

November 11, 1971

ANALYTICAL SUMMARY

Contingency Paper -- Indo-Pakistan Hostilities

The following summarizes and reviews the current state of our contingency planning for the possible outbreak of hostilities between India and Pakistan.

I. The Prospects (pp. 1-2)

U. S. actions in the event of another Indo-Pak war would in part be conditioned by the circumstances in which the hostilities broke out. The most likely scenarios are:

--An Indian military attack on Pakistan or direct Indian support for a major insurgent effort to seize and hold a portion of East Pakistan.

--A gradual process of escalation involving incidents along the East Pakistan-India border with confusion as to who is most at fault.

--Conceivably but less likely, the Pakistanis initiate hostilities by attacking guerrilla sanctuaries in India and/or Indian military support bases.

[-- West Pakistanis, either to divert Indian attention or to demonstrate Indian vulnerability, attempt to stir up trouble in India-held Kashmir and/or along the Kashmir cease-fire line. As in 1965, the situation rapidly escalates to full scale hostilities. The State paper does not include this possibility but it seems real enough to be considered since from a Pak point of view Kashmir is India's most vulnerable point.]

Hostilities would probably initially involve only India and Pakistan. However, there is real danger that (1) China would get involved by provoking border incidents along the Indian Himalayan frontier in order

to ease pressure on Pakistan; and (2) the Soviet Union would aid India, short of direct military intervention.

II. U. S. Interests (p. 3)

Should war break out between India and Pakistan it would be in the U. S. interest that:

--the hostilities not expand to include third parties, particularly China (and the Soviets).

--to see that hostilities are not protracted since a prolonged war could do profound damage to the political, economic and social fabric of India and Pakistan.

Thus, the paper concludes, U. S. interests would be best served by an early end to the conflict and by negotiations among all parties leading to a withdrawal of Indian troops and an overall political settlement.

III. Options in the Event of Hostilities (pp. 3-16)

The U. S. , according to the paper, could pursue one of the following three broad strategies in the event of hostilities between India and Pakistan:

A. Passive International Role (pp. 4-6): The U. S. would assume a "relatively passive" (or inactive) posture indicating our basic neutrality. Such a role might be particularly appropriate in circumstances where (a) responsibility for the outbreak of hostilities was unclear, (b) the likelihood of Chinese involvement was judged to be small and (c) the conflict appeared likely to be of short duration. In pursuance of this strategy, we would:

--adopt a public position that we did not intend to become directly involved and would not provide assistance to either side;

- support but not initiate efforts in the Security Council to end hostilities and achieve a negotiated settlement;
- suspension of all economic and military aid to both sides;
- offer good offices to both Yahya and Mrs. Gandhi to arrange negotiations for a political settlement;
- consult closely with Soviets and British;
- caution the Chinese and Soviets against involvement (presumably only if they seemed to be heading in that direction).

The argument for is that U. S. involvement would be at a minimum and we would maintain maximum flexibility as events unfolded. Also, an interim relationship with both India and Pakistan would be preserved. (As long as the Chinese stayed out and refrained from adopting a menacing posture toward India, there would be a hope for maintaining our own relationship with them.)

The arguments against are that (1) we would risk serious damage to our interests if the conflict were protracted. Indian dependence on the Soviets and Pakistani dependence on the Chinese could be increased without any significant gain for the U. S. ; (2) Cautioning the Chinese could damage Sino-American relations; and (3) neutrality in general could appear as de facto US opposition to the aggrieved party.

B. Military Support (pp. 6-10): At the other extreme would be a decision to support one side with military assistance. We have limited commitments to both which they might seek to invoke (through SEATO and CENTO with Pakistan and through the 1963 Air Defense Agreement with India) -- although there are no provisions for automatic U. S. involvement and these are, practically speaking, dead letters.

1. To Pakistan. (pp. 6-8) In the event of an Indian attack on Pakistan, the Paks might well turn to us as they did in 1965. Short of providing U. S. combat personnel, we could:

- develop an emergency military supply program;
- terminate all U.S. programs in India;
- take the lead in mobilizing international pressure on India to halt its intervention;
- support a Security Council resolution condemning India.

The argument for is we would be supporting Pakistan's national unity, diminishing Chinese influence (and marginally improve Sino-American ties), and strengthening our position elsewhere in the Muslim world.

The argument against is that U.S. interests in and relations with India would be damaged and the Soviets would gain ground there. Moreover, our actions would probably have little effect on the military outcome of the conflict and there would be no basis left for a conciliatory U.S. role.

2. To India. (pp. 8-10) If India were not the initiator of hostilities, this contingency could arise. If China were to intervene massively on Pakistan's side and seemed to threaten India in a major way we might want to consider providing military assistance to India. Short of providing combat personnel the U.S. might:

- offer to consult with India under the 1963 Air Defense Agreement;
- develop an emergency military assistance program focussed primarily on meeting the Chinese threat;
- share intelligence on Chinese military deployments;
- coordinate with the British and the Soviets on additional assistance measures.

The argument for is that it would be consistent with our overall Asian policy of assisting states threatened by external aggression and would

at the expense of the Soviets create a firm basis for a future close relationship with India and with the possible future state of Bangla Desh.

The argument against is that very severe strains would be created in our relations with Pakistan and, more importantly, with China. There would also be the risk of creeping involvement leading to a more extensive commitment involving a direct U. S. confrontation with outside powers (China).

C. Political Intervention (pp. 10-16): Going beyond assuming a relatively neutral political posture (Option A) and short of intervening with military assistance to one side (Option B), we could intervene politically. The main purpose of an activist political role would be to first localize the hostilities and then work for a settlement which would remove the basic causes of the fighting.

Immediately upon the outbreak of war we could:

--call for a UN Security Council meeting and support a demand for an immediate cease-fire and negotiations between the parties;

--support any UN direct initiative in Delhi and Islamabad;

--support UN peace-keeping efforts;

--send Presidential messages to Yahya and Mrs. Gandhi calling for an end to the fighting and a negotiated settlement; notify the parties of aid suspension;

--engage in immediate talks with the Soviets and British on ways to end the hostilities;

--privately and publicly urge restraint on the Chinese (and if possible engage them also in the peace-making effort);

--explore the possibilities for an international conference to bring about (and guarantee) a political and military settlement;

--limit other countries' involvement by discouraging transfer of US equipment to Pakistan by Iran, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Tunisia, etc; [We would not pursue this if India initiated hostilities and we decided to reopen the pipeline to Pakistan.]

If hostilities have broken out because of an Indian attack or because of Indian support to the Bengali insurgents we should also:

- after carefully assessing the likelihood on a Chinese attack on India, move to terminate our residual military sales program for India;
- hold up on all shipments and licenses of military supplies destined for India;
- hold economic assistance to India in abeyance at least for the duration of the hostilities.

If the circumstances of the outbreak of hostilities were thoroughly ambiguous then we should also:

- publicly suspend military supply to both countries;
- consider suspending economic assistance to both sides;
- urge other major arms supplying countries (Soviets, Chinese, British and French) to suspend arms shipments to both sides.
- take action in the India and Pak consortia to urge international economic pressure on both.

The arguments for include:

- would provide maximum U. S. flexibility in a complex situation and maximize the use of international organizations and multi-lateral diplomacy;
- would maximize use of U. S. programs and influence to shorten hostilities and inhibit external military intervention;
- would contribute directly to a realistic political settlement;
- would increase chances for U. S. to maintain relations with both India and Pakistan (and perhaps even Bangla Desh) in the aftermath of hostilities;

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- 7 -

--might create conditions in which the US and USSR (and possibly China) could cooperate fully in a common political and peace-making role.

The arguments against include:

--since the real effect of this policy would be felt on the invader (probably India), a heavy, perhaps unbearable, strain would be placed on our relations with India;

--at the same time the Paks could also feel sold out;

--might not succeed in shortening hostilities and could strain our relations with others whose involvement we are trying to discourage.

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