

*Nsc,
Administration Special Action Group,
WAG (Theater) 5/24/71*

MEMORANDUM
~~SECRET/EXDIS~~

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

JR WSAG
MEETING -- May 26, 1971
May 26, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM: Samuel M. Hoskinson *SH*

SUBJECT: [REDACTED] Indian Government Decisions on Pakistan Crisis

1. Refugee Situation: The Indian Ministry of Home Affairs reported that:

--The refugee situation along the East Pak border was becoming "desperate" -- the mid-May figure was over 2.5 million.

--The financial responsibility for the refugees would place an impossible burden on the Indian economy and infrastructure.

--They recommended the Indian Government take every step to force the GOP to cease pressuring East Pakistanis to flee and to force the GOP to repatriate refugees.

2. Bangla Desh Government in Exile in Calcutta: External Affairs reported that:

--Recognition of Bangla Desh must be considered only in light of the specific material help that India was prepared to make available to the East Pakistan liberation front.

--Bangla Desh should only be recognized when India made the decision to risk military action against Pakistan for the liberation of the East.

--The External Affairs report stressed the extremely negative reaction of the third countries (especially Muslim nations) to the East Pakistan situation and the "wait and see" attitude of the major powers, notably the U.S. and USSR.

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~~SECRET/EXDIS~~ -- 23. Military Situation in East Pakistan and Possible Indian Military Action:

The report from the Defense Ministry, while stressing the preparedness of Indian armed forces and the weakness of Pakistani armed forces, recommended against unilateral Indian military action for the following reasons:

- a. Inability to determine at what point the Chinese would become involved.
- b. Willingness of some Muslim countries (Turkey and Iran) to help Pakistan.
- c. Indian inability to assure continuing military supply from third countries (notably USSR) if India initiated what could be a long war.
- d. An invasion to achieve the liberation of the East would involve India in a two-front war which could create a requirement for the military occupation of all of Pakistan.

4. The following decisions were made:

- a. Defer recognition of Bangla Desh for the immediate future.
- b. Maintain constant military readiness.
- c. Take every diplomatic step to force the major powers to take action to force the GOP to stop the refugee flow and to repatriate those who have crossed into India, including hints that India might take unilateral military action.
- d. Seek financial aid from all sources to temporarily support the refugees.

They also decided to release off-the-record press comments that India is reaching the point where some sort of action, possibly military, was possible if there is not immediate relief for the refugee problem.

In a follow-up meeting with opposition leaders, Mrs. Gandhi reaffirmed India's priority of putting all possible diplomatic pressure on the major powers to pressure Pakistan to change its policies. Stressing the gravity of the current crisis, she pleaded for broad support of current Indian policy "regardless of where it led." [When queried about possible unilateral Indian actions, she avoided using the words "military action." The source reports that opposition -- left to right -- took a tough line demanding some sort of military action if there were no resolution to the refugee problem in the immediate future.]

Comment: As you can see, the Indians are engaged in a fairly sophisticated diplomatic and public relations campaign. More importantly, their decision-making

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PA/HO, Department of State

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has not reached yet the stage of war or peace. This report would indicate that Mrs. Gandhi is still moving with considerable restraint, given the circumstances, and that there is scope for us to reinforce this.

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