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INTELLIGENCE NOTE

BUREAU OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH

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BANGLA DESH LEADERSHIP

The composition of the future government of Bangla Desh will depend largely on the presence or absence of Sheikh Mujib. If he is released from jail and allowed to head the government, its membership will probably be drawn almost exclusively from the Awami League, and it will probably be similar though not identical with the present Bangla Desh Cabinet, which was established in Calcutta during the Civil war. If Mujib is not available, the government is likely to be a coalition of Awami Leaguers and moderate leftists from the Bangla Desh Consultative Committee organized about four months ago, and, quite possibly, prominent Mukhti Bahini commanders.

The Awami League. Sheikh Mujib molded the character of the Awami League. He described himself as a British-style socialist, as a moderate on everything but autonomy for East Bengal, and surrounded himself with men of similar minds. The "inner circle" of the Awami League -- the men who make up the Bangla Desh cabinet -- are all law-trained, and have been successful both as lawyers and as politicians. They have all been long-

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active in the Awami League, have all held various elective offices, and many of them have been in jail for political activities. Their main point of contact was loyalty to Sheikh Mujib. While known to political professionals and possessing solid political bases in their home areas, none of them had a province-wide image or following prior to the civil war. Although all of them are classifiable as moderate socialists, Tajuddin Ahmed, the General Secretary of the Awami League and Bangla Desh Prime Minister, is probably the farthest to the left, while Khondkar Mushtaque Ahmed, the Vice President of the Awami League and Bangla Desh Foreign Minister, is the farthest to the right. Tajuddin Ahmed, because of his duties as General Secretary, has had the most extensive experience as an administrator, but none of them is a professional manager. Both in the Awami League and in the more recent Bangla Desh cabinet, this group has depended on advisers from the universities and business world to provide practical guidance, while the group supplied political expertise.

In the absence of Sheikh Mujib and under the pressure of a civil war, a number of divisions appeared within the Awami League and the Bangla Desh cabinet, notably that between the Tajuddin Ahmed and Mushtaque Ahmed factions. The struggle for Bangla Desh, however, kept the party united and the differences hidden. Under the more intense strains of setting up a new government, the factions could split, weakening the overall influence of the Awami League. The return of Sheikh Mujib,

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however, would be enough to reduce the friction and reunite the factions, at least for the short term.

The Bangla Desh Consultative Committee. Comprised of the Bangla Desh cabinet plus the political leaders of Soviet-oriented leftist parties, the Committee has been an Indian-sponsored attempt to give the Bangla Desh movement a wider base. The small membership of these leftist parties, because of their activist bent, played a disproportionate role in many of the insurgent activities. In a postwar situation the Soviet Union may well apply pressure to include these leftists in the eventual government. The Indians might also see advantage in promoting a solid front against radical leftist organizations. The leftist members -- Muzaffar Ahmed of the pro-Soviet National Awami Party, aging peasant leader Maulana Bhashani, Hindu leftist Monorajan Dhar, and old-line Communist Mani Singh -- have little enough popular support, however, and the Awami League would still be likely to dominate a coalition government.

The Mukhti Bahini (MB). The MB Sector Commanders and Commander-in-Chief Col. Osmani are all ex-Pakistan Army men. The question to be answered is their willingness to adhere to the "British Raj" tradition wherein the military stays strictly out of politics. They are the conquering heroes (only slightly diminished by the Indian Army role), have been fighting over the

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long term in East Bengal while the Bangla Desh cabinet remained safely in Calcutta, command the loyalty of a fairly well-armed and proven fighting force, and will probably be watching the political development of Bangla Desh with close attention. Their acquiescence and support will be central to a successful transition from war to a state of law and order, and they may well be invited into the government in some role to ensure their cooperation. If so, they will exercise a moderate rightist influence. Their sub-commanders, however, while presumably loyal, are said to be much more leftist-oriented and probably have the greatest degree of local influence. If new elections are held promptly, as has been announced, the participation of these local area commanders could well move Bangla Desh to the left.

INR/Near East and South Asia
 Director : Curtis F. Jones
 Analyst : David C. McGaffey
 Ext. : 21382
 Released by: *RCM*

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