of the Bengalis. He declared that this movement would embody the following points: (1) all government

offices semi-autonomous bodies and educational institutions were to remain closed until further notice, although on March 28 they would be allowed to open in order to disburse salaries; (2) private trade and commerce to proceed as normal; (3) interwing telephone and telegraph communications to continue as long as they were not used for "anti-people purposes;" (4) internal transport to function as usual although trains should not carry military personnel.

Mujib refuted Yahya's charge that the Awami League was primarily responsible for the present situation, and said he had placed a call to Yahya the previous week urging the President to visit East Pakistan in order to see personally how military bullets were killing Bengali civilians. The Sheikh said he would consider attending the National Assembly called for March 25 if three preconditions were met: (1) withdrawal of the Army to its barracks, (2) an end to martial law, and (3) the transfer of power to the people (presumably he meant the provincial assembly for East Pakistan). Subsequently, Mujib added two more demands: (4) an inquiry into the Army killings, and (5) an end to reinforcement of the Army in East Pakistan.

Mujib arrived at the rally uncharacteristically late (by an hour and fifteen minutes). Prior to his arrival the crowd was led in chanting various slogans such as "take up arms and destroy enemy armed forces," "Make Bengal independent," "Victory to Bengal," etc. Mujib was the only speaker and was introduced with a minimum of fanfare by Tajuddin Ahmed, the General Secretary of the Awami League. A large proportion of the audience came armed with iron rods and bamboo sticks.

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There was general agreement on the part of American observers that a showdown had been averted but the crisis situation remained basically unchanged. Our assessment from Dacca was probably the most optimistic.

The situation remains confused as two sides jockey for position and wait for other to force issue. Mujib has, we believe, defused the immediate crisis. Permitting normal commercial and transportation activity will remove the hardships of the *hartal*. At the same time the civil government, if the Sheikh's call is heeded which we think it will be, will remain paralyzed. Only such government activity

which receives Mujib's specific approval will be allowed. Little by little the Sheikh and the Awami League become the de facto authority in East Pakistan. Meanwhile the concept of Pakistan continues to erode. The Sheikh's tactics, if successful, reduce the chances of open confrontation by exposing only a fuzzy target for the MLA. At the same time he keeps the initiative and maintains control of the situation.

Embassy Islamabad was more pessimistic in the following excellent assessment:

1 While Yahya March 6 and Mujib March 7 speeches have averted immediate showdown, Pakistan's political crisis continues, and prospects for settlement remain poor. Events since Yahya announced postponement NA session March 1 have sharpened east-west differences and led to direct confrontation between Yahya and military on one side and Mujib and Awami League on other. Third principal on Pak political stage Bhutto for moment remaining relatively quiet.

2 Yahya and Pak military leadership have opted for tougher line with Mujib. March 1 NA postponement, replacement of Vice Admiral Ahsan with Lt. Gen. Tikka Khan as East Pak governor, harsh tone of Yahya's March 6 speech and clear warning that force would be used against any move for separation all indications in this direction.

3 Question now is how military responds to Mujib's March 7 speech. While Mujib avoided ultimate step of UDI, his call for continued non-cooperation, attack on "Punjabi ruling coterie," assertion that AL "only legitimate authority" for Bangla Desh and four demands he made as conditions for AL attendance NA session passed buck back to Yahya. Next few days will tell whether military decides it has had enough, which could mean crackdown and arrest of top Awami League leadership, or if it believes there are still grounds for working out political situation that will insure continued unity of country. In any event, believe no Rpt no chance MLA will commit hari-kari by lifting martial law prior to March 25 NA session as Mujib has demanded.

4 What does Mujib now intend? As seen from here (and we will defer to Dacca's opinion), his goal remains unchanged — "Emancipation" of Bangla Desh from West Pakistan domination. This could mean "full provincial autonomy" as under six points. It could also mean Mujib has come to believe that freedom he seeks is attainable only by outright independence. Course he outlined in March 7 speech suggests, as Dacca had indicated, effort to achieve his goal by gradual assertion of power by Awami League without risking direct confrontation with military that would follow UDI.

5 If political dialogue resumed and NA able to meet March 25, what are prospects for resolving east-west impasse over constitution? Substantively, differences between Awami League and People's Party on division of powers between center and provinces could probably be reconciled, or at least papered over, for purposes of writing constitution. Bigger problem is whether Bhutto and Mujib retain genuine interest in cooperating toward settlement. Political rhetoric since Bhutto triggered current crisis with February 15 Peshawar speech gives little ground for optimism on this score.

6 Thus, events of March 6-7 have deferred showdown, but have not altered basic elements. Bengalis appear bent on degree of autonomy which Pak military (and probably Bhutto) unable to swallow. Question now is whether Yahya or Mujib will blink first — or whether neither will blink. Showdown cannot be put off much longer.

The Department's equally pessimistic view was embodied in an information memorandum prepared by the Bureau of Intelligence and Research. The assessment agreed that the political crisis in East Pakistan had temporarily been eased, but thought the two sides had only bought time in their confrontation. The Department saw the next move as up to Yahya and the military regime, which was unlikely to concede Mujib's preconditions for attending the Assembly. To lift martial law and hand power over to an Awami League provincial administration would only open the way to full autonomy or independence for East Pakistan, which the MLA opposes. Even if MLA should concede, it would only carry the conflict to a new forum.

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Our optimism, while cautious, was grounded on our conviction that a bloody repression of the Awami League by the MLA would inevitably

result, sooner or later, in an independent Bangla Desh. I learned later that this conviction was equally shared by the Department. Consequently we thought that Yahya would try to avoid a breakdown on his negotiations with Mujib. For his part, the Awami League chief was signaling that he was prepared to back away from his earlier stance of seeking an all-Pakistan constitution based on the Six Points.

Basic to our conviction that the people of Bengal would not be cowed by "a whiff of grapeshot" was our belief that the Bengalis would fight on indefinitely for their independence, no matter how much pressure was applied by the Army. Just before Mujib's March 7 speech Embassy Islamabad had asked my views on the extent to which the Bengalis would resist a West Pakistani military crackdown, should Mujib make a unilateral declaration of independence.

Today, when I read my reply to the Embassy's query, I am both surprised and ashamed. The Embassy asked a straightforward question, and I should have given a straightforward answer; namely, the Bengalis will resist and go on resisting until they achieve independence. Instead, I had written:

> Question of extent to which Bengalis would resist West Pak repressive military measures following UDI or clear step in that direction is of less immediate concern following Mujib's speech this afternoon. Rather than open military confrontation we foresee essentially static waiting game with neither Army nor civilians prepared take hold initiative break deadlock, and each side hoping will of other side would break first. Ultimate outcome likely to be determined by capability Army contend with logistical problems and by capacity civilians bear economic disruptions, as well as overall willingness West Paks pay costs of continued military repression of hostile East Wing populace. (By Army logistical problems I meant Bengali denial of food, fuel and transport services to the Army).

An indication of the Army's willingness to take massive military measures would be any steps taken to reinforce Army strength in East Pakistan. Mujib had already expressed concern over the reported repositioning of Army units and had demanded an end to the flow of reinforcements coming to the East Wing. We were also tracking this situation as well as we could. The Defense Attaché's office in Embassy Islamabad produced this very useful summary of the Pakistani military's

order of battle in East Pakistan, including additions made in the two years since Yahya assumed power, as well as data on reinforcement logistics.

Prior to the Declaration of Martial Law in March 1969, the Pakistani regular army combat and combat support forces in East Pakistan consisted of one division with three infantry brigades and an armored cavalry troop of six PT-76 amphibious tanks and a commando battalion, for a total of approximately 14,500 troops. The Pakistani Air Force had one fighter squadron of about 16 E-86s based in Dacca. The Pakistani Navy, based primarily in Chittagong, had two or three patrol boats and one or two support ships. The personnel for both sea and air forces was about 1,000.

Since March 1969 the Army has added approximately 8,500 men as follows: One corps HQ with attached transportation, signal, police, medical and engineer units and a logistics area HQ for a total of approximately 4,500; one infantry brigade of 2,400; one cavalry regiment with 50 M-24 tanks of 600; two artillery units (caliber unknown) of 1000. The total current strength of Pakistani Army forces in East Pakistan (as of March 1) is estimated to be approaching 25,000. The combat effectiveness of the Pakistani Army in East Pakistan was significantly increased by the recent issue of more up-to-date equipment, including automatic rifles, to infantry troops. The Pakistani Air Force and the Pakistani Navy have not increased their forces by any appreciable amount.

The current disposition of Pakistani Army units in East Pakistan is as follows:

Unit	**Place**
HQ Eastern Command (Corps HQ)	Dacca
HQ 14th Infantry Division	Dacca
HQ East Pakistan Logistics Area	Dacca
23rd Infantry Brigade	Rangpur (in north)
53rd Infantry Brigade	Comilla (in east)
57th infantry Brigade	Dacca
107th Infantry Brigade	Jessore (in west)
Special Service (Commando) Battalion	Chittagong and Comilla

Another force to be reckoned with is the East Pakistan Rifles. It has 13 tactical wings which cover all or most of East Pakistan, with a total strength of about 13,000 men. Although all of its officers of the rank of captain and above are detailed from the regular army, its loyalty and willingness to obey orders directed against the people of East Pakistan is questionable since about 50 percent below the rank of captain are recruited from East Pakistan.

Most troop movements to East Pakistan have been made in merchant ships, while most officers and some key enlisted personnel have been moved by air. The time enroute by ship from Karachi to Chittagong is seven to eight days. Future major reinforcements and heavy equipment would most likely also be transported by ship.

The capability of the Pakistani Air Force and PIA to air transport troops to East Pakistan has been seriously hampered by the longer route (12,600 nautical miles vs 1,000 nautical miles across India) imposed by the Government of India after the recent hijacking. The Pakistani Air Force transport fleet consists of five C130B and one C-130E aircraft, each with a maximum capacity of 92 troops. Except for the E model, C-130 aircraft would be required to land and refuel at Colombo. The primary means of moving troops by air would be by PIA which has seven Boeing 707 aircraft (202 passengers per sortie) and four Boeing 720 B aircraft (112 passengers each). These aircraft can fly non-stop Karachi-Dacca. Using 75 percent availability factor of Pakistani Air Force and PIA aircraft and assuming all PIA Boeings put in service as troop carriers, 2,000 troops could be flown per sortie. One way flying time ranges from about 5 hours for a 707 to about 11 hours plus refueling time at Colombo for C-130B aircraft. After first sortie capability would decrease rapidly due to maintenance requirements.

During a 31-day period, from February 1 until March 3 a total of 14 Pakistani merchant ships sailed from Karachi for East Pakistan. These included ten cargo hulls, one passenger hull and three passenger-cargo hulls. This is estimated to be only a slight increase over normal sailing per month. On March 1 our Consul General in Karachi was told by the Japanese Consul General that a large number of Pakistani Army troops had recently embarked on two ships and sailed from Karachi to East Pakistan. No actual dates or number of troops were mentioned. A steamship company official was given as the source of the information. Even if the information is confirmed, the troop sailings may be only a normal rotation of Army battalions.

Because of all that was going on in Dacca we at the Consulate General were unable to develop much by way of solid information on troop movements by sea to Chittagong. We could, however, vouch for a sudden influx of troops by air through the Dacca airport. On several occasions I personally watched as about one hundred young men debarked from a PIA aircraft. They were dressed identically in short-sleeved white shirts and Chino trousers, and after having been lined up, were marched away very smartly. As March wore on, the number of such flights increased markedly.

CHAPTER TWELVE

COUNTDOWN TO DISASTER

The next two weeks, March 10-24, produced increasingly serious friction, to the point of armed clashes, between the Pakistani Army and de facto Awami League rule in East Pakistan; a spate of anti-American activity, not very serious but annoying; another effort by Mujib to get the U.S. to weigh in with Yahya; Yahya's arrival in Dacca, followed later by Bhutto, for the ostensible purpose of seeking a last minute solution to the crisis; a battle over flags on Pakistan Day; and hectic parleying between Yahya and Mujib.

Mujib's non-cooperative movement impacted upon the Army in several ways. Bazaar merchants refused to sell fruit and vegetables and other food supplies to the Army. Army convoys in Sylhet, Jessore and other towns were blocked by crowds when they attempted to collect rations. The troops did not force their way through but on March 10 the MLA issued an Order No. 114 warning that further impediments to the movement of troops or supplies would be dealt with firmly.

On March 11 ESSO executive Ray Matelli told us that ESSO facilities in Chittagong had, after checking with Awami League headquarters, refused a Pakistani Navy request for bunkering. The Navy was told that workers would destroy the ESSO facilities if fuel was supplied. The Navy apparently accepted ESSO's decision. In follow-up ESSO issued instructions to all its offices and agents not to deliver fuel supplies to the Pakistani military, although efforts by the military to take fuel supplies should not be impeded.

Also on March 11 the MLA Public Affairs Officer, a Major Salik, in a background talk to journalists was asked about the Awami League

shutdown of government offices. Salik said that the MLA had considered ordering civil servants back to work but had decided not to do so in view of President Yahya's impending visit to Dacca.

Routine military movements continued to be harassed by the hostile population. The most serious clash occurred on March 19 when Army personnel opened fire on a crowd gathered at the Joydebpur railway crossing twenty miles north of Dacca. Apparently in an effort to prevent the Army from collecting arms and ammunition from the nearby Gazipur ordnance factory, the crowd had erected a barricade, including a railway car, at the crossing. Army sources claimed one person was killed after troops fired in self-defense when the crowd attempted to seize weapons from the troops. A pro-Awami League newspaper claimed that twenty were killed in the firing.

Mujib condemned the "random" firing on "unarmed people," saying the incident was "uncalled for" at a time when President Yahya "who is also C-in-C of the armed forces" was in the city. Mujib told newsmen that "If they (MLA) think they can suppress the people's struggle by bullets and force, they simply live in a fool's paradise."

On the evening of March 19 Alamgir stopped by my house a bit out of breath. He wanted me to know that Mujib was concerned that the firing incident at Joydebpur that same day would make it difficult for him to present some compromise solution to his people at the same time the Army was engaging in "such provocations." This gave me the opportunity to make the natural rejoinder: rise above the matter; play the statesman; surely, Yahya must be as unhappy about such incidents as Mujib.

Alamgir also expressed Mujib's appreciation for a birthday gift and note I had sent earlier in the day by Alamgir's hand. The gift was a copy of President Kennedy's "Profiles in Courage" and my note had mentioned the coincidence of Mujib's birthday and St. Patrick's Day and had drawn a parallel between the Irish and the Bengalis.

We Americans in Dacca also felt the impact of the Awami League's non-cooperative movement, primarily through the ban on the opening of educational institutions. By way of Alamgir I asked Mujib to permit the American school to resume classes. He refused, and the mothers in the American community had to contend with the indefinite house stay of their children.

On March 9, for the first time since March 1, all U.S. and local employees of the Consulate General, USAID and USIS were able to

report to work. There remained, however, considerable confusion as to what organizations were allowed to function. The Pakistani employees of USIS were suddenly told not to work and we had to seek a rescinding of the order from the Awami League. "Enforcers" told PanAm to close its office, and the PanAm representative moved his ticketing operation temporarily to the travel section of the Consulate General. Mujib did okay the resumption of work on the Dacca-Aricha road bridges by Vinnell-Zachary-Perini, an American-Canadian company, provided the company vehicles flew black flags.

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We were also the object of a sudden outbreak of ineffectual bombings and shootings during this rather frantic fortnight. At about 11:15 p.m. on March 12 two presumably homemade explosive devices were exploded on the ground floor of the Adamjee Court building which housed the Consulate General offices. Although shaking the building and startling the communicators on duty, the bombs did no structural damage and left only singe marks at the impact site. According to the night watchman on duty at the time, three men in a white car without a license plate came up to the ground floor entrance, ordered the watchman at gunpoint to move a truck parked in front of the building, and then ordered him to step aside. The men threw two bombs, one exploding in the lobby and the other going off against the folding steel door at the entrance. One man also fired a revolver shot in the air before escaping.

We were uncertain whether the bomb attack was directed against us or against the Adamjees who although major financial contributors to the Awami League, were greatly disliked by many Bengalis as exploitative non-Bengali industrialists. We took some precautionary measures and did not object to the police picket that was posted the next morning at the building.

Three nights later, on March 15, the anniversary of my arrival in Dacca, my wife and I heard what seemed to be several shots. The chowkidar (watchman) at the gate told me that a jeep had just driven up and one of the occupants had fired three shots. We found some small holes in the ceiling, wall and door of a small verandah off the master bedroom. My eight-year-old son and Mark Mosely, the son of the head of the Cholera Lab, who was spending the night at our house were in the immediate vicinity, but were more excited than frightened.

The next morning AID Public Safety Advisors Corr and Jackson came by and found numerous small fragments believed to be from a small bore shotgun. They reported the incident to the police who dispatched a guard detail of eight men armed with rifles. They pitched a tent in our front yard, remaining there until the awful night of March 25.

On the night of March 19 three Molotov cocktails were thrown on the roof of a maintenance shed belonging to the Consulate General but located a mile away from the office building. One burned harmlessly; the other two did not ignite. A similar device exploded the same night in the garden of the International Hotel, causing little damage. In the same week there were bombings directed against the Dacca Club and the British Council. On March 23 two Molotov cocktails were thrown at offices occupied by the American Life Insurance Company and American Express in downtown Dacca. There was no damage. The police responded at once and provided protection.

The Superintendent of the Special Branch of the Dacca Police told an AID Public Safety Officer that the bombings were the work of a Naxalite (Communist) student group, some of whom were known to the police. The police rounded up several suspects and together with Awami League leaders had warned them that a crackdown would follow if the activity continued. The students claimed that they were motivated by a desire to attract the attention of foreigners to Bangla Desh's plight.

Happily for us, the bomb throwers and shooters displayed considerable amateurishness. One student from the Dacca Central Law College even dropped his I.D. card at the site of the maintenance shed bombing.

In mid-March the CIA developed information that a Communist group was drawing up plans to assassinate me. Ambassador Farland immediately offered to send the Embassy Security Officer over from Islamabad. I thanked him but in what was one of my better decisions asked instead for the loan of the Air Attaché. I remembered from my Kabul days when we had helped evacuate Americans from Lahore and Peshawar who were endangered in the 1965 Indo-Pakistani War, that our Air Attaché had been vital in arranging an airlift from Kabul to Turkey. Knowing that we might have to cope with an evacuation of our own, as well as a possible civil war, I was anxious to get some professional military help. No military personnel were stationed in Dacca, not even a Marine guard detail.

The Ambassador graciously complied with my request and Colonel Robert Nolan, the Air Attaché who was also Defense Attaché, flew over and joined our group. He was cool, unflappable and in the weeks ahead proved a great source of strength and sound advice. I always took the DATT (Defense Attaché) with me when I met with any of the Pakistani military. Col. Nolan also kept a very knowledgeable eye on what was going on at the Dacca airport, particularly the military side. For several weeks after March 25 no foreign diplomatic or military personnel were allowed to enter East Pakistan. I am sure that it must have grated on the MLA to have Col. Nolan in their midst during those crucial days. The British also managed to slip in an Assistant Military Attaché before "the balloon went up."

* * * * *

In the second week of March President Yahya let it be known that he would come to Dacca for talks with Mujib. On the morning of March 10 Alamgir Rahman came to see me with what he said was a message from Mujib. Alamgir said that Mujib was greatly relieved at the news that Yahya was in fact coming to Dacca. Mujib wanted very much to work out with Yahya some political settlement that would avoid bloodshed, satisfy Bengali aspirations, and preserve some vestige of a link with Pakistan. Alamgir opined that it was now too late to talk in terms of a Six Point Constitution but perhaps some solution could be found along the lines of a confederation, with separate constitutions for East and West Pakistan and one army and one foreign ministry.

Mujib's message, or rather question, said Alamgir, was "does the United States want to see a military confrontation with the prospect of an eventual Communist domination of Bengal or would it prefer a political solution to the current crisis?" I said that Mujib's question, put that way, was easy to answer. We naturally hoped for a peaceful political solution in lieu of bloodshed. We were gratified to learn that Mujib was also thinking in these terms, and we interpreted Yahya's willingness to come to Dacca as evidence that he too was desirous of achieving a political solution. We hoped both sides would approach the talks in a spirit of compromise.

Alamgir then said that Mujib wanted to know if the United States would be willing to indicate to Yahya our hopes for a political solution

to the current crisis. I said I did not know if this thought had been conveyed to Yahya in Islamabad but I would undertake to suggest to the Chargé (Ambassador Farland was still in Bangkok on medical leave) that, if an appropriate occasion presented itself before Yahya's departure, he might note to Yahya our hopes for a political solution to the problems facing Pakistan.

I made this suggestion in an EXDIS telegram sent simultaneously to Embassy Islamabad and the State Department, noting that I of course recognized that an expressed hope for a "political solution" as distinct from any other solution carried the implication that we would be concerned about military repression as the MLA solution. Still, given the urgency of the situation, I argued that we could be somewhat more positive in our response to Mujib. I promised to send an analysis of the prospects for a political solution in immediate follow up. I was not sanguine that the suggestion would bring anything more than the customary recital of the non-involvement mantra, but sitting on the brink of a disaster, I thought it worth a try.)

The promised analysis of the chances of a political settlement was sent the following day, March 11:

1 In attempting to assess the chances of a political solution to the crisis which now engulfs Pakistan we must begin by confessing to a certain lack of objectivity. It is difficult to be completely objective in Dacca in March 1971 when, out of discretion rather than valor, our cars and residences sport black flags and we echo smiling greetings of "Joi Bangla" as we move about the streets. Daily we lend our ears to the outpouring of the Bengali dream, a touching admixture of bravado, wishful thinking, idealism, animal cunning, anger, and patriotic fervor. We hear on radio Dacca and see on Dacca TV the impressive blossoming of Bengali nationalism and we watch the pitiful attempts of students and workers to play at soldiering.

2 On the other hand our contacts with the contending force, the Pakistani military, are nil. Old contacts, like Admiral Ahsan and General Yaqub, have departed or are leaving. Attempts to establish contact with others have thus far not been successful. We can only guess at their motives, hoping that they will be moved by logic rather than emotion and will accordingly seek to retrieve the most they can out of a bad situation.

3 In our view the political crisis has moved well beyond the LFO and National Assembly discussion of a Six Point constitution. The election result itself doomed this possibility by, first of all, affording the Awami League the unexpected majority by which to ram through a constitution of its making and, secondly, by cutting Bhutto out of any role greater than Chief Minister of Punjab or leader of the opposition in the National Assembly. What is needed now is a solution which will give something to Bhutto, something to Mujib, something to Yahya and the Army, still preserve at least a vestige of the unity of Pakistan, and hopefully buy time for a cooling of passions.

4 One such solution might be confederation. Bhutto could become Prime Minister of West Pakistan under any constitutional arrangement he could devise. Mujib could become Prime Minister of Bangla Desh (East Pakistan has become a term for geographers) under his own constitution. Yahya could remain as President of the Confederation of Pakistan. The Pakistan Armed Forces could, as before, draw their sustenance from both wings and be stationed in both wings.

5 The principal drawback of this solution is, of course, the problem posed by the conduct of foreign affairs. Given Bhutto's and Mujib's diametrically opposed views on the central issue of relations with India, it is difficult to see how a common foreign policy could be developed. Perhaps, the opposing views might be compromised into an essentially neutral foreign policy or, perhaps, Mujib might acquiesce in the continuation of a West Pakistan-dominated foreign policy in return for a free hand to develop the economy of Bangla Desh.

6 Another drawback of the confederation scheme, particularly in Yahya's eyes, would be that confederation is but a half step to full independence for Bangla Desh.

7 The other solution which suggests itself to us as a compromise involves the prompt establishment of provincial governments in each of the federating states, the postponement for a while of the convening of the National Assembly, and the continuation of the central government pretty much as it existed pre-March 1. Mujib would find this solution less palatable than the foregoing but Yahya and Bhutto might prefer it more. Actually, it is no solution at all but a postponement, a purchase of time. The key

question of the relationship of Bangla Desh to the larger entity of Pakistan would have to be sorted out in a less frenetic atmosphere and some of the political passion could be channeled into the problems of day-to-day government on the provincial level.

8 What are the alternatives? The possibility of Mujib compromising sufficiently on the Six Points to permit the National Assembly to agree on a constitution seems out of the question. It would be political suicide for Mujib; his people would not tolerate it. We have passed that point in time. The ominous prospect of a military crackdown is much more than a possibility, but it would only delay, and ensure, the independence of Bangla Desh.

9 On balance, we believe that some form of confederation, spite the difficulties of its practical application, offers perhaps the best way out of the present dilemma.

The Department's reply came as no surprise.

2 We have [also] carefully weighed Dacca's suggestion that, if opportunity arises to see Yahya before he leaves for Dacca, we might convey to him our hope for "political solution" of problems facing Pakistan. We recognize advantage we might achieve with Mujib by such intercession and importance of having good initial relations with him should East Pakistan separate. However, believe these considerations outweighed by disadvantages on West Pakistan side. With drift in East Pakistan having gone as far toward separation as it has endorsement of "political solution" could readily be construed by Yahya as support for East Pak aspirations. In current charged situation, U.S. approach could be seen by Yahya and GOP as unwarranted interference in Pakistani domestic affairs, lend substance to suspicions that U.S. supports separatism, and undermine our future relations with West Pakistani leaders. Since there are inherent limitations on our influence in any event, and Yahya visit to Dacca itself provides best opportunity to salvage union, believe we could continue maintain our posture of non-involvement.

* * * * *

On the eve of Yahya's arrival in Dacca Bhutto gave a speech in West Pakistan in which he suggested that power be transferred to the majority party in each wing, i.e., the PPP in West Pakistan and the Awami League in East Pakistan, rather than allow the overall majority party, the Awami League, to govern Pakistan. While the reaction in Dacca to this suggestion was overwhelmingly negative, we believed that Mujib himself was no longer harboring any expectation of being Prime Minister of Pakistan but was moving toward a fallback position of first establishing an Awami League provincial government in East Pakistan, and leaving the details of the relationship of that government to the Government of Pakistan for further negotiation.

President Yahya arrived in Dacca on March 15 (the Ides of March). No local political leader met him at the airport and he drove quickly to President's House in a heavily armed convoy. He could not help seeing that virtually every house and automobile sported a black flag mandated by the Awami League. A student group paraded past President's House shouting anti-Yahya slogans.

Just minutes before Yahya's arrival Alamgir Rahman came by to tell me that Mujib was going to urge Yahya to agree to an immediate turnover of power to the Awami League in East Pakistan. The Awami League felt that this demand was more tenable now that Bhutto had made a similar demand in his March 14 speech and now that Mujib had consolidated his de facto control of the East Pakistan government. Mujib would also demand that the strength of the military in East Pakistan be reduced to the level existing before March 1. According to Alamgir, Mujib would then agree to the convening of the National Assembly and would accept any time limit for constitution-making set by Yahya. Any attempt by the military to use force, said Alamgir, would be met by an instant declaration of independence.

I took this opportunity to point out to Alamgir that Yahya, as well as his senior colleagues in the Pakistani Army, were proud men with a limited tolerance to insults and harassment. I said that in my view the military in Dacca had clearly acted with restraint in the face of numerous provocations and wondered how long this restraint could be maintained. Alamgir answered that Mujib was aware of these factors and volunteered that Mujib would not stand on ceremony with respect to the modalities of the forthcoming talks. Mujib, he said, was prepared to go to

President's House for talks. He added, however, that at some time during Yahya's visit Mujib would like Yahya to drop by his house for a "cup of tea."

It was very difficult to discover what actually happened in the talks between Yahya and Mujib. Neither side issued a communique at the end of each day's discussions. The people around the President were inaccessible. The press seemed to be restricted, as we were, to information gained from the Awami League, information that suggested wildly fluctuating moods of optimism and despair.

Herewith our report on the initial meeting between Yahya and Mujib on March 16:

1 According to Moinul Hossain, editor of Pro-Awami League daily *Ittefaq*, March 16 meeting between president Yahya Khan and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman commenced with exchange of mutual recriminations over responsibility for current crisis, discussion then "settled down" and conversation continued in generally cordial atmosphere. Talks apparently centered on Mujib's four preconditions, especially question of ending martial law and transferring power to elected representatives. Hossain stated that Yahya questioned technical aspects of transferring power and ending martial law. Hossain added that he "had heard" that Justice Munir being called over from West Wing to offer expert advice on matter. March 16 talks were preliminary and exploratory in nature, Hossain commented. If all went well, today's round (March 17) between Yahya and Mujib would be followed by meeting March 18 between two men joined by principal advisers.

March 17, which coincidentally was Mujib's 53rd birthday, was an inauspicious day for the talks. Our report was as brief as the talks.

> We have just learned from reliable newspaperman that Mujib left President's House at 1100 hours after one hour talk with Yahya. Mujib reportedly looked grim and discouraged and told newspaperman no further talks scheduled. Mujib said he hoped talks would continue but certainly would not take place today.

Summoned by Yahya, Bhutto flew over to Dacca on March 21. I had gone to the Intercontinental Hotel for a luncheon and thus happened to be in the lobby when Bhutto arrived to go up to his suite. I thought I was watching a re-run of a 1930's Hollywood gangster film. Bhutto strode into the hotel flanked by two machine-gun toting bodyguards. The hatred

of the Bengalis in the lobby was palpable; they blamed Bhutto much more than Yahya for the crisis facing East Pakistan. For his part Bhutto stared ahead, his reptilian eyes fixed on the wall. He was in the enemy's camp and he knew it.

Somehow, and I don't know whether it was Yahya or Mujib who took the first step, the talks resumed and began to show indications of progress. More and more people were being drawn into the talks at the advisory level. Our report of the March 23 discussions read as follows:

1 Frenetic pace of high level political discussions in Dacca aimed at resolving current crisis continued unabated March 23. President Yahya Khan met with Khan Abdul Qaiyum Khan, President of the Pakistan Muslim League (Q) for an hour. Later, President met in joint session with five other West Pak politicos.

2 Awami League leaders Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmed and Dr. Kamal Hossain met twice with President Yahya's advisers for a total of over three hours of talks. President's advisers reportedly included economic adviser M. M. Ahmad, former law minister A. R. Cornelius, principal staff officer Lt. General Pirzada, and legal adviser to MLA Lt. Colonel M. A. Hassan. AL General Secretary Tajuddin Ahmed told newsmen discussion centered on principles agreed upon earlier by President and Mujib.

3 PPP Chairman Bhutto visited President's House for hour and half. Bhutto told newsmen he met at that time with Lt. General Pirzada.

4 Five West Pak politicos who met jointly with President called on Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in afternoon.

5 *Comment*: Numerous reports are floating around to effect Yahya will address nation March 25 at which time he will announce formula to resolve present impasse.

* * * * *

March 23 was also Pakistan Day, a not very happy coincidence. It was on March 23, 1940 that the Muslim League meeting in Lahore adopted a resolution that the areas of Muslim majority in northwestern and eastern India should be grouped together to constitute independent states.

Generally referred to as the Lahore Resolution, the resolution came to be celebrated as the first announced intention to establish a homeland for the Muslims of the sub-continent, i.e. Pakistan.

Mujib declared that Pakistan Day would be celebrated as "Resistance Day" in East Pakistan. Hundreds of the new Bangla Desh flags were flying in Dacca, including over Mujib's house. The portrait of Mohammed Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, was burned by demonstrators outside Mujib's home, as was the Pakistan national flag. The foreign missions in Dacca were drawn into the flag issue as groups of Awami League youths went from one consular establishment to another, requesting, and sometimes demanding, that the Bangla Desh flag be flown.

The Dacca press on March 24 dutifully reported which foreign missions had flown the Pakistani flag and which the new Bangla Desh flag on "Resistance Day." The Soviets and British had hoisted the Bangla Desh flag in addition to their national flags, while the Iranian, Indonesian and Nepalese had flown the flag of Pakistan. The press reported that the Chinese had started the day flying the Pakistani flag but had been forced by students to substitute a Bangla Desh flag. It was noted that other countries, including the U.S., had not flown either flag in order to avoid the controversy.

Since the office was closed for the holiday, we flew no flag at Adamjee Court. I flew the Stars and Stripes over my residence. At mid-day several students came by and asked that I fly the Bangla Desh flag, but I refused.

The Nepalese Consul General, whose residence was near mine, told me that some 25 students came by his residence and demanded that he take down the Pakistani flag, hoist the Bangla Desh flag, and surrender the Pakistani flag to them for burning. The Nepalese Consul General complied with their request and the students burned the Pakistani flag in front of his residence. The Nepalese Consul General also saw the students perform the same stunt at the nearby Chinese Consulate General. The Chinese then came over to the Nepalese residence and requested him to inform the police. (China was generally perceived by the Bengalis as Pakistan's closest friend.)

Our USIS branch centers were often targets of demonstrations. The only "flag" incident we heard of was at Mymensingh where students raised the Bangla Desh flag over the center. The branch director went down and removed the flag, explaining to the students that he had no authority to fly any flag. The students took this with good grace.

* * * * *

Despite the Awami League provocations on Pakistan (Resistance) Day, it seemed that Yahya and Mujib might actually be nearing agreement on a solution to the constitutional crisis. Alamgir came by the house at lunch time on March 24 to tell me that Mujib had been confident as of the evening of March 23 that he had reached an agreement with Yahya on a solution that would involve (a) the immediate establishment of provincial governments, (b) the temporary continuation of the central government under President Yahya, (c) the subsequent drafting of separate constitutions by East MNAs and West MNAs, with the two constitutions to be subsequently blended into one in a joint meeting, and (d) an understanding that the eventual constitution as well as the interim arrangements, would embody a division of power between the center and the provinces so that the center retained only defense, foreign affairs and currency, with foreign trade and aid to be provincial subjects. Alamgir said that even M. M. Ahmed (economic adviser to Yahya) had agreed to this formula, and that the provinces of West Pakistan would work out among themselves whether to handle aid and trade on a consortium basis. In response to my question Alamgir said reports that the agreement involved a political coalition government at the center, were "pure poppycock."

Only three or four clauses of the memorandum of agreement remained to be worked out in detail by the advisers, said Alamgir, and the final meeting of principals could be held and an announcement made by Yahya. However, the President's advisers had asked for a postponement of this morning's meeting until 1800 hours (6 p.m.), with this later meeting dependent upon confirmation. As of 1400 hours (2 p.m.) no word had come from President's House.

I asked Alamgir how Bhutto fitted into this. He said Mujib had not mentioned Bhutto and Alamgir had the impression that Bhutto had played an essentially neutral role.

But the main purpose of Alamgir's call was to convey Mujib's belief that President Yahya, presumably under pressure of the MLA "hawks," appeared to be reneging on the agreement reached earlier. Mujib hoped

that the U.S. could "stiffen" Yahya by letting him know how much we favored a political solution to the current crisis.

I told Alamgir that I thought it highly unlikely that the U.S. would, even if it could, try to influence Yahya at this juncture. I said I could make no commitment except to inform the Embassy and the Department promptly of Mujib's concern over the latest development in the talks.

In reporting this conversation I made the comment that Mujib seemed to offer little evidence that Yahya was backing away from the agreement or was about to take a harder line. I thought the Awami League chief would naturally be nervous about any last minute obstacle to an agreement which gives him everything but independence and which, we believed, he could sell to the people of Bangla Desh.

The Embassy, with Ambassador Farland now back from Bangkok, replied thusly:

1 Agree with ConGen Dacca comments that evidence lacking re Yahya's backing away from any previous agreement. Radio Pakistan 8 p.m. news broadcast March 24 states AL advisers did meet today with President's advisers, who now scheduled meet with Bhutto's advisers tomorrow March 25.

2 In any event, as we understood Dept's more recent guidance this subject, it would be inappropriate for USG to intervene with Yahya as Mujib requests. Embassy agrees that we should not intervene, at least at this time and on this issue.

3 We believe Consul General should respond to Alamgir, if response believed necessary, that we were pleased to note advisers did meet March 24 and we hope progress is continuing toward mutually agreeable solutions.

But the following day proved Mujib right in his distrust of Yahya and the Embassy and me tragically wrong in our implicit assessment that Yahya was in good faith seeking a negotiated settlement along the lines he had indicated to Mujib.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

MAN'S FURY

December 7, 1941 is remembered by Americans, in FDR's memorable words, as "a day that will live in infamy." So too should the night of March 25, 1971 live on in the annals of the young nation of Bangladesh as a night of infamy.

On the evening of March 25 we hosted a dinner for sixteen, followed by a showing of the film "Cass Timberlane," starring Spencer Tracy and Lana Turner. I had tried throughout the crisis to maintain a business-as-usual posture, as far as the increased workload permitted, in order to provide some relief from the tension and also as a reassurance to the American community.

We had finished dinner and were watching the fairly depressing film when the emergency field phone sounded. It was a call from Hugh Haight, who reported that students were felling trees in order to barricade the streets against Army vehicles. He also said that Yahya, Bhutto and other West Pakistanis had suddenly flown back to West Pakistan. He was trying to work his way down to the office.

When I informed our guests of Hugh's report, the Bengali guests, two High Court justices and their wives, decided to make a run for it because they did not live very far away. One American couple was concerned about their children at home and also decided to leave. They returned, however, after a few minutes, having discovered a body in the street a block from my house. Other guests, including the Yugoslav Consul General and his wife, and my deputy, Bob Carle and his wife Suzy, felt they had no option but to spend the night with us. Meg rushed about accumulating sleeping gear and, as I remember, we ended up with twelve unexpected house guests.

Around 10 p.m. I had a second call from Hugh. He and a communicator were at the office and were beginning to send fragmentary reports of the military crackdown. On March 27 I sent this telegram of commendation:

1 I cannot praise too highly political officer Haight and communicator McDermott for their courage and initiative in working their way to office night March 25-26 and thereby keeping our communications lines open. They did so in the face of grave personal danger, having been fired at several times by Pak Military.

2 Tonight Defense Attaché, Consular Officer Malpeli and I have joined Haight and communicators at Congen office.

Together with our house guests, we spent a good part of the night of March 25-26 on the flat roof of the house, watching with horror the constant flash of tracer bullets across the dark sky and listening to the more ominous clatter of machine gun fire and the heavy clump of tank guns. We were able to establish that there was particularly heavy firing in the vicinity of the police lines and the East Pakistan Rifles barracks. We could see many fires burning, some of them in old Dacca. Our head bearer told us that one particularly large fire was burning in a poor bazaar area where many of his family lived.

On March 26 the sun rose over a shocked and quiet city. Smoke could still be seen here and there but there was no firing. A curfew was imposed for the entire day. Army jeeps patrolled the streets of Dacca. At seven p.m. President Yahya addressed the nation from Karachi, announcing that he had authorized the armed forces to restore the authority of the Government of Pakistan in the East. He said the Awami League was outlawed and declared Sheikh Mujib a traitor, guilty of flaunting Government authority, insulting the armed forces and bringing the nation to the verge of disintegration.

The curfew was lifted at 7 a.m. March 27 but reimposed at 4 p.m. We hurried to use this window of opportunity to check on the safety of the American community and to begin to piece together the events of the night of March 25, the horror of which we sensed but could not yet document.

Together with the Defense Attaché, Col. Nolan, I went to see General Farman Ali, the MLA director for civil affairs. Farman was a tall, aloof man who had spent much of his military career in East Pakistan and spoke Bengali. His daughters attended Dacca University and he cultivated some of the faculty.

In response to my query Farman said that he had no reports of injuries to any Americans or any other foreigners. He noted, however, that two Americans had been found driving around during the previous night's curfew and were ordered to return home. He maintained that the Army was in firm control of Dacca, which indeed our own reconnaissance tended to confirm. Again, in answer to my question, Farman said he had no news from Chittagong except that there had been considerable trouble there. In his view, movement throughout the province was unsafe for the moment.

Farman then gave us the MLA version of what had happened on the night of March 25. According to him, Awami League leaders began to put up barricades as soon as they learned that President Yahya had left Dacca for West Pakistan at 1900 hours (7 p.m.). He said the Awami League plan counted on the support of the police and the East Pakistan Rifles who, together with Awami League volunteers, would try to drive the Army back into the cantonment and thus control Dacca. Farman said the police and East Pakistan Rifles had in fact sided with the Awami League but after one half hour of "really hard fighting" the military had defeated them.

With a straight face Farman said it was the Awami League and not the Martial Law authorities who had cut telephone communications at 0030 hours (a half hour after midnight). He thought the telephones would be back in working condition before a day (It turned out to be closer to two weeks). The Army, which had its own communications network, would, of course, be much less disadvantaged than the Awami League by the cutting of telephone service. The Awami League leaders would have been frantically calling each other to coordinate their movements in the face of the sudden Army onslaught.

Farman also confirmed that Sheikh Mujib had been arrested.

Later the same day, March 27, we submitted our first situation report:

1. Military in complete control. All Americans in Dacca safe. We are not yet in touch with Americans in outlying districts or Chittagong but are endeavoring to do so. Advice to all is stand fast and observe curfew. Reports from CARE rep returning from Noakhali indicate countryside in high state of tension.

2. According numerous accounts including eye witness reports, Pak military crackdown on Bengali nationalists has been carried out throughout Dacca swiftly, efficiently (despite heavy

resistance from some quarters, including pro-Awami League police and East Pak Rifles). And often with ruthless brutality.

3 Congen local told us word passed via Awami League volunteers around 2130 to 2200 Mar 25 for public to construct barricades on grounds "military are coming." He reported heavy firing of automatic weapons by troops in his locality, much of which seemingly at random. He also conveyed report that much firing occurred in nearby Azimpur graveyard where remnants of EPRs who fled with weapons from their camp at Peelkhana were pursued by Army troops.

4 Regarding whereabouts of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Abdur Razzaq, MPA-elect and Chief of AL volunteer corps, told one reliable source on morning of Mar 27 that he had visited Mujib at about 2300 hours March 25. He tried prevail on Mujib leave his residence, but Mujib adamantly refused, saying if Army wanted blood they could have his. If he fled, too many people would shed blood for his action, and he, therefore, would stay put. Razzaq said he planned move out of Dacca in hopes re-establishing communications links with his volunteers to plan for further resistance.

5 ConGen officer residing on same street as Mujib heard several shots fired around Sheikh's house at approximately midnight Mar 25. Later he witnessed heavy automatic weapons fire seemingly directed in vicinity of AL leader's house at approximately 0130 Mar 26. By daybreak black flag and Bangla Desh flag had disappeared from Mujib's house.

6 Indian Deputy Hicomer told us that about 10,000 Hindus are residing in Tanti Bazar and Sankhari Bazar Mohallas in Old Dacca. He said this area has been surrounded by the military and houses have been burnt and people butchered. Large number of casualties feared. Residents fleeing from this area were also not spared. He asked us convey this info to Government of India. We told him communications uncertain.

7 Foreign correspondents all of whom were staying at Intercon Hotel were rounded up and taken by Army last night and taken to airport and dispatched by air to Karachi.

8 We have noticed thousands of Bengalis streaming through city, carrying personal belongings and obviously trying to get out to villages.

Not all the foreign journalists were rounded up on the night of March 25. Simon Dring, then a 27-year-old reporter for the *London Daily Telegraph,* evaded the roundup by hiding on the roof of the Intercontinental Hotel and then later went around the city to see at first-hand the results of the Army's repression. He flew out to West Pakistan two days later with his notes intact (hidden in his socks) despite having been twice stripped and searched. Michael Laurent, an Associated Press photographer, also eluded the Army for a couple of days, as did Arnold Zeitlin, the Associated Press correspondent, who was lucky enough to have been dining out with friends on the night of March 25. Dring's and Zeitlin's reports were the first to show the outside world the extent and fury of the military crackdown.

On March 31 the sub-MLA Administrator for Dacca, a Pakistani Army Lt. Colonel, told Col. Nolan and me, again with a straight face, that the foreign journalists had been flown out of Dacca in response to their own requests, because they feared for their safety, and since they could not file any copy because of press censorship. It is somewhat insulting to be lied to so broadly. One is tempted to break out in a loud guffaw, but diplomatic training restricts one to a bemused smile. Can you imagine a journalist worthy of his trade who, finding himself sitting on a breaking story, would demand to be flown to safety?

March 27 was a busy day. The Public Affairs Officer, Brian Bell, toured the city in the company of a Bengali-speaking newsman and saw and was told the following:

1 Newspaper *Ittefaq* which supported Awami League razed: Newsprint still burning, told by *Ittefaq* employee night production staff of approximately 40 printing newspaper midnight Thursday when Army tanks drew up across street and opened fire without warning. PAO saw tank tracks in asphalt, PAO shown one charred body, told impossible tell how many killed. By looks of building would think loss of life high.

2 Police barracks at Rajarbagh police camp leveled, apparently by heavy guns. Army occupying camp. Told was two hour battle Thursday night between Army and police with heavy casualties on police side.

3 Iqbal Hall at Dacca University, said be headquarters Awami League student activities and rumored recent days be stocked with firearms

and ammo, badly damaged, appeared by mortar fire, dead body lies 10 feet from entrance. Inside burned in places.

4 Students said eight dead at Iqbal Hall and 25 at Jagannath Hall, Hindu students' dormitory.

5 Saw evidence of fire damage inside Provost's offices. Rest of University appeared undamaged.

6 Large area on outskirts Old Dacca gutted. Area contained markets, shops, dwellings, railroad workers' dormitory. Latter building badly damaged: Almost nothing left of others which were flimsy structures. Estimate area gutted about size of two dozen U.S. city blocks. Told Army "blasted" area with gunfire because is where "those who usually cause trouble in Old Dacca live."

7 Press Club across street from USIS has three large holes in upstairs wall. Told was mortared since Army blames press for stirring up "trouble." Attack around midnight Thursday: Night guard only one in building. Told me badly hurt by shrapnel.

8 Newspaper *The People*, Awami League supporter, which has been especially outspoken in criticism military recent days; also attacked, from outside could not see much damage but told gutted inside.

9 USIS undamaged.

Our sitrep of March 28:

1 Despite radio Pakistan's announcements, life has not returned to normal in Dacca. Curfew re-imposed today (March 28) at noon but lifted shortly thereafter. Curfew now scheduled take effect again at 1700 hours. Army checkpoints being set up at several intersections in city. Continuous flow of people streaming out of city carrying meager possessions. From their dress they appear to be Hindus, although panic-stricken Muslims reportedly also departing.

2 We now are informed that Army is attempting to pick up all Awami League leaders including MNAs, MPAs and student leaders. All roads out of the city are blocked, hence it is impossible for well-known figures to slip into countryside. One source claimed that Sheikh Mujib's oldest son and one daughter were killed during firing at the Sheikh's house night of 25th-26th. (Fortunately this report turned out to be false.) Firing continued in certain areas of city last night but with less intensity than previous two nights. Some explosions, presumably cannon fire or demolition charges, also heard.

3 Apparently large-scale looting, pillaging and murder on part of non-Bengali people against Hindus and Bengalis taking place and Army standing by watching. Last night Hindu village at Dacca Club golf course burned. Twelve bodies seen by American warden. Dacca rife with similar atrocity stories. Local who clears shipments for us told us in tears that Army killed his sister. Claimed military burst into his house in Dhanmondi residential area searching for arms. He denied having any and invited them to search. At this point his 17-year-old sister intervened, threw arms around him, but was bayoneted by soldier. Girl died on spot. Relatives of two of three pro-Awami League youths who circulated in Dhanmondi giving their phone numbers to foreigners and offering respond to calls for help if houses molested by "miscreants" reported youths went to Mujib's house unarmed "to protect him" but were killed by troops.

4 Radio Pakistan this morning found it necessary to deny that Comilla, Jessore and Chittagong were under control of the Awami League. Radio Pakistan also denies that General Tikka Khan had been wounded during fighting. (Comment: Rebuttals apparent effort refute broadcasts by illicit radio station).

5 Major effort underway locate and freeze all Awami League funds (subject of Martial Law Order 134). ConGen officer saw troops arrive and heard them break into National Bank of Pakistan guest house morning March 27. Three nude men with towels wrapped around heads trundled out of building and taken away. Portly appearance suggested they might be bank officials. According neighborhood gossip, troops came searching for all bank records, in particular accounts of Awami League funds or transactions.

6 *Pakistan Observer* and *Morning News* appeared today for first time since March 25. Except for mastheads, both papers appeared in same skeletal one-page format, front contained text of President Yahya's March 26 broadcast and text of Zone B Martial Law orders 117 to 134. Back contained full page ad for National Shipping Corporation. Censorship obviously in effect.

We continued our reporting of all aspects of the military crackdown. A smattering of these reports indicates the diversity of the sources we used, as well as the often unconfirmed nature of the raw information reaching us. Remember, though, the situation in which we were working. There was a daily curfew; all telephone communication was denies us; we were not allowed to travel outside Dacca; and we were dealing with a populace which was in shock, and angry and fearful for their lives.

Item: American priests in Old Dacca tell us that the Army had been exclusively responsible for all fires in that section on March 25 and 26. The Army's technique was to set houses afire and then gun down people as they left their homes. Although both Hindus and Muslims lived in the areas burned out, the priests think the Hindus were a particular focus of the campaign.

Item: We received recurrent but sometimes contradictory reports that a number of University professors had been killed, although the circumstances of their killing are vague. The British say six are confirmed dead, as do the Indians, although their names do not exactly correspond. We still do not know whether these faculty members were killed in a cross-fire when the student halls at Dacca University were attacked on the night of March 25 or whether they were subsequently killed.

Item: A well-connected Bengali whom we have always considered reliable tells us that he was an eye-witness to the wiping out of one family with no Awami League or government connections. He also claims that the Army entered the houses of three or four senior Bengali civil servants of the Government of East Pakistan and killed all the inhabitants.

Item: We receive widespread and we believe reliable reports of troops engaged in the looting of homes and the shaking down of people trying to flee Dacca.

Item: Pakistani soldiers are reportedly standing by while non-Bengalis (Biharis) loot Bengali dwellings. On the morning of March 29 several officers of the Consulate General witnessed the butchering of one civilian by another in an area known for Bengali-Bihari discord.

Item: We hear of house-to-house searches for "Fouji men," i.e. Bengali ex-servicemen who are being shot on sight whenever found.

Item: The USAID Public Safety Chief whose job it was to maintain liaison with the East Pakistan police reports that no police are seen anywhere in Dacca, except for a few senior police officials awaiting orders from the MLA. The Public Safety Chief was implored by one police official "Pray for us."

Item: Our Provincial AID Director, Eric Griffel, was eye witness to what appeared to be unprovoked firing by the Army on children and fishermen on the afternoon of March 28. Approximately 20 to 30 shots were fired, although no one seemed to be hit.

* * * * *

We were particularly concerned about the military situation in Chittagong because that city was home to a number of Americans and word was reaching us that the fighting there was very heavy. The following trio of telegrams attests to the strong Bengali resistance in Chittagong:

Radio Pakistan announced last night (March 28) and this morning that situation in Chittagong was "improving." Indian Deputy Hicomer Sen Gupta told DPO Carle and Colonel Nolan another version. He received his information from a Bengali Army captain who came to Dacca on Friday with Brigadier Majoomdar, senior Pakistan military officer in the area. Majoomdar came to Dacca because situation in Chittagong was getting beyond his control. He said an EPR Major Zia had rallied EPR forces plus Awami league volunteers and had captured the cantonment and the city was in their control on Friday and early Saturday. Sen Gupta said that the clandestine radio broadcast had originated in Chittagong. (This was confirmed by another source who had also heard this broadcast.) In response to situation, Pak Army had dispatched three battalions to Chittagong on Saturday and heavy fighting was in progress. Sen Gupta's informant was of opinion that Bengali forces would have to surrender or be wiped out since they lacked heavy weapons. Sen Gupta also claimed that PAF was supporting the Army operations in Chittagong in these attacks. (We witnessed four F-86's take off this morning, which is the first such air activity that we have been aware of since the crisis started. They were not carrying any external ordnance.

2 AID contract employee was told by PAF flight lieutenant, who had himself participated in operations, that PAF had landed paratroopers to secure Chittagong Airport and had engaged in some bombing attacks on Chittagong. PAF officer said Pak military was now in control key parts of town although several pockets of resistance remained.

(The "Major Zia" mentioned in the telegram was Ziaur Rahman, a major in the East Bengal Regiment, who was later to become President of Bangladesh.)

1 Radio Pakistan reported last night (March 30) that situation in Chittagong was normal and that "operations against the band of armed miscreants which had been harassing peaceful civilians" had been concluded.

2 Yesterday noon Major General Farman Ali told Consul General Blood that fighting was still going on on one hill near the cantonment. ConGen's expression of concern over the safety of Americans in the Chittagong area due to the use of aerial and naval bombardment by Pak forces brought no denial from General Farman.

3 We have been informed that the so-called "armed miscreants" comprised of elements of the East Bengal Regiment, East Pak Rifles and volunteers under the command of Major Gia (or Zia) which is a code name.

4 Radio Bangla Desh was heard again yesterday morning by a number of people in Dacca and while we suspect that it was coming from the Chittagong area, we are unable to confirm this. The assertion by Radio Pakistan this morning that Radio Bangla Desh had not come on the air since noon yesterday confirms that it was operating. Since it reported considerably on events in Chittagong, it may have been in that area.

5 We are making every effort to secure military permission and transportation to go to Chittagong today or tomorrow to look into safety of American community. Army sent message last night to UNDP Rep saying all UN and foreign personnel were safe.

On April 4 we were able to report:

1 After a delay of a week consular officers of the U.S., Russia, Yugoslavia and Japan were finally flown to Chittagong on a special PIA Fokker. Reason for the delay became apparent almost immediately upon arrival. Heavy smoke from two large fires could be seen from plane windows. U.S. citizens who have been trapped in Chittagong during a week of heavy fighting stated that soldiers conducted a clean-up campaign this morning of all civilian bodies for consular delegation benefit.

2 Story, although sketchy due to shakiness of U.S. citizens, of events in Chittagong begins on Friday morning when East Pakistan Rifles mutinied, killing all West Pak officers and taking control of all of city with exception of cantonment. City was quiet through Sunday, with all U.S. citizens treated politely by Awami League. No reports of either killing or looting of West Pak population during this period. Army moved early Monday morning, first taking airport and then moving through port area into city. Heaviest fighting reported on Tuesday with both air strikes and tanks used by Army. Fighting, in many cases house to house, has continued through today. Roughly estimate less than one-third city still in AL hands.

3 Obvious that fighting called off during consular corps visit. Squad size units were resting on roadside, obviously in battle gear. Three M-24 tanks also waiting for our departure. Yugoslav citizens report napalm used in air strike this morning. Pak Army officer admitted parts of city still in Awami League hands. Fires not more than two hours old were viewed by reporting officer, still burning strongly. Many residential areas burned out.

4 U.S. citizens eyewitness to numerous incidents of cold-blooded murder of unarmed Bengalis by Pak military. One U.S. home looted by military. A male U.S. citizen was held overnight at gunpoint by Pak military, released in morning by officer.

* * * * *

One disturbing aspect at the end of March, almost a week after the Army's crackdown and after the Army seemed to have established a firm control over Dacca, was the continuation of wanton acts of violence by the military. Scattered firing was heard throughout the nights from various parts of the city. Undeniably Hindus were a special focus of the Army's terror campaign. Our local employees at the Consulate General

told us that most of the areas being set on fire were predominantly Hindu. One told us that the Hindu temple on his street was set on fire by the Army.

Truckloads of prisoners were seen going into the East Pakistan Rifles camp at Peelkhana, from which one of our officers heard steady firing of approximately one shot per ten seconds for a thirty minute period. Our inference was that captured Bengali members of the East Pakistan Rifles were being executed.

The Army continued its search for student activists and Awami Party leaders. On the night of March 30-31 a room-by-room check of the Hotel Intercontinental was conducted by an Army NCO and two enlisted men. On the same night five vehicles of Army troops visited our compound where the motor pool is located. Several scaled the walls and inspected the compound, but nothing seemed disturbed.

On March 27 the Army demolished the Central Shahid Minar (Martyr's Monument) commemorating those killed in the 1952 language movement. The Shahid Minar was the most powerful physical symbol of Bengali cultural and political aspirations. Each year, on February 21, the anniversary of the shooting of two students was commemorated in parades, speeches and poetry. The language movement was a protest against the decision that Urdu be the official language of Pakistan, and Bengali agitation forced the National Assembly in 1954 to designate "Urdu and Bengali and such other languages as may be declared" to be the official languages of Pakistan. Today, a much enlarged monument stands in the same spot and additionally another very impressive martyrs' monument commemorating the liberation war heroes stands in the outskirts of the capital city at Savar.

* * * * *

By the end of March we were still hard put to estimate the number of casualties as a result of the military crackdown in Dacca. The casualty toll at the University was particularly difficult to ascertain, with estimates ranging from several hundred to over one thousand. The University had been officially closed for several weeks prior to March 25 and many of the students must have left. On the other hand, the University halls had become the base for students active in the Awami League "movement," and it is not inconceivable that young people

might have flocked to the University at the first indication of trouble on the night of March 25-26. What was generally believed was that the Army plan of attack at the University was to take no prisoners and to kill all students present in the dorms. We saw traces of two mass graves on the campus, one near Iqbal Hall, the other near Rokeya Hall. The rain on the night of March 29 exposed some bodies and the stench was terrible.

The students at Iqbal Hall, some of who had weapons, were either shot in their rooms or mowed down when they came out of the building in groups. Rokeya Hall, a dormitory for girl students, was set ablaze and the girls were machine-gunned as they fled the building. The attack seemed to be aimed at eliminating the female student leadership since many girl student leaders resided in that hall.

Our contacts at the University told us that the game plan was for student leaders to escape to the countryside and organize a resistance movement. From Army radio broadcasts we monitored, we gathered that the Army was having difficulty in tracking down known student leaders, leading us to believe that most had succeeded in getting out of Dacca.

It was equally, perhaps even more, difficult to determine the casualties among the University faculty. We thought that most had been the victims of a pre-planned purge, but soon found that some faculty members reported killed were still alive. On April 7 we reported the names of seven faculty members who were reliably reported to have been killed by the Army.

1 Although discrepancies exist in various reports of casualties among faculty members at Dacca University in connection with Army move onto campus March 26, following are names of seven faculty members reliably reported killed by troops.

1 Dr. G. C. Dev, Head of Philosophy Department. Visited us on several occasions, where admirers have established a "Dev Foundation" (In Philadelphia). Publications include book, "Buddha the Humanist." A Hindu, he reportedly offered no resistance, was taken from residence to field in front of Jagannath Hall, and there shot.

2 Mr. A.N.M. Muniruzzaman, Reader, Department of Statistics. Taken from residence and shot. Apparently only wounded. Wife took body back into house. Soldiers returned two hours later and shot him again.

3 Dr. Jotirmoy Guhathakurta, Reader, English Department, and Provost of Jagannath Hall (Hindu residence Hall). Dragged out of residence, shot in neck and mortally wounded.

4 Mr. M.A. Muktadir, Senior Lecturer, Geology. Killed in his residence. After shooting started, went to upstairs flat to join wife, when soldiers burst in, shooting.

5 Dr. Mafizullah Kabir, History Department. Details of death unknown.

6 Mr. Sadeque, Headmaster, University Laboratory School (Institute of Educational Research). Killed in his residence.

7 Mr. Fazlur Rahman, Senior Lecturer, Soil Science. Details of death unknown.

Reported dead, but not confirmed, are: Dr. Kamal Hossain (Department of Mathematics, not to be confused with Awami League MNA-elect Dr. Kamal Hossain); Dr. Azizul Huq, Department of Mathematics; a Professor Hye of the Department of Sociology; and Dr. Habibullah, History Department.

Professor Innas Ali of Physics Department, earlier reported killed, only slightly wounded when troops fired at him while he at window of residence. Economics department head and ex-governor Dr. M. N. Huda who also reported dead reportedly was severely beaten but was saved by pleading of family members. Troops reportedly unsuccessfully sought economist Dr. Anisur Rahman and political scientist A. Razzaq.

Our professional contacts very frightened by events and fear for lives. No evidence however any Dacca University faculty members picked up by MLA since March 26-27 period.

On May 12 we amended the foregoing report as follows:

1 To date our best information is that eleven members of Dacca University faculty were killed night of Mar 25-26. These include seven reported [Reftel B] less Dr. Mafizullah Kabir of History Dept who is alive, plus following five:

Khan Khadem, Asst House Tutor Dacca Hall and Lecturer, Dept of Physics.

Sharafat Ali, Asst House Tutor, Dacca Hall and Lecturer, Dept of Math.

Talapatra, Asst House Tutor, Dacca Hall and Lecturer, Dept of Sociology.

Anupam Bhattacharya, Lecturer, Dept of Applied Physics.

Dr. Alim, Senior lecturer, Dept of Philosophy.

Let us use the most conservative estimate of the number of students killed at Dacca University, i.e. 500. Our police sources indicated that from 600-800 East Pakistani police were killed in Dacca during the hard fighting on the night of March 25. Probably several hundred Bengali members of the East Pakistan Rifles were killed that night. Also hard to estimate is the number of casualties in the old city where Army troops burned Hindu and Bengali areas and shot the occupants as they came tumbling out. Most observers put these casualties in the range of 2,000 - 4,000.

At this juncture we estimated that as many as 4,000 - 6,000 people had lost their lives as a result of military action in Dacca. We had no information on military casualties but we gathered that some had occurred during the fighting with the police and the East Pakistan Rifles.

* * * * *

Our reporting of the nature and extent of the military crackdown which began on the night of March 25 drew no comment whatsoever from the Embassy in Islamabad or from the State Department. At first we thought that this silence was due to unhappiness over the unflattering picture we were painting of the Pakistani Army and our obvious sympathy with the victims of the Army's brutality. Slowly, however, it began on us that maybe our reports were not believed. When the State Department spokesman would say at his noon briefing, "We do not want to comment on what is going on in East Pakistan because of conflicting reports," he could only, by "conflicting reports" mean information being fed to the Embassy and the Department by the Government of Pakistan. This was frustrating; we thought we were better equipped, and motivated, to provide objective assessments than was the Pakistani Government, which had imposed strict press censorship and excluded all foreign journalists from East Pakistan. All travel to East Pakistan by foreigners, including diplomats, was banned until further notice.

We certainly did not try to adjust our reporting to the perceived preferences of our audience. On the contrary, we continued with a pair of assessments which we knew would not be very palatable to our readers.

The lead paragraph of an assessment captioned "Old Myths and New Realities" read as follows:

1 With benefit of hindsight it now evident AL tragically miscalculated its position in its post-March 1 confrontation with MLA. Mujib and AL believed they dealt from position of strength, based not only on overwhelming victory at polls which legitimized position vis-a-vis MLA, but also blind faith in "people power." Strongly held myth here is that masses in 1968-69 anti-Ayub agitation not only successfully confronted police and EPRs but also had the regular army cowed. Other evidence suggests this line of thinking patently incorrect and that military did not intervene in support of dilapidated Ayub regime which toppled largely due to its own incompetence. Belief in efficacy of "people power" turned out to be misplaced in confrontation with Yahya's Army.

We concluded with this evaluation if the consequences of the MLA's action on political attitudes in East Pakistan:

4 Because of unforgettable atrocities of past several days, future course of action likely be pursued by remnants of "defunct Awami League." Is one point program; i.e., complete separation from West Pakistan. To this end, AL politicos undoubtedly will ally themselves with far left and communists, groups more technically competent in underground terrorist activities. India is viewed as mutual ally, and considerable pressure will be brought to bear on Indians to provide arms and sanctuary for "Liberation Movement." Hindu genocide should increase prospect of India's aid.

5 *Comment*: Military, by "knee-jerk" reaction to perceived threat to continuation of Pakistan, has in continuing orgy of violence terrorized populace today but radicalized political leadership for tomorrow. Ultimate tragedy, as stated before, is that present situation unnecessary, that freely elected members of National Assembly never given chance meet together to thrash out solution to difficult but not insoluble constitutional question, and that guardians of nation's honor and integrity have struck the sharpest blow conceivable against the raison d'etre of Pakistan.

And our assessment of the military situation in East Pakistan:

1 Though it is not clear when the decision was made to seek a military solution to the political problem in East Pakistan, it is

certain that, insofar as the Dacca area at least, the operation was carefully planned in advance. The seizure of Dacca was accomplished swiftly, efficiently and brutally. Available evidence suggests that the Army's objective in Dacca operation included internally the following specifics:

A Seize physical control of the city.

B Neutralize the existing sources of possible organized resistance, e.g. the East Pakistan Rifles and East Pakistan police.

C Neutralize the Awami league leadership.

D Neutralize sources of potential political leadership e.g. student groups and intellectual community.

E Accomplish the operation with maximum violence in short order to shock and terrorize the population into quick submission.

2 While it seems that the military objective in Dacca has been accomplished, there is accumulating evidence to the effect that developments in the remainder of the country have not gone according to plan. We suspect that the plan for military intervention may have included an assumption that if the top leaders of the Awami League were neutralized and the capital of the country placed under control, then remainder of the country would offer little further resistance. In actuality, although the operation in Dacca area seems to have been quite successful, there has been considerable and possibly growing armed resistance in widespread areas of the country.

3 Since shortly after the seizure of Dacca military reinforcements from the West have been arriving at high rate and we estimate that possibly as many as 10,000 may have been brought in by PIA since 28 March. Many of these probably were casuals but it likely that some at least are organized formations. The Martial Law Administration admits that there is resistance and it also seems reasonable to conclude that the subjugation of East Pakistan is proving to be more difficult job than anticipated.

4 At this point our opinion is that the military is capable of extending its control into all significant areas. However, we consider their lines of communications to be very vulnerable

and their strength inadequate to protect their lines of communication throughout the country. The information available to us is so fragmentary that it is difficult to forecast the outcome with confidence, if however, given a determined resistance movement (which may or may not develop) and given sources of armament and other supplies (which in view of the border and political relationship with India seems quite possible) then it seems credible that the Pak military could arrive at an impasse here, with the Army in control of the important urban areas and resistance forces moving with some freedom about the countryside, operating against Army lines of communication. If the resistance movement maintains significant capability for the next four to six weeks, the onset of the monsoon season will further complicate the Army's problems.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

SELECTIVE GENOCIDE

In the Foreign Service we invariably gave a subject heading to reporting telegrams, e.g. Subject: Meeting with Mujib. This practice enabled busy readers, who often were dealing with hundreds of telegrams a day, to pick out quickly for priority reading the cables that they thought most significant. Most subject captions were straightforwardly descriptive but occasionally we would try for something more eye-catching.

On March 28 I sent a telegram captioned "Selective Genocide." As far as I know, it was the first time that term had been used, but it was not to be the last. The message was born of frustration and anger. For three days we had been flooding Islamabad and Washington with graphic reports of a vicious military action, only to be answered with a deafening silence. I was suddenly tired of shouting into the dark and I decided to ratchet the intensity of our reporting up a notch. The resultant cable is, in large part, quoted below:

1. Here in Dacca we are mute and horrified witnesses to a reign of terror by the Pak military. Evidence continues to mount that the MLA authorities have a list of Awami League supporters whom they are systematically eliminating by seeking them out in their homes and shooting them down.
2. Among those marked for extinction in addition to the A. L. hierarchy are student leaders and university faculty. Also on list are bulk of MNAs-elect and number of MPAs.
3. Moreover, with support of Pak military, non-Bengali Muslims are systematically attacking poor people's quarters and murdering Bengalis and Hindus. Streets of Dacca are aflood

with Hindus and others seeking to get out of Dacca. Many Bengalis have sought refuge in homes of Americans, most of whom are extending shelter.

4 Tightening of curfew today (it is being reimposed at noon) seems designed to facilitate Pak military search and destroy operations. There is no repeat no resistance being offered in Dacca to military.

5 Full horror of Pak military atrocities will come to light sooner or later. I, therefore, question continued advisability of present USG posture of pretending to believe GOP false assertions and denying, for understood reasons, that this office is communicating detailed accounts of events in East Pakistan. We should be expressing our shock, at least privately, to GOP, at this wave of terror directed against their own countrymen by Pak military. I, of course, would have to be identified as source of information and presumably GOP would ask me to leave. I do not believe safety of American community would be threatened as a consequence, but our communication capability would be compromised.

(The communication issue is treated in a subsequent chapter.)

There was no immediate reaction from our Embassy in Islamabad to this message. In Washington the Country Director for Pakistan in the State Department cabled me to say he understood that members of the American community may be harboring citizens of East Pakistan in their homes and he instructed me to discourage this "dangerous" practice. In some heat I fired off an immediate reply noting that virtually all Americans in Dacca, official and unofficial, had terrified Muslim and Hindu Bengalis hiding in their servant quarters. As far as I know, these refugees were poor and apolitical. My own servants were sheltering a number. I concluded by saying that I had no intention of discouraging this action by our servants who were acting out of human compassion and at considerable inconvenience to themselves. I never heard any more on this subject. Interestingly enough, I did not find this exchange of cables in my January 1999 search of the recently declassified documents pertaining to this time period.

The Department's only other reaction was to limit distribution of the selective genocide telegram to a few readers on a need-to-know basis by tagging it EXDIS. Such a measure, however, proved less than foolproof,

because in Washington there began a pattern of leaks of our Dacca cables to the press and the Hill by persons unknown. These leaks complicated life for the Department and for me also, since they gave wide distribution to our Dacca messages which we knew were unpalatable to the Department.

At the Departmental spokesman's noon briefing of the press on April 2, a reporter noted that there had been reports up on the Hill and published reports in the press that our government is in possession of a good deal of information from our Consulate General in Dacca regarding the very sanguinary situation there. The reporter said that even the phrase "selective genocide" has been used in diplomatic reporting. Then he added, "Can you say whether this is true or not, or can you say why the government doesn't want to discuss it?"

The spokesman's answer was a classic example of waffle:

> We have made clear repeatedly that reliable information regarding recent events in East Pakistan is hard to come by. This is especially so regarding areas outside Dacca which, as we presently understand it, remains relatively quiet. We are naturally concerned at the reported loss of life, damage and hardship suffered by the people of Pakistan. What is impossible for us to establish at this time are the actual details.

There was, however, one very strong reaction to the "Selective Genocide" telegram and it came from an unexpected quarter. On the very next day following its receipt, Ken Keating, our Ambassador to India, weighed in with this powerful message:

Subject: Selective Genocide

> Am deeply shocked at massacre by Pakistani military in East Pakistan, appalled at possibility these atrocities are being committed with American equipment, and greatly concerned at United States vulnerability to damaging allegations of association with reign of military terror. I believe USG (a) should promptly, publicly and prominently deplore this brutality, (b) should privately lay it on the line with GOP and so advise GOI, and (c) should announce unilateral abrogation of one-time exception military supply agreement, and suspension of all military deliveries under 1967 restrictive policy (spare parts, ammo, non-lethal, etc.). It is most important these actions be taken now, prior to inevitable and imminent emergence of horrible truths and prior to Communist initiatives to exploit situation. This is time when principles make best politics.

In Dacca we read Keating's message with mixed feelings. We welcomed his endorsement of our suggestion that the U.S. Government deplore the brutal crackdown of the Pakistani military and we endorsed his proposed suspension of all military deliveries to Pakistan. At the same time we knew instinctively that his demands would be greatly resented by Ambassador Farland as unwarranted interference in a matter which should be the more immediate concern of Embassy Islamabad. We also guessed that the Department would be no less displeased. And feuding between the two Ambassadors put us in a difficult position because our reporting, and our sympathies, were much more in line with Ambassador Keating's position than with that of our own Ambassador.

In the ensuing days and weeks, as Bengali resistance increased in the countryside, and a situation of civil war was approached, we realized that the term "genocide" was not appropriate to characterize all killings of Muslim Bengalis. Atrocities were being committed on both sides as the struggle intensified. While we still heard reports of unprovoked Army shooting, it seemed to us that Army violence was increasingly being used for military purposes, i.e. to secure control of the countryside. On the other hand, "genocide" struck us as applying fully to the naked, calculated and widespread selection of Hindus for special treatment. Accordingly, we began to focus our "genocidal" reporting on the Hindus.

We were unable to cite specific reasons for the Army's move against the Hindus, but to us the evidence seemed to suggest that the Pakistani military were unable to make a distinction between Indians and East Pakistan Hindus. Both were treated as enemies. When talking with us, West Pakistanis resident in East Pakistan often equated "wicked Hindus" and "wicked Indians," using the terms interchangeably. It seemed conceivable that soldiers from West Pakistan, where virtually no Hindus reside, had been indoctrinated with the line that Hindus (who comprise about 13% of the East Pakistan population) were responsible for secessionist currents in East Pakistan.

Unfortunately, such anti-Hindu sentiment tied in beautifully with the MLA's efforts to prove to the world that the resistance in East Pakistan was confined to, or at least led by, infiltrators from India. MLA propaganda also branded Bengali nationalism, which was predominantly Muslim, as tainted by identification with an Indian (read "wicked Hindu") conspiracy to undo Pakistan. Islamicists, people of the older

generation who remembered the partition and Muslim immigrants from India were probably most susceptible to this line.

Of course, anti-Hindu sentiment was not a new phenomenon in East Pakistan and was not limited to West Pakistanis or Biharis. The Chief Secretary of the Government of East Pakistan, a Bengali, told two USAID officers on April 1 that "the Hindu community in East Pakistan had always conspired against Pakistan and had spoken and acted in such a way as to heighten distrust and hatred of West Pakistan by Bengalis. Hindus were responsible for Awami League intransigence." When the USAID officers demurred, pointing out that the Awami League had the overwhelming support of the Muslim majority of East Pakistan, the Chief Secretary said, "Yes, but although the Hindus are not in the foreground, they are always in the background, conspiring and making the situation worse." After first denying that the Hindus were being singled out for Army atrocities, he admitted that the Army crackdown was a calculated plan.

On April 8, in a telegram making the points above, we predicted that the killing of Hindus in East Pakistan could lead to anti-Muslim violence in India, which in turn could provoke further anti-Hindu atrocities here. Such a vicious cycle might compel India to intervene militarily in East Pakistan. We were right on the military intervention but wrong on the reason therefor, which turned out to be the massive flight of Hindus from East Pakistan to India.

For the next month, according to the telegrams in the archives, we were focusing our reporting on the ebb and flow of Bengali resistance activities. But on May 14 we turned again to the Hindu issue. In a telegram entitled "Slaughter of Hindus" we reported that in recent days we had been receiving numerous accounts, many from reliable eye-witnesses, which suggested a common pattern of Army operations whereby troops entered a village, inquired where the Hindus lived, and then killed the male Hindus. There appeared to be little, if any, killing of Hindu women and children.

We found it virtually impossible to quantify this slaughter, but given the twin facts that the Army was now engaged in mopping up and search operations throughout most of the province and Hindus were scattered throughout the province, we estimated that the daily death toll might be in the hundreds and the cumulative total to date, since March 25, in the thousands.

More and more we were convinced that the Army was embarked upon a deliberate policy of ridding East Pakistan of the Hindu community. This would be a formidable task since there were about ten million Hindus here. However, the Army could count on many fleeing across the Indian border, probably never to return, and might also count on Indian passivity out of concern of igniting communal tension in India. (In hindsight I see that we exaggerated the possibility of communal tension. During my earlier service in Dacca, there had, however, been numerous instances of Hindu-Muslim clashes on both sides of the border, one fueling another.)

We emphasized again the West Pakistani belief that the Hindus in East Pakistan were a subversive element working with "unpatriotic" Bengali Muslims to destroy the integrity of Pakistan. In our opinion the Pakistani troops clearly looked upon the local Hindus as "the enemy." We also vouchsafed the view that the Army might have a deliberate policy of blooding new troops by encouraging them to kill Hindus. (I know this is a strong accusation, but on more than one occasion Pakistani soldiers boasted to me that they had come to East Pakistan "to kill Hindus."

We ended by predicting that the killing of Hindus would force the swell of refugees to India. It would also solidify the feelings of hatred and fear of the Army on the part of Bengali Muslims, who almost without exception had expressed to us their abhorrence at this deliberate slaughter. It would also provide India with a plausible reason for intervening in East Pakistan, if she ever desired to do so.

At the same time our Embassy in Islamabad was growing increasingly concerned over the Government of Pakistan's propaganda line which stressed the alleged role of Hindus and Indians in causing the crisis in East Pakistan. This propaganda was inflaming public opinion in West Pakistan to a dangerous degree. The Embassy did not think, as we did, that the Army's policy as such was to expel Hindus, but agreed that the Army had clearly been singling out Hindus for especially harsh treatment. In the Embassy's view, the principal determinant of whether the refugee flow to India would be stemmed would be the actions of the Pakistani Army. The Embassy also suggested that the State Department take up this issue with a senior Pakistani official who was about to visit Washington, and urge, as the Embassy said it had been doing in Islamabad, that the Government of Pakistan stop the shootings and begin rebuilding in East Pakistan.

We were buoyed up by this evidence that our reports, at least on this subject, were beginning to have some impact, and we increased our efforts to provide further information. On May 19 we submitted a telegraphic report which itemized specific occurrences corroborated by reliable witnesses.

Item: Congen officers were able to confirm first hand May 16 that Hindu village of Dhamrai, which lies to south of Dacca on Buriganga River, is still almost totally deserted, following Army attack upon it several weeks ago.

Item: American witness confirms that Catholic mission station in Nagari (to northwest of Dacca) is sheltering some three to four thousand Hindus fleeing before Army patrols combing the region and systematically attacking Hindu villages. The same witness confirms that Pak military authorities have warned the mission in writing not to give shelter to Hindus who were characterized as enemies of Pakistan. Most Hindus at Nagari apparently fled there from village of Barrai which was attacked May 13 by Army, resulting in large numbers of Hindu casualties according to Bengali sister then in area but normally in charge of Catholic convent school in Comilla.

Item: Senior Congen local (Christian) reported during weekend stay in his village southwest of Dacca that Pak Army patrols in company strength were attacking Hindu villages in his area. Attacks were causing seven to eight thousand Hindus to flee through Christian village to seek shelter in interior. Pak military on arrival in Christian village sought aid of Congen employee in identifying and locating local Hindus, characterizing them as enemies of Pakistan.

Item: At a recent social gathering young West Pak officer (helicopter pilot) denied Army was killing Hindu women and children but admitted they were killing Hindu men. He justified this on basis Hindus were enemies and that East Pakistan had to be "cleansed." He said he was engaged in a jihad, a holy war.

Comment: Officer appeared to believe what he was saying and was probably regurgitating briefing.

Item: British High Commissioner Sir Cyril Pickard told me that in his May 18 meeting with East Pakistan Governor General Tikka Khan he had confronted Tikka directly with possibility that Pak

> Army is bent on extermination or removal of Hindus from East Pakistan. Tikka had denied any such intention and had taken notes on Nagari incident which was relayed to him by Sir Cyril, who told me he was going to report plight of refugees to General Hameed (Tikka's superior) in effort to "make their welfare a touchstone of Army intentions."
>
> *Comment*: Army pressure on Hindus is abetted by Army's encouraging non-Bengalis, and in some cases, Bengalis to loot villages as Hindus move toward Indian border. We hope in days ahead to enlarge our knowledge of this phenomenon. If our suspicions are correct, however, we fear that India's refugee problems are just beginning. There are (or were) almost 10 million Hindus in East Pakistan.

On May 19 Dr. John Mosley, the acting director of the Cholera Research Lab, visited the Catholic mission station in Nagari. Mosley estimated that from three to four thousand Hindus have taken refuge in the mission school and mission compound. Some Hindus were also being sheltered by Christians in Nagari village. Mosley found the refugees living in terribly confined and unhygienic conditions. He examined several of the more seriously wounded who had been machine gunned by the Army when fleeing Barrai village in boats. Mosley carried with him a large supply of antibiotics. These he left with a Bengali Christian doctor who was providing emergency treatment. Mosley plans to return on May 21 to administer cholera and typhoid inoculations and to take an accurate count of the refugees.

That same morning, May 19, I spoke to Archbishop Ganguly, the leading Catholic prelate in East Pakistan. He said that the American priests Goedert and Wyss at Nagari had asked him for medical supplies. He also said that Father Houser in Kaliganj, not far from Nagari, had reported that one thousand Hindus were seeking refuge in his church and mission. The Archbishop thought that Dr. Mosley's efforts to provide assistance would be helpful and not prejudicial to continued operation of the missions. The American priests at both missions, said the Archbishop, seemed determined to provide protection to the Hindus, even at some risk to their own safety.

The Archbishop also said that on his return trip by rail from Mymensingh on May 18, he had seen troops enter the train at the Dacca cantonment station and interrogate all Pakistani passengers who were

told to recite the Qalema (Muslim Creed) to prove that they were Muslims and not Hindus. He saw one passenger severely beaten by troops while protesting that he was not a Hindu.

In addition, Archbishop Ganguly told me that Italian priests had informed him that the Catholic mission at Bondbari in Rajshahi District (Northwest East Pakistan) had been surrounded by the Army on May 3 because three hundred Hindus had sought refuge there. The Army took away some 85 boys and men between the ages of 17 and 60. The mission personnel later learned that these Hindu males had been killed by the Army a few miles away from the mission.

On May 20, we learned from a cable from Islamabad that Ambassador Farland had seen Yahya Khan and raised with the President the question of Hindu persecution in East Pakistan, citing parts of our telegram of May 19. The Ambassador said that Yahya was visibly angered, but cooled down after a while and promised to look into "such allegations."

Dr. Mosley returned again on May 21 to the Catholic mission at Nagari, accompanied by a Norwegian doctor "left over" from the cyclone relief operation and by Mark Tucker of the Cholera Research Laboratory. Dr. Mosley gave shots to everyone at the mission. (We believe he succeeded in administering to everyone since the Catholic fathers insisted that no one could stay at the mission without producing a chit showing a shot.) 4,185 Hindus were given shots.

The Catholic priests gave Mosley a detailed list showing the villages from which the refugees had come, the actions taken by the Army in each instance, and the casualties suffered. In many cases the houses abandoned by the Hindus had been looted by their neighbors. We cabled this information to Islamabad and Washington, together with the following comments:

> Information obviously may not be accurate in all instances since informants badly scared and exaggerations likely under such circumstances. Nevertheless, believe that Catholic priests with wide experience in area have weeded out most of exaggeration and what remains is relatively straightforward and unemotional. Area where all this happened is relatively small one with many Christian, Muslim, Hindu and mixed villages where life for some 25 years has been largely free of communal fightings and killing. While present killing, burning and looting not all carried out by Army, it is

difficult to believe that it would have occurred without active Army encouragement or, at the very best, strong hints of Army support.

(Looked at 28 years later, the last sentence of our comment strikes me as somewhat garbled. I wish it had been phrased "The widespread looting is troublesome and in most cases can certainly not be laid directly at the Army's door. It is difficult to believe.....")

In a telegram of May 25 we noted, inter alia, that

> (evidence of a systematic persecution of the Hindu population is too detailed and too massive to be ignored. While the Western mind boggles at enormity of a possible planned eviction of ten million people, the fact remains that the officers and men of the Pak Army are behaving as if they had been given carte blanche to rid East Pakistan of "these subversives" and they have been both encouraging and acquiescing in the persecution of Hindus by Biharis and Muslim Bengalis. That many Hindu homes and villages have not only been looted, but also occupied by non-Hindus suggests that the Army intends the dislocation of Hindus to be permanent.)

I do not know what effect, if any, Ambassador Farland's demarche to Yahya had on the Army's pogrom against the Hindus. On June 3, however, just a couple of days before my requested departure from Dacca, I reported on Army atrocities in the vicinity of Barisal, as told me by Bishop Blair, the Anglican bishop and a long-time resident of East Pakistan.

In that fateful spring of 1971 I thought that the Pakistan Army's action against the Hindus was criminally insane. I believe this all the more now, given the events which took place later in 1971. I cannot see any military justification for their action. At the time the Army began to move systematically against the Hindu population, the organized Bengali resistance, mostly the remnants of the East Bengal Regiment, the East Pakistan Rifles and the police, had either been destroyed or driven over the Indian border. A new resistance movement had not yet been organized. The Hindus were unarmed, scattered throughout the province, and posing no military threat. (Could not the Army see that a mass exodus of Hindus to India would give the Indian Government, egged on by their public's opinion, even greater incentive to aid the Awami League in its struggle and turn world public opinion irreversibly against Pakistan?)

Admittedly, India would most probably have come to the aid of the Bengalis even if the Hindus had been left unharmed. But India would have reacted more slowly than they did and Pakistan might have had more time to fashion some agreement with Mujib along the lines of a peaceful separation of the two wings of Pakistan.

(The Army's campaign against the Hindus helped to bring about the first ever surrender of a Pakistani Army before the end of the year, and the humiliating experience of this proud army of 90,000 men spending up to three years in Indian prisoner-of-war camps.)

(Now, almost 30 years after the fact, my memory often encapsulates the criminality and irrationality of the Pakistan Army's persecution of the Hindus in the person of one man — Professor Dev of Dacca University.)

(Of the faculty members killed on the night of March 25-26, Dr. Dev was the best known to me. A jolly, stout white-haired man, he reminded me of Santa Claus and indeed he resembled Old Nick in his actions. At our last meeting we had rejoiced together over his recently completed and very successful lecture tour in the U.S. A bachelor, he opened his home and table to many poor students. He was the most apolitical of men; what interested him were religion and philosophy and his beloved students. Still, he was a Hindu and was on the Army's hit list. So soldiers came to his home on that awful night, took him out to a nearby field and shot him. He must have been about 70 years of age.)

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

EVACUEES, "THIN-OUTS" OR MISCREANTS

Whether or not to recommend an evacuation in a time of crisis is one of the most difficult decisions that can confront a principal officer of a Foreign Service post. The overriding consideration is, of course, the safety of the American community. But their safety has to be measured not only in terms of the immediate danger but also with respect to the likely situation in the near future, because a mistake in the timing of an evacuation could unnecessarily risk lives. On the other hand, a premature evacuation, or an evacuation that subsequently is proved unnecessary, constitutes a bad judgment call. Moreover, evacuations are very expensive for the U.S. Government and for the evacuees themselves. Tours of duty are suddenly truncated; families are separated; those evacuated have to be reassigned and their personal effects have to be shipped from the post evacuated.

It is the principal officer who nearly always makes the recommendation to evacuate, but the State Department has to approve the recommendation and order the evacuation. It is difficult for the Department to dispute the principal officer's judgment because he or she is the person on the spot and therefore most knowledgeable of the situation. If the Department fails to order the recommended evacuation and American lives are lost as a result, then the Department becomes terribly vulnerable.

I knew the call was mine. I did not solicit any advice because I knew the response would be "We have every confidence in your judgment"

(unless you turn out to be wrong). Ambassador Farland did send me a cryptic message, saying "My only advice is to err on the side of caution." Normally, I would take that to mean "If in real doubt, go ahead and evacuate." Still, I was not so sure that was his meaning since we both knew that the Government of Pakistan clearly did not want an American evacuation from East Pakistan.

* * * * *

The possibility of evacuation had been on our minds even before March 1. Our concerns were considerably allayed when the Awami League assumed de facto control of East Pakistan in early March. Except for occasional clashes between the populace and the Army and several low-level and amateurish bombings, law and order were being effectively maintained by the student wing of the Awami League. If a problem arose with respect to the American community, we had a direct line to Mujib and the sure expectation that the problem would be dealt with promptly.

For example, on March 15, when Alamgir Rahman stopped by to see me on another matter, I had the opportunity to express my unhappiness at several reports I had received about young Awami League "enforcers" approaching individual Americans and suggesting strongly that they not leave East Pakistan. I told Alamgir that we were not contemplating an evacuation of the American community. If a decision to evacuate were taken, it would be because we believed there was a danger to members of the community. The question of whether the Awami League or the Martial Law Administration wanted us to stay would be immaterial to our decision. If members of the community were to get the idea that they were being held hostage here against their will, they might become anxious to leave.

Alamgir said he would take immediate action to see to it that Awami League volunteers were called off this tack. He subsequently telephoned me to say he had talked with Mujib on this matter and that necessary instructions were being passed to the volunteers. The volunteers had been telling Americans that they did not want "their friends to leave" but in the telling this had somehow been subject to misconstruction as a veiled threat.

In another instance one of our American secretaries had been harassed when returning home from work by some youths who probably had no direct connection with the Awami League. I telephoned Alamgir and he quickly ordered a volunteer patrol, armed with lathis, to patrol the area in which the secretary lived. There were no further problems of this sort.

On March 11 at the Department's noon briefing of the press there was a flurry of questions prompted by an AP report from Pakistan that the U.S. had ordered an evacuation from East Pakistan. (The AP quickly issued a new story contradicting the first report.) In response to questions from the press, the Departmental spokesman said that "we are watching developments in the area, but we have not taken any step with respect to Americans there." Interestingly, when asked by a journalist about reports that there is now a de facto separate government in East Pakistan, and whether the Department had any word from our Embassy to reinforce those reports, the spokesman's reply was "I believe not, no."

While we in the Consulate General were standing fast on the question of evacuation, one American company took instant action to get its employees out of East Pakistan. General Telephone and Electronics/Lenkart asked the State Department to send the following message to Dacca: "For all GTE/L personnel. All employees should leave East Pakistan for any international destination ASAP. If not possible, all should gather at Dacca." The leader of the company's group in Dacca was sent this message: "Due to reported conditions in Pakistan, you are hereby instructed to evacuate all your people immediately."

We thought it prudent to acquaint the Pakistani military with our contingency evacuation planning in order to smoke out any possible problem. On March 13 Deputy British High Commissioner Frank Sargeant and I called on Major General Farman Ali Khan, who we knew had recently been vested with the responsibility of dealing with foreign missions in Dacca.

Farman said he hoped the British and Americans did not evacuate, noting that, in his view, evacuation was unnecessary. He said the MLA believed firmly in a political solution to the current impasse and was optimistic that President Yahya would be able to work out some settlement with Mujib. Farman also confirmed that he was in steady communication with Mujib.

We voiced our concern that the limited rate of operations at Dacca airport (for non-Pakistani military aircraft) could pose a problem if we decided to order an evacuation. Perhaps as many as 28 sorties would be

needed to lift out British, Americans and others and at the present rate of operation this could take twelve days. Farman suggested that the MLA would welcome external assistance in operating the tower and airport to permit an additional number of flights in such a contingency. Sargeant volunteered the thought that RAF personnel in civilian clothes from Singapore might be flown in for this purpose. Both of us expressed gratitude for Farman's assurance that airport operations could be accelerated if necessary in such a way.

Farman said the MLA was willing to provide protection for our assembly points and for movement from these points to the airport, if requested. We both undertook to provide him with the addresses of our respective assembly points. (Ours was the elementary school in Gulshan and the high school in Dhanmondi.)

When I noted the difficulty we were currently experiencing in getting mail, since PIA was declining to carry mail bags from Karachi, Farman wondered if Pan Am could not arrange to fly into Dacca on a regular basis during the emergency situation. (At this early stage we had not yet sized up Farman for the maliciously deceptive person he was. Nothing he suggested or promised with respect to an acceleration of airport operations materialized, and in the actual evacuation we depended entirely on our own resources in getting our people to the airport.)

Col. Nolan, the Defense Attaché on loan from the Embassy, was making himself extremely useful. He called on Farman on March 22 and was assured that the safety of U.S. citizens in Dacca would be secured if evacuation should be necessary. Farman was not as confident with regard to the Americans in the Chittagong area, and said that their evacuation, if decided upon, should be undertaken "in advance." By this he meant before the situation degenerated to the point where major protection was needed. Farman said he could provide all necessary security for the Chittagong airfield for evacuation purposes.

The Defense Attaché also called on Wing Commander Mubaris, the PAF staff operations officer at Dacca airport.

> Mubaris said that the situation at the Dacca airfield is "very difficult" because everything must be done by the Army and PAF. They are concerned about the security of PIA operations and are processing baggage and passengers very carefully (and slowly) as a consequence. It was suggested to him that if evacuation of U.S. citizens should be advisable this could require five or six flights by 707 type aircraft. In that contingency, would the PAF be able to handle these aircraft in one day? His initial reaction was that only one such flight per day would be possible because they didn't have the personnel or resources to handle more. He rejected the idea of a USAF airport control team being used to facilitate such an evacuation, saying that this wouldn't be "advisable." After a rather lengthy monologue on the problems involved he finally offered the opinion that the PAF could handle six evacuation aircraft in one day if necessary.
>
> With regard to air evacuation from the Chittagong airfield he agreed that the use of a USAF airport team might be helpful, although "we would send a PAF officer to be in charge, of course."
>
> According to Mubaris relations between the Army and the PAF at Dacca airport are "very good" and there have been no difficulties between them. One of the main problems is that of keeping everything on the up and up with regard to allocation of seats on westbound flights, since there is a large backlog of passengers and there are always some people who will try to cheat. This matter is regarded so seriously that the senior PAF officer in East Pakistan, Air Commodore Masud, personally controls the allocations and signs the necessary authorizations. (In this connection, the British Assistant Military Attaché told Col. Nolan that while he was in Masud's office for a "few minutes" on 19 March, the Air Commodore received telephone calls from three different consuls, all calling for priority seating for their nationals.)

* * * * *

Meanwhile, other nations were beginning to evacuate their people. The first sizeable evacuation was by the Germans. 117 left on March 9 and another 200 on March 10 and 11. The Consulate General staff remained, but without dependents. Using Bangkok as a safe haven, the Germans were flown out in German Air Force 707s. The German Consul General told me that Bonn had ordered a prompt evacuation, in part because of a recent incident in Guinea where a delayed evacuation resulted in some German casualties.

The British, while maintaining an official stand fast position, arranged for the diversion of a BOAC flight to Dacca to take out 60

British (out of a community of 1000) on a voluntary basis on March 9. Frank Sargeant told me that the BOAC charter flight had to circle Dacca for forty minutes because it was unable to communicate with the Dacca airport tower. It finally made an unassisted landing. The BOAC pilot passed this information on to a Thai Airlines pilot outbound from Calcutta to Dacca, and Thai Airlines did not attempt to land in Dacca.

Perhaps sparked by the German evacuation, the UN moved to evacuate its personnel from East Pakistan. The UNDP (Development Program) representative was in a state of panic and, according to bemused Pakistani Air Force officers at Dacca airport, had insisted that the UN take priority in the allocation of evacuation space over any individual country.

The Canadian High Commissioner to Pakistan, C. J. Small, spent some time in East Pakistan in mid-March. Since Canada did not maintain a Deputy High Commission office in Dacca, he was concerned about the Canadian citizens scattered about the province and was also busy in reporting on the ongoing political developments. At his request I sent his telegrams, both on contingency evacuation planning and in political matters, through our channels to our embassy in Ottawa which transmitted them to the Canadian Ministry of External Affairs. As far as I can recall, the Canadian High Commissioner was the only chief of mission in Islamabad who came to Dacca at this critical period. He was a delightful and informed temporary addition to our beleaguered community.

After March 25 the Pakistani Government moved quickly to cut East Pakistan off from the outside world. Besides banning travel by foreigners to the East Wing, the MLA cut normal telephone communication between the two wings, as well as wireless communications from East Pakistan. The last made it impossible for foreign missions without an independent communications capability to communicate with their embassies in Islamabad and their foreign ministries in their capitals. At the same time the military crackdown raised the specter of civil war and accelerated the movement toward evacuation.

Several of the isolated consular posts turned to us for help, knowing that we were still able to communicate. The Japanese and Nepalese Consul Generals and the Australian Deputy Commissioner were among those who asked for my help. I was happy to oblige them and sent off and received on their behalf a series of messages arranging for the air

evacuation of their dependents and non-essential nationals. As in the case of the service provided the Canadian High Commissioner, we relayed their messages to our Embassy in their capital, which then sent their Foreign Office's reply to us for delivery to our colleagues.

It was a particular delight to work with the Japanese. Their Consul General was extremely efficient, calm and competent. I was so impressed that I went down to the airport to watch the arrival of the chartered JAL plane sent to pick up the evacuees. Smiling stewardesses had toys for the children and tea and cakes for the adults. The entire operation was handled smoothly and with style.

About this time the new Soviet Consul General called on me, and in the course of the call asked if it might be possible for his office to call upon our help in communicating with Moscow. Surprised and amused, I said with a smile that I was sure the Soviet Union provided its posts with good communication facilities.

* * * * *

On March 27 I sent the following telegram, which, now, I wish I had torn up before sending. I must have been overly impressed by the speed with which the Pakistani Army established its firm control over Dacca, as well as the Army's ability to control its own soldiers.

Subj: Assessment of Need to Evacuate

1 In my view evacuation of dependents and non-essential employees is not called for at present or in the immediately foreseeable future. Pak Military shows every sign of being able to control law and order in Dacca where vast bulk of Americans reside. Situation in Chittagong and countryside undoubtedly dicier but it would be folly to try to move Americans to Dacca at this moment. We estimate it will be weeks, perhaps months, before any effective insurrectional activity can be mounted. For time being we see no evidence that Bengalis are prepared take out any of their resentment toward West Pakistan and Pak Military on Americans. Their attitude of course could change, depending on USG actions in coming months, but for moment they probably know we share their stunned sense of shock at Pak Army's ruthless actions.

2 Moreover, evacuation at this time, after imposition of martial rule and following overthrow of de facto Awami League

Government, would be received by MLA as political act, at best as indication of our lack of confidence in their ability to maintain law and order and at worst as indication of our abhorrence over their recent actions.

3 General Farman, who of course is not disinterested observer, today recommended against evacuation. British and French are not contemplating evacuation. UNDP is trying to evacuate but UNDP representative has been on edge of panic for over a month.

4 We are advising Americans through warden system to observe curfew and take normal precautions during non-curfew hours.

5 In sum, East Pakistan is not going to be a happy place in coming months but we have no strong reason to believe it will be a less safe place.

Just three days later I reversed myself, after much agonizing, considerable discussion with my staff and leading numbers of the American community, and dialogue with Frank Sargeant, the Deputy British High Commissioner and my closest foreign colleague. I recommended evacuation in a cable which made the following points:

1 The situation in Dacca had suddenly become more tense. There was sporadic shooting in residential areas last night and another Pakistani military sentry was killed. Individual soldiers and officers of the Pakistani Army are beginning to engage in looting and harassment of foreigners, including Americans.

(In this connection Sargeant sent me word that two British HICOM officers had on March 29 luckily come upon three other Britishers who were backed up against the wall and about to be shot by a squad of soldiers for having taken photographs of destruction in the area. The captain in charge was dissuaded from this action only after great difficulty; and maintained he would shoot any foreigners he saw talking to any Bengali since all foreigners were collaborating with the Bengalis. The captain tried to retain one of the Britishers in order "to torture him to find out the whereabouts of the secret Bangla Desh radio transmitter.")

(I had my own frightening story which I never revealed at the time for fear of putting my informant at risk. A private American citizen had come in an agitated state to tell me that he had killed a Pakistani soldier who had molested his wife. He said he had buried the body in his compound.)

2 Some private Americans have left via PIA, vowing to tell the full and terrible story of what has happened here. Once the American press begins to report the atrocity stories, we can expect that the attitude of the Pakistani military, which presently is not very friendly or cooperative, will become less so.

3 The mood of the American community is becoming increasingly angry. Some feel that they are being held hostage to a USG desire to placate Pakistan which obviously wants the Americans to remain in order to show that the situation in East Pakistan is under control and to keep them from spreading the awful truth about recent events. Virtually no one in the community expresses concern for his or her safety; their concern is that the truth be told.

4 In addition to the psychological stress of living through a brutal military crackdown the American community has to face a situation in which schools are not operating, shops are closed, mail and telephone service has been suspended, and many people are unable to carry out the jobs to which they are assigned.

5 The World Bank, the UN, the Germans, Japanese and the Yugoslavs have either evacuated or begun evacuating their personnel. The British, French, Australians and Soviets have decided to evacuate dependents.

(The British recommendation to evacuate was reached in my meeting with Sargeant on May 29 when we agreed to act in tandem. Sargeant told me at that time that the staff of the British Council would be leaving right away because on the night of March 25 the Army had attacked the Council (roughly the equivalent of a USIS cultural center) in the mistaken impression it was the Dacca University library. The Army killed the police guard, set numerous fires and burned the automobiles of a British Council officer before realizing they were not on University grounds.)

I requested that the evacuation be accomplished by USAF aircraft from Thailand, with the evacuees transported to our designated safehaven of Bangkok. I recommended that the evacuation be voluntary for non-official Americans but mandatory for all dependents of official personnel and for official personnel deemed non-essential for the continued operation of the post. I said a staff of 31 would be sufficient.

* * * * *

I suppose that no evacuation proceeds according to plan, and certainly ours was no exception to the rule.

First of all my recommending cable was immediately leaked. Sid Schanberg, the *New York Times* correspondent in New Delhi, heard there of the cable and filed a story the same day to the effect that I had recommended an evacuation on the ground that foreigners are no longer safe in East Pakistan.

Ambassador Farland immediately endorsed the recommendation but the Department, while approving the recommendation and starting preparations for a military airlift, questioned whether the evacuation could be accomplished by withdrawing non-official Americans and dependents of officials in the first instance and leaving all officials in place. The Department also questioned whether civilian aircraft could be used and whether I was sure I was keeping enough staff on the job. To this nit-picking I replied tartly that I stood by my recommendations.

Then the Government of Pakistan intervened to extract its several ounces of flesh. First, the Pakistani Foreign Secretary indicated to Ambassador Farland that the term "evacuation" would be considered "less than appropriate" by the Government of Pakistan. The Foreign Secretary suggested that we use the term "thinning out" instead, and I was directed to do so by the Ambassador.

Next, and much more importantly, the Government of Pakistan refused to allow USAF aircraft to land in Dacca and pick up our evacuees (oops! I mean thin-outs). Moreover, our people would have to leave on PIA flights, for which the U.S. would be charged full fare, from Dacca to Karachi. In lieu of a two-hour flight from Dacca to Bangkok and a safehaven with a climate similar to Dacca's, our people would have to fly all around India, with a stopover in Colombo, a flight of ten hours. They would be boarding PIA aircraft which had just ferried troops to Dacca and which, after an hour and a half layover, took the long flight to Karachi. Our people, virtually none of whom had a good word to say for Pakistan after the atrocities they had come to learn about, were furious at the idea of overnighting in Karachi, from where they were to fly the next day via Pan Am to the newly designated safehaven of Tehran.

The prospect of a group of tired and angry group of Americans being accessed by the press just after they had been witness to a 1970's type of ethnic cleansing was very worrisome to the Embassy and the Government

of Pakistan. Ambassador Farland sent us a series of messages, both before and after the decision to evacuate.

The first, sent on March 29, read as follows:

> Subject: Guidance for USG Employees in Current Situation: For Consul General From Ambassador
>
> 1 I have instructed the consuls general in Lahore and Karachi to ensure that all USG personnel in their consular districts adopt a professional attitude towards recent developments: specifically, in conversations with Pakistanis, official personnel have been enjoined not rpt not to voice opinions or pass judgments on the Army intervention in East Pakistan and Yahya's imposition of strict martial law. Foregoing equally applicable to adult dependents.
>
> 2 I know that official personnel working under you in East Pakistan are undergoing a most difficult and personally trying experience. In these circumstances I am sure you are counseling members of the official community to exercise that discretion which is expected of USG employees.

On April 1 a second message:

> Subject: Movement of Certain U.S. Citizens from East Pakistan.
>
> 1 In telling our people here of thinning out of us citizens in East Pakistan, we are emphasizing this is temporary, not "evacuation" and is being undertaken in view of circumstances that most U.S. citizens are unable perform usual work functions, lack of day-to-day amenities, and desire of most to depart.
>
> 2 I request you to counsel all those adults who do leave to exercise discretion and caution when discussing events with press at safehaven. This particularly applies to official personnel and their adult dependents. Attributed press reports will certainly only add to difficulties of those of you remaining in Dacca, possibly jeopardizing your security, as well as that of American community in West Pakistan. We will expect, as I know you do, that official personnel and their adult dependents in talking with press in safehaven will keep constantly in mind their positions as USG representatives in Pakistan with the constraints and obligations this position demands.

I expressed my concern that in applying the guidance it might seem to some of those leaving, particularly the non-official Americans, that we

were counseling them against contacts with the press or in the case of all Americans were overtly attempting to guide the substance of what is told to reporters. The Embassy agreed, but urged the necessity of low-key briefings for each group of "thin-outs" before departure, stressing that "impressions of what has happened can only add to the confusion, and that comments should be based on actual observations, not hearsay. The Embassy did, however, agree with our recommendation that USIS Bangkok (at that time we were still thinking in terms of USAF flights to Bangkok) facilitate contacts between U.S. news representatives at the airport and the evacuees. (The GOP had not yet decided that we were to be "thin-outs.")

When we were still contemplating an Air Force ride to Bangkok, the Department got a number of inquiries from news organizations requesting permission for media representatives to fly in with our military aircraft to Dacca. This presented the Department with a delicate issue, because the Government of Pakistan had approved one plane a day on the condition that no incoming passengers would be permitted to arrive at Dacca on these aircraft nor would any incoming cargo be allowed without prior arrangement.

In reporting this problem to the Embassy in Islamabad the Department noted that some of the media seemed to be hinting that our failure to reveal information regarding developments in East Pakistan has been a matter of deliberate policy rather than our inability to say clearly what is happening in view of conflicting reports. (This could only mean that the Consulate General in Dacca is telling us (the Department) one story and the Pakistani Government is telling us a completely different story.)

Not wanting the onus for turning down the media requests and to place the onus on the Pakistanis, the Department told the press that it was taking up the matter with the Government of Pakistan, but doubted that approval would be given since only a few days before the Pakistani Government had expelled all foreign newsmen.

Once it had been determined (by Pakistan) that the Americans departing Dacca would go via Colombo to Karachi, the question arose as how to deal with the interest of American and other foreign correspondents in interviewing Americans during their stop in Colombo. The Department thought that some correspondents in West Pakistan might go to Colombo to seek interviews with our transiting Americans

because of the difficulties in filing stories in Karachi (meaning strict press censorship). In the Department's view it seemed possible that PIA officials might try to prevent interviews and the Government of Ceylon, because PIA had no landing rights, might deny correspondents the right to approach the passengers. The Department instructed Embassy Colombo to leave it to the Government of Ceylon authorities to decide whether or not to give access to Americans, noting that it did not wish to stand in the way of normal press contacts with the passengers but did not wish to facilitate them in Colombo.

The Department also alerted Embassy Colombo that some Americans were distressed at the prospect of flying via PIA to West Pakistan. This was in reference to my own report to the same effect. The Department expressed concern that some private Americans might refuse to continue on the PIA flights despite the absence of PIA landing rights in Colombo.

As it turned out, PIA insisted on all evacuees turning over their passports in Dacca, to be returned only in Karachi. At the airport I protested this action vigorously, but to no avail. When the evacuation flights landed in Colombo, Ceylon was in a state of emergency and the entire island was under curfew with all Embassy personnel confined to the office or their homes. Our Chargé in Colombo, Pete Peterson, had been Consul General in Athens when I was Political Counselor there. All he could do was to alert the airport officials to the incoming flights. He emphasized that the local security situation made any disembarkation unwise. Consequently, our people were kept sequestered for several hours in a hot room before being herded back on the plane.

* * * * *

The evacuation commenced on the afternoon of April 4 and was completed on April 6. In the interval between my recommendation to evacuate and the commencement of the evacuation there were several developments which helped assure me that the recommendation was justified. On March 30 the French Consul General's son, who was driving his father's car, was stopped by a military patrol. A sub-machine gun was jammed into the son's belly and the car was completely searched. Later the same day, as the Consul General's wife was walking to her residence a soldier fired several shots in her vicinity but not aimed at her. The French

Consul General protested to General Tikka Kahn about the lack of security being provided for consular personnel and vehicles.

On April 1 several Americans, including the Defense Attaché, reported that their cars were stopped by armed soldiers who insisted that the license plates be in Urdu and not in English or Bengali. That afternoon, the Defense Attaché and I called on Colonel Taj, the Sub-Deputy Martial Law Administrator for Dacca, to request an explanation. He told us that he had learned shortly before our call about these "over-zealous jawans" and had taken steps to stop the practice. He assured us that there would be no MLA requirement to change license plates to Urdu.

At 10 a.m. on April 2 two Pakistani soldiers, one armed with a rifle and the other with hand grenades, entered the residence of Dr. Hare of the Cholera Lab in the Gulshan residential area. Mrs. Hare was robbed of watches, clocks and a carpet and threatened with a hand grenade if she did not hand over these items. The servants were robbed of watches and other small items and threatened that they would be shot later by the Army. No one was injured in what was obviously a case of individual looting.

The next day Dr. Doyle J. Evans of the Cholera Lab was stopped by two Pakistani soldiers in the Gulshan area near Dr. Hare's home. The soldiers took $66 in cash, a watch and a ring from Dr. Evans and his wife, who were in their car. The Evanses convinced the soldiers that their passports, which the soldiers also attempted to take, would be of no value to them. Neither Dr. Evans nor his wife was physically harmed.

There were a number of American missionaries in East Pakistan, both Catholic and Protestant. The Catholics elected to remain, but some Protestant missionaries, particularly those with small children, decided to take advantage of the arranged evacuation. One Baptist family was enroute by riverboat from their up-country mission when they were fired upon by Pakistani soldiers. Their small son had his ear nicked by a bullet. That was frightening enough but we felt lucky that all Americans from the hinterland arrived safely in Dacca.

* * * * *

The movement from the assembly point to the airport was efficiently handled, thanks to the careful planning of our administrative officers, Larry Koegel and Wayne Swedenburg. Meg and I went out to see off

each evacuation flight, with Meg choosing to leave on the last flight. She had our cook prepare batches of sandwiches and thermoses of lemonade and soft drinks for each departure.

At the airport our "thin-outs" witnessed large numbers of young men in identical civilian dress disembark from the aircraft our people were about to board for the flight to Karachi. We were told by a PAF squadron leader that the turnabout time for those PIA Boeings was about one and a half hours, "unless there is ammunition." We saw numerous dependents of West Pakistani military personnel awaiting flights to the West Wing. The same squadron leader told us that these military dependents had been expressing considerable resentment at seeing Americans and British boarding the PIA planes. I thought it quite ironic that the Pakistani military and the Government of Pakistan would urge Americans to remain in East Pakistan at the same time they were; bringing out their dependents as fast as they could.

Some private American women had Bengali husbands, a few of whom were academics and thus possible targets for the Pakistani military. We were determined to prevent any family disruption and decided to bluff and bull a way through for the Bengali "dependents." We had officers hovering over these potential problem cases as a protective screen, and they displayed irritation and impatience at any indication that the passport control officials were about to single them out for special questioning. Since the Bengalis were of course Pakistani citizens, our apprehensions were justified, but all got through without any serious trouble.

In all there were six PIA evacuation flights out of Dacca from April 4 to April 6. The one I remember most poignantly was the last which carried Meg, my younger son Cubby, and Perky, the dog. As they boarded the plane, maintaining a cheerful front as best they could, I could not but help think that I was entrusting their safety to tired PIA aircrews who had been shuttling troops to East Pakistan as fast as they could, with only a brief respite on the ground in Dacca and the prospect of another long flight ahead of them.

The American Consulate General in Karachi had reserved a block of rooms at the Beach Luxury Hotel for all the U.S. citizens and dependents arriving from Dacca. After they had been processing through Customs, they were bussed to the hotel for further processing. Desks manned by ConGen wives efficiently checked in the passengers and confirmed their

onward flight arrangements. Several evacuees, including Jon and Candy Rohde, had prepared statements for the press but they were skillfully isolated from newsmen by Embassy and Consulate General Karachi personnel. Following their arrival in Karachi most evacuees, including my family, flew on to Tehran via Pan Am on the next day. With great relief they boarded an American plane and, as they took off from Pakistani soil, burst spontaneously into shouts of "Joi Bangla."

In addition to the PIA flights, there were two other evacuation movements worthy of note. Some sixty American citizens were evacuated by ship from Chittagong to Karachi, since travel between Chittagong and Dacca was deemed unsafe. Another group in a much more isolated situation were the medical missionaries operating a hospital in Malumghat, well south of Chittagong and close to the Burmese border. We had no way of communicating with them. Ten days after the main evacuation we learned from the Pakistani Army that they were driving "armed miscreants" in that direction and the Army thought their situation would be perilous if the fighting extended to Malumghat. (We suspected that the hospital was treating wounded Bengali resistance fighters.)

I cabled VOA and asked that it broadcast an announcement warning the Malumghat group to evacuate to Burma. When VOA replied that it had never taken such an action before, I said it was time to start. The English language broadcasts on April 15 and 16 carried the following message:

> Following is special announcement for Americans at Malumghat, East Pakistan. American Consul General Dacca believes possible danger exists in staying in Malumghat. If you have four wheel drive vehicles, suggest you drive south Saturday, April 17 with children to Burmese borders at Teknaf. We are alerting Burmese authorities to expect you. If Burma evacuation not feasible, suggest you move out of your buildings and away from main road at first sign of battle.

The Malumghat group heard the announcement and moved out of harm's way to Burma. They returned several months later.

The Soviet evacuation followed hard on the heels of ours. Soviet specialists and dependents, the latter on a voluntary basis, were flown from Dacca to Karachi on PIA on April 7 and 8. Citizens of other Socialist countries also went out on these flights. The Soviets had requested permission to bring in their own aircraft to East Pakistan, but

the Government of Pakistan refused. Some Soviet technicians were serving in remote parts of East Pakistan. At Soviet request a Pakistani Army helicopter airlifted one technician out of Rajshahi on April 4, but when the Soviets requested similar assistance in evacuating personnel elsewhere, they were refused on the grounds that the areas concerned were not under Army control.

* * * * *

Evacuees, "thin-outs" or miscreants? All of us in Dacca abominated the Pakistani-contrived appellation of "thin-out," which we used only derisively. Evacuees we accepted, but sometimes thought "refugees from a war zone" might be more precise. The somewhat antiquarian term "miscreant" was never applied directly by Pakistanis or our American colleagues in West Pakistan, but we sincerely sensed that in their minds we were beginning to fall in that category. After all, we had all been hypercritical of our host country of Pakistan and had clearly been cozened by those clever Bengalis.

"Miscreant" quickly became for us something of a proud and defiant badge of honor. One of my most cherished relics of those turbulent days is a wooden model of a Bengali countryboat, complete to the long oar used for steering, presented to me by my staff upon my departure from Dacca. It bears a small brass plate saying "From The Miscreants."

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

DANGEROUS DISSENT

On the morning of April 6, the last day of the evacuation, several of my officers presented me with an eloquently and strongly worded message of dissent from the U.S. policy toward East Pakistan, and asked me to send it to the State Department, with copies to the Embassy and our other consular posts in Pakistan. The message was signed by twenty officers, including the Provincial AID Mission Director, the Public Affairs Officer, my deputy and the heads of the economic, consular and administrative sections. I later came to regard the list of names as a "roll of honor."

On that hectic day when my own family was about to leave, I quickly thought over the options available to me, deeply aware that the problem was both complicated and eased by the fact that their message mirrored my own views. One option I did not have, and that was to refuse to transmit the message. In January 1969 Secretary of State Rogers had sent a message to all posts welcoming a full airing of divergent views within the Department and the Foreign Service and, to this end, a "dissent" channel had been established and a Task Force had made a number of proposals aimed at creating greater openness.

I might have tried to talk them out of dissenting, but in my heart and mind I both shared their amazement and distress over the Department's failure to express even the slightest concern over what was happening in East Pakistan, let alone its patent efforts to suppress any information from us bearing on the situation.

Also, I could have suggested some changes in the wording, but nitpicking seemed almost a sacrilege in view of the earnestness and

conviction of the message. In retrospect there are, however, two changes that I wish I had thought of at the time. In reading the dissent cable many years later I was surprised to see that it was classified only Confidential, and with no distribution restriction. I should have classified it SECRET, EXDIS. When I returned to Washington, I was accused by several superiors of having deliberately put a lower classification on the message with the hope that it would be leaked. The message was indeed leaked, and almost immediately, in Washington, but my fault was carelessness, not malignance.

Secondly, I should have tried to tone down the assertion that "Our government has failed to take forceful measures to protect its citizens." Admittedly, we were disappointed that the Embassy and the Department agreed so readily to the Government of Pakistan's insistence that we fly out, not in USAF aircraft, but via PIA to Karachi, but then the British, Russians and others were obliged to do the same. And both the Embassy and the Department had moved quickly, albeit perhaps with some reluctance, to approve the recommendation to evacuate. Certainly, I never doubted Ambassador Farland's keen concern for our welfare; we were, after all, part of his team.

Quickly, I reduced my options to two: I could affix my own signature to the list of signers and send the telegram (the wording of the message easily permitted that course of action); or I could withhold my signature and add my own comments. I chose the latter course.

The soon-to-be-famous dissent cable read as follows:

Subj: Dissent from U.S. Policy Toward East Pakistan

1 Aware of the Task Force proposals on "openness" in the Foreign Service, and with the conviction that U.S. policy related to recent developments in East Pakistan serves neither our moral interests broadly defined nor our national interests narrowly defined, numerous officers of AmConGen Dacca, USAID Dacca and USIS Dacca consider it their duty to register strong dissent with fundamental aspects of this policy. Our government has failed to denounce the suppression of democracy. Our government has failed to denounce atrocities. Our government has failed to take forceful measures to protect its citizens while at the same time bending over backwards to placate the West Pak dominated government and to lessen likely and deservedly negative international public relations impact against them. Our government has evidenced what many will consider moral bankruptcy, ironically at a time when the USSR sent President Yahya a message defending democracy, condemning arrest of leader of democratically elected majority party (incidentally pro-west) and calling for end to repressive measures and bloodshed. In our most recent policy paper for Pakistan, our interests in Pakistan were defined as primarily humanitarian, rather than strategic. But we have chosen not to intervene, even morally, on the grounds that the Awami conflict, in which unfortunately the overworked term genocide is applicable, is purely internal matter of a sovereign state. Private Americans have expressed disgust. We, as professional public servants express our dissent with current policy and fervently hope that our true and lasting interests here can be defined and our policies redirected in order to salvage our nation's position as a moral leader of the free world.

2 Our specific areas of dissent, as well as our policy proposals, will follow by septel.

3 Signed, Brian Bell, Robert L. Bourquein, W. Scott Butcher, Eric Griffel, Zachary M. Hahn, Jake Harshbarger, Robert A. Jackson, Lawrence Koegel, Joseph A. Malpeli, Willared D. McCleary, Desaix Myers, John L. Nesvig, William Grant Parr, Robert Carle, Richard L. Simpson, Robert C. Simpson, Richard E. Suttor, Wayne A. Swedenburg, Richard L. Wilson, Shannon W. Wilson.

4 I support the right of the above named officers to voice their dissent. Because they attach urgency to their expression of dissent and because we are without any means of communication other than telegraphic, I authorize the use of a telegram for this purpose.

5 I believe the views of these officers, who are among the finest U.S. officials in East Pakistan, are echoed by the vast majority of the American community, both official and unofficial. I also subscribe to these views but I do not think it appropriate for me to sign their statement as long as I am principal officer at this post.

6 My support of their stand takes on another dimension. As I hope to develop in further reporting, I believe the most likely eventual

outcome of the struggle underway in East Pakistan is a Bengali victory and the consequent establishment of an independent Bangla Desh. At the moment we possess the good will of the Awami League. We would be foolish to forfeit this asset by pursuing a rigid policy of one-sided support to the likely loser.

The cable's reference to a recent policy paper in which U.S. interest in East Pakistan were defined as primarily humanitarian, rather than strategic, concerned a Pakistan policy appraisal made earlier in the year by the Embassy in Islamabad and the constituent posts, including Dacca. It was a joint effort undertaken in the shadow of the impending crisis. Its principal theme was that we would prefer to see Pakistan continue as a unified country but could live with the emergence of an independent Bangladesh. The principal drawback, in terms of U.S. interests, of a splitting up of Pakistan, in our view, would be the need for greatly increased developmental assistance to the new nation. On March 5 the Embassy and constituent posts cabled to the Department a follow-up assessment, the kernel of which was a bleak assessment of the chances for one Pakistan. We saw the idea of Pakistan as still a force in West Pakistan, but believed it had been supplanted in the East by Bengali nationalism. We were, therefore, considerably surprised by the USG response to March 25 and its aftermath, which struck us as a completely one-sided "protect Pakistan at all costs." position.

* * * * *

The Embassy's response was a masterful demonstration of damage control. Ambassador Farland immediately ordered the principal officers in Karachi, Lahore and Peshawar to destroy all copies of our message. On the same day as the dissent cable was dispatched, the Ambassador sent the following SECRET(NODIS) telegram, marked Eyes Only for Assistant Secretary Sisco (NEA) from Ambassador:

1 Reftel has just come to my attention and I wish to affirm my accord with principle that all members of U.S. mission in Pakistan have right to express their views on fundamental and serious problems facing us in current Pakistan crisis.

2 I agree that we need to review policy toward Pakistan within which we have been operating. That policy which we found it desirable to reaffirm on various occasions during past year of

intensive political activity in Pakistan amidst recurrent charges of U.S. interference, excludes interfering in its domestic affairs. The current exceptional conditions in Pakistan do, however, call for a policy review.

3 I am awaiting Dacca septel, as promised, identifying specific areas of dissent and putting forth policy proposals. In absence thereof, I am naturally not in position to comment.

4 At this point I recall two specific recommendations made by ConGen Dacca since military crackdown began in East Pakistan on March 25-26. One recommended that USG express shock, at least privately, at military excesses against Awami League and Bengali populace. I have noted recent statements by Dept spokesman enunciating our concern over loss of life and our hope for reestablishment of peaceful conditions; those statements accord with my view, as previously expressed, that we do not and cannot condone wanton and excessive violence used by GOP to assert itself in East Pakistan. Dept statement falls short of qte denunciation, unqte but it does not, in my opinion, reflect qte moral bankruptcy. Unqte. As Dept. aware, we have felt that consideration of national sovereignty is pertinent to what we do at this time and how we do it; a major immediate consideration has been for physical safety of our compatriots in East Pakistan; and we have separately submitted proposal to register our very serious concern in appropriate way. Meanwhile our operational programs in Pakistan are under review. I have very recently sent our USAID Director to Dacca to help provide basis for appropriate recommendations.

5 Second specific recommendation from ConGen Dacca in past two weeks was to evacuate most of American community using U.S. military aircraft. We submitted request to GOP for clearance for military aircraft within one hour of receiving Dept's authorization on April 1 following receipt of Dacca's recommendation in which we had concurred. Actual evacuation began on April 4 using PIA aircraft, under circumstances which Dept and Dacca know, and our qte thin-out unqte according to ConGen Dacca will be completed tonight. I do not find in this any convincing support for statement that qte our govt has failed to take forceful measures to protect its citizens, unqte which I presume relates to

evacuation exercise. Speaking for Embassy Islamabad, every decision and every action originating here had the safety of U.S. nationals in East Pak as the primary objective.

6 I do not recall any other specific proposals form ConGen Dacca with regard to current situation, and await them with interest. I believe it fair to say that this Embassy has encouraged full and frank debate on policy issues among Embassy and constituent posts. Dacca proposals will be received in that spirit.

At the State Department, immediately upon receipt of the dissent cable, nine courageous officers at the working level sent the following memorandum to Secretary Rogers:

> The undersigned officers, all of whom have specialized in South Asian affairs for the major portion of their service, wish to associate themselves with the views expressed in Dacca 1138 (copy attached) and to urge that the United States Government take immediate steps to meet the objectives raised in paragraph one of the telegram.

We in Dacca did not hear of this "insurrection." I learned about it only when I returned to Washington in late June and what I learned was generally confirmatory of the account given in Roger Morris's book on Kissinger "Uncertain Greatness." According to Morris, Joe Sisco, the Assistant Secretary for NEA, called Kissinger to discuss the dissent cable and the South Asian specialists' memorandum, saying "My people seem to be leaving the reservation." Kissinger told Sisco that there was "no possibility" the administration would change its policy toward Pakistan and that the dissenting FSOs should be held "in line." Sisco then called in the desk officers for what most participants remembered later as a vague yet decisive meeting. Their proposed condemnation of the genocide was "premature" Sisco reportedly told them. He suggested that Blood and his staff might be "overreacting" in Dacca. The junior officers left Sisco's office with the clear signal that he was not "buying."

Although the "insurrection" was quickly aborted, I was very grateful for the support of my colleagues when their action finally became known to me. Until then I really had no inkling that our reports had a sympathetic audience anywhere in the Department. Some of the officers who signed the memorandum to the Secretary in support of our dissent, such as Peter Burleigh, Tony Quainton and Howie Schaffer, went on to achieve distinguished careers in the Foreign Service.

The Department's reply to the dissent cable also came quickly. In addressing our complaint that the U.S. had failed to denounce the suppression of democracy and the atrocities committed by the MLA, the reply struck us as pedestrian and extremely evasive. The pertinent parts of this section of the Department's reply were the following:

> We view this as primarily an internal matter of the Pakistan Government and most other governments have the same view. Reports have been conflicting. Media in U.S. has been carrying stories of atrocities on both sides although we do not, of course, equate the two.

The MLA had begun soon after March 25 to put out its account of the events which had plunged East Pakistan into chaos. In May the Government of Pakistan issued a statement which, in effect, was a summary of a clumsy attempt to rewrite history in an effort to justify the military action.

We rebutted those points of the statement relative to events of which we had direct knowledge:

1 There was no reign of terror throughout East Pakistan in period March 1-25. As previously reported, there was some violence in Old Dacca on March 1-2, which was quickly stopped in response to Mujib's appeal for law and order. There were subsequently clashes between Army and Bengalis at Tongi, Joydevpur and Chittagong. While there was some harassment and intimidation of non-Bengalis (as well as of Bengalis by Army) during this period, as far as we have been able to ascertain there was no murder, arson, rape and looting, with the possible exception of Chittagong. What the Army has done is to backdate violence after March 25 in order to explain its crackdown on Bengalis. After all, during this period, people were moving freely throughout East Pakistan, communications were functioning, and press was free. News on any atrocities, if they had actually occurred, would surely have reached us.

2 Concerning Yahya-Mujib talks, we know agreement in principle had been reached between the second and third weeks of March. Insistence of other political parties that transfer of power emanate from National Assembly was story concocted by MLA after breakdown of talks.

3 According to our information what few arms held by students were in Iqbal Hall. We think it is incongruous that Jagannath

Hall, the Hindu residence hall, was center of any resistance. Most training which took place was with dummy rifles. From conversations some of our officers had with students that fateful evening of March 25 it is clear that barricades were hastily put only after it was learned that Yahya had broken off talks and departed. Awami League was clearly taken by surprise by Army action. Pre-emptive strike theory now being advanced by Army is absolutely phoney. Call for independence was made only after Army had thrown down gauntlet and no other course was left open to Awami League.

4. Undoubtedly, many West Pakistanis and Biharis have been killed by Bengalis since March 25. We would guess, however, that at least two-thirds of 200,000 people who have probably perished in East Pakistan since March 25 are Bengali Muslims and Hindus.

Continuing the Department's reply to our dissent cable:

However, we have not been silent. Over the past two weeks following points made by the Department's spokesman:

A On the first day following reports of developments in East Pakistan (March 26), Department spokesman said: QUOTE We are watching developments closely, with concern. UNQUOTE. Department spokesman revealed QUOTE American personnel who reached Consulate General this morning have reported the presence of Army troops throughout the city and extensive firing, including, I understand, the use of tanks.... I know that Ambassador Farland called at the MFA in West Pakistan this morning and made a strong request that the GOP insure all possible protection for Americans in the East. UNQUOTE.

B On March 30, based on Dacca's reports, Department spokesman stated situation remained quiet in Dacca and that we did not have reliable information re elsewhere in East Pakistan. We also made clear in response to inquiries that while military supply agreement does not prohibit use of weapons supplied for internal security purposes, no weapons have been supplied to Pakistan since 1965 and none have gone as result of one-time exception decision.

(Subsequently, in response to Congressional probing, it was shown that the last clause was a complete falsehood.)

C On March 31 Department spokesman confirmed Consul General Dacca's recommendation on evacuation. He also made statement critical of Pakistan Government saying: QUOTE We felt that legitimate news gathering functions of American journalists had been unduly restricted. UNQUOTE.

This was a real howler. The one instance in which we used stern language toward Pakistan concerned a Pakistani action which made eminent good sense. Naturally, the MLA would not want any foreign journalists on hand to report and photograph what they were about to do to their fellow countrymen. When, eventually, the MLA allowed foreign newsmen to visit East Pakistan, any who were in Dacca on March 25 and expelled were expressly excluded. Those journalists were, of course, those with some knowledge of East Pakistan, and a number of contacts in the province.

The Department's rebuke, which was intended to satisfy American journalists more than to achieve any corrective action by the GOP, read as follows:

1 We are seriously concerned about action by MLA in expelling American and other foreign newsmen from East Pakistan which certain to result in severe criticism by American and world press as well as hostile attitude toward GOP on part of newsmen concerned.

2 You should therefore approach MFA soonest and register our considerable concern over this sudden and arbitrary action taken without any advance notice or consultation. You should point out that as we understand special martial law restrictions for East Pakistan they do not prohibit normal news-gathering activities by accredited journalists.

D On April 2 Department spokesman made full-blown statement stressing our concern over developments and giving explicit support to SYG humanitarian initiative. He said:

1 QUOTE. We are naturally concerned at the reported loss of life, damage and hardship suffered by the people of Pakistan. What is impossible for us to establish at this time is any reliable set of facts regarding the recent events in the area or their foreseeable consequences.

2 QUOTE. Now, in this respect we have noted the statement yesterday by the UN Secretary General and in this connection

we would, of course, give sympathetic consideration to any humanitarian efforts to assist that might be requested by the Government of Pakistan in line with the Secretary General's statement. UNQUOTE.

3 He also said the following re use of American arms: QUOTE.... It is a matter of concern to the USG when its weapons are used. UNQUOTE.

E On April 5 the Department spokesman reiterated April 2 statement and added: QUOTE It is our hope that peaceful conditions can be reestablished. UNQUOTE.

We will keep under active review question of further public statements in light of any further reports more clearly establishing facts and when the withdrawal of Americans is further along.

After repeating the Department's and Embassy's action in support of the evacuation, the Department message went on to say:

As to the longer range implications of current developments, Task Force has this matter under active review and views of Amembassy Islamabad, New Delhi, and ConGen Dacca have been requested by the Department. We welcome your intention to provide us with your recommendations. Obviously, if USG concludes, as your message does, that the most likely outcome of present civil war is a Bengali victory and consequent establishment of an independent Bangla Desh then this has implications which we will have to take into account in our policy review.

6 We welcome expression of strongly held views as well as recommendations on policy. We are sure, however, that you wish these be forwarded privately and directly to principal officers, while at the same time not receiving such widespread dissemination as to increase likelihood of leak to press.

* * * * *

On April 12 we submitted some policy proposals, this time in a telegram captioned SECRET/EXDIS:

Subj: U.S. Policy Toward Pakistan

Joint ConGen/USAID/USIS Message

1 We have been a friend of Pakistan since partition 24 years ago. We have admired the energy and boldness of Pakistan's development program even though in late years we have not always approved everything that was done by Pakistan's planners. Pakistan has enjoyed our confidence and our confidence has taken the form of large and generous aid appropriations, way out of line on a per capita basis with aid received by neighboring countries.

2 We believe that events, particularly since March 25, have demonstrated that Pakistan is not using its resources in a rational manner and that it no longer deserves the extraordinary support of the United States and of other donors.

3 Aid has been provided to Pakistan in the past because:

A It has been used with reasonable efficiency and because of humanitarian considerations.

B Some progress towards establishment of democratic institutions was being made.

C It helped in maintaining Pakistan's unity and integrity, thereby contributing to the general stability in South Asia.

4 Pakistan no longer deserves this support because:

A Aid has not been used efficiently in recent years. The military budget has gone up, and investment from domestic resources has gone down. Furthermore, important policy measures that all of Pakistan's friends and supporters had been advocating have been ignored.

B Progress toward development of democratic institutions has been replaced by reactionary measures of the most brutal sort. Moreover, the ruling clique is clearly not prepared to give up its preponderant role in society and in view of recent events it seems likely that it has been using its power to further entrench itself with the assistance of our aid.

C Our policy of supporting the unity and integrity of Pakistan did not explicitly or implicitly condone military measures to achieve this aim. A military solution to East Pakistan's desire to attain a high degree of autonomy cannot contribute to stability in South Asia. To the contrary, it will contribute to the general instability of the region by remaining a vivid example of suppression by

force and offering continuing possibilities of civil resistance or guerilla warfare. It is not in our interest to assist a ruling clique in such an endeavor.

D Most important, the actions of the MLA are having the effect of destroying moderate and democratic forces in East Pakistan and of radicalizing the society. This means that parties and factions unfriendly to the United States will inherit the support of the people of East Pakistan. This is precisely the turn of events which our support for a unified Pakistan was calculated to prevent.

5 Policy recommendation.

We recommend most aid to Pakistan be phased out except for humanitarian assistance, especially to alleviate possible starvation. The most immediate issue is the program loan. This should not be signed since our policy will only be effective if it hurts West Pakistan where most program loan money goes. Even humanitarian assistance must contain iron-clad guarantees that the intended recipients actually receive the assistance. We also recommend a commensurate reduction in the official U.S. presence in Pakistan.

6 The manner in which this recommendation is implemented deserves careful thought. We believe the reasons for our actions should be made perfectly clear to GOP privately and to some degree publicly. Perhaps the most appropriate vehicle would be a message from President Nixon to Yahya expressing our deep disapproval of suppression of democratic forces and widespread loss of lives and property, and indicating our inability to continue our economic aid programs until the political atmosphere becomes conducive to such programs.

These proposals did not win any support in the Nixon Kissinger Administration, but numerous members of Congress subsequently pressed for cutbacks in economic assistance to Pakistan and, with State Department support, were generally successful.

* * * * *

Meanwhile, Senator William Fulbright (D-Arkansas), Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, requested the State Department to

make available to his Committee the reporting cables from Dacca, particularly singling out the dissent telegram. The Department declined to provide the reports on the grounds that it was the Department's long-standing practice not to provide diplomatic communications to the Congress.

On April 30, Chris Van Hollen, the NEA Deputy Assistant Secretary for South Asian Affairs, appeared before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in executive session (not open to the press or outsiders). Several Senators expressed their unhappiness over the Department's refusal to release the requested official documents, including the reporting cables from the field and what they misunderstood to be an "open telegram" of dissent from Dacca.

Senator Fulbright's reaction was reported in an AP dispatch datelined Washington April 30:

> QUOTE - State Department refused today to give senators a report from an American official in East Pakistan. The report allegedly contends that United States must not remain silent about mass killing of Bengali civilians by Pakistani government forces.
>
> Disclosing this after closed briefing, Senator Fulbright, chairman of Foreign Relations Committee said State Department is trying play down situation in civil war-torn East Pakistan because "stability and support of status quo is more to our interest than any upheaval."
>
> "They declined make available to us direct reports from the field, Senator Fulbright told reporters. "They will only make their own summaries and views available to committee."
>
> Senator said committee learned more from letters it has received, specifically one from a former foreign-aid worker airlifted from Pakistan April 7 after three years in that country, than it has from State Department.

6 "Compared to what the letter says, "Mr. Fulbright said, department summaries and testimony given by Christopher Van Hollen, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, "minimize actual reports" from East Pakistan.

7 According to letter from Jon E. Rohde of Barrington, R.I., forwarded to Mr. Fulbright by his mother, American Consul General, Archer Blood, has sent detailed reports from Dacca on situation in East Pakistan.

8 "While in no way suggesting that we interfere with Pakistan's internal affairs, Mr. Blood asserts, and we support him, U.S.

must not continue to condone the military action with official silence," Mr. Rohde's letter added.

9. "The silence of our government is being widely regarded," Mr. Rohde concluded, "as tacit approval of action being taken by Pakistan military." UNQUOTE

At the Committee's request Van Hollen agreed to refer the question back to the Department for reconsideration. On June 21 David Abshire, Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations, sent a letter to the Chairman, the salient parts of which read as follows:

> I have discussed this question with the Secretary. It is the Department's decision that we should continue to decline release of the original text of the telegrams themselves. However, in order to be responsive to the Committee's requests for information, we are providing the enclosed summary of the situation in East Pakistan which has been prepared on the basis of a large number of reports from our posts in East and West Pakistan.
>
> The reason for retaining the classification of this document is that we have special concern not to prejudice our relations with the Government of Pakistan nor to jeopardize the presence and effectiveness of our Consulate General in Dacca.

* * * * *

Not until July 15 were we to know the reason behind Nixon's and Kissinger's seemingly inexplicable refusal to express any criticism of the Pakistani Army's reign of terror in East Pakistan. On that date came the dramatic announcement of Kissinger's secret trip to China via Islamabad. Nobody in the State Department or the Foreign Service had known in advance of the China trip, not even the Secretary of State who was not informed until Kissinger was about to board a Pakistani aircraft for Beijing.

The "opening to China" was arguably the most important foreign policy initiative of the Nixon years. In his memoir "White House Years" Kissinger, in a chapter entitled "Tilt" covering the Bangladesh crisis, states,

> The United States could not condone a brutal military repression in which thousands of civilians were killed and from which millions fled to India for safety" but the East Pakistan crisis "burst upon us while Pakistan was our only channel to China; we had no other means of communication with Peking.

In an article published in *Asian Survey* in April 1980 Chris Van Hollen, who was NEA Deputy Assistant Secretary during the crisis and later Ambassador to Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon), forcibly refuted much of Kissinger's defense of the Nixon's administration handling of the Bangladesh crisis, which Kissinger characterized as "perhaps the most complex issue of Nixon's first term." Van Hollen pointed out that as of March 25 there were two channels to Beijing, one through Pakistan, the other through Romania, and it was not until a month later that the White House opted to use the Islamabad link. In Van Hollen's view

> it was most unlikely that a statement of U.S. disapprobation of the military crackdown would have caused Yahya to back out of his intermediary role; he was honored to have been tapped by Nixon as a communications link with China and desperately wanted to retain the goodwill of both Washington and Beijing.

Van Hollen also puts in proper perspective Kissinger's comment that there was "justified outrage" when reports began to come in of the Pakistani "atrocities" in Bengal, noting that these

> are the words of the elder-statesman author, viewing events retrospectively, they were not the words of the Assistant to the President in March-April 1971. At no time during the period is Kissinger on record as voicing outrage or humanitarian concern as the Pakistani armed forces obeyed Yahya's crackdown order with a vengeance.

Sometimes I have asked myself if I would have joined in a dissent if I had known of the Pakistan help in the opening to China back on April 6, 1971. I like to think that my colleagues in Dacca and I would have done so. Of course, we would have acknowledged the importance of Pakistan's intermediary role but could have gone on to claim that in our view, as the people on spot, the genocidal action of the Pakistani Army and the inevitable blow it would inflict on the unity of Pakistan and stability in the area were of even greater importance and called for something more than a condoning silence.

* * * * *

Did our dissent serve any useful purpose? It certainly made no dent in the Nixon-Kissinger stance toward events in East Pakistan. Were we naive in even thinking that our voices might have had any impact on policy? Perhaps so. In "Uncertain Greatness" Roger Morris argued that

> Even without the iron control of the White House and its clandestine priorities, there was a naive quality in the appeal of the Dacca cable to the authority of policy papers and national interests narrowly defined. Whether Blood and diplomats like him, their careers spent mainly in the field, understood or not, their cables fell among capricious personal politics in the State Department as well as at the White House.

Our dissent may, however, have contributed in a small way to energizing the backlash to the Administration's policy which became increasingly evident in the months to come within the State Department, the Congress, the press, and elements of the public.

Dissent can be dangerous. While much lip-service is given to welcoming divergent views expressed in a disciplined and constructive manner, the truth is that dissent is a challenge to existing policy and the dissenters can all too easily be dismissed as "no longer team players" or simply as nuisances. In my own case there were painful repercussions. Nixon ordered my transfer from Dacca and for the next six years, while Kissinger was still in power, I was in professional exile, excluded from any work having to do with foreign policy. Luckily, my time in the wilderness was rendered tolerable, even enjoyable, by friends in the Department during my stint in Personnel and by Army friends during my tour at the Army War College.

As I write these words Kosovo is the dominant foreign policy issue confronting the United States. It is heartening to see an administration which is willing to take positive action within the territory of a sovereign nation in order to reverse the effort of the leader of that nation to purge a province of a particular ethnic group. It is also heartening to see this essentially humanitarian action win the support of the majority of Americans, although not my Congressman and two Senators. Perhaps the memories of Bangladesh, Rwanda and Bosnia have contributed to this sea change in foreign policy attitudes.

The scope of the humanitarian crisis in East Pakistan was so much greater than that of Kosovo. Close to a million Kosovars have been

forced to leave Kosovo; ten million Bengalis were driven or fled from East Pakistan. Perhaps some thousands of Kosovars have been killed; probably a million Bengalis lost their lives in 1971. Admittedly, the people of Kosovo look more like us and Kosovo lies in a region of much more importance to the U.S. than does Bangladesh. Still, all we wanted was some indication of disapproval of Yahya's ethnic cleansing, not military action which would have been inconceivable, and not even economic sanctions, at least for the first couple of months. We hoped to see a little morality injected into the realpolitik of Nixon and Kissinger.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

A PROBLEM OF COMMUNICATION

A mini-crisis, which fortunately proved transient in nature, burst upon us on March 27, only two days after the military crackdown. It was sparked by news broadcasts that morning by BBC, All-India Radio and VOA citing the American Consul General in Dacca as the source of reports that heavy fighting, including the use of tanks, was taking place in Dacca. All-India Radio commented that this was the first report received from the scene.

Embassy Islamabad immediately fired off a telegram stressing how important it was not to cite official USG sources in Pakistan in any releases regarding the situation on the spot in East Pakistan. The Embassy pointed out that any citing of the Consul General as a source of information raised the question of his means of transmitting information. Since all normal authorized telecommunications from East Pakistan were either down or carefully controlled by Government of Pakistan censors, any reference to reports by the Consul General could jeopardize the Embassy's and Department's ability to maintain contact with Dacca.

I immediately weighed in with this telegram:

1 We are at a loss to explain why BBC cited "American Consul General in Dacca" as source report about heavy fighting and use of tanks. While we did of course submit such report in classified message, neither I, Haight (who was at ConGen office sending messages), nor Defense Attaché or DPO had any contact with press representatives between outbreak of hostilities and issuance of BBC report. And we were only ones who were aware of what we were reporting.

> 2 We cannot endorse too strongly Embassy Islamabad's point urging against citing USG sources in Pakistan in any releases concerning East Pak situation. As full story of what has happened here emerges, Pak military and, by indirection, GOP are inevitably going to be painted in blackest terms by newsmen.

That very same morning of March 27 Ambassador Farland was called to the Pakistani Ministry of Foreign Affairs by M. M. Abbas, the Director General for Western Europe and the Americas, to discuss the BBC, All-India Radio and VOA broadcasts. If it were true that the American Consul General in Dacca was the source of the broadcast reports, Abbas said, then the Government of Pakistan "desired to register the most emphatic perturbance over the incident." Abbas also said that he wished to note the fact that the; account was broadcast by the Voice of America, a USG agency, "thus giving considerable credence to the assumption of its credibility." Abbas thereupon asked for the Ambassador's comment.

Ambassador Farland "specifically and incisively" denied that the American Consul General in Dacca was the source of the reports in question. The Ambassador said he had no idea where the story originated and consequently his speculation thereon was worthless. He also said he had been aware of the broadcasts since early morning and had already sent two telegrams to Washington in an effort to secure more information and to counsel against the spreading of incendiary rumors.

When Abbas continued to express incredibility that VOA could have broadcast the report, the Ambassador told him that, while he might not be able to understand, the Ambassador knew well that in an organization the size of VOA the top-level policy people necessarily could not be at the teletypewriters 24 hours a day, reports can, and are, filed at lower echelons, and broadcasts have been initiated without verification or substantiation when picked up from established news media. Ambassador Farland noted that he understood the situation in view of the fact that during November VOA had picked up an erroneous Associated Press dispatch which was highly denigrating to him personally and had given it credence by broadcasting it over VOA facilities.

Abbas, while denying that he was in any way attempting to cross examine the Ambassador, then asked two pertinent questions: (A) Has the Embassy been in contact with the Consul General in Dacca and (B) Has the Consul General been in contact with Washington?

At this point Ambassador Farland must have felt himself forced into the role of a diplomat defined as "an honest man sent abroad to lie for his country." He told Abbas that he had not heard from the Consul General since the Government of Pakistan "saw fit" to close the wire service and that he would have been informed if the Consul General were in touch with Washington. He also told Abbas that he wished some means of communication could be established because he was more and more concerned about the safety of U.S. nationals in East Pakistan and the problem of their possible evacuation.

Showing his frustration, the Ambassador ended his report to the Department by stressing that this story, whatever its source, had created "but one more headache for Embassy Islamabad," and had certainly widened the credibility gap which had long been present. Ambassador Farland urged that the Department give urgent consideration to the issuance of a corrective statement by VOA attributing the story to news media and not to the Consul General.

Completing the action on March 27 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a press note, the key elements of which read as follows:

> The American Ambassador, Mr. Joseph S. Farland, was called to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs here this morning and was informed of the news broadcast by the Voice of America and the British Broadcasting Corporation, to the effect that the American Consul General in Dacca had reported intense fighting in Dacca. The Ambassador assured the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that it was not true that any such report had been sent to Washington by the American Consul General in Dacca. He, however, promised to take up this matter with his government. The British High Commissioner, Sir Cyril Pickard, was also called to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs this afternoon and was informed that the British Broadcasting Corporation and other responsible British news media had been issuing unauthenticated and tendentious reports about events in East Pakistan. These reports were derived from sources known to be hostile to Pakistan.

Two days later Abbas, having succeeded in publishing Ambassador Farland's prevarication, helped to get us off the hook, on which we had been placed by the prevarication. When the DCM, Sid Sober, called on him to protest the expulsion of American newsmen from Dacca on March 25-26, Abbas said he wanted to be sure we understood that, in his discussion with the Ambassador on March 27, he was not registering any objection over the fact that our Consul General in Dacca was reporting

to the USG. (The Embassy thought that the only possible conclusion to be drawn from this remark was the assumption that the GOP knew about our transmitter in Dacca.) Abbas went on to say that the GOP's concern was that our Consul General should be cited as the source of a news report for public consumption.

Sober said that we appreciated the GOP's concern over the latter point and, as the Ambassador had told Abbas, we had taken steps to insure that information which the Embassy might report privately to our government would not be used as a basis for stories by the international news media. He added that recent VOA broadcasts which we had monitored in Islamabad could not give any concern to GOP on that score. Abbas said he was pleased that we understood each other.

On April 1 the Pakistani Foreign Secretary in a meeting with Ambassador Farland responded to the Ambassador's earlier expressed wish to M. M. Abbas for some means of communication with Dacca. The Foreign Secretary said that in order to be as helpful as possible he would see the Defense Secretary about making a telephone line available to the Ambassador so that he could have "a first hand report from his Consul General in Dacca." The next week I went down to the cantonment and placed a call to the Ambassador. Given the fact that it was an open line, we could do little but offer mutual assurances: the Ambassador that he was completely supportive of the evacuation, which we were about to begin; and I that the American community in East Pakistan was safe and sound.

* * * * *

Meanwhile, the Department was struggling both to provide guidance to the Embassy in answering any further queries relating to our communication facilities in Dacca and to answer newsmen in Washington who began to smell the possibility of a story in the Department's contact, or lack thereof, with Dacca. On the latter score the first reaction was to fudge. In his noon briefing on March 2-7 the Departmental press spokesman was asked, "What is your answer to the question as to whether the Department is or is not in contact with the Consul General in Dacca?" His response was "I have said, for the record, that we have information reaching us from Pakistan, and that we are in constant contact with our Embassy in Islamabad. I am sorry, I simply cannot go beyond that."

On March 29, the spokesman, presumably in light of Abbas' hint that the GOP knew of our transmitter in Dacca and was not objecting to the Consulate General's use of the transmitter in reporting to Washington, fielded a similar question in much less equivocal terms. He was asked if he had any information whether the Pakistani Government was able to prevent our Consulate General in Dacca from continuing radio or telegraphic contacts with Washington at any time since the fighting broke out. In reply the spokesman said "On background, we have been in continuing communication with our Consulate General in Dacca. I will leave it at that and not take further questions."

There were further question. "Does that mean there was a disruption (of communications), since you refuse to go beyond that?" Reply: "I think my statement speaks for itself. We have been in continuing communication with our Consulate General in Dacca." Question: "Did the Pakistanis, on the other hand, deliver a protest to us either in Pakistan or here that our Consulate General was sending inflammatory reports to Washington?" Reply: "I have said I would take no further questions."

Even a month later, the question, albeit with a different twist, took up some of the Departmental spokesman's time. On April 27 there was the following exchange at the noon briefing:

Q Charlie, did we ever straighten out the lack of communications in the very first days of the troubles in East Pakistan when we said we had no communications from our Consul General at that time.

A No, I never put it quite that way, Pete. You may have missed one or two sessions in which I described the nature of the problem, which I would be happy to go over with you again, but I think most people in this room are familiar with it.

Q There was no lack of communication?

A We were never out of communication with our Consulate General in Dacca.

Q Were any of our reports from Dacca stopped or halted by our Embassy in Islamabad?

A No, sir.

Q Was the Consul General in Dacca out of communication with the rest of the area though?

A What do you mean by the rest of the area, Spencer?

Q I mean the area outside of Dacca. We were asking you about conditions in East Pakistan, and you said you were unable to provide them because you had no direct knowledge.

A That is a separate subject.

Q This is the subject he is raising I believe.

A I understood Pete to be talking about the technical problem of communications between Dacca and Washington.

Q Well, there are reports, Charlie, that our Consul General in Dacca was not able to get through to the State Department because many of the reports were being either cut down or not passed on by Islamabad.

A No, that is flatly untrue. We were in direct communication with Dacca throughout the crisis.

Q From the beginning?

A From the beginning.

The false charge that Embassy Islamabad had blocked our reports was believed by many Bengalis, many of whom thought that the Consulate General had to report to Washington via the Embassy in Islamabad. As far as I am aware, Dacca had always had the right to report simultaneously to Islamabad and Washington. At no time did the Embassy ever seek to censor or even influence our reporting.

The Department came up with the following position on how to handle possible further questions from the Government of Pakistan concerning the use of an unauthorized transmitter in Dacca.

> Department has decided that, although Spokesman will attempt avoid referring directly to Dacca whenever possible, he will as required acknowledge we are in touch with ConGen. (Presumably this in itself should not cause problems judging from Abbas' March 29 comment he previously was not registering any objection to fact ConGen was reporting to USG.) Spokesman will attempt focus his remarks on safety and welfare of Americans in East Pakistan, rather than on political or military situation and will try to refer primarily to Embassy as source of Information.
>
> We realize that by indicating we are in communication with ConGen Dacca we may be challenged by GOP on grounds we operating radio facilities without permission. If subject raised, Embassy should explain situation along following lines (or in its discretion volunteer information in advance of inquiry): As GOP knows, our regular communications channel in Dacca, leased from GOP, has been inoperative off and on for some time despite our specific requests that these facilities be restored. Consequently, we naturally have had to use backup emergency radio equipment in order make plans for protection American citizens and report on general situation in area. We trust GOP will not object to our continuing to use this emergency equipment until regular commercial service is restored.
>
> In light Abbas-DCM conversation we think it unlikely GOP will again raise Ambassador's March 27 conversation. However, if this conversation is raised, Embassy should handle in manner which will protect Ambassador's credibility possibly including explanation that Blood unable report from Dacca March 25-26 because curfew made it impossible for him to reach office.

Looking back at this fleeting but amazing brouhaha, my personal guess is that the most likely source of the offending (to Pakistan) radio broadcasts was New Delhi. Both VOA and BBC usually had correspondents stationed in New Delhi, working closely with, respectively, the American Embassy and the British High Commission. While the correspondents might not have seen our actual reporting telegrams, they could easily have picked up word of them from their normal contacts in their countries' missions. New Delhi was occasionally the source of earlier leaks, such as our dissent cable. Our Embassy in Islamabad was ever suspicious that our Embassy in New Delhi, in its briefing of newsmen, was giving out more information that it properly should. On March 31 Embassy Islamabad registered its concern that a report by *New York Times* correspondent Sid Shanberg, quoting "reports reaching here from unimpeachable diplomatic sources in Dacca" suggested that classified material from Dacca might have been used in Embassy New Delhi press briefings.

* * * * *

VOA's natural response to the furor raised by its citation of Consulate General Dacca's reporting on the events of March 25-26 was to be hyper-cautious in its coverage of developments in East Pakistan. I remember that the first VOA report was, incredulously, that President Nixon had

sent President Yahya congratulations on the occasion of Pakistan Day (March 23). At the Department's request we had transmitted the President's message to Yahya, then in Dacca for his fateful talks with Mujib. This type of national day message was strictly routine and about as newsworthy as reporting the weather as unchanged.

Immediately after March 25 USIS Dacca had begun to transmit daily background cables to USIA in Washington to be used as background information for VOA. Concerned about VOA's antiseptic, bland, and one-sided commentaries, PAO Brian Bell sent the following message to his Washington headquarters on April 4.

> Feel you should know getting lots of flak Bengali friends and Americans for our broadcasts. VOA credibility gap widening as BBC continues present eye witness reports their correspondent and British newsmen who have entered East Pakistan from India and seen that countryside not completely under control military. (BBC reports some towns flying Bangla Desh flags.) Especially damaging was VOA report from Yugoslavs landing in Delhi several days ago who said Dacca rapidly returning to normal (This despite our backgrounders stating contrary). Advisory, our best knowledge from most reliable sources great deal country not under control military. Military controls Dacca but city life far from normal with traffic 80 percent below usual in mornings and streets almost deserted after 3 p.m. Do not know what can be done to help credibility view delicate situation but thought you wish be aware problem.

The VOA credibility problem was gradually eased by a combination of factors. American newsmen also began to enter East Pakistan surreptiously from India and, upon returning to India, to file reports giving the lie to Pakistani propaganda that all was well in the province. USIS Dacca also continued to send daily backgrounders for VOA's guidance which, coupled with the Consulate General's own more highly classified messages, helped to keep VOA from unqualifiedly citing Pakistani sources. VOA got back some of its listeners but was never able, in my view, to match BBC for interest and accuracy of detail.

* * * * *

The insightful reader may have picked up an apparent inconsistency between our urging that the USG express unhappiness over the Pakistani

military repression and our support for the position of not sourcing any news reports to our telegrams. Obviously, if the Administration were to make such an approach to Yahya, it could hardly claim that its concern grew out of BBC or foreign news stories. The Consulate General in Dacca would have to be acknowledged as the source of Washington's information.

I acknowledged this dilemma in the Selective Genocide cable, when I suggested that we might express our shock at least privately to the GOP at the wave of terror directed against their own countrymen by the Pakistan Army, citing me as the source of the information. Looking back, thirty years wiser, or at least more cynical, I can see that such a remonstrance could easily be nullified by a private channel message stating that the expression of concern was for the benefit of the "bleeding hearts" in the Department and Foreign Service and did not signify any change in the Administration's staunch support of Pakistan.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

NADIR

In the month of April, 1971 my Foreign Service career, and consequently my own morale, hit rock bottom. There were a number of contributing factors. First of all, I was asked to request home leave and transfer to the Department; in other words I was being dismissed from my post in Dacca. The dismissal, while it came as no surprise after the dissent cable, still came as a jolt, and suddenly I was very much a lame duck. Secondly, to my surprise and consternation I learned that my colleagues in the Embassy had come to question my judgment. And finally, and perhaps most poignantly, the Pakistani Army began systematically to capture, one by one, the important cities of East Pakistan and to restore some semblance of order and normal life within Dacca. Was the Bengali struggle for independence doomed?

At the very beginning of April the military situation struck us as somewhat more favorable to the Awami League. In a telegram captioned "Who controls East Pakistan" we offered the following appreciation on April 2:

1 We are picking up increasing indications that effective Pak military control in East Pakistan is limited to a few major cities and that most of countryside is under Awami League control. Pak military is clearly in control of Dacca and nearby river port of Narayanganj. We also believe GOP reports that military control Chittagong, Comilla, Khulna and Jessore but we suspect last-named city is virtually in state of siege.

2 General Farman told British Deputy Hicomer April 1 that Army unable to send any patrols as yet into Mymensingh and

Sylhet districts which were "strongholds of East Bengal regiment." Pak military apparently controls Sylhet town and airport because Fokker Friendship flight Mar 31 evacuated number of West Pakistani tea planters from Sylhet.

3 Defense Attache and I debriefed American missionary evening April 1 who had that same day driven with his family from Faridpur to Dacca. He said Faridpur city was in hands of Awami League with telephones, power and all utilities working. Police in Faridpur were entrenching for possible defense of town and some police had departed to join in fighting around Jessore. According to missionary loud speaker trucks are moving about encouraging young men to volunteer in militia. Awami League controls important Goalundo Ghat ferry crossing of Padma River. Awami League provided ferry for missionary's vehicle, as well as armed guard of 50 volunteers armed with old rifles. Awami League also control Aricha on this side of river and missionary did not meet with any Pak military until three miles outside Dacca. Missionary said he had heard six aircraft flights over Faridpur in direction of Jessore on March 31. Since Faridpur astride principal land route from Jessore to Dacca it is obviously necessary for Pak military to supply Jessore by air.

4 Highly interesting and valuable reports from Calcutta indicate border in Jessore district wide open and Awami League patrol much of countryside.

5 In North Bengal we are inclined to accept Army claims that Rangpur, Dinajpur, Saidpur are firmly in their hands but we would guess that surrounding countryside is not.

6 Advent of monsoon rains in about two months' time will severely handicap Army operations while facilitating those of guerrilla-like bands. We would not at all therefore discount possibility that July and August will find Pak Army marooned in a series of strong points throughout the country and experiencing difficulty in obtaining supplies, except for those places reached by air (Sylhet, Comilla, Cox's Bazar, and Jessore) and those reached by sea (Chittagong and Khulna-Chalna).

7 It also seems clear that any Awami Leaguers who were able to get out of Dacca will have found safe refuge in countryside and should have no difficulty in moving across Indian border if they wish to do so.

8 Of course, Army was not attempted to extend its control into countryside. If it makes a major effort, Army would certainly be able to thrust aside any opposition. Concentration on searches and purges in Dacca and contingency redeployment against Indian action would have effect of limiting Army's freedom to control countryside, assuming it desired to achieve such control. In this connection there are some indications that Army may have in mind starving population into submission.

A week later, in a joint ConGen/AID message we sent in our summary assessment of the economic situation in East Pakistan.

1 Dacca and immediate environs completely cut off from rest of province. Railroad, river transport not functioning. Bus service extends only a few miles from center of city. Military have confiscated all trucks. Intra-wing PIA flights under control of military and being used almost exclusively by them. Only link with outside world is interwing PIA flights.

2 Rice and other foodgrains are still available in open market and ration shops. Prices have gone up but not seriously as demand has fallen sharply owing to massive population exodus. At current rates of consumption free market rice stocks will be exhausted in 7 to 10 days. Replenishment from principal surplus area, North Bengal, before supply gives out highly unlikely as Bengali nationalists are reportedly very strong in that area. Still ample stocks in government godowns so no danger of shortage next month or so. However, not all families have ration cards and obviously many lower class people out of work and may not have sufficient funds to tide them over even if they do have ration privileges (which most of them do not have). Ration shop owners (private businessmen) also facing difficulties in transporting foodgrains from government depots to their shops owing to government confiscation of trucks. Other food stuffs available at somewhat increased prices. Availability, however, varies from market to market and day to day. Substantial city-wide shortages are expected to show up in another week. This is also true for other consumer goods.

3 MLA has confiscated all gasoline stocks except 20,000 gallons of Burmah Eastern (BE) and 44,000 gallons of ESSO. Senior ESSO

officer estimates supply should last two to three weeks. MLA also took over jet fuel stocks from BE (who is only supplier) and were fueling PIA jets themselves. This responsibility returned to BE few days ago. Recent consumption has been running at 40,000 gallons per day. Amount of stocks available unknown.

4 Banking is "back to normal" although volume has dropped sharply. The clearing house is meeting daily and a courier system for all banks has been arranged between Dacca and Karachi. Telecommunications for banks including the state bank have not been restored as yet. Some interest in negotiating export bills that were blocked while Awami League ran show but bankers still reluctant as most businessmen want to withdraw rupees generated from these bills rather than pay off their loans. So far no indication of MLA penalties against two Bengali banks, Eastern Banking Corporation and Eastern Mercantile Bank. Eastern Banking Managing Director, Hamidullah, has left Dacca, however, as his entire family was killed by Army when they were attempting to leave Dacca by country boat during non-curfew hours. Hamidullah, who was not with them, is reportedly in state of shock.

5 No jute or cotton mills are running. Best measure of industrial inactivity is drop in consumption of electrical power from 160 megawatts per day to 10.25 megawatts per day. About enough to handle non-industrial demand. Kaptai hydroelectric installation is off line for unknown reasons. Ashuganj thermal plant has also shut down owing to lack of trained personnel, and no construction activity in city although this is height of construction season.

6 *Comment*: As is evident from foregoing, Dacca area will not be back to normal for some time. No evidence yet that people are returning to city. MLA is holding daily meetings with various key government agencies and private firms (petroleum firms, shipping firms) in attempt to restore lines of communications, particularly between Dacca and port cities of Chittagong and Khulna. Difficult to see what these groups can do, however, in absence of military control of countryside. MLA still has a few weeks grace but obviously must accomplish great deal during this period if major economic catastrophe is to be avoided in Dacca to say nothing of East Pakistan as a whole.

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The reception room at the Consulate General quickly took on the appearance of a war room, with the walls covered with maps and colored pins depicting the changing military situation. To our private dismay the red pins depicting Pakistani Army units began a steady extension and the green pins of the Awami League a general contraction.

Not until early May did we receive detailed and reliable information about what had happened in the Faridpur sector. Our sources were two American missionaries, Ryther and Thurman, who stayed on in Faridpur until the beginning of May. They said that the Pakistani garrison in Faridpur had left for Jessore on March 21 due to the difficulty of obtaining food supplies from a hostile population. When news of the Army's crackdown in Dacca reached Faridpur, there was an attempt to wreak vengeance on the approximately 1000 Urdu speakers living in the town, but it was prevented by the local Awami League leaders. Neither Ryther nor Thurman heard of any killing during this period and said they would have heard, if there had been any, because of their extensive contacts in both the Bengali and Urdu-speaking communities.

Their comments helped to confirm our view that there had not been any uniform reaction throughout East Pakistan to the news of the killing in Dacca. In some cases only Urdu-speaking males were killed; in some all Urdu-speakers were killed, and in others, like Faridpur, there had been either no incidents or very few.

When the Army reached Goalundo Ghat on the Padma River, they found extensive defensive positions, including earth-covered bunkers, prepared by the police and East Pakistan Rifles. According to an Army officer, the resistance was stiff. When the Army broke through, the few police and EPRs left in Faridpur retreated toward India. The Army destroyed all of Goalundo town (a medium-sized town serving the ferry crossing) and all the houses on both sides of the twenty-mile road from Goalundo to Faridpur, presumably in retaliation for the defense offered at Goalundo Ghat.

Faridpur was a ghost town when the Army arrived. The Army burned the large, central market area and the local Urdu-speakers engaged in some arson and looting. The missionaries were told by the Army major in command that the Army assumed all remaining Bengalis were enemies and deserved to be shot. The loss of life turned out to be small, approximately 100 Bengalis, because almost all had fled upon the Army's approach.

Between Faridpur and the western border of East Pakistan with India lies the small city of Chuadanga. Its claim to fame derives from the fact it was for several weeks the seat of the "Provisional Capital of Bangladesh," before the Awami League seat of government moved to Mujibnagar, near Calcutta. The Army occupied Chuadanga on April 18, meeting no resistance, withdrew the same day but returned the next day and proceeded to destroy the city. According to a German TV correspondent who had been through Chuadanga several days later, all the houses were searched and most of the occupants killed. The Army had shelled the city before entering and the houses left standing were systematically burned and the livestock was shot, the aim being to make an example of a place so clearly associated with the Awami League. The German said that there no longer appeared to be any organized resistance by Bengali forces in the area. The bulk of those who had originally been in Chuadanga had retreated into India before the Army came.

Mymensingh, in the northen part of the province and arguably the most important city after Dacca and Chittagong, was the last city of any size to fall to the Army — on April 23. On May 8 I debriefed Don Schaeffer, a level-headed Australian missionary who had lived in Mymensingh for some years. Moreover, he had kept a diary for the past two months.

Schaeffer said there had been no violence in Mymensingh between March 1 and March 27. During that period the civil government and the Awami League had satisfactorily maintained law and order. On March 27 a group of Punjabis, about 50 in number and attached to the East Pakistan Rifle garrison in Mymensingh, panicked and slew a number of their Bengali fellow EPRs in their tents. Other Bengali-EPRs, who greatly outnumbered the Punjabis, then counterattacked. After a day and a half of fighting the Punjabis were wiped out. Some Punjabis attempted to surrender but were shot down. Some townsmen and people from nearby villages then descended on the EPR camp and grossly mutilated the bodies of the Punjabi soldiers.

Although tension ran high in Mymensingh, no other violence occurred until April 15 when Pakistani Air Force planes made their first strafing and rocket attack on the city, killing eight and wounding ten. Immediately thereafter, rumors began to circulate that the Biharis (non-Bengali Muslims originally from India) had raised red flags to guide the planes. Goondas (armed criminal elements) from the city and nearby villages attacked three Bihari colonies in the city. Male Biharis over the age of ten were killed when found. The women and children, who took refuge in a mosque, were unharmed.

Schaeffer said he heard that from 500 to 2,000 Biharis were killed. He emphasized that the killing was not done by the East Pakistan Rifles or Awami League forces who were out of town in defensive positions at the time. After the killing Bihari shops and property were thoroughly looted.

A second raid was made by two planes a few days later, but the planes merely machine-gunned the middle of the river, causing no casualties. On April 23, preceded by another air strike, the Army reached Mymensingh. The first troops to arrive came not by road through the Madhupur forest, where they had been expected, but by rail in a fortified train, protected by sandbags and carrying at least three tanks on flat cars.

The Army rolled right up into Mymensingh station, and began five hours of tank firing. By the time the Army had arrived, there was no resistance in Mymensingh and 90% of the population had fled. Schaeffer said there were no casualties from the Army's shooting. He believed they were firing into the air or in some cases firing blanks, in a deliberate attempt to intimidate the remaining population. After the Army's arrival there had been much looting of shops by soldiers and by Biharis.

The killing of the Biharis in Mymensingh was to have repercussions in Dacca. The families of the Bihari men killed in Mymensingh began to arrive in Dacca on April 28 and spread word of the slaughter. A rumor quickly spread through the city that Biharis in the Dacca suburb of Mirpur were forming up with the intent of marching into Old Dacca and extracting revenge. All downtown offices were closed by 11:30 a.m. on April 28. The Army, however, deployed rapidly and contained the mob before it could enter Dacca proper, inflicting a number of casualties on the Biharis. Colonel Saeeduddin Ahmed, of MLA Civil Affairs, confirmed to DPO Carle that seven Biharis had been killed and 45 arrested. This was the first time, he said, since the recent troubles that the Army had been forced to fire on Biharis, adding that the Army intended to make every effort to control communal tensions in Dacca.

As the green pins disappeared one by one from the maps in our little war room, we realized that the Army had succeeded in neutralizing almost all resistance from organized military formations (the East Bengal regiment, the East Pakistan Rifles and the police). But the remnants of these forces had lived to fight another day by retreating across the

borders into India, and the long India-East Pakistan border was proving highly porous and seemingly beyond the ability of the Pakistani Army to seal off. Although we did not fully realize the importance, this latter point was to make all the difference in the ensuing months.

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As I looked at the documentary record of that month of April, I could see that our small group in Dacca was turning testy and pugnacious. Whether or not our reporting was given credence in Washington or Islamabad, we were going to battle on for truth and righteousness as we saw them. We must have struck some of our colleagues as real pains in the neck.

For example, on April 5 we received a trifling joint telegram from the Department and USIA which stressed the need for consistency in the terminology used internally and publicly, particularly over VOA and in briefing the press, to refer to the Bengali opponents of the MLA in East Pakistan. They proposed to use "Bengali separatists," unless the context should require a more specific term.

"Bengali separatists" was not that bad a term, although it seemed to suggest that not all Bengalis favored separation from Pakistan. Perhaps a few older, insignificant politicians still thought in terms of a united Pakistan. Our joint ConGen/USIS reply was huffy and uncompromising.

1 We object to use of term "Bengali separatists" as being inaccurate and pejorative. The struggle in East Pakistan is between West Pakistan Armed Forces and non-Bengali civilians on one side and Bengalis on the other side.

2 While we can assume that the Bengali goal will eventually be independence, we have no positive information that Mujib actually declared independence. Moreover, it should be remembered that the Pak Army struck first.

3 We would prefer use of the term "Bengalis," Our second choice would be "Bengali nationalists."

The upshot was that Washington kept on using "Bengali separatists," and we stuck to "Bengalis" in our reporting telegrams and in talking with the few American journalists who began to slip into East Pakistan by way of India and whom we sheltered in our homes to prevent their detection by the MLA.

From the Department's telegrams we learned that our old nemesis, Ambassador Hilaly, was stressing the idea of a political solution in East Pakistan through enlisting the cooperation of non-Awami League political figures. Hilaly reasoned that the Awami League's principal strength was in the cities and the conservative villagers would gravitate toward religion-based political parties. He also suggested that only a part of the Bengali populace had been directly affected by the Army's operations. We took instant umbrage and attacked Hilaly's reasoning, which reflected the hopes of the MLA, in this message:

1 We view Ambassador Hilaly's hopeful prognosis for political evolution in East Pakistan as highly debatable. Firstly, political figures such as Hamidul Huq Choudhury, who MLA currently wooing, represent older generation which based on evidence of past election has very little political clout. PDP, in which Choudhury figures, won 1.09 percent of votes cast in December 7 election. Winning thereby one National Assembly seat. Politico-religious Jamaat-i-Islam won 6.25 percent. On whole conservative parties won 13.45 percent of vote and one seat, compared to Awami League's 72.57 percent of vote and 151 out of 153 seats at stake in December 7 election. Election also proved that countryside was as responsive to essentially secular appeals of Awami League as were urban areas. It is difficult to see these attitudes changing overnight.

2 Secondly, we of opinion that suffering by Bengalis widespread, resulting whenever and wherever Army chooses to assert its authority. Extended family system also enhances extent of grief. Wounds in body politic appear deep and perhaps irreparable. Some Awami League turncoats may appear, but by doing so they probably would lose following.

3 For MLA power will grow out of gun barrels. Indiscriminate killing has shocked and terrorized society. For some, such as city dwellers and civil servants, they must submit in order to survive. Others have fled terror of cities for imagined safety of countryside. In these circumstances MLA can only appeal to fears of populace of worse evils than itself. The most convenient fear to conjure up is that of Indian/Hindu domination. But how far the MLA can force political evolution via a "hate India" campaign is questionable. Likewise any Bengali "window dressing" in governmental structure imposed from above will do nothing to resolve current crisis.

The MLA soon went public in its effort to win over Awami Leaguers to a political solution. On April 18, in his first broadcast since his arrival in East Pakistan in early March, General Tikka Khan appealed to the people to join in a cooperative effort to repair the damage done to the nation. Tikka's speech was most memorable in its conciliatory gesture toward members of the "defunct" Awami League. Tikka claimed that a "vocal, violent and aggressive minority" had "forced the Awami League to adopt a destructive course." The banning of the Awami League as a political party, Tikka said, "does not mean that all those who belonged to it were against the solidarity and integrity of the nation." He added that "all those who wish Pakistan well need have no fears" and should "come forward, join others and do their duty." Likewise, those of the Armed Forces, East Pakistan Rifles and police who have not yet reported to duty should return to the fold and they "will be treated compassionately, keeping in view the prevailing conditions." That was the carrot, like all MLA pronouncements, Tikka's broadcast also brandished a stick. "If failing to avail themselves of this opportunity," Tikka warned, they will be "destroyed completely." Tikka repeatedly referred to the Bengali resistance as "miscreants" and on one occasion surprisingly as "fascists."

Tikka's appeal to the police brought at least one response. The eight Bengali policemen who were camping in our front yard from March 16 to March 25 had shrewdly folded their tent and buried their rifles somewhere in the yard as soon as the Army crackdown began. They knew full well that any armed Bengali would have been shot without question on that fateful night. For a while, minus their uniforms, they mingled with our servants in the servants' compound, but then quickly faded away. Suddenly, on April 20 to my surprise the corporal in charge of the police squad surfaced at my house. He had heard of Tikka's appeal to the police and asked if I would accompany him to the MLA offices when he returned the rifles, and vouch for his good behavior on the night of March 25.

I agreed and drove him myself to the MLA headquarters, the rifles stacked in the trunk of the car. (Our Bengali drivers were fearful of going anywhere near the Army.) The corporal, sweating nervously, explained to an Army captain what had happened. I corroborated his account and pointedly reminded the captain of General Tikka Khan's offer of amnesty, adding that the corporal, in my view, was fully deserving of fair and friendly treatment. I hope and believe that he did indeed suffer no serious consequences.

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As noted earlier, the appointment of Lt. General Tikka Khan, the "Butcher of Baluchistan," to be Governor and Chief Martial Law Administrator for East Pakistan was greeted with consternation by the Bengali population. Their worst fear that Tikka would live up to his reputation had soon been confirmed in the military action commencing March 25. In the next week nothing was seen of Tikka. He made no speeches or radio addresses, obviously being fully occupied with his military responsibilities. Some of my colleagues in the Consular Corps had called upon him prior to March 25, but only a couple had called upon him since March 25. It was quite obvious that Tikka welcomed those calls by foreign representatives, calls which would certainly have been made with promptitude in more normal times. Each time a Consul General or Deputy High Commissioner called on Tikka, the event was zealously publicized in the MLA-controlled press.

For my part I stubbornly refrained from calling on Tikka. I was, after all, very busy, and besides neither the Embassy or the Department was urging me to do so. But the matter was soon taken out of my hands. On the afternoon of April 2, as I was leaving the office, I was stopped by an Army captain who informed me that General Tikka Khan wished me to call on him at his residence at 6 p.m. that evening.

I decided to take Colonel Nolan, the visiting Defense Attaché from Islamabad, along with me. I was not at all sure what the meeting would bring, and I thought a witness might be helpful. The 45-minute friendly conversation brought out nothing more important than his offer to be of any assistance to me and the American community. I took advantage of the opportunity to (a) reaffirm our desire to get to Chittagong soonest to visit Americans there, (b) request him to contact military in certain areas such as Comilla to ascertain whether Americans there were safe, and (c) raise question of clearances for our aircraft to carry out Americans who wished to leave. In each case he took notes and promised to help. Only significant information he imparted was that Feni was not in Army hands, grain would be moved from Chittagong to Dacca by water in first instance since railroad was cut, and railroad between Dacca and Khulna (river port in southern part of the province) was likely to be out of commission for some time.

Tikka introduced us to General Niazi, generally known as Tiger, and the field commander of the Army troops in East Pakistan. Over several

Scotches we reminisced about mutual friends in the Pakistani Army. The next morning, as I had expected, the controlled press carried a front page story that the American Consul General had called on the Chief Martial Law Administrator. It was the only diplomatic call I ever made at near gunpoint.

One week later, on April 9, Lt. General Tikka Khan was sworn in as Governor of East Pakistan. I received my invitation to the swearing-in ceremony at 8 a.m. the same morning. In consultation with my British, French and Soviet colleagues, we jointly agreed that we would not ourselves attend but would be represented by lower ranking officers. We had heard that the ceremony had been delayed over the refusal of East Pakistan High Court Chief Justice B. A. Siddiky to administer the oath. Reportedly, the Chief Justice had been kept under house arrest.

I asked our junior political officer, Scott Butcher, to represent the U.S. His report made interesting reading.

1 Oath of office was administered at 1110 hours local time by East Pak High Court Chief Justice B. A. Siddiky (who appeared sepulchral but alive, contrary to reports he was killed by MLA). GOEP Chief Secretary Shafiul Azam also participated in ceremony. Following ceremony tea was served. Governor Tikka Khan departed Governor's house accompanied by military escort at approximately 1130 hours, presumably to return to Cantonment.

2 Recognizable diplomatic guests present were Polish, Chinese (Consul General and interpreter), Nepalese, Iranian, Australian, Burmese, Indian, Japanese and Czech. Slavic speaking individual, possibly junior Russian diplomat, also observed. U.S. represented by Vice Consul. Also France. British not represented (must have changed mind at last minute).

3 Affair was grim and businesslike. Tikka Khan was unsmiling as were photographers and TV cameraman present. Both Justice Siddiky and Tikka Khan wore sunglasses, although ceremony held indoors. (Tikka always wore dark glasses.) Khaki dominated: at least half of those present were military. Civilian officials who could be identified were B. M. Abbas, Chairman of Epwapda; Arshaduzzaman, Director of Information, GOEP; Mr. Dastiger of Investment Promotion and Supply; Home Secretary Mujibul Huq; GOEP Chief Protocol Officer Osmany; and Protocol Officer Obaidur Rahman Khan.

4 Following ceremony and announcement tea being served, diplomatic representatives with exception of Chinese, milled about in confused indecision over whether or not to partake. They eventually did, although fraternizing with each other rather than with Pakistanis present.

5 Departure of guests was shambles, as Consular Corps representatives had to walk to own cars which haphazardly parked about. Scene of total confusion was highlighted by cars being driven through gardens (now unkempt) of Governor's house as guests sought to extricate selves from traffic jam. No assistance was rendered by MLA personnel.

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During this period there was one instruction from the Department that we jumped to respond to as quickly and fully as we could. Because of strong Congressional interest in the subject, the Department asked us for any evidence of the use of U.S.-provided military equipment against the Bengali populace. While we knew that some of our equipment was being used, since the bulk of the Pakistani Army's equipment came from the U.S., we were hard put in some cases to make a categorical response that equipment actually used was of U.S. origin, and not Chinese or French. Fortunately, we had Bob Nolan's help.

Our response, submitted on April 15 in a SECRET/EXDIS message, read as follows:

1 There is little hard information available on use of U.S. equipment in Pakistan. However, there is no doubt that it has been used in some instances and we suspect probably is being used as required.

2 A. A ConGen official in the Consulate General offices on morning 26 March saw three M-24 tanks pass by on the street. One of these let off a burst of machine gun fire. Neither the target nor possible effects could be observed. In the afternoon of March 26 this same official saw four M-24 tanks come to an open area near the Consulate General and park. He did not see them do any firing nor did he observe their departure, which presumably took place after dark.

B. Regularly and frequently from the morning of 26 March for the next ten days many ConGen officials saw US-type jeeps

with what appeared at a distance to be U.S. .50 caliber machine guns mounted on them. These vehicles were apparently being used by the Army to patrol the city. Twice on 26 March Defense Attaché saw and heard such vehicles fire short bursts. Similar types of firing were heard regularly the day of 26 March. In the two instances observed it could not be determined whether the fire was directed at specific targets or at random for purposes of general intimidation.

C. Beginning 29 Mar sorties from Dacca Airport by F-86 type aircraft have been observed almost daily. No qualified observer has reported seeing any external stores on these aircraft other than fuel tanks, and almost every returning sortie observed was also carrying external fuel tanks. There has been one report by an unqualified ConGen observer to the effect that he "thought" he saw one F-86 type aircraft carrying what by his description may have been rockets.

D. On April 4 a ConGen official visiting Chittagong saw three M-24 tanks together with infantry stopped on the side of a road leading into an area of the city which was still held by resistance forces. These tanks were not seen to be in action but it was the observer's opinion that they were preparing to go into action.

3 A. The UK Asst Milatt was in Purbani Hotel in downtown Dacca when trouble erupted on 25 March and from this vantage point was able to see some activity during the succeeding day and half of curfew. He claims that on 26 March he saw an M-24 tank fire its turret gun and also its machine gun although he was not able to observe the probable target or effect. This same source says he saw what he identified as U.S.-type 106 recoilless rifles in the city on more than one occasion on 26 March. He did not see any of these weapons fired. The UK Milatt also saw many U.S.-type jeeps with what he identified as U.S. .50 caliber machine guns mounted thereon. He says he was told by a UK citizen resident in Chittagong, a former British Naval Officer, that he saw F-86 type aircraft attacking the Chittagong radio towers during the fighting there and saw them firing what he felt sure were aerial rockets. The observer said that as the aircraft dived toward the towers trails of smoke advance out ahead of the aircraft. This sounds characteristic of aerial rockets.

B. "Time" correspondent Dan Coggin told Defense Attaché that he was convinced that aerial rockets had been fired against a target in the Kushtia area. Coggin said he did not see any air attacks personally but that many witnesses in the area told him of an air attack and that he saw damage to a building alleged to have been done by attacking aircraft that he believed could only have been caused by aerial rockets. This belief was based on the angle of trajectory apparent from the damage.

4 A. A Danish observer told ConGen officials that he had seen 105 howitzer ammunition being offloaded from PIA Fokker aircraft at Comilla. He claimed the cases were marked with the USAID handclasp. This observer has not been available for further interrogation of any details this incident but his report stressed the sighting of the AID symbol on the ammo cases.

B. The Dacca press (controlled) reported recently that the PAF had flown some operations in support of the Army and claimed specifically that nine vehicles carrying arms and ammunition from India to Pakistan had been destroyed by PAF air attacks.

5 Two ConGen officials are presently in Chittagong re evacuation Amcits and expected to return Dacca soon. If they have observed other instances of the use or possible use of U.S.-supplied equipment, it will be reported at once.

The State Department did take action to stop U.S. military supplies to Pakistan. In his book "White House Years" Kissinger was very critical of the Department in this instance. The Department's side was put forth succinctly in Chris Van Hollen's earlier cited *Asian Survey* article.

> The Department of State did not move toward a new arms embargo against Pakistan because it had any emotional bias toward India (Kissinger had referred to the Department's traditional Indian bias); instead, in light of clear evidence the U.S.-supplied tanks and aircraft were being used against the Bengalis, and strong media and Congressional reaction to such use, the Department imposed a "hold" on military equipment for Pakistan, pending a formal White House decision. But in a textbook example of a bureaucratic snafu, although the State Department thought it had stopped all military supplies to Pakistan and had conveyed that impression to the Congress and the Indians, small amounts of arms, most of which were outside U.S. Government control, were shipped after March 25. This equipment had been purchased under licenses issued

before the hold action. When the *New York Times* reported in late June that Pakistani freighters had sailed, or were about to sail, from U.S. ports with arms, a credibility gap was created with Congress and with the Indian government; Indian Foreign Minister Swaran Singh had just returned to New Delhi from Washington with what he thought were assurances no arms were being shipped.

The amount of arms shipped to Pakistan after March 25, 1971 was not large, although the exact amount may never be known. Senator Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts used the figure $50 million on several occasions, and this figure was given prominence by the Indian press. But a General Accounting Office study, undertaken at Kennedy's request, later reported that $3.8 million in military supplies were exported between March 25 and September 30, 1971 on licenses issued before March 25.

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In one respect there was something of a return to normalcy in East Pakistan in mid-April. Travel to East Pakistan by foreigners, including holders of diplomatic passports, became possible, but only after permission was received on a case-by-case basis from the Pakistani Ministry of Foreign Affairs. On April 12 PIA resumed three round trip flights daily from Karachi to Dacca. Our first official visitor from Islamabad was Joe Wheeler, the AID Mission Director, who was with us from April 7-9. His business was primarily with Eric Griffel, the Provincial AID Mission Director and concerned follow-up to the cyclone disaster relief effort.

Then, from April 14-17, the DCM, Sid Sober, visited Dacca. At first I welcomed his visit, but I quickly became depressed when I realized that Sid, a friend for 24 years, doubted the balance and accuracy of our reporting. One of his first steps was to visit, on his own, a mutual Bengali friend. Upon his return Sid told me that the friend had told him that reports of extensive military violence were grossly exaggerated, that the military were using very little force in East Pakistan. Astonished and angry, I told Sid that his informant was lying through his teeth. I asked him if he equated this fellow's comments with the contrary views of all of his colleagues in East Pakistan.

Sid also wanted to visit the University of Dacca, the scene of some of the worst atrocities on the night of March 25-26. I showed him the

bullet holes in Jagannath Hall, but he thought they did not indicate a great deal of firing. He asked to see the mass graves, and I showed him their location but new grass covered the digging scars. In Jagannath Hall, however, a student quickly slipped up to us and took us to a stair well which was heavily pock-marked with machine gun bullet holes. We noticed a sickly sweet stench from the bottom of the stairwell. The student, with a handkerchief to his nose, told us that the source of the smell was a pile of decomposing student bodies, some of which were discernible.

I tried to explain to Sid that the Army had done a very efficient job of collecting bodies and disposing of them quickly. If only the Army had behaved that efficiently in the cyclone-stricken areas. All through Sid's visit I had the distinct feeling that his impressions mirrored those of President Yahya, who after he overflew the areas impacted by the cyclone and tidal wave said, "It doesn't look so bad."

On April 15, in the middle of Sid's visit, Alamgir Rahman, the General Manager of ESSO in East Pakistan and my very helpful contact with Mujib, was arrested by the Army upon leaving his house and taken to the cantonment. I continued to make inquiries about his welfare as long as I was in Dacca, stressing that my interest derived from the fact he was an executive of an American corporation. Severely tortured while in custody, Alamgir died soon after liberation.

On April 28, together with Eric Griffel and Scott Butcher, I flew to Islamabad for a Country Team meeting. It was the first such gathering of the Ambassador and the key members of the Embassy staff, plus the principal officers in Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar and Dacca, sometimes accompanied by members of their staff. Given the unbelieving attitude just displayed by the DCM, I approached the meeting with the bevy of U.S. officials in West Pakistan with considerable trepidation. They had been exposed since March 25 to a steady barrage of MLA propaganda, setting forth the Pakistan case which was at great variance with our reports from Dacca. Sid's demeanor had shown that much of the GOP line had registered with them. They must also have resented our forthright convictions that the end of a unified Pakistan was in sight.

I think it fair to note that Islamabad was pretty much of an artificial city, constructed to be the country's capital in part because of its isolation from major centers of population, as in the case of Canberra and Brasilia. Islamabad was, essentially, a government town. It had no university, or

industry or thriving business class. What it had were fine new buildings, numerous diplomatic missions, and even more numerous government offices. Our people in the Embassy did a good job of traveling around the country but while in Islamabad they were, to my view, existing in a Pakistani-imposed cocoon.

We had prepared our presentation to the meeting with great care. Eric dealt with the economic conditions following the military crackdown, Scott with the general political situation, and I with the security picture, including the prospects of the Bengali resistance. To our considerable chagrin we found that our chance to participate came only after the reports from Peshawar, Lahore and Karachi. All three of the constituent posts in West Pakistan dwelt on their districts' attitudes toward what was happening in East Pakistan. They seemed pretty optimistic about the future of Pakistan, no doubt reflecting the MLA line.

Finally, we had our day in court, such as it was. Our analyses had a generally courteous, albeit skeptical, hearing, and the questions addressed us were not hostile, for the most part. The overall attitude, however, struck me as one of sad resignation — their formerly respected colleagues in the East Wing had clearly gone off the deep end.

I had a direct set-to with the head of the Military Advisory and Assistance Group (MAAG), Brigadier General Chuck Yeager, who had been the first test pilot to break the sound barrier, and later the model for the character portrayal in the film "The Right Stuff," and the long-time pitchman for Delco batteries in TV commercials. After I had said in response to a question that I thought the Bengali resistance would win out in the end with Indian help, Yeager sneeringly asked, "Do the Bengalis have any aircraft? Any tanks? Then, how can they stand up to the well-equipped, disciplined Pakistani Army?"

I felt like replying "Haven't you fellows learned anything from Vietnam?" but I desisted, largely because I felt depressed and suddenly very lonely. Instead, I restricted myself to enumerating the reasons for my view: The Indian Army could tie down Pakistan's soldiers on the East and West borders, leaving their internal lines of communication open to attack by Bengali guerrilla fighters; The Army would be hard put to maintain control of a terrain not unlike the Mekong delta in Vietnam, with 70,000 troops operating in a hostile sea of 70 million Bengalis; The Bengalis would wear out the Army in the long run and, if India intervened, could win an all-out victory in the short run.

That evening I remember leaving the final dinner early, anxious to get back to my post and to colleagues who had shared the same experiences and who held the same views. I knew my stay in Dacca would be short, at most six weeks, because the Ambassador had told me that the decision had been made at "the highest level" to move me out of Dacca. "Highest level," he said, meant the President and Kissinger. Later I learned that both Eric Griffel, the Provincial Aid Director, and Brian Bell, the Public Affairs officer, would also have shortened tours in Dacca. But, before we all left, there was much that we wanted to do and say.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

RESISTANCE AND ESCALATION

Upon returning to Dacca, I found my morale instantly lifted, simply by being back on the job and in the midst of my own people. I was also encouraged to learn that I most likely would be assigned to Personnel, where I had enjoyed serving several years before. Moreover, the situation in East Pakistan seemed to be evolving in a manner favorable to the Bengali resistance. In fact, I deliberately stalled in fixing a firm date for my departure, until I was jogged into settling on June 5 as a result of a polite but firm reminder by Ambassador Farland.

On April 26, before I had gone over to Islamabad, I was sad to say goodbye to Bob Nolan, the Defense Attaché from the Embassy. He had been a pillar of strength and a delightful companion since coming to help us in mid-March. He had stayed with me at the house and accompanied me on many calls. The Embassy kindly replaced Col. Nolan with the Army Attaché, who also proved of valuable help.

In early May I received travel authorization to fly to Teheran to visit my wife and son. (Most of the other officers left in Dacca had already made their conjugal visits to Teheran). I flew first to Islamabad where the Embassy gave me a car and driver to proceed north to Kabul via the Khyber Pass and the even more scenic Kabul Gorge. In Kabul I stayed with my former Ambassador, Bob Neumann, and his wife and son, and had a chance to visit with my successor as DCM, Bruce Laingen and his wife Penne. Bruce and I had shared an office in the State Department when he was Greek desk officer and I had the Cyprus desk, and we often substituted for each other. A few years later Bruce was to find himself as the senior U.S. hostage in Teheran.

My stay in Teheran was brief but pleasant. Like the rest of the miscreants, my family was housed in a hotel, or rather a series of hotels. Some of the American community had already departed for the U.S. and the remainder were preparing to leave. The Embassy in Teheran had thoughtfully provided the group with edited cable summaries of our reporting in Dacca, and I tried to flush out this information in several talks with the rapidly diminishing group.

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From mid-May onward the Consulate General thought it could discern three emerging trends: (A) the beginning of an ongoing resistance, (B) the systematic persecution of Hindus, and (C) the continuing deterioration of the law and order situation. In a message dated May 25 we sought to analyze those trends, which we saw as mutually reinforcing and holding important implications for USG policies and operations with respect to East Pakistan. Our message, minus those sections treating with the persecution of the Hindus which was the subject of the Chapter on Selective Genocide, read as follows:

1 We had earlier believed that round one of the Bengali struggle for independence, marked by the Pak Army's destruction of all organized units in the field and capture of all towns held by insurgents, would be succeeded by several months of regrouping and training before any meaningful guerrilla action would begin. We have been proven wrong. Resistance has continued without a break and is beginning to take on some meaning in terms of disruption of transportation and communications, economic warfare, and intimidation of the population.

2 Successful attacks against riverine traffic in the vicinity of Khulna and Barisal and on the water route to Sylhet have certainly hampered the export of jute and frightened the operators and crews of river craft. The Pak Army will be hard put to police the riverways successfully and if they are not successful some eighty percent of the total traffic of East Pakistan is in jeopardy. Reports keep coming in of bridges damaged after having been repaired once by the Army, suggesting some organized demolition effort. Some Peace Committee members have been killed and many more have been threatened in a program of intimidation which seems to be growing apace.

3 We had attributed the efflux of city and town dwellers and the paucity of industrial labor primarily to fear of the Army. This fear was understandably the initial cause and continues to be a major factor, but we believe it is fast becoming subordinate to a strongly and widely held attitude of non-cooperation with the Martial Law authorities, caused in part by intimidation and fear of resistance reprisals. Students do not return to school because they believe it is unpatriotic to do so. Shopkeepers do not reopen their shops and workers do not return to their plants because the *Mukti Fouj* (Liberation Army) urges them to stay away. Bengalis refuse to buy goods made in West Pakistan and shopkeepers make a point of emphasizing which items are made in East Pakistan by Bengalis. Taken individually, these actions mount to very little but cumulatively they can constitute an economic headache to the Army.

4 In Dacca and Chittagong and in a few of the major towns the Army has established a tolerable degree of physical security. In most towns and throughout most of the countryside there has, however, occurred a massive breakdown of law and order. Such a breakdown is only natural when we remember that events since March 25 have in large part destroyed the fabric of civil government, many of the officers of which have defected or been killed; have gravely shattered the only viable political structure, the province-wide organization of the Awami League; and have completely ruined by death and demoralization the law enforcement agencies of the East Pakistan Rifles and the East Pakistan police. Death and destruction meted out by the Army to "miscreants" and Hindus, the atrocities committed by Bengalis against non-Bengalis, the resistance activity of the *Mukti Fouj* — all conspire to keep the countryside in a state of turmoil, as is always the case in this part of the world, Goonda elements have been quick to take advantage of a deterioration of law and order and their depredations, whether cloaked under communal justification in league with the Army or a patriotic motivation in league with the *Mukti Fouj* or simply as undisguised dacoity (armed robbery by rural gangs), have undoubtedly been responsible for many murders and much robbery.

At first the signs of resistance known to us were small and scattered. On May 17 there occurred the first instance of bombing in Dacca since the March 25 takeover by the Army. Two bombs exploded simultaneously just after noon; one at the Government Secretariat, causing no damage; the other in front of the Habib Bank, in the Motijheel section, damaging the bank's glass doors.

On May 13 we obtained a copy of the first issue of "Purbo Bangla" (East Bengal), an underground newspaper of four mimeographed pages. Its seeming purpose was to exhort the Bengali populace to resistance and non-cooperation. The paper was distributed by street urchins who either tossed the paper into rickshaws or slipped in between the pages of the newspapers they sold. In time such clandestine leaflets served as communiques from the Bangladesh government-in-exile.

By mid-April the clandestine Bengali radio station began to reach a sizeable audience in Dacca. The transmissions were very short — one hour in the morning from 8 to 9 or 8:30 to 9:30 and two hours in the evening from 5 to 7 or 8 to 10. The broadcasts contained a few songs, news in English, a bulletin for the Freedom Fighters and extracts from the world press. They began and ended with Shahnaz Begum's song "Victory to Bengal." The transmitter was believed to be located in or near Calcutta.

We were also getting reports that *Mukti Fouj* recruiters were active in Dacca. Students became a particularly fertile source of recruits, not surprisingly because students had always been in the vanguard of militant political activity in East Pakistan. Our friend and the friend of our children, Gullu, who was a neighbor during our first tour in Dacca in 1960-62, was one of the earliest students to join the *Mukti Bahini* or Liberation Force. He was active in Sector Two along the Eastern border of East Pakistan in the area of Comilla. Another young former neighbor, and Gullu's cousin, Chinku (all the Bengali lads we knew went by their nicknames) also joined the resistance. Very small as a youngster, the teenager Chinku suddenly grew to be much taller than the average Bengali. Because of his height he was twice mistaken for a Pathan spy and taken into custody by his own people, and each time his friends had to rescue him. Tragically, Chinku never returned from the war and must be presumed to have been lost in action. While still young, he had shown great promise as an actor, performing in numerous English language plays.

I got very irritated when I heard GOP propaganda to the effect that leftist student extremists made up the bulk of the *Mukti Bahini* volunteers. The two I knew personally were hardly extremists. Gullu's father was a senior officer in the police and Chinku's uncle was a professor at the University of Chittagong. As far as I knew they were not active in the student wing of the Awami League. They took up arms in a Bengali nationalist struggle to win free of West Pakistani domination.

There was also mounting evidence that the resistance was beginning to interfere in a meaningful way with transportation throughout the province. On May 12 three American employees of Louis Berger, Inc. came under heavy fire from Bengali nationalists, separatists, insurgents (take your pick) at the embankment on the west side of Mirpur Bridge not far out of Dacca. The three were returning from an inspection trip of bridge and culvert sites along the Dacca-Aricha road and had been waved on by an Army checkpost one thousand yards further west. They took cover along with some 20-30 Army troops who were returning fire coming from a nearby village. When the troops counterattacked, carrying mortars with them, the Americans quickly drove across Mirpur Bridge.

On May 10, Alfred Foust, the resident associate of Berger, saw an Army platoon with heavy weapons deployed at the Bengali river crossing further west on the Dacca- Aricha road. He was told by the Army officer in charge that troops frequently came under fire at the river crossing.

On May 13 two ConGen officers visited the office of the Pakistan River Steamers Co. to investigate a rumor that a "Rocket" steamer (a large paddle-wheel vessel) had been hijacked by Bengali forces. They learned the following from Hamid Ismail, the Company's Deputy Managing Director:

1 On May 11, tug and two barges belonging Pak River Steamers halted by heavy gunfire from both banks of Madhumati River, Gopalganj Sub-District, Faridupur District, about four hours out of Khulna. Were 20-30 boats in attacking party. As soon as tug halted, attackers burned barges, including cargo 8,100 bales of jute. Shortly thereafter, another tug, property Pak Bay Co. pushing six barges, halted in same manner. Three barges burned, three taken away. Cargo believed to be gunnies (jute sacks). At this point, one tug escaped to Khulna. Other was held until the 12th and thus witnessed capture of "Rocket" on that day. "Rocket" taken in same fashion as first two seizures. "Rocket" carried approximately 300 passengers, including one Britisher, employee of National and Grindlays Bank who was

acting as courier for Khulna banks. Passengers let loose on shore, after having been looted of their bank's belongings, and have been reported safe in Faridpur. No word on fate of "Rocket" itself. After "Rocket's" capture, remaining tug escaped to Khulna with report. Pak River Steamers had lost due to combat action vessels worth RS. 75 lakhs and barges worth RS. 7 lakhs prior to this incident (a lakh is 100,000).

2 Ismail stated that this route only one possible for steamers between Khulna and Dacca during rainy season, and that it cannot be used after this incident, unless area subsequently secured by Army. This is turn means Khulna-Dacca river link is effectively cut. No info on what action, if any, planned by MLA as response.

3 Scale of attack, method of operation, and fact that valuable cargo of jute destroyed by attackers make it extremely unlikely that this simple instance of dacoity, almost certainly, was effort by Bengali nationalist forces. If so, is first real act of resistance since abortive efforts oppose Army crackdown. Circumstances this incident suggest *Mukti Fouj* not as ineffectual as Pak Army claims, and that situation in province rather more fluid than general torpor would otherwise indicate.

Coincidentally, there was a sharp fire-fight between Pakistani troops and deserters from the EPR near Dacca on the same day that the "Rocket" was seized. The EPR deserters had been hiding out in the area for some time. When they began firing from rice paddy fields, the Army deployed in strength and after a considerable time the EPR deserters were routed. Many were killed; a few escaped. Afterwards, the Army demanded that a local official, the Union Council Chairman, identify any deserters still in hiding, as well as those persons who had sheltered them. When he could not (or would not), he was shot.

The disruption of provincial transportation and communications was to further increase and be confirmed by no less a neutral judge than the World Bank. In the first half of June, a World Bank Mission visited East Pakistan to assess the economic, political and military situation, with particular relevance to the prospects for continued economic aid. The Mission was headed by Peter Cargill, the Bank's Director for South Asia and Chairman of the Pakistan Aid Consortium, the group representing Western aid donors to Pakistan.

The Mission's report noted four principal effects of the conflict on the functioning of the economy of East Pakistan: 1) the general destruction of property and cities, towns and villages, 2) the major destruction to the transport and communications networks, 3) the loss of vessels and vehicles to the economy, and 4) the general atmosphere of fear and uncertainty which persists (as a result of continuing activity by the insurgents and, particularly, the Army).

The report elaborated on these points in the four paragraphs quoted below:

> Most cities and major towns have sizeable pockets of destruction where market places, small shops and workers' housing once stood, and, in some, the damage has been much more severe; unauthorized homes and shops along roads and railway rights-of-way have been obliterated both within towns and along major arteries between towns; and numerous villages have suffered heavy destruction, particularly to market places and bazaars. The extent of damage and destruction varies greatly both between and within districts; however, few areas have escaped altogether. In all cities visited there are areas that have been razed, and in all districts visited, there are villages which have simply ceased to exist.
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> Damage to the transport and communications network was widespread and severe. Ten major railway bridges were blown up with variable, but generally considerable, degrees of success; scores of smaller bridges and culverts were also destroyed or damaged; and rails, ties and footplates have disappeared all over the province. In addition, during the fighting, some damage occurred to locomotives and railway rolling stock, ferries and vessels; the telecommunications system was severely disrupted and railway telecommunications were put out of commission entirely.
>
> The loss to the economy of vessels and vehicles occurred in a number of ways. Substantial numbers were damaged or destroyed. Others were taken across the borders by the insurgents. Some were abandoned by owners who have fled, gone underground, or are simply too frightened to venture out. Probably the largest number, particularly of trucks and land-rovers, was commandeered by the military. This holds true particularly of the districts north and west of Dacca, where the combination of heavy fighting and disruption of transport preventing the shipment of military vehicles up from Chittagong prompted the Army to seize virtually all vehicles. "Requisitioning"

occurred also, however, in areas such as Chittagong. There, contractors' new vehicles were taken from the port and, as elsewhere in the province, jeeps and LCTs intended for relief work in the cyclone-affected areas were also commandeered. At present in Chittagong, while scores of Army jeeps and trucks wait for the road and railway links to be opened so they can be sent north, requisitioned vehicles have still not been returned to their owners.

Perhaps most important of all, people fear to venture forth and, as a result, commerce has virtually ceased and economic activity generally is at a very low ebb. Clearly, despite improvements in some areas and taking the province as a whole, widespread fear among the population has persisted beyond the initial phase of heavy fighting. It appears that this is not just a concomitant of the Army extending its control into the countryside and the villages off the main highways, although at this stage the mere appearance of military units often suffices to engender fear. However, there is also no question that punitive measures by the military are continuing, as considered necessary by the Martial Law Administration; and, whether directed at the general populace or at particular elements (such as known or suspected Awami Leaguers, students and Hindus), these have the effect of fostering fear among the population at large. At the same time, insurgent activity is continuing. This is not only disruptive in itself, but also offer leads to massive Army retaliation. In short, the general atmosphere remains very tense and anything but conducive to the resumption of normal activities in the Province as a whole.

The World Bank report was devastating in its criticism of Pakistani actions in East Pakistan, and completely destroyed the Pakistani-generated myth that all was under control in East Pakistan, save for negligible activities of a few Bengali miscreants and Indian infiltrators. When World Bank President Robert McNamara tried to suppress the report, the *New York Times* obtained the document and gave it front page treatment. McNamara had to send a letter to the Pakistani Government apologizing for the leak.

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On the evening of May 16 I chatted at some length with British High Commissioner Sir Cyril Pickard who was making his farewell visit to East Pakistan. He thought there were three possible future

courses of developments here. (A) Pak Army would attempt maintain itself indefinitely as Army of occupation, (B) Army would give up in despair and pull out of East Pakistan, leaving the Bengalis to their own devices, and (C) Yahya and Army would seek to replace military rule for the country with some sort of civilian government. Sir Cyril ruled out possibilities (A) and (B) as "intolerable," arguing that continued Army rule over long period would ruin Army as a fighting force and increase chances of successful insurgency and Army's departure would leave utter chaos.

From talks he has recently had with Yahya and Generals Hameed and Peerzada, Sir Cyril was convinced that they sincerely wanted to restore civilian rule but he was doubtful whether "conditions on the ground" would allow them to do so. In this connection he doubted whether sufficient number of responsible political figures in East Pakistan could be found to cooperate with MLA. Noting that six elected MNA's and MPA's have thus far pledged fealty to the MLA, Sir Cyril said number would have to be 206 before such cooperation would be credible. He also argued that progress toward a political solution was hardly possible when the Army was busily burning villages in reprisal and killing Hindus throughout the province. He said General Hameed had asked him to report back to him after his visit to East Pakistan and he intended to urge on him the absolute necessity of an end to Army violence as a pre-condition to political solution.

One of my own farewell calls was on Nurul Amin, an elder statesman of East Pakistan and the only candidate, save for a tribal chief, elected to the National Assembly on December 7 who was not an Awami Leaguer. Nurul Amin thought that the continuing insecurity in the province was due to three elements: "rebellious" Bengali soldiers, EPRs and police, ordinary criminals who were released in droves during the recent difficulties, and finally, student extremists who were roaming the area. Until the security problem is solved, Nurul Amin said, it would be very difficult for East Pakistan to get back on its feet economically. Displaying his anti-Awami League and pro-Pakistan bias, Nurul Amin did not mention the Army's actions as contributing to the prevailing atmosphere of fear and resentment.

Nurul Amin also observed somewhat wistfully that Bengalis (of whom he was of course one) by their temperament will work against their own interests. For example, he said that the police were trying to

reconstitute a force by recruiting Bengalis as well as non-Bengalis. However, very few Bengalis had come forward and as a result, the vast majority of the police would be Biharis. The same thing, he said, applied to industry. Out of fear, the Bengalis were refusing to come back to their jobs and they would soon find themselves replaced by non-Bengalis. Later, he said, they would make an issue of this, claiming that they had been deprived of their rightful share of positions in the police and industrial work force.

Nurul Amin was presenting a one-sided version of the job situation. The MLA and West Pakistani-controlled businesses were not behaving so impartially toward the Bengalis. Two weeks before we had reported a rash of mass sackings of Bengalis, some of which we realized were due to the general economic turndown, but most seemed part of a newly inaugurated policy of deliberately moving Bengalis out of jobs. The Hotel Purbani fired 200 of 300 employees, PIA released 600 Bengali menials, and Kohinoor Chemical released unknown numbers of Bengalis.

Nurul Amin predicted that President Yahya would shortly promulgate a constitution since this was the only way in which some semblance of a transfer of power (from the military to the politicians) could take place. He also believed that enough Awami Leaguers would come forward to form a nucleus for a provincial assembly. He said that he had recently been summoned to West Pakistan by President Yahya, but declined to comment on the nature of their discussions. (Subsequently, Nurul Amin was named Prime Minister of Pakistan by Yahya. Such an action was symptomatic of Yahya's growing desperation; in an effort to show that a united Pakistan was still in operation he had to co-opt the single non-Awami League politician to be elected.)

Yahya also sent Begum Akhtar Sulaiman, the daughter of the late revered Bengali statesman H. S. Suhrawardy, to contact Awami Leaguers who had been elected to the National and Provincial Assemblies, meaning of course those who were still in East Pakistan. At the time the Government-controlled press reported that she had won over 109 of them to cooperate with Yahya in forming a civilian government.

The MLA was also making overtures to the owner of the Bengali daily *Ittefaq*, the paper closely associated with Sheikh Mujib and the Awami League. On March 25 the Army had brought tanks in front of the *Ittefaq* building and proceeded to demolish it. On May 25 the owner of

Ittefaq, Anwar Hossain "Manju", told a ConGen officer that the MLA had repeatedly apologized for the destruction of the *Ittefaq* premises and had even given him a written statement that the act was non-intentional, thus clearing the way for a full settlement with the insurance companies. Hossain said he had lost everything in the building, including practically new press machinery from Germany, which was heavily insured. Hossain said he was running off 7,500 papers per day, using an old press and a borrowed press, with the MLA taking 75% of all papers for distribution in the province.

Hossain's family and Mujib's family had always been very close friends, which was why Major General Ghulam Umar had a month before asked him to arrange a meeting with Begum Mujibur Rahman. Umar explained that the MLA was not satisfied with where Mujib's family was living since they considered it unsafe because of Bihari agitation. They wanted the family either to move back to Mujib's residence or to any home Begum Mujibur Rahman chose in either the Dhanmondi or Gulshan areas of Dacca. Furthermore, Umar offered either an Army, plain clothes, or police guard, depending on the Begum's choice, to protect the family.

The meeting was held at Hossain's house with Hossain serving as interpreter. Begum Mujibur Rahman accepted the offer of a house on Road 18, Dhanmondi, with Army guards. Umar offered to pay the costs, but the Begum declined, saying they had money in the bank but Mujib would have to sign the check. She later received the check, proving that Mujib was still alive.

The MLA action was thoughtful and courteous, but still Hossain expressed himself as pessimistic about the future of Pakistan. Too much blood had been shed and too much violence had occurred for Bengalis to forgive and forget. For him, the basis for a unified Pakistan no longer existed.

In another effort smacking even more of futility Yahya announced that all East Pakistanis "who had been forced to seek refuge in India because of the disturbance created by miscreants" were welcome to return. A number of reception centers were established along the border areas. On June 11 Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, visited a couple of these centers where returning refugees were expected to report. One of the centers was located at Chaudanga, the same town which had been destroyed by the

Army back in April, after killing most of its occupants and all of their livestock. It was no surprise that very few refugees elected to accept Yahya's invitation to return to East Pakistan. Early the next year, virtually all of the Bengali refugees in India, Muslim and Hindu, were to return to their homes in what was now Bangladesh, but only after the Pakistani Army was languishing in POW camps.

Yahya's several efforts to restore a measure of Bengali confidence and trust in the Army were doomed to failure. Too many men had been killed; too many women had been raped. Fear among all segments of the population in Dacca was still very real. Panic was easily stimulated. A rash of bombings in late May produced a large number of arrests and a further exodus from the city. Widespread rumors of the impending reimposition of a full curfew and house-to-house searches continued to be current and believed, and the MLA was displaying a lack of confidence and trust in the Bengali population. We were finding that contacts with Bengalis and even non-Bengali East Pakistanis had become much more difficult. The problem was that a visit by a foreigner was frequently followed by a visit from Pakistani Army intelligence wanting to know what the visit was about. Few Bengalis wanted to risk calling the attention of the Army to themselves, fearing that the Army's list of suspected intellectuals and businessmen was still being compiled. Consequently, our Bengali friends told us that social relations were out until the situation normalized. From the MLA point of view office calls by foreigners and diplomats on government officials and businessmen for the purpose of provable business were acceptable, but social meetings were suspect and discouraged. In such an atmosphere we decided that a low profile was not only desirable but practically mandatory. Perhaps it was time for me to be leaving.

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In April and May of 1971 the conflict between the Pakistani Army and the Bengali nationalists escalated quickly into an ominous confrontation between India and Pakistan, raising the specter of a war between these two long hostile countries.

From the very beginning of the crisis India had abundantly made clear where her sympathies lay. On March 31 the Indian parliament passed a resolution in support of the "people of Bengal." India could

hardly remain a passive and neutral observer of the crisis in East Pakistan, which is surrounded by India except for the Bay of Bengal to the south. The flow of Bengalis, Muslim and Hindu, seeking refuge from the Pakistani Army presented India with a huge and expensive problem, particularly in the Indian state of West Bengal.

On April 21 India announced that it had 259,000 East Pakistani refugees. A month later the figure reached three million, and by early July, according to Indian sources, 6,700,000. On August 13 UN Secretary General U Thant said the number of refugees was 7,000,000. Eventually, according to many estimates, the refugee total reached ten million, ten times the number of the refugees from Kosovo in 1999 and all harbored within the territory of one nation.

India, of course, received considerable financial assistance and aid in kind from the United Nations and individual countries, prominently the U.S. But the refugees constituted an enormous economic burden for India, as well as presenting huge administrative and public health problems. In an article in the *New York Times Magazine* of October 31, 1971 John Kenneth Galbraith, a former U.S. Ambassador to India who writes too well for an economist, paid this fitting tribute to the Indian effort on behalf of the refugees:

> It has been, in fact, a compassionate and organizational achievement of the first magnitude. The Indians have a reputation, not wholly unearned, for being articulate but rather feckless managers. I used to think when I was Ambassador — and I am now fully persuaded that they were also nearly unique in their capacity to contrive something out of almost nothing. The camps affirm this talent and notably its presence in the agency in charge, the Ministry of Rehabilitation. It is a talent born partly out of a long-standing necessity to make do with very little; partly it is the achievement of a bureaucracy which, going back to the tradition of British India, combines a great deal of authority and responsibility in the man in charge.
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> The most vivid manifestation of this contrivance is the Salt Lake Camp on the outer edge of Calcutta not far from Dum Dum airport. Until last March it was a vast unoccupied acreage, built up by sand dredged from the Hooghly, a monument to a still unrealized dream of a new garden suburb. (Such dreams, invariably unrealized, are endemic in Calcutta.) Now Salt Lake is a city of more than 160,000 souls holding the all-time record for urban growth. Roughly 2 by

> 1 ½ kilometers in area, it contains 1,200 basic structures, each with 12 cubicles, each of the latter sheltering a family. (There are numerous other individual and communal shelters.) Walls are of coconut matting, roofs are of polyethylene sheet. The structures — they can hardly be called buildings — are neatly aligned in streets. There are warehouses for the food ration, very elementary hospitals, the beginning of schools. Wells, called water points, have been drilled and equipped with power pumps from West Germany. Latrines are being built and the stench from the earlier absence of all sanitary facilities has been suppressed by a liberal spreading of chloride or lime.
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> There is something else which adds an aspect of cheer to the camps and that is the curious composition of the camp population. It consists of grandparents, women and a vast number of children. There are almost no young or middle-aged men. No one makes a secret of the reason. "They are away training with the Bangladesh Liberation Army."
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> One ghastly danger, much feared by responsible Indians earlier this year, has not developed. That was communal resentment, both in the camps and in India generally, over the fact that so many of the migrants were Hindus and leading, in turn, to action against the Moslems. The Indians have been calm, and communal friction in the camps seems to be totally lacking. An American visitor for his education on the policy of the Nixon Administration is greeted by deafening shouts for Sheikh Mujibur from the predominantly Hindu population.

India also became the seat of the Bangladesh Government-in-exile, and the Indian Government established close working ties with the government headed by Tajuddin Ahmed, Mujib's principal lieutenant in the Awami League and de facto head of the party while Mujib was imprisoned in West Pakistan. Equally, if not more important, Indian soil was made available for training camps, hospitals and supply depots for the *Mukti Bahini* or "Liberation Force" of the Bengali resistance movement. The *Mukti Bahini* came to enjoy that great asset of a guerrilla army, a safe haven to which it could retire for rest, food, medical supplies and weapons, safe from the pursuit of its conventionally operating and legally restricted foe. India was in fact waging a proxy war against Pakistan, much as the U.S. was to do in Afghanistan vis-a-vis the Soviet Union less than a decade later.

In this struggle with Pakistan India won the public relations advantage by virtue of its effective and compassionate reception of the East Pakistani refugees and the spreading reports of the Pakistani Army's vicious actions against its own people. American newsmen, such as Loren Jenkins of *Newsweek* and Dan Coggin of *Time*, wrote eloquently and dramatically of the atrocities inflicted by the Pakistani Army. Equally telling was the writing of Anthony Mascarenas, a Karachi correspondent who had earlier been considered a veritable stooge of the MLA, having written graphically of atrocities committed by Bengalis against West Pakistanis in the early days of the fighting. Suddenly, Mascarenas and his family fled Pakistan to London and in the London *Sunday Times* of June 13 he gave a detailed report of the Pakistani Army's systematic killing of thousands of Bengalis. Mascarenas described the Army campaign as a "pogrom."

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As our vantage point at the center of the original eye of the storm slowly vanished when the storm spread to new centers, New Delhi and Islamabad, and as our own vision became blurred as normal contacts withdrew and the MLA's desperate efforts to restore a semblance of normality softened the earlier and harder distinction between right and wrong, we began to realize that the game was moving beyond, well beyond, our meager efforts to influence. But it seemed to be moving in a direction that would in time vindicate our efforts, and the much greater sacrifices of our friends, the once and future citizens of Bangladesh.

CHAPTER TWENTY

MILITARY DISASTER TRUMPS NATURAL DISASTER

On May 8 the Dacca press carried reports that a cyclonic storm was expected to pass between Khulna and Chittagong between 5 and 7 a.m. that same day. Warning signals had been hoisted for the preceding 36 hours. Dacca itself experienced heavy rain on the night of May 7 but the rain was short of torrential. May and November were the months of heavy cyclonic activity in East Pakistan, which was still far from recovering from the November 12-13 cyclone. My first reaction to the news reports was "Please God, not another. This land and its people have already suffered too much." Two days after we could thankfully report that the Relief Commissioner had told us that the cyclone had caused no significant damage.

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Our concerns about the areas affected by the November cyclone had not been obliterated by the subsequent constitutional crisis and military strife. In February 1971 Dr. Alfred Sommers of the Cholera Research Laboratory and ten 2-man teams carried out a systematic survey of 2,973 families in 79 unions and in 9 thanas (the next larger local government unit than the union) in the cyclone area. Using a cluster sampling technique, at least 20 families in each of two villages in each union covered were interviewed in order to obtain a relatively uniform coverage of the geographic and administrative units affected by the

cyclone. It was estimated that the 2,973 families comprised 16,353 persons or 1.3% of the 1970 population of the area in question.

Extrapolating from the sampling results the team estimated 230,000 deaths out of an estimated population of 1,476,137 or 15.6%. The team noted that since families only were interviewed, the death rate did not take into account those deaths in families all of whose members were wiped out. Neither did it include migrants who made up a large part of the population in November, the harvest time.

The survey also indicated that 87% of the housing had been destroyed and, as of February, 52.4% were still living without adequate housing. 72.4% of the families had received some kind of food relief, and 73% some cash relief. The number of families unable to plant crops because of a lack of plows, bullock or seed was 56.8%, while 35.1% of the families customarily engaged in fishing were unable to fish due to the loss of nets and boats.

In April we sent copies of the survey to Washington and Islamabad, as well as to the GOEP and the Army authorities in Dacca. The GOEP officials with whom we talked had no plans to supply the area with food, and none did anything but shrug off the possibility of supplying cyclone disaster relief, even if the communication and transportation system for the rest of the province was restored. Clearly, the November tragedy had been subordinated to the newer tragedy, although the consequences of the cyclone were still with us.

A month later and after more than two weeks of effort in Dacca and Islamabad, Provincial AID director Griffel had still not succeeded in getting authority to visit the cyclone disaster area, which was now under Army control in the same sense as the rest of the province. Our last really reliable information was the February survey, now more than three months old. We strongly felt that we should make another effort at the highest level to get permission to travel to the area. Having USAID travelers in the area would not provide people with food but might help to shame the Pakistani Government into providing relief assistance. Permission finally came through, and USAID officers, accompanied by GOP and GOEP officials, plus police and army escorts, made a 4-day trip from June 9-13.

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The basic problem, of course, was that President Yahya did not want foreign relief assistance teams traveling about in East Pakistan. He

publicly stated that East Pakistan relief would be handled by the GOP. In a message from Islamabad Ambassador Farland attributed Yahya's reluctance to accept foreign assistance to the security situation as well as the tendency of foreign personnel serving in East Pakistan to identify with Bengali political aspirations. Moreover, GOP officials had told the Embassy that the GOP did not want to develop an image of carrying out military actions in East Pakistan while depending on foreigners to carry on relief work.

It was obvious that Yahya's consuming interest was to reassert control over East Pakistan. Many observers in the U.S. felt that any famine in East Pakistan would not be due to a lack of food supplies but to poor distribution. The Pakistani Army was using almost all available boats and trucks for military purposes. The U.S. had given Pakistan $2 million to charter ships to carry U.S. food grain to East Pakistan, but the Pakistani Army had diverted much of the shipping to transport troops and ammunition.

In Dacca Public Affairs Officer Brian Bell was watching the May 18 evening news on TV when he suddenly saw a photo of Lt. General "Tiger" Niazi, the Army field commander in East Pakistan, standing in a boat which was clearly identifiable as one of the 50 assault boats furnished by US/AID for relief work after the November cyclone. The photo caption described Niazi as "inspecting one of the boats acquired by the Pakistani Army to carry troops deep into the interior to wipe out remnants of miscreants during the monsoon season." Here was incontrovertible evidence that the Army had commandeered the assault boats.

Even hitherto staunch supporters of Pakistan in Washington were beginning to show annoyance at the GOP attitude toward foreign assistance. On June 4, the day before I left Dacca, Assistant Secretary (NEA) Sisco called in Ambassador Hilaly and in his gruff way laid out U.S. concern over the lack of progress in some important aspects of relief and rehabilitation in East Pakistan. Using Dacca reports as sources, Sisco noted, inter alia, the slowness in relieving port congestion in Chittagong and Khulna, the inadequate number of coastal vessels allocated for food grain deliveries, and the commandeering of the assault boats intended for cyclone disaster relief.

Hilaly tried to finesse the problem of the assault boats, asserting that the Army's action was only natural as military requirements took

precedence in the current emergency. He implied that it would be difficult to persuade the military to return the boats. With unmitigated gall Hilaly asked the USG "not to worry" about these particular boats but to supply others for relief purposes. Sisco pointedly reminded the Ambassador of the serious public relations problems which would ensue if the boats were not returned.

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The Senate had also begun to display considerable impatience with Pakistan. In early May a group of Senators cabled Secretary Rogers recommending the suspension of economic aid to Pakistan unless Pakistan mounted a sufficiently large relief effort in East Pakistan and allowed International Red Cross officials to enter immediately to coordinate such efforts. On May 6 Ambassador Hilaly sent a telegram to the Senators involved. Hilaly's telegram is interesting for some of its downright false assertions.

Hilaly first asserted, accurately enough, that the problem in East Pakistan was not a question of the inadequacy of supplies but of the restoration of means of communication and the mobilization of all available means of transport to enable their distribution throughout the province. But then Hilaly went on to claim that

> the Pakistan Army having restored law and order and having re-sealed the borders with India across which arms and Indian miscreants were infiltrating, is now busy in restoring communication facilities and mobilizing transport including thousands of lorries and boats. It is simultaneously engaged in whatever relief operations as are necessary just now. The civil administration of East Pakistan has begun to function again and is helping the Army to perform these two tasks.

In fact, the Army had not restored law and order. Resistance was on the increase. Nor had the Army sealed the borders with India. It was over these borders that the Bengalis received their support for a mounting guerrilla effort. True, trucks and boats had been collected, but not for relief efforts. And the civil administration of East Pakistan was definitely not beginning to display any recognizable effort in relief work.

The State Department did promise Congress that the $131.5 million it had requested in economic assistance for Pakistan for the next fiscal

year would be held back until Pakistan accepted some form of international monitoring for foreign aid in East Pakistan. After some hard negotiating Yahya was pushed into requesting humanitarian relief assistance for East Pakistan through the United Nations. Pakistan requested 250,000 tons of wheat on a grant basis from the World Food Program, 100,000 tons of edible oil, 15 coastal craft of 1,000 tons and 15 of 500 tons, and 500 land vehicles particularly trucks.

The State Department promptly issues a statement welcoming a development which had been so difficult to bring about:

> The United Nations has just released the formal request which the Secretary General has received from the Government of Pakistan for international humanitarian relief assistance for East Pakistan. We are most pleased this request has been made and will be giving full support to the relief program under UN auspices. A UN representative is to be sent to East Pakistan to coordinate international efforts, and the Pakistan Government is prepared to associate UNICEF and World Food Program personnel in planning and organizing relief. We look forward to the UN assessment of requirements for meeting the urgent needs for relief in East Pakistan.

An alert newsman remarked on the strange wording "we are most pleased this request has been made" and wondered if Pakistan had been reluctant to ask for any foreign assistance for East Pakistan.

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The U.S. had also been supporting an international relief effort to help India to cope with the huge influx of refugees from East Pakistan. Initially, the foreign response to India's needs had been sluggish, out of a concern on the part of Western nations, including the U.S., that substantial unilateral aid for the Bengali refuges in India might irritate Pakistan. In the early stage of the refugee flow Yahya had tried to downplay the number of refugees, arguing preposterously, that most of the refugees were Indian infiltrators who had been routed by the Pakistani Army.

As the number of refugees continued to mount, there was increasing concern in Washington that the resultant burden might force India to take direct action in East Pakistan. The U.S. considerably stepped up its

assistance for the Bengali refugees in India, eventually increasing the original authorization of $2.5 million a hundred fold to $250 million.

On May 28 President Nixon sent letters to both Yahya and Mrs. Gandhi. In his letter to Yahya Nixon acknowledged Yahya's readiness to accept the internationalization of relief and encouraged Yahya to continue on the course of political accommodation. The letter to Mrs. Gandhi emphasized the U.S. desire to reduce the refugee flow into India and to help ease the burden on India through U.S. financial aid.

The letter, quoted in Kissinger's *White House Years*, went on to say

> We have chosen to work primarily through quiet diplomacy, as we have informed your Ambassador and Foreign Minister. We have been discussing with the Government of Pakistan the importance of achieving a peaceful political accommodation and of restoring conditions under which the refugee flow would stop and refugees would be able to return to their homes. I feel that these approaches were at least in part behind President Yahya's press conference on May 24 and especially his public acceptance of international assistance, offer of amnesty to the refugees and commitment to transfer power to elected representatives.

Nixon added a veiled warning against a military solution:

> India's friends would be discouraged were this progress to be interrupted by war.

Writing long after the events he was describing, Kissinger claimed

> I was convinced that East Pakistan would become independent Bangladesh relatively soon. But Yahya could not possibly accomplish this (did he really have an intention of doing so) before October or November when the Indians were most likely to attack. Our policy was to give them to assert themselves — but our action was outstripped by India's deliberate acceleration of tensions.

Kissinger's account is kind to Yahya and harsh to India. He criticized India for making the return of refugees to East Pakistan depend upon a political settlement while at the same time declaring that India would not agree to any solution that meant the death of Bangladesh, or in other words, independence for East Pakistan. Kissinger also faulted India for refusing to accept UN personnel on its side of the border with East Pakistan, thus making it impossible for the UN to play a meaningful role in facilitating the return of refugees.

There seems little doubt that India, taking advantage of Yahya's gross miscalculation on March 25, was determinedly seeking to bring about the separation of the East Wing from Pakistan. Moreover, India held the moral high ground, and enjoyed the support of the vast majority of world opinion. Efforts of the Nixon-Kissinger administration to postpone the inevitable seemed doomed to frustrating failure.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

BIRTH OF A NATION

Just when is a new nation born? Is it when a group truly representative of a country's people declares the country independent? Or is it when, after a struggle, independence is conclusively won on the battlefield and international recognition is confirmed?

Bangladesh celebrates its National and Independence Day on March 26, the anniversary of the first proclamation of an "independent sovereign republic of Bangladesh" in a radio message broadcast from a captured station in Chittagong on March 26, 1971. The "Voice of Independent Bangladesh" announced on March 28 that Major Zia, actually major Ziaur Rahman, an officer in the East Bengal Regiment who was to become President of Bangladesh in 1977, would form a new government with himself occupying the "presidency." Realizing that his action was unpopular, Zia supported a provisional government established in Calcutta by leading members of the Awami League. On April 17 the "Mujibnagar" government formally proclaimed independence and named Mujib, in prison in West Pakistan, as its president.

Bangladeshi independence was not fully secured until December 16, 1971 when the Pakistan Army surrendered in Dacca to the Indian Army and Bangladeshi forces. Although the silver anniversary of December 16 was celebrated in great style, Bangladesh's annual celebration of its independence occurs on March 26. In this, Bangladeshi practice mirrors that of the United States. We date our independence from July 4, 1776, when the Declaration of Independence was signed, and celebrated our centennial as a nation in 1876, not in 1881, the one hundredth anniversary of Cornwallis' surrender at Yorktown (roughly the equivalent of the

Pakistani surrender in Dacca) nor in 1883, one hundred years after the peace treaty ending the Revolutionary War was signed in Paris. The Continental Congress, of course, had always maintained itself on American soil; Bangladesh was not so fortunate.

If I may be permitted a digression, I have long been intrigued by the similarities in our independence struggle and that of Bangladesh. Although East Pakistan had legally been part of Pakistan from the very beginning, the people of East Pakistan had long felt that they were being exploited like a colony. Like the American colonists the Bengali "colonists" had many unaddressed grievances. Just as the fledgling U.S. owed its final victory to the timely military intervention of France at Yorktown, so did Bangladeshi independence come about as soon as it did because of the swift and successful Indian campaign in East Pakistan. Just as the U.S. was helped through much of its long struggle (1776-1781) by French arms, money and diplomatic support, so was Bangladesh to profit in like manner in its much shorter struggle (March - December 1971) from Indian support. Just as France was motivated to help the American colonists win free from Britain because of the long-standing French-British rivalry, so did the hostility between India and Pakistan motivate India to pursue the dismemberment of Pakistan. And finally, just as the American colonists had to fight not only against the British but also against Americans who remained loyal to the King, so had the Bangladeshis to cope not only with the Pakistani Army but also with those loyal to Pakistan, such as the Biharis, many of whom were armed by Pakistan.

Naturally, there are striking differences between our two experiences. The Bengalis of East Pakistan did not migrate from West Pakistan; they were indigenous to the area. Except for those who knew English, they did not speak the same language as their former "rulers." Neither George Washington nor any other Revolutionary War leader was captured and taken away to be tried for treason. And in 1776 there were no extraneous foreign powers greater than Britain and France capable of exercising an influence, if they chose to do so, while in 1971 U.S., Soviet and Chinese attitudes had to be taken into reckoning by both Pakistan and India.

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Might there not also be a middle ground between the declaration of independence and the winning of independence which could mark the

birth of a nation, not legally nor on the battlefield but certainly in the hearts and minds of those who definitely renounce any former allegiance and embrace a new nationality?

The Pakistan Foreign Service, like the Indian Foreign Service and their domestic counterparts, the Civil Service of Pakistan (CSP) and the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), were elite organizations composed of highly competent officers, and worthy descendants of the superb Indian Civil Service (ICS). Entrance to the Pakistan Foreign Service was by competitive examination and consequently the PFS was one central government organization in which Bengalis were fairly represented. Coming from a province where the literacy rate was higher than elsewhere in the country and where intellectual pursuits were more highly esteemed, the Bengalis shone in the competition for slots in the Foreign Service. The same was true in India where Bengalis and Tamils won more than their share of places through competitive exams.

In my Foreign Service career I was privileged to know many members of the Pakistan Foreign Service, both from West and East Pakistan. They were, on the whole, an impressive group, competent, articulate and charming. As the Bangladesh crisis deepened, I watched with great interest the unfolding drama, presented in our cable traffic, at the Pakistani Foreign Service posts around the world. In many of the posts there was a sizeable number of Bengalis. What would be their reaction to the events in East Pakistan, and most particularly, to the establishment of a Bangladesh government in exile outside of Calcutta?

Bengali diplomatic personnel around the world found themselves in a difficult position. If they openly defected, they could be stranded without any means of support in a foreign country and their families back in East Pakistan might suffer some retaliation. If the Bangladesh cause failed, they faced permanent exile abroad. And if they remained at their posts but worked covertly for Bangladesh, they stood a good chance of being fired. As early as April 11 Tajuddin Ahmed, acting as head of the Bangladesh Government-in-exile in Mujibnagar, appealed to Bengali officers and Pakistani embassies around the world to serve Bangladesh, and on April 20 Mujibnagar promised that onward postings would follow a transfer of allegiance from Pakistan to Bangladesh. But where could these postings be made, except a few to Mujibnagar itself? No nation had recognized Bangladesh.

I have thought over in my mind whether there was any parallel in U.S. history to the predicament faced by the Bengali diplomats. The only possible parallel that occurred to me was the outbreak of our Civil War. Our diplomatic and consular services at the time were too small to be considered, but our Army officer corps was fairly equally divided between Northern and Southern officers. The majority of the Southern officers left the U.S. Army to serve their individual states or the Confederacy, but they departed without hindrance and went home overland to certain occupation in the Confederate Army. It is not much of a parallel.

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On April 18 the Deputy Pakistani High Commissioner in Calcutta, Hussain Ali, declared his allegiance to the Bangladesh Government in exile and took his entire Bengali staff with him. His action followed by one day the formal inauguration of the Bangladesh Government in exile in nearby Mujibnagar, and was to set off a diplomatic imbroglio between India and Pakistan that lasted for months. No two nations could be as beastly to each other on procedural issues as India and Pakistan.

It was customary for Pakistan to assign a Bengali as head of the Deputy High Commission in Calcutta, where Bengali was the language of the people. In turn, India often assigned a Bengali-speaking officer to its Deputy High Commission in Dacca, and the current Deputy Hicommissioner was a Bengali, Sen Gupta.

When the departing Bengali staff in Calcutta took over the office premises and its property, the Government of Pakistan requested the Government of India to evict the Bengalis and enable the newly appointed Deputy High Commissioner, Mehdi Masud, to take charge of his mission. According to a diplomatic note to the State Department from the Pakistani Embassy, the Government of India, while accepting Mr. Masud as the new Deputy High Commissioner and giving assurances that they would help him to recover control of the mission and its property, actually put many obstacles in Mr. Masud's way.

As a consequence, the Pakistani Ministry of Foreign Affairs advised the Indian High Commissioner in Islamabad by note on April 23 that Pakistan had decided to close its Deputy High Commission in Calcutta as of noon April 26. The note went on to state that since the Calcutta

mission had been established under a reciprocal arrangement, the Government of Pakistan requested the Government of India to close down its Deputy High Commission in Dacca on the same date. Pakistan proposed that the repatriation of Indian personnel and their families from Dacca should take place simultaneously with the release of Pakistani personnel and their families stranded in Calcutta.

But it was not to be that easy. The Indians in Dacca and the Pakistanis in Calcutta essentially became two sets of hapless hostages whose release depended upon the successful negotiation of a number of procedural problems. One of the complicating issues was that Mr. Masud in Calcutta insisted on interviewing each of the Bengali defectors separately, but they refused to be interviewed except as a group.

In Dacca Sen Gupta and his staff were kept under close house arrest, Sen Gupta in his own home and the staff members in other houses. Sen Gupta could send a servant out to make food purchases but only to the nearest market and only if accompanied by police and soldiers. Each time the servant was stripped and searched. Sen Gupta was unable to meet with his staff. In May the wife of one staff member was permitted to go to the American Catholic hospital for the birth of a baby and the husband was allowed to visit her under police guard. I understand that the situation of one of the Pakistanis in Calcutta was quite comparable.

Sir Cyril Pickard, the British High Commissioner to Pakistan, sought permission to pay a call on Sen Gupta, but was not allowed to do so. I also sought permission which was refused. However, on May 8 the Indian authorities allowed Herb Gordon, our Consul General in Calcutta and an old friend from Athens days, to call on the Pakistani Deputy High Commissioner. Reciprocally, I was then permitted to visit Sen Gupta.

I found him in surprisingly good spirits, considering the circumstances. His greatest concern was the welfare of his staff. He, of course, had his work and a radio, but it was still a lonely and frustrating existence, one which he seemed to bear with great fortitude. I took along several bottles of Scotch and some sweets, which he declared to be very welcome. Years later, when I was serving in New Delhi, I had a pleasant reunion with Sen Gupta who had recently retired after serving as Ambassador in a South American country.

Negotiations between India and Pakistan dragged on until well after I left Dacca, finally being resolved as a result of Swiss mediation. I understood that the ultimate solution called for Soviet planes to airlift the

Indians from Dacca to New Delhi and Iranian planes to take the Pakistanis from Calcutta to Karachi.

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On April 26 Mahmood Ali, a Vice Consul in the Pakistan Consulate General in New York, defected and declared his allegiance to Bangladesh. He was, I believe, the first Pakistani diplomat to do so outside of India. (In addition to Hussain Ali and his Bengali staff in Calcutta, several Bengali diplomats had earlier defected in New Delhi.) Mahmood Ali's wife went to work to support the family, and their home in New York City was for a while an unofficial Bangladesh mission to the UN. Subsequently Mahmood Ali was to become Bangladesh Ambassador to Germany.

A revolt was also slowly brewing among the many Bengalis in Pakistan's mission to the UN and the Embassy in Washington. The first at the Embassy to openly defect was my old friend from 1960-62, A.M.A. Muhith, who was serving as Economic Counselor. Muhith declared his allegiance to Bangladesh in June, although ever since March 25 he and his wife Sabia had labored hard but unofficially in lobbying the Congress and organizing support for the Bangladesh cause among Bengali resident in the U.S. and sympathetic Americans, in and out of government.

The Bengali diplomats in the U.S. were naturally concerned about their sustenance once they broke openly with Pakistan and set up competing Bangladesh missions in Washington and New York. Funding was sought from both the Bengali community in the U.S. and the Bangladesh Government at Mujibnagar, with the intention of making a mass renunciation of their allegiance to Pakistan and proclaiming their commitment to Bangladesh. Meanwhile they continued to go to their offices in New York and Washington but campaigned quietly from their homes with their friends and acquaintances in the State Department and the Congress.

On July 5 Mujibnagar asked all Bengali diplomats posted abroad to transfer their allegiance. The Bangladesh government in exile decided to establish Bangladesh missions abroad and undertook to pay for the expenses of the missions and their staffs. The Bengali diplomats in the U.S. agreed to transfer their allegiance in the following month. On

August 4 all the Bengali officers and staff in the Pakistan Embassy in Washington, the Pakistan Consulate General in New York and the Pakistan Permanent Mission to the UN in New York transferred their allegiance to Bangladesh.

A Bangladesh mission was formally established in Washington as a registered foreign agent, and continued in operation until it became an embassy after the U.S. recognized Bangladesh on April 4, 1972.

Bangladesh was moving quickly from a dream to a reality. A new nation was being born, although the birth pangs were still far from over.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

RETURN TO WASHINGTON

I left Dacca on June 5, ten days short of fifteen months since my arrival at post. My comrade in arms, Frank Sargeant, the British Deputy High Commissioner, departed the same day, and for basically the same reason. Sargeant's superior, Sir Cyril Pickard, had told me that Sargeant was being removed because of his "emotional and rumor-laden reporting." That same charge had probably been levied at me, but I always found Frank a model of those validly attributed signs of British character — coolness and steadiness under fire. I was proud and grateful to have had him as a colleague in those trying days.

As I flew out of Dacca, my thoughts were predominantly sad ones. I was leaving before the end of the story, and leaving many good friends, Bengali and American, whom I probably would never see again. It was a sad occasion to leave any post, not knowing whether I would ever visit again a place which had absorbed my interest and concern for many months. Leaving Dacca this time was all the harder. I felt certain that the crisis would not be papered over with a political solution but determined on the battlefield. And I would have given much to be able to witness the final outcome.

I was not heading straight back to Washington but instead to Boulder, Colorado to join my family for home leave, prior to reporting to the State Department for my next assignment to the Bureau of Personnel. Our older daughter, Shireen, had just graduated from the University of Colorado and, clever girl, had located a charming house belonging to an English professor, which we rented for the summer. The house was in one of the scenic canyons adjoining Boulder and provided

horses for our children to ride and many trails for my wife and me to hike.

My travel was by way of the Pacific, stopping in Hawaii for a couple of days of unwinding on the beach at Waikiki, before flying into Denver. The entire family was collected in Boulder, and we soon had visitors; my wife's sister, Joyce, her husband Don Zeiller, their two daughters and a prospective son-in-law. So many people under one roof, without the outlet of a busy workday, soon got on my already very taut nerves, and Meg and I sought refuge in Aspen for a few days.

Shortly after our return to Boulder, I was surprised to receive a telephone call from Howie Shaeffer in the NEA Bureau, who told me that I had been chosen to receive the Herter Award at a luncheon given by the American Foreign Service Association on June 24, and that I would be sent orders authorizing travel to Washington and consultation for the period June 24-28. Howie also warned me that I would probably be called to the Hill to testify before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and Senator Kennedy's Sub-committee on Refugees of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

The Herter Award, named after former Secretary of State Christian A. Herter, was established by the American Foreign Service Association in 1969 through the generosity of Mrs. Herter and her son, Christian A. Herter, Jr. In 1968 the Harriman and Rivkin Awards had been established for annual presentation to one mid-career and one junior officer of the foreign affairs agencies for "extraordinary accomplishment involving initiative, integrity, intellectual courage, and creative dissent." The Herter Award was designed to recognize senior officers who had evidenced these traits. All three awards carried a stipend of $1000. (It is now $10,000).

I was not only surprised but also tickled pink by the news of the Herter Award. I had no idea of the reception I would receive in the Department. At that time I had not heard of the support which mid-level officers in NEA had given to the dissent cable. I only knew that the attitude at the top was decidedly unfriendly. It was very gratifying to know that the award winners, while selected by committees made up of senators and distinguished private citizens, had been nominated by their peers.

Little remains in my memory of the award luncheon, except that the award was presented to me by Secretary Rogers and Mrs. Herter. It must

have been somewhat awkward for the Secretary to present the award to a subordinate who had offended his boss, the President. But Mr. Rogers, always a courteous man, showed no sign of animosity. I also remember that I sat next to Frank Shakespeare, the Director of USIA, who was very interested in the East Pakistan crisis and seemed very open-minded about the issues involved.

In the citation I was credited with "consistently displaying, under pressure, the qualities of leadership, physical and intellectual courage, initiative and fortitude of the highest standard through situations any one of which would be more than a single tour should normally include.

> From the beginning of his tour of duty in Pakistan in March 1970, Mr. Blood was confronted with a series of problems: Major floods, a catastrophic cyclone, and civil disturbances which disrupted the country.
>
> He undertook the direction of relief efforts in the aftermath of the cyclone which ravaged East Pakistan in November 1970, in addition to insuring continued political reporting and analysis as Pakistan approached and held its first election since independence based on universal suffrage.
>
> In the midst of the recent civil strife Mr. Blood had to display exceptional self-reliance. The geographical separation of the two wings of Pakistan placed him a thousand miles from U.S. Ambassador Joseph S. Farland and the U.S. Embassy at Islamabad.

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June 24 was a busy day. After the luncheon I went to the Hill to appear before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee at their request. Nobody from NEA accompanied me, but I suppose somebody from the Bureau of Congressional Affairs came along to assure that I got to the correct hearing room. The Committee met in executive session, meaning that the hearing's proceedings were classified as "confidential" and newsmen were excluded.

My memory of the appearance before the Committee is a confused one, because the proceedings were very disjointed to someone who had never before appeared before a Congressional Committee. The Senators came and went with great frequency; there never seemed to be more than three present at any one time. Only a couple of the Senators showed

much interest and their questions struck me as following no particular line of inquiry. Only Senator Case (R. N.J.) had a substantial set of questions and he was able to ask me only a few before the Chairman, Senator Fulbright (D. Arkansas) called a halt to the session. I left with the feeling that I had not got myself into any trouble, while at the same time I had not been a very useful witness.

Following the session, a staff aide to the Committee gave me a list of other questions Senator Case had wanted to raise and asked that I provide written answers. As I recall, I sat down directly upon returning to the Department and dictated my answers. When they were shown to Joe Sisco, the Assistant Secretary for NEA, he flew into a sudden rage and shouted, "My God, we can't let this go across to the Hill." His aides calmed him down and he grudgingly admitted that the answers were not so incendiary after all.

In my search of the archives I noted that the Department's letter transmitting the answers to Chairman Fulbright was dated July 13., three weeks later. I was still in Colorado then so I must have turned in the answers before leaving Washington on June 29. The transmittal letter pointed out that the answers were entirely mine and had not been edited or conditioned in any way by the Department, nor did they necessarily reflect the views of the Department.

Senator Case's questions and my answers are reproduced below:

On his advice to Washington and the evacuation

Q1 What were your recommendations in the immediate period following March 25? Have you changed your mind?

A1 I recommended a review of U.S. policy toward Pakistan, specifically, the suspension of U.S. military sales and of any forms of economic assistance which would help the Government of Pakistan in pursuing its military actions in East Pakistan. I have not changed my mind in this regard.

Q2 Do you feel that the U.S. should have issued a strong statement condemning the West Pakistani military action?

A2 I would have preferred a stronger statement than the several issued by the USG.

Q3 Did you feel that economic assistance should have been suspended? What do you think now? Do you think that as a general matter, U.S. aid has been misused?

A3 As I indicated above, I favored the suspension of those forms of economic assistance, such as foreign exchange assistance embodied in the commodity credit loan, which would help the Government of Pakistan to pursue its punitive policy in East Pakistan. I did not recommend against ongoing technical assistance, PL-480 sales, or humanitarian relief. I am still of this opinion. In general, I believe U.S. aid to Pakistan has been misused during the past several years, with too much of it going to shore up the military-industrial group which rules Pakistan and too little to improve the lot of the people, particularly in East Pakistan.

Q4 Are the political conditions in East Pakistan such that you feel an aid program could work? If not, when do you feel that such conditions will exist — what will the Army have to do?

A4 At the time I left East Pakistan, June 5, I thought that the law and order situation, the sullenness and apathy of the bureaucracy, and the disruption of transportation facilities rendered impracticable the reintroduction of any large-scale economic aid program. The pre-conditions for such a program would, in my view, be a genuine political settlement involving civilian rule and the re-establishment of law and order and security throughout the province.

Q5 What can the United States do to encourage a political settlement in East Pakistan? Do we use all the influence we have?

A5 We should continue to use our influence with President Yahya and the Government of Pakistan to push for a political settlement. Our influence is limited but I think that within these limits we have had some success in recent weeks.

Q6 When did you recommend that Americans be evacuated from East Pakistan?

A6 I recommended evacuation on March 29.

Q7 Did you conceive of this evacuation as a protest against what had occurred?

A7 No, my reason for recommencing evacuation was solely the safety of the American community.

Q8 Was the evacuation carried out on American planes or on Pakistan International Airways? If on PIA, did the United States pay for use of PIA for this purpose? When PIA airplanes came in to take Americans out, did they carry troops from West

Pakistan? If so, does this mean that the U.S. directly subsidized the movement of troops into the East? How did the British handle their evacuation?

A8 The evacuation was carried out by aircraft of Pakistan International Airways (PIA). The USG reimbursed PIA. The aircraft which came to evacuate Americans carried troops from West Pakistan. There were hundreds of Pakistanis, including the wives and children of soldiers, who were themselves awaiting evacuation, queuing up for seats on PIA. Consequently, it was not a question of the aircraft returning empty to West Pakistan. The British used the PIA as we did. In addition, the British had earlier availed themselves of one military evacuation flight and several civil air charter flights.

On the use in the war of United States military and economic assistance

Q1 Is it true, as suggested in the press, that Pakistan has used for military purposes small boats which were provided for cyclone relief? Where did Pakistan get these boats? Who paid for them?

A1 According to our best information, the Pakistan Army did use for military purposes at least some of the small boats provided by the USG for cyclone relief. The USG supplied these craft free of charge.

Q2 Is it true that approximately 18 boats owned by the Pakistan-SEATO Cholera Research Laboratory which were used as a kind of ambulance have been commandeered by the Pakistan military? Who paid for these boats?

A2 Two or three of the boats owned by the Pakistan-SEATO Cholera Research Laboratory were commandeered by the Pakistan military. They were subsequently returned and to the best of my knowledge were never actually used by the army. These boats were the property of the USG, but I do not know who paid for them.

Q3 We have received a report from an American still in East Pakistan that he has seen seven "coasters" (vessels designed to operate on large rivers and in the sea) unloading military equipment or ammunition; how many of this type vessel are there in East Pakistan? How many were used for military purposes? Are they similar to the vessels which Pakistan will

charter with the $1 million grant which AID announced on June 10? What assurances do we get as to the use of AID-funded equipment? Do you think these assurances are reliable?

A3 I do not know how many "coasters" are available to East Pakistan, nor how many have been used for military purposes. I believe they are similar to the vessels chartered under an AID grant. Our best assurance is the employment of non-Pakistani crews. I believe such an assurance is adequate to prevent misuse of these vessels.

Q4 Is there any U.S. food, supplied under the P.L. 480 program, in East Pakistan? If so, has the army been distributing it? Is it true that the army has used this food, or has used the offer of food, as an inducement to get people to give information on Hindus or other persons? Is it true that food has been offered as a reward for turning in, or providing information as to the location of, Hindus?

A4 Yes. I know of no distribution by the army of PL-480 foodgrains. I do not think it is true that the army has used such food to get people to give information on Hindus.

On the killing of Bengalis

Q1 Is it true that the Pakistan army has concentrated on eliminating intellectual elements from East Pakistan? Are they trying to drive all the Hindus from the country?

A1 No, but the Bengali intellectuals feel a great sense of insecurity. The ongoing persecution of Hindus suggests that at least some elements of the army would prefer to see a general exodus of the Hindu minority.

Q2 How many villages have been wholly or partially destroyed? Do you know what happened at Baira? Chartar?

A2 I do not know how many villages have been wholly or partially destroyed. Baira, a Hindu village in Dacca district, was to a large extent destroyed by the army on May 14. I cannot place Chartar village.

Q3 Has there been any killing of foreign missionaries?

A3 One Italian priest was killed in Jessore.

Q4 Is the Nagari mission still functioning? What is the story there?

A4 Yes. A large number of Hindu refugees from Baira and surrounding villages are being sheltered there. They are bringing their own food but have been given some medical supplies by the Catholic Church.

An interesting postscript to my appearance before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee was Ambassador Hilaly's agitated call on NEA Deputy Assistant Secretary Chris Van Hollen. Hilaly had read a Reuter report, citing Senate sources, which said that I had described fighting between the Pakistani Army and Bengalis "in grim terms" and that my reports had portrayed a more serious situation in late March and early April than the State Department was officially acknowledging in Washington. Hilaly wanted to know why I had been authorized to testify.

Van Hollen replied that (a) the testimony was not given in open session but in executive session and therefore Hilaly should not put credence in press accounts, (b) although he had himself not been present at the hearings, he understood Blood had handled himself circumspectly and did not take positions contrary to those of the Administration, and (c) the Reuter story had received very limited coverage in the American press. Van Hollen noted that Blood had testified at the Committee's request, explaining that if the Department had not acceded to this request, it would have fueled allegations that the Department was trying to cover up the East Pakistan situation.

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The other Senate hearing took place on the morning of June 28 before the Sub-Committee on Refugees of the Senate Judiciary Committee. It was chaired by Senator Ted Kennedy of Massachusetts. This time I was but one of many witnesses. Eric Griffel, our Provincial Aid Director in Dacca, was there on consultation in Washington, and there were others including Chris Van Hollen from the Department, and senior AID officials, and numerous representatives of voluntary aid organizations such as CARE and Catholic Relief Services. The hearing was an open one, and the room was crowded with members of the media.

To me the most memorable aspect of the hearing was the line of good-looking, tall blonde girls who kept slipping in with cups of coffee or messages for the Chairman or the other Senators. If they had been carrying balloons or bubbles one would have thought they were Las Vegas chorus girls. Obviously, the Senate was not held to any non-discrimination clauses in the hiring of female staff.

Despite my fascination with the blonde parade I soon realized that the purpose of the hearing was to develop information that would support Senator Kennedy's claim that the people of East Pakistan were facing a famine situation. Neither Eric nor I believed that famine was such a threat at that time, and our answers were clearly not very pleasing to the Senator. We stressed the difficulties of mounting a relief effort through the Government of Pakistan when that Government was waging a war against the majority of the populace in East Pakistan. We were also remembering the pleas of numerous Bengali friends to refrain from handing the MLA a food weapon which it might use against the resistance.

The last question addressed to me, out of only a few, concerned the reported killing of numbers of Bengalis by the Pakistani Army. I replied that I thought it would be better to go into executive session before taking up that topic. The threat of famine, however, was the only subject which then engaged the Chairman's attention, and no broader questions were pursued. All in all, the hearing was, for me, an anti-climactic experience.

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Before returning to Colorado to resume my home leave I had two other items of business to conclude. One was personal. While in Washington I saw the efficiency report prepared on me by Sid Sober, the DCM in Islamabad. I did not expect a glowing report but was disturbed to see a remark, to the effect that I had whipped up the American community in Dacca in an anti-Pakistan stance. I thought the criticism unfair. Admittedly, I could have done more by way of urging members of the community to sift out rumors from actual observations, but all the Americans in Dacca, official and non-official, had personal knowledge of some atrocities and all were sympathetic to the Bengalis and unforgiving of the West Pakistanis.

To protect myself against Sid's charge I asked Chris Van Hollen if he would add a reviewing statement that would place the critical remark in somewhat better perspective. Chris kindly obliged me, which was not an easy action for him, giving the unfriendly attitude toward me of his

superior, Joe Sisco, and noted in his reviewing statement that I had acted responsibly and with discretion in my dealings with the press and others outside the Department.

The other item of business was a meeting with Under Secretary John Irwin, the second ranking official in the State Department. The catalyst for the meeting was Nick Veliotis, Irwin's staff assistant. Nick had served in New Delhi and seemed sympathetic toward Indian and Bengali concerns. Moreover, he hinted that his boss was probably more open-minded about the East Pakistan crisis than most of the top hierarchy in Washington. Nick was later to become Ambassador to Egypt and Assistant Secretary for NEA.

In the half-hour meeting the Under Secretary asked for my predictions on the outcome of the struggle in East Pakistan. I said that I was fully confident that the Bengalis would eventually win their independence from Pakistan, with the duration of the struggle depending primarily on the extent of India's involvement.

Mr. Irwin then asked me if I thought that India would intervene soon and decisively in East Pakistan in support of the Bangladesh cause. Showing what a poor prophet I was, I opined that India, which now seemed to have Pakistan on the ropes, would probably be content for some time to bleed Pakistan white through a sustained and evermore effective guerrilla campaign conducted by its ally, the *Mukti Bahini*. I wish I had been more prescient. I should have realized that the pressure applied by India and the *Mukti Bahini* would, sooner rather than later, push Yahya to the point of launching a desperate attack against India and thus provoking, and legitimizing, an Indian invasion of East Pakistan.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

EPILOGUE

At an accelerating pace the Bangladesh crisis drove India and Pakistan toward war in the summer and fall of 1971. I have chosen to illustrate the U.S. efforts to break this momentum by, first, quoting pertinent parts of President Nixon's Report to the Congress: U.S. Foreign Policy for the 1970's of February 9, 1972, and then rebutting the President's assertions.

> We urged an amnesty for refugees of all creeds, replacement of the military government of East Pakistan by a civilian, and a timetable for return to full civilian rule. Pakistan took all those steps.

Indeed, Yahya did belatedly replace General Tikka Khan as Martial Law Administrator with his deputy, General Niazi. But Niazi had been in actual charge of the Army's operations in East Pakistan. A compliant Bengali politician, Abdul Motaleb Malik, was brought out of retirement and installed as civilian governor of East Pakistan. But Malik, old for his 66 years and frightened to death by his appointment, had no credibility whatsoever in East Pakistan. Even Bhutto dismissed Malik's appointment as "eyewash." An election was held in October to choose new members of the National and Provincial Assemblies to replace the outlawed Awami Leaguers. Most of those elected were adherents of the Muslim League parties which had drawn a minuscule share of the East Pakistan vote in the December, 1970 election, and many of those elected ran unopposed.

The actions we proposed were all too little and too late, as well as completely out of touch with reality in East Pakistan. The people of East Pakistan saw the growth of the resistance movement and the steadily worsening relations between India and Pakistan. Putting the two

together, they sensed the inevitability of a successful conclusion to their struggle. Why settle for anything less than full independence?

> As the tension along the border intensified in the fall, the United States proposed that both India and Pakistani troops pull back from the borders. Pakistan accepted this proposal; India turned it down. UN Secretary General U. Thant placed his good offices at the disposal of both. Pakistan responded favorably, and in addition suggested the dispatch of UN observers to both sides of the border. India refused the Secretary General's offer, and declined to accept UN observers. The United States then proposed to Pakistan that it pull its forces back from the borders unilaterally, as a first step toward a mutual pullback. Pakistan accepted this idea, provided India would give some assurance that it would eventually reciprocate. India would not.

As was obvious from the responses of the two countries, our proposals were designed to help Pakistan to escape from a very unadvantageous position and to lessen the advantages enjoyed by India and the Bengali liberation forces. Indian deployment along the border forced the Pakistani troops also to concentrate at the borders, thus leaving their lines of communication to Dacca more vulnerable to Bengali guerrilla attacks. Pakistan's security situation in East Pakistan was deteriorating by the day, impelling Yahya on November 23 to declare a state of emergency in all of Pakistan and to ask his people to prepare for war.

> Time had run out on a peaceful solution. In late November, open war on a broad front erupted between India and Pakistan.

Virtually all writers fix on December 3 as the beginning of the Indo-Pakistani war of 1971. It was on that date that the Pakistani Air Force made an ineffective attack on airfields in northern India. On the following day the Indian Army launched a three-prong attack on Pakistani forces in East Pakistan from the Indian states of West Bengal in the west and Assam and Tripura in the east. Out of desperation Yahya had provoked India into an all-out attack, presumably with the hope that the U.S. could, through the UN, help bring about a cease-fire before India could achieve complete victory.

Admittedly, the Indian-East Pakistan border had been the scene of a number of cross-border incursions by both Indian and Pakistani troops since late November. Some Indian troops were still in East Pakistan as of December 3, but the situation on the ground was murky at best and neither nation was claiming that open war had begun.

> On December 4, the United States requested an urgent session of the UN Security Council, which voted, 11 to 2, for an immediate cease-fire and withdrawal of foreign forces. The USSR vetoed this and a second resolution soon after. A similar resolution then passed on December 7 in the General Assembly by 104 to 11, with 10 abstentions .... The Soviet Union blocked international action until the capture of East Pakistan was fait accompli.... On December 12 we called for another emergency session of the UN Security Council.... The Soviet Union vetoed again. Intensive exchanges took place with the Soviet leaders. No cease-fire, however, was agreed to until December 17.

The words quoted in the paragraph above are unexceptionable; they clearly reveal the futility of the Nixon-Kissinger diplomacy in this instance. The December 17 cease-fire followed immediately upon the December 16 surrender of the Pakistani Army in East Pakistan.

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The Indian strategy was to concentrate on seizing control of East Pakistan, while at the same time holding against attacks from West Pakistan. The Indian forces advanced quickly toward Dacca, bypassing intermediate cities and obstacles. At least three brigades of the *Mukti Bahini* fought in conventional formations along with the Indian Army, and the rest of the *Mukti Bahini*, probably not fewer than 100,000, intensified their guerrilla attacks. The Pakistani Army was surrounded and bereft of air and naval support. On December 16 Lieutenant General J. S. Aurora, the Indian commander of the combined Indian and *Mukti Bahini* forces, accepted the surrender of Lieutenant General Niazi. On the western front India had contained the Pakistani attacks and even made some limited advances into West Pakistan.

The Indian forces completed their withdrawal on March 12, 1972. Prisoner exchanges took longer. India held about 90,000 prisoners of war and civilian internees; Bangladesh had 195 Pakistanis, mostly military, with the original hope of bringing them to trial for war crimes. In West Pakistan 28,000 Bengali military personnel had been stranded and, in many cases, imprisoned. Not until April 20, 1975 was the repatriation of prisoners in all categories completed.

India was the first nation to recognize Bangladesh, doing so as early as December 6. Pakistani recognition came in February 1974 but diplomatic relations were not established until January 1976. Pakistan's firm friend, China, blocked Bangladesh entry into the UN in 1972, and Chinese diplomatic relations with Bangladesh were only established in 1976, after Pakistan had done so. Pakistan's other close major friend, the United States, moved somewhat more quickly, and established diplomatic relations with Bangladesh in May 1972. Bangladesh was admitted to the United Nations in September 1974.

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In her marvelous work *The Greek Way* addressing the nature of tragedy as seen by the ancient Greeks, Edith Hamilton poses the question: Why is the death of the ordinary man a wretched, chilling thing which we turn from, while the death of the hero, always tragic, warms us with a sense of quickened life? Perhaps the concluding years of the three principal characters of our story can provide an answer of sorts to this question.

Yahya Khan, the principal architect of the events culminating in the humiliating surrender of the Pakistani forces in East Pakistan and the creation of Bangladesh, could not stand up to the angry storm which broke about him at the news of Pakistan's defeat. In West Pakistan violent demonstrations demanded the end of military rule. Yahya resigned on December 20, four days after the surrender, and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto took over as president and chief martial law administrator. Yahya was sentenced to five years of house arrest.

Yahya lived on in seclusion, ignored and forgotten, until 1980, outliving Sheik Mujibur Rahman by five years and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto by one. Not quite an ordinary man for he did after all, for a while, try to restore political government to all of Pakistan. Yahya was certainly no hero and is remembered primarily as a failure, one who was not up to the role he cast for himself.

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Bhutto again played the spoiler become savior part he had enjoyed in the downfall of Yahya's predecessor, Ayub Khan. Forgetting his contribution

to the disaster when he pushed Yahya into postponing the convening of the National Assembly on March 1, 1971, Bhutto laid the full blame for Pakistan's defeat on Yahya Khan and his Martial Law Administration. But Bhutto projected strength and ability, and Pakistan, now reduced to West Pakistan, desperately needed a leader with such qualities in those difficult days.

Bhutto, who subsequently became Prime Minister, introduced a new constitution with a modified federal and parliamentary system. He tried to reform the civil service and sought to improve the lot of the poor under his party's program of Islamic socialism. His most impressive accomplishment was in restoring Pakistan's prestige in the world.

Bhutto preached democracy but his style of governing was autocratic. He wanted a strong central government with himself in charge, and provincial governments in the hands of the PPP, the party which he had established in 1968 to force Ayub Khan from power. The PPP began to slip out of control, indulging in widespread corruption and political violence, including the beating, arresting, and even murdering of opponents.

Despite signs of growing unhappiness on the part of many elements of the populace, Bhutto announced that he would hold national and provincial assembly elections in March of 1977. (In the interval the national and provincial assemblies had been made up of those elected in the December 1970 elections.) In the election the PPP won 155 seats, while only 36 seats went to the Pakistan National Alliance (PNA) a united front of nine political parties, united, that is, in their opposition to Bhutto.

The PNA immediately claimed that the election results had been rigged and demanded a new election. Bhutto refused, and found himself faced with a mass protest movement, which continued for several months. Finally, the Army intervened, as it had in 1958 and 1969, and arrested all political leaders, including Bhutto. The Army Chief of Staff, General Mohammad Zia ul-Haq, proclaimed martial law, promising that new elections would be held within ninety days.

Elections were not held; Zia canceled the elections because he said he had discovered "irregularities" in the previous (Bhutto's) regime. Many "white papers" were produced, alleging such abuses of power as the rigging of the 1977 elections and illegal actions by the Federal Security Force, a paramilitary force, created by Bhutto and a thorn in the

Army's side. Finally Bhutto was brought to trial and charged with complicity in the murder of a political opponent. Found guilty in March 1978, he was sentenced to death.

Bhutto spent many months on death row, during which time Zia was deluged with pleas for clemency from leaders around the world, including President Carter. Zia was unmoved and in 1979 Bhutto was hanged. By all accounts he went to his death with great bravery.

An eloquent epitaph for Bhutto came from the pen of Henry Kissinger in his book *White House Years*.

> In the days of his country's tragedy he held the remnants of the country together and restored its self-confidence. In its hour of greatest need, he saved his country from complete destruction. He later brought himself down by excessive pride. But his courage and vision in 1971 should have earned him a better fate than the tragic end his passionate countrymen meted out to him and that blighted their reputation for mercy.

Bhutto's end was much more tragic than that of Yahya, who died peacefully in bed. Despite his faults, Bhutto was certainly a hero to many of the poor of his country. While he was hated and feared by those elements he tried to rein in, like the Army, the Civil Service, and the so-called "twenty families," he was loved by a large proportion of the masses who saw him as their spokesman and protector.

Moreover, Bhutto's tragedy is ameliorated by the political dynasty he founded. His daughter, Benazir, took over control of the PPP and was elected Prime Minister in 1988. Although dismissed by the President of Pakistan in 1990, Benazir regained the prime ministership in the elections of 1993. She is no longer Prime Minister but is still the leader of the principal opposition party. As long as Bhutto's daughter and the party he formed and she now leads continue to be important in the politics of Pakistan, Bhutto himself will live on in the hearts of some and the fears of others.

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Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was in jail in West Pakistan when Bangladesh independence was achieved on December 16, 1971, having been convicted of treason by a military court and sentenced to death. After

taking over from Yahya, Bhutto released Mujib and allowed him to return to Dacca via London and New Delhi.

The Sheikh arrived in Dacca on January 10, 1972, to be greeted by huge emotional crowds chanting "Joi Bangla" (Victory to Bengal) and "Sheikh Mujib Zindabad" (Long live Sheikh Mujib). Mujib's first speech back on the soil of Bangladesh began:

> Brothers and sisters of Bangladesh, on this auspicious day I remember at the outset those farmers, laborers, students, and intellectuals who embraced martyrdom at the hands of the barbarous Pakistani Army during the last nine months. I pray for the salvation of their departed souls. My lifelong desire is fulfilled today. My golden Bengal is today an independent and sovereign state.

Although he at first assumed the title of President, Mujib vacated that office two days later to become Prime Minister. He was the undisputed leader of the world's eighth most populous nation, a nation scarred by civil war, with partially destroyed communication and transportation systems and a crippled economy, and forced to contend with a near complete break-down of law and order. Despite substantial foreign aid, food was scarce and corruption and black marketeering flourished.

The euphoria of Bangladesh's victorious struggle for independence faded quickly when Mujib's government failed to cope successfully with the many problems it had inherited. Sheikh Sahib proved to be considerably less effective as an administrator than as a revolutionary leader. Not surprisingly, Mujib was partial toward those who had participated actively in the independence struggle. He favored the freedom fighters over those professional Bengali military officers who did not manage to leave West Pakistan after March 1971. Out of the ranks of the freedom fighters Mujib formed a National Defense Force which became, in effect, his private army, to the consternation of the regular armed forces.

In 1973 the country's first national elections were held. Mujib's popularity was still great enough to carry the Awami League to a smashing victory, winning 282 out of 289 directly contested seats. But his popularity declined markedly in the next two years in the face of a worsening economy and mounting law and order problems. Mujib's response was to concentrate more power in his own hands. In January 1975 the Constitution was amended to make Mujib president for five years, with greater executive power. The following month Mujib proclaimed

Bangladesh a one-party state, thus abolishing the parliamentary system. He also renamed the Awami League, which became the Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami League (Bangladesh Peasants, Workers and People's League), and even required all civilian government personnel to join the party.

In the early morning of August 15, 1975 a small group of Army officers, most of whom were majors, forced their way into Mujib's home in the Dhanmondi suburb. They gunned down one of Sheikh Mujib's sons, the first to confront them. Then they started upstairs, killing Mujib at the top of the stairs. They proceeded through the bedrooms, killing Mujib's wife, his two other sons and two daughters-in-law. The youngest son, Sheikh Russel, aged 10, cried for his mother, and the officers dragged him into his parents' bedroom, pointed out the corpse of his mother, and said "There's your mother," before killing him. Other members of Mujib's family were killed in a nearby home. The only members of Mujib's family to survive the slaughter were his two daughters. The married daughter, Sheikh Hasina Wajed, was away in Europe with her husband and her younger sister, Sheikh Rehana, was with her.

Some of the assassins had earlier been dismissed from the Army in a purge instigated by Mujib. Probably all of them shared the anger of military professionals over the favoritism displayed by Mujib toward his private army. The plotters installed a conservative member of the Awami League, Khondakar Mushtaq Ahmed, as president, but their action led not to stability but to a furious spate of coups and counter-coups; culminating in the coming to power in November 1976 of General Ziaur Rahman (Zia), the Army chief of staff. This was the same Zia, who as a major in the East Bengal Regiment had announced the independence of Bangladesh on March 27, 1971 from a captured radio station in Chittagong.

Zia remained in power until May 30, 1981 when he was assassinated in a plot conceived by a Major General Manzur, the Army commander in Chittagong, who reportedly was angered by his onward assignment to a noncommand position. During his, for a South Asian political leader, relatively long time in office, Zia restored a measure of stability to Bangladesh politics. He created a new party named the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, which won a majority of the seats in the Parliament in elections held in February 1979.

After Zia's assassination, his vice-president, former Supreme Court Justice Abdus Sattar, became acting president. Sattar called for new elections, as the Constitution required, and was easily elected president in November 1981.

Immediately after the election the Army chief of staff, Lieutenant General Hussain Muhammad Ershad, pressured Sattar into giving the military a formal institutional role in the government. Reluctantly, Sattar established a National Security Council, with the president, vice president and prime minister representing the civilian side and the three service chiefs representing the military. When Sattar tried to limit the influence of the military by relieving a number of military officers from duty in the government, Ershad dismissed Sattar, dissolved the Parliament and declared martial law. In its infancy Bangladesh was beginning to mirror the earlier experience of Pakistan in alternating short periods of unstable civilian rule with substantially longer terms of more stable military rule.

In the ensuing years Ershad, who had assumed the title of president, tried to lead the country toward civilian rule, but a civilian rule which had scant tolerance for opposition. In this effort he was consistently challenged by the two major political parties; Zia's Bangladesh National Party, now led by Zia's widow, Begum Khaleda Zia, and Mujib's Awami League now under the leadership of his daughter, Sheikh Hasina. On several occasions Hasina and Khaleda Zia were placed under house arrest.

Ershad established a new government party, the Jatiyo (National) Party which won an absolute majority in parliamentary elections in May 1986. The Awami League ran second, but the Bangladesh Nationalist Party boycotted the elections. Both the major opposition parties claimed that the elections were flawed by Ershad's overt financial support for Jatiyo Party candidates. In presidential elections that October, Ershad, now officially the Jatiyo Party candidate, won 84% of the vote. Both the Awami League and the Bangladesh Nationalist party boycotted the elections and later claimed that only 3% of the electorate had cast ballots.

In the next several years Ershad was unable to reconcile the political opposition to his regime. He did succeed in winning another parliamentary election in March 1988, but in the face of a general opposition boycott. This time the opposition claimed a voter turnout of only 1%; the government claimed 50%.

Finally, in 1990 the military-dominated government collapsed under sustained popular protest. Begum Khaleda Zia became Prime Minister but lost in the 1996 election to Sheikh Hasina. Once again, after a turbulent gap of twenty years, Bangladesh was to have an Awami League agovernment, and one to be led by his own daughter.

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There are obvious similarities between the lives of Bhutto and Sheikh Mujib. Both were indispensable to their people at a crucial juncture: Bhutto in the despair following the loss of East Pakistan; Mujib both in the euphoria following the December 1970 elections and the agony following Yahya's military crackdown. Both began their terms of office attended with high hopes and both, after losing much of their popularity because of their own actions, drew down upon themselves the wrath of their military. Both died violently, and prematurely. Both established an enduring political party and a family political dynasty.

Their stories are certainly tragic, even chillingly so. But at the same time they display a courage and strength of personality and a human frailty that seem more than life size. If military rule in Pakistan and Bangladesh has run its course and political government faces a more secure future, then the history of these two countries, and history is written by the winners, should appropriately assign Bhutto and Mujib an everlasting place in their perspective national pantheons. In any event I feel quite confident that in the afterworld Mujib and Bhutto have more to talk about and share together than either does with Yahya Khan.

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By way of further postscript let me briefly relate what happened to some of the non-Pakistanis and non-Bengalis whom you have met in these pages.

Ambassador Farland was rewarded by President Nixon for loyal service under trying circumstances in Islamabad by being appointed Ambassador to Tehran. He served in Tehran from May 1972 until February 1973, and then was moved out to make way for Dick Helms, the CIA Director. As a consolation prize Nixon nominated Farland to be

Ambassador to New Zealand, but the Ambassador decided not to take up his new post.

I only saw the Ambassador once since my departure from East Pakistan. We bumped into each other in a waiting room at Kennedy Airport in February 1974. The Ambassador, then retired from public service, was leaving on a business trip to London and other European capitals. I was off to New Delhi to fill in for the Director General of the Foreign Service at a regional meeting of labor reporting officers in South Asia. As always, the Ambassador was friendly and courteous. We did not have long to talk, however, before the boarding call came and the Ambassador went forward to First Class and I retreated to the tourist section. The Ambassador passed away a few years later.

In subsequent years I saw quite a bit of Sid Sober, the DCM in Islamabad in 1970-71. Sid had a long and successful tour in Islamabad. He managed to consolidate a cordial relationship with Bhutto, with whom he had frequent contact before Bhutto became Prime Minister. For much of the latter part of his tour in Islamabad Sid was Chargé d' Affaires. After his retirement from the Foreign Service Sid was a frequent spokesman for U.S. foreign policy in lecture tours abroad sponsored by USIA.

As I was to do myself, Sid enjoyed a post-retirement academic career. In fact, we collaborated on several occasions. I spoke to one of his classes on diplomacy at the University of Pittsburgh and he was the star performer in a panel discussion of Middle East issues which I organized at Allegheny College.

I crossed paths once again with Frank Sargeant, the British Deputy High Commissioner in Dacca. My family and I spent a vacation in Yvoire, a charming village in the French side of Lake Geneva, during the summer of 1972. Hearing that Frank was posted as Consul General in nearby Lyons, my wife and I had a very pleasant reunion with the Sargeants at their attractive residence.

Two of my senior American colleagues in Dacca, political officer Hugh Haight and my deputy, Bob Carle, are no longer with us. Before Bob's death, we had an opportunity to work together one last time. In 1974-75 he was State Department adviser to the Commandant of the Armed Forces Staff College at Norfolk, while I was Deputy Commandant for International Affairs at the Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Bob arranged for me to give several lectures at

the Staff College, providing a rewarding opportunity to talk over old times.

Unfortunately, I lost track of Eric Griffel, the Provincial AID Director. I last saw him in June 1971 when we both were witnesses before Senator Kennedy's sub-committee. I understand that he went on to serve AID in Morocco. Brian Bell, the PAO, continued with USIS. One of my last duties before retiring from the Foreign Service in May, 1982 was to serve on a USIS promotion panel to promote USIS officers from FSIO-2 to FSIO-1. At that time Brian was PAO in Djakarta.

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As for myself, I settled down quickly in my job in Personnel, where I had responsibility for assignments of FSO-4s, roughly the equivalent of lieutenant-colonels. My morale was greatly heightened because my immediate supervisor was Cleo Noel, Chief of the Counseling and Assignments Division. Cleo had been a close colleague in my first tour in Personnel and, working together, we managed to return the assignment process to the structure and procedures we had known earlier. In the interval the Department had imported some people from the Pentagon who had pushed through procedures more in line with Pentagon practices.

When Cleo moved up to Deputy Director of Personnel for Career Counseling and Assignments, I succeeded him as Chief of the Foreign Service Counseling and Assignment Division, and when Cleo was named Ambassador to Sudan I succeeded him in the Deputy Director position. Not long into his tour of duty in Khartourn, Cleo, together with his DCM, was taken hostage by Palestinian terrorists and after some hours murdered in cold blood. Cleo Noel represented the Foreign Service at its best.

In September 1973 my stint in Personnel began to accelerate to a grand finale. Dr. Kissinger was sworn in as Secretary of State on September 22. William O. Hall, the Director General of the Foreign Service, suddenly decided to retire. Bob Brewster, the Deputy Director General and Director of Personnel, was sworn in as Ambassador to Equador. Consequently, in just a couple of weeks I moved up to be Acting Director of Personnel and then Acting Director General of the Foreign Service.

When Nat Davis, Kissinger's nominee for the Director Generalship, took over in December, I found myself in a difficult position. After some soul-searching, I asked Nat, who had been the youngest member of our entering FSO class, if he would test the water to see if I were still in Secretary Kissinger's doghouse because of Dacca. Nat kindly agreed to do so and put my name forward for an embassy, namely Upper Volta. Kissinger's reaction, as relayed by Nat, was "get that guy out of Washington," and he did not mean by means of an embassy.

From my vantage point in personnel I knew what the possibilities were outside of Washington. The one I liked best was Diplomatic Advisor to the Army War College, where I had been a student in 1962-63. The incumbent, Herman Eilts, also a member of my entering class, was departing to become Ambassador to Egypt. Nat arranged the assignment and on March 1974 I left for what turned out to be a most pleasant three and a half year exile in Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

We lived in a home which had once belonged to a signer of the Declaration of Independence, and from the home I could walk along a lovely stream to my office, far more splendid than any I had in the Foreign Service. A new Commandant, General Dewitt C. Smith, arrived shortly after I did. An inspirational and dynamic leader, Dee was a delight to work for and we soon became close friends. It was he who had my title changed from Diplomatic Adviser to Deputy Commandant for International Affairs. My job gave me the opportunity to do some writing and to learn how to deliver a 50-minute speech without any notes, cue cards or props. I also got to meet virtually all the top military leaders when they came to speak at the school.

When Jimmy Carter was elected in November 1976 and Henry Kissinger, then Gerald Ford's Secretary of State was due shortly to leave office, I knew that my exile was approaching its end. The NEA Bureau proposed me as a candidate for the DCM position in New Delhi, and the new Ambassador to India, Robert Goheen, a former president of Princeton, interviewed me in Washington and accepted me as his deputy. I was back in the Foreign Service!

We arrived in New Delhi on October 1, 1977, to begin a tour of duty that lasted four years to the day and turned out to be our favorite assignment in the Service. Ambassador Goheen and his wife Margaret were two of the most gracious and thoughtful people we have ever known. Moreover, since the Ambassador had been born in India and had

spent his pre-college years there, he was more knowledgeable about more facets of Indian life than any of his staff.

New Delhi was also a great family post. Our younger son, Cubby, graduated from the American high school there. Our older son, Peter, spent two years with us, getting an M. A. from the University of New Delhi. Our two daughters each made two long visits, on one of which our older daughter was accompanied by Meg's sister, Dee and Betty Smith also came for a visit, in the course of which General Smith was invited to address the Indian Defense College. Another War College visitor was General Cal Benedict, a former Deputy Commandant, who visited us with his wife and younger son on their return from his posting as U.S. Commander in Berlin.

When I went out to New Delhi, I knew that my initial months would be fully devoted to one task, preparing for the visit of President and Mrs. Carter in January 1978. It was the first, and last, time I was involved in a presidential visit, and the experience was both exhausting and exciting. It also provided an excellent early opportunity to get to work closely with a host of Indian officials.

In 1977-81 our principal bilateral problem with India was the nuclear issue, specifically our attempts to get India to accept IAEA safeguards on all its nuclear research and power facilities. We were not successful because the Indians wanted to keep open the option of developing nuclear weapons after exploding a nuclear device in May 1974. Still, our efforts may have served in postponing India's decision to conduct further tests and become an overt nuclear weapon state, an action which was not taken until May, 1998.

Another cause of friction with India was our policy of supporting the Afghan resistance after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979. Since Pakistan's cooperation was essential to any effective aid to the Afghan freedom fighters, the U.S. was drawn into a closer relationship with Pakistan, irritating and worrying India. Mrs. Gandhi was once more in power, and her official statements with respect to the U.S. position on Afghanistan took on a harsh tone. Nonetheless, our business and social relations with Indians, in and out of government, continued to be cordial.

In the fall of 1979, shortly before the Soviet invasion, the Department asked me to go to Kabul on temporary duty to give the Chargé, Bruce Amstutz, the chance to take some leave and meet his wife

in Europe. After Ambassador Dubs had been killed in February 1979, we had no Ambassador in Kabul, spouses and families had been evacuated, and Kabul was classified as a danger post. I spent almost six weeks in Kabul, living in our old house and fortunate to have our former servants to take care of me.

A Communist government had seized power in Afghanistan in 1978 and its misguided efforts to impose Communist strictures on an Islamic society had provoked the Afghans into open revolt. The Soviet Union was trying to help the Communist regime in Kabul to put down the insurgency but with little success. Our principal concern was to track the extent of the Soviet involvement by monitoring the steady inflow of Soviet military personnel and equipment into Afghanistan. Our job was not eased by the nightly curfew and the restrictions on our movements during daylight hours. I had virtually no freedom of action; the Afghan government assigned a bodyguard to accompany me everywhere, even to the barber shop and tennis court. When I once went shopping in the bazaar on a Sunday morning, the Foreign Ministry asked me to desist, citing fears for my safety. Actually, all Americans in Kabul felt safe; our only concern was that we might be mistaken for a Soviet.

Toward the end of my TDY in Kabul the Department asked me to seek an appointment with Hafizullah Amin, the President of Afghanistan. It was supposed to be an exploratory meeting, and so it turned out to be. Amin probed for some indication that we might be open to resuming development assistance and, as instructed, I responded that any such resumption was impossible until the Amin government clarified its suspicious role in the abduction and subsequent murder of Ambassador Dubs, whose death we thought could probably have been avoided if the Afghan government, and the USSR, had been more cooperative.

As far as I am aware, I was the last Western diplomat to see Amin alive. He was killed by the Soviets when they invaded Afghanistan the following month. I confess that I did not predict an overt invasion. I thought the Soviets would continue to infiltrate their troops and civilian advisors on a gradual basis until they had established firm control over the Afghan government and military. What I underestimated was the significance of the split of the Afghan Communist Party into two competing factions, and the desire of the Soviets to work with the faction led by Babrak Karmal rather than with Amin's faction.

In 1980 Ambassador Goheen had to undergo several heart surgery operations. When Ronald Reagan defeated Jimmy Carter in the November election, the Ambassador decided to resign and he departed India in January, 1981. For the next nine months I was Chargé d' Affaires because President Reagan was slow to appoint a new Ambassador. The new Ambassador, Harry Barnes, a career officer with whom I had worked in Personnel, did not arrive until after I left New Delhi on October 1.

Back in Washington I found the onward assignment situation to be discouraging. The only assignment offered me was that of Chargé in Afghanistan. Since Kabul was a danger post, I could not take my wife. The remuneration was good, however, what with 25% danger pay and 25% regular hardship pay, and besides, I had always enjoyed service in Afghanistan. I started Dari lessons at the Foreign Service Institute, and was briefed by academic experts on Afghanistan. Then, the Afghan government refused to grant me a visa, saying only that they would accept anybody but me.

Indian friends told me later that the Afghan government claimed I had several secret meetings with Amin while I was in Kabul. I do not believe that was their motive. They knew full well that I had but one meeting with the late President. The real reason, I believe, was that the political section of Embassy New Delhi, using cable traffic from Kabul as a source, had conducted regular briefings of the western press. The aim was to keep alive the story of the Afghan resistance to the Soviet Army and the Afghan Communist regime. In those days there was a real concern on our part that the resistance might be written off as a hopeless cause.

Feeling considerably let down, I decided to retire from the Foreign Service, which I did in May, 1982.

Suddenly, out of the blue, I was offered an interesting new opportunity, the product of an encounter in New Delhi. David Harned, head of the Religion Department at the University of Virginia, had visited New Delhi in 1981 to evaluate a program in which his department sent a group of students for one semester a year to Mysore in southern India. Since Virginia was my alma mater, I had taken an interest in the program and my wife and I had visited the first group in Mysore and introduced the second group to students at the University of New Delhi. Dr. Harned told me that he was leaving Virginia to become president of Allegheny College in northwestern Pennsylvania.

After learning of my retirement from a mutual Indian friend, Dr. Harned called me to say he was thinking of establishing a diplomat in residence position at Allegheny. Would I be interested? If so, could Meg and I come to Meadville, see the college and meet some of the faculty? We did so, and were favorably impressed by the college and by Dr. Harned's offer which included a full professorship. We were to spend the next ten years in Meadville, happily immersed in the life of a small liberal arts college. The first course I taught was South Asian politics, but I quickly developed courses in Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy, Politics of the Middle East, and U.S. Foreign Policy, as well as a seminar in U.S.-Soviet Relations and an interdisciplinary seminar on U.S.-Canadian relations. After the tightly structured Foreign Service, where one has to be guarded in what one says, needs to clear virtually everything one writes, and is on duty 24 hours a day, the much greater freedom of the academic world was a constant delight.

In the summer of 1990 I decided to retire from teaching. I was experiencing trouble with my hearing, which was a decided disadvantage in fielding questions by shy, small-voiced students in the rear of the lecture hall. Meg and I stayed on in Meadville for another two years when we succumbed to our daughter Shireen's repeated urging that we move to Fort Collins, Colorado to join her and her family. Our younger daughter, Barbara, had also moved to Denver to start law school, and we had been visiting Colorado a couple of times a year for over ten years.

We have been in Fort Collins for over seven years now, enjoying both the best climate in the world and full-time involvement as grandparents.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

RETURN TO BANGLADESH

Thursday, the fifth of December, 1996 was a typical sunny winter day in Colorado. I had walked down to the set of postboxes serving our small community of homes on my daily early afternoon trip to pick up mail. Among the Christmas cards I noticed an envelope from the State Department. Opening it, I found a letter from the secretary to the Bangladesh Ambassador in Washington, saying that the Bangladesh Permanent Representative to the United Nations wanted to speak with me "regarding an important matter." In an effort to protect the privacy of its retired officers the Department does not give out addresses or telephone numbers but instead agrees to forward any communication to the addressee.

Puzzled and intrigued, I promptly telephoned Ambassador Anwarul Karim Chowdhury in New York. After apologizing for the short notice, Ambassador Chowdhury told me that I was one of a group of foreign "dignitaries" whom the Prime Minister of Bangladesh was inviting to attend the "Silver Jubilee Celebration of the Victory in the Glorious Struggle for National Liberation of Bangladesh." The celebration would begin on December 14 and last until December 19, and I would be the guest of the Bangladesh government with all expenses paid.

Yes, I would be delighted to attend. Yes, I had a valid passport. Yes, I could leave as early as December 12. Ambassador Chowdhury explained that it would be difficult to make convenient airline reservations, given the Christmas holiday traffic and the short notice, but he would have his office get to work on it immediately. There would not be time to get a visa for Bangladesh, but I could obtain one at the airport in Dhaka.

Ambassador Chowdhury promised speed and efficiency and the tickets did indeed reach me a couple of days before my scheduled departure. The routing, however, was somewhat complicated. I was to fly from Denver to Newark on Continental, from Newark to Manchester, England on BOAC, from Manchester to Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates on the UAE national airline, and from Abu Dhabi to Dhaka, again with the UAE airline. The Ambassador told me that I would have a traveling companion from Newark on in the person of Arnold Zeitlin, the former Associated Press correspondent in Pakistan, whose name figures frequently in my narrative of the 1970-71 period.

I met Arnold in the lounge at Newark airport and found that he was bringing along his wife, Vicky, at his own expense. Her routing was sometimes different from ours but we all arrived together in Dhaka on the morning of Saturday, December 14. But my checked luggage did not arrive with me, and I was considerably discomfited at being limited to what I was wearing for the next two days. Out of desperation I went out and bought a cotton sport shirt on the second day; my turtleneck was too warm for daytime wear in December.

* * * * *

The Dhaka of 1996 was not the Dacca of 1971. Its population had risen probably as much as eightfold, to an estimated eight million. Its geographic extent had spread to areas I had not heard of twenty-five years ago. Its downtown streets were host to thousands of new buildings, some quite attractive, and decorated by IBM and Pepsi Cola signs in witness to Bangladesh's embrace of the new global economy. Most intimidating of all was the vast increase in vehicular traffic. There had always been lots of bicycle rickshaws; now there were even more. There had not been that many private cars; now they clogged the streets. Add many trucks and you have a perfect recipe for near-constant gridlock. To me the new traffic and its unregulated patterns were downright frightening, but the drivers of Dhaka seemed good-natured and not over-stressed as they slowly pushed their way through one traffic jam after another.

Dhaka had become a real city, a bustling, enterprising city. In so doing it had lost much of its earlier charm but had gained a new vibrancy and intensity that seemed striking to a time-warp visitor such as myself.

We international guests were housed in the Sheraton Hotel, the expanded and greatly improved Intercontinental Hotel of my earlier days. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs established a central room at the hotel, under the competent and engaged direction of Additional Foreign Secretary Waliur Rahman and staffed by courteous and hard-working young officers, whose principal job was to get us to the scheduled events on time. I did not envy them their task, although it was one that I had performed myself many times in handling Congressional delegations. All of us had friends in Dhaka and thus something of a personal agenda which had to be blended with the official schedule.

Besides Arnold Zeitlin and myself, there were three other American guests, none of which I had previously met. One was Charles Ashton, a Virginia lawyer who had worked hard for the Bangladesh cause in 1970-71, although he had never been to East Pakistan (Bangladesh). Ashton was, incidentally, a close friend of A.M.A. Muhith, my old friend from the early 1960's and had helped Muhith in his lobbying activities during the Bangladesh crisis. The second was Dr. Peter Bertocci, a professor of anthropology at Oakland University in Michigan, who was in Dhaka prior to and during the liberation and who spoke very good Bengali. The third was Enayetur Rahim, who as a Bengali graduate student, had played an active part in organizing the 1971 Bangladesh movement in the U.S. He subsequently became a professor at Georgetown University.

The guests from Britain were Simon Dring, who as a young reporter for the *London Daily Telegraph* had eluded the Pakistani Army's roundup of foreign correspondents on March 25, 1971 and succeeded in smuggling out his notes for the first eye-witness journalistic account of the military crackdown, and Rashed Suhrawardy, the suave son of the late H. S. Suhrawardy, one of the founders of the Awami League and a former Prime Minister of Pakistan.

From Japan came Mrs. Motos Hayakawa, widow of a former Japanese Minister, and Mr. Shin Sakurai, a member of the Japanese Parliament. Another guest was an Irishman, John Kelly, who had been in Dhaka in 1971 as an official of the UN High Commission on Refugees. The largest group, seven in all, came from India and included noted poets and scholars as well as P. N. Dhar, who had been Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's Chef de Cabinet in 1971.

* * * * *

The first event in our crowded schedule, which was frequently amended, was a memorial service on the evening we arrived for the large number of academics and journalists, who had been murdered by East Pakistanis opposed to independence just two days before the surrender of the Pakistani Army. We foreign guests were seated on the dais and some of us, myself included, were asked to say a few words. Survivors of the murdered intellectuals were recognized and presented with mementos.

On the next morning we attended what was billed as a youth rally at the National Stadium. I had some apprehension about being exposed to several hours of watching children march and sing, but the event turned out to be among the most rewarding of my visit. The march past the Prime Minister was performed by numerous groups of school children, each group dressed in its school colors. They marched very well, in the swinging arms style of the British Army. Culminating the parade was an amazingly good all-girl bagpipe band and a squadron of gorgeously uniformed Bengal Lancers.

Following the march past some 200 or more girl drill teams performed a series of complicated maneuvers, all very precise and beautifully synchronized. It was a world class performance.

The National Stadium was well known to me. In earlier years I had spent enjoyable hours there watching cricket or polo games. What was new was a fence ringing the inside of a circular track about the stadium, which was topped by an additional 5-6 feet of criss-cross wires. I was told that the fence, all in all 20 feet high, was required by the international soccer organization to prevent fans from climbing on to the playing field, as a consequence of the fracas caused by British soccer fans in Belgium a couple of years before.

Also new to me was the Bengali adoption of the American custom of sports fans forming designs through the synchronized use of differently colored cards. On opposite sides of the Dhaka stadium two large sections of students, about 3-4 hundred in number, presented continually changing depictions, ranging from remarkably detailed portraits of Sheikh Mujib, to the Bangladesh flag, to quotations in the Bengali script.

The culminating event of the morning was a dramatic performance commemorating the cruel struggle for Bangladesh independence. It opened with a scene of a peaceful country village, with the villagers going about their normal duties of attending to crops, washing clothes, etc. Suddenly the

village is attacked by Pakistani soldiers. All the villagers are killed save for two girls who are carried away to be raped. Freedom fighters from the village return to find their families slain. While they are mourning their loss, two informers from the village slip out to fetch back the Pakistani soldiers. The freedom fighters are killed in a brief fire fight. But right triumphs in the end. The slain villagers and freedom fighters rise from the dead and march off the field, escorting the soldiers and informers whose hands are raised in surrender. It may seem corny in the telling, but it was actually quite moving.

Beginning at noon the international guests were interviewed seriatim, either in Bengali or English, by members of Bangladesh Television in the reception rooms on the top floor of the Sheraton. Generally, we were asked to offer our reminiscences of 1971. (I had by then procured a clean shirt.)

Throughout our stay in Dhaka the foreign visitors were exposed to a media blitz, mostly in the form of print journalism interviews. My two friends, Muhith and Gullu, asked me to grant interviews to journalists they knew and trusted. Many interview requests came out of the blue. After a couple of days all of us became considerably more selective. Not only were we short on time but we were beginning to run out of fresh things to say. Even then, I was interviewed in the Sheraton lobby just before departing for the airport and interviewed in the waiting room at the airport. Of course, all this press attention was flattering and helped turn a celebratory and reminiscential visit into something of an ego trip.

Monday, December 16 was the busiest day of all. We had to be in front of the hotel by 5:30 a.m. to catch the transport for the long drive to Savar on the outskirts of Dacca, the site of the imposing National Mausoleum honoring those killed in the struggle for independence. The President of Bangladesh, Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed, and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina placed wreathes as buglers played the last post.

At Savar I met David Merrill, the American Ambassador to Bangladesh. I had telephoned him earlier to set a time when I could pay a courtesy call. We agreed to meet at Savar and fix a time. The Ambassador, along with his DCM, Political Counselor and AID Chief, were at Savar as part of the Diplomatic Corps contingent, and I introduced them to the other Americans in the "foreign dignitary" group.

From Savar we proceeded directly to the Victory Day Parade. Led by the general commanding the 9th Infantry Division, the parade began with a foot column composed of units of the armed forces, the Bangladesh Rifles (successor to the East Pakistan Rifles), the police, the

National Cadet Corps and village defense forces. They were followed by a mounted contingent including the Bengal Lancers, a parachuting show, fly-pasts by Army Aviation and the Air Force, a march-past by a mechanized column, and a march-past by the combined bands. Adding considerably to the event was a well-done continuing commentary which introduced the respective contingents.

I was seated next to P. N. Dhar of India and asked him if General Aurora, who had commanded the Indian Army during the Indo-Pak war and had accepted the surrender of the Pakistani Army, had been invited to the Silver Jubilee celebration in Dhaka. Dhar said that General Aurora had been invited but could not attend. I read in the Dhaka papers that General Aurora and his deputy, General Jacob, had attended a victory celebration in Calcutta.

Much of the equipment displayed struck me as quite out of date, particularly with respect to the Navy and Air Force, but the pride and elan of the participants were palpable. I had a warm feeling as I watched the parade, moderated only by a silent hope that these fine-looking people could succeed in staying out of politics.

Our next stop that morning was the old race ground where Mujib had delivered his historic March 7, 1971 speech and where the Pakistani Army surrendered on December 16, 1971. After laying the foundation stone for an independence monument, the Prime Minister spoke with gratitude of the countries which had been helpful to the Bangladesh struggle for independence. I thought it interesting that in this connection she cited India, Russia, Britain and Japan but used the phrase "the people of the United States."

We international visitors were again seated on the dais and recognized by the Prime Minister. We were privy to an interesting contretemps which occurred in the course of a subsequent speech by, I believe, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Culture. When he was several minutes along in his talk, an angry murmur broke out in the front ranks of the audience. The speaker had to interrupt his talk and there was a hurried conference between officials and the excited members of the audience, who appeared to be mostly students. I was seated next to Peter Bertocci who could follow the Bengali and told me that the audience was complaining that the speaker had failed to use the honorific "Bangabandhu" (friend or beloved of Bengal) when mentioning Sheikh Mujib. The speaker was forced to apologize and to mend his ways.

A luncheon for the foreign visitors was given at the state guest house, a building which I had known from earlier days as the home of G. M. Adamjee, the most prominent non-Bengali industrialist in East Pakistan and owner of the building which housed the Consulate General. Our host for the very pleasant occasion was the Foreign Minister, and at the luncheon I had the chance to renew acquaintance with Bhabani Sen Gupta, a political writer whom I had known in New Delhi.

Later that afternoon we attended the Victory Day reception given by the President of Bangladesh at his residence, Bangabhaban (Bangladesh House) which I had known before as Government House, the residence of the Governor of East Pakistan. It was a large outdoor reception but I did not find myself at loose ends because, first, kind officers of the Foreign Ministry and, second, my friend Muhith took me around and introduced me to large numbers of people. I was enjoying myself so much that, together with Charles Ashton and Peter Bertocci, I was one of the last to leave, and we were due at the Prime Minister's dinner at 8 p.m.

The traffic was horrendous and then our driver compounded the problem by taking us on "a short cut" to circumvent the worst traffic. Instead, we were totally immobilized on a street which the traffic police had no success in clearing. Were it not for the time constraint under which we were operating I believe I might have enjoyed the enforced delay. The streets were packed with families in a holiday mood, carrying flags, sometimes singing and always laughing.

Finally the three of us voted to abandon the vehicle and strike out on foot for the Sheraton. Peter said he knew the way and he did, but in the process we had to force our way through streets of slowly moving traffic. When we arrived at the hotel, we found that the rest of the group had already left for the Prime Minister's residence. Fortunately, the able Foreign Ministry crew came to our rescue, and still in our dusty clothes but with newly washed faces we rushed off, to arrive just a minute or two before the assembled guests moved into the dining room. After dinner we each had an opportunity to chat with Sheikh Hasina.

The most poignant moment of my visit came early the following morning when I visited Sheikh Mujib's old house on Road No. 32, Dhanmondai, now preserved as Bangabandhu Memorial Museum. The modest ground floor drawing room where we used to be received by the Sheikh has been converted into a gallery displaying pictures illustrating his career. The stairway leading to the first floor has been paneled in

glass and still shows blood stains where Mujib was gunned down. In the bedroom of Sheikh Fazilatunnesa, Mujib's wife, blood stains and bullet holes mark the area where she and other members of the family were killed. While the total effect was a saddening one, I drew some consolation from the thought expressed in the Museum's brochure: "In the larger sense, the Bangabandhu Museum speaks of epical times, of the illustrious personality who made freedom an attainable proposition at the crossroads of national life."

The last completely official event on the schedule was a call on the President of Bangladesh at Bangabhaban. The President was most gracious and seemed to enjoy talking with us, so much so that his aides almost literally had to pull him away for his next appointment. During the call I had the opportunity to talk with one of the ranking generals in the Bangladesh Army about the helpful role Bangladesh was performing in various UN peacekeeping efforts. As I left the large and handsome central hall of the President's residence, I was struck by the change in the portraits, displayed on its walls. Gone were the Pakistani era portraits, those of Jinnah, Ayub and Yahya. In their place were, appropriately enough, many portraits of East Bengal political leaders, most prominently H. S. Suhrawardy, A. K. Fazlul Huq and, of course, Bangabandhu.

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For the rest of my visit, a full day and a half, I was free to pursue personal business and interests. I did, however, grab the opportunity proffered the foreign visitors to visit the National Museum. Along with John Kelly, I spent several happy hours gazing at displays of animals, birds and plants of Bangladesh, models of early architecture and a pictorial record of the war of liberation. I also saw again with great appreciation the starkly dramatic paintings of the Bengal famine of 1943 by Zainul Abedin. My wife and I had met the artist in 1961 and greatly respected his work.

Ambassador Merrill sent his car to pick me up at the hotel and take me to the Embassy, which was located far out in Baridhara, a new suburb of Dhaka which had been created as a diplomatic enclave. Foreign countries were offered sizeable plots on which to construct their embassies. I had expected the new Embassy to be a far cry from the dingy quarters we occupied at Adamjee Court and which became the first Embassy after the U.S. recognized Bangladesh. But the contrast was far greater than I had imagined.

The Embassy red brick compound must occupy a full city block. My first thought was that I was seeing a modernized Red Fort of New Delhi. It did possess a fortress-like quality, which was not diminished by its many security features. At Adamjee Court our principal concern was that a malfunctioning elevator would force us to walk up six floors. The new Embassy had protection against car bombs, safe-like doors, and other security devices.

The Ambassador was not an FSO but a career AID officer. Since the principal U.S. interest in Bangladesh is economic development, it makes sense to have a chief of mission with development expertise.

Ambassador Merrill was clearly enjoying his tour in Dhaka, and my Bengali friends held him in high esteem. We were joined by the DCM, Political Counselor and AID chief for some good Foreign Service talk, after which we adjourned to a nearby Chinese restaurant for lunch.

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Soon after I arrived in Dhaka I had telephoned my two oldest friends, A.M.A. Muhith and Gullu Haque but I was unable to get together with each of them privately until the official schedule was completed. On Wednesday afternoon and evening I was royally entertained by Gullu and his family. Gullu's wife, Minoo, took me on a shopping excursion to the Cottage Industries Emporium, where she made most of the purchases, all for my family. Later at Gullu's home I had a reunion with his mother and met his uncle, visiting from London. Early in the evening Gullu took me several houses down the street to the house which we had occupied in 1960-62. It is now owned by a friend who had been in the same resistance unit as Gullu. Several other members of the unit joined us and I became the proud recipient of a T-shirt of K Force 2, comprising the 4th, 10th and 11th Infantry units and the 1st Mujib Battery. Then we went to dinner at the Dhaka Club which I had not seen since 1962 when it was a rather fusty relic of the Raj. In 1996 the membership seemed to be mostly energetic young Bangladeshi businessmen, and the ambiance was both more sober and more lively.

My friend Muhith once sent me a copy of his book "American Response to Bangladesh Liberation War with this inscription: "To Archer Blood, a friend for all times." That is exactly how I feel toward Muhith. On the day of my departure from Dhaka, December 19, Muhith sent his car to

take me to his home in Banani, not far from the present American Embassy, and I had breakfast with him and his charming wife, Sabia. Later we were joined by Muhith's journalist friend, Matiur Rahman, who interviewed me for his Bengali language newspaper, *Bhorer Kagaj*.

* * * * *

It was time to say goodbye. The six days in Dhaka had been hectic and fatiguing, but above all, exhilarating and rewarding. On balance, the experience was essentially an emotional one; greeting old friends, making new ones, visiting familiar old sights, some of which brought back bittersweet memories, marveling at the bustle and dynamism of a huge city.

Yet, when I looked through the Dhaka newspapers, I sometimes felt a sense of deja vu. I saw several stories about clashes between the Awami League and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, and another story about the security forces assaulting a camp of the *Shanti Bahini* tribal insurgents, plus a report of prisoners seizing control of Jessore jail. Our papers in the U.S. have more than their share of reports of violence, but in the U.S. the violence is almost always the act of individuals or very small groups, and nearly always without political rationale. Will Bangladesh, I asked myself, be able to master its legacy of political violence and bitter factionalism?

It has been said, and rightly so, that the real test for democracy in a relatively new, developing nation is the ability to hold several, generally considered fair elections in a row, regardless of whether they result in a change of government. In essence, this means that the winning party needs to refrain from taking all power into its own hands and to see the reason for an effective opposition, and the losing party has to accept the verdict of the polls and not launch a mass protest movement which will, in time, inevitably lead the military to intervene and set aside parliamentary norms.

I do not think it presumptuous or patronizing of me to voice my concern over the need to continually strengthen the democratic institutions in Bangladesh, and thereby make for greater political stability and accelerated economic progress. Given its cruel birth and bloody infancy and adolescence, Bangladesh, blessed with a talented, industrious, and charming people, certainly merits a tranquil and productive maturity.

Joy Bangla!

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from their own sense of personal duty and responsibilities. The structure of the book, therefore, swings from being both an intensely personal memoir to a serious account of the many aspects of Bangladesh crisis, which was later described by Henry Kissinger as perhaps the most complex and difficult issue to confront the first Nixon term.

Archer K Blood was the American Consul General in the former East Pakistan in 1971. Earlier he served in the US Missions diplomatic positions in Greece, Germany and Afghanistan. He also held important Desk positions in the State Department in Washington. Following his term in Dhaka, Blood served the State Department in various capacities and in 1974 became the Deputy Commander for International Affairs in the US Army War College. After two terms as Charge d' Affairs in US Mission in New Delhi, Blood retired in 1982. He was Diplomat in Residence and Professor of Political Science in 1982-1990 and Professor Emeritus at Allegheny College, USA. He has a Masters degree in International Relations from George Washington University. He had been guest lecturer at a number of universities and institutes in the US and has published several articles in journals in the US.

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