

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

February 2, 1972

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

I was very pleased to have your message conveying your impressions of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and your thoughts on the recognition of Bangladesh. Your people have kept us up to date on your government's views since your letter was written, and I believe you know generally how our thinking is evolving.

Mujib's return to Dacca has had a significant impact on the situation in the East. We share your view that it is in our interest to bolster his hand against extremists. We are examining our own position on recognition but will want to defer any decision until we have a clearer picture of how it will relate to the broader situation in South Asia.

Principally, we must consider how our recognition will affect a number of basic factors in the subcontinent, including the relationship between the new regime in Dacca and India; the future relationship between Islamabad and its former Eastern wing; and the question of how the Indo-Pakistani issues growing out of the war will be settled.

When we talked with President Bhutto here in December, we found him to be quite realistic about the situation in the East. Nonetheless, he said he would need a little time to see what basis remained for a future relationship with Dacca and he hoped that we would bear this in mind in our own actions. The situation has now changed considerably with Mujib's return and the statements he has made, and we are, of course, taking this into account in our continuing examination of the recognition question and other issues. But we will not want to complicate unduly any progress toward an understanding which they might achieve.

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PA/HO, Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
June 9, 2005

We are most interested in keeping in close touch with you on your talks with Bhutto, and you can be sure that we will keep you advised on our own talks with him and on our thinking as it develops.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Richard Nixon".

The Right Honorable
Edward Heath, M. B. E., M. P.
Prime Minister
London

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