CHAPTER - FIVE

The Bangladesh Crisis - 1971
THE BANGLADESH CRISIS - 1971

Background of Bangladesh Crisis:

The developments in East Pakistan in 1971, popularly known as Bangladesh crisis, also affected the Indo-U.S. relations. The crisis in Bangladesh had its origin in the conflict between the two wings of Pakistan - the East and the West. The trouble in Pakistan in 1970-1971 started immediately after the country's general elections which were held in December 1970 for the formation of a national Government and for the creation of a National Assembly to frame a constitution for Pakistan.

1. The Administration of Pakistan was dominated mainly by the West Pakistanis. Soon after the emergence of Pakistan, the Pakistani Government sought to make 'Urdu' the national language. But the East Pakistanis, whose language was Bengali, could not accept Urdu, and started language movement. They demanded that both Bengali and Urdu should be the national languages. Gradually, the East Pakistanis felt that they were being deprived and were being exploited by the West Pakistanis. Thus, a regional feeling developed in East Pakistan. The independence movement of East Pakistan in 1971 was the result of their feeling of deprivation and the result of regionalism. See, A.F. Salahuddin Ahmed: The Emergence of Bangladesh : The Historical Background. ("A Nation Is Born." Ed. Calcutta University Bangladesh Sahayak Samiti, 1974), 72-83.


2. The general elections of Pakistan (1970) were held when Pakistan was administered by the Army Chief, Mr. Yahya Khan, who assumed power in 1969 from his predecessor Mr. Ayub Khan. Yahya Khan ultimately became the President and the Chief Martial Law Administrator of Pakistan.
In the national general elections of Pakistan in December 1970, the Awami League Party led by Sk. Mujibar Rahman, a Bengali, whose main support base was in East Pakistan, emerged as the majority party securing 151 seats in the National Assembly of 291 representatives. The Pakistan People's Party led by Z.A. Bhutto became second largest party, winning 81 seats in the National Assembly. The Awami League secured all the seats they contested in East Pakistan, but drew a blank in West Pakistan. On the other hand, the Pakistan People's Party could not win single seat in East Pakistan.

The Awami League contested the elections (in 1970) on the basis of their "six point" formula whose core was the political and economic autonomy of the provinces of Pakistan. But the Pakistan People's Party went to the polls in 1970 mainly on the slogan of maintaining the political and territorial integrity of Pakistan.

Immediately after the election, a serious dispute arose between the Awami League and Pakistan People's Party on the question of procedure to be followed in framing the constitution for

3. The "six point" formula of Awami League was adopted by the Party in 1966. It prescribed a Parliamentary and Federal Government of Pakistan where the Central Government should be given the responsibility for defence and foreign affairs only; there should be two separate currencies for the Central and the State Governments mutually convertible; the federating units shall have their own militia. See, Government of Pakistan, White Papers On The Crisis In East Pakistan (henceforward cited as White Papers); (5th August, 1971); Appendix "C", 36.
the country. It was the contention of the Pakistan People's Party that if the national Constitution was framed by the National Assembly on the basis of majority vote, the interests and will of the West Pakistani people would not be protected as the National Assembly would be dominated by the Awami League. A Constitution so framed, apprehended the Pakistan People's Party, would not at all be a viable one. Mr. Bhutto claimed equal rights and parity for his Party with the Awami League in framing a viable constitution for the country. The Awami League ruled out such a claim. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the undisputed leader of the Awami League, pointed out that the National Assembly, where the Awami League got the majority of seats, representing the will of the majority of people of Pakistan, was the only body entitled to frame the Constitution for the whole country on the basis of the principle of majority vote.

On 13 February 1971 President Yahya Khan announced that the National Assembly would meet on 3 March 1971 for the purpose of framing the Constitution. On 15 February 1971 Mr. Bhutto,

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4. See, The Pakistan Times, Lahore, 21 December 1970. See also The Dawn, Karachi, 18 February 1971. See also, Y. Bhatnagar : Bangladesh, Birth of A Nation (Delhi, 1971), 96-98.

5. Ibid.


however, declared that he would not attend the National Assembly Session scheduled to be held on 3 March 1971. He declared that he could not attend the session simply "to endorse the Constitution already prepared by a Party", i.e. the Awami League.

POSTPONEMENT OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SESSION

On 1 March 1971 President Yahya Khan issued a statement postponing the National Assembly session which was scheduled to be held on 3 March 1971. In his statement, the President announced that he had to postpone the session because of the acute differences between the leaders of the East and the West Pakistan on the issue of the future setup of the country and because of "the general situation of tension created by India" which, according to him, "has further complicated the whole position." On 6 March 1971, President Yahya further announced that the inaugural session of the National Assembly would take place on 25 March 1971. But on 22 March 1971, Yahya Khan again postponed the scheduled session of 25 March and he said that he did so with a view to facilitate the process of agreement among the political parties.

9. Ibid.
12. Ibid., 12.
hand, he mobilized military forces in East Pakistan in February 1971.\textsuperscript{14}

Sk. Mujibur Rahman and his Party became concerned for the delay on the part of the military Government to summon the National Assembly Session and for the mobilization of military forces in East Pakistan. Mujib thought that behind this "unnecessary delay" there was a "conspiracy" hatched by the Government of Pakistan against the Awami League and against the verdict of the people.\textsuperscript{15} Mujib repeated the charge of conspiracy on 15 February 1971, \textsuperscript{16} two days after Yahya's announcement of the date of the National Assembly meeting. He considered that it was an undemocratic step on the part of the military authority of Pakistan that they should have postponed the National Assembly session (of 3 March 1971) on the ground that the Pakistan Peoples Party which was a minority Party in the National Assembly disagreed with the Awami League on the question of framing the Constitution.\textsuperscript{17} The Awami League might have thought that the military Government of Pakistan were not willing to transfer the power into the hands of the Awami League representatives, and for this they were unnecessarily delaying the summoning of the National Assembly. On 3 March 1971 Sk. Mujib appealed to the military

\textsuperscript{14} Y. Bhatnagar: \textit{Bangladesh : Birth of A Nation}. (Delhi, 1971), 97-98.
\textsuperscript{15} \textit{The Dawn}, Karachi, 10 February, 1971.
\textsuperscript{17} \textit{The People}, Dacca, 2 March 1971.
authorities of Pakistan for 'transferring power to the elected representatives' and appealed to them to withdraw Martial Law from East Pakistan. He appealed to the people of Pakistan not to cooperate with the Government from 4 March 1971. On 7 March 1971 Mujib put forward four-point demands to be accepted by the Government before the Awami League would consider the question of attending the National Assembly Session of 25 March. The main demands were the immediate withdrawal of the Martial law from East Pakistan and the immediate transfer of power to the elected representatives of the people. The Awami League felt that they were being deprived (by the military rulers of Pakistan) of their legitimate right to establish the Government of the people.

MILITARY CRACKDOWN:– The conflict which was originally between the Awami League and the Pakistan People’s Party ultimately became one between the Awami League and the military authority of Pakistan. The military authority apprehended that the non-cooperation movement, as launched by the Awami League, was designed to ultimately "establish a separate state of Bangladesh." President Yahya charged that the non-cooperation


President Yahya Khan revealed this apprehension in an interview with Mr. Pierre Bois of Le Figaro (a French Journal) when he remarked that "The people elected him (Mujibur Rahman) on a programme of autonomy. Intoxicated, he soon began talking of independence." Quoted in B. Costa: *Dismemberment of Pakistan*. (Ludhiana, 1972), 70.
movement of the Awami League was "an act of treason" and accused Mujib of having "attacked the solidarity and integrity" of Pakistan. According to the military authorities, Mujib was encouraged by India in demanding the independence of East Pakistan. They assessed that the Awami League, with the help of the East Pakistan Rifle force and the Indian forces, was preparing for an armed uprising. Consequently, on 25 March 1971, President Yahya called upon the armed forces to do their duty and "fully restore the authority of the Government." On 26 March 1971, Yahya Khan stated that the Awami League had "tried to run a parallel Government" and hence it was the duty of Pakistan's armed forces to ensure the integrity and solidarity of Pakistan.

22. Ibid., 15.
23. Mujib, however, refuted the charge that he or his Party men were secessionists. In an interview with Mr. Amer Taheri of Kayhan International (Iran) Mujib remarked that "those who describe me a secessionist were slanderers of meanest kind." Quoted in Y. Bhatnagar; Bangladesh: Birth of A Nation, 73. See also, "Pakistan: Round I To The West" Time Magazine (Chicago), 97 (12 April 1971), 23-24.
24. White Papers, 40.
25. Ibid.
In the name of restoring the authority of the Government of Pakistan, the army started to kill the innocent people and intellectuals of East Bengal from 25 March 1971, and on the same day Mujibur Rahman was arrested by the Government. The Awami League, as a political party, was banned by the Government. Meanwhile, the 'independent Bangladesh', (East Pakistan) was declared by the Awami League in a clandestine Radio broadcast. The East Pakistanis launched a vigorous movement against the Government for the independence of East Pakistan. In order to put down the movement of the Bangalees of East Pakistan the army indulged in mass killing of the people of East Pakistan. Because of the mass killing and terror unleashed by the army, mass exodus from East Pakistan started, and in order to save their life these people infiltrated into the neighbouring provinces of India.

INDIA'S CONCERN OVER THE INFLUX OF REFUGEES INTO HER TERRITORY:—The military oppression in East Pakistan by the Pakistani armies to suppress the freedom movement there produced its impact on India. She had to shoulder the responsibility of millions of refugees who had been coming from East Pakistan since March 1971.


28. It was reported that the proclamation of independence (of Bangladesh) order was issued on 10 April 1971; the order came into effect from 26 March 1971. See, Sunday Standard (Delhi) 18 April 1971.
The infiltration of the East Pakistanis into India was, however, not new; it started with the partition of India in 1947. In 1970 also there was huge influx of refugees from East Pakistan to India because, according to India, of the "insecure conditions" of the minorities there and because of the "discriminatory treatment meted out to the minorities" by the Government of Pakistan.

In 1971 a record number of refugees entered into India from East Pakistan due to the military oppression there. On 20 July 1971, Mr. R.N. Khadilkar, India's Minister of Labour and Rehabilitation, revealed in the Rajya Sabha that from March 1971 to 15 July 1971 a total of 70.22 lakhs of refugees crossed over to India. From March 25, 1971 to December 15, 1971 a total of 9,899,305 refugees entered into India from East Pakistan.


30. See the statement of Mr. S.P. Singh, India's Deputy Minister of External Affairs, in the Lok Sabha on 7 May 1970. See, India, Lok Sabha Debates (hereafter cited as L.S. Deb.), 41 (7 May 1970), 173-179.

31. See, India, Rajya Sabha Debates (hereafter cited as R.S. Deb.), 77 (20 July 1971), 125.

32. 1. West Bengal  7,493,474
    2. Tripura  1,416,491
    3. Meghalaya  567,986
    4. Assam  312,713
    5. Bihar  8,641

Total: 9,899,305

India considered that such enormous exodus of refugees from East Pakistan in 1971 was the "direct result of Pakistani atrocities" in East Pakistan.\textsuperscript{33}

To India, the happenings in East Pakistan in 1971 initially appeared as a matter falling within the internal jurisdiction of Pakistan.\textsuperscript{34} But when the huge influx of refugees into India began, India considered it as a matter of legitimate concern to her. The Indian Prime Minister, Mr. Indira Gandhi said in Lok Sabha on 26 May 1971 that the Bengali refugees in 1971 were, in fact, the "victims of war" and were not "refugees in the sense we understood the word since Partition" of India.\textsuperscript{35} India dealt with this exodus, contemplated a Ministry, on the "humanitarian ground."\textsuperscript{36}

The massive influx of refugees into India in 1971 caused a

\textsuperscript{33} The statement of Mr. R.N. Mirdha, India's Home Minister, in the Lok Sabha on 24 May 1971. See, \textit{L.S. Deb.}, 2 (24 May 1971), 138.

\textsuperscript{34} See, the statement of Swaran Singh, the Minister of External Affairs in the Lok Sabha on 20 July 1971; \textit{L.S. Deb.}, 6 (20 July 1971), 261-262.

\textsuperscript{35} See, \textit{L.S. Deb.}, 2 (26 May 1971), 185.

\textsuperscript{36} The statement of Mr. R.N. Mirdha, India's Home Minister, in the Lok Sabha on 24 May 1971. See, \textit{L.S. Deb.}, 2 (24 May 1971), 138.

India's sentiment of 'compassion' towards the Bengali refugees was appreciated by the influential U.S. Senator, Mr. Kennedy in his address to the National Press Club, Washington, on 26 August 1971 after his visit to India in August 1971 as an observer of the situation in India and Pakistan. See, \textit{Bangladesh Documents}, Vol. 1 (New Delhi, 1971), 596-598.
tremendous pressure on the economy of India. Moreover, India thought that the Pakistan Government wanted to solve its internal political problem by forcing the East Pakistanis to cross over to India. Mrs. Gandhi also maintained that Pakistan could not be allowed to seek a solution of her political or other problems "at the expense of India and on Indian soil." Apart from India's day to day expenditure for the refugees, the existing food reserves of India were also being depleted for feeding the refugees, and it threatened to create a famine in India.

The huge influx of refugees impeded India's economic development as well. In an interview with Mr. Edward Klein, the editor of News Week magazine, in November 1971, Mrs. Gandhi said

   The U.S. Senator, Mr. Kennedy visited India in August 1971 to investigate problems connected with the refugees. In his Report to the U.S. Senate Committee on Judiciary, Mr. Kennedy pointed out that per head per day cost of nine million refugees was two Indian rupees; he estimated that the expenditure of India for the refugees in one year would be 800 million. See, Report of Senator, Mr. Kennedy to sub-Committee to Investigate Problems Connected With Refugees And Escapers, Senate Committee On Judiciary, 1 November 1971; (Washington), 7, 33.


   These refugees were being employed in the agricultural works by the land owners of India at a cheaper price than the Indian agricultural labourers. As a result, this threatened a great unemployment problem of the Indians. Ibid.
that since India had to take care of the refugees, she had to curtail many of her economic programmes and had to impose additional taxes on the nation. All these meant "a very very heavy burden" on India, said Mrs. Gandhi. India also thought that the major problem which the influx of the refugees had created for her was 'the social and political tension' generated within her own country, and it was threatening the "security" of India.

India felt that though she had been treating the refugees with sympathy on humanitarian grounds, she could not afford to bear the burden of the refugees "forever" even if the Government of India "wished to do so." India, therefore, argued, that the refugees would have to return to their homeland. But, India considered that the conditions in East Pakistan and the necessary confidence in the minds of the refugees should be created by the Pakistani Government for their safe return.

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41. See, Mrs. Gandhi's statement in the Lok Sabha on 26 May 1971; L.S. Deb., 2 (26 May 1971), 221.


question of the return of the refugees, the Government of India wrote to the then Secretary General of the United Nations on 2nd August 1971:

"The root cause of the inflow... can only be explained by the total absence of such conditions in East Pakistan as would encourage or enable the refugees to return to their home... India has no desire to prevent the refugees from returning to their homeland." 44

As the Government of India believed that the influx of the refugees from East Pakistan to India was the direct result of the military atrocities there, they thought that the refugees would not return to their homeland unless the military atrocities stopped in East Pakistan. 45

Mr. S.P. Singh, India's Deputy Minister for External Affairs, informed the Lok Sabha on 21 June 1971 that on 21 May 1971 the Government of Pakistan had declared that the 'bonafide' and the 'law abiding' citizens of Pakistan who entered into India would be allowed to return to East Pakistan. 46 But, Mr. Singh sharply reacted to this declaration of Pakistan and maintained that this declaration of Pakistan was "mere propaganda." 47 India felt that the inflow of refugees from East Pakistan to India would stop "only if this ruthless military action" in Pakistan was stopped. 48 Hence, India demanded "immediate

44. See, R. S. Deb., 77 (3 August 1971), 144-145.
45. See the statement of Mr. S.P. Singh: L.S. Deb., 7 (9 August 1971), 225-226.
47. Ibid.
cession of the use of force and of the massacre of defenceless people" of East Pakistan.49 The entire Parliament of India along with the Government condemned in unequivocal terms the military atrocities in East Pakistan let loose by Pakistan’s military administration.50

The U.S. Stand On Atrocities: The U.S. Government did not make any public declaration condemning the Yahya Administration for its repressive policies in East Pakistan. A was an ally of the United States and had cordial relations with Washington. India expected that the U.S. Government would and could persuade the military authorities of Pakistan to stop their repressive measures in East Pakistan, to find out political settlement of the problem there and to create conditions in East Pakistan for the safe return of the refugees.51

On 7 April 1971, Mr. Charles, W. Bray III, Director, the U.S. Office of Press Relations (he was an officer not of higher rank in the Department of State) stated in a Department of State release:

"Since the beginning of the present crisis (in Pakistan) we have on several occasions expressed concern over the

49. This demand was made in the resolution which was moved by Mrs. Gandhi in the Lok Sabha on 31 March 1971 on the happenings in East Pakistan; the resolution was unanimously accepted by the Lok Sabha. For the text of the resolution see, L.S. Deb., 1 (31 March 1971), 116.

50. Ibid.

loss of life and damage which have occurred in East Pakistan... Normal life in East Pakistan has been seriously disrupted." 52

The above statement, however, was very evasive. It did not make clear the attitude of the U.S. Government towards the independence movement of the East Pakistanis, nor the statement denounced the repressive policies of the Government of Pakistan. The statement merely expressed the U.S. concern. On 8 September 1971, Mr. William Rogers, the U.S. Secretary of State, stated before the U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations that the U.S. Government had "urged the Government of Pakistan to make every effort to create the conditions (in East Pakistan) that will lead to the return of refugees." 53 But there was no public U.S. stand condemning the repressive policies of Yahya Administration. 54

That the U.S. Government did not make public declarations condemning the atrocities followed by Yahya Administration in East Pakistan was admitted by Mr. Henry Kissinger, the National


Security Advisor of President Nixon, on 7 December 1971.\(^55\)

The United States gave different explanations of the question why it did not make public comment on the atrocities in East Pakistan. In the first place, Mr. Kissinger said that the U.S. Government neither condemned nor did pass judgement on the happenings in East Pakistan only for achieving a political settlement (of the crisis in Pakistan) which, he said, the United States was trying to achieve at that time.\(^56\) In the second place, the U.S. Secretary of State, Mr. W. Rogers, said on 12 November 1971 (to a question of a Reporter) that the U.S. Government "tried not to pass judgement on the events ... to maintain friendly relations with both sides (Pakistan and India)."\(^57\) In the third place, Mr. Charles, W. Bray III, Director, the U.S. Office of Press Relations, stated on 7 April 1971 that the lack of "reliable information on the situation" in East Pakistan was the reason why the U.S. Government did not initially make comment.

\(^{55}\) See the Background Briefing with Mr. Henry Kissinger. The briefing (hereafter cited as Background Briefing), held on 7 December 1971, was conducted by Mr. Kissinger and Mr. Ronald Ziegler. The copy of the briefing, collected from the U.S. White House, was placed before the U.S. Senate on 9 December 1971 by the Senator Mr. Goldwafer. This briefing revealed the U.S. Government's position on the Bangladesh crisis. See, U.S. Congressional Record, Senate (hereafter cited as Cong. Rec. Senate), 117(9 December 1971), 45734.

\(^{56}\) See, Mr. Kissinger's Background Briefing : Cong. Rec. Senate, 117 (9 December 1971), 45734.

\(^{57}\) See, Bulletin, 65 (6 December 1971), 653.
on the happenings in East Pakistan. But, it was, however, reported that the then U.S. Consul General in Dacca (East Pakistan), Mr. Archer, K. Blood, immediately apprised the U.S. State Department in Washington of the mass killings of the civilians in East Pakistan by the Pakistani armies. This report, however, was not confirmed by the U.S. Government. But later on, Mr. Kissinger in his book wrote that Mr. Blood sent "cables to Washington urging a public American stand against Pakistani repression ..." He further wrote that because Mr. Blood urged the U.S. Government's stand against the Yahya regime's policy towards the East Pakistanis' movement, President Nixon ordered Mr. Blood's transfer from Dacca. Thus, it appeared that the U.S. Government was informed in time of the events in East Pakistan. There was, therefore, hardly any reason to believe that the U.S. Government lacked 'reliable information of the situation' in East Pakistan.

The actual explanation why the U.S. Government did not make any public comment condemning the military atrocities in East Pakistan seemed to be different. In 1971 the Nixon

58. See, Bulletin, 64 (26 April 1971), 554.
60. H.A. Kissinger: The White House Years (Boston, 1979), 853.
61. Ibid., 854.
Administration was not in a position to antagonize the Yahya Administration by condemning its repressive policies in East Pakistan because at that time Yahya Khan was rendering a great service to the U.S. Government by acting as the intermediary in the Sino-U.S. negotiations for normalizing their relations. Hence, it might be that in order to get Mr. Yahya's help and cooperation the U.S. Government did not take a stand against the repressive policies followed by the Yahya Administration. The U.S. Government perhaps thought that a public declaration against the Yahya administration might deprive them of the 'Yahya Channel,' the U.S. channel to China.

In an interview with the British Television (the interviewer was Mr. David Frost) on 28 October 1979, Mr. Kissinger confessed that the U.S. Government did not react against the Pakistani Government's action in East Pakistan in 1971 because of the "very complicated situation in which we found ourselves"; Pakistan resorted to military action, Mr. Kissinger continued, at a time when "we were trying to arrange a secret trip to China" with the help of Mr. Yahya Khan.  


In July 1971, Mr. Yahya Khan arranged the secret visit of Mr. Kissinger to China via Pakistan. See, R.M. Nixon: Memoirs, 551-553. See, H.A. Kissinger: White House Years, 861. See also, the statement of the U.S. Senator, Mr. Kennedy in, Cong. Rec. Senate, 117 (10 December 1971), 46286.
It might also be the case that the U.S. refusal to publicly condemn Pakistan was motivated by the consideration that the matter was an internal affair of Pakistan. Moreover, Pakistan was an ally of the United States. The United States, therefore, might not have intended to embarrass Pakistan by condemning its internal policies.

It was, however, reported that some U.S. State Department officials urged the U.S. Government to take a harder attitude towards Yahya Khan's repressive policies. But President Nixon seemed to have realized that the USA's national interests lay in Yahya's cooperation (in Sino-U.S. normalization of relations) and not in condemnatory comments on Yahya Khan's policies in East Pakistan which, in fact, did not directly affect the U.S. national interests.

The U.S. Government's silence over the atrocities in East Pakistan was criticised by the influential U.S. Senator Mr. Kennedy who found in the U.S. silence a tacit support (of the U.S. Government) of the repressive policies of the Pakistani Government.

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64. See, "Bangladesh: Out of a War A Nation Is Born" Time Magazine (Chicago), 98 (20 December 1971), 20-22.

65. Mr. Kennedy's address to the National Press Club, Washington, on 26 August 1971; See, Bangladesh Documents, Vol. 1, 598. See, Mr. Kennedy's remarks in Senate on 7 December 1971, Cong. Rec. Senate, 117 (7 December 1971, 45125.

President Nixon's silence over the atrocities in East Pakistan appeared to be surprising. On 11 December 1948, the U.S. Government signed The Convention on the prevention and Punnishment of the Crime of Genocide. The then
INDIA'S RESENTMENT AGAINST U.S. INACTION:—The influx of refugees from East Pakistan into India posed two main problems for India. First, it posed economic and socio-political problems for India. In the second place, the problem was the immediate repatriation of the refugees to their homeland.

In 1971, the United States gave refugee relief aid to India. On 24 June 1971, the U.S. Secretary of State, Mr. W. Rogers, stated that the U.S. Government gave refugee relief aid to India "to meet the burden imposed upon it (India)."

But the assessment of the Government of India was that although the U.S. Government realized that the influx of the huge number of refugees was a 'burden' on India, the U.S. Government, however, limited its responsibility only to giving refugee relief aid; the cause of the influx of refugees from East

U.S. President, Mr. H. Truman transmitted the Treaty to the U.S. Senate on 16 June 1949 for the ratification. The treaty was not considered (for ratification) by the Senate for several years. Requesting the Senate for the ratification, President Nixon said on 19 February 1970 that "... The United States remains as strongly opposed to the crime of genocide as ever" (see, Bulletin; 62; 16 March 1970, 350). It was surprising that President Nixon was on 19 February 1970 requested.

66. For the U.S. refugee relief aid to India see, Mr. Kissinger's Background Briefing. U.S. Cong. Rec. Senate, 117, (9 December 1971), 45734. See, Bangladesh Documents, Vol. 2; 82-84. See also, Senator, Mr. Kennedy's statement in the Senate on 7 December 1971: U.S. Cong. Rec. Senate, 117, (7 December 1971), 45151.

Pakistan "was ignored" by them.\textsuperscript{68} India considered that the refugee "relief can-not be perpetual or Permanent."\textsuperscript{69} India was, in fact, more concerned over the causes of the influx of the refugees which, according to India, were the result of the military atrocities in East Pakistan. India thought that the refugees would return to their homeland only if ruthless atrocities stopped there. She was, however, of the opinion that by doing nothing to stop the root cause of the influx of refugees, the United States revealed its "general support to the Pakistani posture" of repressive policies in East Pakistan.\textsuperscript{70}

On the other hand, India was also not satisfied with the quantum of the U.S. refugee relief aid to India. On 3 December 1971, Mrs. Gandhi stated in Calcutta that the U.S. aid for the refugees "was meagre compared to what was necessary."\textsuperscript{71} Mr. Kennedy, the U.S. Senator, too, pointed out that the U.S.

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\item \textsuperscript{68} See, Mrs. Gandhi's letter to Mr. Nixon on 15 December 1971: \textit{Foreign Affairs Record}, 1971 (New Delhi), 393.
\item \textsuperscript{69} Mrs. Gandhi's statement in the Lok Sabha on 24 May 1971. See, \textit{L.S. Deb.}, 2 (24 May 1971), 138.
\item \textsuperscript{70} The statement of Mr. Swaran Singh, the Minister Of External Affairs, in the Lok Sabha on 9 August 1971 during discussion on "Reported statement by Yahya Khan to execute Sheikh Mujibur Rahman." See, \textit{L.S. Deb.}, 7, (9 August 1971), 246.
\item \textsuperscript{71} See, Indira Gandhi: Years Of Endeavour: Selected Speeches of Mrs. Gandhi, August 1959-August 1972 (Ministry Of Information and Broadcasting, New Delhi, 1975), 585-586.
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contribution for the refugee relief to India was well short of the need.  

**INDO-U.S. DIFFERENCES ON THE POLITICAL SETTLEMENT OF THE BANGLADESH CRISIS**

India believed that the problem of East Pakistan could not be solved by military measures which the military regime of Yahya Khan had been attempting. The problem of East Pakistan, according to India, required a political solution. "A political solution," Mrs. Gandhi observed in the Lok Sabha on 24 May 1971, "must be brought about by those who have the power to do so." India held that political solution should be one which was "acceptable to the elected representatives led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman." The Foreign Minister, Mr. Swaran Singh, therefore, observed that "Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is the only person who, on behalf of the people of Bangladesh, can enter into a solution." India felt that political solution of the East Pakistani crisis could be achieved through negotiations between Mujibur Rahman, who was in prison, and the military authority of Pakistan.

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73. See, L.S. Deb., 2 (24 May 1971), 188.
75. Ibid, 233.
India held that the refugees who had taken shelter in India would never return to their homeland as long as a Government responsible to the elected representatives was not established in Pakistan. An early political settlement of the East Pakistani crisis was, therefore, very necessary and important for India for the repatriation of the refugees. By political solution India meant the transfer of political power to the elected representatives of Pakistan.

India's emphasis on an early political solution of the crisis of East Pakistan was asserted in the Indo-Soviet Joint Statement, issued in New Delhi on 11 August 1971. The same contention of India was reiterated in the Joint Indo-Soviet Statement, issued in Moscow on 29 September 1971, during Mrs. Gandhi's state visit to the Soviet Union beginning on 28 September 1971.

In a nation-wide 50 minutes broadcast on 28 June 1971, President Yahya Khan announced that he had ordered a 'Committee

76. Statement of Mr. Swaran Singh, Ibid, 234.
77. For the Joint Statement see, Foreign Affairs Record, 1971 (New Delhi), 164. The Indo-Soviet Joint Statement was issued after the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace And Friendship was signed in New Delhi on 9 August 1971.
78. For the Joint Statement, Ibid., 186.
of experts' (but he did not mention the names of the Committee members) to prepare a new constitution of Pakistan, and also ordered by-elections to replace the disqualified (in the consideration of the military Government of Pakistan) elected members of Awami League Party. Mr. Yahya Khan was reported to have announced further that the timing of transfer of power in Pakistan would depend 'on the internal and external conditions' of Pakistan.

But India sharply reacted to the announcement of Mr. Yahya Khan. India thought that it was 'obnoxious' that a committee of experts selected by the military authorities instead of the elected members of the Constituent Assembly should be entrusted with the task of framing the Constitution of Pakistan. It was surprising to India that the military authorities would decide as to who among the elected members of Awami League would lose the elective post. The Government of India held that the announcement of President Yahya Khan on 28 June 1971 "negatived any chance of reversion to the democratic way of life" in Pakistan.


81. The statement of the Foreign Minister, Mr. Swaran Singh in the Lok Sabha on 2 July 1971: L.S. Deb., 4, (2 July 1971), 272-274.

82. Ibid.
and that the announcement showed that a determined bid had been "made by the military regime to perpetuate their own hold."83

It appeared that India reacted against Mr. Yahya Khan's announcement because India might have thought that the contents of the statement of Mr. Yahya Khan did not conform to India's understanding of the political settlement of the crisis in Pakistan.84

Mr. Kissinger claimed that in order to reach a political settlement of the crisis in East Pakistan, the U.S. Government sought to promote a negotiation between Mr. Yahya Khan and the Bangladesh people.85 We came to know from the memoirs of President Nixon that the idea (during the independence movement of the East Pakistanis) of the U.S. Government was that once the negotiations (between Yahya Khan and the leaders of East Pakistan) started the ultimate and the "inevitable" result would be "political autonomy" for East Pakistan, and the USA "favoured" it.86 Mr. Kissinger wrote that the U.S. Government, therefore, tried to "persuade Yahya to move toward autonomy" for East

83. Ibid.
84. India's stand on political settlement was appreciated by Mr. Golbraith who was an eminent economist and who was the former U.S. Ambassador in India. For Mr. Golbraith's view on Bangladesh Crisis see, New York Times, 4 June 1971.
86. R.M. Nixon : Memoirs, 525, 528.
Pakistan. In this context, Mr. Kissinger pointed out on 7 December 1971:

"We approached President Yahya Khan three times in order to begin negotiations with Bangladesh people... We told the Indian Prime Minister when she was here that we would try to arrange negotiations between the Pakistanis (i.e. the Pakistani rulers) and members of the Awami League, specially approved by Mujibur who was in prison... What we attempted to promote was a negotiation with Bangladesh people who were not in prison, and who were in Calcutta. The Pakistanis said they would talk only to those Bangladesh people who were not charged with any particular crime in Pakistan." 88

Though the U.S. Government tried for political autonomy for East Pakistan, they, however, assessed that East Pakistan would "eventually become independent." 89 Mr. Kissinger wrote that as the U.S. Government assessed that the ultimate reality was the independence of East Pakistan, the policy of the (U.S.) Administration was, therefore, to "give the facts (in East Pakistan) time to assert themselves." 90

It appeared from the above account that to the United States, the political solution meant 'political autonomy' for East Pakistan, evolved out of negotiations between the East Pakistanis and Mr. Yahya Khan. The U.S. Administration, however, did not emphasize the negotiations between Yahya Khan and Mujibur Rahman, but emphasized negotiations between Yahya Khan and...
Administration and persons specially approved by Mujibur Rahman. By this prescription of political solution of the crisis in Pakistan, the United States desired and sought political autonomy of East Pakistan, and not political independence which was the battle-cry of the movement of the East Pakistanis. Neither President Nixon nor his National Security Advisor, Mr. Kissinger, who was an important and very influential person during Nixon Administration (1969-1971), however, did mention in their writings whether political autonomy — if at all achieved — of East Pakistan was to be on the basis of the 'six point' formula on which the Awami League contested the elections in 1970.

In his Report to the U.S. Congress, dated 9 February 1972, President Nixon showed how the U.S. Government sought to achieve a political solution of the crisis in Pakistan. In the Report, Mr. Nixon revealed, as follows:

"We obtained assurance from President Yahya that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman would not be executed. . . . We urged an amnesty for refugees of all creeds, replacement of military Governor of East Pakistan by a Civilian, and a timetable for return to full civilian rule. Pakistan took all these steps. Return to civilian rule was prepared for the end of December (1971). By early November (1971), President Yahya told us he was prepared to begin negotiations with any representative of this group (i.e. Awami League) not charged

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91. The U.S. Government perhaps considered that Mujibur Rahman was in prison, and his fate would be determined according to the national laws of Pakistan. Under the circumstances, the United States might have thought that to insist on negotiation with Mujibur Rahman was tantamount to tamper on the release of him and to interfere with the internal affair of Pakistan. That might be one reason why the U.S. Government did not emphasize the negotiation with Mujibur Rahman.
with high crime in Pakistan, or with Awami League leaders still in Pakistan. In mid November (1971), we informed India that we were prepared to promote discussion of an explicit time-table for East Pakistani autonomy." 92

President Nixon sought to impress that the United States tried to achieve a political settlement of the crisis of Pakistan. But when the independence movement was going on (until East Pakistan became independent in December 1971) the U.S. Government appeared to be silent about the developments in Pakistan.

RESENTMENT OF INDIA :- Both India and the United States felt that there should be a political solution of the crisis in Pakistan. India might have expected that the United States, by virtue of its influence on Pakistan, might take an active initiative to persuade Yahya Khan to move towards political solution of the problem. But India considered that while the U.S. Government agreed on the need of political settlement of the crisis, they were not very serious and sincere to bring this about. 93

That was why in a letter, dated 15 December 1971, Prime Minister Mrs. Gandhi wrote to President Nixon that "Lip service was paid to the need for a political solution, but not a single worthwhile step was taken to bring this about." 94


94. See, Foreign Affairs Record, 1971, (New Delhi), 393.
The U.S. Government agreed with India that the problem required political solution but could not appreciate India's stand that a time-bound programme of the settlement of the crisis was needed to solve India's problems arising from the crisis. The U.S. Government, however, did not give specific time necessary for the settlement of the crisis. When Mrs. Gandhi was in Washington in November 1971, the U.S. Government was reported to have indicated to her that about two years would be needed to bring about peaceful political settlement of the crisis of East Pakistan. The understanding of India was that if the United States did seriously try, they could have achieved the political settlement earlier, but India's impression was that they did not

95. Mr. Kissinger in his book wrote that the U.S. policy was to "give facts (in East Pakistan) time to assert themselves" (White House of Years, 585). On this point Mr. T.N. Kaul, who was the Foreign Secretary of India in 1971, remarked that Mr. Kissinger forgot to mention "how much time he thought was necessary for the facts to assert themselves." (See, T.N. Kaul : Kissinger Years : Indo-American Relations: New Delhi, 1980), 57. But in one place in his book, Mr. Kissinger wrote that his assessment was that: "Bangladesh would come into being by the spring of 1972" (White House Years, 873).

96. Mrs. Gandhi made an official tour to the USA from 5 to 7 November 1971) For her talks with the U.S. President Mr. Nixon during visit see, Bulletin, 65, (29 November 1971), 615-620.

On the other hand, Mr. Kissinger thought that India's demands of early political solution of the crisis, the repatriation of the refugees, and the return of civilian rule in East Pakistan were motivated by New Delhi's desire for early "political collapse" of Pakistan. According to him, India, in fact, had favoured a military solution of its problems. Ultimately, war between India and Pakistan started in December 1971. In this context Mr. Kissinger remarked that it was India which had resorted to military action against Pakistan "without adequate cause." From the remarks of Mr. Kissinger it appeared that there was a feeling in the U.S. Government that India's assertion of political settlement was not what she actually wanted about Pakistan.

India emphasized the early political solution of the problem because that would enable the refugees to return to their

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98. On 15 December 1971, Mrs. Gandhi wrote to president Nixon that "lip service was paid to the need for a political solution, but not a single worthwhile step was taken to bring this about . . . our earnest plea that Sheik Mujibur Rahman should be released . . . was not considered practical on the ground that United States could not urge policies which might lead to the overthrow of President Yahya Khan . . . The fact of the matter is that the rulers of West Pakistan got away with the impression that they could do what they liked because no one, not even the United States would choose to take a public position". See, Foreign Affairs Record, 1971, (New Delhi), 393-394.


100. Ibid.
country and help India to get rid of the pressure on her economy caused by the influx of East Pakistani refugees. In her letter to President Nixon on 15 December 1971, Mrs. Gandhi recalled how she had emphasized, during her visit to the United States in November 1971, the need for the early political settlement of the crisis. She also pointed out that this sentiment of India was expressed to Mr. Kissinger too when he was in New Delhi in August 1971. What aggrieved India was that there was, in the consideration of India, no U.S. response to the need to persuade Yahya Khan to settle the crisis in East Pakistan. Resenting the U.S. inaction, Mrs. Gandhi wrote to Mr. Nixon, during the war between India and Pakistan, in December 1971: "... we have not received, even to this day, the barest framework of the settlement which would take into account the facts as they are and not as we imagine them to be." The U.S. inaction, therefore, greatly disappointed India.

India also thought that for the early solution of the crisis in Pakistan, it was essential that the Pakistani military regime should negotiate with Sheik Mujibur Rahman who, in India's opinion, was "the only person who, on behalf of the people of Bangladesh" could enter into any solution. But the U.S. Government

101. For the text of the letter see, Foreign Affairs Record, 1971 (New Delhi), 393-395.
102. Ibid.
103. Ibid.
104. See, the statement of India's Foreign Minister, Mr. Swaran Singh in the Lok Sabha on 28 June 1971: L.S. Deb., 4, (28 June 1971), 233-234.
maintained that since Mujibur Rahman was in prison on the charge of high treason and since Mr. Yahya Khan would not agree to immediately release him, the negotiations for the solution of the crisis might start between the military regime of Pakistan and the representatives of the Awami League, approved by Mujibur Rahman.\textsuperscript{105} Mr. Kissinger pointed out later that though the Government of Pakistan welcomed this U.S. formula for negotiations, India "discouraged such negotiations."\textsuperscript{106}

The U.S. Government proclaimed that they had been trying to arrange negotiations between the Pakistani Government and the East Pakistani representatives, approved by Mujibur Rahman. On this point, Mr. Kissinger was asked in the Senate on 9 December 1971 by the U.S. Senator, Mr. Goldwafer whether the military regime of Pakistan ever agreed to negotiate with the representatives approved by Mujibur Rahman.\textsuperscript{107} In reply Mr. Kissinger said, "No. That was a point which we were still trying to get accomplished. They (the Pakistani Government) said they would consider it."\textsuperscript{108} The Senator, Mr. Kennedy, too maintained in the Senate


\textsuperscript{106} Ibid., 45735. The U.S. Representative in the United Nation, Mr. Bush stated in the Security Council on 12 December 1971 that Mr. Yahya Khan did not accept India's proposition that negotiations should have begun with Shaik Mujibur Rahman. He further stated that the U.S. Government sought "for a dialogue to begin without pre-conditions." See, Bulletin; 66, (17 January 1972), 66.

\textsuperscript{107} See, Cong. Rec. Senate, 117, (9 December 1971), 45736.

\textsuperscript{108} Ibid.
on 10 December 1971, "In fact, official reports from the field indicate that at no time did President Yahya Khan agree, without many qualifications, to a pledge to undertake negotiations with high level Bangladesh representative." It appeared from these statements that the United States was not even certain at that time that it would be successful in persuading Yahya Khan to start negotiations with the representatives of East Pakistan.

Mr. Kissinger wrote in his book that it was the hope of the United States that negotiations between the Pakistani rulers and the East Pakistani representatives would obviously result in the "autonomy for East Pakistan, leading to independence" of that country. But Mr. Kissinger was silent in answering a very pertinent question: how could the U.S. Government foresee the political autonomy and the ultimate independence of East Pakistan out of negotiations when Mr. Kissinger himself confessed in the U.S. Senate that Mr. Yahya Khan never committed to the United States that he would sit across the table for negotiations with persons approved by Sheik Mujibur Rahman? It might be that the Government of India considered this question and thought that the U.S. proposal of negotiations between Mr. Yahya Khan and the representative of East Pakistan was no "worthwhile step" taken by the United States to bring about a political settlement of the Bangladesh crisis.

Moreover, Mrs. Gandhi in her letter of 15 December 1971 wrote to President Nixon that India "waited nine months for it (Political solution)" but India did not receive from the United States a "barest framework of settlement." India felt, as Mrs. Gandhi's letter revealed, that the United States had no firm public stand on the crisis and that the U.S. efforts to bring the two parties in East Pakistan to a conference table were devoid of any sincerity. According to one columnist, India could not rely on any effort by the United States as India's experiences of the past U.S. efforts relating to Pakistan were not happy. In the words of this columnist,

"For 20 years the record of the United States in seeking to persuade military and civil dictators, who were its (USA's) clients on the international scene, to relax political terror and repression and begin to install popular Government has been one of consistent failure." Mr. Kissinger, on the other hand, alleged that as India wanted the "break-up" and total isolation of Pakistan, she "rejected" the U.S. formula of autonomy of Pakistan through negotiations. Mr. Kissinger further maintained that India did not welcome the U.S. efforts to promote negotiations between Mr. Yahya Khan and the leaders of East Pakistan because New Delhi

111. See, Foreign Affairs Record 1971, (New Delhi), 393-394.
feared that she "might then lose control of events in Pakistan."

*INDO-U.S. DIFFERENCES ON THE TRIAL AND RELEASE OF MUJIBUR RAHMAN*

India and the United States also differed on the question of the trial and release of Mujibur Rahman, who was arrested by the Pakistani Government on 25 March 1971 on the charge of 'treason.'

On 3 August 1971 Mr. Yahya Khan was reported to have declared in an interview with Pakistan Television Corporation that Sheik Mujibur Rahman would be put on trial on grounds of 'acts of treason' and 'acts of open rebellion.' It was reported that he would be tried by a Special Military Court. Later on, it was reported that the said trial commenced on 11 August 1971.

These reports naturally caused consternation in India. Because, India thought that if Mujib was not released but tried by the Pakistani Military Court, the problems of East Pakistan would not be solved; on the contrary, those problems, according

114. Ibid., 873.
117. Ibid., 29 September 1971.
118. See, the statement of Mr. Swaran Singh, the Minister of External Affairs, in the Lok Sabha on 28 June 1971; L.S. Deb., 4 (28 June 1971), 231-234. India was of the opinion that the refugees would return to their homeland if the affairs of Pakistan were in the hands of Sheik Mujibur Rahman and the elected representatives of the people.
to India, would be "multiplied."

India even apprehended that the trial of Mujib would further "aggravate the situation in East Pakistan." On 10 August 1971, Prime Minister, Mrs. Gandhi sent a message to the Head of the foreign Governments expressing India's resentment over the "secret military trial" of Mujibur Rahman "without affording him any foreign legal assistance." In the message, Mrs. Gandhi appealed to the Heads of the Governments to exert influence on Mr. Yahya Khan "to take a realistic view in the larger interest of the peace and stability of this region."

On the same day, Mr. Swaran Singh, the Minister of External Affairs, appealed to all the foreign Governments, including the United States, "to exercise their influences on the Government of Pakistan . . . on securing his (Mujibur Rahman's) release" from what India called "farcical trial." On 10 August 1971, Prime Minister, Mrs. Gandhi sent a message to the Head of the foreign Governments expressing India's resentment over the "secret military trial" of Mujibur Rahman "without affording him any foreign legal assistance." In the message, Mrs. Gandhi appealed to the Heads of the Governments to exert influence on Mr. Yahya Khan "to take a realistic view in the larger interest of the peace and stability of this region." On the same day, Mr. Swaran Singh, the Minister of External Affairs, appealed to all the foreign Governments, including the United States, "to exercise their influences on the Government of Pakistan . . . on securing his (Mujibur Rahman's) release" from what India called "farcical trial." On 10 August 1971, Prime Minister, Mrs. Gandhi sent a message to the Head of the foreign Governments expressing India's resentment over the "secret military trial" of Mujibur Rahman "without affording him any foreign legal assistance." In the message, Mrs. Gandhi appealed to the Heads of the Governments to exert influence on Mr. Yahya Khan "to take a realistic view in the larger interest of the peace and stability of this region."

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119. See, Mr. Swaran Singh's Message to the U.N. Secretary General, dated 10 August 1971, expressing India's concern over the reported trial of Mujib: Foreign Affairs Record, 1971, (New Delhi), 156.


121. See, Mr. Swaran Singh's statement in the Lok Sabha on 9 August 1971 during discussion on the "reported trial of Mujibur Rahman." L.S. Deb., 7, (9 August 1971), 233, 238.

122. For the text of Mrs. Gandhi's message see, Foreign Affairs Record, 1971, (New Delhi), 156.

123. Ibid.
Affairs, sent a message to the Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. U Thant, requesting him to take "urgent steps" to request the Government of Pakistan not to take any precipitate and extreme decision "in the context of Mujibur Rahman's life and welfare." 124

In an interview with the American Magazine, Newsweek, in the first week of November 1971, President Yahya Khan said that as Mujib had "led an armed rebellion against the state," he could not "negotiate with him" nor he could "release him on a whim." 125

On the issue of release of Mujibur Rahman, India held that the Pakistani rulers, in order to resolve the crisis in East Pakistan, should begin negotiations with Sheik Mujibur Rahman. India argued that since Mujibur Rahman was "the only person who, on behalf of the people of Bangladesh," could enter into any kind of agreement with the military rulers of Pakistan, the East Pakistani leader should be released from jail and be encouraged to undertake negotiations with Yahya Khan. That was why India

124. For the text of Mr. Swaran Singh's message to the U.N. Secretary General, ibid., 156.


There was, however, a rumour that Mujib would be released on parole to visit his ailing parents in East Pakistan, and in September 1971 the rumour went that he would be released as a part of political settlement of the crisis in Pakistan. See, the despatch of Mr. Malcolm, M. Browne from Karachi (captioned 'Release of Sheik Mujibur Rahman Predicted') in The Scotsman, Edinbourgh, 28 September 1971.
urgently sought the release of Mujib. It was also the belief of India that the transfer of administrative power to Mujib and to the elected representatives of the people would create the conditions in East Pakistan in which the safe return of the refugees would be possible. Precisely for this reason, India appealed to all the foreign Governments to see that Mujibur Rahman was released. The United States assessed the situation otherwise. It was the view of the United States that once the negotiations between Yahya Khan and the East Pakistani representatives, approved by Mujibur Rahman, started "the release of Mujib would be an inevitable consequence after some period of time." The U.S. Government, therefore, did not consider essential the release of Mujib for the immediate resolution of the crisis and that was why it was reluctant to put pressure on Yahya Khan to release

126. On 28 June 1971, the Foreign Minister, Mr. Swaran Singh stated in the Lok Sabha that the refugees "can go back only if the affairs of Bangladesh are in the hands of the elected representatives. It is none else except Sheik Mujibur Rahman. Unless he and his Party are in charge of the affairs in Bangladesh, there will never be atmosphere for these refugees to go back." See, L.S. Deb., 4, (28 June 1971), 231.


Mujibur Rahman. The United States thought that the result of negotiations between Yahya Khan and the East Pakistanis would be autonomy for East Pakistan and the release of Mujibur Rahman.

In short, the difference between India and the United States on the issue of the release of Mujibur Rahman was that while India wanted that the release of Mujib would precede the negotiations with the Pakistani Government, the United States contended that the release of Mujib would automatically follow after negotiations. To India, no negotiation could take place without Mujib; to the United States, negotiations could take place with the representatives of Mujib. Thus, while India attached primary importance to the release of Mujib for the solution of the crisis in Pakistan, the U.S. Government did not. To the United States, the important thing was to get the negotiations started.

For securing the release of Sheik Mujibur Rahman, India appealed to the Secretary General of the United Nations and to the Heads of the foreign Governments. India sought to internationalize the question of the release of Mujibur Rahman. On the other hand, the U.S. Administration did not want to get itself involved in the issue of the release of Mujib. On 21 December 1971, Mr. Rogers, the then U.S. Secretary Of State, was asked in a news conference whether the United States was making efforts to get Mujibur Rahman released from imprisonment. In reply, 

Mr. Rogers said that the United States "should not be involved" in the issue of the release of Mujib as the U.S. Government considered the issue as an internal affair of Pakistan, and that was to be "decided by the people concerned." It was also reported that the United States was reluctant to put pressure on Yahya Khan to release Mujibur Rahman.

India was not naturally happy with the U.S. position on the issue of the release of Mujib. India's displeasure with the U.S. position was categorically expressed by Mrs. Gandhi when she wrote to President Nixon on 15 December 1971:

"... our earnest plea that Sheik Mujibur Rahman should be released, or that ... contact with him might be established was not considered practical on the ground that United States could not urge policies which might lead to the overthrow of President Yahya Khan. While the United States recognized that Mujib was a core factor in the situation ... arguments were advanced to demonstrate the fragility of the situation and of Yahya Khan's difficulty. ... The fact of the matter is that the rulers of West Pakistan got away with the impression that they could do what they liked because no one, not even the United States, would choose to take a public position."

India's Disappointment Over U.S. Inaction: - India expected that because of the influence that the United States had on Pakistan, the Nixon Administration would be able, using its "vast

130. Ibid.
132. See, Foreign Affairs Record, 1971 (New Delhi), 393-394.
prestige" and "wisdom", to persuade Yahya Khan to release Mujib-
ur Rahman and to come to a political settlement of the crisis.\textsuperscript{133}

The External Affairs Minister Of India, Mr. Swaran Singh
visited the United States along with some other European coun-
tries between 6 and 22 June 1971 to discuss with these countries
"the grave and serious situation created for India by the influx" of refugees from East Pakistan to India.\textsuperscript{134} In Washington Mr.
Singh met President Nixon and the Secretary of State, Mr. Rogers,
and discussed with them the problems faced by India in connection with the heavy influx of refugees, the problem of repatriation of the refugees and the restoration of peaceful conditions in
Pakistan.\textsuperscript{135}

Mrs. Gandhi herself officially visited the United States from 3 to 7 November 1971.\textsuperscript{136} In an interview with the National
Broadcasting Corporation (NBC), Washington, on 7 November 1971, Mrs. Gandhi said:

"I certainly think that the United States and some of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{133} For reference see one of the letters of Mrs. Gandhi to President Nixon, and the letter was quoted by the U.S. Senator Mr. Kennedy: U.S. Cong. Rec. Senate, 117, (10 December 1971), 46287. See also, T.N. Kaul: \textit{Kissinger Years}, 44.
\item \textsuperscript{134} See the statement of Mr. Swaran Singh, giving report of his visit abroad, in the Lok Sabha on 25 June 1971: \textit{L.S. Deb.}, 4, (25 June 1971), 133-135.
\item \textsuperscript{135} See the statement of Mr. Charles, W. Bray, Director of U.S. Press Relations, on 17 June 1971 : \textit{Bulletin}, 65, (12 July 1971), 41.
\item \textsuperscript{136} For Mrs. Gandhi's talks with President Nixon during her visit to USA. See, \textit{Bulletin}, 65, (29 November 1971), 615-620.
\end{itemize}
the big powers are in a position to persuade the leaders of West Pakistan to talk to some of the people concerned with this problem in the East.'' 137

President Nixon, too, acknowledged that India expected that the United States would and could exert its influence on Pakistan to come to a settlement. In the Report to the U.S. Congress, dated 9 February 1972, President Nixon said that India had expressed "hope" that "our (U.S.) influence (on Pakistan) would produce results" in the context of the crisis of Pakistan. 138.

But by June 1971, India was totally disappointed with the U.S. policy as she found that there was no serious initiative on the part of the United States to resolve the crisis. 139 She found that her efforts to persuade the U.S. Government to exert influence on Yahya Khan yielded no result. It was reported that India was so disappointed over the U.S. inaction that Mr. L.K. Jha, the then Indian Ambassador to USA, had to remark that in India "there is a feeling of being let down by the USA." 140

India's disappointment with the United States was all the more because of the fact that it found that the USA, instead of adopting any constructive step to stop the atrocities in East Pakistan, and to solve the problem, had begun supplying arms to Pakistan from May 1971. 141 The Indian Government apprehended

141. See, Chapter Four of this thesis.
that the U.S. arms delivery to Pakistan at a time when the Pakistani armies were using arms to suppress the movement of East Pakistan, would increase the intransigence of Yahya Khan and would ultimately pose a threat to the security of South Asia.  

India believed that the U.S. arms supply to Pakistan was, in fact, hindering a political settlement of the Bangladesh crisis.  

The U.S. Government, however, did not agree to India's assessment that the U.S. Administration did not seriously want the solution of the East Pakistani crisis. On the contrary, Mr. Kissinger claimed that the United States "played a very active role in attempting to ease the suffering" of the refugees and to bring about political settlement of the crisis. He said: "We constantly used our influence . . . to urge the Government of Pakistan in a direction of a political evolution." He further claimed that in order to bring about a political solution, the United States "attempted to promote . . . a negotiation with Bangladesh people who were not in prison, and who were in Calcutta." Mr. Kissinger, in his book, mentioned that the U.S. Government "undertook to persuade Yahya to move toward autonomy" of East Pakistan.  


144. Ibid.  

145. Ibid., 45736-45737.  

146. H.A. Kissinger: White House Years, 855.
The U.S. Government maintained that they sought to bring about the political settlement of the Bangladesh crisis, but India did not welcome the political solution. Mr. Kissinger pointed out that during their talks with Mrs. Gandhi in Washington in November 1971, President Nixon conveyed to her that Pakistan informed the USA that it offered to withdraw its forces unilaterally from India - Pakistan border and that Yahya Khan expressed his willingness to talk to the East Pakistani leaders. But Mr. Kissinger wrote in his memoirs that this concession of the Pakistani Government was "of no fundamental interest to her (Mrs. Gandhi)." Mr. Kissinger practically held India responsible for hindering the political solution of the East Pakistani crisis and said:

"We were told by our contacts in Calcutta that the Indian Government discouraged . . . negotiations . . . the Government of India wanted things so rapidly that it was no longer talking about political evolution, but about political collapse (of Pakistan)." 149

147. Ibid., 881-882.


Reffering to Mr. Nixon - Mrs. Gandhi talks in Washington in November 1971, Mr. Kissinger wrote that "Nixon-Gandhi conversation . . . turned into a classic dialogue of the deaf." See, White House Years, 881-882.
The relations between India and Pakistan began to deteriorate following the influx of a huge number of refugees from East Pakistan to India. The relations between the two countries further deteriorated when the two countries ordered their respective troop mobilizations in their border regions. It was in this context of the mobilization of forces by the two countries at their borders that the U.S. Government counselled India to "exercise maximum restraint" and to withdraw her forces from the border areas.

Mr. Swaran Singh told the Lok Sabha on 28 June 1971 that the counsel to exercise restraint was given (to India and Pakistan) by a U.S. Official on 27 May 1971. Both Mr. Nixon and Mr. Kissinger wrote that even before the outbreak of the Indo-Pak war in December 1971, the U.S. Government learnt of an Indian plan to attack and dismember Pakistan. Perhaps this had led the U.S. Government to counsel India to exercise restraint.

150. The Home Minister of India, Mr. R.N. Mirdha informed the Lok Sabha on 24 May 1971 that Pakistan had mobilized its armed forces at the Indian border and that Pakistan intruded into Indian territory for several times; See, L.S.Deb., 2, (24 May 1971), 137. See also, the statement of the Defence Minister of India, Mr. Jagjivan Ram, in the Lok Sabha on 23 July 1971, L.S.Deb., 6, (23 July 1971), 225.


The U.S. Counsel for restraint, however, irked India. The Foreign Minister, Mr. Swaran Singh, sharply reacted to it and said in the Lok Sabha on 28 June 1971 that the U.S. advice on restraint should have been directed towards Pakistan and not to India. He further said that India's views on the U.S. counsel for restrain was made clear to the U.S. Government through his private and public statements in Washington when he had been there in June 1971. One member of the Lok Sabha sarcastically remarked that India had shown enough of restraint by accommodating a huge number of the East Pakistani refugees. India strongly objected to the U.S. advice of restraint to her because India thought that the counsel of restraint should have been directed to Pakistan whose unrestrained actions, in fact, caused the tragedy in East Pakistan. India took exception to the U.S. attempt to equate her with Pakistan on the question of restraint; and such an attempt, Mr. Swaran Singh said, was "Unfortunate and

155. Ibid.
156. See, Mr. P. Gangadeba's statement in the Lok Sabha on 28 June 1971: Ibid.
In May 1971, when the Pakistani Government had launched the repressive military actions against the East Pakistanis, the United States sent two ships, 'Sundarbans' and 'Padma,' to Pakistan loaded with U.S. arms. Against this background of the U.S. arms deliveries to Pakistan in May 1971, India questioned the moral right of the U.S. Government to ask India to exercise restraint. Mr. Swaran Singh ridiculed the U.S. counsel by saying, "It is surprising that the U.S. Government which has been counselling restraint to us should have itself taken a measure which will aggravate the situation" in East Pakistan. The U.S. Senator, Mr. Kennedy, too questioned the moral right of the U.S. Government to urge India to restrain itself; he urged the U.S. Government itself to show restraint towards Pakistan by stopping "all further U.S. arms shipments to West Pakistan."

158. Ibid: 1

When Mrs. Gandhi officially visited the USA in November 1971, she was reported to have expressed to Mr. Nixon that "our people can not understand how it is that we who are victims should be equated with those (i.e., Pakistani rulers) whose actions caused the tragedy." See, "The Sub-Continent: A loosing Battle" - Newsweek (New York), 78, (15 November 1971). A spokesman of the Indian Embassy in Washington was reported to have said on 20 October 1971 that the U.S. counsel to India to exercise restraint in the context of the mobilization of forces by India at her border regions was "Uncalled for." This was reported by Mr. Stephen Barber from Washington in The Daily Telegraph, London, 21 October 1971.


The U.S. Perception of The Situation :- In fact, the whole United States policy on the crisis in East Pakistan from March 1971 to the outbreak of Indo-Pak War in December 1971 was influenced by one consideration - that India had the ulterior design to dismember Pakistan.

Whatever the U.S. leaders, President Nixon and Mr. Kissinger wrote subsequently in their memoirs about their hopes of the evolution of an independent East Pakistan in future, the fact was that the United States perceived the East Pakistani situation of March - December 1971 as one of a crisis in which the questions of secession and dismemberment of a country were involved. The U.S. Government at heart did never like the idea of dismemberment of Pakistan and it was totally opposed to it.

President Nixon wrote that during the movement of East Pakistan he understood that "Yahya Khan eventually would have to yield to East Pakistan's demands for independence ... he (Mr. Yahya Khan) could no longer defend East Pakistan" See, R.M. Nixon : Memoirs, 525-528. Mr. Kissinger wrote that the U.S. Government "favoured" the autonomy of East Pakistan, and wrote that the autonomy of East Pakistan would ultimately lead to its "independence" See, White House Years, 858-881. Referring to Mr. Kissinger's perception and assessment, Mr. T.N. Kaul, the then Foreign Secretary of India, wrote in his book that whether this assessment "correctly reflected Kissinger's thinking at that time (during the independence movement) or is merely an aftermath." See, T.N. Kaul : Kissinger Years, 57.

It was reported in New Age, a left oriented journal of India, that in order to prevent the dismemberment of Pakistan, the U.S. Government put pressure on the leaders of East Pakistan 'to give up their demand for complete independence' and to settle the crisis on the basis of 'provincial autonomy' See, "Bangladesh Struggle : Victory Assured: Now Task is to Hasten It"- New Age, (New Delhi), 26, September 1971.
Naturally, the United States did not favor the independence movement of the people of East Pakistan, because this movement threatened the unity and integrity of Pakistan. The independence movement of East Pakistan appeared to the USA as essentially a secessionist movement. Referring to the independence movement of East Pakistan, Mr. Rogers, the U.S. Secretary of State, remarked in a news conference in Washington on 23 December 1971 that "We did favor, we do favor, unity as a principle, and we do not favor secession as a principle." The U.S. Government was, therefore, from the beginning of the crisis, in favor of a policy that would maintain the unity and territorial integrity of Pakistan. That was why they had been emphasizing a political solution of the crisis based upon the negotiations between the Pakistani

163. Syed Nazrul Islam, who was the acting President of Bangladesh during the movement, once expressed to the Senor Editor of Newsweek, that while the U.S. Congress supported the cause of the East Pakistanis "We can not understand why the U.S. Government is against us?" See, "The War In Bengal: India Attacks"-Newsweek (New York), 78, (6 December 1971), 30, 32. Mr. Nixon wrote that the U.S. Department of State, however, felt that independence of East Pakistan was not only "inevitable," it was "desirable" too. See, R.M. Nixon : Memoirs, 526. In this connection see "U.S. Government Top Secret Report - Conflict in East Pakistan, Background And Prospects." : F.Q. Quaderi : Bangladesh Genocide And World Press (Dacca, 1972), 24-26, 31-33. In this Report, which was never confirmed by the U.S. Government, Mr. Archer, K. Blood, the U.S. Counsel General in Dacca, pointed out that the independence of East Pakistan was inevitable, and if the reign of control of the independent Bangladesh was held by the Awami League Party, it would not adversely affect the U.S. national interests.

rulers and the elected representatives of the people of East Pakistan. Hence, the United States favoured an autonomous East Pakistan within a general framework of Pakistan.

Mr. Nixon wrote in his memoirs that he had the information that India and the Soviet Union had the motive to exploit the situation in Pakistan and to dismember it.  

Though this information of the President was at variance with the assessment of the situation of the U.S. State Department which held that "India had limited aims in East Pakistan," Mr. Nixon wanted "to let the Soviets know that we (the U.S. Government) would strongly oppose the dismemberment of Pakistan by the Soviet ally (i.e., India) using Soviet arms." Mr. Kissinger also wrote that he disagreed with the assessment of U.S. State Department that India had limited aims in East Pakistan.

During the crisis in Pakistan the assessment of the U.S. Government was that the Indian support of the independence movement of East Pakistan was motivated by the idea of dismemberment of that country. It was apprehended in Washington that taking

166. Ibid.
167. Ibid.
169. In the Background Briefing, Mr. Kissinger said that "... what started as a tragedy in East Bengal (East Pakistan) is now becoming an attempt to dismember a sovereign state and a member of the United Nations." See, U.S. Cong. Rec. Senate, (9 December 1971), 45735. See also President
advantage of the internal troubles of Pakistan, India might try to dismember it. Mr. Nixon wrote that he conveyed such apprehension of the U.S. Administration to Mrs. Gandhi when she had been in the United States in November 1971. He further revealed that Mrs. Gandhi categorically assured him that "India has never wished the destruction of Pakistan or its permanent crippling." India's Foreign Secretary, Mr. T.N. Kaul, also gave the same impression to Mr. Kissinger when the latter was in New Delhi in July 1971. Mr. Kaul told Mr. Kissinger that if India at all had wanted it, she could have resorted to military action against Pakistan at the initial stage of the crisis in that country. But despite these assurances, Mr. Nixon could not remove doubts from his mind concerning India's intention in the crisis. He wrote in his Memoirs that Mrs. Gandhi's "generals and advisers were planning to intervene in East Pakistan and were considering contingency plans for attacking West Pakistan as well ... " This assertion of Mr. Nixon was supported by

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171. Ibid.
172. Ibid.
173. See, T.N. Kaul: Kissinger Years, 43.
Mr. Kissinger when he wrote that he had learnt in May 1971 from "reliable" sources that Mrs. Gandhi "had ordered plans for a lightning 'Israel type' attack" in West Pakistan. 175

Mr. Nixon believed that if war broke out between India and Pakistan over the question of the Bangladesh crisis, India, by virtue of her military superiority to Pakistan, would "win" the war, 176 and that would mean the dismemberment of Pakistan which Mr. Nixon was totally opposed to.

In view of his apprehension of an imminent Indian threat to Pakistan, President Nixon, in order to "demonstrate the displeasure with India and support for Pakistan," constituted a special committee, known as the Washington Special Action Group (WSAG) and convened its meetings in November - December 1971 to deal with the situation. 177

175. See, H.A. Kissinger : White House Years, 856.

Mr. T.N. Kaul, however, challenged the reliability of Mr. Kissinger's sources. He contradicted Mr. Kissinger by saying that instead of planning to attack Pakistan, Mrs. Gandhi "was trying her best for a political solution" of the Pakistani crisis. See, T.N. Kaul : Kissinger Years, 56-57.


India's Views:-India viewed the Bangladesh crisis from a different angle. She considered that the independence movement of the people of East Pakistan, led by the elected representatives and Sheik Mujibur Rahman, was a "democratic" movement based on the right to self-determination of the people.\textsuperscript{178} Prime Minister, Mrs. Gandhi told the Lok Sabha on 27 March 1971 that India "had welcomed" the movement of East Pakistan because in that movement were involved the values which India had always upheld.\textsuperscript{179} In India's opinion, the independence movement of East Pakistan could not be in any way termed as a secessionist movement, as the United States wanted the people to believe, because Bengalis who constituted the majority of the whole population of Pakistan could not be accused of getting themselves involved in secessionist movement if they asserted their rights. Mrs. Gandhi asserted in the Indian Lok Sabha on 26 May 1971 that "in a democratic system the majority does have certain rights. They cannot be accused of secession if they asserted their rights."\textsuperscript{180} Therefore, the Government of

\textsuperscript{178} See, Mrs. Gandhi's statement in the Lok Sabha on 27 March 1971 : L.S. Deb., 1, (27 March 1971), 43.
\textsuperscript{179} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{180} See, L.S. Deb., 2, (26 May 1971), 220.

Mr. Philips Talbot, the former U.S. Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (1961-1965), theorized Indo-U.S. differences by saying that while "India assessed the Bangladesh issue in terms of Wilsonian self-determination," the U.S. Government had chosen to stand by the Principles of the U.N. Charter "that protect the sovereignty and integrity of member nations against interference by external powers." See, Phillips Talbot: "The Sub-Continent: Menage a Trois." Foreign Affairs (New York), 50, (July 1972), 698-710.
India viewed the movement of East Pakistan as an assertion of the democratic rights of the East Pakistanis. In the resolution on 31 March 1971, the Lok Sabha expressed its "profound sympathy" for the East Pakistanis "in their struggle for a democratic way of life."\textsuperscript{181}

India also felt that Pakistan had made "a calculated attempt" to make "India a scapegoat for their own misdeeds," and to make its internal crisis appear as one between India and Pakistan.\textsuperscript{182} Mr. Swaran Singh, the Foreign Minister of India, repeatedly made it clear after the emergence of the crisis in East Pakistan that the situation in East Pakistan was "not a problem between India and Pakistan."\textsuperscript{183}

From the beginning of the trouble in Pakistan in 1971, President Yahya Khan held India responsible for the crisis in Pakistan.\textsuperscript{184} In its White Papers on The Crisis in East Pakistan, the Pakistani Government alleged that the situation in East Pakistan did not return to "normal life" because of the

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{181} See, \textit{L.S. Deb.}, 1, (31 March 1971), 115.
  \item \textsuperscript{182} See, Mrs. Gandhi's statement in the Lok Sabha on 24 May 1971: \textit{L.S. Deb.}, 2, (24 May 1971), 186.
  \item \textsuperscript{183} See, Mr. Swaran Singh's statement in the Lok Sabha on 20 July 1971: \textit{L.S. Deb.}, 6, (20 July 1971), 251-262.
  \item \textsuperscript{184} In an interview with Mr. Pierre Boist of Le Figaro (French Journal), Mr. Yahya Khan remarked that "He(Mujib) did not change (i.e., from the slogan of autonomy to the slogan of independence) by himself. You know the Indians... They never missed a chance to weaken our position." See, B. Costa: \textit{Dismembrument of Pakistan}, (Ludhiana, 1972), 71.
\end{itemize}
"interference and incitement by India" in the affairs of Pakistan.\(^{185}\)

India categorically denied all these charges and asserted that all the Pakistani charges against India were motivated to implicate India in a crisis which was one of Pakistan's own making.\(^{186}\) Mrs. Gandhi was very categorical when she said that all these Pakistani charges against India were Yahya's "efforts to divert the attention of the world from Bangladesh and to put this blame on us for a situation which he himself has created."\(^{187}\)

India always tried to impress upon the world public opinion that the crisis in Pakistan was not an India-Pakistan dispute. The Government of India did not accept the U.N. Secretary General's suggestion of July 1971 for the posting of the U.N. observers on both sides of Indian border. India felt that "such a U.N. presence in India would result in the situation in East Bengal being misconceived as an Indo-Pakistan dispute."\(^{188}\)

India always considered the East Pakistani problem as an internal affair of Pakistan. She, however, held that with the influx of millions of refugees from East Pakistan into India,

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186. For reference see Mr. Swaran Singh's statement in the Lok Sabha on 20 July 1971: L.S. Deb., 6, (20 July 1971), 261-262.


188. See, the statement of Mr. S.P. Singh, the Deputy Minister of External Affairs, in the Lok Sabha on 9 August 1971: L.S. Deb., 7, (9 August 1971), 224-226.
the problem ceased to be an "internal affair" of Pakistan and
had become an international issue on which, India felt, inter-
national opinion has to be mobilized.189

Though India received refugee relief aid from the rich
countries,190 she felt that the world community did not respond
as it should have to India's appeal to exert influence on Yahya

189. See Mr. Swaran Singh's statement in the Lok Sabha on 28
June 1971: L.S. Deb., 4, (28 June 1971), 229. See also
the editorial of The Sun, Baltimore, 29 September 1971.

190. The refugee relief aid received by India upto February
1972 was as follows:
Offers received from the foreign governments (in Dollars):
a) Through the U.N. Focal Point 1,92,935,136
b) Direct to the Government of India 41,778,283

<table>
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<th>Name of States</th>
<th>Through U.N. Focal Point</th>
<th>Direct to Government</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>a. European Economic Community</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>8,600,000</td>
<td>8,600,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. United Kingdom</td>
<td>28,262,132</td>
<td>9,920,000</td>
<td>38,182,132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. USA</td>
<td>35,500,000 (in Cash)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>89,157,000</td>
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<td></td>
<td>53,657,000 (in kind)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. USSR</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>20,000,000</td>
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The above figure have been taken from Bangladesh Documents, (New Delhi), Vol. 2, 81-84.
See in this connection the editorial (Captioned "Asia At Flash Point") of The Globe And Mail, Toronto, 20 October 1971.
Khan for the solution of the crisis. Hence, on 26 May 1971, Mrs. Gandhi regretted the apathy of nations in this crisis and remarked in the Lok Sabha:

"We have heard much talk of democracy... But when democracy is flagrantly and also so brutally being destroyed (in Pakistan), we do not hear much comment... Could there be a greater or clearer expression of democracy than the one we witnessed in the elections in Pakistan (in 1970)," 191.

Mrs. Gandhi thought that the United States and other big powers "were not in the least worried about the causes of the crisis" in Pakistan.192 India was of the opinion that only the Soviet Union and other Socialist Countries 'openly' tried to persuade "the military rulers (of Pakistan) not to go ahead with their atrocities."193

THE INDO - PAK WAR IN 1971: From beginning of October 1971, India began to suspect that the growing success of the movement of the East Pakistani people to "liberate" their country might lead the military Junta of Pakistan to attack India to cover up their own failures at home as well as to adopt a diversionary tactic of projecting the problem as an Indo-Pak

It was reported that from October 1971, Pakistan increased its military activities near Indian borders. Mr. Jagjivan Ram, the Defence Minister of India, informed the Lok Sabha on 15 November 1971, that from the middle of October 1971, the Pakistani forces "indulged in a series of provocative acts." Since March 1971, India had lodged 66 protest notes to Pakistan of border violations. On 24 November 1971, Mrs. Gandhi stated in the Lok Sabha that ignoring all these protests, Pakistan "threatened total war" against India and had "launched a massive hate-India campaign with the slogans 'crush India' 'Conquer India.'"

194. See, Mr. Swaran Singh's statement in the Lok Sabha on 20 July 1971: L.S. Deb., 7, (20 July 1971), 261, see also Y. Bhatnagar: Bangladesh, Birth of A Nation, (Delhi, 1971), 99.


198. Ibid.
On 3 December 1971, Pakistan attacked India. After eleven days, on 14 December 1971, the Defence Minister of India, Mr. Jagjivan Ram declared in Lok Sabha:

"... our forces in contact with the Mukti Bahini (Liberation forces of East Pakistan) have succeeded in liberating large areas of Bangladesh ... It is our hope that through the joint operations of Bangladesh and the Indian forces the process of liberating Bangladesh will soon be completed.

On 16 December 1971, the Pakistani forces in East Pakistan surrendered to the Indian Army, and on the Western front India unilaterally withdrew her forces after the Pakistani forces' surrender in the East. On the same day, after the surrender of the Pakistani forces, Mrs. Gandhi stated in the Lok Sabha:

"Dacca is now the free capital of a free country. Our objectives were limited to assist the gallant people of Bangladesh and their Mukti Bahini to liberate their country from a reign of terror and to resist aggression on our own land." 200

After Pakistan's defeat in the war, President Yahya Khan resigned. On 19 December 1971 Mr. Z.A. Bhutto became the President of Pakistan. In January 1972, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was released from imprisonment. The refugees started trekking back to their homes after the Pakistani troops surrendered in East Pakistan.


In an article Mrs. Gandhi quoted Mr. Bhutto to have remarked that "I had warned against it (war against India), but my warning fell on deaf ears of a power drunk junta. They recklessly plunged our people into the war and involved us in an intolerable surrender and lost us half our country." See, Indira Gandhi. "India And The World," Foreign Affairs, (New York), 51, (October 1972), 65-78.
U.S. POLICY TOWARDS THE WAR:—It has already been pointed out that both President Nixon and his National Security Adviser, Mr. Kissinger, were under the impression that India sought to dismember and destroy Pakistan. When the war between India and Pakistan broke out on 3 December 1971, the U.S. Government held India responsible for precipitating the crisis. On 4 December 1971, the U.S. Secretary of State, Mr. William Rogers, stated that hostility was intensified in East Pakistan due to the "incursions of Indian troops across the borders of East Pakistan." The U.S. Representative in the United Nations, Mr. George Bush, stated in the Security Council on 4 December 1971 that India had intervened in the affairs of Pakistan "with military force in violation of the United Nations Charter." Similarly, in an interview on 4 January 1972, the U.S. Secretary of State, Mr. Rogers, stated categorically that India had "resorted to armed means to resolve a political controversy." Mr. Kissinger too held the same view and remarked that the military action was taken by India "without adequate cause," and the action was "unjustified."

India, however, strongly reacted to this U.S. assessment.

that India had invaded Pakistan and sought a military solution of its refugee problem. In the letter, dated 15 December 1971, Mrs. Gandhi wrote to President Nixon saying that the war could have been prevented,

"... had the rulers of Pakistan not launched a massive attack on us by bombing our airfields... in the broad day light on December 3, 1971, at a time when I was away in Calcutta.... We waited nine months for it (political settlement). When Dr. Kissinger came (to New Delhi) in August 1971, I had emphasized to him the importance of seeking an early political settlement. But we have not received, even to this day, the barest framework of settlements... with all the knowledge and deep understanding of human affairs you, as the President of the United States... will at least let me know where precisely we have gone wrong before your representatives or spokesmen deal with us with such harshness of language." 205

Stating the background of the Bangladesh crisis and the Indo-Pak war, Mr. Kissinger observed that India wanted things so rapidly that she was, "no longer talking about political evolution but about political collapse" of Pakistan. 206

Even before the actual out-break of war on 3 December 1971, the U.S. Government became so much convinced of India's supposed

205. See, Foreign Affairs Record, 1971, (New Delhi), 393-394.

206. See, Kissinger's Background Briefing : U.S. Cong. Rec. Senate, (9 December 1971), 45735. The U.S.Senator, Mr. Kennedy, however, contradicted Mr. Kissinger's observation and said in the U.S. Senate on 10 December 1971 that "what is too rapid in a crisis that has fastened eight long months." See, U.S. Cong. Rec. Senate, (10 December 1971), 46287. Mr. Lagget, the member of the U.S. House of Representatives criticised the U.S. position that India was the aggressor. According to him "This makes about as much sense as calling the United States an aggressor because we attacked Germany (in the second world war) when they did not attack us." See, U.S. Cong. Rec. House, 117, (14 December 1971), 46871.
design against Pakistan that it had stopped exporting military equipments to India. It was reported that on 3 December 1971, Mr. Charles, W. Bray III, the U.S. State Department spokesman, informed that the U.S. Government had decided to cancel approximately 11.5 million worth of military supplies destined for India. The U.S. Government withheld $87 million economic aid to India on the ground that the latter might utilize this assistance for war purposes instead of developmental efforts. So sharp was the U.S. reaction to the Indo-Pak war that on 7 December 1971, Mr. Kissinger hinted that the United States might resort to economic sanctions against India. Similarly, the U.S. Secretary Of State, Mr. Rogers, too, threatened, in a news conference on 4 January 1972, a cut of the U.S. economic aid to India.

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THE U.S. TILT TOWARDS PAKISTAN :—Before and during the Indo-Pak War (December 1971), the U.S. Government indicated


several times that it would not take sides in the Indo-Pak crisis arising out of the Bangladesh problem. On 12 November 1971, Mr. Rogers, the U.S. Secretary of State, was asked whose side would the United States take if war broke out between India and Pakistan.\footnote{212} In reply, Mr. Rogers said that the United States had "good relations with both" India and Pakistan, and so, if war broke out, the U.S. Government would "stay out."\footnote{213} Similarly, on 7 December 1971, Mr. Kissinger dismissed as "totally incorrect" the comments made in some quarters that the U.S. Administration was "anti-Indian."\footnote{214}

But the documents, later revealed, would indicate that the U.S. Government, in fact, had adopted the policy (in the Indo-Pak crisis) which subsequently was described as the U.S. policy of "tilt" towards Pakistan. This policy of tilt was adopted in the meetings of the Washington special Action Group (WSAG), held between 22 November and 6 December 1971.\footnote{215} The confidential minute of the WSAG meetings were leaked to the press by the U.S. Columnist, Mr. Jack Anderson.\footnote{216} Later on, President Nixon admitted

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{212}{The question was asked during the 62nd Anniversary Convention of Sigma Delta chi at Washington. See, \textit{Bulletin}, 65, (6 December 1971), 652.}
\footnote{213}{Ibid.}
\footnote{215}{See, R.M. Nixon : \textit{Memoirs.}, 526, 527, 531.}
\footnote{216}{See, President Nixon's news conference on 10 February 1972: \textit{Bulletin}, 66, (5 March 1972), 298. See also, Binod Gupta: \textit{Anderson Papers : A Study Of Nixon's Blackmail Of India} (New Delhi 1972). See also, Indrajit Badhwar : "From The Barrel Of A Pen", \textit{India To-Day} (New Delhi), 1-15 September 1979, 58-59.}
\end{footnotes}
that the United States adopted the policy of tilt, and he wrote:

"I agreed with Kissinger's recommendations that we should demonstrate our displeasure with India and our support for Pakistan. To coordinate our planning, Kissinger convened a meeting of the Washington Special Action Group (WSAG).... On December 14, 1971... syndicated columnist Jack Anderson published verbatim excerpts of the minutes of the WSAG meetings of December 2, 4 and 6. The minutes revealed Kissinger's statement to the Group relaying my strong pressure to 'tilt' toward Pakistan." 217

One immediate result of the U.S. Government's policy of tilt towards Pakistan was that Washington ordered the U.S. Navy to move the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, Enterprise, from the Pacific to the Bay of Bengal.218 On 10 December 1971, the Enterprise, the largest aircraft carrier of the U.S. fleet, left the Pacific Ocean for the Bay of Bengal.219 The apparent reason for the movement of the Enterprise was said to be the evacuation of the U.S. nationals in East Pakistan (the number of these nationals at that time was reported to be fortyseven only).220 But some U.S. Congressmen, however, thought that the real intention of the U.S. Government behind the despatch of the Enterprise was not the evacuation of the U.S. nationals in East Pakistan but

Mr. Kissinger, in his book, wrote that initially the U.S. State Department did not agree with President Nixon's policy of tilt. In this context he further wrote that "If there was a 'tilt' in the U.S. Government at this stage objectively it was on the side of India." See, H.A. Kissinger : White House Years, 890.


219. Ibid.

the rescue of the Pakistani troops. 221

Considering the strained Indo-U.S. relations in 1971 on the Bangladesh question and the timing of the despatch of the Enterprise, it seemed that the United States sent the Enterprise to Bay not so much for the evacuation of the American nationals as it was to create pressure on India. Nowhere in his Memoirs Mr. Nixon wrote that the task force was sent to the Bay of Bengal for the evacuation of the American nationals. On the contrary, it appeared from his writings that he "authorized Admiral Moorer to despatch the task force of eight ships, including the nuclear aircraft carrier, Enterprise" from the Pacific Ocean to the Bay of Bengal in the context of his "displeasure with India" and "support for Pakistan." 222

Mr. Rogers, the U.S. Secretary of State, justified the U.S. policy of tilt towards Pakistan when he said on 4 January 1972 that the United States stood on the 'principle' that "a nation like India should not invade East Pakistan even though there were a lot of political reasons;" he further said that in such cases if the United States did not support weaker states like Pakistan vis-à-vis stronger India "then the whole idea of the United Nations fails." 223

221. See, the statement of the U.S. Senator, Mr. Eagleton in the U.S. Senate on 15 December 1971: U.S. Cong. Rec. Senate, (15 December 1971), 47078. See also, the statement of the U.S. Senator, Mr. Cranston, ibid., 47123. See the statement of the U.S. Senator, Mr. Cooper in the Senate on 17 December 1971: U.S. Cong. Rec. Senate, (17 December 1971), 47653-47655.


Differences in Perception of India and the U.S.:—From the previous account it becomes apparent that there were sharp differences between India and the United States in their attitude towards the crisis in Pakistan.

These differences in the attitude of the two governments arose out of the facts that the assessments and perceptions of the situations of the two Governments varied and were different. While the Indian Government viewed the movement in East Pakistan as essentially a democratic movement based upon certain ideals and values for which the Indians "have always stood," the U.S. Administration looked at the situation by assessing the movement as essentially a secessionist movement. India was pained to see that a democratic movement like the movement in East Pakistan was being opposed by a democratic country like the United States. The Foreign Minister of India, Mr. Swaran Singh, expressed India's feeling when in an interview on 13 December 1971 with the NBC, Washington, he said:

"We have noted that the U.S. Government did give support to Pakistan, and we also have a feeling that U.S. Administration's approach to the situation was not unbiased." 224

India also felt that by not condemning the repressive policies of the Yahya Administration, the U.S. Government, in essence, helped and encouraged the Pakistani military rulers in

224. See, Bangladesh Documents, (New Delhi), vol. 2, 302.
their suppressive and repressive policies against the people of East Pakistan. India was, therefore, "not happy" with the U.S. "attitude" towards the Bangladesh crisis. The U.S. support to the Pakistani military junta strained India's relations with the USA. On this point Mrs. Gandhi once wrote as follows:

"In regard to Bangladesh and during the December war, the United States openly backed Pakistan at the cost of basic human values. This . . . strained our relations."226 India was disappointed over the U.S. Government's silence on the question of genocide in East Pakistan. India was also irked by the U.S. decision to supply military spares to Pakistan at a time when the Pakistani armies were using force to suppress the independence movement of the East Pakistanis. Moreover, India considered that as Pakistan was preparing for war against India, the shipments of the U.S. military materials to Pakistan in 1971 were "definitely against" India's "interests."227 Again, during the December 1971 war, the U.S. Government tilted toward Pakistan and branded India as an aggressor. This, too, strained India's relations with the United States.

Thus we see that the relations between India and the United States became strained because India thought that the U.S. actions

225. Mr. Swaran Singh's interview with the NBC, Washington, on 13 December 1971: ibid.


went against the movement of East Pakistan. From India's point of view its relations with the United States became strained because during the Indo-Pak war of December 1971 the U.S. Government openly supported Pakistan. In the context of the U.S. support to Pakistan, Mr. T.N. Kaul, the then Foreign Secretary Of India, aptly observed:

"Nixon and Kissinger felt that friendship between India and the United States was expendable, while a tilt toward Pakistan would be helpful." 228.

The U.S. Government, on the other hand, viewed that the movement in East Pakistan was merely a secessionist movement and it, from the beginning of the movement in East Pakistan in 1971, became convinced that India had been supporting the movement for the independence of East Pakistan. 229 According to the U.S. Government, the motive of India behind its support to the movement in East Pakistan was to dismember Pakistan. The U.S. Government considered that a threat to Pakistan's security and integrity was prejudicial to the U.S. security interests. To the United States, the attitude of India towards the Bangladesh crisis was not conducive to the larger U.S. interests in the Indian Sub-Continent. Mr. Kissinger pointed out that India sought to "assert India's preeminence on the Sub-Continent" by isolating and by dismembering Pakistan. 230 According to one political analyst,

228. See, T.N. Kaul: Kissinger Years, 54.


230. See, H.A. Kissinger: White House Years, 914. In this connection see also, T.N. Kaul: Kissinger Years, 81-82.
the U.S. Government, however, never liked India to be an independent centre of power in South Asia.\textsuperscript{231} In this context Mr. Kissinger wrote,

"I could not agree with Indian pretensions that we might 'lose' India's friendship for ever, unless we supported its hegemonistic ambitions on the Sub-Continent."\textsuperscript{232}

Because of the differences in the perceptions of the situations of the two Governments, the Indo-U.S. relations became strained. The Bangladesh issue became an important factor in the total Indo-U.S. relations. Both Mr. Kissinger and Mr. Rogers gave indications of possible U.S. economic sanctions to be applied against India.\textsuperscript{233} As against this Mr. C. Subramaniam, the then Planning Minister of India, was reported to have declared, at a public meeting near Chandigarh on 29 December 1971:

"As Planning Minister I want to state that even if the United States reconsiders resuming the economic aid to India which was withheld in the wake of the Pakistani attack on December 3 last, we will not avail of it."\textsuperscript{234}

This rejoinder of Mr. Subramaniam, too, was enough to indicate a deterioration in Indo-U.S. relations.

\textsuperscript{231} See, L.P. Singh: "Regional Power Vs. Global Power In Arms Control: India, America And Nuclear Affairs" - India Quarterly (New Delhi), 35, (July - September 1979), 351-361.

\textsuperscript{232} See, H.A. Kissinger: \textit{White House Years}, 880.

\textsuperscript{233} See, foot notes no, 210, 211.

\textsuperscript{234} See, \textit{National Herald}, Delhi, 30 December 1971.
Common Desire for Maintaining Normal Relationship: We have discussed that the Indo-U.S. relations became strained on the issue of Bangladesh crisis. But it should be pointed out here that their relationship did not, however, reach to a point of complete snapping of ties. Neither India nor the United States allowed their disagreements on the Bangladesh crisis to be the sole determinant of their future relations. Mrs. Gandhi stated on 3 January 1972 that the "relations can get back to normal today if the United States wants it." She further mentioned that India's relations with the United States were "perfectly normal" and India had "nothing against the United States."

If the above statements of Mrs. Gandhi were the reflections of the Government of India's thinking on the United States, it would not be erroneous to infer that India considered the differences with the U.S. Government (on Bangladesh crisis) not so crucial as to damage the overall relationship between the two countries. Secondly, it was implied in Mrs. Gandhi's statement that this particular issue did not encompass India's total relations with the USA. Thirdly, since India did not identify her differences on this issue with the total relations with the United States, the ball was in the U.S. court as far as a return to normalcy in Indo-U.S. relations was concerned.


236. Ibid.
But Mrs. Gandhi did not forget to mention that normal Indo-U.S. relations would be impaired if the U.S. Government failed to be guided by the realities of the situations.\textsuperscript{237} She maintained that if the United States, after the war, refused to recognize "what India is, what India stands for and what India wants to do ... then I cannot say what will happen and what sort of relations we will have."\textsuperscript{238}

In an interview with another American magazine, The Time Magazine, on 3 January 1972, Mrs. Gandhi stated that normal Indo-U.S. relations would depend on the realization by the United States of "the realities of modern Asia."\textsuperscript{239} By stating this Mrs. Gandhi perhaps meant that the United States might accept or become reconciled to the altered power position of the South Asian states that emerged after the Indo-Pak war of December 1971. She also seemed to indicate that it might be better if the United States did not try to interfere in the politics of South Asia. She commented that "The turmoil that has engulfed South Asia is essentially a legacy of the big power politics from the days of John Foster Dulles."\textsuperscript{240} In the second place, by the term 'realities in modern Asia', Mrs. Gandhi perhaps meant that the United States should accept and recognize India's policy of non-alignment. Both

\textsuperscript{237} Ibid., 619-620.
\textsuperscript{238} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{239} See, Bangladesh Documents, (New Delhi), vol. 2, 318.
\textsuperscript{240} Ibid.
President Nixon and Mr. Kissinger had doubts about the genuineness of India's nonalignment. According to Mr. Kissinger, "Non-alignment enabled India to navigate the international passage with a maximum number of options."

Mrs. Gandhi reacted strongly against the U.S. disbelief of India's adherence to the policy of non-alignment and against the Nixon Administration's conviction that India was allied with the Soviet bloc. On 3 January 1972, she said that "there is fantastic nonsense being talked about in America about our having received promises from the Soviet Union to intervene in the event of the U.S. or the Chinese military action on the Indian sub-continent. Observing that such misconception (of India's leaning towards the Soviet Union) might adversely affect "bilateral relations between India and America," Mrs. Gandhi wrote in an article as follows:

"Successive U.S. administrations have ignored the fact that India must see her problems and her relationships in a different perspective. They have insisted on interpreting our non-alignment within the confines of a neutralism which they imagined to be slanted in favor of Russia. India was regarded with disapproval and resentment because of her

241. President Nixon was of the opinion (during his Presidency) that "Mrs. Gandhi had gradually become aligned with the Soviet." See, R.M. Nixon: Memoirs, 525. Mr. Kissinger believed that "India and Soviet Union were brought into a natural defacto alliance" as a result of the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace And Friendship, signed at New Delhi on 9 August 1971. See, H.A. Kissinger: White House Years, 866-867.


independent policy."244

It was in this context that Mrs. Gandhi suggested that the United States should recognize the realities in modern Asia in order to bring about normalcy in Indo-U.S. relations. After the Bangladesh crisis was over in 1971, India sought cordial and normal relations with the USA., and so Mrs. Gandhi wrote:

"We are ready to join in any serious effort to arrive at a deeper appreciation of each other's point of view and to improve relations." 245

This substantiated that though on the issue of Bangladesh crisis India's relations with the United States became strained, India, however, wanted to "improve relations" with the USA so that the strained Indo-U.S. relations did not prolong needlessly and indefinitely. Though India and the USA perceived the Bangladesh crisis differently, India did not want that the total Indo-U.S. relations should be disrupted because of her differences with the USA on one issue. Consequently, India, immediately after the Indo-Pak war in December 1971, laid stress on 'serious effort' to arrive at the appreciation of each other's point of view in order to clear the misunderstanding between the United States and India.

The United States too gave indications of restoring cordial and normal friendly relations with India. Mr. Kissinger felt that the U.S. relations with India became "strained" over Bangladesh issue.246 At the same time he mentioned that in 1971 Indo-U.S.

245. Ibid., 75-76.
relations were in a state of "strained cordiality, like a couple that can neither separate nor get along." This observation would indicate that the strained Indo-U.S. relations during the Bangladesh crisis had not led the decision makers at Washington to think in terms of breaking off relations with India. Hence, from the U.S. point of view, its relations with India did not reach the breaking point. And there was a belief in Washington that the cordiality between India and the USA, which was lost during the Bangladesh crisis, could be salvaged. The United States, in the words of Mr. Kissinger, "could no more permanently 'lose' India." 

In his Foreign Policy Report to the U.S. Congress, dated 9 February, 1972, President Nixon threw light on his Government's perspectives on the future of Indo-U.S. relations and on their interests in Indian democracy. He stated in that Report that though the USA's relationship with India was shaken by the Indo-Pak war of December 1971 and though the United States disagreed with "specific Indian actions in November and December (1971)," the future relations of these two countries would depend on the "respect for each other's views and concerns" and not on their "identity of policies." Referring to the impact on Indo-U.S. relations Mr. Nixon said in the Report:

"The United States, of course, has a tradition of friendship with India... Our strong interest in Indian...

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247. Ibid.
248. Ibid.
democracy and progress is not diminished. . . . We have our views and concerns in the world, just as India has its own. . . . We are prepared now for a serious dialogue with India on the future of our relations . . . . We can search out ways of transcending our differences and resuming our traditionally close relationship." 250.

Thus, we see that President Nixon admitted that on international issues India might have its own judgement and views. He sought to point out in the Report that the intention of the U.S. administration was to maintain and not to disrupt the traditional friendship with India, no matter if it differed with India on specific issues. Mr. Nixon refused to admit the contention that he was "anti-Indian" on the issue of Bangladesh crisis; he claimed that he was merely "anti-War." 251

Both Mr. Nixon and Mr. Kissinger asserted that the U.S. administration preferred normal Indo-U.S. relations. But as criteria of future relations with India, Mr. Nixon stated in the U.S. Foreign Policy Report to the Congress, dated 9 February, 1972:

"If India has an interest in maintaining balanced relationship with all major powers, we are prepared to respond constructively." 252 Later on, the U.S. Secretary of State, Mr. W. Rogers too, declared on 3 March 1972 that the U.S. relations with India would depend on "India's relations with other powers, particularly its stated non-alignment policy." 253 In the second place, Mr. Nixon

250. Ibid.
maintained that the U.S. relationship with India would be determined "by the posture that South Asia's most powerful country (India) now adopts toward its neighbours on the sub-continent." 254

Following the growing differences between India and the USA on the issue of Bangladesh crisis and following the U.S. support of Yahya Khan, some doubts were, however, expressed in the U.S. Congress about the U.S. relations with India. For example, Mr. Gallagher, a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, said in the House on 3 August 1971, during discussions on the Foreign Assistance Act 1971, "Because of the undue solicitude for Pakistan on our part, America's relations with India to-day faces a serious challenge." 255 He expressed concern over the fact that by supporting the Yahya regime the U.S. Government was "alienating the people of the largest democracy - India." 256 Similarly, Representative Mr. Laggett regretted that,

"in trying to keep on the good side of Yahya Khan, we have alienated India . . . it is impossible to understand why we should jeopardize our relations with India even for the sake of a good and stable Government." 257

But after the Indo-Pak war of December 1972 and when the Bangladesh crisis was over, the U.S. Government, however, indicated that though its relations with India became strained over the

256. Ibid.
issue of Bangladesh crisis, it had chosen and opted to maintain cordial friendly relations with India as before. Perhaps, the U.S. Government felt that prolonged strained relations with India would not serve their national interests. The differences between India and the United States, over the Bangladesh crisis, therefore, did not lead to the severing of their ties. In this context it is worthwhile to mention what Mr. Phillips Talbot, the former U.S. Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (1961-1965) wrote after the Indo-Pak war of 1971:

"Both (India and the United States) have sound reasons to desire friendly relations. Having won her contest within the sub-continent, India needs to bring her international relations back into some sort of balance. On the American side, it is clear that henceforward any dealings of significance within the sub-Continent will bring the United States into contacts with India." 258