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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

22 September 1971

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: The Indo-Pakistani Crisis: Six Months Later^{1/}

NOTE

Enough has happened since we last published^{2/} to warrant another assessment of the situation in South Asia. In the following we discuss the current situation; likely developments with respect to Pakistan, India, and the Bengali insurgents; the roles of the great powers; the contingency of larger hostilities between India and Pakistan; and possible resolutions of the problem.

^{1/} This memorandum was prepared by the Office of National Estimates and coordinated within CIA.

^{2/} SNIE 32-71, 12 April 1971, Prospects for Pakistan; and Memorandum, 28 May 1971, Indo-Pakistani Tensions. The principal judgments in both remain valid.

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The Insurgency

1. The situation in the subcontinent, and particularly in East Pakistan, has become increasingly tense and volatile. The West Pakistani army and paramilitary security services in East Bengal, now augmented to around 80,000 men, control the cities and parts of the countryside, at least in the daytime. They do have some allies among the populace, notably the 1-2 million non-Bengali Urdu-speaking "Biharis", and some ardently anti-Hindu Bengalis. Many of their supporters have been organized into officially appointed "Peace Committees" which perform some governmental functions.

2. But the military and its allies have not been able to crush an insurgency movement operating throughout much of East Pakistan. Bengali propaganda, such as that from the outlawed Awami League (AL) leaders now in India, alleges that the resistance forces are formidable. Little is known, however, about the real capabilities of the Mukti Bahini (Liberation Fighters, a term frequently used to designate all armed Bengali insurgents, of whatever organization or political persuasion, whether based in East Pakistan or in India). In India there may be as many as 50,000 East Bengalis in some way or another associated with a resistance force. Many if not most of them formerly belonged

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to the pre-March 1971 Pakistani army and to the paramilitary Bengali security service. Perhaps as many as 15,000 cross the border from time to time and carry out guerrilla operations.

3. The larger group that has so far stayed in India may be planning to seize and hold, against Pakistani military counter-attack, a sizable chunk of East Bengali territory in which it could establish a functioning, independent Bangla Desh -- a move which would be both highly provocative and of uncertain outcome. Or it may be similar to the Algerian army based in Tunisia until 1962, i.e., intending not to fight immediately but rather to wait and take over the country when the West Pakistanis leave. It is also quite possible that decisions as to the use of this force have yet to be made. In any case, some effort has been made to screen it so as to assure its loyalty to the AL-controlled Bangla Desh government-in-exile in Calcutta.

4. The political orientation of the operational guerrillas themselves, their exact numbers, command structure, etc., are generally unknown. But Bengalis are traditionally individualistic, even anarchic in character. The insurgents probably include a number of disparate, even conflicting groups of individuals and bands who operate independently of one another. Those loyal to

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the AL may make up the largest number, but at least some of the insurgents are hard-line extremists similar to the urban guerrillas in India's state of West Bengal.

5. The Mukti Bahini have shown an increasing degree of sophistication and effectiveness against the Pakistanis, though not so much as they claim. By blowing up bridges, sabotaging ships and boats, mining roads, and derailing trains, they have badly disrupted the area's transportation system. They have assassinated a number of Peace Committee members. Striking hard at the jute industry, Pakistan's principal export earner, the Mukti Bahini's acts of sabotage and intimidation have helped to reduce output of jute products to about a quarter of the former level. Casualties have been inflicted on the Pakistani army, but we have no reliable information on how many. Our Consulate in Dacca has reported a number of explosions in that city; at one time or another the city's power system and gas supplies have been put out of action, and the lobby of the most prominent hotel destroyed by a bomb. School attendance, particularly in the universities, is virtually at an end. "Pacification" remains unrealized, though Islamabad continues to claim the situation is in hand.

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6. The relationship between the Mukti Bahini and the Indian government remains a subject of controversy. Islamabad claims that only active Indian backing and collaboration have permitted the "miscreants" to operate; that peaceful conditions and the end of the refugee flow would have been achieved if only India had closed the border, disarmed the insurgents fleeing to India, and severely restricted their activities. New Delhi replies with denials of such support, and with arguments that the 2,500 mile Indian-East Pakistani border is so long and the terrain so difficult as to make control of it impossible. New Delhi further claims that neither it nor anyone else can tell whether Bengalis in the area are from East Pakistan or from West Bengal, that the insurgency is a mass popular uprising inside East Bengal itself, and that it is unable to monitor, much less stop, the aid given the Mukti Bahini by sympathizers in India.

7. There is some truth in both sets of claims, but Indian involvement with the Mukti Bahini is clearly greater than New Delhi publicly admits. [REDACTED] reports and direct observation by such outsiders as Western newsmen indicate that the Indian military and the paramilitary services are arming, equipping, and training -- as well as providing sanctuary to -- East Bengalis in considerable numbers. Numerous artillery duels

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and open border skirmishes between regular Indian and Pakistani military forces on the border also point to direct Indian support of border crossers. While some private aid to the insurgents in India has taken place, neither the conventional nor the guerrilla units of the Mukti Bahini could have acquired arms and munitions in any quantity except from the Indian military.

8. There are a number of reasons why New Delhi is pursuing this policy. The Mukti Bahini's cause is enormously popular in India; repressive measures against them would generate major political backlash. In terms of realpolitik, India considers its self-interest served by any weakening of its traditional foe. The Indians may think effective opposition to Islamabad's rule is greater than it actually is, and probably downgrade the actual strength of the West Pakistanis' military power in East Bengal. At each stage, they have been willing to arm more guerrillas and to abet more border crossings in the hope that this would finally begin the toppling of Punjabi military rule there.

9. In helping the insurgents, New Delhi also seeks to maintain some degree of control over them. India's state of West Bengal has long been a hotbed of some of the most virulent

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and extreme political movements in the world, ones which have already inflicted considerable damage on that state's (and India's) urban industrial economy. Heavy repressive measures have so far kept these movements under control. The Bengalis of East Pakistan are equally susceptible to such views; if such radicals ever took over control of an independent Bangla Desh, they would pose a formidable threat to Indian security. Indeed, India is worried about the political fallout in West Bengal even now. New Delhi is probably not merely giving support to East Bengalis it regards favorably, but also is trying to check the extremists.

The Refugees

10. The violent acts of both the Pakistani forces and the Mukti Bahini, the reprisals and counter-reprisals have inflicted grave damage on East Bengal and its people. Economic activity is now some 30-35 percent of what it was prior to March 1971, if that. Estimates (really guesses) say that some 200,000 or more residents of the area have been killed, and the area has seen one of the largest and most rapid population transfers in modern times. Since March 1971, over 8 million of the 76 million

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East Pakistanis have fled to India, and this movement continues.* The tide ebbs and flows; since its peak rate in June when it averaged 100,000 daily, it has rarely fallen below 20,000-30,000 a day.

11. Probably 80-90 percent of those fleeing have been Hindus. It may be that the refugee flow into India will stop only when nearly all the Hindus have finally crossed the border. Some 6 million plus have already left Pakistan; the remaining 3-4 million may not be far behind. Depending on events in the area, this could occur even by the end of the year. Moreover, if East Pakistan suffers severe food shortages in the next few months, the Hindus may be joined by additional millions of Muslims.

12. Why this incredible movement of people? There are a number of reasons, but many if not most of the Hindus fled for fear of their lives. At the beginning of the civil war, General Tikka Khan -- then the Governor and Martial Law Administrator -- apparently calculated that he could intimidate his recalcitrant

* *These are Indian statistics, but they are generally corroborated by outside observers, including those from the UN. In addition, the Indian government has appropriated funds to take care of this number. The Pakistanis on the other hand claim the figures are highly exaggerated, and say the total is closer to 2 million. In the following, we assume, on the basis of the best evidence now available, that the Indian figures are more likely the correct ones.*

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province into quick submission. Troops mostly from the West Pakistani Punjab (an area now almost 100 percent Muslim and strongly communal in outlook) appear to have made Hindus, darkly suspected anyway of being Indian spies and secessionists, their special targets. In this virulent atmosphere, [REDACTED] and resident collaborators have become accustomed to mistreating the Hindu religious minority. The top leaders in Islamabad have since tried to stop these practices, but their efforts have sometimes been unavailing.

13. The Indians have accepted the refugees and have provided them with the rudiments of subsistence. They seem prepared to continue doing so, at least for the moment. From early on, they hoped that most of the heavy costs would be borne by the wealthier outside powers. To date, these hopes have been mostly unavailing; extensions of foreign assistance for the refugees have so far amounted to some \$200 million (actual deliveries have been much smaller); the total cost to India through the next six months or so may come to five times that amount. India's comparatively charitable response probably results less from altruism than from lack of alternatives. To forcibly drive the millions of refugees back across the border might result in the death of many if not most of them. If India permitted

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retaliatory actions against Muslims in India, including expelling them into Pakistan, it would risk making its 60 million Muslims fair game for Hindu fanatics (of whom there are many). Were such to happen and get out of hand, as it probably would, the present woes of East Bengal would seem small-scale.

14. In many respects the refugee problem is the principal threat to peace in the subcontinent. The sheer numbers of refugees may burden India beyond its capacity. New Delhi might then conclude that it had no choice but to invade East Pakistan either to install a government that would let the refugees return, or to seize enough Pakistani territory to resettle them. This kind of reasoning is attractive to many Indians, and pressures for an invasion will grow if the exodus continues. But this move would probably only make a bad situation worse -- and at least some prominent Indian leaders are probably aware of this. An attack on East Pakistan, with accompanying heavy fighting, movements of large armed forces, etc., would create still another group of refugees, further disrupt transport, and destroy crops and stored food in an area where the latter is already in short supply. Similarly the seizure of a Bengali area large enough to resettle several million people

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could achieve its purpose only if many present residents were expelled and made homeless themselves.

15. Most Hindu refugees now in India would probably not want to return to East Bengal under any conditions -- though India is reluctant to acknowledge this. Hindu properties have been parceled out to others, memories of atrocities remain fresh, and Hindu-Muslim antagonisms -- although now muted amongst Bengalis by common grievances against the West Pakistanis -- remain strong.* But whether these negative factors will continue to be recognized by the Indian government is another matter.

Famine in East Bengal?

16. This is still uncertain. There is still too little hard information, too few means of finding out exactly how much food, transport -- or even how many consumers -- there will be in the next few months in East Pakistan. Taking into account war conditions, flight of farmers, neglect of cultivation, and earlier natural disasters (severe floods in August 1970, the cyclone of November of that year) the production of rice, the

* Some 5 million Hindu Bengalis left East Pakistan in the 23-year period between independence and early 1971.

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area's principal food, will of course be down, though by how much is unknown. But with the flight of 10 percent of the population, and the probable availability of emergency food shipments from abroad, the situation may not assume critical proportions.

17. This may not be the case, however, for individual families, villages, or larger food deficit areas. East Pakistan's internal transportation network has been crippled, and movement of food from ports and surplus areas will be very difficult, often impossible. Much of the former local administrative and distributive apparatus has disappeared. In addition there will be continuing obstacles of political origin. Food distribution is viewed by each side as something to be used for its own advantage, or at least as something to be denied to the enemy. Thus there are reports of some members of the Pakistani army and the Peace Committees deliberately withholding food from Hindus. Some Mukti Bahini leaders for their part have threatened to attack and sabotage emergency food distribution efforts, including those of the UN, because such will be ultimately run by and for their West Pakistani oppressors. In any event, the food situation in East Bengal is likely to remain uncertain, with the potential for a disaster of major magnitude.

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Attitudes of New Delhi and Islamabad

18. The two governments continue to be hostile, self-righteous, and emotional with respect to one another. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, who got a sweeping electoral mandate last spring, is clearly in charge in New Delhi. Elected on a platform promising a major effort to reduce unemployment and to raise living standards, she has been compelled instead to preoccupy herself with the Pakistani crisis. On the whole, she has been a force for moderation, resisting demands for all-out war from the xenophobic Jan Sangh party and other extremists. Her policies have so far received general public support.

19. The Pakistani military continues to rule all sections of the country through its strict Martial Law Administration (MLA). Whether President Yahya Khan is absolute boss or simply one of a number of generals ruling collectively cannot be established. In any event Yahya and the MLA show almost no signs of partisan disagreements or lack of resolve. Z.A. Bhutto, the politician who got most of the West Pakistani votes in the December 1970 elections, has so far not been permitted to take office. In his frustration he frequently lashes out at the MLA in private (and occasionally in public), but he will remain powerless so long as

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the military continues to rule. And in the present crisis atmosphere, there are few signs that the MLA will in fact renounce its authority.*

20. The Indians say that the West Pakistanis' acts in the east wing are not only wrong -- in that they are trying to negate through military acts the AL's electoral mandate -- but also doomed to failure. They probably see the degree of Bengali resistance as too great for Islamabad ever to stifle; in any event, they feel morally obligated to support it, even though this policy entails obvious risks. They calculate that mounting costs and continuing failures -- much of it resulting from the activities of the Indian-supported Mukti Bahini -- will eventually force the West Pakistanis to grant autonomy to the east wing and probably to abandon it entirely. The Indians also seem to feel, or hope, that these objectives may be achieved sooner rather than later, and without a full-scale Indo-Pakistani war.

21. Besides aiding the insurgents, India has also given asylum to many civilian AL leaders who were able to flee East

* *The other principal Pakistani political leader, the AL's Mujibur Rahman, remains in prison. Islamabad has announced that he is being tried in camera for treason, but has not disclosed the verdict or sentence. Even so he remains overwhelmingly the most popular politician in East Bengal.*

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Bengal, and has extended considerable aid to the Bangla Desh government-in-exile which these leaders set up in Calcutta some months ago. Most of them have proved to be uninspiring figures, with little stature or popularity in their own right. None can claim, as could Mujibur Rahman, to speak for the Bengali people. Mrs. Gandhi has so far resisted domestic political pressures to extend formal diplomatic recognition to this shadow regime. Such an act would almost certainly lead to a break in relations with Pakistan and possibly to serious hostilities as well. Were the latter to erupt anyway, or the insurgency to continue for an extended period, however, the odds favoring recognition would grow.

22. For his part, Yahya sincerely believes that Pakistan is the aggrieved party, that it is only suppressing a treasonable, secessionist movement in order to maintain the integrity of the country. Because the Indians support the Bengali insurgents, Islamabad asserts that they are the aggressors and are responsible for the suffering, bloodshed, and refugees. Even so, there are occasional rumors of a possible accommodation being reached between President Yahya and the AL. But this would probably require such major (and at the moment unlikely) concessions by Yahya -- particularly the release of Mujibur

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Rahman -- as to make it improbable. Rather, the MLA is likely to remain morally and emotionally committed to its present course.

23. That course implies more than just continued military rule. President Yahya has recently declared an amnesty for most Bengalis, removed the harsh General Tikka Khan from East Pakistan, and appointed a Bengali civilian as governor there. But the new governor is an old man not noted for skill, decisiveness, or popular appeal. He has chosen a cabinet of civilians, but his province continues under martial law and thus under army control. About 40 percent of the AL members elected in December 1970 to provincial and national assemblies have been officially cleared to take their seats when and if those bodies meet; elections to replace those proscribed are promised by the end of 1971. But the Mukti Bahini will inhibit many if not most of those who have been cleared from serving, and will also probably disrupt any new elections which might be held. On balance, we expect that Yahya's military regime will continue to seek ways of bringing on civilian constitutional rule in all parts of Pakistan, but will find the obstacles formidable, and the goal probably unattainable. Any civilian

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government established in East Pakistan under the army's aegis is likely to be more shadow than substance.

24. West Pakistan itself has experienced some difficulties in the past six months. Military spending is cutting into development and social services; stock market prices are the lowest in six years; private investment is nearly non-existent; and there are some press reports that prices are rising. Even so, West Pakistan has so far not felt the severe economic pinch and consequent political difficulties which some experts thought would result from the troubles in the east wing. Urban unemployment has not seriously increased. More than 70 percent of its workers are farmers who would not be much affected by developments in the urban, industrial sector. Except for occasional complaints by the frustrated Bhutto and some of his associates, there has not been much public unrest or dissatisfaction with the government and its policies in the west wing. Yahya's moves have so far been well accepted and probably popular there. This, like the economic situation, may change, but it does not seem likely at any time soon.

25. West Pakistan's foreign exchange position has remained considerably better than expected. Soon after the crisis broke,

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Islamabad unilaterally declared a six months moratorium on its foreign debt payments, saving itself \$60 million in foreign exchange. Its fairly large textile industry has lost much of its captive market in the east wing, but it apparently has been able to export its products elsewhere. At the same time, consumer imports have been cut sharply. Development spending in the east, of course, has been greatly curtailed if not ended entirely. Thanks to these steps, Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves have fallen only from \$254 million a year ago to \$217 million. Western powers have made no significant new extensions of foreign aid since March 1971, but there is still enough aid in the pipeline to last several more months, possibly longer. Pakistan's moratorium on foreign debt repayments expires in October and the government is seeking more liberal repayment terms from its creditors. If such are not forthcoming, Islamabad could then declare another moratorium and continue as before -- though this would further antagonize at least some of its foreign creditors.

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South Asia and the Outside Powers

26. Since March 1971, both India and Pakistan have, of course, sought outside backing for their respective positions, and have shown considerable concern with foreign responses to their moves. Neither country has taken its case to the UN in this dispute, probably in part because neither would be likely to get the strong endorsement of any significant group of nations there. In some cases foreign support, or lack of it, has had only marginal impact. India has been disappointed, though hardly damaged, by the support given the Pakistanis by the Arabs whom New Delhi has so long cultivated and endorsed in their dispute with Israel. Of far greater consequence has been India's failure to get all Pakistan's principal sources of economic aid to suspend their assistance pending a political solution in East Bengal. But the two South Asian countries have concentrated most of their efforts in seeking the backing, variously, of the US, the USSR, and China.

a. China

27. Peking has not involved itself much in the current South Asian crisis, at least not openly and directly. Early on, it did send a nasty, if somewhat equivocal, note to the Indian

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government telling the latter not to interfere in the affairs of others, but it has since been generally silent on the civil war in East Bengal. So far as we know, ties with the Islamabad government remain cordial, and China's substantial economic and military aid programs with Pakistan appear to continue as before. Well before March 1971, Peking had begun to mute its normally harsh anti-Indian posture. During the past year or so it has made no polemical attacks on Mrs. Gandhi, and has apparently ceased its propaganda support of the small tribal insurgencies in northeastern India. Indeed, there are numerous rumors in India that major moves in the direction of a detente with Peking are in the offing.

28. In any case, China remains an important factor in both Islamabad and New Delhi; the contingency of a joint Pakistani-Chinese attack on it remains a principal Indian bugaboo. This has been even more the case since the Indians learned of Mr. Kissinger's trip from Pakistan to Peking and of President Nixon's impending trip to China. Ever suspicious and prone to fear the worst, many in India surmise that they face not merely the coordinated hostility of their two traditional enemies, but fear that both will have the backing of the US. We continue to estimate that the Chinese probably would not join in an Indo-

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Pakistani conflict -- though in certain circumstances they might engage in such threatening gestures as maneuvering troops near the Chinese-Indian border. We also believe that the Indians themselves probably do not consider the Chinese to be an actual imminent threat. Nonetheless, they are uneasy, and continue to seek ways both of strengthening themselves militarily and of finding supporters against a putative US-China-Pakistan coalition against them.

b. The USSR

29. These fears have been a major factor in India's development of even closer ties with the USSR. Moscow has not backed India consistently and uncritically since the Bengali crisis erupted. It has continued deliveries under its economic aid program to Pakistan, and [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] But more than any of the other great powers, the USSR has lined up with India since March 1971; in New Delhi's eyes it remains a bastion against any threat, real or imagined, to an India isolated from or hostile to the other principal powers. The Friendship Treaty of August 1971 further cements and formalizes Indo-Soviet ties. It reaffirms mutual friendship, incorporates

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promises not to assist one another's enemies in case of an attack by a third party, and agrees to mutual "consultation" in the event of such an attack or a threat of one. How much enhanced influence or "control", if any -- say through secret understandings -- this treaty actually gives the Russians over the Indians in foreign policy matters is still unclear. At the very least it provides some satisfaction to the Soviets in formalizing their present satisfactory position in India. It appears likely that they approve and support the present lines of Indian policy, and that they will continue their efforts to prevent New Delhi from heating up the situation and particularly from launching an all-out war.

30. The treaty has already had a considerable impact on both the Indians and the Pakistanis. In what can be construed as the first fruits of "consultation", India affirmed, in a joint statement of the Indian and Soviet Foreign Ministers a few days after the treaty was signed, that "there can be no military solution and considered that urgent steps be taken in East Pakistan for achievement of a political solution". Whether this implies a permanent renunciation of Indian use of force in East Bengal as well as a condemnation of Pakistan's acts there remains to be established. However, a later reference in the joint statement to

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the settling of international problems by peaceful negotiations does point in that direction.*

31. At least up to now, the treaty has served as a stabilizing factor, muting the militancy which had previously raised its voice throughout much of India. Hawks have found it more difficult to get the government to listen to their demands for forceful action against Pakistan, or to attract much of a popular following. Over time, the treaty may have wider ranging consequences in other areas. It is still too early to tell, however, whether the treaty might lead to greater Indo-Soviet cooperation in military or other matters.

32. For their part, the Pakistani leaders will probably find this new formalized relationship an inhibition against launching an attack on India, and against assuming they will get very much assistance from the Chinese in the event of a war. Soviet efforts to promote restraint and avoid an Indo-Pakistani war will probably continue, and may contribute to keeping

* *Conversely it can be argued that Mrs. Gandhi might feel that with open Soviet backing she can now adopt far more risky policies than she has in the past. To date, nothing in the behavior of the Indian government tends to confirm such a view, even though its leaders insist that their freedom of action has been limited not at all by the treaty.*

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the situation under control. But the USSR's leverage, like those of all the great powers with respect to South Asia, is not limitless, and developments could bring on major hostilities despite all attempts to forestall them.

c. The United States

33. Efforts to be even-handed with respect to these two moralistic South Asian antagonists have always been difficult at best. India has been greatly angered by US policies since Pakistan's troubles began, and leaders in New Delhi claim that relations between the two countries are now worse than at any time in the past. US decisions, which have had more symbolic than substantive impact on developments -- particularly the continued shipments of small quantities of military equipment -- have roused extremely strong Indian ire. The Pakistani government has, of course, been pleased by such acts, and it has been accommodating and helpful to the US in a number of ways. Nonetheless there is probably wariness in Islamabad over the future course of US South Asian policies (particularly in light of Congressional and press criticisms of them), and concern to maintain independence in basic decision making.

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34. Overall, it is likely that the leaders of both India and Pakistan consider that the US, in the last analysis, will play a comparatively limited role with respect to the subcontinent, whatever the psychological impact of US policies. US military involvement in the area seems to them out of the question. US military aid programs, quite large and important until 1965, have been almost completely terminated. Nor are India and Pakistan as critically dependent as they were a few years ago on US and other Western financial aid for economic health and development.* This is not to say that either has become prosperous, or that the permanence of this independence is assured.

35. But especially in the case of India, those grievous trade deficits which had to be closed by generous outside financial aid have been rectified, at least temporarily. Thus, in 1967 India had a trade gap of over a billion dollars (imports of \$2 billion and exports only half of that). This gap was covered by foreign aid, about half from the US, which

* *Both still need and receive US food aid in substantial quantities. With war conditions in East Pakistan and millions of refugees throughout Bengal, these needs will increase substantially. But this is generally referred to as "humanitarian" and not generally believed likely to be cut off in any circumstances. US economic and military aid programs were stopped during the 1965 Indo-Pakistani war, but food shipments continued.*

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assured what economic development there was. But in the most recent Indian fiscal year, exports and imports were nearly in balance. India, of course, still receives foreign non-food aid, but uses more than half of what it gets merely to repay the debts incurred from previous external assistance programs.* Were India now to be faced with the threat of denial of further aid from the US or other Western powers, it would, of course, be seriously concerned. It could, in extremis, declare a temporary moratorium or even default on debts previously incurred, and would probably be able to get along without suffering major calamity, though additional hardships would be felt by some sectors of the population.

36. In some ways the Pakistanis are already going through this process. As noted above, Pakistan, with no important new extensions of economic assistance since March 1971, has declared a moratorium on repayments of foreign debts and is drawing on aid already in the pipeline. The economy of West Pakistan is

* *These debts are now very large for both India and Pakistan, as are the annual debt servicing payments. In 1969, India's indebtedness to Western economic aid donors was over \$9 billion, and debt servicing was over \$500 million. In Pakistan's case the figures were \$4 billion and \$150 million, respectively. All have since risen.*

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not doing badly even with the shambles in the east wing. Particularly with a diminished foreign debt burden, it could probably continue to survive, albeit considerably less comfortably, without major outside help for some time. Accordingly, it, like India, would probably be able to resist such specific pressures as threats to terminate aid programs.

37. This is not to say that either India or Pakistan has lost interest in seeking US assistance, economic or political. They, of course, do need it, do value it highly, and will continue to seek not only economic aid but as much political support from the US as they can get. They will also remain quite concerned about the possibility of US aid programs -- military, economic, or whatever -- which might be provided to the other. But at the same time, US influence over both states has diminished over the past several years. This is not to say that, in certain circumstances, India and Pakistan might not be receptive to the idea of mediation by the US as the great power least committed to one side or the other.

Major Hostilities?

38. To date the factors working to restrain the two powers from fighting one another have been stronger than those impelling

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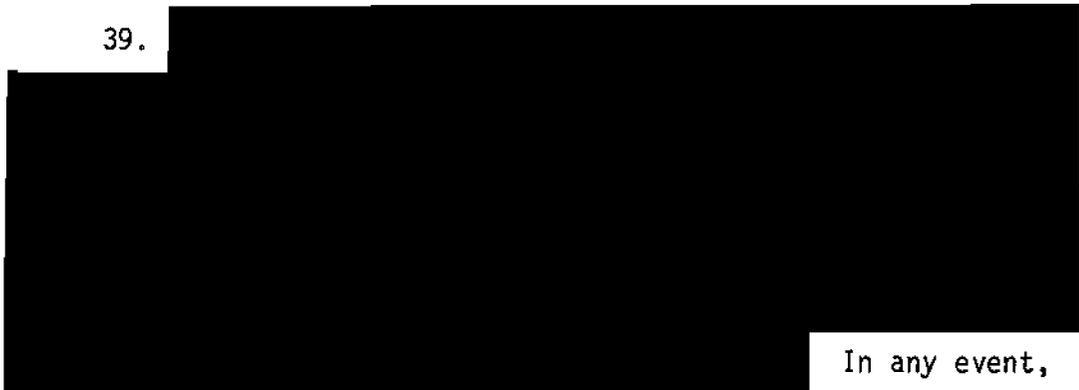
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them into a major conflict. Whether and how long this will continue is basically unpredictable. A war could erupt, perhaps with little or no warning.



Local army commanders in East Pakistan have already sought (and have been denied) permission to attack and destroy nearby guerrilla bases in India. Were some field commanders to disobey orders and cross the border in force, a big explosion might become unavoidable.

39.



In any event, delusions held by the two hostile parties encourage dangerous risk-taking, and moves taken by either -- either accidentally or by design -- could set off major fighting:

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a. *Accident.* Perhaps "stumbling into war" or "inadvertent escalation" are more appropriate terms. Miscalculation and self-deception might play a role here, but so would the vagaries of chance. With relations as volatile as they are, such incidents as infiltration of guerrillas into Kashmir by the Pakistanis, or of fairly large Mukti Bahini conventional military units into East Bengal by the Indians could snowball into all-out hostilities -- though neither party intended this when it began the operation.

b. *Specific Decision.* There is also the danger that the top leaders of either India or Pakistan will decide that the situation had so deteriorated that a full-scale war is the preferable alternative, particularly if begun with a pre-emptive strike. A decision to do so would, of course, be secretly arrived at and, given the high state of preparedness and readiness of both parties, either one might be able to achieve a tactical surprise in the event of an initial attack.

40. For example, either side might come to believe an attack by the other was imminent, and decide to anticipate it. Or Islamabad might, after a considerable period of time, find itself bogged down in an endless, costly, unwinnable guerrilla

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war. The prideful, honor-conscious generals in charge of Pakistan, faced with the humiliation of defeat, might then decide to mount a sudden assault on India. They would probably realize that the odds were against victory, but might simply hope for luck and perhaps -- if worst came to worst -- for great power intervention to provide a face-saving means of extrication.

41. If either decides deliberately to initiate hostilities, it is somewhat more likely to be New Delhi which might convince itself that a war would be preferable to letting the situation drift. The immediate danger of an attack by India seems to have receded for the moment, but tensions are likely to arise again, as will the opportunities for an Indian assault. Indian military movements into East Bengal would be facilitated after the end of the monsoon season in October or November; New Delhi's fear of moves by the Chinese would be lessened by the heavy snows in the Himalayan mountain passes from January until June.

42. How long a war would last and which side, if either, would win it, would depend on many unknown factors including luck and outside diplomatic, political, and military intervention. The heaviest fighting would probably, as in 1965, be on the border areas between West Pakistan and India, though this

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time the Indians would attempt to seize part or all of East Pakistan as well. Barring extreme incompetence or some very bad breaks, the Indians by sheer weight of numbers would continue to be heavy favorites in any war fought to a final conclusion with Pakistan alone.* But decisive victory in any such all-out conflict would likely take weeks or months to achieve if it were achieved at all, and the aftermath for both parties in human and economic terms would be fearsome.

Denouement?

43. The Indo-Pakistani crisis shows no signs of going away, much less of being settled. Its resolution -- perhaps far in the distance -- might be accomplished in one of several ways including:

a. A war, with India expelling the West Pakistanis from Bengal and setting up an independent, but Indian-influenced Bangla Desh. This might be accompanied by a return of most refugees, or

* *The Indian army has some 1,100,000 soldiers, Pakistan about 300,000. Our knowledge of current deployment of the Indian army is less than complete, but there are almost certainly enough troops in position to cope with the situation in all likely areas of fighting.*

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by an agreed population transfer wherein several million West Bengal Muslims go to the new state to compensate for the Hindus who had come to India.

b. A war on both fronts which no one wins, followed by a cease-fire with Indian and Pakistani forces -- along with UN observers -- occupying parts of East Bengal as well as areas on the Western front. This might be followed by some kind of temporary solution facilitated by one or more of the great powers, say working through the UN.

c. A slow defusing and de-escalation following the success of conciliatory West Pakistani efforts in East Bengal. The East and West Pakistanis come to some kind of mutual accommodation. The insurgency stops as does the refugee flow. Some of those who fled to India (principally the Muslims) go home and India grudgingly accepts the remainder, though at heavy cost.

d. The insurgency continues, possibly for years. The West Pakistanis become increasingly war weary and economically hard-pressed, and eventually depart.

e. The insurgency continues, but the Bengalis lose heart and West Pakistani hegemony is restored.

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44. There are, of course, other possible scenarios. If war is avoided, we believe the outcome described in subparagraph d. above would be most likely, though the manner and timing of West Pakistan's departure and the establishment of an independent Bangla Desh cannot now be forecast. In any case, the lot of the Bengali people, already bad enough, is likely to deteriorate even more. The odds are against any outcome which would soon alleviate the hardships and sufferings which have been and are yet to be inflicted on them. Rather, Bengal will remain a serious problem for India, Pakistan and the world at large. Gravely overcrowded, devoid of natural resources, wracked with violence, its people will probably become even more prone to extremism and acts of desperation than they now are -- and this in turn will call forth more repressive measures by the governments in charge.

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