

The background of the image is a sepia-toned map of South Asia, specifically showing the borders of Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh. Two flags are placed on the map: the Pakistani flag (green with a white crescent and star) on the left, and the Bangladeshi flag (green with a red circle) on the right. The flags are on thin poles and appear to be standing on the map. The title and author information are overlaid on the map.

How Pakistan got divided

Major Gen. (Retd) Rao Farman Ali Khan

Reproduced By
Sani H. Panhwar (2025)

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**Dedicated to the forgotten Shaheeds
of 1971 war, who lost their lives in
defence of the integrity of Pakistan.**

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FOREWORD

What did happen to Pakistan in 1971? Was it a foreign imposed tragedy or a self-inflicted fatality? Did it result from maneuvering by external forces or it was an inner impulsion to commit suicide? Why, how and in what form East Pakistan became Bangladesh and West Pakistan began to be described as 'New' Pakistan? Two decades have passed since the tragedy occurred but the full story has not been revealed nor it is learnt how Nature's law of survival and destruction operated in 1971, and also could operate in the future. No serious efforts have been made by the people and leaders of either Wing to unravel, to measure the extent and consequences of the disaster, or to know whether it was a sudden happening or the culmination of a long period of misdirection which hastened the end, so that the new generation could benefit from the mistakes of the past. Much has been said, no doubt, during these two decades, but mostly in bits, for mudslinging, character assassination and political exploitation, or as seen from places not close enough to enable the onlooker to have a total view of the Hara-kiri committed by Pakistan!

I saw much more than many others did or could. I was witness to the tragic drama being conceived, woven and enacted, first during my brief visit to East Pakistan in 1962 and 1963 as a Lieut Colonel in the Army, and then during my unbroken stay there from the beginning of 1967 to the end of 1971 when I held important positions earlier in the Army and later in civil administration. I sometimes thought of telling the story in totality I am guilty that I did not due to many reasons.

A soldier has often been, and mistakenly, considered a callous person, a feelingless creature. A real soldier however does not fit this description. He offers his life on the battlefield, also takes lives of others, but it is not possible for him to take pleasure in these gambles or to relish their memory and narrate them as a normal writer or story teller would do. It is not possible for him to behave as an intellectual or academician, who in his zest would produce a fascinating account while remaining insensitive to the pain, depth and color of the wounds and who would take pleasure in his analysis while remaining immune to the type of personal inner torture which is the lot of a soldier. This has been my misfortune, as also of some other soldiers who were dragged in the 1971 tragedy. This was the main obstacle in narrating the true story of dismemberment of my motherland which on its birth in August 1947 was acclaimed as the world's largest Islamic state. However, some recent stories in the Press - inspired or mere concoctions - have obliged me to narrate what I saw during the five agonizing years of my stay in East Pakistan.

While making this effort, my purpose is not to falsify what others have said, nor to applaud my own role. Breakup of Pakistan is too tormenting a happening to be utilised to air one's own likes and dislikes or to put one's ownself at a higher moral ground.

When I look back, I see a host of monstrosities rising before my eyes. This is an account of events as I say them. Many others will tell the story from their point of view. The story of the elephant and six blind men is well known. Callous politicians, indifferent military rulers, ignoble personal motivations, disgraceful ease with which the entire nation was dragged to the arena of death and destruction, the helplessness of those who generated the high tide and then rode it to be swallowed by it or tossed away in the maze from where they could not emerge alive. My attempt in this treatise is to juxtapose various events and drifts, mad passions and lunatic insensitiveness, to uncover the seductive power of the wily leaders and the beguiling nature of their slogans and promises that led to Pakistan's dismemberment, followed soon by the undoing of the main actors in this heinous drama.

The delay in a way has brought certain clarity to the situation of East Pakistan. One can look at the happening in a more rational manner. Since 1971, the world has seen many military actions against dissidents and rebels. Closer to home there was the 'Golden Temple' operation against Sikhs by the Indians who had condemned our action to safeguard the integrity of our country and then had taken full advantage of our weak position due to internal strife. The Chinese action against rebel students in Beijing's Tiananmen Square proves that when military action is taken it is bound to be strong and violent. Army plans for and executes its operations to achieve complete success, whatever the cost. Recent example is army action in Yugoslavia.

The 1991 Gulf war clearly pointed out the price one pays for being isolated internationally. It also showed how vulnerable a country is when surrounded from all side by hostile forces as we were in East Pakistan. Due to failure of our foreign policy we were also as isolated Iraq was. Even our friends were unwilling or unable to help us. The power of the people has been aptly displayed in Russia. The most important lesson was that internal strife invites outside aggressors and leads to defeat. A divided nation is an easy prey to its enemies. For the safety, security, integrity and defence of a country internal cohesion is a must - the base must be solid and strong.

The interplay of political maneuvering and military situation was borne out by the 1973 Arab Israeli War where Sadaat took timely action to seek cease-fire before his 3rd Army would have been forced to surrender. Saddam could have saved the entire Muslim world from disgrace had he withdrawn from Kuwait on or before 15 March 1991.

The Muslim psyche is such that it loves heroic utterances and bloated claims. We could have easily saved the events of Dacca which culminated in surrender, if correct and timely action had been taken. The hope is that we will learn from history, or else we will be condemned to repeat the mistakes of the past. This book may be able to shed some light on this aspect.

Originally, I had not covered Hamoodur Rahman Commission Report as I thought that the report was SECRET. but recently selected portions of the Preliminary Report were published for reasons which are quite obvious. I now feel free to state what I know to be the correct and final version of 'Hamood ur Rahman Commission' Report. I am including a chapter on the Report.

The health of the nation again is not good today. The same ailment which afflicted us in 1970 is gradually eating up our edifice. There is political confrontation much beyond the acceptable level in a democratic set-up. Criticism is a right of all individuals, but it should be constructive and not destructive. What we are seeing is total collapse of moral fiber of our nation.

All this after two elections the results of neither were accepted by the opposition of the time. Both have behaved in the same manner as our leaders did in 1971. Fair elections are the only basis on which a democratic set-up is built and grows. If these are rigged and strong arm basis on which a democratic methods are used then the strongest arms will overtake.

We saw a secessionist movement in East Pakistan, we have one on hand in Sind though not as dangerous. It has to be dealt with through political means and socio-economic measures. Use of force will be counterproductive and may again provide an excuse to India to exploit the situation. We must start a process of becoming a nation. We are running Pakistan as a state through administrative measures. Building a nation requires philosophical, psychological liberal attitude, and educational measures to mould the minds of the people.

All sections of our society contributed, knowingly or otherwise to the break-up of Pakistan. The politicians, general bureaucrats, foreign policy makers, the press, the students in East Pakistan, did not play their part in a constructive manner rather they added fuel to the fire.

East Pakistan has suffered by becoming an Independent State. They are at the mercy of India. West Pakistan can become economically and militarily a strong and viable state provided we take lessons from our failures of the past. Those who have secessionist tendencies must learn from what East Pakistanis themselves call a mistake. Pakistan as a whole can and have a place of honor in the comity of nations and as a part of it each of its units shall share the pride of achievements of the whole; as individual units they will certainly be burdened by the hegemony of India.

RAO FARMAN ALI KHAN
Lahore, 1992

CHANGING PATTERN OF MUSLIM BENGAL

Bengali Babu. Bengali Jadoo and Bhooka Bengali: these three pronouncements were what we had heard about Bengal in our childhood. Bengal was reputed for its educated clerks during the British regime, almost all of them Hindu. The British had become masters of Bengal a century ahead of their sway over North West India. Hindus of Bengal made themselves available to the British the moment they entered Bengal eventually becoming its complete masters after the Battle of Plassey in 1757. For obvious reasons, the new rulers found the Hindus more reliable who opted for education under the new dispensation and provided a distinct class of office workers the East India Company, soon became famed for their studious and anti Muslim attitude as clerks. The expression Bengali Babu would thus instantly picture before one's eyes a callous, unforgiving calculating machine whose main function was to strengthen the British statecraft and depress the country's erstwhile rules, that is the Muslims.

Bengali Jadoo, too, had a peculiarity of its own, a vague, inexplicable fear even attraction of being enticed by Bengal whenever one went there from western India. We had heard that a number of persons, of course male, from western India who left for Bengal had not returned to their places. Nobody exactly knew what had happened to them; all that was said was that they knew had been entrapped by Bengal. By whom? Perhaps by the bewitching eyes of the Bengali women, or by the beauty of its land, but most thought it to be work of Bengali sorcerers.

Bengal was also known to have rich alluvial soil subjected to frequent floods almost on yearly basis. The natural consequence was chronic form of famine from times immemorial. Birth rate, too, was very high, and combined with the devastating floods. It made Bengal a land of starving multitudes. Bengalis, mostly Muslims, would be forced to leave their homeland and to roam about too far off places in search of food. This is how the expression Bhooka Bengali became current.

The Bengalis thus had come to be associated with three distinct, somewhat contradictory, qualities of being studious (Babu), bewitching (Jadoogars) and starving (Bhooka). These vague impressions lingered on in the remote recesses of my mind., nourishing a peculiar longing to have a glimpse of the land and its people.

It was in March, 1944, that I could come in contact with this land of fairy tales. I was commissioned in the Army in September 1943 four years after the outbreak of the Second World War - and after undergoing extensive training in jungle warfare was asked to join my unit. 7 Field Regiment Artillery, located on Ramree Island off the coast of Burma, we had to pass through Calcutta on our way to Akyab and then on to the

Ramree Island. We stayed in Calcutta for about a week, enabling me to see what still haunts me.

Calcutta presented a horrible spectacle. The scars of the devastating famine of 1942 were still visible. Filth heaps were found all over the places with countless human skeletons - old men, women and children sitting on them were vultures, picking out bits of food thrown away by the affluent foreigners. Dust laden trams were rickety in their movement and raised a lot of noise. The whole atmosphere was awfully loathsome and I could, from what I saw in March 1944, form an idea how extensive and devastating had been the toll on life that the famine had taken. Added to the horrors of famine was the sickening unconcern for life that was displayed by the British and American troops passing through Calcutta. They had plenty of money to throw about which they did as probably the result of an overpowering passion for enjoyment before possible death. The contrast of attitudes and possessions was appalling.

From Calcutta we went to Comilla by train, a long arduous journey. There was no bridge over Jamuna, and we had to cross the river in a motor boat which took almost six hours. The train journey that followed took us over most of what three years later became East Pakistan. Though we did not see much, as it was night we heard a lot. The whole night, even while the train was moving, we heard the constant chanting "Sahib Bakhshish, Sahib Bakhshish". Comilla Cantonment was in those days called Mainamati Cantonment after the hill on which it was located. It was not much of a cantonment, consisting of improvised bamboo huts and tents. The town itself was full of ponds, mostly multipurpose pools of water which were used for rearing fish, washing clothes and utensils, bathing and supply of drinking water. They would also be used as convenient lavatories. One could see raised platform jetting out into the water with a covered approach from the house. However, living conditions underwent a metamorphosis after Pakistan came into being. Comilla became the best cantonment in Pakistan well laid out, well built and picturesque.

Chittagong was no better. It appeared to be a huge mass of shanty hutments and shabby houses with narrow roads. The only transport available was rickshaw pulled by human beings. A few victorias (four-wheel) driven by the most miserable and emaciated horses could also be seen. Chittagong became the main port of East Pakistan after the birth of Pakistan and passing through various stages of development had become a reasonably well built city by 1971, much cleaner than Calcutta. The second time I happened to be in the area of Calcutta was on the day Great Calcutta Massacre of 1946 took place. I was on my way to Japan to rejoin my battery which was part of the British Commonwealth Occupation Forces. Due to disturbances, we were stopped at Howrah and accommodated in Howrah Transit Camp, just below the bridge which connected Howrah with Calcutta. We saw massacre of Muslims which took place on the bridge itself. The Muslims, on way back to their homes after attending a Muslim League

meeting, were caught unawares, way laid, hacked to pieces, and thrown dead or alive - into the Hoogli river.

A new concept took place after the birth of Pakistan, and so was ushered in an era of new motivation. This meant a new phase of life. It was as a Pakistani that I paid my third visit to Bengal, which had then become East Pakistan in 1962, to be awakened to a new reality. I did not hear any reference to Calcutta killing: instead what I saw and heard was directed against their own compatriots. It was a dreadful phenomenon.

After completing more than normal tenure as Instructor at Staff College (Staff Wing) Quetta I was posted to Lahore in 1962 to command a Regiment. Command of a unit is a normal prerequisite in the Army for further promotion. I had hardly completed six months with them when I was detailed to attend Senior Services Course at the Administrative Staff College, Lahore. According to the College Administration, a senior officer was one who was in the top four grades. I was only a Lieutenant Colonel and was, in their opinion, in sixth grade after a general, Lieutenant general, major general, brigadier and a full colonel. Therefore, the college authorities objected to my nomination. I was the first Army officer who had been nominated, and the GHQ, without any inkling to me, accepted the right of the College authorities to throw me out, if at any stage, they felt that I did not come up to their standards. Not only I proved up to their standards, they recognized my contribution to the course without reservation. The Principle, Mr. Malik, and the Vice Principal, Mr. Qayyum..... to my embarrassment, apologized for having raised objections to my nomination. I was graded as the best student and my paper on Power, Authority and Responsibility was duly published. In that paper in 1963 I had recommended lifting of all governmental controls which were stifling the economic and industrial development of our country.

As a student of Administrative Staff College Lahore, I had the opportunity to visit East Pakistan. President Ayub's performance was known to be impressive. He was highly respected within the country and abroad for his leadership. He had done a lot for East Pakistan. Development activities had been given a significant boost up through increased investment. The main hurdle to Investment was given out to be the lack of absorbing capacity of the area. In West Pakistan, the East Pakistan Governor. Monem Khan, was projected to be an effective administrator. He was thought to have brought peace and tranquility to the province which was supposed to be helping his province's economic growth. On arrival in Dacca, however, I was shocked to see "Down with Ayub" slogans written on the walls all over the city. We were told by the educated people whom we met casually that there existed a serious feeling of deprivation amongst the people. They were against Ayub's regime and against Monem Khan, the latter having become the most hated person in East Pakistan.

While at the Staff Course, I was directed by the Commandant, Major General Bilgrami, to write a paper on higher education and training of Senior Officers. The paper that was

produced by me was approved by both General Bilgrami and the GHQ. As a result of acceptance of the recommendations, War Course was started at the Staff College. Major General Yakub was posted as Commandant and a team of senior officers was given to him as members of the Directing Staff. After the completion of my assignment with the Staff Course I had been posted to Lahore. The War Course was due to start but the tactical exercises were not ready mainly because what was produced had not come up to the standard of General Yakub. His standards, in those days, were very high. In desperation I was called to Quetta and given the task of writing three exercises and get them approved by the Commandant, in a period of three months. I had not met General Yakub before but I found him quite a reasonable person to work with. I wrote all the exercises in one month and got them approved by him. May be he was impressed by my output that he asked for me as a member of the Directing Staff on the War Course.

My second visit to East Pakistan came the following year as member of Directing Staff. Our meeting at Dacca with Governor Monem Khan was at once interesting and intriguing instead of talking about the economic and development pace of his province, he told us with most funny gestures how he was picked up as Governor. He said: "One day my President (Monem Khan always called Ayub as my President) came to the cabinet meeting. He sat down, he looked to his right and he looked to his left (joyously enacted the scene) and then he looked to his front and said. 'I want a Governor for East Pakistan'. We looked to our right and we looked to our left and then we looked to our front and all of us said, 'We can't find a Governor for East Pakistan'. My President looked to his right, looked to his left and then looked to his front and said. "You are all useless". Go away and find one. Next day we came and the President came. He sat down. He looked to his right and looked to his left hand said. 'Have you found a Governor for East Pakistan'. We shook over heads. My President looked at me and said, "Monem Khan, you are Governor of East Pakistan.

Monem Khan then narrated a long story of his achievements. He had controlled, he said, the law and order situation with the result that East Pakistan's capacity to absorb development funds had greatly increased. This, we learnt later by talking to others, was untrue; Monem's concept of utilization of allotted funds meant merely spending them, not how they were spent and with what results. He was quite happy I he could tell the centre that funds had been exhausted and that he wanted more. This is how, he felt, his efficiency and administrative ability was measured by the centre.

However, what we observed off duty was disheartening. People in West Pakistan were not aware of the mental change that was steadily taking place in East Pakistan. Walls at all important places were plastered with anti-Ayub slogans. A very popular man. Lt Gen. Azam Khan, had been removed as Governor, and an inefficient and partisan person inducted in his place, behaving as totally subservient to Ayub Khan, some of the East Pakistanis whom we met would tell us in confidence, "You take away whosoever becomes popular in East Pakistan - even if he is a West Pakistani. We do not want a

Bengali like Monem Khan. We want men like Azam Khan, Umrao Khan and N.M. Khan."

The Common man was still friendly but the higher echelon of society displayed a good deal of hostility. I got the impression that some positive action was required to keep the two Wings together. We noticed that the regime's efforts for development had resulted in significant economic growth but social sectors were not being fully attended to mere growth in GNP created problems. A new elite had taken birth who wanted greater share in political power which the regime, by its very nature of being a Presidential form was unable to provide. Instead of being bridged, the gap was widened by the policies aimed at building up a strong state without realizing that something else was needed to build a strong nation. A state has physical form: a nation an emotional cohesion.

Four years later, I was in a position to have a closer view of that Wing when I was posted to Dacca in 1967 as Commander Artillery 14 Division. Fate had carried me to Dacca. I had been earmarked in 1966 to go to Delhi as Military Attaché in the Pakistan Embassy, a post tenable by a full Colonel. I happened to be a Lieut Colonel then: my assignment to Delhi was considered as promotion and thus was resented by my colleagues. I spent two months in preparation, disposing off car and house-hold furniture. Just as I was set to depart for Delhi and was getting final briefing in the office of DMI (then Brigadier later Lt Gen. Akbar) a telephone call came to him from Gen. Yakub, the CGS saying that I was not going to India but was to report to him immediately. When I reached there, the CGS said, "Farman, you are not going to India". "Why Sir". I asked. His reply was "Delhi post is only for a full Colonel and you are going to be a Brigadier in the next few month". As CGS, he was faced with planning the defence of Pakistan, and for that purpose, he wanted me to be in Rawalpindi as DDMO in CH9. Though shortly afterwards Delhi post was held by a Brigadier. I toiled, happily though, in GHQ to finalize the Operational Plan for "Defence" of Pakistan.

DDMO post had been held by Colonel Osmani, an East Pakistani for the previous eight years. Though he later became a General in Mukti Bahini he was not considered fit for promotion in Pakistan Army. He was a Bengali and perhaps not trusted by high ups. When I reported to him for taking over the charge I was horrified to know that he was not getting a single file to see. Even *chaprassies* ignored him. His office had not been dusted; it was dormant, decapitated, ineffective and utterly ignored. When I reported to CGS for a directive he asked me to study the existing plan and write a new one: he thought that the existing plan was insufficient. Brigadier Omar, a man with a fertile brain, and many ideas, held the post of DMO. But he loathed table work. To study maps, measure distances, compare own and enemy resources which were essential for the preparation of a sound military plan, appeared to be loathsome to him.

The existing plan was nothing more than a collation of plans submitted by lower HQs. It did not state conditions under which a war could start, nor responses to each situation had been worked out. What in military term is called operational strategy with Hypothesis and Concept of Operations, had not been thought out. It was a mere collation of Division level plans. I had, therefore, to work day and night, of course with the assistance of two other officers (Rana and Sarfraz), to evolve the Operational Plan only for "Defensive Operations under the Hypothesis of enemy's main attack against West Pakistan while India remains on the defensive against East Pakistan." The plan was approved by the then C-in-C, Gen. Yahya Khan. He then presented it to President Ayub Khan. He too approved it and I got smiles and appreciative nods from all present. (In those days officers did not use superlative words of praise for each other as is done these days. A smile and well done were good enough expressions). After finalization of the plan. I thought of analyzing another possibility and sought permission of the CCS to write an operational plan under the hypothesis of enemy attack on East Pakistan while he remains on the defensive against West Pakistan - this is exactly what happened in 1971, six years after the development of the situation as conceived in the hypothesis projected. Order for my promotion and posting to Dacca had already been out, therefore, the CGS said. "I am sure somebody else will undertake to do this. But you have a job to do in Dacca. 14 Division is conducting a war game to finalize the recommendations on Defence of East Pakistan under the hypothesis you are talking about *i.e.* major attack on East Pakistan. You are to assist GOC 14 Division in the conduct of the war game. At the end of the game you may give any recommendation which will be given due consideration". I acted as the Director of Exercise EX SUNDER BAN I. - conducted it and presented my conclusions to CGS Maj. Gen. Yakub Khan and the GOC Maj. Gen. Muzaffaruddin. I made three important points which were significant and perhaps were clearly enunciated for the first time. These were:

- 1) East Pakistan is like Poland was in World War II. It is surrounded by the enemy. Its major cities like those of Poland are on the border, thereby attracting our forces outwards, creating a vacuum in the middle, and thereby exposing Dacca to the enemy.
- 2) Defence of every inch of the territory is not possible. The mission of Pakistan Army should be changed from "Defence of East Pakistan" to "Remaining in being". This terminology was used for the first time and was later included in the Operational Directive issued by GHQ.
- 3) The final attack on Dacca will come from the north in the same manners as delivered by Guderian in Poland. (How true I was, unfortunately). Therefore, adequate defensive measures be taken to defend Dacca at all costs.

Both the General Officers fully endorsed these views and GOC 14 Division Gen. Muzaffaruddin issued orders to locate one battalion to cover northern approach which till then had been neglected.

I took over as Commander Artillery 14 Divisions Dacca on 2 Feb 1967. The subsequent fateful years kept me in East Pakistan and India till 21 April 1974. Though I was charged with the task of conducting operational exercises SUNDER BAN I, at the same time I was instructed by the CGS to write two papers: one on 1965 war and the second on "Second Line Forces for Pakistan". To write these paper I came back to GHQ Rawalpindi on temporary duty and stayed here for some months. In fact, during first year of my tenure in East Pakistan I spent over six months in Rawalpindi on GHQ allotted assignments as stated above.

The paper on Second Line Forces was presented to Field Marshal Ayub in Abbottabad during Formation Commander's Conference in 1968. A general officer asked me, "Would not the possession of arms by the civilians pose a great threat to the Government"? I answered, "If a nation turns against its rulers, it does not need arms to overthrow them". I was only a Colonel at that time. The officer did not like my blunt and bold statement in front of the President and other senior officers. However, after discussion, I was told to re-submit the paper when comments from those present were received. Conference being an annual feature was held again in 1969 in Abbottabad. In the Intervening period Yahya Khan had taken over from Ayub as the country's Chief Executive after civil commotion. I too had been promoted Brigadier. As we were walking towards the hall Maj. Gen. Nawazish, the Director General Military Training, said, "Farman, we are going to criticize your proposals." I said, "Simply because I have written one. Those who do not write anything and make no proposal cannot be criticized." By then we had entered the hall which was full of red-tabs. When my turn came, I opened with these remarks, "Gentlemen, in reply to a question last year I had said that if a nation turns against its ruler, it does not need arms to overthrow him. How this statement of mine has been proved correct by subsequent events."

In my opinion Muslims by nature are loyal to those who provide them arms. Normally they are a disciplined and loyal lot provided they are trusted. I reiterated my earlier conclusion that the Army alone could not defend Pakistan, we would never find resources to finance it to the extent required. My view was that the civil population should be trained on territorial basis and integrated in the defensive efforts of the nation. My proposal was accepted, approved and launched but after certain modifications had been carried out which distorted its motivational drive from patriotism to financial gains.

I had hardly completed my engagement with EX SUNDAR BAN when I was called to GHQ to act as DMO in place of Brig Ghulam Omar who was proceeding on leave to perform Haj. Fortunately, I was able, as DMO, to get the approval of CGS to the concept

of "remaining in being" in East Pakistan and have it included in the "Operational Directive." it is still there and was shown to me by Mr. Justice Hamoodur Rehman as head of the Commission which was asked by Mr. Bhutto to inquire into the causes of Army's debacle in East Pakistan in 1971. My report on 1965 War never saw the light of the day as it was critical of the conduct of war and had concluded that we had failed to achieve our aim activating of the Kashmir issue and thus had not won the war.

As I was in East Pakistan from February, 1967 onward till it became Bangladesh, I had the opportunity of studying the problems of East Pakistan from close quarters. Five years which I spent there were full of events in which Agartala case came to light Followed by Mujibur Rehman's trial and province-wide agitation, along with imposition of Yahya's Martial Law.

I had found in 1967, a most disturbing situation. Clear trends of movement towards disintegration of the country were visible. There was open discussion on the demand of Bangla Desh. Hatred against West Pakistan was reflected in the eyes of common Bengalees. Those Bengalees who socialized or had any contact with West Pakistanis were shunned by the others. Campaign against Urdu, which was considered a symbol of West Pakistani domination, was so intense and wide-spread that one could not find a single sign post in Urdu anywhere. All shops had Bangla boards. If one landed in the middle of a Dacca bazar one found one's self totally estranged and foreign. If you asked a question or put a query in Urdu, you would either be ignored or answered in English. The hate Urdu campaign had invaded the realm of religion as well. I heard many students saying that they would not read the Quran as it was in Urdu script. I thought at that time that Islam was paramountly important and for its sheer preservation in that area it would be worthwhile to allow them their own state.

The students were in the vanguard in their campaign against what they described as domination and exploitation of East Bengal by West Pakistan. It was impossible for a West Pakistani to make an estimate of the scale, dimension and organization of agitation that was raging in East Pakistan. Millions of people would turn out on the streets and at meeting places in a matter of minutes at the call of leaders like Mujibur Rahman. The Students Action Committee had branches down to primary school level in villages. It will not be an exaggeration to say that at the call of the Students Action Committee even birds were not allowed to fly. No vehicle, except with their permission, could move on the roads. People had to walk bare-footed on the day of strike. Meetings and processions were organized on a massive scale. Every effort was made by the organizers to coin venomous slogans against West Pakistan. Pro-Bangla Desh slogans were chanted with vigor and passion. *Amra Desh Tumar Desh Bangla Desh* (our motherland and your motherland Bangla Desh) was shouted in full throat by Lakhs of people in unison. Artists had drawn pictures depicting extreme animosity and antagonism against West Pakistan. A few examples would suffice. A big man in *pugree* with a hidden knife was shown embracing a small man in dhoti; the big man stabbed

the small man while in embrace; this depicted betrayal of Bengalis by the Punjabis. In another poster, maps of East Pakistan and West Pakistan were drawn. A snake was shown rising from West Pakistan, and going all the way across to bite East Pakistan. West Pakistan was blamed for every ill that before befell East Pakistan. Even natural calamities like floods, cyclones and tidal waves which for centuries had afflicted that region were attributed to the evil designs of West Pakistan.

I soon found that Dacca University was an independent island. Pakistan flag could not and did not fly within its premises. Students held meetings almost daily, vociferously protesting and criticizing every action of the government. In all such meetings creation of Bangla Desh was demanded. West Pakistan was condemned.

How great this estrangement was could be gauged from my personal experience. I knew a Major Zaman in Nowshera. We had reached Dacca, he had left the Army. However, sometimes we saw each other in bazar or other places, but they would always avoid us. I found that even in messes, the Bengali Officers were not social with officers from West Pakistan. General Muzaffaruddin made special efforts to coax and goad both groups to mix but failed. One of the reasons was West Pakistani's inability to speak in Bangla language.

We all knew that 95% of Bengali Muslims had voted for Pakistan. They had expressed feelings of Islamic brotherhood and wanted a separate homeland for Muslims in no uncertain terms. In the first Constituent Assembly, Bengali Muslims had allowed their representation by Muslim members from outside their province. But I found in 1967 that talk of Islamic brotherhood and unity of Pakistan on the basis of Islam carried no conviction with them. Bengali Babu had disappeared after partition, but Bengali Jadoo still seemed to be operative, though in a different way. It had electrified the entire mass of Bhooaka Bengali with rage against a distant cousin, West Pakistan, for supposedly having snatched away everything from him. History was sought to be falsified and disowned, presumably in vain as has been testified by the two decades that have passed since Pakistan's breakup.

ESTRANGEMENT

How did estrangement and the hostility develop between the two wings of Pakistan? It started early. Just about the time when Pakistan was about to come into existence Mr. Suhrawardy, the great leader of Muslims of Bengal, advocated the idea of Undivided Independent greater Bengal. He declared, "Make Bengal a great Country and make Bengali Muslims, Hindus and Scheduled Caste a great nation". He met Gandhi Ji, Quaid-i-Azam and other leaders. None liked his idea except most of the Muslim leaders of Bengal. It was the Hindus led by Mr. Shyam Parshad Mukerjee who opposed the proposal. The idea died its natural death on Pakistan coming into being. But the idea sowed the seeds of Bengali nationalism that Bengalis were a separate nation.

The discussion also revealed that the people of two wings of Pakistan had different perception about Pakistan - the Bengalis laying greater emphasis on Lahore Resolution which in their opinion envisaged two independent Muslim States. They claimed they be given greater recognition in political power structure. Lahore Resolution had been got amended by Mr. Suhrawardy in 1946 whereby it was resolved that Pakistan shall be one state.

The glaring and damaging divergence in national policies was expressed on two major issues of language and foreign policy. Bengalis did not accept even Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's declaration that Urdu shall be the national language even when he simultaneously clearly stated the Bengali language shall continue to play its full part within the province. In foreign policy matters the Bengalis wanted friendly relations with India considering them their natural trade partners.

Constitution making was delayed till 1956 due to the question of representation. East Bengal had more votes due to their population but had less representation in the National Assembly because a number of Muslims of Indian provinces had been inducted through Bengali quota. West Pakistan feared Bengali domination and therefore imposed parity.

They also had lesser representation in Civil and Armed Forces due to historical reasons. There was only one ICS officer in whole of Indian Civil Service and 17 in Indian Police. The requirement for administering Pakistan was mostly met by officers migrating from Indian provinces all of them were dubbed as West Pakistanis. In the Armed Services the lack of proper representation was due to the British considering them as non-martial race. Even in 1955 when a number of Bengalis were inducted there was only one Brigadier and a couple of colonels.

Economically East Bengal was a poorer area and backward in infrastructure. This was attributed to exploitation of their resources by West Pakistan. The fact was that the area had too much of population and too little resources. That got proven by the coming into being of Bangladesh which has been described as the begging bowl of the world.

All the above factors could be toned down if a serious effort had been made by the Government of Pakistan. They could have accepted at least the recommendations of East Bengal Muslim League which accepted federal form of government but with greater autonomy to East Pakistan. They wanted to manage transportation, trade and a separate list of subjects to be controlled fully by the province. These were legitimate demands, but their denial led to Six Points.

Imposition of Martial Law further converted East Pakistan to the status of a colony due to shortage of Bengali officer representation in the Services. Even now people moan about loss of East Pakistan. The fault lay in the behavior of bureaucrats whose attitude was that of the British Raj.

Thus, in Dacca, the atmosphere had become suffocating. A feeling of antagonism in the relationship of ordinary people of West and East Pakistan had developed. I remember having the feeling of standing at a cross-road. The very viability of Pakistan as a nation was being questioned. The 1965 war with India made the Bengalis aware of their isolation. The statement of Mr. Bhutto that China had saved East Pakistan also led to the feeling that association with West Pakistan was not essential to the survival of East Pakistan, if it gained total independence.

Agartala case did more harm to the integrity of Pakistan than any other single factor. The case was framed in the light of conspiracy "unearthed." The main charge in this case against the accused was that they had planned to separate East Pakistan from the control of Rawalpindi by violent means with arms, ammunition and other material help provided by India. The Intelligence Agencies, the ISI and IB, had alleged that a certain number of Bengali Personnel from all three Services of our Armed Forces, with the active support of Mujibur Rahman and a few other politicians, had hatched a conspiracy to undo Pakistan which had been fully coordinated with the Indians. Several meetings had taken place in the bordering Indian town Agartala with the Indians. Agartala case was not well handled. Several mistakes were made, with the result that it did more harm to the unity of Pakistan than any other thing.

I was Commander Artillery then. During discussion with the GOC. Maj. General Muzaffaruddin, I had suggested that Mujib's name should not be included in the case. Maj. Gen. Akbar, DG ISI, thought otherwise and felt that it was essential to have him included. "The people will skin him", he said. However, inclusion of Mujib Ur Rahman made the case a political case. He overnight became a national hero of the Bengalis, fighting the state of Pakistan for the rights of his East Pakistan brethren. The trial was to

be conducted by a Special Tribunal. The case was prolonged for various reasons. The hearing was open. The press fully covered the proceedings almost verbatim. The court was used as a political platform by all the witnesses in which very serious allegations of discrimination against the Bengalis in matters of representation, selection and promotion were highlighted. Facts and half truths mingled with falsehood were presented in such a manner as to arouse the feelings of the entire mass of Bengalis. They had not heard such things before. Agartala case turned Pakistani Bengalis also into Bengali nationalists.

The case dragged on. It was not yet over when agitation against Ayub started in West Pakistan. In the early stages of the agitation East Pakistan was peaceful except that the students were as ever active. However, when the Central authority was shaken in West Pakistan due to PPP led agitation, the East Pakistan also rose. The agitation in East Pakistan was more violent with Bhashani's slogans of "Agan Lagao put everything to fire" being practically implemented. Agartala case provided an excuse to the hard-core extremists to take over control of the events. Death of Sgt. Zahur Ul Haq added fuel to the fire. Muslim history was being repeated where whenever the Centre became weak the provincial rulers unfurled their own flags of Independence. Ayub's position in West Pakistan became weak. East Pakistan politicians took full advantage of the situation and launched their own movement. The nation-wide agitation resulted in the postponement of Round Table Conference called by Ayub. The politicians in West Pakistan declined to attend the RTC till Mujib was released and invited to participate in the meeting. In this manner Mujib became the leader of leaders. An undue importance was given to him, raising his stature still higher in East Pakistan.

How authentic was the Agartala case? This was proved by the subsequent events of 1971 where the Indians took active part in dismemberment of its neighbor against all canons of International behavior. In this connection, I may refer to an open letter written by Mrs. Kohinoor Hossain, wife of the late Lieutenant Commander Moazzam Hossain, one of the accused in the Agartala Conspiracy case. This letter took the form of an In Memoriam to the her husband published in the issue of the daily *Purbadesh* of Dacca, dated, March 26. 1972. I distinctly remember some of the lines which I quote verbatim here, after translation from Bangla.

"Dearest husband you are no longer with me. I remember your contribution towards the cause of Independent Bangla Desh. I remember how you came to Dacca from Karachi on leave under a pseudonym, met P.N. Ojha, First Secretary, Indian Embassy, at the border at Agartala along with other Indian and Bangladesh officers. You negotiated with Indian authorities for arms and other kinds of help....."

Readers in the Indian subcontinent may recall that this P.N Ojha was no other than the man who had been expelled from the country by the Pakistan Government on charges

of "espionage and subversive activities". There can be no manner of doubt that Indians had all along been working for East Pakistan's separation, and they took full advantage of the situation resulting from demand of East Pakistanis for independence.

Ayub Khan succumbed to the pressure from West Pakistani leaders and Gen. Muzaffaruddin was asked to arrange Mujib's acceptance of conditional release on parole and departure for Rawalpindi. In his meeting with Muzaffaruddin, Mujib was all honey and sweet behaving as a loyal, patriotic Pakistani with praises for Ayub. He promised that he would go to Rawalpindi and assist Ayub in restoration of peace in the country. He also showed his willingness to accept parole. But the secrecy of the arrangements was violated when Mujib's political rivals issued a statement revealing the news of Mujib's release on parole. Such arrangements were considered a weakness a sentimental approach that had been a legacy of British days. On hearing of the statement of Maulvi Farid Ahmed. Mujib refused to be released on parole: instead he asked for unconditional release.

Simultaneously to the preparation of Round Table Conference, studies were going on for imposition of Martial Law. A proposal for this purpose was brought to Dacca by Minister of Defence Admiral A.R. Khan. Gen. Awan (then Brig DMI) was with him. The proposal was for imposition of Martial Law in East Pakistan only. We considered it a very dangerous and undesirable move. In both wings, in West Pakistan under the leadership of Bhutto and in East Pakistan under Mujib people had turned against Ayub. Obviously, imposition of ML under Ayub's leadership to maintain law and order and sustain his government would be an unpopular act and could be straightway rejected by the people. Our view was that instead of peace. Ayub's second ML might result in greater trouble in the country.

When the proposal for imposition of ML appeared unacceptable, orders for Mujib's release were given. He raised his conditions for release. He asked to be permitted to address a rally before departure to attend the RTC. He was allowed. At his call about six hundred thousand people gathered in the Race Course to hear him. The sight of the chanting crowd further turned his head. His attitude changed and with the boycott of RTC by Bhutto, Mujib's demands were unacceptable to Ayub. RTC failed and all doors for political settlement were closed. Sinister thoughts started moving across the minds of the President and the Commander-in-Chief of the Army simultaneously. During Ayub's illness Yahya had tasted power. He presided over cabinet meetings, gave decisions, issued orders as the de facto executive head. He, like any other human being, enjoyed it and wanted to assume power. Due to his illness Ayub had lost much of his sharpness and decisiveness. He had become soft and resigned to fate. Yahya made up his mind to take advantage of weakness of Ayub. As a preliminary step he sent a circular to all Army formations in December 1968 declaring that Army was neutral in the power struggle. This was clearly a political move to undermine the authority of Ayub.

Yahya Replaces Ayub

No Martial Law can succeed without some support from one or the other political party. Bhutto met Yahya surreptitiously. The story of Bhutto's meeting with Yahya is related in the Book "Zulfi My Friend" by Piloo Moodi as to how Bhutto's aircraft got diverted to Rawalpindi where he met Yahya who was waiting for him. On being asked, Bhutto promised support to Yahya. From that day on Bhutto and Yahya remained very close to each other. Though publicly and outwardly Bhutto criticized the regime, sometimes quite violently, but he used to explain this away to Yahya by saying that in politics one had to criticize the government to win over people's support. Yahya relied heavily on Bhutto's political sagacity and guidance in the fateful years to come. With General Peerzada as COS to the President and virtual Prime Minister, Bhutto had access to all the secrets of the Government and through him influenced many decisions of Yahya.

GOC 14 Div Dacca, Gen. Muzaffaruddin attended a meeting in Rawalpindi on 19 March 69, called by the C-in-C. It was decided in the meeting to impose Martial Law throughout the country the date fixed was March 25. Army's concern about the deteriorating law and order situation was conveyed to the President and need for urgency in settling the political issue was stressed. The President took note of the message from the Armed Forces. He appointed new Governors for both East and West Pakistan and briefed them about the agitated minds of the army commander urging them to take concrete and immediate steps to improve the political situation in the country. He, however, did not know that the Army Chief had already decided to take over.

Mr. M.N. Huda was to take the oath of office as new Governor of East Pakistan on 24 March in Dacca. But I had been told on 22 March by Gen. Muzaffaruddin after his return from Rawalpindi about the decision of CHQ to impose Martial Law on 25 March. When the oath ceremony was taking place I was struck by the facade. Turning towards Muzafaruddin, I said, "Sir, what is all this. We are going to impose ML tomorrow. Why all this". He said. "You just keep going with the events."

The time had run out for Ayub. He could have controlled the events had he brought about administrative changes in the Cabinet and about the two Governors earlier. Both Musa and Monem were unpopular. Gen. Muzafaruddin told Ayub about Monem when he visited Dacca earlier in February 69. But he took no action. Ayub was an old timer loyal to his subordinates, a praiseworthy quality in an Army General but a handicap for a political leader. Changes were brought in but too late. And Yahya was impatient to assume power.

After the imposition of Martial Law on 25 March, Maj. General Gul Hassan visited the ML Administrator Dacca on 10 April 69. I was present in the Governor House when he related the story of takeover by Yahya and with great relish told of the role he had

played in forcing Yahya to take over the direct control of Martial Law. When Ayub proposed the promulgation of Martial Law, Yahya said. "Yes, there will be Martial Law but under the control of the Army". Ayub immediately responded, "I understand what you mean. Get the necessary papers prepared for my signature." Ayub was an honorable man. He did not want to cling to power. He resigned in the interest of the country. In his farewell address Ayub stated that dissolution of one unit in West Pakistan and Six Points were not acceptable to him as that would have weakened the country. Yahya took over with the promise of resolving the political problems facing the country.

Immediately, after the imposition of Martial Law, there was peace throughout the country. All agitation came to an abrupt end. Yahya, unlike Ayub, did not ban political parties. He announced that his aim was the creation of conditions conducive to the establishment of constitutional government and smooth transfer of power to the representative of people elected freely and impartially on the basis of adult franchise.

In East Pakistan, the Governor had gone. Maj. Gen. Muzafaruddin COC 14 Div became MLA East Zone and was entrusted the responsibility to perform the functions of Governor as well, though not officially named as Governor. I had completed two years normal tenure in February 1969 and though order for my posting to Lahore had been issued I was detained for a period of three months to assist the Martial Law Administrator. With frequent changes of Governor my stay continued to be extended. I served with Muzafaruddin, Ahsan Yakub Khan, Tikka Khan and Dr. Malik. My family was in West Pakistan as all my children were studying in Lahore. As I had completed more than my tenure of duties. I wanted to come back to West Pakistan but was not spared by any of the Governors. I suffered, so did my children, but I did not complain. I know of very many senior and junior officers who were dead scared and managed to avoid going to East Pakistan on one excuse or the other. Later, some of these officers were the loudest in criticizing those who were defending East Pakistan during 1971 and became victims of circumstances.

I was posted as Brigadier Civil Affairs to look after the affairs of civil administration. We analyzed the political situation. Great many events had taken place since the creation of Pakistan. New generation of leaders and public had come up. Their ideas had undergone remarkable change. In East Pakistan, at that time in March 1969, the Six Points were the accepted formula to express their intensified national pride and desire for a substantial measure of independence from the centralized political structure. The first point called for the establishment of federation "on the basis of Lahore Resolution and a parliamentary form of government, with supremacy of legislature to be directly elected on the basis of adult franchise." The second point demanded that the federal government deal with only two subjects defence and foreign affairs and that all the other subjects "rest in the federating states." The third point suggested that there be two separate but freely convertible currencies for the two wings. Later, they were willing to

accept one currency provided effective constitutional provisions were made to stop the flight of capital from East to West Pakistan. Point four denied the centre the right of taxation. The federal government was to be provided with requisite revenue resources for meeting its requirements. It also envisaged provisions for unit Government to establish trade and commercial relations with foreign countries. The fifth point was that there shall be two separate accounts for foreign exchange earnings of the two wings. And the sixth point demanded the setting up of a militia or a paramilitary force for East Pakistan.

Six Points apparently had seeds of secession. Their acceptance in toto would have led to creation of virtually two Independence countries. But essentially they were political in character. The Government could have responded politically to this political demand. Mujib had hinted that the demands were negotiable but the Government embarked on a course of head on collision instead of conciliation.

I had met Mujib the day he was released during the Agartala case. When the decision to release him was taken he had to be transported to his house secretly to avoid any problem of law and order. The situation in Dacca was so tense and explosive that it was considered dangerous to convey him with armed escort as that could have resulted in a sporadic reception and violence. Nobody wanted to volunteer to risk his life to perform the duty unarmed and unescorted. I volunteered. Driving a jeepster without escort I took Mujib alongwith two other detainees from the Mess, where he had been kept, to his house. I was supposed to drop all of them in front of Mujib's house and hasten back to the safe haven of the cantonment. But I stayed on making sure that they all got to their homes comfortably. This gesture of mine, perhaps, won for me the friendly disposition of Mujib. It lasted till he was again arrested in March 71.

Our analysis revealed that East Pakistan situation had deteriorated dangerously. Those who had fought for Pakistan, had demanded autonomy initially and were now changing their loyalty towards the protagonists of independent Bangla Desh.

We submitted a report to President Yahya in which we stated that a "large majority of Bengali intellectuals and other educated persons are for secession." We expressed the view that Martial Law was unlikely to solve the political problem and recommended that elections be held as soon as possible. The report was not well received. Later, I happened to visit CMLA HQ Rawalpindi during the month of May, 1969. A staff officer, Col. Qayyum, who was a Bengali, was standing beside Brig. (later Maj. Gen) Iskandarul Karim, also a Bengali, said, "Who is that mad man in your office who says that there are secessionists in East Pakistan?" I said. "That mad man is standing in front of you." Then I asked him, "Since how long have you not visited East Pakistan." He gave a figure of 6 or 7 years, as he was married to a West Pakistani girl. I requested him to visit Dacca at his earliest and assess the situation himself. His elder brothers, Kabir Chaudhry and Munir Chaudhry, were the leading Intellectuals of East Pakistan and

strong advocates of Bangla Desh. When he visited Dacca he came to see me and it goes to his credit that he accepted what I had told him. He said that he was surprised at the great change that had taken place in the thinking of the people. He himself remained a supporter of Pakistan and did not migrate to Bangla Desh. This is how minds change. Even families get divided on such issues. However, my subsequent experience revealed even a more unpleasant development in the attitude of people. Sub-nationalism is a terrible disease. It is as bad as AIDS. It destroys resistance to the appeal and call for separatism.

Most damaging political administrative and economic developments had taken place in the country. Worst was that all institutions had been neutralized, weakened or destroyed. National cohesion had given way to regionalism. Yahya took upon himself the task of putting the house in order. Yahya was a very able commander and a forceful person. He knew how to delegate power and how to give decisions on his own. He was a success in the Army and not many would question his abilities as a commander. But he was not a politician. He, therefore relied heavily on others for political advice. On the advice of politicians of West Pakistan Yahya terminated One Unit. On the advice of another political adviser, Mr. G.W. Chaudhry, he discarded parity and accepted the principle, of one man one vote. Both these decisions had far reaching consequences. Breakup of One Unit led to provincialism in West Pakistan. Acceptance of the principle of one man one vote resulted eventually in the call by Mr. Bhutto of safeguarding the interest of West Pakistan and the slogan of "UDHAR TUM IDHAR HAM", and finally to the emergence of Bangla Desh.

Yahya had abrogated the 1962 constitution. He had the option of either reinstating the 1956 constitution or set up a new Constituent Assembly to draw up a constitution. We in East Pakistan Governor House were in favor of the 1956 constitution. It was an agreed and accepted constitution. Its immediate reintroduction would not have opened up new issues. It is inevitable that debate starts and pandoras box gets opened up with every new approach to constitutional problems. With great difficulty and after a 10 years period of Independence an agreed constitution was finalized in 1956. Though there was some disagreement in East Pakistan over the extent of provincial autonomy provided in the 1956 constitution, it was our belief that if immediately after imposition of Martial Law Yahya had promulgated its reinstatement, the leaders of East Pakistan would have accepted it. And what was more, fresh election could have been held early in 1969 denying time to secessionist forces to exploit the various events which took place later. However, ignoring Governor, Ahsan's recommendation Yahya accepted drafting committees recommendations and revealed his scheme for transfer of power on 28 November 1969. Elections were to be held on the basis of one man one vote to the National and Provincial Assemblies in October 1970. A whole year was available to the political leaders to organize their parties and to influence the public opinion. This time was of greatest importance to the newly formed political party the PPP. It needed time to organize and spread its message. Its leader was close to Yahya and was therefore able

to gain time in West Pakistan. But the electioneering activity spread over a whole year had a devastating effect on the ideology and concept of Pakistan. Though in the Legal Framework Order which was proclaimed by Yahya in March 1970. Six Point demand had not been accepted, the Awami League and its leader Mujib took full advantage of the freedom of political activity granted under it. The Awami League's aim was to win a commanding majority in the National Assembly by getting maximum seats from East Pakistan. Such a strategy had become feasible by the introduction of one man one vote in which East had been allotted a majority of seats in the Assembly. Their major campaign theme was a pledge to frame the constitution on the basis of their own Six Points and Eleven Points programme of the students. In under-developed countries anybody who champions a parochial cause like that of the Bengalis is certain to become popular with the illiterate masses and secure election victory. Awami League played up - day after day for whole year the grievances of the Bengalis. some real, some made up, and whipped up emotions against Punjabi "exploiters". Mujib was a great orator. He was not an intellectual, not even a very intelligent man. He was a demagogue who played with the sentiments of the people. He was able to gear up solid support for himself and his party. The other political parties were Jamaat-i-Islami, Jamiatul Ulemai-Pakistan, Jamiat ul Ulemai-Islam, Pakistan Democratic Party, three factions of Muslim League - Council, Qayyum and Convention and the National Awami Party with two factions, Pro-Moscow and Pro-Peking. It became apparent early in the election campaign that 'National' and Islam Passand parties had little mass support: the support tended to be regional and leftist. Leftist parties did not fully believe in the constitutional process as they maintained that Bengali rights could only be achieved through confrontation and armed struggle. The Awami League had, by electing to take part in the political process, gained an advantage over the leftist parties. However, leftist demand for independence was articulated by no less a person than Maulana Bhashani - a founder fighter for Pakistan. We asked the Maulana for this change of heart. He said. "Mujib is asking for six points. I have to ask for more to have an edge over him." This is how some politicians win elections outbid one another to win elections.

We tried to get a clear guidance from HQ Chief Martial Law Administrator about the attitude to be adopted on propagation of Six Point. In our opinion the points were negation of Legal Framework Order (LFO). The LFO had spelled out the parameters of the future constitution. It had envisioned a democratic and federal government for Pakistan. On the question of provincial autonomy, LFO had stated that while provinces would have maximum legislative, administrative and financial power, "the federal government also shall have adequate powers including legislative, administrative and financial, to discharge its responsibilities in relation to external affairs and to preserve the independence and territorial integrity of the country." Despite this clear enunciation, LFO was being flouted by the Awami League. During one of my visits I asked the then Brig ML Affairs, Rahim, as to whether we were to allow propagation of Six Points or not. His reply after consulting his superiors in CMLA HQ was: "We have

allowed propagation of Sindhu Desh, why not Six Points also". Martial Law authorities in East Pakistan also took no action to stop propagation of Six Points. The movement for achieving Awami League objective continued unabated.

THE ELECTION 1970

The elections campaign started with a bang at 0001 hours immediately after midnight of 31 December 1970 - 01 January 1971. The following evening a *mashall* (torch bearing) procession was taken out by the Awami League with slogans of Bengla Desh ripping through the air. Imperialism of West Pakistan was condemned, the general mood was defiance, even of violence, against the Western Wing. Subsequently, other parties also organized meetings and processions throughout the province, but the Awami League from the very first day was well ahead of others in popular support. The leaders as well as followers both were motivated, emotionally attached to Bengali nationalism, had better organizational setup and, what was most important, it had sound financial backing. The financial resources available to Awami Leaguers appeared unlimited. It helped them to project themselves and their party to the masses. Just to give one example. Awami League election symbol was a boat. Hundreds of wooden boats were seen hanging up above the ground at all important crossroads in cities and in the entire countryside. This alone would have cost the organization at least a crore of rupees. Where did the Awami League get this money from? Awami Leaguers themselves were not rich nor were the masses in a position to give substantial amount of money. There were no big industrialists in East Pakistan with deep Awami League commitment. Rumors had it that India had provided Awami League all the funds required by them. In my opinion, which I expressed at that time, Indian investment was on sound footing from their point of view. We were going to see a battle of ballot and not of bullets. In the battle of ballot money plays a decisive role. Even in the USA a presidential candidate who runs short of money has no chance of success. Examples are Nixon's first candidacy and Humphrey's for presidency. The pro Pakistan parties approached the President for assistance. Their plea was that 1970 election would decide the fate of Pakistan. Whether Pakistan stayed as one entity or Bengla Desh got created would depend on the results of the elections. I fully endorsed this view and pleaded for financial support. I made two suggestions. One was about Muslim League funds that had been frozen by the Martial Law regime due to dispute between Convention Council and Qayyum Leagues. The Muslim Leagues were lawful owners of the funds. They needed money not only for themselves but also for the preservation of the integrity of Pakistan. I met Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan and Mr. Fazal Qadir Chaudhry and got them to agree to share the money. However, President Yahya did not accept my suggestion to release the frozen funds.

My second proposal was that as Pakistan's very survival was involved, we should treat the elections as a part of defence of Pakistan. Pakistan was created as a result of the popular vote: it could disintegrate through the same process. Those who were charged with the responsibility of preserving the territorial integrity of Pakistan should take all measures, in accordance with the situation, to ensure defence against all internal and

external threats to the country's integrity. In a normal process of democratic elections the government must remain neutral. But the 1970 election was not going to be a normal thing. Here one of the major political parties was seeking a mandate from the people to break up the country. Prospect of this party coming to power had to be denied to save Pakistan. Therefore, I pleaded that the money, out of funds earmarked for second line forces be utilized to support pro-Pakistan parties if no other source is available. The suggestion was not accepted. Mujib had been able to convince Yahya that his Six Points propaganda was only a means to win the election, that he was not against Pakistan and that he would change his attitude after the election etc. I think Yahya's friendly disposition towards Mujib before election was due to Mujib's promise to have Yahya as the future President of Pakistan. However, the regime did help Islam passand parties through some of the industrialists who coughed up money and paid it to the political parties. As far as I know all political parties benefited but as the amounts were meagre and parties too many, the effort had no impact.

Money plays an important part in the election. Though no political party's hands are clean they all blame each other for getting money from blood-suckers and foreign governments. In India the major reason for political stability and continued rule of Congress is due to the well coordinated collaboration between Jedding industrialists and the Congress Party. Whereas in Pakistan the leading moneyed class is that of the agriculturists who tend to take part in election themselves, in India the industrialists feel safe by having representatives financed by them in the house.

Election campaign went on and on with Mujib and other leaders journeying by road, rail and boats from one end to the other. Awami League's main theme was the demand for the acceptance of Six Points in which they played up Bengali nationalism. Alleged exploitation and injustice perpetrated by West Pakistan, disparity in services, flight of capital and indignities inflicted were some of the emotions arousing naranges of the speakers. Being an appealing propaganda theme, its preaching paid dividend to the Awami League.

The sustained propaganda gradually started having an effect on Government servants as well. This is a phenomenon of sub-nationalism. Once it spreads and it does spread the loyalty, efficiency and reliability of Government servants and agencies get seriously affected. The Government loses support of its executives which adversely affects its ability to govern and maintain law and order. More and more Government servants, including senior secretaries to the Government, beame converted to Awami League thoughts. Their loyalties tilted more to Mujib than to the Government.

A very significant and disturbing development was noticed which indicated that even the loyalty of personnel of Armed Forces of East Pakistan was being undermined. Meetings of both serving and retired army officers were frequently held under the chairmanship of Col MAG Osmany to organize an underground force for the Awami

League in case constitutional methods failed. Awami League had decided to take part in the coming election as the amended one man one vote clause gave them a constitutional opening to come to power and to dismantle 'Inequities' and 'injustices' done to them in the past. However, there was a group under Tajuddin who maintained that the West Pakistan would not hand over power peacefully, power would have to be taken through use of force. Therefore, simultaneous to the election campaign, organization and training facilities were being set up to meet the eventuality of resorting to armed struggle for the achievement of the desired goal.

Awami League used the strong arm method of neutralizing and demolishing all opposition except the leftist parties. This is a normal development in under developed countries that leftist parties support sub-nationalism to create confusion, chaos and eventual disintegration. In July 1970, Maulana Maudoodi visited East Pakistan. A grand rally was planned to be held in Paltan Maidan which had the reputation of being the political arena of East Pakistan and about which it was said that whoever held Paltan Maidan held East Pakistan. Jamaat-e-Islami was well-known for its effective and active organization. It had its own dedicated and well-motivated students and workers. They were warned personally by me to be on guard against Awami League's mischief. They organized defence groups and had themselves well stocked with *lathis* but the Awami League proved to be better planners and executers. They were not only able to totally disrupt the meeting, they beat the participants ruthlessly. The Jamaat was so thoroughly routed that after this incident Awami League had no opposition to its activities. I was called to West Pakistan that day. I always had a feeling that my absence had been planned. No police support was provided to Jamaat-i-Islami by Brigadier Martial Law Majeed ul Haq.

Floods hit East Pakistan in the month of July which provided a politicking theme to the rabble rousers of Awami League. They exploited and capitalized on the misery caused by floods. Some went so far as to say that the floods had been caused by the Government of Pakistan as it had failed to implement the recommendation of Krugg Mission for flood control. Nobody bothered to read the Krugg Mission report or its recommendations which were, to say the least, controversial and perhaps damaging to the entire countryside.

President Yahya visited East Pakistan in August and went round the flood affected areas. He was greeted with great enthusiasm by the ordinary people with slogans of Pakistan Zindabad and Ayub Zindabad, they did not know that Ayub was no more the President and that it was Yahya visiting them. Also it showed Ayub's popularity and ordinary folks' loyalty to Pakistan. The people of East Pakistan were loyal Pakistanis till the last; their leaders misled them and betrayed them; and the leaders of West Pakistan threw them out of Pakistan. The President discussed the possibilities of postponement of the election dates due to the floods. All political parties except Awami League were clamoring for postponement. Publicly, Mujib had taken a stand against Martial Law

regime but when he was face to face with Yahya, he accepted his decision meekly. The elections were postponed. This dual faced disposition is normal in a fairly large number of political leaders. Even Maulana Bhashani used to behave in a most cooperative manner when he met Yahya privately. I was present in one of such meetings when he said. "You keep occupying this chair. We are agitators; will continue to agitate. You sit where you are."

There was a clearly identifiable separatist movement in East Pakistan spearheaded by students and intellectual of the province. A movement takes place as a result of ideas conceived and propagated. Force of arms cannot counter such a movement, only opposing ideas can. The battle is won by the strength of the idea as well as by its presentation and propagation. Sitting in East Pakistan, one could clearly see quite early that there would be serious trouble if Awami League won with overwhelming majority. Awami League victory would ultimately lead to adding strength to the extremist elements demanding independence. Though, given the sentimental excitement and emotional built up against West Pakistan, *i.e.* pro-Pakistan parties. It was felt, however, that if they could form a united platform and put up joint candidates, margin of Awami League majority would be reduced, thereby influencing them to adopt a more reasonable attitude towards the integrity of the country. Keeping this in view and only to ensure reduction in Awami League majority I supported the efforts of Mr. Nurul Amin and Khawaja Khairuddin to forge a unity and understanding amongst Islam Passand Parties to meet the twin challenge, one to ideology and the other to the integrity of Pakistan from the forces of secularism and socialism in the coming election. We succeeded to a certain extent but after nominating 80 seats the exercise ran into trouble. I was suffering from acute back pain taking 10-20 pain killing tablets every day. The President took pity on me and ordered me to go to London that very day. 01 October 70, to get the operation done. When I protested, saying that for the election my presence would be useful, he said. "Election be damned. You go today." So I went and got the operation done successfully. But I was away for three weeks and in the meantime talks between the Islam Passand Parties broke down. We could not utilize the possibility of worthwhile display of Pro-Pakistan sentiments of the people of East Pakistan. But I was, and continued to be, blamed by PPP for "distributing sweets and biscuits" in Dacca. I plead guilty of making an effort to save Pakistan through political means.

When I met Sheikh Mujib after the elections he complained about my anti-Awami League stance. I told him I was only trying to help him because with a big majority he would find himself a slave in the hands of the extremists. Though at that time he said that it would not be so, subsequent events proved me right. He claimed, as all political leaders do, that he had such power over his people as would oblige them to do whatever he wanted, to sit down or to stand up if he so asked them. But in the end against all his promises personally given to the President that Six Points were negotiable he was forced to have an oath taking ceremony dedicating himself and all

MNAS to Six Points formula. If he had a reduced majority he would have had a greater flexibility of approach and option for a more compromising attitude.

To add to our problems in East Pakistan an unprecedented cyclone hit the southern regions of East Pakistan on the night of 12/13 November 1970. The cyclone and tidal-bore played havoc with human lives, their properties and the live-stock wealth in all the five coastal districts of East Pakistan. The worst hit were the Islands of Bhola (Barisal Distt), Hatia (Naokhall Distt), Sandwip (Chittagong Distt) and almost the entire District of Patuakhali. The damage caused by this calamity was beyond any comprehension. The exact death toll was not known for many days. Official figures, however, showed 1,94,803 dead and 13,906 missing. This calamity put all electioneering in the background for a moment, but the wily politicians, obsessed with the election victory or defeat, did not miss the opportunity of exploiting the tragedy for their political gains. They capitalized on it and further consolidated their position by projecting anti-West Pakistan slogans, criticizing alleged apathy of the Central Government and advocating full autonomy, some even going to the extent of demanding complete independence as a solution of the geographical isolation and the utter inability of West Pakistan to be useful even during peace. In their slander mongering, they did not even spare the Army.

The stupendous task of mobilizing and providing relief to the survivors of cyclone and burying the dead was too much for the Provincial Government, and as such, the Armed Forces willingly extended their support logistically, physically and morally to alleviate human sufferings. Initially, the only thing visible was the lone Army helicopter for 9-10 hours a day without let. This was supplemented by Army Engineers LCT and PAF's C-130.

The Naval efforts and the troops, which were actually moved out on 13 and 14 November, were not visible to the general public and the Press for a day or so, hence became the subject of controversy. However, the Armed Services went about their job in their usual quiet manner. Army took over the task of coordinating the receipt and dispatch of relief material to the affected areas, utilizing all available resources, supervising the distribution to the afflicted, burial of the dead and disposal of animal carcasses. The task was gigantic and the resources were meager. But, by then the whole world had been moved by the foreign press/radio, and relief from all over the globe started pouring in. The handling of foreign aid and aircraft was again a difficult task but the Armed Forces saw to a well coordinated and smooth organization of this relief work.

However, the quiet effort of the Armed Forces was misrepresented in the public and the press. It was termed as the apathetic attitude of the Administration towards the calamity. Strangely enough, they also described it a 'conspiracy' of the Centre to devastate East Pakistan. The press and the political leaders both branded the absence of

West Pakistani politicians as a display of 'anti Bengali' attitude. The misunderstanding thus caused led to several political controversies in which foreign press also got involved; it dragged itself into local politics. It was said that the sense of geographical isolation, which East Pakistan felt during the 1965 War, gave rise to Six Points demand and the cyclonic calamity reinforced the theory. Delhi-based foreign press correspondents added fuel to the fire. They focused their entire attention on the bitterness and East West relations, bringing into prominence the hatred which the autonomy-seeking Bengali nationalist leaders had against the Central Government. It appeared as if they had assumed the responsibility of bringing home to every East Pakistani the disadvantages of dependence on the Centre and West Pakistan alike and the advantage of becoming a fully autonomous state. While the exponents of Six Points had avoided talking of secession on the eve of election, foreign media people made sure of its mention by asking direct as well as Indirect questions about aid from West Pakistan.

The anti-West Pakistan propaganda continued to escalate. Even the Relief Commissioner, a CSP officer, started accusing the Central Government of apathy, demanding more and more helicopters from West Pakistan. I was on my way back to Pakistan after my operation of slipped disc and was performing Umra when I heard the news of the tragedy. I had been allowed medical leave and was advised rest for six weeks but I hurried back to Dacca where I found, a crisis having developed in relations between the civil and the military arms of the Government. Admiral Ahsan was the Governor and Gen. Yakub the Martial Law Administrator, both very fine persons and good administrators. The rehabilitation Commissioner, an extremist Bengali nationalist, would daily issue statement, accusing West Pakistan and the Central Government of lethargy, insensitiveness and disregard for the misery of the people of West Pakistan. Saadullah, Colonel Staff of 14 Div, was an upright soldier and had the common weakness from which all army officers suffer, that of being blunt and forthright. The two had clashed during the relief coordination meetings giving birth to two hostile camps. On the morning when I reached the office I found there a few Secretaries of the Government of East Pakistan waiting to see the Governor. They pleaded that I should take over the operation of cyclone relief work; they would not work, they said, under any other military official. I went to see the Governor who repeated what the civil officials had said. I told the Governor that my back wound was still raw and that the doctors had advised me not sit in a chair for long hours otherwise I might suffer back pain throughout my life. He appreciated, was sympathetic but insisted that i had to come in otherwise civil-military relations would not normalize. I had no option but to accept the responsibility of coordinating relief work. It was the month of Ramazan. We used to start work after *tarawih* at 9:30 p.m. and finish by 12 O'clock at night. It was hard and arduous work involving allocation of sorties of aircraft, helicopters, boats and vehicles along with equipment, material and food for each consignment. Arrangements had to be made to receive foreign aid, and consignments from West Pakistan. Soon I was able to create harmony and understanding between the warring groups. The relief

operation was so successful that after the cyclone not a single person died of hunger, disease or any other man-made cause. But in the process, I literally broke my back. The wound was raw and the side muscle weak. I will carry the pain and discomfort to the grave but with the comforting knowledge that this was for service to the country. Bangladesh was again hit by cyclone in 1991. But disease, hunger and inadequately organized in thousands of deaths and burning of dead bodies.

The same day I came to know that British units on their way back from Singapore were to land in the area of Patuakhali to carry out flood-relief operations. As the Central Government had agreed to this politically unwise step we could not stop their landing. I was however, horrified to note that while foreign troops would be landing on our soil, not a single Pakistani soldier would be in the area to receive them. I hurried down to the cantonment and met the MLA. We discussed the civil-military relationship which in the opinion of Gen. Yakub also required improvement. I was able to convince him that the British contingent should be properly received. This was done eventually: they were received by the Brigade Commander of the area.

As accusation of tardy response from West Pakistan persisted, to expose callousness of Bengalis themselves I asked the Commissioner Relief Operation: to organize Sari collecting points in Dacca. Obviously, Saris were unlikely to come from West Pakistan or anywhere else. Several points were set up and appeal broadcast from Radio and television. There was pathetic response from people of Dacca. We did not get Saris but the step shut up anti-West Pakistan propagandists. This propaganda was so virulent and full of venom as was not possible to think that it would be directed against one's own people and Government. But it was, and the sole purpose was to further the cause of the separatists and Bengali nationalists. They exploited every possible opportunity to discredit Government of Pakistan and to provoke hatred against West Pakistan. Army did whatever it could to help their brothers in East Pakistan. When the politicians found that people were developing a soft corner for the Army, they started false accusations of rape etc. There were instances where dead bodies buried by the Army Jawans were taken out of the graves by the close relatives to get photographs taken by the foreign press in return for a few rupees. Accusation would then follow that West Pakistanies were not burying the dead.

The catastrophe proved to be a blessing in disguise for the political parties and leaders who were taking part in the elections half-heartedly, or had lagged behind in their campaign or feared defeat. Such elements voiced the demand for postponement of elections. They were never sure of their victory over Awami League candidates. Those who had some kind of a hope of returning to the Assembly, probably, did not want their existence in isolation in a House dominated by Awami League. Whatever may be the motive, they abstained from contesting elections.

With the increasing number of withdrawals, elections appeared to have become a one-sided affair. Awami League, who even otherwise had been leading throughout, did not face any competition worth the name. They were expected to raise some Issue on the eve of election to fan and exploit the feelings of Bengali nationalism, but they were spared the effort: they only had to move their lips the rest was done by nature, the local press and the foreign correspondents.

It appeared that DESTINY was leading us up the path of separation. Firstly, Mujib's public trial had acted as a catalyst for Bengali nationalism which though in existence since the inception of Pakistan had got spurred by the trial. Then came Yahya with his one man one vote and disintegration of one unit thereby opening up possibility of permanent majority and rule by East Pakistan, infusing fears in the minds of West Pakistan of a number of repercussions in political as well as economic sectors. The floods followed by cyclones of unprecedented fury helped in the generation of anti-Pakistan feelings. Mujib and Bhutto came up simultaneously as leaders with identical ambitions of being heads of state. Mujib with greater vole power but with lesser brain power was pitted against brilliant, ambitious and ruthless Bhutto.

The Army had been ruling over Pakistan for a long time. All political leaders wanted to get rid of them, and probably rightly so. Army has no right to rule. They may come in to restore law and order but they should hand over power to the civilian authority as soon as possible. According to Mr. Bhutto there were three powers in Pakistan Awami League, People's Party and the Army. Mujib with lesser brain power was likely to take on the Army head-on. The brilliant man maneuvered in such a manner as to create a situation where the Army destroyed the Awami League and in the process got destroyed themselves leaving the field to PPP in the area of its strength - West Pakistan.

All political parties and their activities were banned after imposition of Martial Law in 1958. Though the political parties were banned, students unions were allowed to exist and function. Politicians and their ideas found students unions as convenient vehicles to influence and establish trends. In East Pakistan student unions became the most powerful anti-government organizations. Students Action Committee of East Pakistan was a force to be reckoned with. They had established branches down to primary level. Their programme was to struggle for the implementation of Six Points of Awami League and 11 Points of the students. They acted as a vanguard of political thought and demands of East Pakistan. They were ahead all the time; invariably they demanded more than the political parties did. They were to express their ideas through virulent speeches in the safe sanctuary of the Dacca University. The students had managed to make the University campus a no man's land, a safe haven for rebels. Police was not allowed to enter the University area.

The power, influence and effectiveness of the students could not be comprehended by the people of West Pakistan. When the students projected any new thought and

demand, political parties would tamely own it up. When they launched a movement and called for a strike, the whole province obeyed the instructions; nothing would move on wheels, pedestrians would be seen walking bare-footed. The call was obeyed down to the village levels with students of the primary level ensuring obedience. It would not be wrong to say that even birds were hesitant to fly on the day of *hartal*.

The student organizations defied lawful and legal authority of the Government whenever they thought it fit to do so. Their philosophy was nationalistic, socialistic and anti-Islam. Each and every step for integration of the country on the basis of a Pakistani nationhood was opposed by the students. Mr. A.S.M. Rab, a student leader of EPSL, articulated explicitly the views of the students community when he said on 17 August 1970, "We want to declare that those who are below the age of twenty four have dreams of a new map, formation of a new country and a new nation". His rival students union EPSU declared on 22 November 1970. "The remedy for all their ills lay in establishing independent Peoples Democratic East Bengal."

As the election date approached there was greater and more vivid crystallization of political ideas in East Pakistan. The Awami League had agreed to take part in the election as it thought there was a chance for it to gain control of the Government through peaceful and constitutional means. At the same time. It encouraged students and radicals to keep the pressure on through calls for establishment of Bangla Desh and if need be to achieve their aims through violent means. The trend was clearly visible when even Maulana Bhashani asked for an independent State of East Pakistan under a Red banner with four stars. My reading of the situation was that except for Muslim League all other worthwhile political parties had a vision of independent region. Awami League wanted a Bangla Desh. NAP (Wali Khan Group) was for Bangla Desh pro-Moscow. Maulana Bhashant wanted a Pro-Peking Bangla Desh. I may dare to say that even Jamaat-i-Islami was for a Muslim Bengal. The odds were heavily loaded against a centralized system prevailing in Pakistan.

AFTER ELECTIONS

Elections were over by January, 1971. Awami League had won all but two seats of East Pakistan in National Assembly by virtue of which they had become the largest single party in the National Assembly. The annulment of the principle of parity had thus created an unusually complex situation. It was to unravel this complexity that political appraisal started crystallizing. The Intelligentsia who happened to be the protagonists of Bengali Nationalism were determined to use the election victory for the achievement of Bangla Desh. The younger generation wanted outright separation. A compromising solution was also floated whose advocates claimed that its acceptance would take the wind off the sails of those who were pleading for a completely independent Bangla Desh the concept of a virtual confederation with a common Head of State in rotation. It was being suggested that such an arrangement might, through a historical process of evolution, lead to a happy federation or a peaceful parting of the ways. There were pressures building up in West Pakistan, too, which undermined the established concept of one country. Mr. Bhutto declared "that without consensus any future constitution would indeed be a barren exercise." He hoped the Awami League would not "bull-doze the issue through the process of brute majority," and propounded the unprecedented and impracticable theory of two majority parties.

The need for a reconciliation was urgently felt. The leaders were supposed to overcome and eliminate frustration, suspicion and hatred. Time had come for frank discussions to arrive at a compromise and mutually acceptable solution to the constitutional problem. The need was to resolve the difficulties with understanding, restraint and utmost care. What was actually being initiated was a head-on collision which would lead to a major disaster *i.e.* dismemberment of the country.

Historically, Six Points were the outcome of a particular environment in which it occurred to the East Pakistani mind that they could never hope to have their due share of power under centralized system of government. However, with the dissolution of One Unit abolition of the principle of parity, the situation was completely altered; the set of circumstances responsible for the creation of suspicion was no longer there. Obviously, the Bengalis were now looking forward to ruling over whole of Pakistan. It were now the West Pakistanies who talked of protection against the brute majority of East Pakistan, a fantastic reversal of the roles, apprehensions and claims. Legal Framework Order that had been issued by President Yahya Khan restricted constitution making to 120 days. Awami League thought that the period was adequate. However, the People's Party leadership felt otherwise; they wanted a longer period for reappraisal of respective view points to arrive at a compromise, and hence the demand for pre-session discussions.

While parleys were going on at country-wide level between the People's Party and the Awami League, I thought it worthwhile to start some sort of dialogue with the Awami League at least to maintain law and order at the provincial level. I suggested to the Governor Admiral Ahsan that such a dialogue would be helpful and he should call Sheikh Mujibur Rahman for discussion. The Governor, however, said that as he had not been given any direction by the President he could not have any meaningful discussion. I knew the reason for this reservation. Rumors had been floated by West Pakistani Leaders (People's Party) blaming Ahsan of closeness to Awami League. Having failed to convince the Governor, I approached General Yakub, the Martial Law Administrator, to take the initiative. He too declined and would not get involved. I then asked for permission to meet Mujib myself. I considered it important for the future of Pakistan that Mujib's views were known and some influence projected on him to counter the pressure of extremist ideas. The permission was granted.

I met Mujib at the residence of a common friend, Mr. Mujtaba of Mughal Tobacco Company. Mujib started the conversation by complaining that I had opposed him and helped Islam Passand Parties during election. I told him that I accepted his charges. I had, I said, opposed him, no doubt but with no bad intention: my efforts were indirectly meant to help him in the long run. In my opinion his success with a reduced majority would have been in his own interest as it would have given him greater freedom of action and maneuvering. I explained that with the thumping majority which he had got he was virtual a slave of Six Points and hence, in my opinion, a weaker man. He did not agree with this view and said at a loud pitch (as was usual with him): "I am the Bangla Bandhu. If I tell them to stand up they will stand up and if tell them to sit down they will sit down." He did not accept my appraisal of his position, but we had a friendly discussion of the future constitution of Pakistan. He agreed that of his Six Points, the three that generated opposition from West Pakistan related to two currencies, control over foreign exchange earnings by each Wing, and separate negotiations for aid/loans from other countries.

Mujib volunteered to drop the concept of two currencies. On negotiation for aid he was willing to have a Pakistan - level team with majority members from the Wing where a particular project was to be executed. It was not an objectionable suggestion, rather a positive and healthier one. About foreign exchange, East Pakistan had come to realize that situation had changed and West Pakistan's earnings amounted to 54% and therefore it would gain by inclusion of this point, and therefore it would be East Pakistan's interest to drop it. It was quite clear that it was possible to resolve the political differences between West and East Pakistan. Unfortunately, no such intention was forthcoming from the powers that be or the West Pakistani leadership. On the other hand, every effort was made to accentuate the differences and confront each other. I submitted a written report to Gen. Yakub on the meeting. The report was submitted to the President but the anti East Pakistan advisers around him did not allow him to heed

the opportunity that existed at that time. Later, during March 1971 a belated effort was made but it was unproductive for reasons which we will discuss later. Timing is very important in resolving problems. A solution may be correct and acceptable today but the same may become out of tune after some time, and hence unacceptable. The severing of the air link provided opportunity, to the extremists to demand complete independence. This served Bhutto's aim as well.

However, the official stance of the Awami League continued to be constitutional. They wanted to take advantage of the decisive victory they had won in the general Elections. They, therefore, instantly started giving final touches to the draft constitution, and while doing this they were conscious of their responsibility as the majority party to submit a Bill recommending a constitution for Pakistan. Sheikh Mujib was confident of getting the Bill passed, even if it was based on his party's programme of Six Points. The LFO had not imposed the normal requirement of two third majority and as Awami League had the absolute, though simple majority they saw no reason for its rejection by the House. He also expressed the hope that the President would authenticate the Constitution without delay and that the power would be transferred to the elected representative of the nation within a reasonable time.

The extremists kept the pressure on. Every move or utterance of West Pakistani leaders was viewed with suspicion and treated as a conspiracy against East Pakistan. Voicing their views even Mujib said it publicly that "the victory of Six Points will be achieved even if the people of Bangla Desh have to face bullets". Some other AL leaders said that if the constitution based on Six Points was not authenticated by the President, they would make a unilateral declaration of independence.

President Yahya visited Dacca during the second week of January. He had extensive discussions with Mujib and his team and point by point asked for their explanation of Six Points programme. It transpired that various members of Mujib's team had different interpretation ranging from secessionists approach to a well-knit federal system. The President was disappointed by hardening of Mujib personal attitude. Whereas before the elections Mujib was submissive and very cooperative and had unreservedly promised flexibility in East Pakistan demands, he now showed aggressiveness and rigidity taking cover under the well known reality of being in majority and exploited the theme of people's demand. This was considered betrayal of the trust by Yahya. Before the elections Mujib had convinced Yahya that he was using Six Points only to win the election and that he would change his stance once he was elected. Yahya found that instead of lowering their demands in an attitude of cooperation and understanding the East Pakistan leaders were becoming inflexible; they were talking in terms of ruling West Pakistan for the next twenty years as West Pakistan had done earlier.

However, hiding his emotions and conclusions, when questioned by foreign journalists at Dacca Airport the President declared that Mujib shall be the next Prime Minister of Pakistan. This announcement was well received in Dacca.

In the backdrop of rumors of his overthrow by General Hamid, when asked by BBC correspondent whether he was still in power the President said. "Very much so" Yahya flew to Karachi and went straight to Larkana on 17 January to meet Mr. Bhutto. This was yet another sore point with East Pakistanis. While in Dacca he had not taken the trouble of visiting Sheikh Mujib in his house in Dhanmandi, even when invited, but had now gone to his enemy's house in Larkana; to hatch a conspiracy against people of Bengla Desh, so they said. Sore with Mujib's hardening attitude which he considered betrayal, the President was receptive to Bhutto's evaluation of the situation. They suspected Mujib's Intentions, even his loyalty to Pakistan.

I was not present in Larkana so I do not know what transpired there. But General Omar told me later that Bhutto's theory was accepted. What was his theory? According to General Omar, the President should test the loyalty of Mujib by postponing the National Assembly session. If Mujib accepted the postponement he should be considered a loyal Pakistani, if he did not, then obviously he was disloyal. Mr. Bhutto's critics say that if the reverse had been applied to Mr. Bhutto how would he have come out a loyal or a disloyal Pakistani that is if the National Assembly had met on 3 March as announced.

The President asked Mr. Bhutto to visit East Pakistan and meet Mr. Mujib to resolve their differences. Mr. Bhutto arrived in Dacca on 27 January with a high-powered delegation and had extensive discussions with Mujib and Awami League leader for 3 days. The talks were inconclusive but Mr. Bhutto promised to continue the dialogue. Main difference centered around the question of sharing power. Mr. Bhutto was of the view that due to geographical separation; and other historical reasons domination of one wing by other would not be a rational situation. To frame a constitution in which power is denied to one wing would thus in his view, be a fruitless exercise. Mujib and his party held the view that framing of constitution and forming of government were two separate exercises. They refused to accept that they had to agree to share power before they framed the constitution

The hijacking of Indian aircraft by the so-called Kashmir Liberation Front members was viewed with considerable misgivings in Dacca. Unfortunately, it took place at a time when Mr. Bhutto was still in Dacca. On return from there, he met the hijackers at Lahore Airport on February 2 and expressed his solidarity with them. He should have been more cautious; hijacking could have been sponsored by the Indian government to find an excuse to sever air link between East and West Pakistan. The Indian move would aim at reviving memories of geographical isolation suffered by East Pakistan during 1965 war which had led East Pakistan intellectuals to reemphasize their demand

for complete independence. Mujib called it a conspiracy by vested interests to undermine and frustrate the Six Points by delaying convening of the National Assembly. Bhutto who was acclaimed as far more intelligent should have seen the implications of hijacking incident much more clearly than Mujib. His handshake with the hijackers could not be without a political purpose because immediately the plane was blown up. The Indians instantly reacted and closed the air route over India. Pakistan was forced to fly its aircraft via Sri Lanka which luckily had a friendly and bold government. Without Sri Lankan's permission to land, even this tenuous aerial link between East and West Pakistan would have been broken or put to severe strain. C-130 military aircraft would not have been able to fly direct to Dacca without landing for refueling. That facility Sri Lanka provided.

On 6 February I got an order from Brigadier (later Major General) Iskandar-ul-Karim, CMLA HQ that the President wanted Mr. Mujib to come to Islamabad for a meeting for clarification of certain points. I range up Mujib and conveyed the message, asking for the date he would go as I had to arrange for his passage etc. He said. "Where is the necessity of another meeting? The President was here only a few days back. We had extensive discussion. In any case we have to, as majority party in the Assembly, prepare and present the constitution. I and my party are busy doing that. My party executive committee is meeting on 14, 15 and 16 February to consider the draft of the constitution. Instead of my going there the President himself should come over to Dacca latest by 21 February so that he is fully briefed by me." I conveyed his views to Brigadier Karim; he was not happy with Mujib's response.

In the meantime, reaction to the calling of Mujib to Islamabad was severe, it was subjected to harsh criticism in the Awami League circles. They insisted that he should not fall a prey to the conspiracies being hatched by Bhutto; the President and the Army, in their view, were once again seen as safeguarding privileges and domination of West Pakistani exploiters and looters. They said that Mujib was being called to Islamabad so that he should be killed there; according to them Shurawardy was killed by Intelligence Agency of West Pakistani in Beirut. Three Federal Ministers alongwith Brigadier Karim arrived in Dacca on 9 February to persuade Mujib but to no avail. Mujib refused to go to Islamabad. Great propaganda mileage was got out of his refusal by his detractors as a sign of his disloyalty. I spoke to him again and eventually he agreed, though reluctantly, to reach Islamabad on 19th February. This was conveyed to HQ CMLA. Mr. Bhutto without any doubt must have come to know of the acceptance by Mujib. The test theory was about to fall. People in East Pakistan thought that to make sure that Mujib shows defiance to the orders of the President. Bhutto issued a statement on 18 February saying that Dacca would be a slaughter house for West Pakistanis and that West Pakistan MNA's would be held "double hostages". Mujib rang me up and said that he was not going to Islamabad. "If Dacca was butcher house for West Pakistan then Islamabad was butcher - house for East Pakistanis," he said. Thus, yet another chance of

arriving at a political understanding was frustrated. We were now clearly on a collision course and heading towards confrontation between East and West Pakistan.

The President called a meeting of all Governors and MLAs for 22 February. Ahsan and Yaqub were to attend from East Pakistan. I was however, called a few days earlier to meet the President. I, along with Gen. Peerzada, met the President in his office on 19 February. Our meeting went somewhat like the following narrative. As soon as we sat down the President said, "I am going to sort out that bastard". I said, "Sir, he is no longer a bastard. He is an elected representative of the people and now represents whole of Pakistan." Yahya was really angry and had already made up his mind to postpone the National Assembly session. I said, "That will lead to military action." "So let it be". he said. I said, "Sir you have four possible occasions to take strong action. You may take it now. I do not suggest it. Let the session take place. The second occasion will arise when Mujib presents his proposed constitution and the West Pakistani leaders (not you) find it unacceptable, then they should come to you and you may take action. That also I do not recommend as I suggest that the West Pakistani leaders should take political steps to get the proposed constitution amended suitably by taking all the measures in accordance with established parliamentary practices. Supposing the bill is bull-dozed through the Parliament and the House passes the Bill without caring for West Pakistani view, it will come to you for signature, you may refuse to sign the Bill and take military action. I do not recommend that either. I recommend that you hand over power to Mujib. I assure that he will be the most unpopular man in East Pakistan within six months". The President did not accept my recommendations and insisted on strong action. Having failed to convince him I said, "Sir, in case of strong action you must appear to be even handed, some sort of action should be taken against West Pakistani leadership as well". I then added "I have seen that in East Pakistan if your action is not sudden and strong the situation escalates and then gets out of hand. If you decide to take action, as you are planning to do, then please impose ban on political activity, meetings etc and impose press censorship in both wings. Otherwise it will be impossible to control the situation. He agreed to this suggestion but did not implement it, all that he did was postponement of the Assembly session.

At the end of the interview I requested to be heard in private as I had met Mujib before I came and wanted to convey to the President what I had discussed with him. Gen. Peerzada left and we were alone. It was then that I told the President what Mujib had said, "I have no differences with Bhutto. There are no differences on Six Points. We both want the Army to be out of politics. They have been ruling the country for too long. The difference is that I want the Army out of power, he wants the Army destroyed. He agrees with Six Points. But he wants share in power. During our meeting Bhutto had proposed that as the Prime Minister will be from East Pakistan, the President will be from West Pakistan. "As you (Mujib) will be the Prime Minister as leader of East Pakistan, I (Bhutto) as leader of West Pakistan should be allowed to nominate the President, was what Bhutto said. I said that I could not allow him to do that. I was

leader of whole of Pakistan and as majority leader of the House it was my prerogative to nominate the President who will no doubt be from West Pakistan. I also told him that I had already promised the position to somebody. Bhutto retorted by saying, Supposing I nominate the same person you have in mind. I said even then I should not abdicate my authority and responsibility." Then Mujib said, "You know Farman what would have happened if I had allowed him to nominate the President? He would have nominated himself and then dismissed me within 10 days". I related this story and asked the President to reconsider his decision about Mujib. He having been disappointed earlier with what he thought to be betrayal by Mujib said that he could not trust him. I got up to leave. Unexpectedly he came to the door to see me off and what he said then shook me, "I am not afraid of myself. West Pakistan is my base. I have to look after it." I understood and, got the feeling that he was under tremendous pressure from the Generals in West Pakistan to do what Bhutto wanted. Since his early days in politics Mr. Bhutto had specially cultivated friendship with senior Army Officers. He had prompted Yahya to take over from Ayub and he was in regular communication with others.

The background to Yahya's fear was the story which was going round the country during his Dacca visit that Hamid had taken over from Yahya. This was reinforced by Hamid's presence with Yahya on all occasions in civilian dress. BBC correspondent in Dacca pointedly asked Yahya whether he was still in power. To which Yahya had replied, "Very much so". During a visit to HQ CMLA I asked Brigadier Haider Jang, who was Brig ML Affairs, about the story. He told me that HQ MLA Lahore had thoroughly inquired into it and found that one night at mid-night Mr. Mahmud Ali Kasuri rang up Mr. Mahmud of APP to say that Hamid had taken over from Yahya. When asked whether this was from his boss (*i.e.* Bhutto)? He said Yes. So the story got around. Authenticity to the threat was provided by show of friendliness between Hamid and Bhutto during Larkana get-together.

The National Assembly had been scheduled to meet on 3 March to frame a constitution for the country. The election had been held, and Armed Forces had performed their side of responsibilities with grace and neutrality. But President Yahya made one mistake. He kept open the office of the President available for grabbing. A tussle thus ensued in the name of equity for the rights of two wings of Pakistan. We saw a new theory being propounded. The theory indirectly indicated a desire to have two Prime Ministers in one country. One in East and the other in West Pakistan. A news item had earlier appeared emanating from a American news agency correspondent saying that Mr. Bhutto in an interview with that correspondent had suggested having two Prime Ministers. Awami League also hinted towards that and later officially asked for two constituent assemblies, two constitutions and two governments very nearly a confederation. The political leadership of the two wings had adopted an irreconcilable attitude. Yahya was caught between the horns of a dilemma. If he favored West Pakistan the Army would be dubbed as West Pakistan and face an uprising in East

Pakistan. If he supported East Pakistani leaders he would be overthrown as some active generals were with Mr. Bhutto and whole-heartedly supported him in his "crusade" against East Pakistani domination. "We will not allow East Pakistan to rule over us," was the accepted theme in West Pakistan.

If there were not to be two Prime Minister then Mr. Bhutto wanted a share in the Central Government by having his nominee as President of the Republic. The nominee was to be himself. As Mr. C.W. Chaudhry has said. There were two Ps available to the leaders of political parties. P for Pakistan and P for Power. Both the leaders of West Pakistan and East Pakistan chose the P for power."

During my two hours meeting with President Yahya on February 10, I had failed to convince him to let the political process go on to culminate in handing over power to the leader of the majority party in the National Assembly. I came out and went to Peerzada's room and requested him to try to persuade the President. He went in and came out saying that the President did not wish to change his mind. Then Peerzada asked me. "What do you think should be done." I said in Urdu "*Jhaun-pari mill rahlhal, mahal nahi mill raha. Jhaun-parl lay lain.*" He said in English "What do you mean" I said. "Sir, we can get a weak centre, not a strong one. We should try to have relationship between East and West Pakistan with Katcha dhaga. We can make the ties stronger later on as East Pakistan will need our assistance."

The meeting of the Governors and MLAs took place on 21/22 February. I was not allowed to attend the meeting as I was neither a Governor nor MLA But what was being decided perturbed me. Confrontation with Mujib after he had got majority votes would lead to serious trouble and may harm the unity of Pakistan. I met a number of people with influence. They shared the view that the situation was critical but were unwilling to take the right step. In desperation I went to see Omar at his residence in Harley Street. He was Chief of National Security and enjoyed the confidence of both Yahya and Hamid. I took about an hour to explain my point of view and my worries about the future of the country. I had only official dealing with the people who were in power. I had no personal understanding or equation to influence them. Omar was close to them. I requested, pleaded and virtually begged him to use his influence to avert the impending tragedy. He promised. He might have tried to do what he promised but he was the one who forced Yahya to take military action in Dacca when the talks failed. He himself told me that but for him Yahya would not have taken military action. So my pleadings had gone waste.

INTO THE BLIND ALLEY

To attend the meeting of Governors and MLAS called for 22 February, we were staying in East Pakistan House, where is now located the Supreme Court. Governor Ahsan and MLA Yakub were in the Governor's suite and I was in the VIP wing. Very early in the morning of 23 February following the MLAs meeting I was called over by Ahsan and Yakub who perhaps had kept awake the whole night. They were discussing the situation. I was given a briefing on what had transpired in the meeting with the final verdict that it had been decided to postpone the National Assembly session. My immediate reaction was, "That means military action." Yakub agreed with what I surmised. All three of us held the unanimous opinion that the decision was wrong. We decided to let the President know of our views in writing. Yakub wrote a letter to Gen. Peerzada in his own hand with Ahsan and I contributing. The letter made it quite clear that in case of military action Indian intervention was likely to take place; the Indians would not miss the opportunity and take full advantage of the situation to be created by the military action. One might ask why Ahsan and Yakub had not expressed their views in strong terms in the previous evening's meeting. The same question might have arisen in the minds of Peerzada and the President on receipt of our joint letter. They must have thought that I was responsible for this reaction. I was ordered to go back to Dacca: I left the same day.

Ahsan and Yakub also returned to Dacca on 27th February. On enquiry as to what happened after I left they told me that they were called by the President who said, "I am willing to accept your views. But go and convince Mr. Bhutto. He is the one who is insisting on postponement." So off they went to Karachi where both of them met Mr. Bhutto. According to them Mr. Bhutto said, "You need not be apprehensive about the reaction of East Pakistan. Awami League is a bourgeois party. It is not a party of the masses. It cannot fight a guerilla war. There will be no violent conflict in East Pakistan etc". They returned to Rawalpindi and apprised the President of the failure of their mission. They were told to return to Dacca and tell Mujib on 28 February that postponement would be announced on 1 March. To this I reacted by saying, "please do not warn them before hand. They will make thorough preparation in the meantime. But Governor Ahsan had orders and Mujib, Tajuddin and Kamal arrived on the evening of 28th to meet him. Ahsan informed them of the President's decision about the indefinite postponement of NA session. Tajuddin's reaction was sharp and violent. He said, "We knew all along that you will not hand over power to us through constitutional means." However, with gloom and depression on the faces of all, lengthy discussion was not possible. After a pause Mujib asked his two colleagues to go out and when he was alone he said, "Please give me a new date. I will be able to control the crowd." If Mujib wanted separation this postponement had created an ideal situation for him. He could exploit it

in his favor. But the very fact that he asked for a new date shows that his first priority was to become Prime Minister of Pakistan.

After Mujib had departed, three of us got into a huddle and continued to discuss the serious repercussions of the decision. We were of the opinion that "once a bullet is fired, East Pakistan is gone." We wanted to avoid confrontation, and decided to inform the President of our views once again. Ahsan drafted a historical signal which said. "I beg of you to announce a fresh date to-night. Tomorrow will be too late." A Signal had to be sent because despite our frantic efforts the Governor of the most sensitive and explosive province was not able to talk to the President on telephone. With great difficulty we got Gen. Hamid in Sialkot and requested him to convey our plea for a fresh date for the meeting of the National Assembly. But there was to be no response: fresh date was not to be announced on that crucial day.

When at noon on March 1, the announcement about postponement of the Assembly session was made the reaction of each and every individual of Bengali origin was violent; there was an intense feeling of having been betrayed. The whole Bengali nation was now on the war path. The die had been cast by the announcement. There is no doubt in my mind: break-up of Pakistan took place on March 1 with the announcement of postponement of the session, the subsequent events were only a natural follow through of the main event.

Within minutes of the announcement over the radio at 1305 hours people from various walks of life struck work and started gathering outside Hotel Purbani where Sheikh Mujib and his MNAS got into a session. The mob was armed with bamboo, sticks, spears, iron rods etc. The crowd at Dacca cricket stadium, where BCCP XI was playing against the International XI. reacted sharply to the announcement. They swarmed into the playing field shouting slogans against the postponement and demanded immediately closure of the match. This was promptly complied with and the players were escorted to safety. The entire staff at the Provincial Secretariat struck work and came out of their office immediately. The lawyers of Dacca High Court brought out a procession. All agitators, joined by groups of slogan chanting students, headed for Hotel Purbani to hear Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. In his Press conference at 1530 hours he expressed his determination to challenge, in a big way, the decision of postponement of the National Assembly. He called for a total '*hartal*' on 2 March in Dacca, to be followed by a province-wide '*hartal*' on 3 March, to measure his own strength and to make the administration feel the impact of the adverse public reaction to the Presidential announcement. Later that day, crowds gathered at Paltan Maidan to listen to the speeches by Tofail Ahmed a former President of EPSL and an MNA elect, and Mannan of Awami League labour front - Jatiyo Sramik League. It was evident from the militant mood of the crowd that they were not satisfied with mere speeches; they wanted action. Some miscreants set fire to the property of non locals in Jinnah Avenue area. This was followed by cases of looting in Nawabpur area. More alarming was the news from

Narayangan Rifle Club, where a gang of students forcibly took away 7 rifles and 3000 rounds of ammunition. PIA employees struck work in protest which brought the schedule of domestic flights to a standstill. People were seen gathering in small groups at various points in the city towards the evening, but they dispersed at nightfall.

The first of March thus came to an end with an uneasy atmosphere and the fear of persecution in the mind of non-local populace, the day also saw the ouster of Admiral S.M. Ahsan as Governor of East Pakistan: MLA General Yakub was charged with the additional responsibility to act as Governor. The removal of Ahsan left bad taste due to the manner it was done. He requested for a fresh date. Awaiting reply. Ahsan, Yakub and I were discussing the general situation in the Governor House. The time was about 10 PM on 1 March. The telephone bell rang. Ahsan picked it up. It was General Peerzada who asked for Yakub. Ahsan handed over the handset to Yakub, who after putting the telephone down said, "I am the Governor now." Ahsan said, "Fine!" Silence ensued. Ahsan started thinking loudly by saying, "I will take some time to pack up. I will get a boat to go to the Chittagong. My books are lying all over the place. I will vacate the house as soon as I can do." Yakub did not say a word of consolation. I expected him at least to say, "No Ahsan, I do not need the Governor House living rooms. You stay on as long as you like etc." Perhaps, he was too pre-occupied with his own thoughts. Yakub left for the cantonment. After seeing him off up to the cantonment I came back to Ahsan who had gone to his room. I saw him picking up things from one place and putting them at the other. He was lost in thoughts. He did not want to be Governor in the first place. Why did the President disgrace him like this? Is this the fate of people who serve their country with the greatest sincerity and devotion?

Interrupting his thoughts I said, "Sir, you are not going anywhere till we make arrangements for your travel to West Pakistan. You stay here." One would love to have a send off which Ahsan got on leaving the Governor House. His entire staff wept as he departed by helicopter on 4 March.

The dawn of 2 March was greeted by militant groups of student and workers who erected road blocks at various places on the streets of Dacca city. Arrangement had been made to make the '*hartal*' successful, and a great success it was. No vehicle could move on the streets, no business was carried out by anyone, and no office of civil government functioned. It was total '*hartal*'. Large processions were brought out from various places. In the forenoon, while they were trying to clear the Farm Gate, a stray army vehicle barged into the crowd from the opposite direction and the newly arrived Jawans were subjected to brickbats. This resulted in firing of 3/4 bullets in the air, coinciding with an incident in which a student was accidentally killed by his instructor with a .22 rifle in the same vicinity. The students capitalized on this, exhibited the blood stained shirt and the dead in the streets, and accused the Army for man-slaughter. This whipped up the emotions. Students held meetings condemning the postponement of the NA session and use of brute force by the Army. Iqbal Hall of Dacca University was

renamed "Sgt. Zahurul Haq Hall" and Jinnah Hall as "Joti Sen Hall." The national flag and photographs of the Quaid-i-Azam were burnt, and flag of '*Shahdin Bangla*' (Independent Bengal) was hoisted, this was followed by the lowering of national flag from many other official buildings including the Secretariat and the High Court. Miscreants thrived on the opportunity thus provided, and by the afternoon they looted and burnt many shops of non-Bengalis. Some houses of non-Bengalis were also ransacked. In the midst of this free-for-all. NAP (Muzaffar Group) held a public meeting at Paltan Maldan and Bengal National League at Baitul Mukarram. Prof. Muzaffar Ahmed and Mrs. Motia Chaudhry addressed NAP meeting while BNL meeting was addressed by Mr. Aatur Rehman and Mrs. Amina Begum. The fiery speeches made at these meetings further encouraged the miscreants. While moving homewards after the meetings they started plundering and burning shops of non-locals in the area of Jinnah Avenue, Nawabpur Road, Thateri Bazar, Kakrall, Shanti Nagar etc. An arms shop at Baitul was looted panic prevailed amongst the non-local communities of these areas. By the time it was dark, the situation had gone beyond the control of police and as a last resort and at the behest of the IG. Police, the Home Secretary and the Chief Secretary, curfew was imposed in the entire city from 2100 hours 2 March to 0700 hours 3 March. Troops, however, could not reach the respective places till 2230 hours due to numerous road blocks. Curfew was violated at a number of places as Sheikh Mujib had reportedly asked the people to resist the alleged repression by the Army. This was done despite the assurance conveyed to him on behalf of the President about the good intentions behind the postponement. The President had advised him to 'act coolly and calmly' and 'not to do anything to aggravate law and order.' But he continued defying the authority and inciting the people to take law in their own hands. On 2 March forces on duty had to open fire at more than one place. Total casualties on the day were 9 dead and 51 wounded.

In other towns the situation was comparatively better but at almost every place protest marches were taken out and national flags were burnt. In Comilla town, two EPR sepoys were stripped naked by the students. EPR FS section's telephone was taped and the detachment was harassed. Their office had to be shifted to EPR Wing Headquarters to ensure their safety.

By the morning of 3 March, everything came to a standstill. East Pakistan was virtually cut off from the rest of the world as communication links between Dacca and West Pakistan were taken over by Awami League. The only link which remained was the Army and Air Force telephones. Life remained at a standstill for the second consecutive day throughout the Province, and the 'hartal' of 3 March was again a complete success. As soon as curfew was lifted in the morning the miscreants restarted their activities of arson, loot and killing. Police and EPR patrolled the city area but were made almost ineffective. A few shops in Jinnah Avenue and Baitul Mukarram were ransacked and looted. The non-Bengalis of Nawabpur, Islampur and Thater! Bazar had to confine themselves within their houses, silently and helplessly watching the plundering of their

property at the hands of local goondas. It was the 'Raj' of lawlessness. The mood of the people was awfully violent. By 1500 hours a human sea of "Joy Bangla" chanting militants was seen at Paltan Maidan anxiously awaiting for the world "go" from their leaders Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who was to address them. Armed with bamboo sticks, they had come to hear the Declaration of Independence of 'Bangla Desh' from Bangla Bandhu. The EPSL carried 9 dead bodies to the meeting accusing the Army of killing thousands of people. The demand of "Shahdin Bangla" was written all over the faces. Sheikh Mujib, however, acted with restraint and condemned acts of arson, loot and killing. He told his listeners to remain peaceful and maintain harmony between local and non-locals. Sheikh Mujib expressed "sympathy" for the sufferers of lawlessness and tried to put confidence into the mind of non-Bengalis who were panic-stricken. He also demanded the lifting of curfew and guaranteed law and order if the troops were moved back to the barracks. He called for continuation of '*hartal*' and non-cooperation movement till the demands of people of 'Bangla Desh' were met, he urged upon the civil servants also to join the non-cooperation movement and asked people not to pay taxes. In a tone of an ultimatum, he gave the regime time up to 7 March to make up their mind for resolving the crisis and said he would announce his future line of action on that day. He did not lead any procession which was earlier planned by his young rebellious lieutenants. The crowd, though disappointed, obeyed their leader and dispersed.

In his heart, Sheikh Mujib was apprehensive of the intention of radical and Naxalite communists in the province who were looking for trouble. It was great disappointment for the subversive elements who had been waiting in hide for things to take a chaotic turn. The Sheikh tried to throw the blame on the extremist elements for engineering lawlessness under the guidance of Maulana Bhasani whose aim, according to him, was to discredit the Sheikh and bring him in conflict with ML authorities, seeing the mood of the people, he was also apprehensive of Maulana Bhashani stealing the show by out-bidding him in declaring independence which could undermine his position with his partymen and the masses. The Sheikh, at this stage, outwardly appeared under considerable pressure from his power-hungry partymen who wanted him to declare independent Bangla Desh unilaterally. The threat of communists, however, was worrying him even more and in order to maintain his grip over the people without coming in direct conflict with the extremist he advocated the formation of a Provincial Government under a Presidential Order as soon as possible.

The law and order situation in some other parts of the Province was even worse on 3 and 4 March. Chittagong, being worse hit, gave the look of an Indian town of pre-independence riot days of 1947. The local fanatics had gone berserk; they wanted to annihilate the entire non-local population. The act of kidnapping and raping of non-local young girls and throwing of children into burning houses were never heard of in Pakistan since its inception. But this is what was actually happening.

Innumerable lives were lost at Pahartall and other colonies of non-locals. Their properties were burnt and the treatment meted out to the children and women folk was simply stunning. It was an outburst of the simmering hatred towards non-Bengalis fanned by the opportunists. Khulna, Rangpur and Rajshahi also had their share of local and non-local clashes. The exact number of casualties at Chittagong may not be known but the local press put the death figures at over 100 with more than 300 wounded in two days. In Chittagong alone 1500 huts were burnt and 10,000 people rendered homeless. A Chief Petty Officer of Pakistan Navy, working for ISI, was also among the dead. In Khulna, the number of dead was 41. This was the state of affairs which sent the non-local population rambling towards Dacca airport in a bid to save their lives and their women and children. Dacca airport presented the sight of a 1947 Refugees Camp of the fleeing Indian Muslims awaiting their evacuation to Pakistan. The sight was pathetic. It also, in a way, reflected the mood of the local fanatics and the fact that Sheikh Mujib's assurance to the non-local populace for protection of their lives and property had failed to instill confidence in their minds and was no more than lip service.

The political situation in the Province was changing rapidly. There were occasions when immediate political decisions were required which would only be given by the President. His presence in Dacca was the need of the hour. Sheikh Mujib had already refused to sit in the RTC called by the President for 9th March. The Sheikh was due to speak on 7th March and something had to be done to take the wind out of the sail before he spoke. The President did not come, but announced 25 March as the new date for the inaugural session of the National Assembly. The tone of his broadcast on 6 March was very much resented by East Pakistanis and the Sheikh felt bitter at being held solely responsible for the crisis. Things were moving at such a fantastic speed that the end of first week of the month saw the exit of the MLA of the Province. He had requested the President to come to Dacca which the later refused to accept.

It was the evening of 4th March. Ex-Governor Ahsan was given a send off. Though the atmosphere was tense in Dacca, a large number of Ahsan's well-wishers had come to the airport. Ahsan was a very popular person in East Pakistan. People low and high, embraced him with great affection and there were very few who did not have tears in their eyes. He had won their hearts by friendly, fair and understanding attitude.

After seeing off Ahsan, we went to Yakub's house where I and Gen. Khadim and our wives had dinner with them. At about 10 PM the telephone rang, Yakub attended to it. We only heard "Yes, Yes, Yes. In that case accept my resignation." Both of us, I and Khadim, said loudly, "Convey our resignation as well". He did not, came back to us and said, "It as Peer (Gen. Peerzada). He said that the President was not coming to Dacca. So I have tendered my resignation as this situation demands responses which are in accordance with the ever changing development." We agreed with him but asked him why he did not convey our views as well. He said that would be taken as rebellion and all of us would be court martialled.

We were still discussing the latest development that the telephone rang again. It was Peerzada again who wanted me to come over to Rawalpindi and brief the President on the situation. Yaqub had resigned. Khadim was commanding the troops and hence only I could be spared from East Pakistan. A PIA flight used to depart from Dacca at about 11 PM. I asked my wife to go home and put a few things in my suite case, requested Yakub to allow me to go and see Mujib before departure so that my briefing to the President could be as complete as possible. I asked Khadim to tell PIA to wait for me. As there was state of emergency, PIA normally accepted such requests. Then I rang up Mujib and asked him whether I could come over to see him. Though it was getting late at night, he readily agreed. Firing was going on all over Dacca. I did not want to risk anybody else's life so I drove a small car myself to Mujib's house in Dhan Mandi. There was a cordon of security guards of Awami League. They knew me and I was allowed to enter the house. Mujib was waiting alone. As I was in a hurry I started the conversation without any preliminaries or pleasantries. I asked him, "Please tell me can Pakistan be saved?" My question revealed the seriousness of the situation and the agony in which we all were in East Pakistan. He said, "Yes it can be saved if somebody listens to us. So many people are being killed by the Army. They listen to Bhutto. They do not listen to me. Even now, even after all this, we are willing to discuss." Before he could elaborate I saw a shadow on the wall. I told him that somebody was listening (eaves-dropping). He got up saying there cannot be anybody. However on seeing the person I heard him say, "Bhai Tajuddin. Please come in." Tajuddin, the die-hard pro-India Awami Leaguer, came in and sat down. He hated West Pakistan and perhaps Pakistan itself. He was reputed to have been a Hindu up to the age of 8. I do not think this story was correct but it revealed adequately his mental makeup. Mujib told Tajuddin that Gen. Farman wanted to know if Pakistan could be saved. Tajuddin said, "Yes, it could be, but under a new formula. We cannot after all this butchery sit with Bhutto under the same roof. He is responsible for all this. Let the Assembly be divided into two houses, one for East and the other for West Pakistan. Each Assembly should write the constitution for its own wing. Then the two Assemblies should meet to write a constitution for Pakistan." I said, "Finally, you will have to sit with Mr. Bhutto." They said, "But that will be as equals." What they were suggesting was a formula for confederation. I told them this was not a solution to save Pakistan. However, I promised to convey their thoughts to the President when I met him, which I did.

In his demands, Sheikh Mujib had the support of almost all the prominent leaders of the Province. Maulana Bhashani thought it better at that moment to go along with the Sheikh. Nevertheless, NAP (Bhashani). NAP (Muzaffar) and Ataur Rahman's Bangla National League - along with the communists - were expected to cause trouble if Sheikh Mujib accepted anything short of an Independent Bangla Desh. While this was going on, President Yahya Khan sent a special message for Sheikh Mujib on 6 March asking him to exercise restraint and not to take irreparable decision and indicated that he would be coming soon and would offer him more than 6 points. The message was

handed over by Brig (later Lt. Gen.) Jilani. Mujib carried this message till creation of Bangla Desh and showed it to everybody who met him.

It had left for Rawalpindi on the night of 4 March. The flight came via Sri Lanka to Karachi after 6 hours flying. There was no direct flight readily available for Islamabad so I boarded the plane to Lahore where we changed to Fokker. At Lahore, while getting aboard I saw General Tikka Khan ahead of me. I immediately concluded that he was to replace Yakub. As our seats were adjacent, I asked, "Sir, when are you coming to Dacca." He said that he had been called to see the President who would give instructions. I told him that I was also going to see the President. I then in very broad outline gave a resume of situation in East Pakistan. As we knew him, Tikka Khan was a straight forward, honest, and obedient soldier, a man with determination and a strong will. He sounded very optimistic and thought he could handle the situation. However, he was not a politician the situation demanded, and when appointed Governor could not show flexibility, even when he wanted to, due to the habit of obeying superior's order and later to uncooperative attitude of Gen. Niazi. We both went straight from the airport to the CMLA HQ.

I was the first to be called to see the President. It was about 1100 hours on 5 March. I had expected the President to be in his office. Instead he was sitting in the rear verandah of his residential house. With him were General Hamid and Mr. Bhutto: all three were drinking. Yahya was bare-footed and had his legs on the table in front of him. I thought of Nero while Rome was burning. I saluted. He asked me to take a chair which I did. His next question was about the situation. I said, "Sir, what I am going to tell you is likely to embarrass Mr. Bhutto. May I request Before I could complete my sentence, Mr. Bhutto picked up his glass and went away to the adjacent room. I gave a detailed situation report telling him how grave the situation was and how an urgent action was required. I also informed him of my meeting with Mujib. When I told him that the situation had gone beyond six-points he said, "Come in the evening for dinner. I am recording a speech to meet the situation. We will discuss further in the evening."

General Hamid and General Tikka were there when I arrived in the evening. The President, I was told, was getting his speech recorded. Soon afterwards he came out; looked flushed and annoyed. He said, "Listen to my speech tomorrow. It has answers to your problems in East Pakistan." Then suddenly he turned towards General Hamid and said, "What have you done about Yakub. When is he going to be court martialled?" Hamid said, "Sir, I have ordered an inquiry. As soon as it gives its findings we will proceed further." Yahya looked at me and said, "I will court-martial all of you. Yakub has chickened out. He has left his post while on active duty." Knowing the charge to be a serious one I said, "But Sir, he has not left his post. He is still the Corps Commander. He has not handed over yet. He has only offered his resignation." On that he laughed. "Trying to defend your friend. He is my friend also." At the first opportunity I rang up

Yakub and asked him not to hand over. This was fortunate because General Khadim later told me that but for my message he was handing over and going to Sylhet to relax.

Before the dinner the President instructed Tikka to go to Dacca immediately. He was not to do anything about law and order. He was to keep the Army in the barracks. He expected the Bengalis to fight it out amongst themselves and the situation to become such that Army help would be asked for. This could be an appropriate attitude of the Army under normal conditions. But in East Pakistan Army was running the whole show. There was Martial Law. It was our duty to protect the life, property and honor of the people. We were shirking responsibility. I expressed my views but Tikka agreed to do as the President directed.

While we were flying to Karachi on our way to Dacca, the President's speech was broadcast over the intercommunication system of the aircraft. Mr. Bizenjo was also travelling by the same aircraft. As the doors were opened he said. "He has got what he wanted." "He" in this case was Mr. Bhutto. The general Impression was that the speech had been written by Mr. Bhutto.

When we were getting down to land at Dacca on March 7 the biggest gathering of approximately seven hundred thousand people was being addressed by Mujib. As the aircraft flew over them low one saw a sea of people. I turned toward General Tikka and said. "This is what happens in Dacca," meaning the situation was not as easy as in West Pakistan.

The speech was over by the time we reached the Martial Law Headquarters. Yakub was there looking small and dejected. A conference had to take place as the first thing Tikka had to face was an ultimatum from the Radio authorities that they wanted to rebroadcast the recording of the speech of Mujib and if they were not permitted to do so they would boycott the system. How could one allow virulent, poisonous anti-state speech to be broadcast over the government controlled media. But the people were with Mujib. Tikka referred the problem to the centre. HQ CMLA were fearful of declaration of unilateral independence. Anything less than that was acceptable. Mujib had, quite cleverly, not declared UDI. His change of plans was due to the threat which Gen. Khadim Hussain Raja, the GOC 14 Division, had conveyed to Mujib a day before. The Radio was allowed to broadcast the speech They would have done it in any case because from 7th onwards every agency of the government worked under Sheikh Mujib's order. The helplessness of the Central Government was totally apparent yet no political action commensurate with the collapsing situation was being taken from Rawalpindi.

THE GHOST GOVERNMENT

In his March 7 speech Mujib had called for continuation of 'non-violence' and non-cooperation movement on a large scale. Feeling the pulse of his people, he laid down the following pre-conditions for Awami League's participation in National Assembly session called for 25 March by the President.

- a. Immediate withdrawal of Martial Law;
- b. Transfer of power to the elected representative of the people;
- c. Withdrawal of troops to the barracks; and
- d. Enquiry into the incidents where Army opened fire and killed a number of people.

Besides these, the Sheikh directed the people not to pay taxes; all government/semi-government officials to continue observing '*hartal*': denial of railways and ports for military purposes: Radio, TV and Press to give only Bangal Desh oriented programmes; telecommunications to work only within "Bangla Desh": banks not to effect remittances to West Pakistan: Police to maintain law and order with assistance of Bengali EPR: and educational institutions to remain closed. By mentioning "Bengali EPR", he tried to undermine the loyalty of the troops that they owed to West Pakistant officers; he wanted them to obey the East Pakistani officers. In this he was giving hint to the Bengali troops to mutiny. The next day this was followed by Issuance of Awami League's directive which regulated governance. Stated in simple terms, he had taken over the government. A Parallel government had in reality been established.

The four demands got spontaneous support from every quarter in East Pakistan and also from some politicians of West Pakistan. The trade against the Army mounted when, besides hurling abuses, a serious effort was made to starve the Army within the confines of the cantonments. All information media, intellectuals, writers, poets and singers joined in mud-slinging against the Army, condemning it in all forums, including Radio and TV. The extent of their falsehood knew no bounds. Law and order situation deteriorated further when a large number of prisoners, both under trial and convicts, escaped by breaking open the jail gates at Dacca, Narayanganj, Comilla, Barisal and Bogra. This was obviously done with the connivance of the jail authorities who were dancing to the tune of Awami League. In Dacca alone 341 prisoners escaped. The news of mass collection of arms and ammunition at various places, including the Dacca University Campus, further aggravated the already grim situation. The Police Chief proved to be first to defect with his force fully cooperating and playing in the hands of Awami League Commands.

Despite the announcement by the President of a new date for National Assembly session and his expected arrival in Dacca in five or six days, the non-cooperation movement continued to gain momentum. It was soon joined by the officers and staff of Government, Semi-Government and autonomous bodies. The climax was reached on 12 March when all CSP and EPCS officers announced their formal support to Sheikh Mujib and their readiness to take orders from the Awami League High Command. It was obvious that these officers did not want to become a party to any action which the ML administration may decide to take.

When the senior officials of the Province met the new MLA General Tikka Khan on 7 March their attitude was that of indifference. It was obvious that they had their heart in the movement as they were part and parcel of the same out-fit. The result of all this was that the Provincial Secretariat was functioning at the Sheikh's residence in Dhanmandi Instead of Eden Building. All Government departments, including Radio, Television, Telephone and Telegraph, and Railways, were strictly following the directives of the Awami League High Command. Intelligence agencies, too, crossed the floor and joined Awami League camp. The 'ghost' government had come into being with the Police in the forefront. The height of defiance of ML authority was reached when the Chief Justice of Province refused to administer oath of office to the new Governor-designate. He was, obviously, acting under instructions of Awami League High Command. Sheikh Mujib not only refused to cooperate in the matter but also turned down an invitation to meet the Governor in the Governor's House and wanted the General to come to his Dhanmandi residence. Without the cooperation of civil administration. It was becoming almost impossible for Martial Law authorities to run the show, particularly when the mood of the entire people of the province was that of defiance. It was here that the need for a severe action was felt to crush this rebellion which had the cloak of non-cooperation. The Army and ML were put to severe test when both had to exercise restraint pending President's last minute effort towards finding a political solution.

In Sheikh's view, the Six Points theory was now outdated. What he now proposed, as political solution, was confederation of East and West Pakistan. He sounded that:-

- a. Power should be handed over to Prime Ministers in East and West Pakistan.
- b. The Constituent Assemblies should be convened for framing separate constitutions.
- c. President to remain at the Centre for coordinating defence and foreign affairs.
- d. Two C-in-Cs should be appointed with a Supreme Commander at the Centre.

e. At a later date, two Pakistans should surrender mutually agreed powers to form a Government of Pakistan resulting in one Pakistan internationally but two separate Pakistans nationally.

Sheikh Mujib went as far as to appeal to the Secretary General of the United Nations, UThant, for the alleged denial of human rights to the '75 million people of Bangla Desh', though subsequently he tried to justify this action as merely an attempt to stop the exodus of foreigners from East Pakistan.

On 9 March, we arranged for a direct telephone conversation between Yahya and Mujib over the army communication network as civil communication system had been taken over by the Awami League. Such was the plight of the Government authority.

Yahya proposed to Mujib that a Round Table Conference be held in which all parties who had secured seats in the National Assembly be represented. Mujib agreed but on meeting resistance from his hard-line colleagues he backed out saying that the representative system in the proposed RTC would convert him into a minority party. Having failed in his attempts to resolve the entanglement the President decided to come to Dacca. When Mujib was told of President's intentions, he issued a statement saying that they would accept Yahya as their guest and not as President. The President House had been taken over by Awami League. They agreed to hand it over and restore its electricity and water which had been cut off.

The President arrived in Dacca on 15 March. A meeting was held on 16th evening which was attended by most of the senior West Pakistani Officers in Dacca. After reviewing the situation the President made a very startling and significant remark. He said. "The Father of the nation was not averse to the idea of two Pakistans. Who am I to oppose such an idea." Idea of an Independent Muslim majority Greater Bengal had been floated by Suhrawardy in 1947 and recently Mr. Bhutto had also talked about two Prime Ministers for East and West Pakistan.

I and Group Capt Masud were the only ones who expressed serious concern about the situation and the dangers of a military action. The President ruled out break down of talks by what appeared to be his very liberal approach of even accepting confederation. We were sure that the problem could be resolved within the concept of a federation with wider powers given to East Pakistan.

A series of talks started between the President and Mujib. A number of rounds of talks took place between the advisers of the President and those of Mujib. Yahya was assisted by Gen. Peerzada, Cornelius, M.M. Ahmed and Colonel Hasan. Mujib's team consisted of Kamal. Tajuddin and Mushtaq Khundkar. The agenda of these talks was kept highly secret and no one commented on the subject. Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rehman, on one hand kept saying that the talks were making "some progress" while on the other hand he

continued advocating the cause of Bengla Desh. Throughout this period, processions and meetings by students, labourers and other organization continued. Almost daily Sheikh Mujib used to address processions in front of his residence urging upon the people to continue the non-cooperation movement. Some of his militant lieutenants were not fully satisfied with the continuation of the talks with the President and seemed to be ready for a rebellion in the name of "Bangla Desh". They included Tajuddin, Nazar-Ul-Islam, Colonel Osmani, Capt. Mansoor Alim, Mannan and all the members of Students League. While talks were going on, the Awami League workers continued collecting arms and ammunition and preparing for a confrontation with the Armed Forces.

We in the Martial Law Headquarters sitting in the Cantonment five miles away from the President's House were kept in the dark about the way negotiations were proceeding. Our only source of information were the telexes and signals sent from President House to Mr. Bhutto and others in West Pakistan. Even General Tikka was not on the negotiating team and was as ignorant as all of us about what was going on in the President's House.

In frustration, I rang up Mujib on 19 March to get some Information from him. He told me that an agreement had been arrived and a proclamation would be issued by the President which would contain the outline of arrangement for transfer of power. And that he was to be the Prime Minister with five ministers each from West and East Pakistan. I asked whether he was satisfied with the arrangement, he said yes he was and asked for prayers for his success.

It was essential that this agreement be approved by Mr. Bhutto. Mujib had refused even to talk to Bhutto. President suggested proximity talks which he accepted. Mr. Bhutto was invited and arrived in Dacca on 21 March. Though Awami League had promised to receive him and provide him all the protection, we were worried about his safety. Brigadier Arbab escorted him and from the angry and hostile attitude of the people it was clear that our decision to provide Mr. Bhutto army escort was a correct one. Mujib had refused direct conversation or discussion with Bhutto. Though the three Yahya, Mujib and Bhutto met under one roof, the conversation between Mujib and Bhutto was conducted through Yahya, such was the antagonism of East Pakistanis towards Bhutto. They had branded him killer No 1 after the postponement of National Assembly session and the resultant riots and killings. Bhutto objected to the agreement. He termed it as a "massive betrayal of West Pakistan." His proposal was that the National Assembly session be called to approve the agreement or he be allowed to have further discussions with Mujib. Awami League leaders were adamant to further and protracted negotiations. There was pressure on Mujib to declare independence.

While negotiations were going on, the law and order situation deteriorated even further. The Armed Forces were being made target of verbal and physical attacks.

Attempts were being to keep them confined to their lines. The supply of fresh vegetable, fruit, poultry and other commodities was stopped. Vendors were stopped by force from coming to the Cantonment area. Army contractors and shop keepers of city/cantt area were harassed and told not to sell anything to the Army Personnel. Daily food articles like potatoes and onions had to be flown out of West Pakistan as local contractors and shopkeepers refused to supply fresh ration to the Armed Forces. The cruel joke was that C 130 bringing in eatables were painted by local and foreign media as troop carriers bringing reinforcements from West Pakistan. The non-local population of Dacca, Khulna, Chittagong, Saldpur, Rangpur etc., was similarly harassed and subjected to inhuman treatment. These unfortunate people were in panic. In Dacca and Chittagong, the Awami League hoodlums were on the rampage. They would enter houses of non-locals and carry out whatever evil intentions they had on the inmates and their property. Non-locals who tried to escape to West Pakistan by air or sea were deprived of their valuables. The height of lawlessness was reached when on 19 March Brigade Commander Arbab, was stopped by mob by means of road blocks on his way back to Dacca from Joyedepur after visiting a battalion of East Bengal Regiment there. His escort, which attempted to clear the road, was fired at. In a similar incident at Rangpur an Army dodge carrying five persons, including an officer, was mobbed. The officer exercising restraint tried to talk his way out, but the mob got hold of him, beat and stabbed him. The officer succumbed to the injuries later in the hospital. The mob took away four sten guns also. All this was happening while the President was still in East Pakistan, holding talks for political solution of the problems.

Reports were pouring in from various places about the influx of Indian arms and ammunition and training of Awami League volunteers by ex-servicemen and other offices who were seconded to the civil government. Colonel Osmani was busy in organizing a paramilitary force to take on the regular troops. These people, by their provocative action against the troops, continued to cause problems for the Army in their normal working. It appeared that they were keen to have a showdown with the Army. Dacca University campus had become a base of such activity and stored huge amount of arms, ammunition and vehicles. It was also being used as a training area.

March 23 was the zenith of Mujib's movement. It was a historic day. Pakistan celebrated it as Republic Day. Mujib celebrated it as Lahore Resolution day. It was a decisive day when Mujib hoisted the Bangla Desh flag at his house thus declaring independence. Pakistan flag could only be seen within the confines of cantonments in the province of East Pakistan. Mujib standing on the balcony of his house in Dhan Mandi waved the flag of Bangla Desh in front of thousands of followers who were raising slogans in support of Bangla Desh.

On 23 March Mujib came to the President's House with Bangla Desh flag flying on his car. The Awami League delegation presented their final proposals. The Secretary General of the Awami League Mr. Tajuddin gave 48 hours notice for acceptance of

demands which he termed as final adding that they were not going to hold any more talks.

It was not known what their demands were except that they were unacceptable to West Pakistan leadership of Yahya and Bhutto. Other West Pakistan leaders fearing catastrophe and bloodshed started leaving Dacca. All hopes of a political settlement had vanished.

This then was the situation where acceptance of Awami League demands or military action was the only course left. Compromise had become impossible at this stage. It was possible earlier. Awami League had taken part in the election. They had achieved absolute majority, they wanted to implement SL Points programme through the system. After the acceptance of one-man one-vote provisions the interest of East Pakistanis in united Pakistan had increased. They finally saw the possibility of ruling over the whole country. Mujib wanted to become the Prime Minister of Pakistan. Some of their extremists leaders of significance were demanding independence as Bangla Desh, they were kept in check till the postponement of National Assembly session. From then on the extremists under Tajuddin directed the policies of the party. They were also able to convince Mujib that the West Pakistanis would never hand over power to him through constitutional means. He came to the conclusion that the combined power of the Army and PPP would frustrate his ambition to be the Prime Minister of Pakistan so he decided to become the 'Father' of a new nation.

Pakistan People's Party which had achieved success in Punjab and Sind was claiming to represent the views of West Pakistan. In the name of protecting the interests of West Pakistan Mr. Bhutto confronted the ML authorities with the possibility of agitation from Khyber to Karachi. As he was a popular leader and his charismatic personality had impressed a number of senior officers of the Pakistan Army the President General Yahya could not hand over power to the majority leader. *i.e.* Mujib, without the agreement of Mr. Bhutto.

The President was caught between two extreme positions. As the majority of the Armed Forces came from West Pakistan he, to save his own position, decided to support the political leadership of West Pakistan. He ordered the Armed Forces of Pakistan to re-establish the writ of the Government. Unfortunately, he himself was a General. Even a civilian as Head of State faced with a similar situation would have done the same. Mrs. Gandhi did exactly the same in East Punjab. The Chinese did it in Peking. A politician would have perhaps tried better and more subtler methods to make the two political leaders come to an understanding. But when the two top leaders were bent upon gaining personal power the area of maneuverability was restricted for the President.

As a matter of policy equal and even-handed treatment to both the leaders should have been meted out. Pakistan Army was not a West Pakistan Army: it should not have

taken sides. Both Mujib and Bhutto should have been made to realize that they had to come to terms with each other. East Pakistan reaction would have been different if Bhutto had been dissuaded and prevented from issuing a threat to chop off the legs of those who tried to go to Dacca. The National Assembly session should have been held and if the Awami League had tried to bulldoze a non-acceptable constitution the President could act as custodian of the interest of Pakistan as a whole. By slipping more and more into the PPP lap the suspicions of East Pakistanis gained credibility. They lost faith not only in West Pakistan leadership but also in Pakistan leadership.

Taking of the military action was a political decision. Mr. Bhutto approved of it and ejaculated: "Pakistan has been saved." In actual fact that day, by the decision. Pakistan had been undone. Though it took another nine months to take the concrete shape the break-up of the country was the direct, inevitable and natural consequence of major political decisions - first, to postpone the National Assembly session, second, to launch military action.

THE MILITARY ACTION

Till the 2nd March 1971, the Army did not know what was happening at the President's House. Maj. Gen. Khadim Hussain Raja was GOC of the only division, *i.e.* 14 Div, in East Pakistan. I was Maj. Gen. Civil Affairs but had no work to do as there was no Governor and the administration was being run by Awami League. Brigadier Jilani, who later became Governor of the Punjab, was Brigadier Martial Law. Martial Law had also failed to impose its will and Jilani, too, was practically without a job. All three of us spent most of our time in discussing the situation amongst ourselves and with those who had descended on us from the GHQ. We were dubbed as doves by the hawks of West Pakistan. We held the view that results of the election must be accepted; Mujib had secured majority in the National Assembly and therefore he be allowed to form a government. We firmly believed that Pakistan Army should not be made to look like a West Pakistan army and only a supporter of West Pakistani leaders and their interests. The problem, we felt, faced by us was a political one, and it should be resolved only through political means.

It was disappointing to note, however, that both Mujib and Bhutto were more interested in power for themselves. It was a struggle for power, and interests of the country meant nothing to them.

We were optimistic that good sense would prevail and therefore no serious preparation had been made by the Army to meet the eventuality of failure of talks. This optimism prevailed till March 20, before Mr. Bhutto arrived in Dacca on 21st. After that the atmosphere suddenly changed to pessimism. Rumors started floating that the talks were heading towards failure. This became apparent from the behavior of leaders from West Pakistan; their exodus had started. We became worried, and Khadim and myself jointly met General Tikka on 22 March with a request to get precise information from the President's House. General Tikka quite nonchalantly said. "Oh, they will let us know if we need to know." However, as we got no news during the day, we approached him again in the evening and repeated our request. He agreed to visit the President's House to get a briefing on the situation.

Early in the morning of 23 March he informed us by saying "*OH KUCH HO RAHA HA TAYARI MAYARI KRO*". Something is likely to happen, prepare yourself." this was the only instruction given by the Corps Commander to GOC 14 Div. Khadim asked me to come over to his Divisional Headquarter where we sat down to write "Operational Instruction" to various elements of the Armed Forces located in East Pakistan. We were faced with the possibility of revolt by East Pakistan Rifles as well as East Pakistan Regiment. An indication of the way their loyalty lay was provided by Joyedepur incident where Brigade Commander Arbab had gone to visit 2 Bengal Rifles and had

faced a road block. Only his personal escort consisting of West Pakistan soldiers had saved him from physical harm and disgrace. While preparing an operational plan, we had to think of answers to the following problems:-

a. In the event of revolt, the resources available would be only ten depleted battalions plus artillery, engineers, and signal units making a maximum of 10,000 West Pakistani troops who could be opposed by four regular army battalions of East Pakistan Regiment and whole of the Regimental Centre supported by Border Security Force, approximately 12,000 East Pakistan Rifles personnel and 100,000 Mujahids. During the period of Awami League control over administration, rifles in Police custody had been issued to the Mujahids. We were going to have an adverse ratio of combat strength combined with the inevitable spread of our troops over vast areas of East Pakistan.

b. From March 7 to 24, the Awami League was in control of all organs of the state. Meetings of regular army officers and ex-service officers of East Pakistan origins had taken place. Preparations had been made to take over Tejgaon airport and the cantonment area so as to force the surrender of West Pakistani elements. East Pakistanis had majority in the PAF and could easily take over the airport. 2 EBR was located at Joyedepur hardly 10 miles from the cantonment. In case of operation, the entire lot of three units in the cantonment were supposed to take part in the city operation, exposing the cantonment to attack by 2 EBR or by the mob. We had earlier uncovered an uncanny plan by Awami League to bring in a whole trainload of armed rioters and halt it in the middle of the cantonment through which the line passed. All residential houses could thus be exposed to an attack by these rioters with frightening consequences.

c. There was not enough time for a proper briefing of the Commanders in various sectors, therefore, senior officers had to fly out to Brigade Headquarters to personally brief the troops about their tasks and missions etc. Our greatest worry, however, was the existence of thinly dispersed JOCS and NCOs in the EP Rifles. Divisional HQ tried to pull them to Dacca but the distances were too long; in the event, most of them were killed.

d. We appreciated that to avoid bloodshed it would be wise to arrest all political leaders even if we had to employ a ruse. Our recommendation to call a meeting of all the leaders and arrest them there was not accepted by the President's House. We, therefore, prepared a list of all worthwhile leaders in Dacca and other places and designated parties to go and arrest them as part of the operation. However, as the plan had leaked out due to President's departure, the political leaders had disappeared and without police assistance it was impossible for West Pakistani army to identify them. Except for Mujib no other worthwhile

leader could be arrested. Kamal Hussain himself turned up to meet Major General Mitha.

e. We had seen the gradual escalation of agitational activity during the last many years and knew how each new phase was more violent and better organized. We were therefore, expecting stiffer and perhaps armed resistance against the Armed Forces action specially as it was coming after virtual rule by Awami League. The Army wanted to avoid a blood bath. The strategy planned and finally adopted was of show of force and greater display of fire power than its actual employment. It was decided to mount light machine guns on jeeps with their barrels upwards towards the sky firing tracer-mixed bullets to keep the people away from the streets. The guns were also fitted with rocket launchers to be used to demolish walls erected to block the streets. It was to be made sure that fear would be generated without causing human casualties to keep the people confined to their homes. Unfortunately, a wrong and distorted twist was given to this display by the foreign press and a casualty-saving device was depicted as mass massacre. There were few casualties in the streets of Dacca. They occurred during fire-fight in the University area and the Police lines. The University had the greatest concentration of armed personnel fully trained and ready to resist the Army. The Police had revolted at about 10 p.m. and were the first to open fire on the Army which was moving on the road passing by the Police lines.

f. As the time was short the civilian administrators from West Pakistan posted in outlying districts could not be informed and some of them lost their lives. I picked up two young officers during my visit to Khulna and brought them to Dacca.

g. Some local commanders exceeded the limits of reasonable response, especially in the case of action against the People's Daily a newspaper which had exceeded all norms of decency in its criticism of the Army.

The preparation for the military action, therefore, was not as thorough as it should have been. Political talks broke down on 23rd March. There was not much time for an operation as complex as was envisaged, and West Pakistani personnel which were spread all over East Pakistan could not be informed, both on account of short notice as well as reasons of secrecy.

An outline plan was developed by GOC Khadim. I wrote the general concept for the execution of the plan. We presented it the same afternoon in the officers mess of 14 Division to General Hamid COS Army. Gen. Tikka was also present. They approved the plan except for the following two vital points:-

a. Our recommendations to disarm the EPR and EBR were not approved. Gen. Hamid on Churchillian lines said, "I cannot preside over the disintegration of the Pakistan Army." Had he accepted our recommendation, the serious military opposition that developed due to the revolt of EPR and EBR would not have taken place, and much of the bloodshed could have been avoided. However, in Dacca with the connivance of commander EPR, the troops in Peel Khana were disarmed making the restoration of peace in Dacca much easier.

b. We had recommended that the President should stay on in Dacca. We were told that he had to brief the foreign ambassadors and generally keep in touch with the outside world for the sake of larger interest of the country. Not only he was not going to stay on in Dacca, we were debarred from taking any action till his aircraft got to within 40 miles of Karachi.

GOC Khadim and myself were living under great stress. We were against the military action and had given out our views many times. On the other hand there was the call of duty and of army discipline. We had been trained to give views frankly but obey the orders once they were issued. We had also seen the reaction of the Army and of the people of West Pakistan to the resignation of General Yaqub Khan. He had been dubbed as "YELLOW" by all and sundry and anybody who says a different thing now is not telling the truth. Had his action been appreciated, we too would have resigned. In any case, those who criticized us after the debacle should know that at the time of crisis one's duty to one's country comes first.

Knowing our reservation about military action two generals Iftikhar Janjua and Mitha were flown to Dacca to take over from us if we wavered or showed any weakness. Major General Mitha was later made Deputy to General Tikka as the high command had more confidence in him. Also present in Dacca at that time were Maj. Gen. Omar and Maj. Gen. Khuda Dad. They were all full of fire, ridiculing me and Khadim for soft attitude towards Awami League. We told them that we were not afraid of our lives, what we were worried about was Pakistan. The effort to goad us to accept military action went too far in stupidity when General Hamid decided to call on us at our home with a special request to meet our wives. We were living together in Khadim's house as I had vacated my residence in the Governor House as General Tikka had been unable to get himself sworn in as Governor. During his chat with our wives, General Hamid in a way asked them to convince us to support the idea of military action. We were also present when he was having the chat and told him that we would obey the orders and execute them but we still thought it to be fatal for Pakistan. As good soldiers we had to obey the decision of the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Army and we told Hamid so. Our decision was based on the traditions of disciplined armies. When the Indian troops attacked Golden Temple Amritsar in June 1984 majority of senior commanders were Sikhs. Despite their religious reservations they executed the orders of the Government.

No date was set for the military operation. However, we were told that the time was short and orders were to be conveyed through personal visits by senior army officers. Chittagong was the most critical and dangerous area with the entire Army personnel comprising Bengali troops; the Regimental Centre, too, was commanded by a Bengali Brigadier Mujamdar. General Khadim decided to go there himself. I was sent to Khulna to brief Commander of the Jessore Brigade. Brigadier Ali al-Edroos COS Corps and Colonel CS Corps Col Saadullah went out to brief troops in Sylhet and Rangpur/Bogra. A code word was given to set the date.

Under my overall supervision, Brigadier Arbab was to command the brigade in Dacca. He knew the city thoroughly but additionally he got reconnaissance to be carried out by the battalion commanders in civilian clothes and also have the houses of prominent political leaders marked.

The impending operation was not going to be like normal army operations in support of civil government where curfew is imposed to curb serious rioting and bring the situation under control. Here the conditions were entirely different: after March, 7 it was the Awami League which was running the government. The emotions of the Bengalis had been whipped up to extreme. Ninety percent of the people had been stupefied by Mujib's wand ready to die for Bangla Desh. They were armed and trained. The writ of the government had to be restored by use of force. A rebellion had taken place which was to be put down.

We waited for the order. On 25 March, I and Khadim came to know that the President was going to visit the Corps Commander. He came. Except for the two of us all other senior officers Hamid, Mitha, Iftikhar, Khuda Dad, Omar were present in General Tikka's House. Both of us were suspects. We were told at about 6 PM that the operation was to be launched that night but not before 0100 hrs as the President was flying out and no action was to be taken before he was in the reception zone of Karachi.

Orders were issued by sending out the code word and the time. Troops started movement after sunset but they were not allowed to enter the city. The President's move was kept a secret. He drove to the Airport in a small car unescorted to keep up the surprise. But little did they know that Wing Commander Khondkar of the PAF was standing on the tarmac to wave him off and then to inform Mujib.

While the President's aircraft was taking off for Karachi, Mujib was meeting his senior colleagues. We asked for permission to move and catch all the senior leaders in the meeting. This action would have killed the movement before it developed to full force. There would have been no bloodshed. But we were not allowed for reasons of President's security. The fear was that Indian aircrafts would intercept President's flight.

Feverish activity was noticed in the city of Dacca. Series of road blocks and barricades were being erected. Big trees were being felled to block the roads, which were dug and filled with tarcoal to be put on fire to stop vehicular movement. They were preparing to deny entry to the Army from the Cantonment. The situation could get out of control as reports came pouring in that Awami League might launch an operation of their own to capture Dacca Airport. Therefore, orders were issued to implement the instructions already given. Sheikh Mujibur Rehman was arrested from his residence at 0130 hrs by a platoon of the Special Services Group who reached his residence after encountering a number of roadblocks. Telephone exchanges were switched off at 0200 hrs. The EPR (2500) at Peelkhana was disarmed at 0230 hrs after they had put up some resistance. Reserve Police (2000). who offered stiff resistance, was disarmed by 0300 hrs. They suffered casualties. By 0500 hrs the university campus area was secured. The residents of Iqbal, Liaqat and Jagan Nath Halls offered stiff resistance with the latter being the toughest to tackle. Raids were carried out at the houses of all prominent Awami League leaders but none could be found. Ex Lt Comd Muazzad Hossain (Agartala Conspiracy fame) was, however, killed when he tried to fire and offer resistance. With the main pockets of resistance falling by the morning of 26 March. Dacca was brought under control without further difficulty. Narayanganj, however, proved to be a strong hold of ex- servicemen who had, presumably, slipped away from Dacca. They had organized strong defence along with the local civil population with such strength that a battalion move supported by tanks was repulsed when they tried to enter Narayanganj on the evening of March 26.

University premises had remained an out-of-bound area even for Police on the excuse of sanctity of educational institutions. It was a safe haven for subversive activities. After March 7. students halls had been turned into guerrilla training camps where obstacle course, barbed-wire entanglements and other training aids had been developed, and where training was imparted to students and volunteers alike. Jagan Nath Hall which housed Hindu students was the most notorious for anti- Pakistan activities. This hall offered greatest resistance. Some people say that students were killed by the Army. One must also ask the question, "When does a student cease to be a student?" The answer that a student ceases to be student when he carries arms should clear the Army of the charge: all those who were killed were carrying arms, had refused to stop firing and accept offer of surrender.

The situation in other parts of the province was not happy. Exaggerated claims of success and return to normalcy were made by all. However, I depicted the true situation in a signal message to HQ CMLA as I saw it. The message dated 28 March said: "The Army in complete control of Dacca airport, cantonments of Comilla, Sylhet, Rangpur, Saidpur, Khulna and Jessore. They are all isolated. No road communication exists between them. Chittagong under rebel control."

Every Bengali unit had revolted. Major Ziaur Rahman had killed his Commanding Officer Colonel Janjua and declared Independence for Bangla Desh with himself as its first President. They took over the city. With sheer determination and great valour West Pakistanis defended the Airport and Naval HQ Area. 4 East Bengal Regiment put their CO under arrest and took over the areas of Ashuganj, Brahmanbaria, Akora, *i.e.* area between Comilla and Sylhet.

2 East Bengal moved out of Joyedepur after killing West Pakistani soldiers and their families. Luckily, they did not move against Dacca Cantonment where there were no regular troops. They took over the area of Tangail and Mymensingh. Bogra and area south of it was taken over by rebel civilians. So was Pabna. Only the Camp area in Rajshahi remained with West Pakistani troops. A whole battalion ex Khulna was decimated between Khulna, Kushtia and Pabna, suffering very heavy casualties. Enormous atrocities were committed on soldiers who fell in rebel hands. Foreign Press also depicted pictures in which rebels were carrying severed heads of soldiers on spears. Except for the Cantonment of Jessore, the entire area had fallen into the hands of the rebels supported by 1 East Bengal Regiment. Khulna was under Army control but no road communication between Jessore and Khulna existed. Patuakhali, Noakhali and Faridpur were totally under rebel control.

On 28 March the situation was very serious. We felt that if reinforcement did not come from West Pakistan the various isolated detachments could face disaster. The Indians had not remained silent spectators. They actively supported rebels in the border areas from Jessore to Rajshahi. At Rajshahi, which was isolated and had only 400 men, the situation was very precarious. Just before the relief Column reached there, the ring round them was only 800 yards in diameter. Rebels, armed with mortars, had made life of our troops unbearable. The battalion in Sylhet had to vacate the town and take up positions around the airport to maintain some link with Dacca.

Chittagong had been considered a critical area. A battalion from Comilla was ordered to move to Chittagong on the night of 25/26 March under Brigadier Iqbal Shafi. The column met with severe resistance all along, suffering considerable casualties, including their Commanding Officer. They could not reach the city till they were contacted by troops from Chittagong. A battalion had landed in Dacca on the morning of 26 March, *i.e.* after the launching of the military action. It was flown out immediately to Chittagong where they acted as saviours.

From 31 March to 7 April PIA carried out a heroic task, equal to the Berlin Air lift. It ferried across over Sri Lanka two Infantry divisions who were immediately sent to various sectors.

By 10 May, the whole of East Pakistan had been brought under army control but the operation had left irreparable scars. Atrocities were committed by both sides. It is a

phenomenon of civil war that it is more cruel than an organized war. In a war there are rules of conduct governed by the Geneva Convention and code of chivalry. In a civil war there are no rules and men behave like wild animals. Both sides acted and reacted. I can cite example of Bengali brutalities where a whole village of Biharis was wiped out. In Brahmanbaria three hundred dead bodies of women were found, with a child's head nailed to the wall, their male members had earlier been butchered. In Mymensingh. Bihari children were forced to dig graves of their fathers. In Chittagong all senior members of East Pakistan Railways had been slaughtered in a slaughter house specially contrived for the brutal act. In Dinajpur a West Pakistani Captain married to a Bengal girl was murdered by his own father-in-law after which a procession was organized. In Bogra the small detachment of 6-7 men was overcome by the mob and the Major incharge was murdered. His head was separated and kicked around in front of his wife. Son-in-law of Mr. Rizvi, Director General of the Intelligence Bureau, was posted as Assistant Commissioner at Tangail. He was killed and his body dragged in streets of the town. All 700 or so NCOs serving with EPR were killed, as were the isolated families of army personnel. At the same time, Pakistan Army failed to behave as a national army. It was overcome by emotions at seeing the mutilated bodies of its comrades. Some of its members exceeded their authority and killed a number of civil and police officials without proper trial. The Army was not able to control Biharis in taking revenge when badly affected areas were liberated by them.

India had not remained a silent spectator. We had expected intervention by India and that was the main reason why Yakub. Ahsan and I had opposed the military option. It appears that the Indian High Commissioner in Dacca had promised direct military support to Awami League leaders. Our troops did come across some elements of Indian Borders Security Force in areas of Benapole, inside Pakistan, and some Gurkhas in Sylhet area but the major emphasis of the Indians was in the psychological warfare. They launched a massive campaign to incite the people of East Pakistan by broadcasting exaggerated accounts of violence by the Pakistan Army. They openly invited Hindus to come over to India. Their army personnel disguised as Pakistan Army personnel created scare in the border areas by indiscriminate firing, mostly at night. The Indian preparation was thorough. They had established camps before the military action to receive the refugees. Hindus had started migration much earlier to take advantage of the offer of allotment of land by the West Bengal Government. As a matter of routine, to ease the hardship of Hindus the Pakistan Government had earlier waived restriction on sale of land by Hindus which had been imposed to discourage migration in the early 50s. The Government record would show that property worth 80 crores or more had been sold by Hindus during 1968-69. The Hindus had sent all this money to India and later migrated to join up with it. The operation itself, by its very nature, facilitated migration. The operation developed outwards; it fanned out from the central position of Dacca being the only airport on which troops from West Pakistan could land. A large number of people, some out of fear created by stories and some out of apprehension about punishments for atrocities committed by them on Beharis and

West Pakistanis, fled to India before the advancing Pakistan Army. East Pakistan Rifles had revolted. Therefore, the borders could not be sealed.

The resistance offered by the rebels was unexpectedly stiff. During the period from 25 March to 10 April, the rebels controlled most of the territory. They set up administration at district level and carried out ruthless atrocities on Beharis and pro-Pakistan Bengalis. Pakistan Army control was confined to Cantonment areas. The whole length of the railway line was under control of the rebels who by now included the Regular Army units of Bengali origin. There was a time when even Indian troops could have moved across East Pakistan from Calcutta to Agartalla by rail without our even knowing about it.

Two divisions were flown out from West Pakistan after the military action. As they were sent by air they left all their heavy weapons behind. They could therefore perform only police duties. Had these been in place before the action, the rebellion might have been contained in the physical sense. The hearts could be won only through political means.

INDIAN MACHINATIONS

The resistance offered by the rebels was unexpectedly stiff. However with reinforcement flown in after 26 March the Pakistan Army was able to clear whole of East Pakistan by 10 May 1971. The main trouble arose due to and from India. India was looking for an excuse to undo Pakistan. Its strategists saw an opportunity of the century to cut Pakistan to size. Indians considered themselves placed in an advantageous position due to the infighting of Pakistanis where Muslims were engaged in killing Muslims. This was a repetition of Muslim history. Practically all Muslim countries and governments had gone under the rule of hostile powers due to their internal strife and disharmony. The Indian Government welcomed those Hindus who migrated to India. East Pakistani Armed Forces personnel were kept in their original units. Training Camps were opened all around East Pakistan where volunteers were trained in guerilla warfare. They consisted mostly of Hindus but there were among them also some Muslim students, they all continued to constitute Mukti Bahini, Colonel Osmani was promoted to the rank of General and put in command of this barbaric force. India Training Institutions were opened to Bengali cadres. In short, India violated all norms of neighborly behavior.

After re-organization and training of their volunteers on the Indian side, the Mukti Bahini guerillas were launched inside East Pakistan. With the population having turned hostile to Pakistan Army the guerilla were well-received by the public. They were provided protection, food and shelter. The hostility of the people was partly due to the military action but mostly due to virulent propaganda against the Army. In a military action there are bound to be casualties which resulted in adverse reaction. This was exploited in favor of Bengali nationalism throughout the province. It also provided an excuse for Indian intervention on what was described as pressure of the refugees. Most of the Awami League leaders had also fled to India, forming their government-in-exile.

By 23 March military action had become inevitable because political negotiations had failed due to fault of both sides. However, military action is never an end in itself, it is a means to an end. One goes to war when negotiations fall only to return to the negotiating table. Sometimes, strong action by the Government becomes inevitable to convince the opponents that they cannot have everything their way, but the action should not end at curbing or eliminating opposition by force. The cause of antagonism has to be removed; if it is not done fire would keep on simmering. In the case of East Pakistan, we had to find an answer to the demand of Awami League who had unfortunately won majority seats in an election supervised by the Army. There is not the slightest doubt that Awami League had exceeded the normal limits of agitation. They had taken over the government: they had revolted. But their support lay with the people. Simultaneously with military action, a political move was necessary to allay the

fears of the people. I therefore, gave a written proposal to be included in President's speech. I suggested that the President should say that Mujib was not being arrested, he was merely being taken in protective custody to save him from the clutches of the extremists. The President should also spell out the future political and constitutional arrangements with regards to provincial autonomy for East Pakistan. I was sure that once Mujib was in custody he would be more amenable to meaningful negotiations. A promise of greater autonomy would have given some cause for pacification to the agitators. Unfortunately, a hatched military operation was launched, instead.

Even the Army commanders believed in force only. After a few days of the military action we found that all of East Bengal Regiments had revolted but they were still inside Pakistan territory and had not moved out to India, as feared. It was to be to our advantage if we could somehow keep them in Pakistan and win them over. In an operational meeting presided over by Lt General Niazi who had replaced Gen. Tikka as Corp Commander. I suggested that amnesty be announced for all those who wished to come back to Pakistan command. One of the Generals laughed aloud and said. "Oh, we have heard about your political views." Their minds were closed. Instead of national approach, I was shocked to hear what Niazi had to say in the same meeting. He said, "What do I hear about shortage of rations. We are at war. We are in enemy territory. In Burma we lived on the land. We got what we wanted from the people. You get it from the people." It was horrifying to hear Pakistanis being called enemies.

I had opposed the decisions which led to military action. However, when ordered I performed my duty to the best of my ability. After two days of military duty I took over the civil affairs again. I contacted all the political leaders in Dacca - Mr. Nurul Amin. Khawaja Khairuddin, Maulvi Farid Ahmed. Mr. Shafiqul Islam, Professor Ghulam Azam and others, and requested them to come over to HQ MLA. They met Gen. Tikka, agreed to issue a press statement and form peace committees. They were truly loyal Pakistanis.

In 1971, the Indian propaganda was very effective. They were able to paint Pakistan as a villain and themselves as champions of the cause of down-trodden people. Pakistan gets bad press due to unfortunate attitude of our people where we do not show unity and unanimity in foreign affairs and tend to criticize every action of the government. Secondly, the foreign press is anti-Pakistan because Pakistan is anti-Israel. Jews dominate the world press. They are supported by Hindu journalists who occupy important positions in most of the English newspapers in the UK.

To counter the effects of propaganda pro-Pakistan leaders belonging to Muslim League. PDP, Jamiat-i-Islam and other Islamic parties organized peace committee throughout the country with Khawaja Khairuddin as the Chairman.

Peace committees did a wonderful job in the early stages. They were able to bring out a massive procession in support of Pakistan in Dacca on or about 7 April. Similar action to reactivate pro-Pakistan elements was taken throughout the country. Our aim was to win over the hearts of the people. Even some of the Army Officers did their best to mobilize support for Pakistan by treating Bengalis as brothers. The most prominent name that comes to my mind was that of Brig (later Maj. Gen) Abdullah. In Rangpur he created complete harmony. This line should also have been adopted by the Army in Dacca but here we had Niazi holding the charge; he wanted to change the racial structure of East Pakistan. During my meeting with Gen. Hamid and the President I in clear words brought to their notice the unbecoming behavior of the Corps Commander but nothing was done to change him.

Unfortunately, our reconciliation efforts got a severe setback from unexpected quarter the behavior of some of the reinforcement troops who were inducted into East Pakistan. The reinforcements included Civil Armed Forces who were brave fighters but being uneducated were more prone to psychological and religious propaganda. Before they came to Dacca somebody must have told them that the Bengalis had revolted against the Islamic State of Pakistan; for some the Bengalis must have been painted as Kafirs. The CAF personnel did not behave well causing embarrassment to the administration and jeopardizing the wound-healing efforts of the peace committees. They were therefore, moved out of the cities. They performed well in operations. To provide protection to the population, a new force of Razakars was raised. They did a magnificent job, by and large. However some Mukti Bahini elements infiltrated into Razakars causing defections. After the induction of a civilian governor the policy of reconciliation had been started. Some did come over, perhaps under the instructions of the Indians. At critical moments, they rebelled and took over various police stations, thereby weakening the position of the Pakistan Army.

There was plenty to do for me to rehabilitate the civil administration. There was confusion all over. No government existed as such; as already explained till 25 March the Provincial Government was acting under orders of the Awami League. Fresh orders had, therefore, to be issued to all Government servants to attend the offices. Schools and colleges had to be re-opened. Teachers and professors were re-assured that no action would be taken against them for their past activities. Radio and Television had been most active in anti- Pakistan propaganda; they were rehabilitated without major overhaul. New heads were appointed and policy directions given. Roads had to be repaired. Ferries had been dislocated causing great discomfort to the public: These were put in operation again. Dacca city and certain areas in the interior were about to run short of food which was lying imported at Chittagong; arrangements had to be made for its transportation. Police was nonexistent; they had to be reassembled and re-assured. Their morale was badly shaken by the military action. East Pakistan was in turmoil. Reinforcement of civil administrators, Police and Radio/TV personnel arrived from West Pakistan. They were all new to the environment. Further, their induction was

a clear indication of no confidence in the East Pakistani Government servants. At the same time, there was no other option. It was a terrible and frustrating situation. I knew Shafiul Azam as Chief Secretary. He was very efficient and capable civil administrator. He was pro-Bengali but he was a patriotic Pakistani. I was sorry when he was replaced. My heart was bleeding. Sitting in the Governor's House I got heart-rending stories from West Pakistanis, from Biharies and from Bengalis. To me all were Pakistanies. All the three categories of Pakistanis suffered at the hands of one or the other. As an illustration, I would relate only a day's happening. I met the wife of DC Comilla in my office. Her husband had been killed by the West Pakistanis. Her brother was with her. He was married to a West Pakistani girl. That girl's male relatives had been butchered by Bengalis in Chittagong. The same day a number of wailing women from Mymensingh arrived with unbelievable stories of Bengali atrocities on Biharies. They had all lost their male members before the Army action.

D.C. Tangall came, trembling, with folded hands and torn clothes. He had helped the mob who had eventually killed a West Pakistani A.C. One could do nothing except forget and forgive with the hope that such a gesture would win over support for Pakistan. I reinstated him and sent him back to take over the district administration. He cooperated and carried out his duties to our satisfaction. However, I was not so successful in the case of other civil administrators who were captured by the Army. Niazi adopted a tougher attitude and in his first address declared that the Bengalis were to be treated as "enemies" an attitude which was abominable, to say the least. When D.C., Faridpur and D.C. Patukahali were arrested by the Army, I requested that they be released. On refusal, I asked Gen. Tikka Khan to intervene and issue orders for their release. However, I was horrified to note that Niazi behaved as being totally independent of Tikka. Actually even Martial Law had failed in East Pakistan and naked military rule had taken over. We, in the Governor House, were in the final analysis, without power. Niazi had his own prison house and concentration camps. People were arrested without reference to the Governor House, the Secretariat or the local civil administrators. This led to many corrupt practices but as we all relied on the Army as the ultimate power we had to accept their overlordship.

Gen. Tikka is a good administrator. He does not spare himself nor does he spare others. He is demanding. He held daily meetings with civil administrators and did a wonderful job in rehabilitating a totally shattered civil administration. However, job of winning the hearts of the people and of political maneuvering was beyond him. Further, Niazi was of no help to him, rather his behavior created contrary effects.

General Hamid visited Dacca again in May. I requested him to post me back to West Pakistan as I could not work in an environment that was in conflict with my conviction. He promised but instead I was posted as Major General Political Affairs with a subordinate staff of only two civilian officers of Deputy Secretary's rank. I had been snubbed for having views against the decisions which led to military action. During my

meeting with General Hamid I also apprised him of illegal detention and executions by the Field Intelligence Units of the Army. He promised to put a stop to such activities and gave orders to Brig Janjua (now Governor NWFP) to convey his instructions to Niazi.

After taking over as Major General Political Affairs the first thing I did was to recommend to General Tikka that amnesty be granted to all. This was the only way to start process of reconciliation, wound-healing and eventually of a political settlement. Tikka agreed to the suggestion and approved a signal to HQ CMLA recommending grant of amnesty by the Central Government. We were delighted to receive approval; it was announced on the Radio. However, we were shocked when we received an admonishment directing us to cancel the amnesty order. People lost faith in our credibility. A large number of MNAS who till then were within East Pakistan lost all hope of a political solution and crossed over to India to join the rebel government in exile.

Very few political leaders from West Pakistan visited East Pakistan after the military action. Those who visited were Air Marshal Asghar Khan, Maulana Tufail Ahmed, Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan and General Umrao. Air Marshal's views were very clear and positive but he stayed in Dacca only. Maulana Tufail went on an extensive tour of the province and his visit resulted in support for the Army by Al-Shams and Al-Badar mujahids and razakars by Gen. Niazi. Nawabzada approach as usual was nationalistic and patriotic. But people belonging to his school of thought were declining. General Umrao had vast experience of East Pakistan and had a good name there. His efforts to arrive at some understanding were ineffective because of his being a general: generals were at the lowest ebb of their popularity in East Pakistan at that time.

We expected President Yahya to visit Dacca soon after the whole province had been brought under control by 10 May. Whenever I met him I requested him to come over to Dacca. He always promised to come but never did.

In June, I was asked to request Mr. Nurul Amin to come to Rawalpindi for a meeting with the President. Mr. Nurul Amin visited Rawalpindi, though somewhat reluctantly, but most of his suggestions were accepted by Yahya and he became an active supporter of the regime. I had accompanied him. He too suggested that Yahya should visit Dacca. Yahya promised but did not come. He went to Iran Instead. In Iran it may have been possible to negotiate some sort of settlement. The Bengalees in Calcutta were willing but the Indians did not desire a peaceful settlement of the problem; they had got the chance of the century to break-up Pakistan. Here was an opportunity, offered by the Muslims themselves by their infighting, to defeat them and, as claimed by the Gandhi, avenge the 1000 years of rule by Muslims. Shah of Iran's efforts failed. A delegation of the exiled Government of Bangla Desh was to go the United Nations. Mr. Mushtaq Khondkar was to lead the delegation as foreign minister, but was dropped on orders

from the Indian Government; he was suspected of being pro-Pakistan. In actual fact, many of the Muslim Bengalees who had gone to Calcutta got disillusioned soon after arrival there. They found that East Pakistan had developed much more than West Bengali and their complaints against West Pakistan were not well-founded. Many other historical events like the Calcutta killings were brought to their notice by the Muslims living there. The genesis of Pakistan's creation got highlighted to them in sharper focus in India when they saw the plight of Muslims there.

In July, future course of action was discussed by the President with Mr. Nurul Amin. All agreed that the internal situation in East Pakistan had stabilized to an extent where political action could be taken. The President informed us that he had decided to replace Tikka as governor by a civilian. He had Dr. Malik's name in mind. Dr. Malik was a respected politician of East Pakistan and had been a minister in Ayub's government. Tikka had been a successful commander. Basically a soldier, he was obedient, loyal, straightforward and honest. He is supposed by some to have been tough and ruthless he has even been called a Butcher. Actually real Tikka was very soft-hearted gentleman. He was a determined commander. Reverses did not upset him. I was sure that if he had been in command, the Army In East Pakistan would have given a better account of Itself.

Visualizing the difficult days ahead of us I requested the President to leave Tikka in command of the troops in East Pakistan: he may only be relieved as a Governor. Civilianization of the administration was required and Tikka was not considered suited to the task of negotiating with political leaders. The British Labour Party delegation of Parliamentarians had openly and publicly criticized Tikka's capabilities to handle the political situation. A change was necessary but his retention as Commander would have been a wise step. Niazi had relieved Tikka earlier. During the short period he had achieved the reputation of man of foul mouth and loose character. What he was, only he or his God knows but his utterances were filthy and his behavior shameful. I narrated all the stories to the President which were floating around in Dacca about Niazi. I expressed concern for his security as he was reported to visit houses of ill-reputed women at night without escort. In a guerilla war atmosphere, women are used by the enemy to entice officers and if the senior most commander could fall into their trap they would have achieved their aim. The President promised to accept my request. We met again in August. He told me that he had discussed Tikka with Dr Malik who had been designated as Governor and who had conditionally accepted the job. One of the conditions was that Tikka be called back to West Pakistan. Dr Malik thought that it would make his position embarrassing if the ex-Governor stayed as commander of the troops. His second condition was that general amnesty be announced for all, whether they had crossed over to India or were still in East Pakistan and may have committed criminal acts as well. Amnesty was also agreed to and was announced later.

It was clear that much publicized monsoon offensive of the Mukti Bahini had been contained but not smashed. It was also clear that army action alone would not solve the problem. It required political negotiations and solution. A dialogue with Mujib and Awami League leaders was the only right solution. Instead, an alternate political approach was adopted.

The main subject in July-August meetings was the future political action. The Government had decided that those MNAS/MPAs who had gone over to Calcutta and had also committed criminal acts be disqualified and mini-election be held in the vacancies so created. After the completion of elections the session of the National Assembly was to be called. I suggested an alternative course of action for disqualifying members which in my opinion would be constitutional and a sounder political move. I suggested that the National Assembly session be convened, a date fixed and announced. Those who did not attend the session be disqualified after lapse of the specified period given for disqualification. Nobody could object to such a procedure. However, we were bypassed and the Intelligence Agencies were ordered to prepare lists of MNAS/MPAS who were to be disqualified. We were told to prepare for conducting elections, when required. I suggested that the elections be completed in October because from November onwards military operations by India were possible in East Pakistan. All military studies had revealed that the best season for offensive operations in East Pakistan was November. It was my opinion that we should be ready for military confrontation in November and that if we had a political government by then. It would be difficult for India to decide the issue through military means. The suggestion was accepted and October was selected for elections.

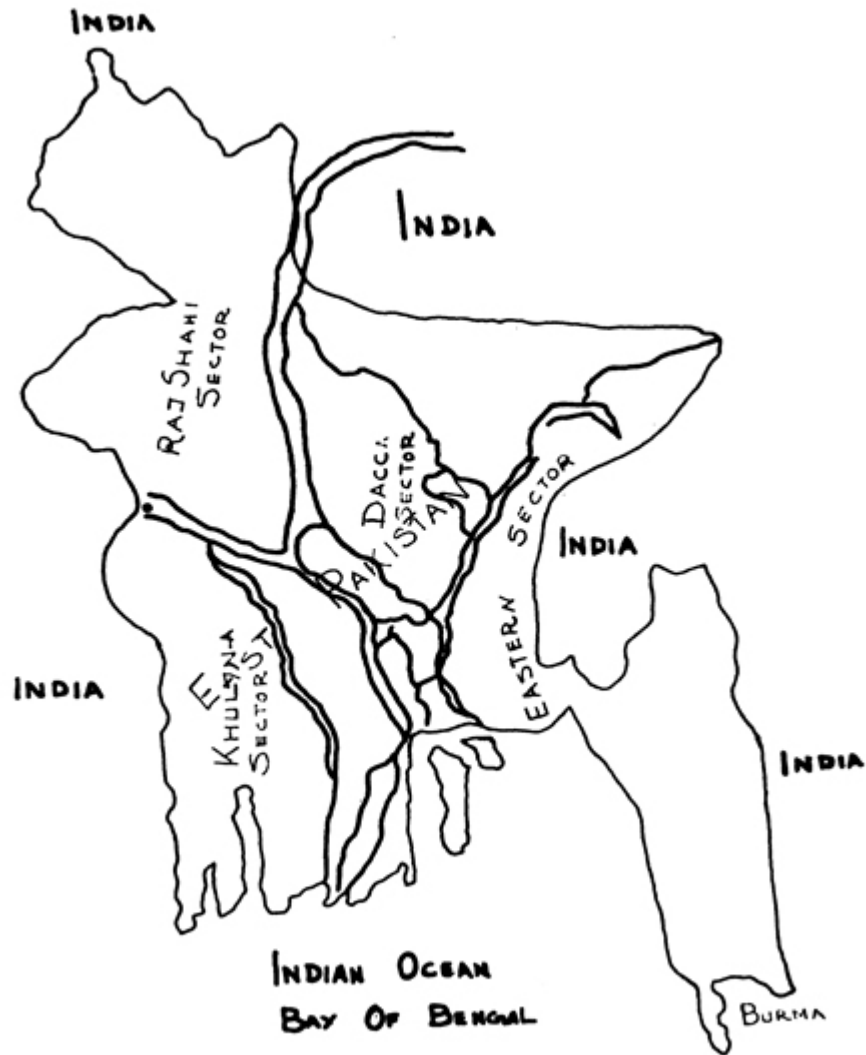
Unfortunately the Army and HQ ML. In East Pakistan wanted to raise additional force of Razakars to provide necessary protection during the election for which purpose they needed time. Without reference to the Governor and me the date was changed to November.

The Indians did not want us to stabilize politically. As soon as they came to know that we were going to hold by elections they asked Mukti Bahini to intensify their guerilla and regular warfare activities. The Indians had decided earlier to solve the problem of East Pakistan militarily. Mrs. Indra Gandhi had clearly and in unmistakable words revealed her intentions. In August Gen. Manekshaw had issued operation orders. Troops had been moved to their concentration areas. The India Army was ready to exploit the weaknesses and difficulties of her smaller neighbor. Mukti Bahini was to dance to the tune of the Indians. But Indians, looking into the future, saw Mukti Bahini as eventual enemies. They visualized the situation after occupation of East Pakistan and creation of Bangla Desh. A well organized and well-trained Bangla Desh force would resist Indian occupation. They would refuse to obey Indian domination. Therefore, it was decided to get them dissipated, mutilated and weakened by the Pakistan Army. It was to kill two birds with one stone both the birds were Muslim. Mukti Bahini was

launched all alone along the border and within the country in short offensive operation. The Mukti Bahini attacks achieved results desired by the Indians in the following shape:

- a. A large number of Mukti Bahini were killed as they had very little fire support given to them.
- b. Pakistan Army was further drawn outwards and also got exhausted in constant counter-attacks. By the time the Indians Army attacked, the Pakistan Army was exhausted due to lack of relief.
- c. The Indians acquired bases for operations inside Pakistan before the final assault on East Pakistan without any cost to the Indian Army. They got these bases by infiltrating with the Mukti Bahini.

MAP OF EAST PAKISTAN



FUSS OVER MINI-ELECTION

The decision to hold mini-election by disqualifying MNAS from East Pakistan was taken after extensive discussions with leaders of West Pakistani majority party. Mr. Bhutto was constantly reported to be having 5-6 hour meetings with the President. By and large, these were drinking sessions but the public was befooled by projecting these sessions as serious discussions at the highest level. However, in such meetings it was decided to hold elections in East Pakistan in such a manner as would enable PPP to emerge as a majority party when the National Assembly met next. The plan was to hold bye-elections in two phases. In phase I, elections were to be held for those seats which were to be declared vacant through administrative action by disqualifying MNAS who had committed atrocities or heinous crimes during Awami League short-lived rule. They numbered about 78. In phase II, the seats vacated by defaulting members unwilling to attend the session were to be filled in through election. It was assumed at Islamabad that due to the prevailing conditions a large number of MNAS would not attend the National Assembly session when summoned, therefore PPP would have a majority in the initial stages.

The situation with regard to MNAS was that most of them had gone over to Calcutta. Only about 70 of a total of 160 Awami League MNAS stayed behind in East Pakistan. In accordance with the procedure given out by the President, most of those who had gone over to India would be disqualified. We were given a list by the Intelligence Services, and the Election Commissioner declared 78 seats as vacant for which by-elections were to be held.

My reading was that Awami League would again win if they took part. It would still not be catastrophic in any way as the individuals thus winning would be persons living in East Pakistan. However, Awami League decided to boycott the elections. The other parties left in the field were Jamaat-i-Islami, PDP. Three factions of Muslim League, and Nizami-Islam. All these parties had limited following in their selected areas. The extent of their popularity was quite evident from the results of 1970 general elections.

Meanwhile, Mukti Bahini supported by the Indian Army, had launched their offensive on the borders as well as within East Pakistan. Therefore law and order situation rapidly deteriorated, and holding of elections, except in major cities, had become impossible. I therefore, agreed to the suggestion put forward by the leaders of various parties that seats be divided amongst them. Since no agreement could be worked out by the parties themselves, I suggested that the seats be allotted in accordance with the ratios achieved by them during the last general elections. There was, however, a snag and that had to be resolved. Nurul Amin was to be the next Prime Minister of Pakistan. The arrangement was agreeable to all other leaders available in East Pakistan. But

though Nurul Amin had won his seat in the general election his party had not done well in other constituencies. There were 62 Awami League members whom I had contacted through the good offices of East Pakistani leaders, particularly Mr. Suhrawardy's daughter Akhtar Suleman. They agreed to attend the National Assembly session and support Mr. Nurul Amin. Therefore, Mr. Nurul Amin's party had to be given weightage. Out of the available seats PDP was given majority of seats though Jamaat-i-Islami had polled the highest number of popular votes after Awami League.

While we were struggling with conflict of interest in East Pakistan, PPP was actively planning the future strategy when Yahya would exit. If Nurul Amin became Prime Minister, their entire exercise of the past one year would have gone waste. They wanted power. I was called to Rawalpindi. The President told me that I was to give 24 seats to PPP from East Pakistan in the by-election. This was bolt from the blue. I got a great shock. I reacted sharply. I informed the President that PPP did not have even an office in East Pakistan. They had totally ignored that Wing during the 1970 election and had not put up a single candidate. They were not interested in East Pakistan. I also told the President that if the next Prime Minister did not come from East Pakistan he might write off that wing they would go their way. I said that though the pro-Pakistan leaders of East Pakistan were fully cooperative, they had a conscience and principles of their own. They could be persuaded to agree to our suggestions but I could not force them to concede to unreasonable demand. Further, East Pakistanis were well-known for their democratic outlook and heritage. They were taking part in election but would not agree to selection. On President's suggestion, I promised to talk to the East Pakistan leaders, specially Mr. Nurul Amin.

On returning to Dacca I posed this problem to the leaders. Khawaja Khairuddin, Mr. Mahmud Ali, Mr. Sabur Khan, Mr. Fazalul Kadir Chaudhry and Professor Ghulam Azam used to attend the meetings related to political matters. They reluctantly agreed to surrender 12 seats for allotment to PPP-6 in phase I and 6 in phase II. A delegation of PPP stalwarts had followed me to Dacca. It consisted of Abdul Hafeez Peerzada, Mr. Mahmud Ali Kasuri, Mr. Kamal Azfar, Mr. Khurshid Hassan Mir and other. They had not been properly briefed. They parked themselves in a hotel and then opened an office of PPP. They did not contact me. Instead, they met Gen. Niazi and called on the Governor and asked for the 24 seats to be given to them as promised. This was to make it doubly sure that PPP would be the majority party in the National Assembly in the initial stages at least. Once Mr. Bhutto became Prime Minister it would not be difficult for him to maintain that majority by winning over MNAS of other parties.

They interviewed possible candidates but got no worthwhile response. It was out of frustration that one day Mr. Kasuri, alongwith Mr. Khurshid Hassan Mir, came to my office. When asked of the purpose of their visit Mr. Kasuri alluded to their desire to get 24 seats from East Pakistan so that greater inter- wing cohesion could be effected. I was equally vague about the possibility of their getting seats, and asked them which

candidates they had in mind. They boasted of having a list of about 150 people which had been carried back by Mr. Peerzada to the Chairman who would select the persons for various constituencies. It was all bluff. I knew they had no worthwhile candidates. I however, promised to help. During their next meeting with me, I informed Mr. Kasuri that East Pakistan leaders had reluctantly agreed to give PPP 6 seats now and 6 seats in Phase II in all 12 seats.

This information was a great shock to them. Hafeez Peerzada carried the message to Mr. Bhutto in Karachi, who instantly left for Rawalpindi to see President Yahya. Before going to the President he walked into General Peerzada's office. During the conversation Peerzada also mentioned the figure 6 - same I had given in Dacca to Mr. Kausri. Mr. Bhutto blew up saying that it was a conspiracy against him; he had been let down, he had been betrayed, West Pakistan had been betrayed etc. While still in rage he went into Yahya's office. Yahya promised to see if the figure 12 could be improved. I was ordered to come over to Rawalpindi and report to the President. I came. Peerzada told me about the commotion which Mr. Bhutto had created. I went in, I did not find the President unduly perturbed. On the other hand, he was apologetic about the whole fuss. I reminded him of my earlier conversation with him and requested him to approve my plan of action. We could not annoy. I told him, the remaining loyal Pakistanis in East Pakistan. Granted they were in no position to oppose us as they had burnt their boats, yet it would be politically unsound and unjustified if we arranged a majority for Mr. Bhutto in the National Assembly which, unfortunately, happened to be the sole purpose of his politics and the aim of his life. Yahya agreed with me, but he wanted to keep Bhutto in good humor and on his side due to Bhutto's popularity in the Army. We gave 6 members to PPP from East Pakistan who would have attended the National Assembly session scheduled to meet on December 20.

I arrived in Rawalpindi on November 4 to brief the President about the situation in East Pakistan. Before coming over I had got a map prepared showing the extent of rebel and Indian activity and the areas which had gone under their control. Niazi had been painting a very rosy picture. He did this to make sure that his reputation as tiger' was enhanced and that no interference came from the GHQ. A very large area on the borders and substantially dangerously large areas within the province had fallen to the Mukti Bahini and other rebels. Pakistan Army was hard pressed to look after both the internal and external threat. At the same time, I found the clouds of war looming large over Pakistan. Indian troops had by then concentrated both on the Eastern and the Western borders. I was worried about the fate of East Pakistan, and was of the opinion that a general war was not in Pakistan's Interest. Pakistan Army had after the 1965 war received no equipment. The US military aid had stopped. We did not have enough financial resources to buy weapons and equipment from other countries in quantities required for replacement of old and outdated weapons and equipment. The international situation was adverse. World public opinion had been won over by the Indian propagandists. Bangla Deshees had done us the greatest harm by publicizing

exaggerated stories of atrocities. If war started, the Pakistan Army would find itself in a most disadvantageous position. I expressed these fears to the President and requested him not to start the war from the West. He said that he was not going to make the same mistake as Ayub had made. I then said, "The time for attack was favorable earlier in October when Indians had not completed their defenses in the West. Then said, "why are our troops deployed so forward as they are"? He said that it was for defensive purpose only. I was satisfied and felt happy that no hasty decision would be taken. However, the whole situation depended on Indian actions. Mrs. Gandhi wanted no compromise. She did not want a political solution of the East Pakistan situation. She had declared that even if the world did not approve of her action she was going to force her solution on Pakistan. We could not afford a war at a time when there was internal insurgency. No nation can fight a war successfully if there is disunity and disharmony within its own country.

I met the President again on 6 November. This time it was in Governor's House Lahore. The purpose of the meeting was to let a PPP delegation know my views about allocation of seats to PPP in the bye-election. Mr. Kasuri and another leader were there as representatives of PPP. I reiterated my earlier stand but promised to arrange for more seats in phase II after the meeting of the National Assembly on 20 December. They could have 12 seats from East Pakistan in a reduced representation from there. It was 12 more than they deserved but PPP influence in the Army was so great that Yahya could not refuse their unfair and unjustified demand.

The critical situation in which we were was uppermost in my mind. I had throughout maintained that East Pakistan situation could only be resolved by a sound political action. In the presence of Mr. Kasuri I said to the President. "Sir, we (*i.e.* the Army) cannot solve this problem. You must hand over to the civilians. Let them handle it. We, in the Army, are straightforward people. In politics you have to be very flexible." I added, "A politician says one thing when he is about to board a plane and totally the opposite when he lands, and gets away with it. We cannot do that. Let the politicians handle this situation." The President said, "Bachchu, my constitution is not yet ready. How can I hand over." On that Mr. Kasuri Interposed. "You can promulgate an ordinance or issue a Martial Law Order to cover the constitutional aspect." The President replied, "Wait till 20 December. Then we will have a constitution." That day never came.

A point to note was Mr. Kasuri's suggestion that constitutional hinderances in handing over power without a constitution could be overcome through an ordinance or a Martial Law Order. This course of action had been rejected by Mr. Bhutto nine months earlier when Yahya had agreed to hand over power to Mujib through a Martial Law Order.

On my way back to Dacca the same day. I met my wife and children in Karachi. I told them that I was very happy during this visit for the first time, the President had accepted my suggestion not to start a general war even though India would provoke us to do just that. A general war could give India freedom of action; freedom to attack East Pakistan deep. East Pakistan would be isolated as all air and sea links would be severed. West Pakistan would not be able to get the pressure relieved on East Pakistan due to nonavailability of really strong hitting power.

On return to Dacca, I got busy with the conduct of bye-elections. However, on 13 November I was called to attend a meeting in Corps HQ. I was surprised by the invitation because earlier during the last few months, since Niazi took over. Governor House had been ignored. The meeting was in preparation for a delegation which was going to GHQ to brief COS Army and request them for provision of reinforcements to Eastern Command. Niazi was not leading the delegation, as he said, he was too busy with the conduct of ongoing operations. After the briefing when we came out, Niazi, standing in front of a map in COS Corps's office said. "We must pinch off this threatening bulge." When he said, this, he put his finger on Belonia, Indian salient opposite Feni. I said. "That will mean general war. There will be no PIA. "We will be isolated". This sobered him down as he realized the reality of the situation. He agreed. But this showed his trend of mind. He had a very unprofessional approach. He was unrealistically boastful and talked about going to Calcutta, of carrying the war into Indian territory and the like without having the ability even to defend adequately.

The delegation returned from GHQ without much success. West Pakistan could ill-afford to spare troops in the strength requested. However, they promised three battalions to create a reserve in area Dacca. This was none of my business but I had complained to the President about lack of defence arrangements for Dacca during my last visit. Earlier, 53 Brigade had been located in Dacca area for this specific mission a mission allotted by GHQ, which in Army vocabulary becomes mandatory to cater for by lower HQ. But Niazi moved 53 Brigade to Feni. Later, whatever reinforcements were flown out to him, instead of creating the much required reserve for defence of Dacca, they were dished out to various formations. Just to show, for psychological reasons as he called it, and bluff the enemy he created adhoc formations. He raised two additional divisional HQs and three Bde HQs by breaking up existing command structure. 14 Division area stretched from Sylhet to Chittagong and in view of heavy enemy concentrations in Tripura and Assam had become the most threatened area. Niazi bifurcated the responsibility with area up to Comilla, with 14 Divisions: area south of Comilla was given to a newly created Adhoc division 39 Division. Command structure was created by converting Martial Law HQ into Divisioned HQ with Maj. Gen. Rahim as the Divisional Commander. With a magic wand, Niazi created 36 Division by designating East Pakistan Rifle's HQ as Hq 36 Division with Maj. Gen. Jamshed as the Divisional Commander, without providing additional troops with responsibility to defend Dacca. Instead of deceiving the enemy the measure broke up communications

and existing relationships between and within commands and yet enabled the World press to say that there were five divisions of the Pakistan Army in East Pakistan when there were only three depleted divisions without artillery and armour.

Internally, the situation was deteriorating day by day. Before the elections and in the days immediately after it, the general masses of East Pakistanis was not totally anti-Pakistan. They led by their intellectuals and political leaders, wanted more autonomy in the shape of Six Points. They also wanted more political share in power at the Centre. Anti-Pakistan movement was confined to the elite. During the eight months preceding Indian Army action, this anti-Pakistan feeling of the elite got converted into a liberation movement. The main cause was the postponement of the National Assembly session which eventually led to the Army action. Army action was resisted by rebellion by armed personnel in the Army and in second line forces. Result was a civil war in which both sides resorted to brutal and ruthless action. Indian propaganda, too, played its part and majority of Bengali people rose against the Pakistan Army. Even the civil servants were involved in guerilla and subversive activities. No secrets could be kept. Pakistan Army was living within its own people but isolated and hated. Its mobility was restricted. Reconnaissance entailed dangers. Even children laid mines to blow up vehicles of the army. Leave alone individuals, platoon strength detachments were ambushed within the country.

Reports started coming in of Razakars going over to the rebels of handing over Thanas to them also of massacre of leaders of pro-Pakistan elements. The situation continued to escalate. Attacks on religious teachers and madrasas became frequent: Bangla Desh movement could ill afford to let Islamic teachings play their part in developing brotherly relations with West Pakistan. Attacks on power lines and communication system were intensified to create pressures on an already shattered economy.

World press had published many stories of cooked up brutalities. As pressmen were required to submit their dispatches to us for censor, I saw a dispatch submitted by the correspondent either of Newsweek or Time, which contained a horrible story of military action in a village near Tangall. It said that all Hindus of the village had been killed by the Army and that bayonets had been stuck up the vagina of virgin women. A picture of unbelievable atrocities had been painted. I was to hold a press briefing in Hotel Intercontinental the same day so I got the authenticity of the news item checked up from Army sources. The story was totally false. There were no Hindus, not even one, living in that village. Army had been nowhere near it. Before starting the Press briefing I asked the journalist concerned about the source of his story asking whether he himself had visited the area. He said he had not visited the area but gone near enough to the area and a "friend" had supplied him the information. I told him that as the story was false I could not clear it, but he flew out to Beirut and filled his story from there. The story came out in the weekly and the whole world got influenced. We got a bad press and paid for it. Stories of large-scale destruction, molestation of women and general

massacre were believed by the Bengalis. This created a sense of self-preservation and nationalism at the mass level, thus making the people haters of the Army and Pakistan.

Stories are usually believed. I remember a delegation from Noakhali having come to see me a few months after the military action, and telling me that they were surprised to see the Dacca University standing intact. They had been told, they said, that the University building had been razed to the ground by the Army. This was the general impression created by the world press and Bangla Desh propagandists. On the other hand India gets away with actions for which Pakistan is condemned. Example: While we were POWs we read that students in Benares University had taken over the buildings. This was an isolated event and was not a part of any rebellious action. But the Indian Army was launched. 150 students killed, and law enforced. The Indian press boastfully praised the Army swift action. With lesser casualties to the students at Dacca, a great case was made by the Indians to intervene militarily. Similarly, if the Golden Temple episode had occurred in Pakistan, the Indian Army by now would have embarked on their self-assumed role of liberators.

Anti Pakistan feeling had permeated all classes of the society. Even Government servants were affected. One day only three of us Gen. Tikka, myself and Secretary Communication. Government of East Pakistan, discussed the problem of transporting food from Chittangong to Dacca. We decided to use the railway line to Chandpur for the purpose. Same night two bridges on that line were blown up. Our plan had leaked out. Only one of us could have done that. Surely. It was Secretary Communications who was contributing his share in the liberation movement.

Talking of stories about atrocities. One day I had a story on my table which was to be filed by one of the foreign correspondents. It said that there were too many pregnant women in Dacca Cantonment as a result of rape by West Pakistan Army personnel. And that Army was looking for gynecologists in the city but nobody was prepared to deliver the babies. I called the concerned correspondent and Major Siddique Salik to my office. I said, "Please go to the Cantonment. Enter any house if you like. Salik will be with you. If you find one single woman pregnant. I will clear this story for you to dispatch". He accepted the offer, entered as many houses as he could. But found no woman, leave alone pregnant woman. When he came back and confirmed that he had found none I said, "Will you now withhold your story. He said, "No, because my story relates what the Bengalis are saying. And what is more we have to sell our papers. This is what our readers want."

It was 1 December 1971, Governor Malik had returned from his visit to West Pakistan where he had met the President. I asked him whether he was able to talk to the President on the 'subject of war. He had done, he said, but had not got a categorical assurance from the President that they would not escalate the war by reacting to Indian attacks in East Pakistan. India had violated all international laws relating to

relationships between two sovereign states. From purely legal point of view India had aggressed against East Pakistan - a part of Pakistan. Therefore, she had attacked Pakistan. No doubt about that. But conversion of border conflict into an all out war, though morally Justified, was not in the best interests of the our country. Only a massive attack against some vital areas with the objective of forcing India to shift some formations from East to West earlier in October may have contributed towards the fulfillment of the strategy of the Army Forces. It was too late now. The enemy had very methodically and with sound strategic comprehension deployed forces in defensive posture against West Pakistan.

The Governor told me that the President would not be coming over. Instead General Hamid COS Army would be visiting on 2 December. On 2 December we were told that General Hamid also was not coming. My conclusion was that war was imminent. I told the people around me of my apprehension. Some of them left for West Pakistan the same day. I thought for a while of doing the same. I had standing permission from the President to visit Rawalpindi whenever I deemed necessary. I could use any official duty as an excuse to escape the coming war. The Governor would have had no objection. But my conscience objected. True, nobody, in East Pakistan knew that war was round the corner. They would not link my departure with war. But I thought that if I leave I would be deserting my colleagues and comrades at the most crucial time. I had recently recalled all civil administrators who had gone on Eid holidays to West Pakistan. I thought my departure to safety would be an act prejudicial to well known military code of honor. I was answerable to none but my inner self did not allow me to leave Dacca though I was well aware of the dangers looming large ahead of us.

On 3 December I worked as usual; meeting politicians and MNAs to coordinate their move to Rawalpindi to attend the proposed National Assembly session, which was scheduled to start on 20 December. Yahya had appointed a Law Commission headed by Mr. Justice Cornelius to draw up a constitution for Pakistan. Its main feature was going to be arrangements for the Armed Forces' role in the country's governance. As the day for the meeting of the National Assembly did not come one would not know what would have been the impact of such constitutional arrangements on developments that took place later. Such an arrangement would have never been acceptable to the politically conscious eastern Wing of the country. Perhaps the powers to be of the future had already written off East Pakistan and were only planning for West Pakistan.

EAST PAKISTAN'S DEFENCE - HANDICAPS

From military point of view defence of East Pakistan posed many problems. One thousand miles of hostile territory separated it from the main base of West Pakistan. Pakistan being a poor, developing country could not afford to have large and strong forces in both the wings of the country. It was therefore decided by strategists at the highest level that splitting of armed forces equally would weaken the overall defence, it would be strong nowhere. The strategic location of West Pakistan was more significant from international geopolitical point of view and therefore it was wisely and correctly decided that main force would be located in West Pakistan. As a corollary to this decision it was incorporated in the planning that defence of East Pakistan would lay in West Pakistan. In simple terms it meant that in the event of an attack on East Pakistan, a massive and full-blooded attack would be launched from West Pakistan so that the enemy forces were forced to withdraw from East Pakistan. A situation was never visualized in which East Pakistan forces would be left on their own to defend that Wing.

Looked at from geographical and military point of view, East Pakistan is a salient in the belly of India. A salient has certain military characteristics. If the possessor of a salient is strong the salient provides a launching pad and an advantageous position for offensive operations. But if the forces defending a salient are weak then the enemy is at an advantage; in that case he can pinch it off easily by attacking it from all sides. Look at the map of East Pakistan. Though the whole territory was a salient itself there were a large number of Indian salients within it. It was surrounded in entirety from three sides by Indian land mass except for 26 miles of Burmese territory near Cox's Bazar way down in the south connected with Chittagong only by a beach road. In the south lay the Indian ocean and without Pakistan Naval force the Indians ruled the sea. East Pakistan was totally surrounded from all sides by India.

From the point of view of a defensive battle the area had certain advantages and disadvantages. It appeared to provide Interior line of communication with possibilities of lateral shifts of forces from the centre and from one sector to the other. But in actual fact, the existence of numerous wide rivers created four mutually non-supporting independent sectors without the possibility of a central force moving to one or the other sector. Lateral shift was made further impossible without air and riverine control. Exploitation of interior lines of communications was possible only if the forces had mobility with useable line of communications under air parity and control of crossing rivers. The four sectors created due to the existence of mighty rivers were:

- a. Rajshahi Sector: This lay north of the Ganges and West of Jamuna/Brahmaputra. Jamuna had no bridge as the river is 10 miles wide. In the

south there was the Harding bridge near Pabna over the Ganges. In this sector there was the Indian salient touching Hilli. Enemy thrust from Hilli to the river line would cut this sector into two quite easily. It was the most critical geographical location. Area in the north was exposed to multiple axis available to thrusts from the Silliguri salient as well.

b. Khulna Sector: This had Ganges river in its north and the Jamuna in the east with Madhomati river branching off from the Ganges flowing in the middle of sector. This sector offered a broad front to the Indian land mass of West Bengal. Two main roads from Calcutta entered this area with many subsidiary routes with no obstacles at the border. The Madhomati river was the first major obstacle available but major cities of Jessore, Khulna and Kustia were located in front of the Madhomati.

c. Dacca Sector: This sector mainly consisted of the area lying west of the Meghna and east of the Jamuna, both flanks protected by these two mighty rivers. Its exposed front lay in the north. It provided the most dangerous approach, as the enemy could reach Dacca directly from the north bypassing all troops in other sectors and with only one river to cross in the area of Jamlapur Mymensingh. In the Indian territory there were hills which were considered an obstacle to the assembly of force. However, as the Indians would have sufficient time with all moves in their own territory. It would not present an insurmountable problem to them. There were good roads leading down from Jamalpur Mymensingh through Tangail and on to Dacca. Tangail had a small airfield. Branched off river from the Jamuna called the Brahmaputra provided a reasonable water obstacle.

d. The Eastern Sector: This stretched from Sylhet to Chittagong Cox's Bazar near the Burmese border. This was the most exposed sector with about 700 miles of open frontier with India. Meghna river lies at its back in the west. There are numerous routes available to the attacker. The width of the sector is 60-70 miles with a south to north road from Chittagong to Sylhet all along the border, at places hardly 500 yards from the border. Same is the case with the railway line where it lay so close to the border that a stretch of quite a few yards passes over Indian territory with Akora railway stations platform being actually in India. Agartala salient provided an easy access to Meghna River line. There was a bridge over Meghna River in the area of Behrab.

The lay of the land was such that all roads converged from the border to Dacca. (There were no lateral roads except Chittagong to Sylhet. Even that was so close to the border that it could be cut by small arms fire all along its length). Movement of the enemy forces on to Dacca was facilitated. When alignment of roads was objected to, the objection was overruled on political and economic grounds. Important cities of Khulna, Jessore, Rajshahi, Dinajpur, Saidpur, Rangpur, Sylhet, Comilla, Brahmanbaria and Feni

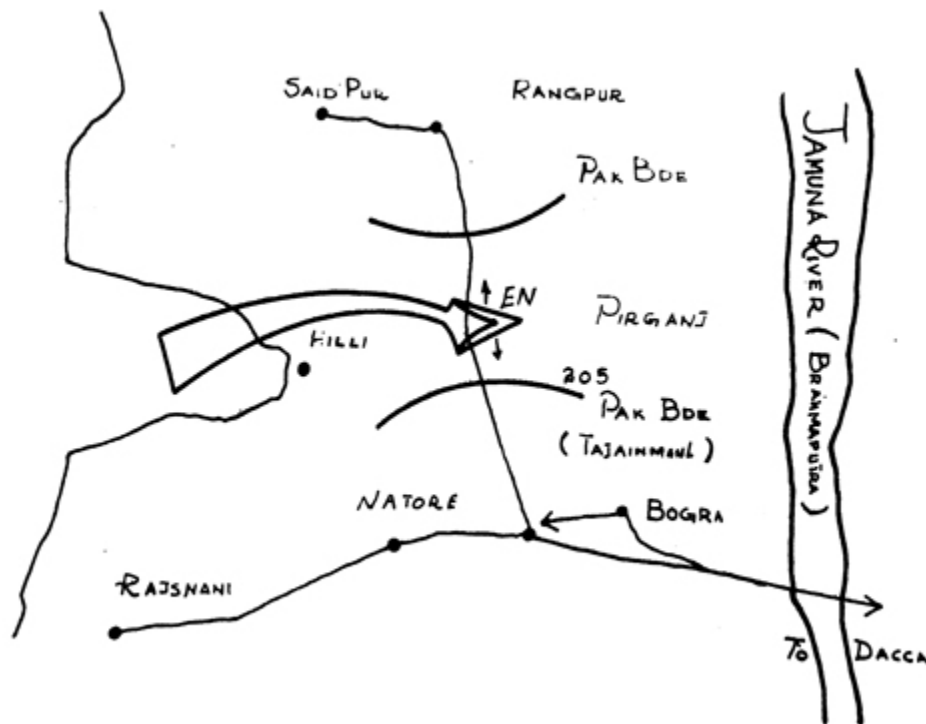
were very close to the border with India. Chittagong was exposed to attacks from the sea. All river obstacles lay behind not only the above mentioned cities but also the whole sector itself. To base the defence on the river obstacles one would have to withdraw from large areas of East Pakistan.

The railway line had been laid during the British days and obviously had no strategic role to play in the context of India. Pakistan confrontation. The track was cut even before the hostilities started and had become unusable. The Hilli Railway station had its station master's bungalow's door opening in Pakistan with its back window opening in India.

During the monsoon the whole area gets flooded and there are approximately 300 water channels navigable during the summer months. Military operations during the monsoon would be limited. But during the period November March the entire area of East Pakistan was as good for mobile operations as the plains of the Punjab.

Total frontier which had to be defended was 2,600 miles. (Compared with eastern front in West Pakistan which is mere 1,300 miles from Chamb to Karachi. Each sector had a minimum of four major approaches towards its vital and sensitive areas available to the enemy.

FINAL SITUATION OF 16 DIV.



For the deployment of forces. East Pakistan territory appeared to offer three lines of defence:-

a. Outer Ring: A defensive line near the border ahead of Jessore - Rajshahi Dinajpur, Saldaipur, Rangpur, Jamlapur, Mymensingh, Sylhet, Comilla and Chittagong formed in a semi-crescent shape. Such a deployment would be spread over 1,800 miles and would result in creation of wide gaps between defended localities.

b. The Intermediate Ring: In the Khulna Sector - along the Madhomati river leaving Jessore Khulna out of strong defensive positions. Going north to Rajshahi sector defence south of the Hilli Neck leaving Dinajpur

Rangpur outside the strong defensive positions. In Dacca Sector defensive position to run along River Brahmaputra in the north and river Meghna in the east with defensive bridge heads across the river. In the eastern Sector, Sylhet and Chittagong to be independent defensive positions. Comilla to be abandoned in favour of a defensive position East of Meghna to deny the river to the enemy.

c. The Close Ring: Defensive position along river Jamuna in the west. Brahmaputra in the north and Meghna in the east *i.e.* only Dacca sector called Bowl to be strongly defended. All troops to have river obstacles in front of them. Dacca's importance was paramount from military, political and psychological points of view. Therefore, Dacca was required to be defended till the last, at all costs. East Pakistan could best be defended by a mixture of Intermediate Ring line and close defence by deploying as far forward as water obstacles would be available. Then fighting delaying actions finally to fall on close defence of Dacca. Every inch of its territory could not be defended. With the forces which could be spared from West Pakistan, they could only hope to "remain in being" till a political solution could be arrived at through the United Nations.

d. The Political Factor: From purely military point of view the Close Ring provided the strongest operational defensive concept. It was easy for military pundits from West Pakistan to advocate such a strategy. I was one of them who also advocated a modified form of this. But if we consider it from the point of view of an East Pakistani this was a frightening concept in which one was to surrender a very large, actually a major, portion of East Pakistan to the enemy. From purely political point of view the concept would be unacceptable to East Pakistanis to whom their hearth, homes and honor of women folk were as sacred as to West Pakistanis. During and after '65 War with India, friendly but foreign strategists advocated withdrawal from Lahore and Sialkot on purely military point of view. How many of us would accept such a strategy on voluntary basis? This Close Ring or Dacca Bowl defensive strategy was useful only to achieve a

political solution of the conflict in the United Nations. Its main aim would be "to remain in being" so that international pressure could be brought up against India to force them to withdraw or seek a political settlement.

The above is based on the appreciation I wrote when in 1967 I conducted Ex-SUNDERBAN I. I later made whatever contribution was required by Maj. Gen. Muzaffaruddin and Lt Gen. Sahibzada Yaqub Khan in finalizing the concept of operations for defence of East Pakistan. The concept was:

- a. Defence of territory was not possible. It was more important for the forces to remain in being.
- b. Defence was to utilize the maximum river obstacles to enhance the defence capabilities.
- c. Dacca was to be defended at all costs.

This was the plan till Niazi appeared on the scene. He was a Sepoy General and despised intellectuals. He was an extrovert and a boastful commander relying heavily on propaganda and self-projection through boisterous statements.

Niazi changed the concept of operation. His operational instruction stated that the mission of Eastern Command was defence of East Pakistan, while:

- a. Taking offensive action in the direction of either Tripura, Calcutta or Silliguri Complex,
- b. Absorbing maximum Indian territory should an opportunity offer itself; and
- c. ensuring defence of Dacca at all costs.

Based on this offensive-oriented mission he decided to adopt a forward defensive posture based on strong points and fortresses with pre-positioned reserves to undertake counter-offensive into Indian territory as a repost. The keynote of this concept as given by Niazi in his operational Instructions was. "In short, the effect desired is to delay. involve and disperse enemy offensive straightaway, wrest Initiative from him and in the process inflict casualties, weaken him and finally destroy him." A high sounding note indeed but devoid of pragmatism and reality. given the forces at his disposal.

After the formulation of the plan, a war game like Ex- SUNDERBAN should have been held. None was held. Only a discussion was held, with COS Gen. Hamid present. All objections were ruled out. Gen. Hamid and later CHQ offered no comments on Nazi's unrealistic planning.

On the other hand, the Indians fully understood the advantages that would accrue to them if the Pakistanis adopted a forward posture and static defence. They cleverly activated the entire front with Mukti Bahini attacks. Niazi like a bull counterattacked each and every incursion and thereby had all his forces in the forward posture and exhausted when general war started on 4 December 1971.

The Indians were going to take no risks. They had under the guise of Naxalite revolt in West Bengal assembled more than eight divisions and one armoured brigade around East Pakistan. Divisions consisted of more than normal three brigades, and each brigade had more than normal three battalions. They assembled a massive force of 150,000 regular troops which had the support of 50,000 Border Security Force and 100,000 Mukti Bahini. Three Corps HQs were employed to attack from all directions east, west and north with the aim of reaching Dacca. Each Corps had lavish support of engineers to cross the water obstacles.

Vertical mobility was provided by a helicopter fleet enough to ferry a battalion in a couple of hours. Para brigade was located at Calcutta to be used when required.

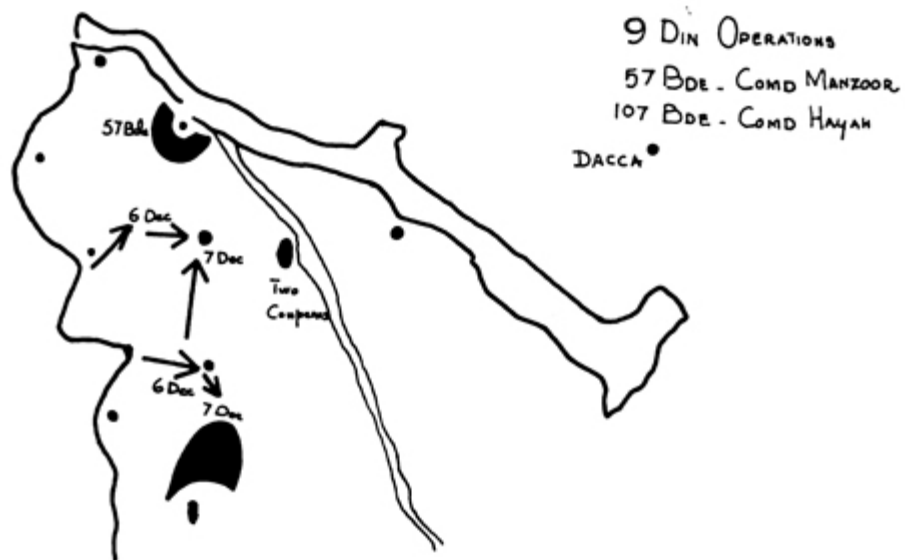
Pakistan Army consisted of three divisions and one brigade. 14 Division used to be the only division in East Pakistan before the military action. It was the only division which had its own compliments of artillery and engineers. It had no armoured units. After the military action 9 Division and 16 Division were flown out. As they were flown out they took no supporting arms in the shape of artillery and engineers. These were required for defence of West Pakistan and were retained here. Graciously, CHO spared an armoured regiment which was equipped with obsolete M24 tank which had been discarded even during World War II. It was a death trap and no match for M54 and PT76 of the Indian Army. Pakistan Army in East Pakistan was essentially an infantry force suited to the task in hand, that of internal security. A total number of four regiments of artillery defended 1890 miles of active border. One of the regiments had 3.7". Howitzer which were discarded before the Second World War and whose range was only 6800 yards. Compare these three divisions with divisions in West Pakistan. The entire fire power available in whole of East Pakistan was less than one division's defending Lahore.

As against ten squadrons of modern aircraft the PAF had only one squadron of obsolete F86s. All IAF airbases were located around East Pakistan, within ten to fifteen minutes flying time. Attacks could be sustained for the maximum duration. IAF had far superior aircrafts at that time. There could be no comparison between F86 and Mig 21 - one flying at 600 mph and the other at 1100 mph.

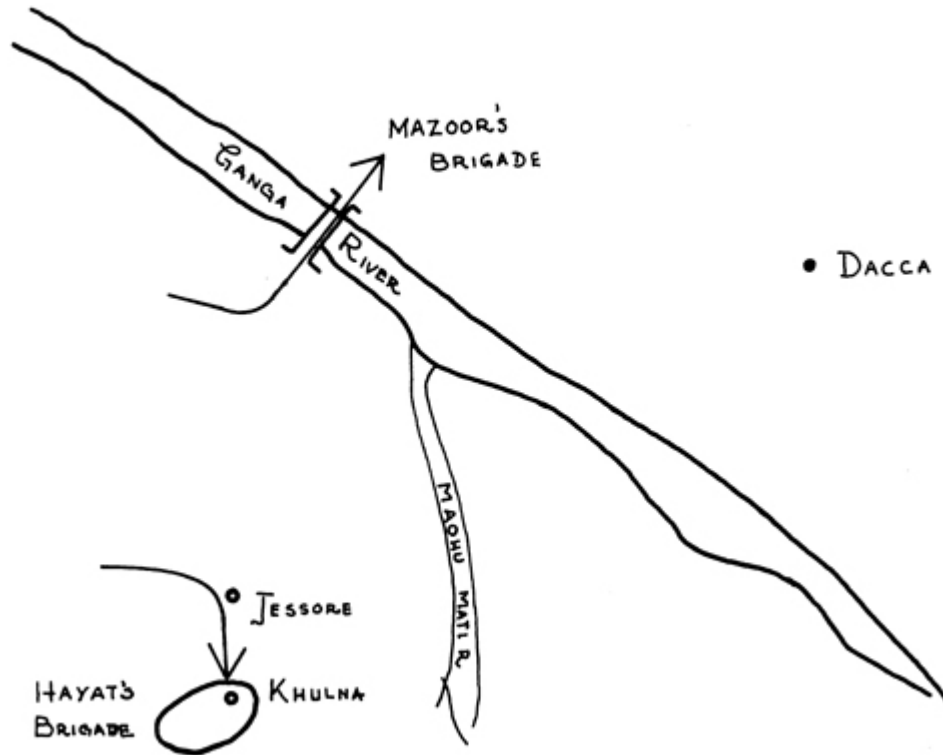
Indian Navy had deployed their only aircraft carrier in the south. Pakistan had virtually no naval force. There were only a few gunboats, good enough only for Intelligence Service duties.

On top of these inadequacies, General Niazi had deployed his entire force well forward, even forward of the conceptual outer- ring of defence.

INITIAL OPERATION



FINAL SITUATION 9 DIV.



INDIAN ATTACK

It was after Maghrab prayers on 3 December, that two BBC correspondents. Gavin Young and his colleague from the same organization, were with me discussing the situation. The mere presence of a large number of senior world media. correspondents indicated the possibility of something big taking place. They get prior information, somehow. of all major happenings. They converge like vultures wherever they smell disaster. Gavin Young asked me about my opinion regarding Mujib's release. Should he be released? I said, "Yes, he should be released in the larger interest of the country. This has been my opinion about Mujib from the time he was arrested." He said that he had asked the same question from President Yahya who had said, "No. My honor is involved." To this I commented that "the honor of the country is more important than that of an individual." Young said that he had said the same thing to Yahya but he did not agree to releasing Mujib. He then asked me. "Will there be a war between India and Pakistan." I said "I do not think that there should be a war. The onus of reacting to Indian attacks lies on us and we will not like to start the war as it is not in our interest." I had not yet explained my view when the telephone rang. It was from the Corps HQ informing me that the war had started between India and Pakistan and that I was to report to the Corps HQ immediately. Excusing myself, and without telling them of the start of hostilities. I bade them goodbye and went over to the Governor to inform him of the development. He had not been informed by the President. He was taken aback and got perturbed. I went over to the Corps HQ where we were briefed about the latest developments. The briefing was very sketchy as they themselves had no prior knowledge of the start of war, nor of the developments on the ground and in the air. I asked whether our forces were in battle positions. The answer was in the affirmative. There was no panic. All sounded confident. To my enquiry about what they expected from us, i.e the Civil Government, Niazi said, "We can look after ourselves. We have everything."

Not only the East Pakistan Governor and Commander Eastern Command were kept in the dark about GHQ intentions, the Commander-in-Chief of Pakistan Navy too came to know of the start of war from the news broadcast. What is unbelievable is that DG ISI Jilani did not know about it. He himself told me that he considered it a joke when he got the news. How could anybody hope to win in such an uncoordinated and haphazard effort?

December 4 was a quiet day in East Pakistan- lull before the storm. That day the Indians carried out final movement of their troops to assembly areas for attacks. However, Mukti Bahini remained active against the rear of Pakistani forces disrupting communications and supplies. Due to the shortage of troops, Pakistan Army had used Bengali labor to dig trenches and develop fortifications. The laborers had been

infiltrated by rebels who thus had complete information about Pakistan Army deployment. Even otherwise the rebels were residents of the areas and knew the extent, width and depth of Pakistan Army deployment and defence. The information had duly been passed on to the Indians. Armed with this information and guided by the rebels, the Indians attacked in all sectors during the night of 4/5 December.

In the briefing of the morning of 5 December we were given the bad news of surrender of the one battalion and critical situation of the other in area south of Comilla. What was worst was that the Battalion Commanders had been forced to give a call to their troops for surrender over megaphones. That they had agreed to do so showed that the morale of troops was very low. News from other sectors also indicated advances by the Indians Army.

We had earlier lost two F86's in aerial combat. The Air Force sent out two on the morning of 5 December. They landed at 0900 hrs 5 December and that was the end of air operations and air support. Flying in from all directions, ten squadrons of the Indian Air Force kept the only operational airfield at Dacca under constant attacks. The anti-aircraft regiment deployment for the defence of the airfield performed heroically. They manned their guns till the last. Even after cease-fire, they brought down a Canberra. They were a brave lot and shot down at least four enemy aircraft on the first day. One of the aircraft fell in Mirpur area where Biharis were living. There was wild rejoicing all over. Sweets were distributed. We were elated at the Governor House by the reaction of the people. Suddenly there was change in Bengali knowledgeable quarters as well. Those who could understand the implications of Indian aggression feared Indian occupation in the event of Indian victory. People were heard saying that they did not want the Indian troops to replace Pakistani troops. At least Pakistanis were Muslim brothers. We could talk to them. Fear of the unknown hit them. But our rejoicing were short-lived.

We got the news that the Indian aircraft were attacking with Russian made bombs which had created very deep craters on the only runway and put it out of operational use. We made arrangement to repair the runway, but the Pakistan Air Force found it irreparable. They got orders to send all pilots to West Pakistan through Rangoon. The war was to go on without air support. The very fact that pilots were withdrawn revealed that the authorities in Rawalpindi had given up East Pakistan. I made last minute efforts to convince people to put in a show of determination by carrying out one-way air attack on Calcutta air base. I volunteered to get all electricity poles removed on the New Capital main road. the road was quite fit to enable fighter aircraft to take off. Calcutta was too far for F86s to come back after attack. However, as they were of no use to us standing there in Dacca, they might as well be used for one way operation. It could be described as suicidal but it would have shown to the world that we were determined to fight to the last. The pilots could bail out after completing their mission of doing maximum damage to the enemy aircraft standing on Calcutta airfield

where knowing the Pakistani capability they expected no air attack. However, my suggestion had no takers and on the night of 6 December, the pilots were flown out to Rangoon on their way to West Pakistan.

After the briefing in Corps HQ on 6 December, I suggested to Gen. Niazi to pull back his troops gradually on to the rivers. Pointing on the map I asked him what the troops in Dinajpur, Thakurgaon and Comilla were doing. I also expressed my fears about the possibility of the narrow neck opposite Hilli being cut any time and suggested that troops from Dinajpur, Rangpur, Thakurgaon should fall back on Bogra. Comilla garrison should fall back to the Meghna river line. Same sort of maneuver be carried out in other sectors. He looked at me and said in Punjabi. *i.e.* "They have not been attacked". Obviously, he had no concept of strategic withdrawals. Instead of carrying out planned withdrawal he issued orders that there would be no withdrawal unless troops had suffered 75% casualties. This was most unprofessional order and hardly needs a comment. However, he promised to talk to the Commanders concerned. Nothing was heard on the 7th but on the 8th when asked he told me that he had discussed my proposal with Atif, Brigade Commander Comilla, who said that he could not withdraw because his rear had already been cut by the enemy. News from all sectors were continuously painting a disastrous situation. The map of West Pakistan had been replaced in the briefing room by East Pakistan operational map.

Earlier news from West Pakistan told of advances on all fronts but later came vague hints of reverses. Actually, India claimed significant victories in Azad Kashmir and Sialkot Sector. The most disheartening news was about sinking of the Submarine Ghazi. We were hoping that she will at least sink the aircraft carrier Vikrant. Since we heard nothing from own sources, we felt that perhaps Indian claims were correct. The Indians became bolder and raided Karachi oil installations setting fire to a few oil tanks. Indian Air Force was reportedly having freedom of the skies as Pakistan Air Force was being preserved by its Commander-in-Chief, Air Marshal Rahim for a six month-long war! This was his own decision motivated by some political considerations. Or was it decided by the Joint Operational HQ? One would never know. The impact it had on the minds of East Pakistan forces was that even in West Pakistan we were losing ground.

Pakistan's defensive measures, operational plans and deployment strategy were known to Bengali officers. A large number of them belonging to the Army, Air Force and the Navy had fled to India, and handed over to the Indians marked maps. In particular, Major Manzoor who later as Major General killed President Zia ur Rehman of Bangla Desh was Brigade Major in Sialkot sector in 1971. He crossed over to India with the marked map enabling Indians to move into unoccupied areas of Sialkot. In the same manner, the Air Force plans were revealed by a Bengali Air force officer. This enabled the Indians to disperse their aircrafts before PAF attack on the evening of 3 December. If enemy plans are known and dispositions are no secret, conduct of successful operations is quite easy. Pakistan's Armed Forces faced a difficult task even without the quiselling

amongst its ranks but with enemy agents and supporters everywhere the task had become horrendous.

On return from the morning briefing on 6 December, at the Corps HQ. I was called by the Governor to know about the military situation. He had heard, he said, disturbing news from the civilian sources that his home towns, Chougacha and Chowadanga, had been overrun and occupied by the Indians. These were border towns, and while replying in the affirmative I suggested that the best person to give him the correct and authentic picture was Niazi. Meeting of the Governor was, therefore, arranged with Niazi. The Governor, accompanied by the Chief Secretary Mr. Muzaffar Hussain, went to the Corps HQ where Gen. Niazi briefed them. Next morning. *i.e.* 7 December the Governor asked me to arrange for the visit of ministers to various areas so that they could boost up the morale of the people: it was in fact, Niazi's proposal,. He had also told the Governor that there was nothing to worry about the operational side; the Army was strong enough to defend East Pakistan. I had a different surmise of the situation and told the Governor that there was no way for the ministers to move out of Dacca. The ferries on all rivers had been abandoned, and boats drifted down the rivers by the rebels. Roads were unsafe. He said that was what he had told Niazi but he had suggested use of army helicopters by the ministers. When I contacted the Corps HQ they said no helicopters could be spared: all 6 of them were engaged in operational work day and night.

This was our plight. To fight an insurgency and a war had a mighty force of 6 helicopters in all! The US had more than four thousand helicopters in Vietnam and still found them insufficient. Niazi had merely bluffed. I suggested to the Governor to invite him to the Governor House where he may express himself more freely. In an Army HQ. In front of his subordinates, a commander has to display courage and give an image of toughness and determination. It was a requirement, i sald, and that was how it should be. But as head of the civilian government of an isolated and cut off province the Governor was entitled to be conveyed a factual, truthful and realistic state of affairs to be able to form his own opinion about what to do. Niazi came. I received him and took him to the Governor where Muzaffar Hussain, the Chief Secretary, also joined us. It was a custom in the Governor House that tea or coffee was brought in automatically within a few minutes of the arrival of a guest. As we sat down in front of the Governor with Niazi on my left and Muzaffar on my right, the Governor started with a statement in general terms saying that in war anything could happen. "When two sides fight one wins and the other may lose. At times a commander may have to surrender and at other..."

Before the Governor could say more on the subject, I heard a shriek, a cry and a sound of loud sobbing. I saw Niazi with his hands covering his face, weeping. At that dramatic moment the butler entered with tea and saw and heard what was going on. Muzaffar got up, hastily took the tray from the butler and pushed him out most awkwardly. He

was supposed to serve the tea and his exit attracted attention. When questioned by the Military Secretary and others he replied "*Undeer Sahib Loog Roo Rahee Haan.*" To that later on I replied that only one sahib was weeping, the rest of us were not. However, the news, like all such news, spread immediately all over Dacca conveying the impression of desperate situation of the Pakistan Army. It caused depression amongst friends but the guerillas were encouraged. Soon their activity within the city increased.

Whether Niazi cried because he did not like the use of the word surrender or he cried because he was a broken man only he or his God knows. I am only stating what I saw and what impression it created. The impression the Governor, the Chief Secretary and I got was that the Pakistan Army was likely to be beaten in the field in not too distant a future. We had only a few days to work out a political solution to avoid disaster.

To enable the President to take the right decision, It was decided to apprise him of the correct situation as existed on that day. Niazi had not been revealing the true picture and therefore the press and the people in West Pakistan did not know till the 9th December that Jessors had fallen to the enemy on 7th. A telex message was jointly prepared with the approval of Niazi who agreed with its contents. However, he asked me to get it sent from the Governor House. At that time I did not realize that he was playing a game and keeping his options open to deny his concurrence with the contents of the Governor's message of 7th December to the President when the need arose. The message clearly stated the military situation and expressed doubts about the strategy we had adopted in the United Nations. Our delegation was asking for a simple cease-fire and withdrawal of Indian forces without indicating or promising political steps to resolve the problems in East Pakistan. Nobody in the world at that time would accept a resolution which did not have a political approach. Governor's message requested that political solution be suggested to UN to get a cease-fire resolution passed there.

The events were now moving too fast. On the evening of 7th December Maj. Gen. Rahim Commanding Adhoc 36 Div asked for permission to evacuate his forces and HQ from Chandpur back to Dacca. Chandpur was abandoned by Rahim and his headquarters. While crossing the Meghna River, the boats carrying the Headquarter personnel were effectively attacked by the Indian aircraft. The boats were badly damaged, a number of officers and men were killed and many wounded, including General Rahim. He was evacuated to CMH Dacca. I went to see him twice but both times I found him asleep, highly sedated. The enemy had reached the bank of Meghna opposite Dacca. Only remnants of various units trekking back were being deployed on the home bank to defend Dacca.

General Nazar, Commanding 16 Division in Bogra sector, had been ambushed by a detachment of the enemy who had cut the Rangpur-Bogra main road bypassing Hilli defenses as I had feared and said earlier. The enemy forces consisted of tanks and infantry. Earlier reports indicated that the General was missing and therefore his

replacement was required. Maj. Gen. Jamshed Commander EPR was flown out to take over command of the Division. Due to complete control over air by the enemy he flew out during night in helicopter but could not locate the landing area. He came back. Luckily. Nazar escaped capture by the enemy and joined his forces safe and sound. During the absence of Jamshed I was to command EPR, as I was available. I was horrified to note that no regular army units were available for the defence of Dacca. Except pointing this out to Corp HQ. I could not do much as Jamshed returned to his command after an abortive try to land in the area of 16 Div. However, Corps HQ tried to seek help from its subordinate formations asking them to spare some troops for the defence of Dacca. But without resources of transportation the intention could not be implemented.

A telex message was received on 8 December from the President's office in reply to Governor's message of 7 December. The message instructed the Governor to continue the fight as the President was taking appropriate measures on international level. The message also informed the Governor that a high powered delegation was being rushed to New York to present Pakistan's case. The word "rushed" signified the realization of the gravity of the situation. However, the delegation led by Mr. Bhutto 'rushed' at a snail's pace to make sure that as much time was wasted as possible. Niazi's options were minimized and political solution became unavailable. They 'rushed' to Kabul on 8 December by road as if Kabul held a key to the solution. Then they 'rushed' by the most zigzag route via Frankfurt, Rome, London to New York reaching there on the 10th. As one gains 12 hours on the way, this rushing took 60 hours to get them to New York whereas they could have been there the same day. By the time they arrived there many developments had taken place. Operational situation had deteriorated as reflected in General Niazi's following signals which he sent to GHQ on December 9.

(1) Signal No G-1255 dated 9 December 1971

One (.) regrouping readjustment is not possible due to enemy mastery of skies (.) population getting extremely hostile and providing all-out help to enemy (.) No move possible during night due to intensive rebel ambushes (.) rebels guiding enemy through gaps and rear (.) Air field damaged extensively cmm* no mission last three days and not possible in future (.) All Jetties cmm ferries and river crafts destroyed due enemy air action (.) bridges demolished by rebels (.) even extrication most difficult (.) Two (.) extensive damage to heavy weapons and equipment due enemy air action (.) troops fighting extremely well but stress and strain now telling hard (.) NOT slept for last 20 days (.) are under constant fire air artillery and tanks (0) Three (.) situation extremely critical cmm we will go on fighting and do our best (.) Four (.) request following (.) immediate strike all enemy air bases this theater (.) if possible reinforcement airborne troops for protection Dacca (.) Message ends.

It is not possible to imagine a more depressing situation than conveyed in the above signal. The commander after painting true state of the situation as extremely critical and his forces as tired goes on to request for reinforcement by airborne forces for defence of Dacca. His request had received wide publicity and when later Indian airborne troops landed in Tangail area Pakistan army mistook them as Chinese troops and went out to welcome them but were taken prisoners.

(2) Signal No G-1265 dated 10 December 1971

One (.) alfa (.) all formations this command in every sector this theater under extreme pressure (.) bravo (.) formations/troops mostly isolated in fortresses which initially invested by enemy cmm now under heavy attacks and may be liquidated due overwhelming strength of enemy (.) charlie (.) enemy possess mastery of air and freedom to destroy all vehicles at will and with full concentration of effort (.) delta (.) local population and rebels not only hostile but all-out to destroy own troops in entire area (.) echo (.) all communication road/river out (.) Two (.) orders to own troops issued to hold on last man last round which may not be too long due to very prolonged fighting cmm troops totally tired (.) anyway will be difficult to hold on when weapons/ammunition exhaust in the next few days (.) supplies/ammunition also continue to the destroyed by enemy/rebels actions besides Intense rate battle expenditure (.) Three (.) submitted for information and advice.

This signal is a clear indication of Niazi's acceptance of defeat. He states that his troops may not be able to fight on for more than a few days more. When such a situation arises militarily it is the job of the politicians to reduce its damaging effect as much as possible. The higher one goes, more far-seeing he should be. The top leadership should have been able to visualize the future. The Governor thought that the situation demanded urgent political action otherwise the Eastern Command would face humiliation. Discussions were going on in the Security Council. It appeared from the speeches of our representative that we were asking for a simple cease-fire from UN without offering any political solution. At that time most of the nations of the world were of the opinion that Bengalis be given greater autonomy or at least promised some political opening to bring the war to an end. To get a cease-fire resolution passed by the Security Council it was essential, in our opinion. to offer a political solution. Therefore, the Governor requested the President on December 9 in a signal which said: "Once again urge you to consider immediate cease-fire and political settlement."

In reply to this signal the President sent the following signal.

FLASH Dated 092300 (9 Dec. 1100 hrs P.M)

FROM: HQ CMLA

TO: GOVERNOR EAST PAKISTAN AND EASTERN
COMMAND

TOPSEC (.) G-0001 (.) From President to Governor repeated to Eastern Command (.) your flash message A-4660 of 9 dec received and thoroughly understood (.) you have my permission to take decision on your proposals to me (.) I have and am continuing to take all measures internationally but in view of our complete isolation from each other decision about East Pakistan I leave entirely to your good sense and judgment (.) I will approve of any decision you take and I am instructing Gen. Niazi simultaneously to accept your decision and arrange things accordingly (.) Whatever efforts you take in your decision to save senseless destruction of the kind of civilians you have mentioned, in particular the safety of our armed forces, you may go ahead and ensure safety of armed forces by all political means that you will adopt with our opponent."

The President clearly and in unambiguous terms gave authority to the Governor to take decision about East Pakistan in accordance with his good sense. The use of word about and not in East Pakistan gives wider power to the Governor. Certain other phrases are very significant: "Save senseless destruction of civilians and ensure safety of armed forces by political means." These two objectives could only be met by presenting a political solution to the United Nations along with the Cease-fire request. For some unknown and dubious reasons, the Government of Pakistan was unwilling to suggest to the UN a political solution and the inference at Dacca from the use of the sentence, "you may go ahead and ensure safety of armed forces by all political means that you will adopt with your opponent" was that they wanted the Governor to make the proposals to UN, to avoid embarrassment to the Central Government.

Expression of desire to look after the safety of Armed Forces had the germs of suggesting surrender. In my opinion Armed Forces are safe if they are fighting or cease-fire brings an end to their fighting or they have surrendered. Fighting capability of Niazi was at a very low ebb as indicated in his two SOS signals quoted above. He had clearly expressed his conclusions by saying "Anyway it will be difficult to hold on when weapons/ammunition exhaust in the next few days." The next option was seeking and getting cease-fire through UN. This, one could get only by offering a political solution. Our reading of the development of debates in UN was that Pakistan's representative was reluctant to offer political solution. Obviously, somebody was forcing their option, that of surrender, on Niazi.

Simultaneously, a much more definite signal was sent by COS Army to Gen. Niazi. It is reproduced as follows:

FROM: PAKARMY
TO: EASTERN COMMAND

DTG:
TOP

100910 FLASH
SECRET G-0237

for Comd from COS Army (.) President's signal message to Governor copy to you refers (.) President has left the decision to the Governor in close consultation with you (.) as no signal can correctly convey the degree of seriousness of the situation I can only leave it to you to take the correct decision on the spot (.) it is however apparent that it is now only a question of time before the enemy with its great superiority in number and material and the active cooperation of rebels will dominate East Pakistan completely (.) meanwhile a lot of damage is being done to the civil population and the Army is suffering heavy casualties (.) you will have to assess the value of fighting on if you can, and weigh it, based on this you should give your frank advice to the Governor who will give his final decision as delegated to him by the President (.) whenever you feel it is necessary to do so you should attempt to destroy maximum military equipment so that it does not fall into enemy hands (.) keep me informed (.) Allah bless you.

Note the following sentences:

- (1) Rebels will dominate East Pakistan completely.
- (2) Governor will give final decision as delegated to him by the President.
- (3) A concealed, suggestive and cleverly worded phrase: "whenever you feel it is necessary to do so (?) you should attempt to destroy maximum military equipment so that it does not fall into enemy hands."

Comments. "So" was kept vague. When does one destroy equipment? Answer is, when one surrenders. Therefore, the word "So" means surrender. CHQ was suggesting that with Governor's approval you may surrender. This was on 10th December.

The above two signals were masterly worded. The whole intention was to throw the responsibility for surrender on the Governor and the Commander in East Pakistan and also blame them for doing so, if and when the occasion arose, that the rulers in Islamabad could go on ruling in West Pakistan by implicating the Governor and Commander for the debacle in East Pakistan.

The Governor, hard-pressed from the civilian side, wanted an end to the fighting with honor. The situation in the areas which were continuously being overrun by the Indian Army and Mukti Bahini was unimaginably terrible for friends of Pakistan. Prominent Bengalees who had supported Pakistan were butchered, and their properties looted. Biharis had no place to hide. They were hunted down like ple-dogs and brutally executed. Given more time the atrocious killing were to become wide-spread. The Governor was heart-broken and depressed but his mind still worked. He thought that

instead of taking the step of surrender why not try for cease-fire. As the responsibility had been delegated to the Governor to find a political arrangement, the following signal was sent by him to the President for approval to be sent to UNO.

FROM: GOVERNOR EAST PAKISTAN TO: HQ CMLA
TOP SECRET A-7107

For President of Pakistan (.) your G-0001 of 092300 dec (.) as the responsibility of taking the final and fateful decision has been given to me I am handing over the following note to Assistant Secretary General Mr. Paul Mark Henry after your approval (.) Note begins (.) It was never the intention of the Armed Forces of Pakistan to involve themselves in all out war on the soil of East Pakistan (.) However a situation arose which compelled the Armed Forces to take defensive action (.) The intention of the Government of Pakistan was always to decide the issues in East Pakistan by means of a political solution for which negotiations were afoot (.) The Armed Forces have fought heroically against heavy odds and can still continue to do so but in order to avoid further bloodshed and loss of innocent lives I am making the following proposals (.) As the conflict arose as a result of political causes, it must end with a political solution (.) I therefore having been authorized by the President of Pakistan do hereby call upon the elected representative of East Pakistan to arrange for the peaceful formation of the Government in Dacca (.) In making this offer I feel duty bound to say the will of the people of East Pakistan would demand the immediate vacation of their land by the Indian forces as well (.) I therefore call upon the United Nations to arrange for a peaceful transfer of power and request (.) one (.) an immediate cease-fire (.) two (.) repatriation with honor of the Armed Forces of Pakistan to West Pakistan (.) three (.) repatriation of all West Pakistan personnel desirous of returning to West Pakistan (.) four (.) the safety of all persons settled in East Pakistan since 1947 (.) five (.) guarantee of no reprisals against any person in East Pakistan (.) In making this offer, I want to make it clear that this is a definite proposal for peaceful transfer of power (.) The question of surrender of Armed Forces would not be considered and does not arise and if this proposal is not accepted the Armed Forces will continue to fight to the last man (.) Note end (.) Gen. Niazi has been consulted and submits himself to your command.

The reader is requested to note the following:

- (a) Suggestion that the conflict must end with a political solution.
- (b) Political solution offered was the peaceful formation of the Government in Dacca by the elected representative of East Pakistan.
- (c) The Armed Forces were not to surrender.

Both signals, one from the President and the other from COAS General Hamid were received by the Governor at night. Mr. Muzaffar Hussain Chief Secretary to the Governor along with all other Secretaries belonging to West Pakistan had moved into the Governor House. The Governor and Mr. Muzaffar Hussain came to my office in the Governor House on the morning of 10 December and showed me the above quoted signal which the Governor proposed to be sent to the President. Muzaffar had prepared the draft. The Governor asked me and Muzaffar to take the signal to Niazi and get his approval. The India Air Forces was very active over Dacca making movement on road hazardous. There were plenty of Mukti Bahini guerillas operating in the city through which we had to pass to cover seven mile to the Corps HQ. We had no military escort. We made our way taking cover from one place to another. We reached Corps HQ and found all the important personalities present with Gen. Niazi. He had given up holding of briefing sessions: Instead there were get together meetings. Present were Admiral Sharif, General Jamshed and Brig Baqar Siddiqui COS Corps. Mr. Muzaffar handed over the draft signal to general Niazi who got it read out to all. Then he asked for opinion, Gen. Jamshed and Admiral Sharif endorsed the suggestion given in the signal by saying, "We have no other option." Then Gen. Niazi said. "In what capacity of mine are you asking for my approval." I said. "In your capacity as theater commander East Pakistan". He said. "Ok, you have my approval."

We both left for the Governor house separately. Muzaffar had to go somewhere else and I got back to the Governor House alone with the approved signal. I found the Governor and Mr. Paul Mark Henry UN representative waiting for us. I told the Governor that Gen. Niazi approved the signal to the President. The Governor asked me to hand over a copy to Mr. Paul Henry which I did after signing it. I signed it because it was a signal message which was to be transmitted over Army Communication system and which required signature by an army officer. I was the only army staff officer available in the Governor House at that time so I signed. Signatures of a staff officer are never taken to mean that the communications is from him. The communication was from the Governor to the President and not me. But I agreed with the proposals as their acceptance would have saved us from the humiliation of surrender.

Life in Dacca had come to a complete halt. Curfew had been clamped to counter the activities of Mukti Bahini inside the city. Road blocks had been established on all roads but infiltration of guerillas continued. There was no Government functioning as Bengal personnel of all levels were involved in resistance to the established government of Pakistan some overtly others. covertly. Under such circumstances the only honorable course open was as indicated in Governor's signal to ensure that surrender is avoided.

SYNOPSIS AND ANALYSIS OF OPERATIONS

Khulna Jessore Sector Maj. Gen. Ansart Commander 9 Division with two brigades under Brig Manzur and Brig Hayat had his forces deployed well forward. His pleas to withdraw to rearward position were made fun of and bypassed by Corps HQ.

20 November. Indians captured Charibpur village about 3 miles inside Pakistan. 6 Punjab supported by a few tanks counter attacked. Attack repulsed. Most of the tanks destroyed. PAF supporting the attack lost two aircraft due to inferior combat aircrafts.

21/22 November. Own 38 FF withdrew on night 21/22 from Chuagacha.

4 December General hostilities started.

Jessore Sub-Sector. Enemy attacked 6 Punjab with a brigade supported by tanks and air at about 1000 hrs on 6 December. At 1600 hrs 6 Punjab informed the Brigade HQ of a breach in the northern flanks. Instead of falling back as planned on Madhomati river the Brigade under Brig Hayat withdrew towards Khulna leaving Jessore undefended. Jessore fell on 7 December as one Captain with a few men continued to fight for 24 hours. Pakistan Radio gave the news on 9 December.

Jenidah Sub-Sector. Under Brig Manzur 57 Bde consisting of two battalions was attacked by 4th Indian Mountain Division on 24 November. Jibanagar fell on 27 November. Enemy could not clear Darsana, but wide gaps existed and with the help of Mukti Bahini the enemy established a roadblock in the rear on Road Chuagacha Jenidah. 37 Bde could not clear it and thus its major portion had to move out of their operational area to the north and after crossing Jamuna got into 16 Division's area east of Rajshahi. Remnants staggered back behind Madhomati river where 9 Division HQ had already moved from Jessore.

Thus by 6/7 December, 9 Division had ceased to exist as a fighting formation. However, It was able to put up a show of force deceiving the opposing commander who did not take the risk of crossing Madhomati river. 9 Division had disintegrated as a command but its individual officers and jawans displayed exceptional courage and performed individual acts of bravery which have been recognized by the enemy as well.

Why did Brig Hayat fall on Khulna and not on Modhomati river? This was contrary to the order of his own GOC Ansari. General Niazi gave the order directly to Brig Hayat so that he could secure Khulna port for the 6th Fleet which was supposedly coming to help him. This was an unsound maneuver as it exposed Dacca to the enemy. There was

only one company, two 3.7-in guns and 9 Division HQ between the enemy and Dacca. What a risk to take?

Rangpur: Bogra Rajshahi Sector. 16 Division under Maj. Gen. Nazar Hussain was defending this sector. Utilizing Hilli salient, the enemy had cut the 16 Division into two halves. GOC survived when ambushed by a road block erected by the enemy on the main Rangpur Bogra road. The Division had one armoured regiment under command equipped with World War II 24 mm guns useless against PT 76's and M 59/M60's of the enemy. The enemy bypassed most of the fortresses and had 16 Division split as one under. At the time of surrender, the division had lost cohesion as a fighting formation though its individual battalions were intact as opposed to that of the other division. Brigadier Tajammal's performance was exceptionally praiseworthy.

Sylhet - Brahmanbaria Section. Before the general war Jantipur, Radha Nagar and Shamsheer Nagar had fallen. By 2 December troops had fallen back on Maulvi Bazar. 313 Brigade was ordered to go to Sherpur and finally to Sylhet where it remained till the end. The troops in Sylhet could not play any part nor could they influence the battle in any way.

Brahmanbaria - Ashugang. 27 Bde under Brig Saadullah fought bravely but was outnumbered and had to fall back successively from Akora - Kasba to Brahmanbaria on night 4/5 December. On 5 December, Brahmanbaria was threatened and evacuated on night 5/6 December. The brigade fought a good battle at Ashugang till night 9/10 December when it crossed over to Bhairab. It was a wrong move as Bhairab had water channel on the Southern side as well. So whereas it provided a sanctuary to the Division HC and 27 Bde. they were out of the battle for the defence of East Pakistan. The enemy was able to cross uninterruptedly at Narsingdi on 11 December and advance on to Dacca without any threat from 14 Division to its flank in the north.

Briefly stated, the 14 Division defenses were torn apart within 48 hours of the start of the all out war on 4 December. By 6 December the Division ceased to exist as an entity, one brigade falling on Sylhet, the other on Brahmanbaria. By 12 December the entire territory within the boundaries of this Division had been captured by the enemy except for the town of Sylhet which was isolated and ineffective.

Southern Sector (Chandpur Comilla). 39 Division had been created by Gen. Niazi to deceive the enemy. In actual fact the move broke up formations and led to lack of command and control due to communication problems.. 39 Division under Maj. Gen. Rahim had one brigade under Brigadier Niazi in area Laksham-Feni. and one brigade under Brigadier Atif in area Comilla. The deployment of Niazi's Brigade was faulty with eyeball contact with the enemy and spread out in a linear formation to defend an indefensible road.

The enemy attacked Chaudagram area on night 4/5 December and with the help of Mukti Bahini established themselves in the rear by capturing Muzaffargang. 53 Bde moved to Laksham on night 5/6 December, Great confusion prevailed in the area with reports of surrender by battalion commanders. Laksham was abandoned along with guns and the wounded. The battalions dispersed, surrendering here and there on their way to Chandpur. Chandpur had already been vacated by 39 Division HQ on 8 December. On their way to Dacca the boats carrying Divisional Headquarters were attacked by the Indian Aircraft. Lt Col Qureshi COS I of the Division and ten others were killed while its GOC Maj. Gen. Rahim was wounded. 39 Division ceased to exist on 8/9 December with the garrison under Brig. Atif at Comilla surrounded.

By 7 December the events had taken an ominous shape for Eastern Command. Jessore and Jhendia had fallen and 9 Division stood disintegrated. Sylhet garrison had been isolated. Brahmanbaria had been vacated by 14 Division and the Indians were threatening Ashuganj Bhairab Bazar. The defence of 39 Division (Adhoc Div) had been ripped open and Div HQ had been permitted to abandon Chandpur. Two of its battalions had disintegrated. On the north western front, 16 Division had been cut into two halves with GOC isolated. Thus, the entire Eastern Command had disintegrated within about three to four days of the start of the all-out war.

By 9 December, the situation had become hopeless in the mind of COC Eastern Command. He informed GHQ of the criticalness of the situation saying that they could fight on only for a couple of days more. He had suffered a military defeat. There is no doubt, though, that the Pakistan Army had to fight under the most adverse conditions. Due to political mishandling the majority of the population of East Pakistan had turned against the Army and, with the militant support of Mukti Bahini, had provided the Indian Army with immense and effective support which gave tremendous advantage to the Indian Army in its mobility and maneuverability on the flanks and rear of the Pakistan Army. Yet the war could be prolonged had Niazi followed the original concept of mobile defence prepared by Gen. Muzaffaruddin and Gen. Yakub in which I had contributed my humble bit.

Overall military situation on 10 December was as follow:-

9 Division

a. Jessore abandoned on 6 Dec. Hayat's brigade withdrew towards Khulna instead of falling on Maghura behind Madhomati river.

b. Brigadier Manzur's brigade crossed the Ganges into 16 Division area. Remained isolated. Was ordered to come to Dacca but due to non-availability of boats could not. All boats had been removed by the Mukti Bahini. 75 miles separated the only two brigades of Division. There were only two companies and Div HQ between the enemy and Dacca.

BEFORE 3 Dec

طکاراٹو

6 Dec

میدان لور

رنگپور

6 Dec

7 Dec

بکرچ

بگرا

نور

راجشاهی

7 دسمبر۔ 6 اڈمیں دھول میں بٹ لیا۔

a. Road Rangpur-Bogra was cut near Pirganj by the enemy on 7 December. Division had been split in two.

14 Division:

a. 27 Brigade crossed over the Bhairab Bazar on 10 December. As there was a waterway south of it, the Brigade became isolated and ineffective for the purpose of war in East Pakistan. It was safe where it was but could provide no support to the defence of Dacca.

b. 313 Brigade moved to Sylhet. There it stayed with 202 Brigade, which was an Ad Hoc Brigade with one battalion only. The isolated fortress of Sylhet was not disturbed unduly by the Indians as it could play no part in the war any more.

39 Ad Hoc Division

a. Two companies and Bn HQ surrendered on the first night 4/5 December.

b. 27 Punjab and 21 AK surrendered on 10 December.

c. Maj. Gen. Rahim withdrew his headquarters from Chandpur to Dacca on 8 Dec.

d. 523 Brigade dispersed all over the countryside. One of its battalions lost the way and surrendered to the enemy.

e. Comilla garrison bypassed. 117 Brigade kept holding on to Cantonment area only. The city had fallen to the enemy earlier.

f. The enemy had reached Dand Kundi and Chandpur and all of own troops in this sector had either surrendered, been dispersed or killed.

36 Ad Hoc Division

This division had only two regular battalions, 33 Punjab and 31 Baluch. The two approaches from Jamalpur and Mymensingh to Dacca were looked after by battalion each. After heroic battles at the border the withdrawal was disorganized. Semblance of command dispersed after the enemy airdrop in area Tangail. Whoever got back to Dacca as straggler was in bad shape. For defence of Dacca remnants of forces from various sectors were organized.

By changing the concept of operations for the defence of East Pakistan Lt. Gen. Niazi sowed the seeds of disaster. The plan which he had evolved was completely out of tune with the existing operational environment. No sooner the Indian offensive unfolded itself the weakness of the plan started becoming apparent and commanders at all levels were unable to obey the no-withdrawal orders issued by the Corps HQ. With wide fronts, thin defenses and overwhelming enemy superiority in numbers and fire-power the concept of fortresses leading to rigid defence could not succeed. This only led to disorganized retreats. The conduct of war, with the exception of a number of instances

of valour, courage and dedication, is a sad story full of panic, chaos, confusion and blemishes, which resulted in capitulation of East Pakistan.

During the initial phase of the Indian offensive from 20 November to 3 December, the Commander Eastern Command failed to comprehend the impending danger and stuck to the redundant idea of not losing even an inch of territory. He failed to redeploy his forces based purely on military considerations and instead, continued to maintain the forward posture, the troops suffered heavy casualties in their effort to recapture the areas occupied by the enemy along the border during their preliminary operations. Even on 3 December, when Gen. Niazi was directed by the GHQ to "redeploy the force in accordance with the operational task," he did not order readjustment of positions with the result that the forward defence started crumbling fast from 5 December onwards.

The meager reserves available at the commencement of hostilities were committed piecemeal. The battalions that arrived in November from West Pakistan were also distributed amongst the divisions in bits and pieces. No effort was made to create any reserves worth the name at any stage during the war. Thus, without reserves the Commander Eastern Command had no capability to influence the course of events. He had no reserves at Dacca and thus committed a breach of higher command orders.

The conduct of defensive battle also suffered mainly because of lack of a realistic overall tactical concept. A concept of defence based on fortresses and strong point system depends for its successful implementation on having mobile reserves and air parity, if not superiority, to enable the reserves to move to put in counter attacks. There were neither enough troops, nor mobile armored forces, nor air to justify adoption of fortress defence. The only defensive concept which could succeed was to trade space for time to achieve the mission of keeping the forces in being. The successive lines of defence, if contemplated, were not spelt out and the time framework for fighting at each line was not issued to the formations. Thus, there was no flexibility in the plan to start with and the formation commander's initiative was curbed when on 27 November Eastern Command issued the impractical order of "No Withdrawal unless 75% casualties are suffered." This illogical order had serious repercussions on the minds of the subordinate commanders, although when all-out war started not a single formation or unit obeyed nor could obey this order.

Eastern Command failed to take adequate steps for the defence of Dacca as the reserve brigade earmarked to be located in Dacca area was moved out to Feni-Laksham area. When the situation deteriorated on all fronts and the magnitude of threat to Dacca was realized, it was too late to withdraw troops from the front line to Dacca. Frantic messages were sent to 9 Div and 16 Div to spare some troops for Dacca. As Manzur's Brigade had crossed across its area of operation and was in area of Pabna it could be spared but without ferries and air control no move could take place. Thus, when the

Indians broke through Mymensingh Tangail supported by para drop and in the east in area Narsinghdi by helicopter-lifted troops on 12 December, there was practically no viable fighting formation available in Dacca. Dacca defence was manned by EPR and the withdrawing and worn-out troops staggering back to Dacca from various sectors.

The higher command at GHQ and the President's HQ lacked sense of direction, political sagacity and sound military Judgment. They were not clear about the national aim and had not evolved any national strategy to achieve the objective, Military strategy flows from the national strategy and the soundness of the latter is essential for correct execution of the former. In other words, if national strategy is bankrupt, military means alone cannot deliver the goods. In this case a military solution was being sought without any clear political objective. The political bungling culminated in military action in March 1971 which sowed the seeds of military debacle of December 1971. It is a well-known maxim of war that armed forces of a country should be launched under as much favorable conditions as the government can create. In the case of East Pakistan, we see the armed forces operating under the most adverse circumstances which one could imagine hostile population, far away from its base, difficult terrain, far superior enemy in number and fire power with mastery of the skies, and with no hope of relief or development of promising conditions on the West Pakistan front, and above all an unfavorable world opinion.

India, on the other hand, by meticulously using diplomatic, political, economic and psychological means had created a most favorable environment for unleashing her military might on November 21-22.

THE INEVITABLE

On the morning of 11 Dec Mr. Popus, the Counsel-General of the USSR, came to see me. He said that the proposals given in Governor's signal were acceptable to his government. I asked as to how he knew about the proposal. He said everybody in the diplomatic corps knew and he showed me a copy of the signal. I asked him whether the message indicating acceptance was from Moscow. He said, "yes". Then I asked whether their ambassador in Islamabad had conveyed the message from Moscow to our Foreign Office. he said "yes, it has been." I told him that if that was so there was nothing more that the Governor could do. He agreed. Then he said. "May, I make a personal suggestion. Mukti Bahini is going to kill you. I have a special room prepared for you. Come and stay in that. We will get you out of Dacca safe." I replied. "Thanks for the offer. I am sorry I can't accept your offer. May fate is with the rest of my people." He left with the offer remaining open. I had no intention of accepting such an offer. I rejected asylum offers from other Bengali friends as well.

General Peerzada rang up at 0900 hrs on 11 December and said, "Governor's proposal has been approved with some minor amendment. We are sending you the amended draft". It arrived. The amendment was that the political solution clause had been deleted. The rest had been approved. The amended telex was also transmitted to UN. Without the political clause the proposal had no strength but the approval did prove that the President had no objection to the Governor approaching UN direct and to the withdrawal of West Pakistani forces if required after political negotiations and settlement.

But we heard on the Radio that the President disclaimed any responsibility for the signal. The signal was attributed to me and the Government announced that Farman was not authorized to send such a message to the UN. The facts had been distorted and twisted. True, Farman was not authorized. But the Governor was authorized. Farman did not send the signal; the Governor did with concurrence of Niazi. And they made no mention of this fact; the whole drama was staged to hoodwink the nation. The plan was to blame others and to stay on in power. This was an ignoble and ruthless campaign to divert the wrath of the nation on to those who could not defend themselves. The whole drama was staged to cover up their misdeeds and evil intentions.

After Maghreb prayers on 12 December I entered a room where civil administrators were staying in the Governor House. I saw a number of them sitting around two foreign correspondents. The civil administrators were clarifying their positions to them saying, "We did not volunteer to be posted to East Pakistan. We were forced to come here. We only obeyed the orders. We have committed no atrocities. Whatever has been done has been done by the Army." The foreigners were nodding patronizingly: perhaps smiling

within. I also saw a couple around the telephone. They were through to their families in Karachi. No harm in that; but they were crying on the telephone depicting the most depressing conditions in Dacca. The enemy gun sound had for the first time been heard in Dacca; they were closing in. The Army could not provide them protection and that they were all likely to be butchered by Mukti Bahini. I intervened and explained to the correspondents that East Pakistan was not a separate country. Pakistan was one and civil and military officer could be posted by the Central Government wherever required. I told them that we had every right to defend our country and East Pakistan was as much our country as that of Bengalis. I had to act and behave with authority because pieces around me were falling apart. I had to show brave face and use strong language. This resulted in foreign press depicting me as the most powerful man in East Pakistan. In actual fact, there was no power in the office of the Governor, leave alone in his staff officer.

Next morning I came to the office as usual at 7.30 AM. There were a few visitors including representatives from International Committee Red Cross and UN Relief Commission. I was most worried about leading members of the public who had remained loyal and who would be sure target of Mukti Bahini. Mukti Bahini's modus operandi was quite clear by their behavior so far. In all the areas which had come under the Indian Army the accompanying Muktis had killed people most atrociously cutting them limb by limb, stabbing them with spears and swords, taking out their eyes and other heinous actions. Therefore, I had requested the International Commission of Red Cross to establish an international zone by taking over Hotel Intercontinental. They were considerate and accepted the responsibilities. They were under no obligation to do so but this was a humanitarian understanding. ICRC head of the mission wanted a few signatures which I put down so that when required all those who wish to seek refuge could enter the Hotel and be protected by international law governing such zones. UN representative came to tell me that if there was a cease-fire agreement, they could mobilize enough manpower to supervise and monitor its implementation for three/four days till UN made alternate arrangements. I expressed my gratification for such an offer but said that political decisions could only be taken by the Governor or the President. However, in the event close coordination needed to be worked out which my office could undertake.

While we were discussing this, telephone bell rang. It was Maj. Gen. Rahim at the other end. I was surprised to know that he was speaking from my residence which was within the compound of the Governor House. He said. "Could you come over. I want to talk to you." I walked across to my hut. The hut had two entrances. As I entered, I saw Niazi and Jamshed walking in through the other door. Rahim had invited them, too, for discussion. I entered the bedroom before the others who had longer distance to cover. Rahim had been wounded while on his way back from Chandpur in a motor boat. He was admitted in CMH which was on the outskirts of Dacca Cantonment. He thought CMH was not safe so he had shifted to my house. I had gone to see him twice in the

CMH but both times I found him sleeping, heavily dosed. I asked him how he was and also the purpose of his call. He said that it appeared that seeking cease-fire was the only course left. At that time Niazi and Jamshed entered the rooms, shook hands and started talking to Rahim. As Rahim was now my guest I went to the next room to ensure that my servant had put necessities of washing and toilet etc., and prepared food for two of us. I returned after a couple of minutes. It appeared that the three had talked about asking the authorities in Rawalpindi to arrange for an honorable end to the war. As I was not involved in the conduct of the battle, I kept quite. It was a few minutes session. Niazi and Jamshed went away. After making sure that Rahim was comfortable. I went back to my office. I was there for about fifteen minutes that Niazi entered my office alone. He had got rid of Jamshed to see me without a second witness present. He had never visited my office before therefore I was surprised to see him there. He said, "Send that from here." What he meant was that the cease-fire message should be sent from the Governor's office. By now I had understood his game. Having lost the war he wanted to throw the entire responsibility on the Governor House, I said, "I am not sending that message from here." I had hardly finished my sentence that Mr. Muzaffar Hussain the Chief Secretary entered. He said. "What is the matter." I said. "The General wants to send a message." he said, "Come with me, Sir." He took him away. After about an hour Military Secretary rang me up and said. "That message is ready for signature." I told him that I was not approving nor signing any message sponsored by Niazi. That was the end of that. The message was never sent.

At about 1100 hrs, 13 December the Indian Air Force launched an attack on the Governor House. They particularly claimed to have hit my office which they did but only the pillar in front of my office was slightly damaged. I walked out where I was joined by Khawaja Khairuddin and others. The Indian planes had turned around and were diving on to the Governor House. I shouted at all, ordering them to lie down flat on the ground. I kept standing but under a tree. The rockets hit the reception hall, where, the Indians claimed, a conference was taking place. A meeting had been scheduled but was postponed. But the Indian claim showed how intimate their knowledge was about what was going on in Dacca. After the raid Khawaja Sahib asked me why I had not taken protective measure. I said. "I am putting on the uniform of a general. I could not show to the other's that I was afraid."

The library had caught fire but the Military Secretary was looking after it calling the fire brigade and taking other protective actions. The Governor called a few of us and said that as Islamabad was not listening to his advice, he was resigning. He left the Governor House and took refuge in the underground shelter prepared for such emergencies.

I was now for the second time left without a job as there was no Governor. The Chief Secretary. Provincial Secretaries and Civilian Staff of the Governor House went away to seek refuge and protection in Intercontinental Hotel under ICRC. I went back to my hut. I was surprised to find that General Rahim was not there. He had left immediately after

the air raid. I looked around. The Governor House looked deserted. What was I to do? I could go to ICRC international zone which I had created myself. But that would not be an act commensurate with my position. I decided to go to the Cantonment and be with the Army. In the Cantonment I found a room vacant in the house of the Administrative Commandant. I left my things there and reported at the Corps Headquarters. I was assigned no duty to perform. From 1200 hours 13 Dec to 16 Dec I had no appointment, no responsibility and no authority. I was only an individual who could give orders only to his orderly. I attended conferences, expressed opinion and gave advice when called for but most of the time I was ignored. I visited the Governor House on 14th as well. I found that due to Indian Air Force rocket attack on the main conference hall of the Governor House burning windows and doors had fallen inwards. I noticed a piece of burning wood touching the red carpet which would catch fire. Being clear in my mind that this would be the residence even in future of a head of state of a Muslim State. I, with my hands and feet got the fires pushed away from the dangerous areas and thus saved the Governor House.

The Chief Secretary along with other Provincial Secretaries who were from West Pakistan and were seconded to the Government of East Pakistan had found it unsafe to stay in their allotted bungalows and 'shifted to the Governor House. They found it impossible to perform their functions and stopped going to the deserted offices in the Secretariat. No civil government existed after about 6 September, 1971. When the Indian Air Force bombed the city there were no civil agencies available to clear the roads or attend to the injured and wounded persons. The only place where one could see some activity was the Intercontinental Hotel where a number of correspondents of the international press were staying. Dacca was a ghost city. Most of the time it was under curfew due to the fear of Mukti Bahini activities.

There was panic in the hearts of most of pro-Pakistan elements, be they from the East or the West. Mukti Bahini had established a secret office in Dacca - it could be even in the office of a Provincial Secretary who could be working for Mukti Bhaini. Most of the prominent persons were contacted on telephone or letters were written to them by the Muktis, threatening them with execution if they helped the 'occupation forces." Civilian officials aside, even some of the Army officers were scared. They were envisaging mass massacre by Mukti Bahini. Many officers and men asked me. "Why are you getting us made mincemeat. Please do something." Those who had committed any crime were particularly more panicky.

Mukti Bahini had declared that they would avenge, what they called, the genocide of the people of East Pakistan. The pressure was on the higher commanders and on the Governor both of the public and the deteriorating military situation. Something had to be done. General Niazi had without any shadow of doubt cracked up. His conscience was not clear, his actions had not been pure, he was afraid of the nemesis. He had become like a doll. He had lost all his vulgar humor and loud boasts. People saw him

weep in his office as well. With fronts collapsing throughout his command, the solution could not be provided by the Army. It had to be a political one and only the Central Government at Islamabad and its representative in UN could provide that solution. The honour of the nation was at stake. The Armed Forces could escape the disgrace of surrender if a reasonable and politically acceptable resolution had been presented to the UN. But that was not in consonance with the scheme prepared by the aspirants of absolute power in the future. Only defeat of the Army could open up the entire horizon of absolute power to them. National honor faded out of view in mad quest for unshared power.

Even the Polish Resolution was torn to pieces by the leader of our delegation in the UN. All doors for a settlement, short of surrender, were shut. A boastful declaration of carrying on the war for a thousand years was made while making sure the ignominious fate of the Armed Forces in East Pakistan. They were not interested in saving East Pakistan because with East Pakistan as part of Pakistan the one man one vote formula had given East Pakistan the chance and the right to rule over whole of Pakistan. That, perhaps, was not acceptable to the powers to be.

If the proposals contained in the Governor's signal or the Polish Resolution had been accepted the sequence of events could have been somewhat like this:

- a. A UN Resolution asking for cease-fire would have been adopted.
- b. It would have been followed by negotiations to ensure implementation of the proposals.

We were sure that the UN would have passed the resolution as it contained a political clause to resolve the conflict in East Pakistan. The Indians would have accepted it because they did not know our military weakness in Dacca at that time and they were expecting unacceptable level of casualties to their forces. The Bengalis would have welcomed a political solution under the changed conditions where they were faced with the possibility of Indian occupation.

After the cease-fire, Pakistan Army would have had time and opportunity to regroup and redeploy. The Central Government of Pakistan could then decide what strategy to adopt. The Indians in 1948 had got a cease-fire in Kashmir and they are still in occupation of the territory. A UN Resolution does not necessarily mean that each of its contents is to be implemented. Negotiations are drawn out and situation could be handled after the most important and crucial step of cease-fire had been achieved.

And most important of all, the surrender would have been avoided. After blocking all efforts for a political settlement Niazi was told that he could surrender. This was only three days after Governor's signal seeking cease-fire had been countermanded. General

Niazi received a signal from the President authorizing him to surrender. In the morning conference of 14 December at 9 AM the signal was circulated by Brigadier Baqar COS Corps. Admiral Sharif. General Jamshed, and AVM Inam were also present. Admiral Sharif expressed his opinion by saying that the President had only given permission. It was not an order. I supported him and added. "You should not surrender *en masse*, i.e. the whole theatre. You have the permission, pass this permission on to the Divisional Commanders. Continue to fight and let local divisional commanders decide individually when to call a halt to fighting." Niazi listened and said, "I will contact COS Army and get clarification."

At about 5 PM, he told us that he had checked it up with GHO and they wanted him to surrender. Then he told us how and with what difficulty he had got through and tried to speak on telephone either to Hamid or Yahya but the only person he could talk to was Air Marshal Rahim who was drunk and who conveyed President's message that the situation in West Pakistan was bad and he was to surrender. After relating the message to us, he asked me to come along with him to the US Council General to seek his help in arranging surrender. I said, "I am not going with you because I am against surrender I was for a political settlement but time for that has gone past." He pleaded. Whatever he might say now and however bold he may show himself to be, at that time his condition was pathetic. He was helplessly seeking support from anyone who he thought could help. I thought for a moment. The lives and destiny of 45,000 Armed Forces personnel and millions of pro-Pakistan civilians were involved. Perhaps I could help. Perhaps I could negotiate an honorable settlement; one often has a bloated opinion about oneself. I agreed to go with him. But when we reached Counsel General's office he left me and his ADC outside. However, as the door was open we could hear his pleadings with the US Council General. He sought his help as a friend. To which Counsel General said, "Why did you to start the war? US cannot help you. The most I can do is to convey your message to the Indians and act as message relayer. Not as a negotiator. We have a worldwide communication system and could transmit your message to whosoever and wherever you want. Give me a written message."

The message was prepared and handed over to the Counsel General signed by General Niazi. As per US system authentication of the signature is a necessary requirement and the US Counsel General asked me to authenticate. I authenticated. It was not a joint or agreed communication. According to the British system which is also the system in Pakistan, a commander's signatures are not authenticated and he is considered to be solely and wholly responsible for his decisions, orders and communication. The confusion arose as the world media played it up by projecting it as a joint civil and military authorities decision. As an afterthought I may say that perhaps this was how Niazi wanted it to be projected. At that time no civil authority existed. The Governor had resigned on 13 Dec. I as a staff officer to the Governor had, therefore, ceased to have any authority whatsoever. My signature in our terminology meant being witness to the signature. The message envisaged (a) cease-fire (b) negotiations to let the Pakistan

Army assemble in selected areas (c) repatriation of West Pakistan elements of Pakistan Army to West Pakistan along with their weapons. No surrender was envisaged. A request was made for a negotiating team to come to Dacca.

We returned to the Cantonment. I was told that my presence was no longer required and that COS Corps would handle further developments.

On 16 December I went to the Corps HQ at about 0830 hrs. I was told that a reply had been received from General Manekshaw who had given a conditional offer of cease-fire up to a certain time after which the Indian Army would restart the offensive. The Pakistan Army was required to surrender before the advancing Indian Army. Just then a sortie of Indian Armed Forces appeared over the Command Headquarters. There was commotion. "The Indians were violating the cease-fire agreement," the Corps HQ officers said. They asked me if I could do something about it. Luckily a UN officer appeared from somewhere. I asked him to find out what had gone wrong with the understanding and also to get the cease-fire time extended from 10 AM to 4 PM. He got through to Delhi and got confirmation of the new arrangements.

It was now about 9.30 AM on 16 December. A chit arrived. It was a message from an Indian General Nagra to General Niazi saying that he was at Mirpur Brigade. *i.e.* at the outskirts of He wanted someone with authority to come and see him. He praised Niazi's decision to bring a halt to senseless fighting. How Nagra had reached Dacca puzzled everybody but that adequately revealed the position of Dacca's defence.

Brigadier Baqar handed over this small piece of paper' to Niazi who after reading it and without uttering a single word handed it over to me. I and Admiral Sharif read it. I asked Niazi, "Is he the negotiating team"? I was still thinking that the originally suggested sequence given in our telex to Manekshaw was being followed, according to which there was to be cease-fire followed by negotiations culminating in an agreement to enable Pakistan Army to assemble in agreed areas. That was why I asked whether the General was heading a negotiating team. Nobody knew exactly how he had arrived with troops so close to Dacca. Obviously he was not the negotiator. I then asked Niazi. "What is your resistance potential." As I was not in command channel I was not aware of the strength of Dacca defenses. It was obviously important from the point of view of negotiations. If resistance can go on during negotiation one can get better terms. General Niazi kept silent as he had been since last three days. I asked, "How long can you resist"? Again silence. At that Admiral Sharif asked in Punjabi "*Kutch Paley Hay?*" (Have you got anything) "Niazi looked towards Jamshed Commander Dacca who shook his head. On that I said, "I can't give any advice go and do whatever you want to do." General Niazi told Jamshed to go and meet the Indian General. He put his cap on and went away.

A message arrived from Calcutta the same day that their negotiating team under General Jacob would be arriving at about 12 Noon. We were told to disperse and meet again at that time; the Corps HQ was to look after their reception etc. As I was not holding any office or an appointment I went back to my room. On return to the Corps Command Post at about 12.00 noon. I found that the place had been deserted. I wondered as to what had happened. However, thinking that perhaps there was some delay in the arrival of the negotiating team I sat down and waited. After some time, an officer appeared. I asked him where the Commander and others had gone. He said most sarcastically and disapprovingly. "They are showing the Indians the Corps HO's furniture and curtains."

I, therefore, went to the peace-time Corps Headquarters building. I was surprised to see Indian Army detachment outside the Corps Headquarters. It transpired that General Jamshed had allowed them to enter Dacca. I thought this was the end of a meaningful discussion with the Indians; how could one negotiate with enemy troops around. In actual fact it meant that Dacca Garrison had already surrendered.

As I entered General Niazi's office, I was horrified at what I saw. General Niazi was sitting in his chair. In front of him was General Nagra; also was there Tiger Siddique of Mukul Bahini in a general's uniform. Niazi was in a jovial mood, reciting Urdu couplets. I saluted and took a chair by the side of Admiral Sharif who had reached there earlier. Niazi was heard asking Nagra if he understood Urdu poetry to which Nagra told him that he was MA in Persian from Government College Lahore. As he was more qualified than Niazi, Niazi started telling jokes in Punjabi. Niazi was his old self again. For the last 10 days or so he was down hearted, morose and quiet. But now it appeared pressure was off. In my opinion, he was behaving in a shameful manner; he was supposed to remain reserve and appear dignified at the time when surrender terms were to be discussed with the enemy. Instead, he was behaving in a bolsterous manner - telling filthy jokes to the Indians as if they were old chums.

Brigadier Siddiqui and a Sikh Colonel were discussing something standing in the middle of the room. After I sat down. Baqar handed over a paper to me saying, "These are the surrender terms." I read it and found that Mukti Bahini was included along with the Indian Army as the force to whom Pakistan Army was to surrender. I said to Baqar, "this is not acceptable to me. We are not surrendering, we are negotiating. In any case please delete the words Mukti Bahini." At that time General Jacob entered with a pipe in his mouth and said, "This is how it has come from Delhi. You take it or leave it." I said, "It is up to the commander to decide." Niazi nodded, approving the surrender terms.

Admiral Sharif and I got up and went out. We noticed that the Indians were looking for chairs and a table. We concluded that perhaps they wanted to arrange some ceremony. We both approached Niazi and told him that Indians were making preparation for a surrender ceremony. We said, "You should not attend it. Surrender has taken place.

They can take us prisoners, beat us or kill us. Do what they like. Please do not attend a ceremony." But he did and signed the surrender documents.

Thus took place surrender a surrender which could be avoided through political means at national and international level.

FRIENDS AND FOES

Four countries India, Soviet Union, USA and China - were connected with what happened in East Pakistan in 1971, some closely and others indirectly. The former two played active role against Pakistan, while the other two, known to be Pakistan's friends, became neutral because of inept handling by our top leadership.

The Indian leadership had very reluctantly agreed to the creation of Pakistan in the hope that the new country would not survive for more than six months. They took several actions to hasten its collapse. Politically, they got it truncated by Mountbatten as much as they could. Economically, they withheld its share of fifty crores as long as they could in the hope of bringing about its economic collapse. On the military front, those elements who were to form Pakistan Army units were kept in India, Singapore and Indonesia for as long as possible; they were released piece-meal. A great burden of refugees was put on Pakistan. The migrating Hindus took all the money away to bring about economic collapse. That Pakistan survived was as great a miracle as its creation.

The Indian offensive to undo Pakistan continued on all fronts. Occupation of Kashmir against the accepted principles of partition of the sub-continent had purely one aim to destroy the ideological basis of Pakistan and all that could ensure its security potential. Stopping of canal waters to Bahawalpur and Punjab was a part of the strategy. Internationally, India tried to Isolate Pakistan by maligning it as being a creation of the Imperialists etc. Pakistan, however, was able to have International support both for its survival and development. The Indians finally resorted to the ultimate weapon of armed conflict and started the 1965 war by crossing the international border in the area of Lahore. The Pakistan Army, with the full support of its people, was able to frustrate the Indian designs.

A Western historian has given an apt description of the Indian psyche vis-à-vis Pakistan - how the Indians wanted to bring an end to Pakistan. Writing after the break-up of Pakistan on the subject of "India, Pakistan and Big Power". William J. Barnd's analyzed the thinking of Indian leaders thus: "Indian leaders were convinced that Pakistan would not survive as a nation. The distance and differences between the two Wings of the country, the lack of educated talent and the paucity of natural resources did not inspire confidence in its future. Moreover, Indian leaders believed that it could not survive because it should not survive." Nehru, according to Barnds, described Pakistan "a medieval state with an impossible theocratic concept" and had expressed the wish; "It should be so natural to have with Pakistan the closest possible cooperation, and one day integration will come. If it will be in four, five or ten years I do not know". While quoting Nehru as above, Barnds asks the question. "How Indian officials envisioned the reunion of the two countries, is not clear."

Nehru was trying to hoodwink the international community as well as his own people. His programme was not to have "with Pakistan the closest possible cooperation" but to coerce it into submission, to use as much force against it as he could collect from all over the world. The programme for the use of force against Pakistan was evolved soon after the creation of the two dominions, and according to Mehr Chand Mahajan, Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir in 1947 and later Chief Justice of India, "such a decision (Invasion of Pakistan) was taken as early as 1947 by Sardar Patel at General Balwant Singh's headquarters. This meeting was attended by the Indian Defence Minister, Sardar Baldev Singh, General K.S. Thimaya, the Maharaja of Patiala, the Jam Sahib of Nawanagar, the late Maharaja Hari Singh, Bakhshi Ghulam Muhammad, Deputy Head of the Emergency Administration of Kashmir, and a few other high ranking military officers. General Thimaya was requested to recruit and train guerillas and the military headquarters to plan steps to be taken."

The Indians failed in almost every sector-economic, political and military strategies and therefore shifted their strategy in the direction of psychological war. The area chosen for this purpose was East Pakistan.

With the help of Hindus living there who happened to be in a position to exert their sinister influence in specified areas, especially in the educational and economic sectors, the Indians started poisoning the minds of East Pakistanis against West Pakistanis. It was here that at long last the Indians met with success. Certain leaders of East Pakistan became receptive to such propaganda as they felt that this would help them in achieving power. The result was the birth of agitation, language riots, killing of West Pakistanis and eventually hatching of a conspiracy to grab hold of East Pakistan by force. The rulers of Pakistan never realized the gravity of the situation; they rather added fuel to the fire by denying East Pakistanis their rightful share in power.

Indians were in no position to attack East Pakistan during the 1965 war as she had only one division (the 9th Division) available for offensive against one division (the 14th Division) of the Pakistan Army. Yet some of our leaders gave the credit for defence of East Pakistan to China. The Indians fully exploited it to impress upon the East Pakistan the futility of staying on within Pakistan.

After the elections of 1970, the National Assembly session was postponed which resulted in the military action. The Awami League leadership declared Independent Bangla Desh and moved to Calcutta. The Indians provided them all the facilities. They asked the Hindus to move out of East Pakistan and cross over to India where arrangements for their reception and accommodation had previously been made. Immediately afterwards large scale training of Mukti Bahini was undertaken in at least three dozen training camps with a regular army major general being incharge. Even regular army officers training schools were used to train East Pakistani rebel officers.

This was not considered interference in the internal affairs of a neighbor; on the contrary. India made a hue and cry about the burden of refugees on her economy and in the bargain earned much-needed billions of dollars in assistance. Indian Government continued within India and internationally, to malign Pakistan with cooked up stories of atrocities and painted Pakistan as a villain and an uncivilized, rather a barbaric, nation. Zionists having control over the information media helped India to the fullest extent.

Having won over active Soviet help in war against Pakistan, Mrs. Indira Gandhi went on a world tour to convince other nations of the genuineness of the stand taken by India. She was so cunning and deceptive that while she was assuring US President Nixon of peaceful designs, her army had assembled around East Pakistan to commit aggression against a neighbor who unfortunately had an internal problem, and who was weak at that particular time of history.

Indian strategists led by Mr. Subramanian unabashedly advised the Indian government to "exploit the chance of the century." There were, however, a few individuals who pointed out the dangers of supporting sub-nationalism because in that case nationalities in India would also demand independent status leading to creation of at least a dozen countries out of India. But Mrs. Indira Gandhi wanted to win the general elections scheduled for 1972 and she had to have an easy victory in East Pakistan which she could see and was too tempting for a politician to miss.

Indians have designs to become a world power. They have dreams of controlling land mass from Hindu Kush to Ball in Indonesia and having influence over the entire Indian Ocean including the eastern coast line of Africa. They consider themselves inheritors of British Empire and entitled to influence over the Middle East, especially Iran and Iraq, including old Asiatic Kingdoms of Samarkan and Bukhara. They considered that East Pakistan was blocking spread of their influence towards the east and West Pakistan for their westward movement. Their ultimate aim would be eliminate Pakistan. Their weapons would be to psychological; they would weaken Pakistan through internal strife and civil commotions and then move in with their armies to support dissident elements.

The Indians may not be interested in absorbing Pakistan, they may only want to be considered and accepted as the paramount power in South Asia and all countries in the region to come under their hegemony. They would welcome creation of four weak and small Muslims states. Greater the number of such small states, weaker the influence and strength of the Muslims would be. The paramount consideration in all this was - and is - to weaken Pakistan, to cut it into small slices. The start was made by occupying Kashmir, and its second phase was finalized in December 1971 by detaching East Pakistan from its western wing by use of force. And while doing it in broad-day light as

an open robbery. Indian writers and analysts soon started describing it the "Second Liberation of India, carrying a stage further the Independence she won 25 years ago." The Indians did not hide their shame facedness while accepting their role in the creation of Bangla Desh, and underlying that "by winning the war in the way she did, India has made herself more secure than she ever was." Time perhaps will give it a different complexion.

Pakistan was considered "maimed by" those who had struggled hard to make it an impossibility, particularly the Hindus and the British. Every effort had been made, while partitioning the subcontinent into India and Pakistan, to make the latter vulnerable. In spite of its vulnerability and smallness of its size as compared to the area which should have formed part of it on the basis of population, Pakistan could not be ignored. The process that led to its creation and the vision that had galvanized the Muslims of South Asia to struggle for the creation of a separate homeland was a new development in the age which was witnessing the birth of nation states in the narrow confines of geographical concept. Pakistan constituted an emphasis on a concept of nationhood based on religion, culture, tradition and history, and was thus considered a new phenomenon. It was for this reason that no power could overlook the birth of a state which could look back to its own contribution to the progress of man as a species on the earth. It was presumably in this context that "*The Times*", London, editorially commended in its Issue of August 15, 1947 on the birth of Pakistan. The paper wrote "In the hour of its creation Pakistan emerges as the leading state of the Muslim world. Since the collapse of the Turkish Empire that world, which extends across the globe from Morocco to Indonesia, has not included a state whose numbers, natural recourses, and place in history gave it undisputed pre-eminence. The gap is now filled. From today Karachi takes the rank as a new centre of Muslim cohesion and rallying point of Muslim thought and aspirations."

It was this "place in history" of Pakistan that forced the big powers to take a serious notice of it as a new phenomenon. USA and the Soviet Union both wanted to bring Pakistan close to them, or, if possible, within their orbits as understood then. USA being leader of the West's developed and open society, their case did not offer any complication. Pakistan was worried about its security and economic development and therefore was not expected to find any inhibitions while coming closer to America. The real problem was Soviet Union which considered its ideology as the main yard stick measure to be close to one or the other country. The Iron Curtain still operated when Pakistan and India took birth as sovereign states.

In spite of these ideological difficulties, Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan wanted to give priority to Moscow while arranging his foreign visits. Things were set rolling by Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan who while hosting a dinner at Tehran in honor of Liaquat Ali Khan who was returning from Commonwealth Prime Minister Conference and made brief stop in Iran also invited the Soviet Charge de Affairs. It was here that the Prime

Minister indicated his eagerness to visit Moscow if a formal Invitation was received. This invitation was received in June and dates were being finalized and even Pakistan's ambassador, Mr. Shoaib Qureshi, was appointed in Moscow under the express desire of the Soviet government, but somewhere something went wrong and dates were not confirmed by the Russians. "In October 1949, the channel of Communication between Karachi and Moscow was suddenly shifted from Tehran to New Delhi. It was through the Soviet Embassy in New Delhi that a further postponement was conveyed to Karachi which left doubt that yet another party had intervened in the matter of Liaquat Ali Khan's visit to Moscow". That other party was obviously India. Liaquat, after this postponement, had to proceed to USA. The membership of the Baghdad Pact, later as CENTO, was the obvious consequence.

Moscow remained hostile to Pakistan ever since, even describing Occupied Kashmir as part of India. It was only when Ayub came to power and decided to normalize relations with Moscow, and go there as a matter of his considered policy, that Soviet attitude began to change. The hosting of meeting between Ayub and Shastri at Tashkent was a sequence to this mellowing of Soviet attitude towards Pakistan. India, however, continued to have an extensive equation with Moscow, and in the 1971 war Soviet Union rendered all possible help to India to defeat Pakistan. And reason for this was not the mere continuation of old equation between India and the USSR. It was Yahya's extraordinary role which he had played to mellow hostility between America and China and pave the way for the emergence of a new normalcy between the two giants. This is how it happened.

President Yahya Khan visited USA in October 1970 and had an hour's exclusive meeting with President Nixon on October 25. Yahya was to tour China three weeks later. Nixon asked Yahya to convey to the Chinese leader Nixon's desire to visit China. Yahya flew to Dacca in the first week of November and after a day's stay there left for Beijing, where he discussed Nixon's proposition with Chou En-Lai. Yahya continued to serve as a diplomatic channel between Nixon and Chou En-Lai till a Chinese note was received by Yahya for transmission to Nixon, which was done promptly. The communication and other activities relating to this remained a complete secret till Henry Kessinger arrived in Rawalpindi on July 8, 1971.

With a masterly secrecy, Kessinger was flown to China in the early hours of July 9 but was reported to have fallen ill and taken to Nathiagali for recovery and rest. Kessinger landed back at the Islamabad airport at 1 P.M. on July 11. Four days later Nixon read out at a press conference the following statement. "Premier Chou En-Lai and Mr. Henry Kessinger, President Nixon's Assistant for National Security Affairs, held talks in Peking from July 9 to 11, 1971. Knowing of President Nixon's expressed desire to visit the People's Republic of China. Premier Chou En-Lai on behalf of the People's Republic of China, has extended an invitation to President Nixon to visit China at an appropriate date before May 1972. President Nixon has accepted the invitation."

"The meeting between the leaders of China and the United States is to seek the normalization of relations between the two countries, and also exchange views on questions of common concern." While making this disclosures Nixon had not made even a remote reference to Pakistan's role, nor expressed his thanks to President Yahya for conducting unique diplomacy at the highest level between the two presumably the bitterest antagonists.

The consequences of this secret diplomacy have proved to be a major feature in promoting world peace, but Pakistan suffered for its role soon after. Both India and Soviet Union, almost went mad on hearing the news, more so the Soviet Union. Immediately visits took place between Moscow and New Delhi. In August 71 was announced the signing between them of a "far-reaching treaty of peace and friendship" which provided for Soviet intervention in case of "attack on India," enlarging mutual defence arrangements where "attack on one" would be considered "attack on the other." When actual hostilities between India and Pakistan started towards the end of October, the Soviet Union provided all sorts of military help to India including use of satellite to locate Pakistan's positions.

America was as usual untrustworthy. It made massive supplies to India during its 1962 skirmishes with China in spite of protests by President Ayub that the hardware would be used against Pakistan. In the middle of 1965, America expressed its displeasure over Pakistan's close ties with China and got the World Bank consortium meeting postponed. Two months later when India attacked Pakistan, America stopped all supplies to Pakistan: even ships carrying spares were diverted from high seas to other countries. And in spite of all that Yahya did in 1970 to bring America close to China, the American Congress refused to sanction the sale or transfer o arms to Pakistan, even in 1971 we were forced to seek military equipment from other sources. This could not make up, especially in the supply of spare parts, the non-availability of supplies from US sources. The Armed Forces had majority of their equipment of US origin and without spare parts, equipment on the ground was useless. Taking advantage of our friendship with China, the US asked Pakistan to help in establishing contact with them. Yahya used his good offices, arranged not only the meeting but also the aircraft and other facilities for Henry Kissinger's visit to Peking. We hoped that in return the embargo would be lifted on spare parts, at least. But in spite of Nixon's desire Congress refused to oblige.

We must remember that in the sphere of war normally Congress and not the President are decision makers. We got no return on Henry Kissinger's success. On the other hand Russian antagonism increased. Indians exploited the situation and entered into a treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation with the Soviet Union. By this agreement India insured itself against possible Chinese intervention Pakistan was isolated and with complete freedom Indians sent their forces into East Pakistan. Even against open

aggression the US did nothing except the so- called "tilt" towards Pakistan. As is clear from Henry Kissinger's book, USA also was for a political solution in favor of Bengali Nationalists. The US Congress believes in democracy in the same way as we believe in our religion. They would never help Pakistan, if under a dictator, against democratic India. Pakistan must remember this. All else is wishful thinking. The much talked about Seventh Fleet was not moving to help Pakistan in East Pakistan. It was moving to save West Pakistan.

China and Pakistan have had friendly relations when Pakistan was a member of SEATO. During 1965 war China provided direct and indirect help to Pakistan. China moved their troops to the Indian border and issued some sort of an ultimatum to the Indians. Pakistan too had served China first during Ayub's regime who openly pleaded China's case during his visit of America in 1961, and then by Yahya who served as bridge between China and America. In 1970-71 Chinese attitude was cautious for two reasons. The people of East Pakistan were involved and their views and feelings could not be ignored by the Chinese. Open support of Yahya's internal policies in East Pakistan would have alienated the vast majority of people of that province. Chinese, in view of their long term objectives in eastern and north eastern region of India could not afford the development of unfriendly attitude towards the people of the region. The second reason was the attitude of Russia towards China and India. Having signed the military treaty of friendship with India the Russians had assured the neutralization of China by massing forty divisions on the border with China. If China moved troops against India the Russians would have attacked China. It was only after such a guaranteed assurance that the Indians could attack East Pakistan.

Mr. Bhutto and others kept on saying, but vaguely and indirectly, that Chinese would help: though during his delegation's visit the Chinese had clearly stated that they could not help us due to obvious reasons of Russian threat.

General Gul Hassan, Air Marshal Rahim Khan and Vice Admiral Rasheed had accompanied Mr. Bhutto to China. They all later on gave an impression that the nation was not told the truth about Chinese reaction. Chinese had already indicated their inability to help Pakistan in the event of war with India but Mr. Bhutto gave an impression that such an assistance would be forthcoming. To encourage Yahya he (Bhutto) on 4 November said that if India attacked the color of the Ganges would be changed. The overall political, psychological and military situation gave no cause for such an optimistic analysis. The purpose could only be to ensure that war starts between Indian and Pakistan. After the war, CHQ kept on feeding false information to Dacca about possible Chinese intervention. When the Governor telexed that, "If any friend was expected to help then action should have an impact within the next 48 hours, otherwise negotiations should be opened in order to bring about a peaceful transfer of power"..... the high command gave him an assurance that "Chinese activities had begun."

On 14 December Niazi got a message on telephone from General Headquarters that Yellow were coming from the north and White from the south. This message encouraged Niazi to make a statement that even if tanks will pass over his body he will stop them. I went to see the Chinese Consul General to find out the details and also arrange for coordination. The Consul General knew nothing about it; he had received no message from Peking though he was in touch with them. On the other hand, he kept on repeating "Get the people on your side, get the people on your side." I could not tell him that was the main problem; that the people were against us.

IN INDIA

Arrangements were made for the General Officers to be flown out of Dacca. Each one was allowed to take an ADC with him. Due to my appointment I did not have an ADC or any personal staff officer. I thought of Siddiq Salik who was a likely target of Mukti Bahini. I arranged to take him with me to Calcutta where he proved to be a good companion.

Gen Niazi, Admiral Sharif, AVM Inamul Haq, Maj. Gen. Jamshed, Nazar, Ansari, Qazi Majid and I along with one ADC each were flown out on 20 December to Calcutta. When we landed on the tarmac Admiral Sharif turned round to Gen. Niazi and Punjabi said:

”پہنچ گئے ہوتا۔ روزِ کندے سی مکتے جاتا ہے“

"You used to say I will go to Calcutta. Now you have reached there."

This was in reference to boasts of Gen. Niazi that he would attack and capture Calcutta, an utterly impossible military objective with resources inadequate even to defend.

From the very early days there have been two types of officers in the Pakistan Army. On one side were soldier types and on the other were who they dubbed as staff types. Soldier types projected themselves as fighters - but many were merely boastful, unrealistic, unreasonable and what is worst a failure in battle. The reason being that modern wars are conducted successfully by commanders with knowledge and understanding of the art of war.

While we were in Calcutta the Indians carried out a surprise search of our belongings and took away papers, notebooks, valuables and currency. They also interrogated us individually. I was interrogated by Major General Jacob (who lately has joined a political party and as the name suggests is a Jew). He asked about the military operation, plan and conduct. I told him that I was not in a position to comment as I was not associated with the command of the troops. He insisted on knowing my opinion as a military officer. I said, "You were lucky that I was not commanding the troops." He was surprised and asked for elaboration. I told him of the original plan to fall back while inflicting casualties fighting a mobile action and hold the middle ring along the rivers. He asked my opinion on the Indian Action. I said, "You have bought, cancer." "What do you mean?" he retorted. I said the provincialism, religiousism and racial nationalism you have sponsored and supported would spread in India as well. He did not agree and said, "We know how to look after such a situation."

He then asked me, "How much money would be required to make East Pakistan a viable state." I said, "Seven crore of rupees a day and forget about them every day." seven crore of people will eat it up.

Then he asked me about the immediate problems which needed attention. I listed establishment of communication and movement of food; otherwise, I said, famine might strike East Pakistan.

The interview was recorded. I know that some day. In accordance with the Indian system, it will be published. The truth is therefore guaranteed.

After about a month's stay in Calcutta we were shifted to Jabalpur where I had spent a few months as second lieutenant in 1943 as an Indian Army Officer.

Throughout the journey we were escorted by Indian Army Officers. I was surprised to see that a full Colonel escorted me while the other general officers were looked after by Lieut. Colonels. I asked the officer if they had not made a mistake as I was sixth in rank. He did not know the reason but I suppose the Indian Army suffered from the wrong information which had been supplied to them by the BBC. What had happened was as follows.

As related earlier, Niazi had broken down in the Governor House on December 7. After that he was not seen in Dacca. The BBC got the wrong cue and in one of their broadcasts announced that Niazi had fled to West Pakistan and Farman had taken over. I thus became known as "Commander of Pakistan Force in East Pakistan." Even Gen. Manekshaw started getting messages broadcast over the All India Radio addressed to me as Commander. I had no Radio set and did not hear of it till I saw leaflets on 14 December which had been dropped over Dacca with surrender appeals addressed to me as "Commander of Pakistan Forces." Niazi had been in Dacca throughout and very much in command. This totally wrong information created many problems for me later. Even in West Pakistan, people had the impression that I was at least Second-in-Command to General Niazi. (This misapprehension continues in certain circles till today). I was not, even remotely, connected with command structure and whatever decisions were taken were Niazi's. As the BBC news was based on a dispatch of their Bengali representative, the Corps Headquarters wanted him to be arrested. I rang him up and in a friendly manner advised him not to send such message about the Corps Commander otherwise he might be harmed. I did not know that he was recording my conversation. The gentleman was later killed alongwith other Bengali intellectuals on 16 December. With the recording available my name was connected with the killing.

All along I had tried to save the civilians and had lodged complaints against certain excesses by a handful of individuals who possessed vast authority. The Governor had no control over the Army who had established their own prisons and courts. I had

secured the release of Mr. Ataur Rahman, Mr. Masihur Rahman, Mr. Zahurul Islam and a number of other leaders to create amiable conditions for negotiations. I had submitted to General Hamid, the COS, in the presence of Brigadier Janjua now Governor of NWFP that certain excesses were being committed by FIU and other Intelligence agencies and requested him to get the murder of NAP treasurer Mr. Saeedul Hassan investigated.

My attitude towards Bengalis was not appreciated by West Pakistanis but I maintain even now that one cannot rule over any group of people through force alone. A constitution is an agreement to live together as equals with equal rights and obligations. West Pakistan's attitude was untenable and we suffered as a nation due to that.

To add to the injury, Niazi accused me before the Hamoodur Rahman Commission of being in contact with General Manekshaw. The whole drama had started with his disappearance. It was to cover up his cowardly action that he concocted the theory. The Commission investigated and found that there was no basis for such an accusation.

Our new habitat in Jabbalpur was a POW Camp with proper barbed wire with inner and outer parameters. Search light and dogs provided additional security to our detainees.

The camp had eight senior officers and eight orderlies only. General Niazi, Jamshed, Nazar, Ansar, Majid and I with Admiral Sharif and Commodore Inamlul Haq were the inmates in what appeared to be single officers accommodation. The mess was opposite across the road from where we were supposed to be getting our meals. However, as POW one gets Other Ranks, ration. There existed no provision for breakfast from the Mess; each one of us had make a daily contribution of rupee one for it.

Since Calcutta days we used to sit on the dining table in accordance with our seniority with General Niazi at the head of the table. I was sixth in seniority. Niazi would take half of the donga, and by the time it got to me one or two bones only were left. Since then I have become allergic to meat.

The food was extremely simple according to Pakistan! standards, normally cooked in water. Very little ghee was used which was good from the point of health. We found that most of the Indian officers were thin and lean. It transpired during discussion that after the 1962 debacle against China the Indian Government had established a Commission which had inter alia recommended a very strict disciplinary regime for the officer class simple living and very high standard of fitnesses. Their recommendations had been effectively enforced. In our case commission reports are not even published so no remedial measures are taken.

The first day in Jabalpur was quite harrowing. We were allotted separate rooms. As we got in we found that all bolts had been removed to ensure that we could not bolt the

rooms from inside so that the Indians could check our presence all the time. Two young officers visited and searched me thoroughly. I had two hundred Pakistani rupee notes which they took away as if to guard against our escape from the camp. As night fell I was made aware again of my status. A high powered search light was directly kept beamed on to my room and a sentry detailed to keep a watch on my movements. Sleeping without bolting one's room was disturbing. Whole night the wind blew; the door opening and closing made noise. It is as a small place and with double ring of barbed wire it was impossible for us to escape though we discussed the possibilities many times.

As is usual with officer's accommodation, there was an open space within the barbed wire where we could sit together. The conversation naturally turned to what had happened. During the earlier part of such discussions I often said that the reason for our defeat was that "we had not become one nation." I was surprised to hear vigorous denunciation of my remarks. I was, however, for the first time, made aware of the ignorance of senior officers about the national problems and issues. A remarkable change took place as time passed and I heard the same senior officers telling me, as their own opinion, what I had said earlier. I have always maintained that for the defence of a country unity as a nation is required where you are emotionally and psychologically of one soul and mind.

A fortnight later General Berar of the Indian Army visited us. He was Commander Southern Command. We all knew of him as a brave soldier who had been decorated during World War II fighting the Italians in Eritrea (SOMALIA). He was a *mona* (clean shaven) Sikh and liberal in his attitude towards Muslims. In pre-partition days Muslims and Sikhs always got on well and were closer to each other than with Hindus. It was only a couple of year before Partition that Master Tara Singh (a Hindu by birth) got the minds of Sikhs poisoned for which they are suffering now. General Berar was quite open in his views. He said, "You were placed in an impossible situation. Anybody else would have had to give up as you did. But it all happened because you were creating problems for us in Nagaland and other hill tribes."

Niazi soon established his reputation as teller of dirty stories. A Sikh Major Iqbal Singh was administrative officer of sorts. He had been brought up in United Provinces from childhood and did not speak Punjabi. It was impossible to think of a Sikh who could not speak Punjabi. He had heard of Sikh stories and Niazi knew them all. So both had good company.

Niazi knew no limits of decency nor minded vulgarity. A Brigadier Khurrana who hailed from Nazi's home town, Mianwali, was visiting us one day while we were having meals. Niazi in his usual mood gave vent to his filthy utterances. I said. "Sir, we Pakistanis already have a bad name. Please don't give credence to such accusations by

your conversation." he accepted the plea by saying that he was not serious about what he said. However, this was a daily happening.

There were some bright sides of our imprisonment. One had heard stores of prisoners losing mental balance, some even accepting enemy propaganda. We found that Islam provided us the strength to face all adverse situations. In our religion we found the solace and comfort. We accepted that everything is from Allah and we have to revert to Him. We got copies of the Quran from Bazar, started recitation and prayers practically the whole day, read translations and held discussions. We become fairly well-versed with our religion which most of the POWS followed routinely even after our release.

There were lighter side of our stay. We had reserved one room to serve as mosque. The room was directly under Naizi's bed room. Prayers were generally lead by General Ansari (who later joined JUP and became an MNA). As the morning prayer is supposed to have a long Surat in the first Rakaat, Niazi used to wait till we were about to go to Ruku. Thus he had extra sleep. One day Admiral Sharif who had great sense of humor told Ansari that he would lead the prayers. He recited a smaller Sura and got down to Ruku and nearly finished before Naizi could join in. After Salam he asked Naizi how he liked his rest. Niazi was caught in his game and felt ashamed.

During early morning walk Commodore Inamul Haq used to give Niazi a full briefing on international and national situation. It appears it had the required effect on Niazi as is apparent from his interviews after return to Pakistan. As far as I remember his opinion on various matters was quite different to what he now expounds after receiving briefings from friends and legal experts. For example, he now maintains that he was opposed to an attack from West Pakistan. His message and signals before the start of war belle his claim.

We were allowed to have our own Radios, and regularly listened to broadcasts from Pakistan. The reports were quite impressive. It was heartening to know that great progress was being made in various fields of economic and industrial development under the dynamic leadership of Mr. Bhutto. Listening to the Radio one imagined industries coming up all over the country, green fields with trees lined up straight on both sides of blossoming crops. After the promulgation of the 1973 constitution we visualized democracy and democratic institutions spreading their benign umbrella over the nation. By the bold utterance of "we will eat grass," we envisaged emergence of strong nation in the manner of defeated nations of Germany and Japan. When we returned in April 1974 we were disappointed. The health of the nation was worse than 1971 and Individual freedom curtailed more voilently than any Martial Law had ever done.

Niazi had told us that we were, under arrangement with the Indians, to be in transit only. We were to go to Pakistan within 3 months. The Indian attitude also appeared to

be in line with this thinking. Our camp appeared to be a temporary arrangement with barbed wire fixed on wooden sticks. After a couple of months we were told to fill in certain forms and make certain declaration. Preparations had been made to repatriate us to West Pakistan. However, after the Simla Agreement we saw a certain change. A new camp was seen being prepared next to ours with proper iron pickets and welding of wires. Standing out in the veranda one could see the future prison being set up in which one was to live perhaps forever. One thought of a bird seeing a cage being prepared for it and its اضطراب اور تڑپ one could only pray"

..... اے مَنِّی الصُّرُوَاتِ اَرْحَمُ الرَّحِمِیْنَ

A Lt Col Randhawa of the Indian Army used to visit us quite often. He was also an artillery officer like me and came from the same district, Montgomery, now Sahiwal. We used to have extensive discussions on various matters. Like all Sikhs we met, he was also anti-Hindu. At that time there were perhaps about 49 Major Generals and other Sikh officers in the Indian army. When he complained that the Indian Government 'will never make a Sikh COAS I suggested that they should take over as their number was large. He was skeptic about the possibility. His prediction came true. Lt Gen. Arora the man who had led Indian Army to victory and was the senior most General was ignored and a Hindu promoted. Sikhs have never been fully trusted by Hindus even when they were their saviors in the earlier wars in Kashmir and the 1965 war. In the future the Hindus are gradually going to reduce the Sikh elements in the Armed Forces, and keep them suppressed.

Randhawa told us that during the Simla discussions, Mr. Bhutto had pleaded for retention of POWS in India. His argument, according to Randhawa was. "We have recently brought back democracy. It is still nascent. We have many problems which I have to solve. Dictators in Pakistan have fought wars with India. It is in India's interest that democracy flourishes in Pakistan. Help me by keeping the prisoners in India, till I have strengthened democratic institutions." According to Randhawa Mrs. Indira Gandhi agreed to hold Mr. Bhutto's hand. We were to stay on for a few years more in India.

The Sikh Other-Ranks were also quite outspoken. One day one of them while on duty got talking to my batman, Ahmed Din, and said. "*Apan otheron vi larne aun te apan theeron vi larne aun. Apan kathe ho jaey te innah nun vie unnan nun vi lambe pa leveay.*" "We the Punjabis fight from Indian side and from Pakistan side and if we get together we will sort out both the Indians and the Pakistanis." This was an indication of development of regional feelings amongst Indians.

We acquired a true understanding of life. Up to 15 December 1971, we were supreme, our orders were obeyed, we were respected and perhaps feared. On 16 December an

ordinary soldier of the Indian Army had become our superior. What a change. Dogs roamed around between the two layers of barbed wire.

We were struck by the standard of education in the Indian Army and the desire of even junior individuals like Havildars to upgrade their educational qualifications. We met quite a few who were attending night classes for graduation in Law. The Indian Army had also made no changes in rules and regulations since the British days. They had maintained the system left behind by the British of Military Engineering Services and the Station Health Organization whom we saw carrying out their duties of inspection and reporting as was done before 1947. Unfortunately in Pakistan we have changed most of the regulations or ceased to implement them.

We had a kitchen as well where breakfast was prepared and food heated, if needed. For heating purposes Cylinder gas (LPG) was provided. But the supply was rationed; only one cylinder per month. One had to make do with it or make other arrangements. The luxury of Sui Gas in every house from Sui to Karachi Lahore - Peshawar is unimaginable to the austere and simple living mind of an Indian. They do not complain nor do they criticize the Government for non-availability or regular supply.

After a couple of week in Jabalpur, we were allowed to send letters to our homes. The letters were heavily censored by the Indians in a most nasty manner to give as much psychological shock as possible to our families in Pakistan. Supposing a letter contained a sentence saying, "so and so died on such and such a date." The censor would cut with scissors the name of the dead person. The recipient of the letter would remain worried as to who had died. We complained to the International Red Cross but the dirty trick of the Indian censor was not rectified. This also resulted in delays and replies to our letters took at least two months to reach us. However, a few interesting things developed. Maj. Gen. Qazi Majid was an emotional type. Worked up by the Indian censor behavior, he started writing about the top Indian leadership, and used derogatory remarks about her. The Indian did not react directly, but when he had a tooth-ache they pulled out his healthy tooth instead of the one which was giving trouble. In spite of this Majid persisted, and so did the dental surgeon. In the process, Majid lost quite a few good and sound teeth.

The other episode relates to Niazi. People had, due to his general behavior, assumed that he drinks alcohol, which he does not. However, bad reputation is worse than bad actions. He became reputed for doing a thing which he never did, and this had spread to West Pakistan and the Censor Office. In one of his letters he wrote in Urdu.

یہاں کافی اچھی مٹی ہے - ہر روز رات کو پیتا ہوں۔

This had double meaning. Niazi meant it to be coffee but his distracters gave it the meaning of "sufficient", to carry the impression that "sufficient quantity of drink is

available here and I drink it every night." This spread in Lahore like wild fire and caused mental disturbance to his family as well.

Letters proved to be a source of seeking knowledge for our children and also forcing us to acquire it. As we had plenty of time at our disposal, as one normally has while a prisoner, we studied more thoroughly than we would have ever done. In one of her letters my daughter Shaheen asked me, "When will the last day (Qiamat) be, according to the Quran." Without the services of Ulema I found that the Quran did not specify 14th Century as the last century, contrary to prevalent and much publicized version. I found Quranic verse at three places which declare in different words the following:

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ أَيَّانَ مُرْسَاهَا قُلْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ
مُسْلِمٌ السَّاعَةِ -
ترجمہ: اے رسول! لوگ تم سے قیامت کے بارے میں پوچھتے ہیں۔ کہہ دو۔ بیشک
خدا ہی کے پاس قیامت (کے آنے) کا علم ہے۔

The 14th century is over. Many more centuries are likely to follow. If we go by common belief then we may start having doubt about Islam, unless one reads the Quran and understands it.

I read and conveyed major lessons of History to her as well as she was doing MA in History. The source was Toynbee's Ten volumes of History of the World. Though his analysis of Muslims rule throughout the world was unduly biased, prejudiced and critical, he concluded his book by saying that Islam will be the future religion of the world. It will triumph due to its simplicity and vigor.

Talking of International Red Cross one has to praise their work and attitude. Under most adverse conditions they helped the Prisoners of War as much as they could. Their delegation quite often visited us. It was their second visit - the date I have forgotten. It was after the Indians had declared that about 90 officers and men were to be tried by the Bangla Desh Government. My name was also in the list. I was so sure of my Innocence that I asked ICRC delegate to arrange for my trial in a neutral country. "But before that take me to Dacca and let me meet Mujib. If he does not embrace me after 5 minutes you may hang me." All the others were aghast at my request as nobody had any trust that the trials would be fair and just.

Mujib had been misinformed by his wife about my actions. After Mujib's arrest his wife left their Dhanmand! House and started living incognito with her relatives out of fear of the Army. One day I was informed by my staff that she had been located and was living under poor environmental conditions. I sent an officer with a message that she was welcome to go back to her house and no harm would come to her. She refused.

However, after a few months she sent a message to me asking for permission to go back to her house. By this time the situation had changed. The Army Intelligence had come to know that her move had sinister design. She wanted to seek refuge in a foreign embassy which was adjacent to her house. Her request was turned down by the Martial Law Administrator but I was the culprit in her eyes. She, on Mujib's return, must have fed him with stories which poisoned his mind. However, before he was killed, he sent his apologies to me through Colonel Riaz of Intelligence Bureau who was well known to him and me in Dacca and was later posted in Abu Dhabi when Mujib was on official visit there.

During stay in POW Camp one developed philosophical attitude which brought home certain aspects of life which one does not see under normal circumstances. An army officer is a member of the privileged class in an under-developed country and we were no exception. We got used to a life of comfort as our service in the army increased. From hardship to comfort is a welcome transition but from comfort to hardship is a distasteful experience. We had to undergo it. One day I realized how simply one could live. I had two pairs of cloths, actually we had reverted back to village life. I found no difficulty in coping with washing and changing day in and day out. The result was that when we returned I had the confidence to face life even if the worst had happened. In reply to questions about my future plans if I was harshly dealt with I said, "I will go back to my village." In my life I have had many ups and downs. When one is down one has to accept it and keep submerged like a sub-marine and recover after the worst is over.

While talking to the Indians I was surprised to find that contrary to our thinking their intellectuals thought that creation of Pakistan was a "good riddance from Muslims - the trouble makers." They were not interested in re-absorbing Pakistan in India. Instead they were planning to create four weak Muslim states so that they could have hegemony over them. According to them a new situation had arisen. The partition of India had taken place on the basis of Muslims Non Muslims. After the Independence, India though created as a secular state had been affected by religious tensions. Very early to develop was the prejudice against the scheduled (untouchable Harijans) caste who according to the puritan Hindus cannot be treated as equal human beings. The scheduled caste have violently asserted their rights and have become a substantially powerful aggrieved party. Next came the conflict with the Sikhs which has ultimately resulted in the demand for a homeland for the Sikhs. The Christian and tribal people of Nagaland and adjoining areas have differences with Hindus. The Majority of Hindus have, as was foreseen by Muslim leaders, started to reveal their true color have shed the cloak of secularism and shown biased attitude by associating themselves with Hindu revivalism. Therefore, the situation in India, now, is totally different to 1947. The Muslim population in the Indian sub-continent has grown at a very rapid rate of 3.2%. If all Muslims of the sub-continent unite and win sympathies of scheduled caste, Sikhs and Christians *i.e.* non- Hindu, they can form a substantial strength and may even be

able to form a government given a genius like Bhutto. And that was the dream of Mr. Bhutto.

I read an article by Mr. Karaka who was Editor of Bombay Weekly *Blitz*. He had after 1971 visited Pakistan and Interviewed Mr. Bhutto. During the recorded interview Mr. Bhutto said two significant things:-

a. Politics in India and Pakistan is Bazar politics. You say in public what you do not do in your official capacity.

b. "I cannot become Prime Minister of India, but I can be its Foreign Minister. When I become its Foreign Minister I will show to the world how the foreign policy of a great country is conducted."

Given the caliber and intelligence of Mr. Bhutto and the military and strategic power of India there is no doubt that he was not boasting.

One day a renowned historian Mr. Piyare Lal who was associated with Indian Defence College visited us. He had a long session with me. He asked for my opinion on the Indian plan. I said. "There was no plan. You attacked from three sides with an overwhelming force of nine divisions a force which at best could be termed as police force). I am talking purely from military analysts point of view. The plan would have been impressive if you had conquered East Pakistan with four or five divisions. One could then praise the various attitudes adopted and appreciate the finesse in maneuvers. Advancing from all three directions - all moving towards Dacca required no genius to plan. East Pakistan force could be overcome by pinning down all the forces on the border - even by Border Security Force and then breaking through the middle as did happen - to reach Dacca with one division. This would have been a brilliant plan, worthy of being taught at Staff College, perhaps equal to Guderian move against Warsaw in 1939." Piyare Lal did not agree with my view that Indian plan was a mediocre plan. It succeeded because of faulty defensive plan otherwise, the plan ideally suited a defensive strategy of gradual withdrawal on all fronts on to the river lines around Dacca, in my opinion.

Trying to exploit my sensitivities being a Rajput he said. "You are intelligent because you have Hindu blood" and for some unknown reason he added. "so has your President." I did not know about the ancestry of the President at that time, so I did not comment but did not agree with his opinion of superiority of Hindus over Muslims in intelligence. There is no doubt that Hindus are more learned, better educated, have world class educationists, scientists, philosophers and intellectuals. But they are the product of their attitude and hard sustained work and application to educational pursuits rather than the religious reasons. The Hindus boys and girls attend to their studies with greater devotion and dedication. The Muslim boys waste their time. Their

19 is as high as that of Hindu boys as is evident from their performance in countries outside the sub-continent. Pakistan had to be created because basically we were left behind in education. Purpose of its existence is negated if our younger generation does not excel in the educational field.

One was confined to the four walls, rather the two layer of barbed wire, of the POW Camp yet one saw life in India around oneself. We could see construction of military buildings quite close to our camp. Each morning a number of laborers would gather at the gate of the establishment, the contractor would choose the required number and chase the other forcibly as they begged with folded hands for jobs. The men were paid Rs. 6/- per day and women Rs. 3/- per day. The contractor would prefer women to men as he had to pay less and got more work out of women making them work till very late. He was seen using his stick to beat the women laborers when they got tired and rested for a while. One could not imagine such a thing happening in Pakistan. Physical condition of workers was seen to be deplorable in that area. Most of them appeared to be underfed. In Central India, men have many wives who work for them. The West makes a great fuss about Muslims being allowed four wives, without mentioning conditionality of equal treatment and special circumstances of orphans and widows being looked after. However, they never mention that in Hindu religion there is no restriction - leave alone four there will be cases where a horde of 20 women be under one man's slavery and work for him.

POLITICIANS RESPONSIBILITY IN BREAK-UP OF PAKISTAN

It has become customary to blow up the East Pakistan Tragedy around 16 December of each year. What is intriguing is the emphasis on throwing the entire responsibility of events in 1971 on the Armed Forces of Pakistan with the aim of disgracing them in the eyes of the Nation and the world at large. Very little is revealed about the role played by the political parties and leaders of both East and West Pakistan.

Without using too many words of our own we present before the nation the role played by the political leaders in the tragedy of East Pakistan.

Let us see what Mr. Bhutto said in "*The Great Tragedy*." Relevant extracts only are given":-

Page-2: Leaders Fall the People: The crisis did not suddenly descend upon us. The successive governments of Pakistan have handled the affairs of State so poorly that an impartial observer would be driven to conclude that the leadership of Pakistan has excelled in making mistakes.

"The language controversy arose soon after Partition and Introduced bitterness between the two wings of the country."

"The Founder of Pakistan died in September 1948. After his death the mantle of leadership fell on Liaquat Ali Khan, who was assassinated three years later. The other leaders of the Muslim League who subsequently came into prominence lacked the courage and the vision to make Pakistan dynamic and progressive State. The first signs of disillusionment set in about five years after independence. The people began to feel isolated and Indeed cheated. Petty politicians considered Pakistan their private fief and clung to power by postponing the framing of the Constitution and general elections. Pakistan has since paid a heavy price for failure."

Page-7: The extremist leaders of East Pakistan (it was Mr. Bhutto himself who in his speech in Dacca Session of National Assembly in March 1966 had said what he attributes to the leaders of East Pakistan) deliberately misinterpreted the Chinese ultimatum in order to tell their people that East Pakistan had been saved not by the Armed Forces of Pakistan, but by the Chinese ultimatum. The Chinese ultimatum did prevent India from attacking East Pakistan but this does not mean that our Armed Forces were not competent to repel any such Indian aggression."

Page-8: "Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rehman introduced his Six Points formula.

Page-11: "The formula taken as a whole was a veiled charter for a confederation which contained the genesis of constitutional secession."

Page-9: Centuries ago. Machivaelli observed that wrong political decisions are like tuberculosis, difficult to detect in the beginning but easy to cure, and with the passage of time, easy to detect but difficult to cure."

Page-14: A few politicians from the West Wing enthusiastically supported Sheikh Mujibur Rahman from the beginning because they also wanted the secession of their provinces in the West Wing. These same individuals had bitterly opposed the creation of Pakistan. In Six Points they saw their chance to destroy Pakistan." (includes politicians of West Pakistan to destroy Pakistan)."

Page after page Mr. Bhutto blames Mujibur Rahman for bringing about the crisis. I am sure Mujibur Rahman blamed Bhutto for the same. On Page 48, Mr. Bhutto says, "It was awesome knowing that the fate and future of our countrymen lay in three pairs of hands and that Allah in His Wisdom had made mine one of them."

Now let us see what Mr. Sisson and Rose in their Book *WAR AND SECESSION* Pakistan, India and the creation of Bangladesh says after interviewing 36 Pakistanis 49 Indians, 12 Bangla Desh and 9 US top military and political leaders and carrying out research for 8 years.

The immediate/recent/1970 crisis in East Pakistan was the outcome of the CMLA to arrange for the creation of a liberal constitutional order and to withdraw from power. Upon assumption of power on 26 March 1969, Gen. Yahya indicated his intention of arranging to withdraw from power. Upon assumption of power on 26 March 1969, Gen. Yahya indicated his intention of arranging a return to a representative form of government with a constitution to be devised by "representatives of the people elected freely and impartially on the basis of adult franchise." Legal Framework Order of 1970 was promulgated on 30 March 1970 with a call for general election at both the national and provincial levels to be held in Oct of that year, the newly elected National Assembly would then be convened to draft a Constitution within 120 days of its first sitting as a constituent body.

"In the election to the 300 seats of National Assembly held on 7 Dec. 1970 the regionally oriented Awami League led by S.M. Rahman was elected with an absolute majority winning all but 2 seats in East Pakistan. The PPP led by Z.A. Bhutto won the majority of the seats in the four provinces of West Pakistan. He did not contest for a single seat in East Pakistan.

"The political battle ensued as the election resulted in the creation of two regionally dominant parties, each bent upon wielding power at the national level, the former

asserting its right to govern as a consequence of its predominance under majoritarian rule, the latter asserting its claim to participate in governance on the basis of the necessity of a "Concurrent Majority" of broader regional representation. Each threatened to make governance difficult, if not impossible, if its claims were not honored.

"Because of the emergence of two parties where they were divided by strong ideologies and more so personalities and were regionally based, and were fearful of each other's designs, party solidarity was emphasized which inhibited efforts at compromise. After the elections, as time went on, normal suspicion and distrust intensified and the demands of each side became more rigid.

"Awami League became rigid on Six Points which in the early stages were negotiable being "Not word of God." They were not willing to compromise on the principle of majority rule though they would accept smaller parties from West Pakistan be partners in Govt.

"The major objective of the leadership of the Pakistan People's Party was to keep the party together further complicated by Bhutto's aspiration to national prominence. The top leadership of the PPP early on decided that it could not participate in the National Assembly without a guarantee of a share of governmental power.

"On the other hand AL started to change its rhetoric from a demand for a "Six Points" constitution to a commitment to its realization. Elections were termed as referendum on the Six Points programme. To counter this despite its minority position in the National Assembly the PPP launched a campaign to establish itself as one of the two "majority parties in Pakistan". Throughout the negotiations towards a political settlement that ensued until the military crackdown in late March, Bhutto was too, aggressive and confrontative. On 20 Dec. in Lahore he declared that no constitution could be framed, nor any government formed at the national level, without the cooperation of the PPP. He stated bluntly that the People's Party was not prepared to occupy the opposition benches, and that it could not wait for another five years to come to power, it had to share power now. (*Pakistan Times* 21 Dec 70).

Sheikh Mujib responded on 3 Jan in which he declared that the constitution would be based on Six Points and that none can stop it, but that he would be responsive to the interests of the people of West Pakistan in the constitution making process. He also reminded that the Awami League was the majority party for the entire country there were not two majority parties and that his party would act with the authority and responsibility that was customary for majority parties, in representative system. The AL would form the constitution with the cooperation of representative from West Pakistan.

Because of apparent inability of party leaders to agree to meet to discuss constitutional issue, Yahya felt compelled by early Jan to initiate a more direct dialogue. He visited Dhaka on 12 Jan. At the end of his stay Yahya referred to Sheikh Mujib as the next Prime Minister of Pakistan adding that his own job was finished, that he was preparing to leave office, and that the transfer of power would occur soon. Both leaders independently indicated their satisfaction with the talks and optimism about the future. On 17-18 Jan 1971. Yahya was a guest of Mr. Bhutto. Bhutto registered his undisguised anger to the Yahya for having unnecessarily and prematurely "made Mujib Prime Minister". Yahya replied that he had not made Mujib Prime Minister. Mujib's majority had.

Bhutto then asked Yahya to test Mujib's loyalty. If Mujib were a "true Pakistani" - postponement would constitute a test.

PP delegation visited Dacca on 27-30 January 1971. Bhutto wanted to determine the place that he and his party would have in a new government. He proposed the possibility of the Presidency. Mujib refused to share power.

On 13 Feb Yahya announced that the National Assembly would be convened in Dhaka on 3 Mar 71.

On 15 Feb Bhutto announced that the Peoples Party would not go to Dacca for the opening of the Assembly on 3 Mar. He could not, he declared, put his party members in the position of being as "double hostages" in Dacca.

Even other East Pakistan! leaders responded harshly *i.e.* Nurul Amin and Ata-ur-Rehman the later declared that Bhutto's stand was nothing less than an attempt to divide Pakistan.

Bhutto's political offensive did not stop. On 17 Feb he declared. "A National Assembly meeting in Dacca would be a "slaughter house" Mujib's response" if Dacca would be a slaughter house for Bhutto, then West Pakistan would most certainly be the same for him. He finally decided not to go to West Pakistan to meet the President.

Bhutto met the President on 18 February. Yahya decided to put Mujib in his place, to re-establish the supremacy of the President's office. On 28 February, In Lahore, Bhutto threatened personal as well as public harm if he were denied control of the political situation. In his customary earthy language and style. Bhutto promised to "break the legs" of any member of his party brazen enough to go to Dacca and talked of one-way ticket for other members. And that he would call a general strike and launch political agitation from the Khyber to Karachi.

I have described in the previous chapters how Mujib and his party basing their propaganda on six points, created hatred against West Pakistan, deliberately whipped up the emotions and sentiments of the Bengalis against their brethren in the West and eventually took over all the functions of the Government. It was an open revolt against which the Army was forced to take action. Indian intervention followed which resulted in break-up of our country.

Yahya's responsibility cannot be minimized despite what has been said above. He was fully responsible for all that happened but the tendency to criticize and blame the Army, as an Institution, can only help the evil intentions of our enemy.

HAMOODUR RAHMAN COMMISSION

In the original outline draft of this book, I had not included any reference to Hamoodur Rahman Commission as time and again we were told that its report was a secret document. However, different personalities both political and literary (Journalists) have commented on it from time to time. Recently selected portions only of the preliminary Report have been publishing in more than one newspaper. Therefore I feel free to write on the Commission and its report concerning me.

After spending 2 years and 4 months as prisoner of war in India, I returned to Pakistan with the last batch on 21 April, 1974. We were cordially received but there was an air of secretiveness and reserved behavior. There were no media people to put us questions; it was an abnormal situation.

Immediately after the events of 1971, changes of immense magnitude had taken place in the country. Mr. Bhutto had taken over as President of 'New Pakistan', and our isolation might have been arranged just for our protection. We were to tell our story only to the officially appointed agencies, and were to be interrogated by a team of officers. Actually, all of the forces in East Pakistan had arrived before my repatriation and had been duly interrogated. Therefore, the picture which the interrogators had before them was clearer than we had individually. A questionnaire was given and we filled it up. The reports on each individual were sent to CHQ, where a Special Committee had been formed under Lt. Gen. Aftab Ahmed Khan with three senior officers of the rank of Major General or equivalent from the Army, Navy and the Air Force.

I appeared before this Committee as did other senior officers. I would like to point out here that individuals would tend to defend themselves but when a Committee or Commission is set up it has before it the statements of others as well and is thus in a position to corroborate, weigh, and sift the true facts before arriving at conclusions. The opinion arrived at was thus of a neutral body and is mostly correct in the light of which the committee was to recommend retention, disciplinary action or retirement of the officers concerned. I was cleared honorably.

Immediately afterwards, we were to appear before the Hamoodur Rahman Commission which had been established to enquire into the circumstances which led to military defeat in East Pakistan. It was a judicial body headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Mr. Justice Hamoodur Rahman. The other members were:-

1. Mr. Justice Tufail Ali A. Rehman Chief Justice of Sind High Court.

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|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2. Mr. Justice Anwar ul Haq | Chief Justice Lahore High Court. |
| 3. Lt. Gen. Altaf Qadir | Military Adviser |
| 4. Mr. Hassan | Legal Adviser |

The Commission had been set up much before our repatriation and had completed their preliminary recommendations with the remarks, "When Major General Farman Ali. Lt General Niazi and some other officers now Prisoners of War in India become available, a proper enquiry should also be held into the circumstances in which General Farman Ali came to remit his message through Mr. Paul Mark Henry to the United Nations Secretary General and who, if any one, authorized him to do so. On Farman's return from India he be questioned about the signal...." This remark had been flashed around in a distorted manner as if the Commission had found me guilty. How on earth one could form such an opinion when in actual fact it was on our return that we appeared before the Commission. The Commission was reactivated after we returned; it submitted its final report after examining us. Final report has been kept a Secret.

Nobody talks about the final report because the Commission had gone beyond the restricted charter "to enquire into the circumstances which led to military defeat", and had also commented on the contribution of the politicians in the tragedy.

Before appearing in person, each one of us had submitted a written statement to the Commission; on the basis of which the members had prepared questions to be put to us. This was my first experience to appear as an accused person. I remained before the Commission for a period of about 13 hours spread over three days. The first day, specially the initial start, was difficult due to expression of an opinion in my written statement on Mr. Fazalul Haq and Mr. Suhrawardy and their concept about Pakistan. Mr. Hamoodur Rehman was a Bengali. He did not like my observations and in his opening remarks showed annoyance. I felt the Commission to be a hostile court, but did not withdraw my remarks nor did I consider it prudent to argue with the Chief Justice. As the examination went on, the atmosphere started changing in my favor. On the second day, I was invited to have tea with the Honorable Justices where during the informal conversation I found that they had a full understanding of the role the politicians had played in bringing about the tragedy. The third day was most satisfying for me. After about 3 hours examination that day, I was really surprised, and elated, to hear from Mr. Justice Hamoodur Rahman. "Gen Farman. We find you to be the most intelligent and straight forward, officer from amongst those who appeared before us. We will today present to you the military plan which we are going to recommend to the government which should have been adopted for the defence of East Pakistan. We would like to have your comments." A Vugraph was set up and Lt. Gen. Altaf Qadir presented the plan to me. The accused had become a judge. I offered my comments which were accepted.

Their verdict on my role is as follows:-

Extract From Hamoodur Rahman Commission Role of Maj. Gen. Farman Ali

13. Before we conclude this Chapter, brief remarks about the role of Maj. Gen. Farman Ali would not be out of place, for the reason that he has been conspicuously mentioned in several contexts by the international press as well as by the Prime Minister of Bangladesh

14. This officer remained in East Pakistan continuously for 5 years (in various appointments etc).

15. It was inherent in the appointments held by him since the promulgation of General Yahya Khan's Martial Law on the 25th of March 1969 that Maj. Gen. Farman Ali should come into contact with civil officials and political leaders, besides being associated with Army Officers and Martial Law Administrators of various levels and grades. He had frankly admitted before the Commission that he was associated with the planning of the military action of the 25th of March 1971, and also with the subsequent political steps taken by the military regime to normalize the situation, including the proposed bye-elections necessitated by the disqualification of large number of Awami League members of the National and Provincial Assemblies. Nevertheless, as a result of our detailed study of the written statement submitted by the General and the lengthy cross-examination to which we subjected him during his appearance before us, as well as the evidence of other witnesses from East Pakistan, we have formed the view that Maj. Gen. Farman Ali merely functioned as an intelligent, well-intentioned and sincere Staff Officers in the various appointments held by him, and at no stage could he be regarded as being a member of the inner military junta surrounding and supporting General Yahya Khan. We have also found that at no stage did he advise, or himself indulge in actions opposed to public morality, sound political sense or humanitarian considerations. In this context, we have already commented at some length, in a previous Chapter of this Report, on the allegations made by Sheikh Mujibur Rehman that General Farman Ali was wanting to "paint the green of East Pakistan red" and have found that the entire incident has been deliberately distorted.

16. During the critical days of war this officer had no direct responsibility for military operations, but he was nevertheless, closely associated with the Governor of East Pakistan as well as the Commander Eastern Command. It was for this reason that he got involved in what has been called "the Farman Ali incident". As we have seen in the Chapter dealing with the details of the surrender in East Pakistan, the message authenticated by Maj. Gen. Farman Ali

for being dispatched to the United Nation on the 9th of December 1971 had been approved by the Governor of East Pakistan, who had obtained prior authority and clearance from the President of Pakistan, namely, General Yahya Khan, for the purpose of formulating proposals for a settlement and cessation of hostilities in East Pakistan. In these circumstances, the responsibility for its authority and dispatch could not, therefore, be placed on this officer. In fact, he had, at the time, demanded trial by court- martial to clear his position. In view of the facts, as they have now emerged before the Commission, there is no need for any such inquiry or trial.

17. Maj. Gen. Farman Ali was present at Headquarters Eastern Command, during the last phases of the events when Indian officers came to meet Lt. Gen. Niazi for negotiating the details of the surrender. From the detailed accounts which have come before us of the behavior and attitude of both these officers, we have no hesitation in recording the opinion that at all relevant times Maj. Gen. Farman Ali advised Lt. Gen. Niazi on correct lines, and if his advice had been accepted, some of the disgraceful episodes might have been avoided.

18. We have also examined the reason why the Indian Commander-in-Chief, General Manekshaw, addressed certain leaflets to General Farman Ali by describing him as Commander of the Pakistan Army. It appears that from the 8th or 9th December 1971. Lt. Gen. AAK Niazi had not been seen outside his Command bunker, and there was a broadcast by the BBC that he had left East Pakistan and that General Farman Ali had taken over the Command of the Pakistan Army. It was for this reason that the Indian Commander addressed General Farman Ali calling upon him to surrender. We are satisfied that at no time did General Farman Ali indulge in any communication with the Indian Generals.

19. An allegation was made before the Commission by Lt. Gen. Niazi that Gen. Farman Ali had sent out of East Pakistan a large sum of money, approximately Rs. 60,000/= through his nephew who was a Helicopter Pilot in the Army and left Dacca in the early hours of the 16th December 1971. We recalled Maj. Gen. Farman Ali to seek his explanation regarding this allegation and some other matters. The explanation given by him was

Given to Islamia Press Rs. 4000/=

Given to Rahim for expenses enroute Rs. 5000/=

Deducted for House Rent as authorized by the Governor Rs. 5000/=

Deposited in the Treasury on return Rs. 46000/=

20. The above statement can easily be verified and is accepted.

21. We are satisfied with the explanation rendered by Maj. Gen. Farman Ali, as the facts stated by him are easily verifiable.

22. For the foregoing reasons we are of the view that the performance and conduct of Maj. Gen. Farman Ali during the entire period of his service in East Pakistan does not call for any adverse comment.

The Commission had a special assignment to investigate thoroughly a particular accusation against me. During Mr. Bhutto's official visit to Dacca, Mr. Mujib showed him a diary in which I had written "Green of East Pakistan will be painted Red." Mujib had been showing this to the whole world trying to prove that we had "planned" genocide of the people of East Pakistan and the sentence mentioned above was used as a proof of their contention. The paint 'Red' connoted Bloodbath.

When confronted with this accusation I accepted that the writing was mine but the words were not. The background story is as follows: During the election campaign NAP (Bhashani Group) held a meeting in Paltan Maidan in June 1970. As it happens, in public speeches, when a leader sees millions of people in front of him he loses his head and says what he would never say otherwise. Certain portions of the speeches were reported by the Intelligence Staff to the Corps Commander. As I was responsible for civil affairs General Yakub Martial Law Administrator range me up and said, "Farman, tell Toha not to make inflammatory speeches otherwise we may have to take action." I asked him as to what had Toha said. What General Yakub said I wrote it down on the table diary which was lying in front of me, and these were: "Green of East Pakistan will be painted Red."

I asked for Toha to come and see me. Toha was a diehard communist believing in Scientific Communism, and a senior political leader. There were a large number of cases against him, therefore he had gone underground. After establishing contacts with eight persons I got through to him and assured him that nobody would arrest him when he visited me in the Governor House. He came. I read out the written sentence and asked him why he had said this. He told me that this was not part of his speech it was Qazi Zafar (he later became PM of Bangladesh) who had uttered these words. What this meant was, he said, that they would convert Green (Islamic state) of Pakistan into Red (Communist) state - Red stands for Communism all over the world. I accepted his explanation, informed General Yakub and the matter was closed. The Commission got it checked with the Government of Bangla Desh who sent the original diary, and concluded in their report.

Page 183, para 23. "A perusal of this document leaves no doubt in our mind that it was indeed in the nature of a writing pad or table diary on which the General made miscellaneous notes during the course of his work. The explanation given by the General appears to us to be correct."

Connected with the above was an accusation that I had got 200 Intellectuals killed on the night of 16 December 1971. The surrender had taken place before evening of 16 December and the Indians had taken control of Dacca.

The fact is that a large number of dead bodies were found on the morning of 17 December. They could have been killed by anybody except the Pakistan Army as it had already surrendered on 16 December. The background as known to me is:-

On 10 December at about sunset I was asked by Maj. Gen. Jamshed, Commander Dacca, to come over to his office at Pheel Khana, Dhanmandi. On getting closer to his command post I saw a number of vehicles. He was coming out of his bunker and asked me to get in with him in his car. After a few minutes I asked him as to what were these vehicles for. He said. "That is what we are going to discuss with Niazi." While on our way to the Corps HQ he told me that he had received orders to arrest a large number of intellectuals and other prominent persons. I said, "Why, what for? This is not the time to do such a thing." Jamshed said. "Tell this to Niazi." When we got to Niazi's office. Jamshed raised the question. Niazi asked my views. I said. "Now is not the time. You will have to give an account of those you had arrested earlier. Please do not arrest anymore." He agreed. My fear is that orders countermanding the earlier orders were perhaps not issued and some people were arrested. I do not till this day know where they were kept. Perhaps they were confined in an area which was guarded by Mujahids. The Corps or the Dacca Garrison Commander lost control over them after surrender and they ran away out by fear of Mukti Bahini who were mercilessly killing Mujahids. The detained persons might have been killed by Mukti or even by the Indian Army to give Pakistan Army a bad name. Dacca had already been taken over by the Indians.

While we were still in Dacca, I was called by Maj. Gen. Nagra of the Indian Army and confronted with this accusation. I asked him. "How could I be involved. I could not have killed so many people single-handedly. I have no command. I have no civilian authority." He accepted. But the question was re-opened when we reached Jabbalpur. Brigadier Leslie DDMI Indian Army came to interrogate us. His first question was. "You are accused of having got 200 intellectuals killed on 16/17 December. What have you to say about it?" I said. "Gen Niazi is sitting upstairs. Go and ask him: did I or did I not oppose the arrest of these people on 10 December. If I was opposed even to their arrest, how could I order their killing." He got up immediately and went away to see Niazi. After ten minutes or so he came back and extending his hand said that he had no more questions to ask. Niazi had confirmed what I had told Leslie.

The Indians themselves were very keen to find a proof to implicate any responsible person of the Pakistan Army with the incident, Brigadier Bashir of East Pakistan Rifles and 50 other officers were kept in solitary confinement in Delhi and grilled thoroughly. One of the officer told me that they had offered to expedite repatriation of anyone who would say that General Farman had given orders for the killings. Not one did for which I am indebted to them for life. Not one was tempted by the offer. And here in West Pakistan the allegations that the Pakistan Army killed the intellectuals of East Pakistan were given wide publicity. The purpose was political to malign the army.

After having been cleared by both the Special Committee of GHQ (called Aftab Committee) and the Hamoodur Rahman Commission I was posted as Director General Military Training in CHQ. This was a clear indication of the verdict but I got confirmation from outside Pakistan.

President Fazal Illahi Chaudhry visited Vienna during Aug 1975. There he met Ex-Governor of East Pakistan Dr. Malik and brought a letter for me from him. A facsimile of the letter is at the end of the this book.

Mr. Bhutto had restricted the domain of the Commission to enquiring only the causes of military debacle though much of what happened in 1971 was the result of political misdoing, calculated or out of ignorance. It was for this reason that the Commission thought it fit to examine Mr. Bhutto and to record that the People's Party Chairman could not provide a satisfactory explanation for raising the slogan "*TUM UDHAR HUM IDHAR*". As far as Yahya was concerned, the Commission stated that he had accepted responsibility for everything.

Vienna.
15-8-75.

My dear General Tirman Ali Sahib,
Assalamu alaikum.

I was so very glad to learn that Justice Hamidul Rahman Commission exonerated you from all guilts others committed; and you have been put in charge of Tuzgi Foundation. Thanks to Almighty Allah and His Mercy. He always does the Supreme Justice. He has done another Justice yesterday, the 14th of August, when Pakistan was born.

How is your health now, and how is your family?

Where is Maj. Asif Ahmed S. and what is he doing now? If you know his address please send me. There are the two young officers who were my military Secretary and A.D.C. They were so loyal, and I always pray for them. I will be glad to know ^{how} they and others are doing.

In Saeed jail my health broke down ^{and} after much difficulties I could come to Europe, first in Austria, in July last year. I have had three operations during the 12 months; and recently the doctors have suggested another operation for enlarge prostate. I have occasional high blood pressure; and diabetes melitus. Heart and kidney functions are also not good. Please pray for me.

I am leaving here on the 21st evening for London and after staying a week there I go to Washington on the 30th day, and pass the month of Ramadan there. Please write to me at the Washington address (over leaf)

With-salam and kindest regards,

Yours sincerely
10/ Atli Malik.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

MAJ. GEN RAO FARMAN ALI KHAN (Retd)

Candidate National Assembly
Constituency NA-137
Noor Manzil, Mandi Road
Tele: (0442) 4140
OKARA.

JANUARY 31, 1985.

MAJ GEN MALIK ABDUL WAHEED
C.O.S. to the President &
Chief Martial Law Administrator
Secretariat (Public Wing)
Rawalpindi.

My dear Wahed,

As you know I am contesting election from Okara for National Assembly seat No.157 and am being opposed by Mian Mohammad Zaman. Although, he was rejected for membership of Majlis-i-Shoora because of conviction under Ghunda Act, still he is trying to get into an "Islamic Assembly". However, I am not concerned with his character. It is the responsibility of the Government of Pakistan to adjudicate such cases. What I am really concerned about is, the very serious allegation he is making publicly against me. The allegation is that I was responsible for the East Pakistan surrender. Cuttings of his interview are attached.

As regards the allegation, Hamood-ur-Rehman Commission and Aftab Committee Reports are available with the Government of Pakistan. Whatever the Hamood-ur-Rehman Commission has said about me should be published so that I, and the people of Pakistan learn about my role in East Pakistan. I know that this Report has been declared as secret. If the Government is reluctant to publish that portion of the Hamood-ur-Rehman Commission Report which relates to my role, the Government of Pakistan should at least make a statement that they have studied the Hamood-ur-Rehman Commission Report and that this Report has clearly, totally, unambiguously and without any reservation cleared me from all blame and responsibility for the tragic events that took place in the erst-while East Pakistan. If this is also not possible, I may please be permitted to approach the Supreme Court of

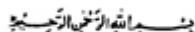
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Pakistan requesting them to study the Report themselves and announce the verdict about my role in East Pakistan as given out in the Hamood-ur-Rehman Commission Report.

I shall be grateful for placing this plea of mine before the President for his kind direction.

Yours *Sincerely*
Farman
MAJ GEN
RAO FARMAN ALI KHAN (RETD)

Transcript of above letter



MAJ. Gen. RAO FARMAN ALI KHAN (Retd)
Candidate National Assembly
Constituency NA-137
Noor Manzil, Mandi Road
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OKARA.

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I shall be grateful for placing this plea of mine before the President for his kind direction.

Yours Sincerely
S/d-

MAJ GEN
RAO FARMAN ALI KHAN (RETD)

CONFIDENTIAL



Maj Gen (Retd) Rao Farman Ali Khan
Managing Director
Fauji Foundation
Harley Street
Rawalpindi Cantt

Maj Gen K M Arif

CMC/MLA/ML-1

Rawalpindi

57/24/CMLA/ML-1

6 April 1978

My dear General,

Please refer to your letter no 1364/1/FF dated 30 March 1978 addressed to Gen M. Zia-ul-Haq. The Chief Martial Law Administrator appreciates your sentiments in seeking permission to publish the conclusions of Hamood ur Rehman Commission concerning your role. Since the Commission report has not yet been published by the Government, making public a part of it by private parties is apt to be misunderstood as an indirect leak sponsored by the Government.

It is regretted that under the circumstances, permission cannot be given at this stage. We are not aware of the source from where you have obtained the extracts submitted alongwith your letter.

Yours sincerely,

Yours sincerely,

Maj Gen
(K M Arif)

CONFIDENTIAL

Transcript of above letter

CONFIDENTIAL



Rawalpindi Cantt
Maj Gen. K M Arif
CMLA Sect
Rawalpindi
57/24/CMLA/ML.-1
6 April 1978

Maj. Gen. (Retd) Rao Farman Ali Khan
Managing Director
Fauji Foundation
Harley Street
Rawalpindi Cantt.

My dear General,

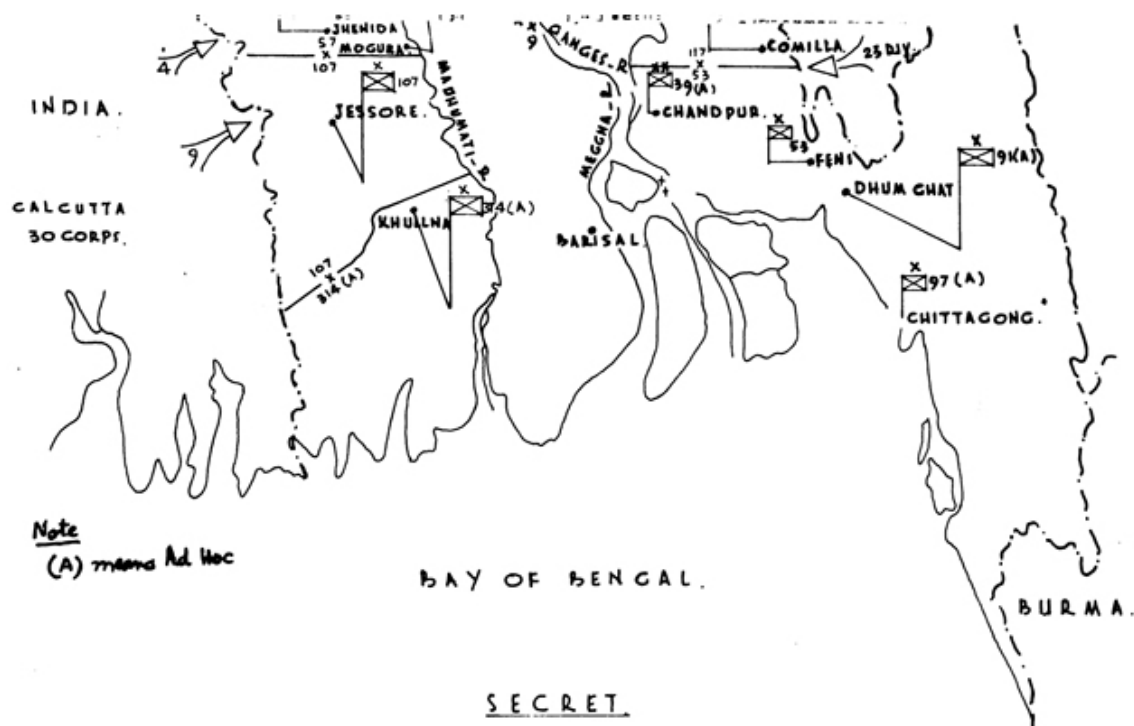
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With best wishes.

Yours sincerely,
S/d-
Maj Gen. (KM Arif)

CONFIDENTIAL



[illegible]

RAIL AND ROAD COMMUNICATION

