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June 9, 2005

NND 969039
By *ST/USA* Date *4/3/98*



DEPARTMENT OF STATE
INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

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12/11/71
December 11, 1971

To: The Secretary

From: S/PC - William I. Cargo *WIC*

NODIS REVIEW	
Cat. A	- Caption removed; transferred to O/FADRC
Cat. E	- Transferred to O/FADRC with additional access controlled by S/S
Cat. C	- Caption and summary retained by S/S
Reviewed by:	<i>Acem</i>
Date:	<i>8/8 1978</i>

The Indo-Pakistan Conflict -- East and West

The East

It is not a new truth to note that the massive use of military force by Pakistanis against the people of East Pakistan, begun on March 25, was a colossal blunder and miscalculation.

The disastrous effect of this initial blunder was compounded by the unwillingness or inability of the Yahya government to move rapidly to political reconciliation with the East Pakistan leaders.

The drastic weakening in Pakistan's real power position vis-a-vis India implicit in these events provided India an opportunity unequalled in the continuing confrontation of these two countries. Given the deep-seated suspicion, fear, and hostility that has dominated the relations of India and Pakistan, it may have been inevitable that, despite our best efforts, India would conclude that military operations against Pakistan were an acceptable or welcome means of exploiting the significant shift in the Indo-Pakistan power balance brought about by Pakistan's inept policies in the East. Thus the Indian resort to war in East Pakistan was almost certainly dictated by Indian concerns that Pakistan might, by 11th hour political accommodation, escape the worst consequences of its initial blunder.

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However that may be, it is clear that India, which from the beginning had trained, equipped, and supported the Mukhti Bahini forces, slammed the door on future peaceful prospects of settlement by undertaking full-scale war in East Pakistan -- a war designed to destroy the Pakistani forces in the East and to establish a state of Bangla Desh.

Major military operations in East Pakistan are likely to be completed by India in a time frame of a few days to two or three weeks, the principal variable being the durability of a will to resist on the part of West Pakistani forces whose position is hopeless from a military point of view. Mrs. Gandhi has made clear that the UN ceasefire effort will not affect the course of these events in East Pakistan. Nor are other external forces likely to do so. As long as the Indians maintain their determination to pursue the war in the East to total defeat or surrender of the opposing forces, the West Pakistanis can do nothing to retrieve the situation and the Chinese seem unlikely to make a move with respect to East Pakistan.

We will thus be shortly confronted with the reality of a new State of Bangla Desh in East Pakistan and the complete elimination of West Pakistani power and influence there. The enormous humanitarian problems arising from these developments are being urgently addressed.

On the political side, our purpose should be to establish a normal and positive relationship with the Bangla Desh Government. The nature and timing of specific steps, including recognition, will have to be related to military and political developments and to the problem of assuring the fullest protection possible to persons and property. On the latter point, Indian troops will have to accept some considerable responsibility initially. The UN formula of ceasefire and withdrawal is no longer valid in the East. As the Indian troops complete their military campaign, their

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continued presence in East Pakistan for a period of time will probably be important in the general interest of public order and personal security.

The West

Still more serious problems, in terms of US interests, lie ahead in the West. Here, the Pakistani forces, unwisely in my opinion, initiated offensive air operations and, more significantly, have occupied some territory in Indian-held Kashmir and in the approaches to Kashmir. This posture by the Pakistanis will afford the Indians added opportunities and justifications for doing what intelligence evidence now suggests the Indians wish to do -- to move effectively to cripple Pakistan's armed forces. Destruction of Pakistan's air and armor are likely to be prime objectives.

The Indian purpose is not likely to be long-term occupation of West Pakistan or even of large portions of it, although some Indian leaders would like, in my opinion, to take over Azad Kashmir, held by Pakistan since partition, and to achieve some other "line straightening", as the Indians call it, along the borders. Such a neutralization of Pakistan's military capability would offer a high ground position to India for further steps to fragment or otherwise weaken or destroy Pakistan as a political entity and a significant power element in South Asia.

There is little question that such a course of events in West Pakistan would be contrary to important, although not vital, US interests. An argument can be made that India is the dominant power in South Asia, that it would be "natural" for Indian power to exclude any other power center from the Indian subcontinent, and that we should fall in line with this natural evolution. Natural or not, total Indian dominance of the subcontinent, I believe, is likely to be harmful to our interests.

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We have a positive interest in the continuation of a power balance in the Indian subcontinent which, although not power equivalence between India and Pakistan, will include a significant deterrent capability on the part of Pakistan. The effective elimination of Pakistan as any kind of countervailing force to India, and the emergence of India, with the support of the Soviet Union, as the totally dominant power in the subcontinent would set the stage for Indian and Soviet exploitation of this situation. An enhanced Soviet position in India and the Indian Ocean; Indian pressures on her smaller neighbors -- Ceylon, Nepal, Burma, and Thailand; added pressures on Iran for accommodation with the Soviet Union; more vigorous and effective Indian diplomacy directed against US policy efforts; greatly enlarged Chinese influence in Pakistan -- could be some of the results.

If the War in the West is pressed by India, what are the prospects that Pakistan could avert major defeat? While a professional military judgment of this is required, my own view is that these prospects are not at all bright. This is for a variety of reasons including India's larger air and ground forces; India's great manpower advantage for military and war-related purposes; India's higher industrialization, including an overwhelming advantage in military production and resupply; the losses already sustained by Pakistan, including fuel stores; and the uncertainties of fuel resupply.

Thus, full-scale war in the West risks gross weakening or destruction of Pakistan's armed forces.

How might this prospect be affected by the support or intervention of outside powers? Here there are great areas of uncertainty for Pakistan. Would needed supplies and equipment be forthcoming? And if so, could they be received in Pakistan and be moved to battle areas in a timely fashion? Would assistance to Pakistan be offset or more than offset by Soviet assistance to India?

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These and other such largely unanswerable questions, taken together with Pakistan's weak position in the West at the present time, suggest that Pakistan should strongly opt for a ceasefire in the West and a mutual withdrawal to previous borders and lines. The risks of continued hostilities against India in the West should be considered unacceptable by Pakistan if the ceasefire and mutual withdrawal alternative can be made operable.

If a ceasefire is to be achieved in the West, it will be essential for Pakistan to be ready to accept mutual withdrawal in the West to previous borders and lines. The critical area here is Kashmir, where Pakistan has made advances and controls territory in the Indian parts of Kashmir. The Indians are highly emotional about Kashmir and would like to take over the areas of Kashmir (Azad Kashmir) held by Pakistan since the initial conflict over Kashmir. While the Indians might be deflected from pursuing this expansionist effort, I can not imagine they will cease hostilities in the West without specific agreement that Pakistan forces will completely withdraw from the Kashmir areas and other Indian territory they have recently occupied. Pakistani operations in Kashmir are an incentive and an excuse for India to escalate the level of hostilities in the West.

An early ceasefire and mutual withdrawal in the West is also the course most responsive to American interests. Assuming as appears likely an early conclusion of the War in the East, an early ceasefire in the West will best permit the United States to maintain, establish, or re-establish productive relations with all three entities in the subcontinent: Pakistan, Bangla Desh, and India. With economic and military assistance by the United States and China, Pakistan should be able to maintain a defense posture which, while not a threat to India, will be a credible deterrent to India, and thus a factor for stability in the subcontinent. The Chinese, assessing their own power relationships with the USSR and India, can be

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expected to provide major assistance to Pakistan in the post ceasefire years.

If ceasefire efforts in the West fail, and all-out war is prosecuted by India, we will be faced with the grave issue of whether to provide major military support for Pakistan. Among the large boulders on this rocky road are: the uncertain requirements and uncertain success of such an effort, the doubtful political support in the United States, the risks of Soviet confrontation and the fall-out of this on SALT and other major efforts in our Soviet policy, and the certainty of long-term alienation of India. My own feeling is that these costs are likely to be excessive in relation to the U.S. interests designed to be protected.

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