

DECLASSIFIED
PA/HO, Department of State
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March 6, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: Recognition of Bangladesh

I believe we should now move toward recognition of Bangladesh. I suggest that we announce the decision about March 25. This would be about two weeks after Indian troops are expected to be withdrawn (March 12). This would also give us time to notify the Chinese and Bhutto of our decision well before we inform Bangladesh authorities.

You will recall that President Bhutto had earlier encouraged us to move toward recognition. He continues to feel that early recognition on our part would be in our mutual interest, suggesting however that our action await withdrawal of Indian forces from Bangladesh. The press reports that Mrs. Gandhi this week publicly promised that all Indian forces would leave Bangladesh by March 12. This withdrawal timetable presumably is designed to pave the way for Mrs. Gandhi's visit to Dacca on March 17.

Our basic objective in South Asia is stable independence for the countries in the area. We want to create conditions which will help prevent any single power (i.e., India) from controlling its neighbors and also prevent any external power, such as the Soviets, from establishing a position of hegemony. Following early Indian recognition of Bangladesh, more than 40 countries have also recognized, including the Soviets, British, French, Japanese, Australians, Canadians, and Indonesians. Among these, the Indians and Soviets are playing a particularly active role as manifested by Mujib's visit to Moscow this week and by large scale Indian economic assistance and the exchange of visits between Mujib and Mrs. Gandhi.

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We believe that Mujib is well disposed toward the United States and would strongly welcome U. S. recognition as an opportunity to expand his options and counteract excessive reliance on either the Soviets or the Indians. We believe the time is ripe and delay could erode this favorable sentiment and also jeopardize the official American presence in Dacca, where the status of our Consulate General has recently been questioned by Bangladesh authorities.

If you agree to move toward recognition about March 25, subject to confirmation that Indian forces have actually withdrawn, I propose that we send the following messages to Chou En-lai and Bhutto informing them of our intentions.


William P. Rogers

Attachments:

1. Proposed Message to Chou En-lai.
2. Proposed Message to Bhutto.

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