CHAPTER V

NONALIGNED RESPONSE TOWARDS INDO-PAK CONFLICT 1971

Look at the non-aligned countries; we have prided ourselves of nonalignment. What have the non-aligned done? Nothing.
- M. C. Chagla (1971)

... Bangladesh had the right of self-determination. India only helped this nation to put an end to further slaughter, ... ten million refugees, the horrible massacre ... left no alternative. India played a positive role in the affair.
- President Josip Broz Tito (1977)

The Indo-Pak conflict of December 1971 can be easily singled out as one of the most eventful developments in the recent history of the Third World. As indeed, this conflict exemplified a rare crisis leading to the disintegration of a post-colonial state - Pakistan, and the emergence of Bangladesh as a new sovereign state. Posing a serious challenge to the existing state-system, these developments highlighted some of the typical problems of nation-building in the post-colonial states of Asia and Africa.¹

¹ "From Ulster and Yugoslovia in the old world to Canada and Brazil in the New World, and almost everywhere in the 'Third World', there are tensions of state to community that are analogous to those that brought about the disintegration of Pakistan". Robert Jackson, South-Asian Crisis: India-Pakistan-Bangla-Desh (New Delhi, 1978), p. 161.
The crisis of Bangladesh which erupted in March 1971 and led up to the violent conflict between India and Pakistan in December 1971 embodied a number of complex issues which unceasingly occupied the international attention both within and outside the United Nations throughout this period. These included in particular the issue of secession and self-determination, armed intervention and aggression, rendering outside help to a just liberation struggle and limits of domestic jurisdiction and the genocidal violation of human rights.

Evidently many of these issues had serious ramifications for the nonaligned states which had still to resolve them in their own arena after attaining nationhood in the recent past. Their concern towards these issues manifested time and again in various resolutions passed at the nonaligned conferences and regional gatherings such as the Organization of African Unity. It is in this context that the nonaligned responses towards the Indo-Pak conflict of 1971 assume a special significance.

2 The African states forming the bulk of the nonaligned movement were particularly affected by these issues. For a detailed analysis, see Benjamin Neuberger, *National Self-Determination in Postcolonial Africa* (Colorado, 1986) and also Caroline Thomas, "Third World Attitudes to the Non-Intervention Norm", *The Nonaligned World*, (New Delhi), vol.2, no.4, 1984, pp.477-92.
Although it is not possible within the scope of the present study to amplify all the intricacies of the Indo-Pak conflict, yet a brief rundown of the same would be in order here to place in proper perspective the issues which confronted the international community in general and the nonaligned countries in particular.

**A Unique Conflict**

The Indo-Pak conflict of 1971 was different from the earlier three conflicts between the two neighbours both in its intent and substance. As this time, it was not the product of any differences between the two countries, it was rather the internal crisis within Pakistan which spilled over as an external conflict. This is not to deny the factor of continuing hostility between the two neighbours which very much shaped India's responses towards the internal crisis which culminated in the dismemberment of Pakistan. Evidently,

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3 A multitude of studies have come out on this subject. Of these some of the more noted ones are: Jackson, n.1; G.W. Choudhari, *India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and the Major Powers: Politics of a Subdivided Continent*, (New York, 1975); Mizanur Rahman, *Emergence of a New Nation in a Multi-Polar World: Bangladesh* (Dacca, 1974); Subrata Roy Choudhari, *The Genesis of Bangladesh: A Study in International Legal Norms and Permissive Consciousness* (New York, 1972); and Mohammad Ayoob and K. Subrahmanyam, *The Liberation War* (New Delhi, 1972).

4 As Blinkerberg has observed: "Once again a special issue pertaining to one of the two countries in conflict soon became a problem common to both, thus affecting the continuous Indo-Pakistan Confrontation...". Lars Blinkerberg, *India-Pakistan: The History of Unsolved Conflict* (Copenhagen, 1972), p. 303.
against a highly inflated military machinery of Pakistan, the Mukti Bahini (the liberation army of the Bengalis) could not have succeeded in the manner it did but for the positive and decisive role played by the contiguous external patron, India. And in any case "an unfriendly India to the cause of Bengalis would have proved a death knell on their movement".  

However, the tension between the two wings of Pakistan culminating in an unprecedented crisis in March 1971 essentially lay in the very foundation of Pakistan; its peculiar genesis and geopolitical structure. The state of Pakistan had come into existence on the basis of 'two nation theory' which envisaged an independent Muslim state carved out of the Muslim majority areas of undivided India. The Muslim majority areas in the north-western and eastern zones of India were subsequently brought together to constitute the state of Pakistan consisting of two geographically remote units, West Pakistan and East Pakistan, separated by nearly 4,800 kilometres of Indian Ocean and by 1,600 kilometres of Indian territory.

5 Rounaq Jahan, *Pakistan: Failure in National Integration* (New York, 1972), p. 204. However, there are many who consider that the crisis of Bangladesh was entirely engineered by India with Soviet support. See for instance, Matiur Rahman, *Bangladesh Today: An Indictment and a Lament* (London, 1978), especially pp. 8-14; and Akhtaruddin Ahmad, *Nationalism or Islam: Indo-Pakistan Episode*, Indian edn. (New Delhi, 1982). Also see White Paper on The Crisis in East Pakistan (Government of Pakistan, 1971), pp. 45-54.

Apart from its incongruous geographic structure the task of nation-building in Pakistan was beset with acute problems since its very inception. "As between the two wings of Pakistan there was hardly anything in common except religion and perhaps originally a certain anti-Indian attitude, which was however, always more acute in the western part than in East Bengal". Bengalis in the eastern wing differed from their fellow Pakistanis in the western wing in language, tradition, ethos and in political culture. The absence of unifying factors between the two wings that make a nation arrested scholarly attention way back in early-fifties. For instance Hans J. Morganthou remarked in 1954 that "Pakistan is not a nation and hardly a state. It has no justification in history, ethnic origin, language, civilization or the consciousness of those who make up its population".

Conscious of these marked dissimilarities between the Muslims of western and eastern zones of British India, A. K. Fazlul Huq, a prominent Bengali nationalist, while moving the historic Lahore Resolution in 1940 had specifically sought an independent status for East Bengal, thus:

... the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority, as in the north-western and eastern zones of India,

7 Blinkerberg, n.4, p.309.

should be grouped to constitute 'Independent states' in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign. 9

It is worth noting that the Lahore Resolution and its further elaboration in 1941 did not refer to the term 'Pakistan' which was then being used exclusively in the context of the western provinces. 10 However, the political manoeuvring by the Muslim League leaders on the eve of partition and an exaggerated fear of a United Hindu India depriving Bengali Muslims of their due, saw the Lahore Resolution receding to background and the formation of a unified Islamic state of Pakistan. 11

Intra-Colonialism

Since the very inception of Pakistan the people of the eastern wing were constantly subjected to political, economic and socio-cultural exploitation by the West Pakistani ruling elite reminiscent of the traditional relationship between an imperial power and a colony. 12 Describing this, Sheikh Mujibur

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10 The term Pakistan originally denoted; P-Punjab, A-Afghanistan (part), K-Kashmir, I-Indu(Sindh), S-Sarhad (Frontier Province) Tan-Baluchistan see Shri Ram Sharma, Indian Foreign Policy; Annual Survey, 1971 (Delhi, 1977), p. 201, and also Guy Wint, ed., Asia Hand Book, revised edn. (Middlesex, 1969), p. 76.

11 See for details Jackson, n. 1, p. 13.

Rahman, who led the liberation struggle for Bangladesh, pointed out, "Even 200 years' rule by the colonial British could not exploit the people to such an extent, as the unchallenged exploitation of this wing of the country during the last 23 years by the vested interests from West Pakistan". Any study of the racial, cultural, economic and political equations between the two wings during twenty-four years of Pakistani federal union would lead to the inescapable inference that East Bengal was transformed into a colony of West Pakistan. As observed by a Yugoslav scholar, "No one is even trying to deny that the more developed West Pakistan by the logic of economic ascendancy dictated unequal relationship in which East Pakistan bore many features of a raw material supplying colonial province". It is, however, necessary to point out some of the conspicuous features of this exploitative relationship.


In all the crucial sectors of decision-making: economic, military and administrative, East Pakistan's representation was extremely small, if not completely non-existent. Since independence, the real transfer of resources from the East to West Pakistan had been to the tune of some 10,000 million dollars. And in line with the standard pattern of all colonial systems, East Pakistan was utilized as a dumping ground for the overpriced goods of West Pakistani industrialists who, thus, enjoyed monopoly rights over this huge captive market. Important commodities, such as jute, were exported to earn foreign exchange which was then utilized for the industrial development of West Pakistan.

The same exploitative relationship in favour of West Pakistan marked the allocation of developmental expenditure and foreign aid. For more than two decades, seventy per cent of Pakistan's invisible funds went to West Pakistan and only thirty per cent to East Pakistan; forty-five per cent of the national revenue was spent in West Pakistan and only twenty-five per cent in the East. Foreign aid collected in the name of one hundred and ten million people of Pakistan was always spent in such a way that seventy-five million people of East Pakistan were deprived of eighty per cent of it.

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16 See Appendix 2 of this work.
17 See Appendix 3 of this work.
18 See Appendix 4 of this work.
In cultural matters, especially on the issue of language, the Bengalis of East Pakistan were constantly subjected to gross discrimination. After the military take over of Pakistan by Ayub Khan in 1958 the discrimination against Bengali language and literature reached new heights. In June 1967 a ban was imposed on the playing of Tagore’s songs on Pakistan Radio. This step was taken by the Ayub regime ostensibly to liberate Bengalis from what he called the evil influence of Hindu culture. However, it aroused an unprecedented mass resentment from all sections of Bengalis for whom Tagore was a national poet admired by both Hindus and Muslims. Similarly the utter neglect of Bengali language in official work despite its being a national language led to a situation wherein the government and other higher posts had become an exclusive preserve of Urdu.

19 Bengalis had reacted sharply to Jinnah’s "One Language Formula" which meant to promote Urdu as a state language, there were mass uprisings and violent protests in 1948 and in 1952. Although the language policy was revised in 1954 and Bengali was recognized as a national language along with Urdu, yet almost no effort was made to promote Bengali. See for details, H. Evans, "The Language Problem in Multinational States: the case of India and Pakistan", Asian Affairs, vol. 2, June 1971, pp. 180-89.

20 General Ayub has referred to this aspect in his memoirs thus: "they (Bengalis) have been and still are under considerable Hindu cultural and linguistic influence. As such, they have all the inhibitions of a down-trodden race ... their popular complexes, exclusiveness, suspicion and a sort of defensive aggressiveness probably emerge from this historical background." Mohammad Ayub Khan, Friends Not Masters (London, 1967), p. 187.

speaking people of the western wing. In the educational field, too, Bengalis were rarely awarded scholarships and there was a deliberate neglect of educational facilities in the eastern wing. 22

In addition, the Pakistan ruling class improvised the typically colonial theme of racial and cultural superiority of West Pakistanis over Bengalis. It was propagated under the patronage of the Ayub regime that Bengalis are untrustworthy, lazy and cowardly people and West Pakistan was inhabited by a "conquering race". Utterly discriminating charges were made about the Bengali race ranging from "promiscuity" to "semi-Hinduism" of the Bengali Muslims. 23 The socio-cultural subjugation along with blatant economic exploitation of the Bengali race was thus a perfect instance of intra-colonialism and added substance to the demand for autonomy which was inherent in the very foundation of the state of Pakistan.

Bengalis' Quest for Self-Determination

The last phase of President Ayub's regime (1965-69) saw a complete erosion of the democratic process leading to an irrevocable alienation of Bengalis from the administration. While the Indo-Pakistani conflict of September 1965 provided President Ayub an excuse to suppress the political rights of Bengalis,
India's conscious refusal to open a front on East Bengal border further added to the alienation of Bengalis who had by now exhausted their patience with the official propaganda of projecting Kashmir as a national cause.

It is against this backdrop that in February 1966, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his Awami League came out with the six-Point Formula containing the demand of regional autonomy and a new balance of political and economic power between the centre and the province. However, Mujib and his colleagues were arrested soon after and the Awami League was branded as leading a separatist movement with Indian help. The brutal suppression of the Awami League only added to the intensity of the autonomist movement which had by now entered its last phase.

The downfall of Ayub's regime in March 1969 did not bring any relief to the Bengalis. General Yahya Khan who succeeded Ayub also followed the earlier policy of the Army Generals to suppress the popular movement in East Pakistan. The apathy of the Yahya regime towards Bengalis was much in evidence when it did precious little to alleviate the misery of the cyclone hit East Pakistan in November 1970. "This new experience", according to Mujib, "only brought into sharp focus the basic truth that every Bengali felt in his bones that we have been treated so long as a colony and a market".

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24 See Appendix 6 of this work.
25 For details see Bhattacharjee, n.21, pp.205-40 and Jackson, n.1, pp.33-55.
The callousness of the Yahya regime thus transformed the Bengali nationalism which began primarily as an urban and middle-class phenomenon into a movement in which students, intelligentsia, the urban and rural poor all claimed their stakes. There emerged a consensus that it was only through the Six-Point Programme and the demand of complete regional autonomy ensured therein, that the Bengalis would attain their overdue socioeconomic emancipation. Subsequently during the election of 7 December 1970, the six-point manifesto of the Awami League was given a near unanimous mandate by the people of East Pakistan. But Yahya Khan who had earlier promised to transfer power to the elected representatives of people went back on his words and refused to provide political power to the victorious Awami League.

Amidst the Awami League's continuing non-violent, non-cooperative movement to press its democratic demands, the Yahya regime on 25 March 1971 ordered the army to crush the people's movement and what followed was nothing short of genocidal violation of human rights in East Bengal. Mujib and his partymen were


28 The Awami League won 167 out of the 313 seats in the National Assembly, taking all but two seats in East Pakistan, but none in the West. The League won its seats with 72 per cent of the votes cast. See Mushataq Ahmad, Politics Without Social Change, (Karachi, 1972), p. 176.

29 For details see Jackson, n. 1, pp. 24-32.
arrested and Martial Law was imposed. "Pakistan army", according to Mujib, "slaughtered 3 million Bengalis, rendered 25 million homeless and caused 10 millions to take refuge in India". Hence, what had started as a movement for greater economic and political autonomy, within the framework of a united Pakistan, turned irrevocably into a determined movement for an independent Bangladesh. Thus on 26 March a declaration of independence was made from the Chittagong Radio in the name of the Awami League.

Clearly, it was not East Pakistan which cut itself off from the West but it was West Pakistan which through perpetual domination and exploitation left no alternative for the East, other than to counter Pakistani militarism through an organized movement. However, the Pakistani government labelled the movement as a secessionist attempt engineered by India. "The army" according to the Pakistani stand, "foiled the secessionist bid to break up the country and the situation would have returned to normal very soon, but for the interference and incitement by India". The fact remained that it was not an attempt at

30 Cited in S.M. Burke, Mainsprings of Indian and Pakistani Foreign Politics, (Minneapolis, 1974), p. 204. It has been pointed out that, "The killings in Bangla Desh were equal to the use of seventy-five Hiroshima type nuclear weapons". Ayoob and Subrahmanyam, n.3, p.168.

31 See White Paper, n.5, pp.45-54.

32 Blinkenberg, n.4, p.313.
secession, as made clear by Sheikh Mujib, when he stated that, "We have the larger population so how can a majority secede from a minority?" \(^{33}\)

**Indian Response**

India's response to the military crackdown of 25 March was initially that of caution. \(^{34}\) Although India cherished the values and ideals which the Awami League espoused, yet the Indira government which had recently returned to power with a landslide electoral victory was not willing to act in haste. Mrs Indira Gandhi stated before the Rajya Sabha that "... a wrong step, a wrong word can have an effect entirely different from the one which we all just intend ... We have to act within certain norms." \(^{35}\)

However, both the Houses of Indian Parliament on 31 March 1971 adopted a rather sympathetic resolution in favour of the struggling people of Bangladesh. It blamed the Pakistani government for its genocidal policy and demanded the transfer of power to the legally elected representatives of East Bengal. It also assured them that "their struggle and sacrifice will


\(^{34}\) However, this may not be the general view. For instance it was remarked that, "India's attitude on this issue was definitely not one of 'wait and see'. Its military initiative was part of a political strategy". Ashok Kapur, "Strategic Choices in Indian Foreign Policy", *International Journal*, vol. 27, no. 3, 1972, p. 455.

receive the whole hearted sympathy and support of the people of India”. 36 This, of course, was an unprecedented resolution as it pronounced a radical departure from India's earlier stand of keeping silent on the domestic crises in its neighbourhood.

However, India had not yet committed itself to any concrete policy of aiding the liberation struggle of Bengalis at least officially. Although there are suggestions and evidence too that from about the beginning of May 1971 India had begun to assist covertly the Mukti-Bahini, the Liberation Army of Bengalis, to wage a guerrilla war inside East Pakistan. 37

India at this stage tried to mobilize international opinion against the violation of basic human rights in East Pakistan. The issue of human rights was first raised by India before the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations in May 1971. During the discussion on the Report of the Commission on Human Rights, Samar Sen, India's representative, called on the world community to prevent Pakistan from committing inhuman atrocities and violation of human rights in East Pakistan. 38 Mrs Gandhi

36 See Bangla Desh Documents, n.8, p.672. On 2 April the Pakistani government deplored "the totally unwarranted resolution" of the Indian Parliament and called it as blatantly interfering with Pakistan's internal affairs. Times of India (New Delhi), 3 April 1971.


38 See Bangla Desh Documents, n.8, vol.1, pp.618-25.
too wrote to the Heads of Government to exercise their influence over the Yahya regime to desist from violating democratic and human rights of the Bengalis. The international press and media joined India in building international opinion against the suppression of fundamental freedom and human rights in Pakistan. While advocating a political solution to the problem, India, however, preferred not to refer to the Bengalis' right to self-determination at this stage because of its possible impact on its own internal scene.

Pakistan, however, did not relent nor for that matter sufficient international pressure was brought to bear on it to do so. Its unwillingness to go in for a political settlement was evident by its refusal to release Mujib and his colleagues from jail. Instead Pakistan raised the issue of domestic jurisdiction and non-intervention to decry India's stand on the Bangladesh crisis. Aga Shahi, the Pakistani representative at the United Nations, contended:

In violation of its solemn obligations under the Charter of the United Nations, India ... is openly interfering in the internal affairs of Pakistan ... no political, economic, strategic or ideological considerations may be invoked by one state to justify its interference in the internal affairs of another state any more than they can be cited as a ground for aggression.

39 Ibid., p.712.
40 Ibid., pp.380-434 and pp.467-95.
41 See Kamal A.Faruqui, "India's Role in East Pakistan Crisis : Legal Aspects", Review of International Affairs (Belgrade) no.516, 1971, pp.24-5.
Although the relationship between matters falling within domestic jurisdiction and human rights has remained rather controversial, yet in the United Nations the observance of human rights is not normally considered a matter falling within the domain of domestic jurisdiction.\(^{42}\) The massive violation of fundamental human rights in East Pakistan had definitely made the issue an international problem. However, the United Nations and the international community remained largely silent on this issue.

**Civilian Aggression on India**

It was, however, the refugee problem caused by the unchecked violation of human rights in East Pakistan that brought a new twist to the whole situation. From the middle of April 1971 the number of Bengali refugees crossing over to the Indian territory started suddenly mounting. According to Indian official statistics, later confirmed by the international media, the rate of influx reached 60,000 people per day and by November about ten million of them had crossed over to India.\(^{43}\) It was a tremendous burden on the socio-economic fabric of India which had to spend about ₹ 5,260 million on relief work. The total foreign aid received on this count was only one-tenth of this amount.\(^{44}\)

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43 See *Bangla Desh Documents*, n. 8, vol. 1, p. 675.
44 Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 82-86.
Clearly for India now the problem was no more than that of the violation of human rights but had become what Mrs Gandhi called "an internal problem of India". The impact of the refugee influx was so excruciating that it was described as a "civilian aggression" on India. Even at this late stage India wanted the international community to intervene effectively to pressure Pakistan for a political solution of the problem whereby elected representatives of East Pakistan could be given a right to decide their destiny. To this end various official and non-official delegations were sent abroad "to educate world opinion on this East Bengal question" especially on the gravity of 'civilian aggression' and the violation of human rights of the Bengalis. Mrs Gandhi wrote to UN Secretary General U Thant that, "whatever efforts you can make to bring about a political settlement in East Bengal which meets the declared wishes of the people there, will be welcome".

Yet the situation kept on deteriorating amidst a non-chalant international opinion and India's continuing support to the liberation struggle of Bengalis, and finally culminated in a violent war leading to the emergence of Bangladesh on 16 December 1971.

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45 Prime Minister's statement in Lok Sabha on 24 May 1971. Ibid., n.8, vol.1, pp.673-74. During this period 13 ministerial delegations visited 70 countries to explain the crushing burden imposed by Pakistan on India. A. Appadorai and M.S. Rajan, India's Foreign Policy and Relations (New Delhi, 1985), p.163.

46 See Hindustan Times (New Delhi), 16 June 1971.

47 See Bangla Desh Documents, n.8, vol.1, pp.660-63.
There is a conflict of evidence as to who really converted a dangerous situation into open hostilities. Pakistani stand was that on 22 November, India launched a massive attack in the eastern sector. According to a statement made by Aga Shahi, its permanent representative in the United Nations, "direct Indian aggression" persisted in the eastern sector during the two weeks preceding 3 December. He further alleged that it was India's interventionist role in Pakistan's internal affairs that has not only 'preceded' but also caused the crisis and that India is using the so-called refugee problem for the military, political and diplomatic purposes with a view to dismember Pakistan. 48

While accepting that its armed forces marched in on 22 November to support the Bangladesh liberation army, India also pointed out the fact that the wider conflict erupting on 3 December or the military initiative of 22 November should not be viewed at in isolation from the course of events which had occurred between March and December 1971. Expressing this view Samar Sen stated in the Security Council:

If aggression on another foreign country means that it strains its social structure, that it ruins its finance, that it has to give up its territory for sheltering the refugees, if it means that all its schools have to be closed, that its administration is denuded, what is the difference between that kind of aggression

and the other types, the more classical type, when someone declares war or something of the sort? It is obvious that the acts of Pakistan government which caused the mass exodus of refugees to India could strictly be treated as an act of aggression under article 39 of the Charter.49

Replying to the Pakistani allegation that India had violated the provisions of the Charter regarding territorial integrity and non-interference, Samar Sen chided the international community for remaining silent on the issue of human rights. He stated at the Security Council that,

Now, several principles have been quoted by various delegations: sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-interference in other peoples' affairs, and so on. But I wonder why should they feel shy about speaking of human rights?50

India which had been initially reluctant to refer to the principle of self-determination finally resolved to do so after the outbreak of the war. This added yet another complex dimension to the entire debate. Swaran Singh, while justifying the assertion of the right of self-determination in the case of Bangladesh compared the situation existing there with the American struggle for independence and on yet another occasion even defined the true content of self-determination

49 Government of India, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Bangladesh and Indo-Pak War: India Speaks at the UN (New Delhi, 1972), p. 110.

50 Ibid.
when he stated:

If the majority population of any country is oppressed by a militant minority, as is the case in Bangladesh and in Southern Africa, or in Palestine, it is the inalienable right of the majority population to over­throw the tyranny of the minority rulers and decide its destiny according to the wishes of its own people.51

It was thus a typical conflict situation wherein the aggressor could not be identified in terms of UN Charter as "the threat to peace was fantastically complex set of inequities, passions and tragic happenings which Charter provisions had not taken note of while laying down the ground rule of inter-state relations in 1945".52

**Global Alignments**

The nonaligned responses towards the Indo-Pak conflict were bound to be moulded not only by the complexities of the situation confounded further by intensive diplomatic mobilization of the two disputants but also by conflicting alignment of Great Powers on this issue. Unlike the 1965 conflict, Great Powers like the United States, Soviet Union and China were all directly or indirectly involved in this eventful development in the Indian subcontinent in 1971.53 As was aptly reported,

51 Ibid., p.49.


"at the back of all this was a power struggle between China and Soviet Union and a strategic struggle between Moscow and Washington". The crisis saw, on the one hand, a unique collusion between Pakistan, China and the United States; and, on the other hand, India and the Soviet Union signing a friendship treaty. This polarization became manifest on almost all international forums and debates and had far-reaching impact on the tone and temper of international opinion.

Space limitation does not permit a detailed elaboration of the role of the Great Powers in this conflict. Sufficient here would be to state that, but for the resolute Soviet support within and outside the United Nations, India would have found it almost impossible to cope with joint pressure built by China and the United States in favour of the Pakistani stand.

It was the extension of the so-called "Nixon" or "Guam" Doctrine that saw the Nixon government suddenly finding Pakistan indispensable as a go-between in bringing about a Sino-American detente. As rightly remarked by G.W. Choudhari, the then Minister of Communication in the Yahya regime,

"The United States and Pakistan revived to some extent their old alliance.... Detente with China contributed to the revival of an alliance initiated to further the containment of China. This marked the completion of a Washington-Rawalpindi-Peking axis."


55 For a detailed account of Soviet and Chinese role see J.A. Naik, *India-Russia-China and Bangla Desh* (New Delhi, 1972), pp. 44-65.

56 Choudhari, n.3, p.196.
Both China and the United States subsequently blamed India for interfering in Pakistan's internal affairs and in addition provided Pakistan with arms and ammunition. 57

The resolutions tabled by the United States in the Security Council after the outbreak of the war were lopsided and made no mention of a political settlement as a precondition of cease-fire. 58 When these resolutions were made ineffective by the Soviet vetoes, the United States dispatched a naval task force led by the nuclear aircraft carrier Enterprise to pressure India to withdraw its forces from Bangladesh. The negative approach of the Nixon administration was completely exposed by Jack Anderson who conclusively proved the anti-Indian policy of the American regime. 59 On the other hand, Soviet support to India was readily available especially after the signing of the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Co-

57 Henry Kissinger, the then US Secretary of State, reportedly told Indian officials that "if China entered the fray between India and Pakistan, India must not expect any help from the United States". Cited in Sudarshan Chawla, "Indian Foreign Policy: Developing a New Role in the World Affairs", in Peter Jones, ed., The International Yearbook of Foreign Policy Analysis (London, 1974), vol.1, p.136.

58 See Misra, n.13, pp.69-78.

59 For Anderson's revelations see Jackson, n.1, pp. 212-31.
operation on 8 June 1971. Soviet leaders time and again appealed to the Pakistani government to seek a political solution of the problem throughout the nine-month Bangladesh crisis, and once the war broke out the Soviet Union openly came out to defend India's interest at the United Nations. Hailing the struggle in Bangladesh as a liberation struggle, the Soviet representative resolutely countered all such American sponsored resolutions which aimed at cease-fire without seeking political solution of the problem. At the same time Soviet resolutions at the United Nations emphasized the imperative of a political solution of the problem before demanding cease-fire.

Nonaligned Responses

Clearly the Indo-Pakistani conflict embodying a host of complex issues and evoking an intensive polarization of Great Powers posed difficult choices before the nonaligned countries. The predicament of the nonaligned, now fifty-three in number, was

60 The Soviet Union considered the treaty as a counterfoil to Sino-American-Pakistani collusion in the Indian subcontinent, see Pravda (Moscow), 10 August 1971.
61 See Richard B. Remnek, Soviet Policy Towards India, (New Delhi, 1975), pp. 74-75.
62 Following countries were present at the Lusaka Summit: Afghanistan, Algeria, Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Ceylon, Chad, Congo (Brazzaville), Congo (Kinshasa), Cuba, Cyprus, Equatorial Guinea, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Laos, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Nepal, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Somalia, Sudan, Swaziland, Syria, Tanzania, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Republic, Yemen, Arab Republic, Yugoslavia and Zambia. Two Decades of Non-Alignment: Documents of the Gatherings of the Nonaligned countries 1961-1982, India, Ministry of External Affairs, (New Delhi, 1983), p. 45.
very much evident during the nine-month crisis when India sought a diplomatic mandate against Pakistan for the violation of human rights in East Pakistan.

This was evident when Swaran Singh, India's Minister of External Affairs, undertook an extensive diplomatic tour covering many Asian nonaligned capitals. He first visited Indonesia which held an important position in the region as well as in the nonaligned movement. India was particularly keen at this stage to neutralize Indonesia in view of latter's propensity to support Pakistan on Islamic grounds. It had also expressed doubts regarding India's intentions and role in the East Pakistan imbroglio. 63 Apparently Swaran Singh succeeded in persuading the Indonesian government in not taking a very sharp attitude on this issue. In the joint communique issued at the end of his visit, the two countries "expressed concern at the tragic events which had led to this situation" and "agreed on the urgent need to work for the creation of such conditions as would be conducive to the return of the refugees to their homes". 64 Obviously, India had no illusions about Indonesia using more categoric terms in this connection and so was quite content with Indonesian neutrality on this count.

63 See V.P. Dutt, India's Foreign Policy, (New Delhi, 1984), p. 269.
64 Bangla Desh Documents, n.8, vol.2, p. 158.
Swaran Singh subsequently visited Nepal on 5 September 1971. But there too he did not elicit much except Nepal's concern for social and economic implication of the refugee problem and the urgent need for creating conditions for the return of the refugees. It may be noted that in 1965, despite Pakistani provocation, Nepal had stood its ground on the issue of Gurkha recruitment in the Indian army and had subsequently supported India's stand regarding the issue of self-determination in Kashmir.

In early September 1971 Swaran Singh also visited Sri Lanka and conferred with Mrs Bandaranaike to explain the Indian position regarding the crisis in East Pakistan. At the back of his visit was the issue of Sri Lankan permission given to Pakistan to utilize aviation facilities at Sri Lankan airports for transit purposes. But it seems that he could not prevail over the Sri Lankan government to withdraw these facilities. This was evident when the Sri Lankan government issued a press communique justifying its stand on this issue immediately after his visit. Although Sri Lanka tried hard to convince that "these facilities are subject to governmental scrutiny to ensure that the Pakistani planes do not

65 See Indo-Nepal Joint Communique on 5 September 1971, ibid., p.160. It is indeed difficult to agree with V.P. Dutta that "... Swaran Singh secured ... considerable alignment of Kathmandu's stance with that of India". See Dutt, n.63, p.199.

66 After the hijacking of an Indian plane on 30 January 1971, India had prohibited the overflight of Pakistani planes. For details see Blinkenberg, n.4, pp.304-5.
carry military personnel or equipment but the very permission ... amounted in the eyes of average Indian to an act of supporting their enemies. It was also reported that despite Swaran Singh's best efforts to clarify India's stand "Mrs Bandaranaike did not budge from her position that the happenings in East Bengal were an internal matter of Pakistan, although the refugee problem was a problem of humanitarian concern for the international community." The Joint Communiqué issued after Swaran Singh's visit stressed Sri Lanka's policy of non-intervention in the internal affairs of any state. Regarding the refugee problem the communiqué called for "accelerated political and constitutional procedures in Pakistan to facilitate the return of the refugees." Thus Sri Lankan premonitions regarding possible ethnic vivisection of a neighbouring state with outside help were obvious right at this initial phase.

Egypt, the premier Arab nonaligned, was approached by Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, the then Indian Agriculture Minister, in early July 1971 to solicit its support on the Indian stand. President Sadat was reported to have assured the Indian Minister that it along with other Arab countries would try to convince

68 The Hindu (Madras), 13 September 1971.
69 Hindustan Times, 12 September 1971.
Pakistan to seek political solution in East Pakistan to facilitate the return of refugees. However, an impression prevailed that "Egypt like many other Arab countries remained passive and ... more concerned with the question of secession in a Muslim country". The Egyptian attitude was subsequently criticized by their own press, thus; "How can we accept to remain silent about what happened in East Pakistan where some one quarter of a million people were slain in the most tragic carnage of contemporary history".

Yugoslavia, which had built the edifice of nonaligned movement along with UAR and India and which had readily supported India during 1965 war, was however less enthusiastic about India's cause this time. Although during his visit to India in October 1971, President Josip Broz Tito did express his concern over the serious social and political tensions engendered in India and the strains placed on India's economy by the presence in India of many millions of refugees. He was also persuaded by the Indian government to mention the need for a political solution based on

70 Ibid., 4 July 1971.
71 Dutta, n.63,p.309.
73 According to Jackson, Yugoslavia remained concerned with Pakistan's territorial integrity throughout the nine-month crisis and exercised its influence over India on this count. See Jackson, n.10, p.261.
"the wishes, inalienable rights and lawful interests of the people of East Bengal". Yet the Yugoslavs gave sufficient indication of their reservation regarding the ramifications of the crisis which in any case manifested more tellingly at the United Nations debates.

Thus, India did not seem to have succeeded much in mobilizing the premier nonaligned countries in condemning the genocidal policies of the Yahya regime at this crucial stage. This becomes all the more obvious when one analyses the tone and temper of the General Debate of September and October 1971. But before that mention must be made of the collective resolution of the nonaligned on the crisis in Bangladesh during the Ministerial Consultative Meeting of Nonaligned Countries held in New York on 16, 17, 18 20 and 30 September 1971.

At the United Nations

The nonaligned meeting in New York was attended by fifty-three full-fledged nonaligned countries of which thirty delegations were headed by the foreign ministers. This consultative meeting which was held to formulate joint action in the 26th session of General Assembly did take note of the crisis in the Indian subcontinent and paragraph seven of the joint communique

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74 *Bangla Desh Documents*, n.8, vol.2, pp.166-68. Also see *Review of International Affairs*, no.518, 1871, pp.16-17.

75 Countries that participated in the Lusaka Conference but were absent from this meeting were: Botswana and Togo. While Burma and Mauritius which were not represented at Lusaka were present at this meeting. In this very Conference, Chile was accepted as a full-fledged member. For details, see, *Review of International Affairs* (Belgrade), no.516, 5 October 1971, pp.15-18.
issued at the end mentioned that:

A humanitarian problem of unprecedented dimension has arisen as a result of refugees which is still continuing imposes tremendous burdens on India and calls for early and effective action, including action at the international level, to stem the flow of these refugees, to alleviate their suffering and promote all the conditions necessary which would create confidence and ensure the inalienable rights of the refugees and their return to homeland safely and speedily. 76

The resolution neither condemned Pakistan for violating the human rights nor mentioned the Bengali demand for autonomy from intra-colonial exploitation, yet Indian circles expressed their satisfaction. 77 In fact it was not without opposition that India could persuade the fellow-nonaligned to adopt even such posture towards the issue. 78 However, it was a significant statement coming from the pluralistic group of fifty-three nonaligned which broadly indicated the shape of nonaligned opinion at the General Assembly.

During the 26th session of General Assembly fifty-three nonaligned took part in the General Debate held in September/October 1971. 79 Apart from India, twenty-six referred to the

77 See The Statesman, 2 October 1971.
78 Jordan and Kuwait had recorded their reservations on this resolution, see Documents of the Gathering of Non-Aligned Countries 1961-1979, India, Ministry of External Affairs (New Delhi, 1981), p. 66.
crisis in the Indian subcontinent and the remaining twenty-six preferred to ignore this issue completely. The nonaligned which commented on the issue were: Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Laos, Lebanon, Nepal, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Yemen Arab Republic and Yemen (PDR) (from Asia); Algeria, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Liberia, Libya, Sierra Leone, Syria, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia (from Africa); Chile, Jamaica, and Guyana (from Latin America); and Cyprus and Yugoslavia (from Europe).

The various shades of opinion expressed by the delegates of these twenty-six nonaligned may be broadly categorized as follows:

(1) Eleven referred exclusively to the refugee problem and its humanitarian dimensions. They were: Laos, Lebanon, Nepal, and Yemen (PDR) (from Asia); Ethiopia, Liberia, Libya, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia (from Africa); and Chile (from Latin America).

Among these, Chile and Tanzania were the most critical. While the delegate from Chile spoke of "an indifference or perhaps an inability to face (such) tragedies" and called it "worthy of special attention by the Assembly" \(^{80}\), the Tanzanian delegate felt that "the conscience of the world has been stirred by the tragic events affecting the people of eastern part of Pakistan". \(^{81}\) Laos was most complacent about the crisis when after

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81 Ibid., 1951st plen.mtg., p.10.
mentioning the humanitarian overtones of the problem its
delegate felt that "the crisis now seems to be subsiding..."

(2) Five nonaligned went slightly beyond the humanitarian
dimensions of the problem and called for restoration of
normalcy in East Pakistan as a prerequisite for the safe
return of the refugees. They were: Afghanistan, Nepal and
Sri Lanka (from Asia); Ghana (from Africa); and Yugoslavia
(from Europe).

Afghanistan's delegate expressed his ardent wish that
"conditions will soon be created to enable Pakistani refugees
to return to their country in full confidence of their safety".\(^{82}\)
The Afghan statement also contained reference to the right to
self-determination for Pakhtoonis and Baluchis which were fight­
ing against Pakistan.\(^{83}\) The Nepali delegate finding the crisis
a "tragedy of unprecedented magnitude" and of "common concern
to international community" felt the "need to create conditions
for the return of refugees to their soil".\(^{84}\) While the Sri Lanka
delegate specifically hoped that "accelerated democratic and
constitutional procedures will be allowed (in East Pakistan) which

\(^{82}\) Ibid., 1961st plen. mtg., p.8. Afghan representative
prefaced his statement by referring to Afghanistan's
"active policy of non-alignment ... based on our free
judgement of all international situations on the basis
of their merits".

\(^{83}\) Ibid., p.9.

\(^{84}\) Ibid., 1955th plen.mtg., vol.1, p.8.
would enable the refugees to return to their homes."\textsuperscript{85} Ghana and Yugoslavia also spoke in favour of establishing necessary conditions for the early voluntary return of these refugees to their homeland.

(3) Only two nonaligned countries, Cyprus and Guyana, specifically stated that a political solution should be evolved to meet the situation. While referring to the humanitarian aspect of the problem, the delegate from Cyprus traced its roots to the political situation and emphasized that "the international community will have to play a more active role, and, in doing so it cannot overlook the real causes of the problem".\textsuperscript{86} Guyana's delegate while sharing the anguish at the great tragedy referred to the Secretary General's report that "the basic problem can be solved if a political solution based on reconciliation and a humanitarian principle is achieved".\textsuperscript{87}

(4) Significantly as many as ten nonaligned delegates preferred to highlight the fact that the crisis is an internal affair of Pakistan. They included: Sri Lanka, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Indonesia and Yemen (Arab Republic) (from Asia); Algeria and Egypt (from Africa); Jamaica (from Latin America); and Cyprus and Yugoslavia (from Europe).

\textsuperscript{85} Ibid., 1962nd plen. mtg., vol. 1, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{86} Ibid., 1965th plen. mtg., vol. 1, p. 12.
\textsuperscript{87} Ibid., 1943rd plen. mtg., vol. 1, p. 13.
Syria, Egypt, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Jamaica and Yemen (Arab Republic), felt the issue as falling within the domestic jurisdiction of Pakistan and so took a lukewarm view of India's complaint. The Syrian delegate expressed his country's eagerness "to see that unity of Pakistan is preserved and that peace in East Pakistan is maintained ... particularly as the President of Pakistan Mr Yahya Khan has called upon all refugees to return to their homeland". 88 The Egyptian delegate expressed the hope that "Pakistan will overcome this crisis in a manner that will safeguard its national unity". 89 The Jamaican delegate stated, "The political dispute is indeed a domestic affair of the sovereign nation of Pakistan and as such is not a matter of international concern; but the possibility always exists that external involvement could make it a threat to international peace and security". 90 The Algerian delegate while speaking in favour of "the establishment of a climate of national reconciliation to which the Pakistan government is already devoting all its efforts" came out quite early to express the premonition of many post-colonial states regarding the preservation of Pakistan's territorial integrity. He stated;

... no matter what the concern of international community, it is abundantly clear today that, to be a genuine solution and not to create similar difficulties for other countries in the world, the final solution of this painful problem can be ensured only through respecting the unity and

88 Ibid., 1952nd plen. mtg., vol.1, pp.5-6.
integrity of Pakistan. 91

The remaining nonaligned in this category: Yugoslavia, Cyprus, Indonesia and Sri Lanka referred to the crisis as an internal affair of Pakistan in a casual manner. Yugoslavia, after mentioning the tragic human problem created by millions of refugees, did talk of creating conducive conditions for their return, but all the same its delegate categorically stated, "We have ourselves regarded the events in East Pakistan as essentially an internal problem to be solved by the Pakistan government". 92

It is significant to note that not many countries outside the nonaligned world tried to highlight the issue as an internal problem of Pakistan. 93 Moreover, it was disconcerting that only two nonaligned had spoken specifically in favour of a political settlement of the problem. 94 But what was indeed

91 Ibid., 1965th plen. mtg., vol. 1, p. 15.
92 Ibid., 1951st plen. mtg., vol. 1, p. 5.
93 The countries which referred to this aspect were: Australia, Iran, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States. See Misra, n. 13, p. 48.
94 Other countries which categorically urged for a political settlement were: Austria, Belgium, France, Ireland, Malta, Mongolia, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, the Soviet Union, Sweden and the United States. See Ibid., p. 47. Four countries specifically stated that a political solution should be reached in consultation with the elected representatives of the people: France ("political solution based on the consent of the Pakistani people"), Mongolia ("settlement by political means in accordance with the interests of its people"), New Zealand and Sweden ("political solution based on the 'will of the people' as expressed through the ballot"). See Bangla Desh Documents, n. 8, vol. 2, p. 375.
shocking was the fact that despite wide coverage given to the genocidal violation of human rights in East Pakistan, mass killings and brutalities of the worst kind, none of the nonaligned states were willing to mention the suppression of basic human rights of Bengalis in East Pakistan. 95

The overarching concern of the nonaligned to preserve the territorial integrity of Pakistan, even if it meant a complete annihilation of the Bengali masses, came as a disappointment to India and added further to its resolve to settle the issue outside the United Nations. In any case, after the Kashmir debacle, India had become rather reluctant to approach the United Nations for any bilateral matter. This explains why it did not lodge a formal complaint to the Security Council even when Pakistan launched a full-fledged air attack on many parts of India. 96

However, the Security Council was called into emergency session to consider the armed clashes between the two countries by the representatives of nine countries including two nonaligned Burundi and Somalia. The other two nonaligned holding

95 Eight countries specifically stated that East Bengal situation involved human rights: Belgium, Equador ("protest against massacre in East Pakistan ... a violation of sacred nature of human life..."), Ireland and Malta ("the refugees camps are the direct result of political and military action" and the "refugees have their inalienable human rights"). See Bangla Desh Documents, ibid.

96 India informed the Secretary General orally regarding the outbreak of armed hostilities on 3 December 1971. See UN Year Book, 1971 (New York, 1972), p.146.
non-permanent membership were Sierra Leone and Syria. Subsequently, the Council discussed the conflict on 4, 5 and 6 December. These debates running for over 20 hours were characterized by a confrontation between the United States and China on the one hand, and the Soviet Union, on the other, with the United Kingdom and France being neutral.

As it transpired the four nonaligned—Burundi, Somalia, Sierra Leone and Syria more or less remained amenable to the American tactic of posing the Bangladesh crisis as exclusively concerning peace and security in the region. Somalia and Syria joined the United States, Argentina and China in countering a Soviet proposal to invite the representative of Bangladesh under Rule 39 of the Rules of Procedure of the Council. Although their opposition to the Soviet proposal was not belligerent, as was the case with Argentina and China, all the same it favoured the general demand for deferring the consideration of giving hearing to the representative of Bangladesh. Thus only Poland stood with the Soviet initiative, which if it had succeeded would have changed the very temper of Council debates.97

During the subsequent discussions at the Security Council on 4 December, the four nonaligned Burundi, Somalia, Sierra Leone and Syria showed no appreciation of India's plea to go

97 For details see UN Doc. S/PV 1606 and also Misra, n.13, pp.62-78.
to the very roots of the conflict. Nor did they refer to the genocidal violation of human rights and the aggression mounted by Pakistan over India. Instead all the four voted in favour of the American proposal which completely ignored the interest of the people of East Pakistan fighting for their socio-economic emancipation. It is worth noting that the resolution was opposed by Poland and the Soviet Union, while the United Kingdom and France abstained. 98

The statements made by the nonaligned representatives made it clear that they had no intention of casting value judgement on the issues involved. While the Somalian representative merely called upon the Council "to come to grips with some of the issues that have given rise to this conflict". 99 The representative of Burundi went a step further and equated India and Pakistan when he called them "two adjoining belligerent Republics". 100 The Syrian representative was equally concerned with preserving the unity and integrity of Pakistan, 101 while the representative of Sierra Leone preferred not to make any substantive point while associating himself with the American proposal.

98 See ibid.
99 UN Doc. S/PV 1606, p.88.
100 Ibid., p.142.
101 Ibid., pp.111-15.
The same trend was visible on 5 December too when the Soviet Union submitted a resolution (S/10418) calling for "a political settlement in East Pakistan which would inevitably result in cessation of hostilities". Only Poland supported the realistic Soviet proposal while 12 countries (including all the four nonaligned) abstained and China vetoed it.102 On the other hand, an eight-power resolution moved by Argentina according top priority to an immediate cease-fire and withdrawal of forces was endorsed by the representatives of the four non-aligned members.103 Thus, amidst a stalemate in the Security Council, the position of the four nonaligned members clearly indicated the dilemma of the Third World nonaligned countries which were still not willing to accept the irrevocable fact of the emergence of a new state in the Indian subcontinent. This was further confirmed when the issue was transferred to the General Assembly under the provisions of Uniting for Peace resolution.

Uniting for Peace

It was indeed during the Uniting for Peace exercise at the General Assembly that one discerns the nonaligned responses in their entirety. In contrast to 1965, when the issue of conflict never came on the agenda at the General Assembly, the Indo-Pakistani conflict of 1971 arrested the international attention

102 See UN Year Book, 1971, n.97,p.148.
103 Ibid.
for a full session evoking various shades of opinion.

It was for the fifth time that the Uniting for Peace procedure was employed to transfer an issue from a deadlocked Security Council to the General Assembly. This was done essentially to undo the Soviet veto which had pre-empted the Council from enforcing an immediate cease-fire without ensuring a reasonable political settlement. It may be mentioned that at this point of time India wanted to avoid any kind of UN intervention so as to accomplish along with the Mukti Bahini the liberation of Bangladesh which India had already recognized as an independent sovereign state.

Out of the eleven members of the Council who concertedly took the decision of invoking the 'Uniting for Peace' resolution, three were nonaligned. They were Burundi, Sierra Leone and Somalia. Syria, the remaining nonaligned member of the Council, did not join its counterparts. On the other hand, the four Council members who opposed were the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, France and Poland. The non-aligned members of the Council by and large seemed to ignore the realities in the Indian subcontinent and almost played into the hands of the United States and China which were making their last ditch attempt to use the United Nations as an effective shield to forestall the liberation of Bangladesh.

104 The Resolution 377(V), known as the "Uniting for Peace" Resolution was invoked during the Korea crisis (1950), the Seuz crisis (1956), the Hungary crisis (1956) and the Lebanon crisis (1958).
With the increase in the membership of the United Nations from the original 50 to 117, the balance was decisively in favour of the fifty-three strong nonaligned group. And the fact that for the implementation of the 'Uniting for Peace' resolution a two-thirds majority was needed clearly gave a crucial say to the nonaligned countries.

The General Assembly took up the question at two plenary meetings held on 7 December 1971. The lead was once again taken by the Somalian representative who amplified his resolution rejected earlier at the Security Council by a Soviet veto, which according to him "does not assign blame to either of the parties involved ... does not prejudge issues involved in the situation".105 Taking its cue from Somalia, Argentina introduced a 14-Power resolution (UN Doc.A/L 647) which essentially called for "an immediate cease-fire and withdrawal of armed forces and urged to bring about conditions necessary for the voluntary return of the East Pakistan refugees to their homes".106 Although the resolution mentioned the imperative of an early political solution, it was not as operative part of the resolution. It is important to note that eight nonaligned had co-sponsored the Argentinian resolution. These were Burundi, Cameroon, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Sudan and Tunisia from Africa and Indonesia from Asia.

106 For the text see UN Doc. S/10429.
However, a new paragraph was added by the sponsors of the draft resolution at the insistence of Italy and was subsequently incorporated as an operative paragraph which "urged that every effort be made to safeguard the lives and well being of the civilian population in the area of conflict". 107 This revised resolution (A/L 641 Ref.1) was sponsored on 7 December itself by 34 members and included the following nonaligned: Algeria, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Ghana, Liberia, Libya, Morocco (from Africa) and Indonesia, Jordan, and Yemen (from Asia). 108

The 34-Power resolution sponsored mostly by African nonaligned ignored the realities of the Indian subcontinent by demanding an immediate cease-fire without ensuring a political settlement of the problem. 109 As there was but a crumbling Pakistani military presence in East Bengal and no political presence whatsoever and in a matter of a few days the liberation forces were to accomplish their mission. In the meantime India bargained for time by suggesting that the issue be referred to the Assembly's Steering Committee to decide whether it should be put on agenda. But no one from the nonaligned group came forward to support India's plea. Later, it had to withdraw the proposal when the President of the General Assembly offered to put the Indian view to vote. 110

108 For the text see Appendix 7 of this work.
109 See UN Year Book, 1971, n. 97, p. 150.
110 Ibid., pp. 150-51.
The apathy of the nonaligned members was confirmed when the 34-Power text was adopted as resolution 2793(XXVI) by the Assembly on 7 December 1971 by a vote of 104 to 11, with 10 abstentions. The voting pattern of the nonaligned can be classified as follows:

**In favour:** Algeria, Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Liberia, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Swaziland, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia (all from Africa), Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Kuwait, Laos, Lebanon, Malaysia, Yemen, Syria (from Asia).

**Against:** Cuba, India.

**Absentions:** Afghanistan, Nepal, Singapore (from Asia), Chile and Senegal.

**Absent:** Burma was absent and Mauritius declined to participate in the voting.111

During the debate, twenty-one nonaligned states (apart from India) commented on the issues involved in the conflict. These were: Algeria, Burundi, Chad, Ghana, Mauritania, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo and Tunisia (from Africa); Indonesia, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Malaysia, Nepal, Saudi Arabia and Sri Lanka (from Asia); Yugoslavia and Cyprus (from Europe); and Chile (from Latin America).

111 It is significant to note that all the African nonaligned, excepting Senegal, voted for the resolution. A full record of voting also reveals that while the Soviet bloc countries voted en masse against the resolution, some of the western liberal democracies such as the United Kingdom, France and Denmark preferred to abstain. See for full record of voting Appendix B in this work.
The remaining thirty-one nonaligned representatives who did not refer to the issue at all were: Botswana, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Liberia, Libya, Mali, Morocco, Nigeria, Yemen, Rwanda, Swaziland, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, Zambia, Mauritius (from Africa), Afghanistan, Laos, Lebanon, Yemen, Syria, Singapore, Burma (from Asia); and Cuba (from Latin America).

At the outset one can discern that the African nonaligned members were more vociferous as compared with their Asian counterparts. For most of these African states this conflict was a test case for their policy proclamation on the sensitive issues of territorial integrity and non-intervention. In fact, Ghana, Chad, Togo and Mauritania, all these four nonaligned offered the most trenchant criticism of India for interfering in the internal matter of Pakistan with a view to dismember a post-colonial state.

To begin with Ghana's representative, while supporting the 34-Power resolution aiming at cease-fire and withdrawal of armed forces included only one sentence for creating a climate in East Pakistan to enable the refugees to go back. Referring to this problem as a 'domestic tragedy', he found a willingness on the part of Pakistan "to make amends for the mistake". Then he launched a frontal attack on India's

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policy in the subcontinent by stating:

It is not for us to dictate to Pakistan what it should do or should not do. We can offer advice, we can offer intimations and hints, but we have to respect sovereignty and territorial integrity of every state member of this organisation. This is one of the most fundamental principles which have been accepted by the Organization of African Unity. The OAU knows that once the intervention in the domestic affairs of a member state is permitted, once one permit oneself the higher wisdom of telling another member state what it should do with regard to arranging its own political affairs, one opens a pandora box. And no continent can suffer more than Africa when the principle of non-intervention is flouted.113

Chad too echoed similar sentiments and went on even to compare the case of Bangladesh with that of Biafra and Katanga, when its representative stated:

Knowing what the consequences of a blind and unreasonable application of the principles of self-determination may be, my government which has said 'No' to Katanga and 'No' to Biafra, cannot say 'Yes' to what is now being asked of Pakistan, namely, the disintegration of the territorial and national unity of the country.114

The representative of Togo also presented a lengthy statement relating to these very concerns of the African states which completely overlooked the causal factors of the crisis and instead criticized India for thwarting the principles of non-interference. According to him, "the sacred principles of non-

113 Ibid.
interference in the internal affairs of the Third World countries has once again been violated”. He went on to present a detailed criticism of self-determination in post-colonial context:

If we are to speak of self-determination in our respective states we might be surprised to see some states becoming 4 or by 10 because of their varied internal problems, and our Organization, which has 131 members might have more than 600 members tomorrow as a result of this splitting up of states. Consequently, why do we wish for a division of Pakistan?\textsuperscript{115}

Almost echoing the position of Chad, the representative of Togo reiterated: "My country Togo, which bravely said 'No' to the secession of Katanga and 'No' to the secession of 'Biafra' reaffirms that position today".\textsuperscript{116}

Mauritania which was relatively sympathetic to the Indian position and appreciated "the complex nature of the problem and the difficulties that confront India ...", however, found it "dangerous to condone the idea that one state, regardless of its reasons, can interfere in the domestic affairs of another state"\textsuperscript{117}

Algeria taking a formal legal attitude refused to pass any value judgement on the question, "it is not up to us to point out the guilty or pass judgement .... a solution to these problems

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item 115 Ibid., p.18.
\item 116 Ibid.,p.19.
\item 117 Ibid.,p.28.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
must be sought within the framework of a number of clearly enunciated principles based both upon the Charter of the United Nations and the basic principles of the Third World, namely, non-interference in the internal affairs of other states and respect for their sovereignty and territorial integrity". 118

The Sudanese representative reiterated his government's appeal issued in Khartum on 6 December stating that "it respects and upholds the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Pakistan and considers this as an internal matter of Pakistan". He further clarified, "These are the principles which my country and all our friends in the non-aligned world have repeatedly affirmed". 119

Burundi, which had earlier participated at the Security Council deliberations, was guarded in its statement and at least made an indirect comment on the plight of the Bengalis. It all the same shared the overall African concern to preserve Pakistan's sovereignty when its representative mentioned the sacred principles which should guide the Assembly:

First, the sacred principles of sovereignty, free from outside interference. Second, the principle that there shall be no recourse to war so long as peaceful negotiations are still possible. Third, the principle that all people have a right to the full enjoyment of freedom without constraint or fear. 120

118 Ibid., p.2.
119 Ibid., p.8.
120 Ibid., p.31.
Tanzania too preferred not to take a categoric position when its representative while supporting the 34-Power draft vaguely stated, "What is at stake is the whole concept of international order as defended and supported by all of us". 121

Although Sierra Leone was one of the sponsors of 34-Power text, its representative indirectly endorsed the Soviet proposal of first ensuring a political settlement before calling for a cease-fire. This view was expressed by its representative rather ambivalently when he said that the two resolutions "if adopted, would certainly have advanced our task for an immediate cease-fire ...." Surely as compared to its counterparts, Sierra Leone was much more sympathetic to the Indian position despite casting its vote in favour of a resolution which ostensibly meant to check India's advance in Bangladesh. 122

As was expected that the nonaligned having Islamic ties with Pakistan-Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait and Indonesia lent all their support to the 34-Power resolution in their bid to prevent the disintegration of Pakistan. The most vehement remarks came from Jordan when its representative felt that, "Regardless of the merit and origins of the present conflict, there can be no justification for the armed intervention of one state in the territory of another". Referring indirectly

121 Ibid., p.21.
122 Ibid., p.42.
to the crisis in East Pakistan he further opined:

The constitutional structure and the nature of relationship among the constituent parts of any state is a matter for its own people to decide, and in any event an internal question... the integrity of sovereign states face the mortal danger from the bullet, the shell and the rocket.123

Indonesia which had earlier revealed indications of a moderate approach also decided to launch a scathing attack on India when its representative stated:

No external Government, can be justified in interfering in the internal affairs of other countries, and especially in aiding any movement that tries to disrupt the national and territorial integrity of the Member States.124

The Lebanese approach as manifest during the debate was somewhat balanced when its representative while referring to the principle of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states, non-interference in the internal affairs of other states, also spoke of a "just, humanitarian settlement of the Pakistan's refugee problem".125

Of the Asian nonaligned, Sri Lanka's attitude was most ambivalent. In its desire to remain strictly neutral, the Sri Lankan representative tried to keep both the contestants satisfied but this in turn made its entire approach towards the crisis

123 Ibid., p. 12.
124 Ibid., p. 7.
125 Ibid., p. 5.
quite contradictory. The Sri Lankan representative thus "blew hot and cold in an effort not to alienate altogether either India or Pakistan". 126

To begin with he refused to go into the origins of the conflict as he found the hour is too late. Yet he dwelt on the quest of autonomy of the Awami League and the six-point manifest and called for "immediate consultations with the acknowledged leaders in East Pakistan to reach an agreement. .... In return, those leaders should agree to renounce secessionist demands and would involve rescission of the declaration establishing government of Bangladesh". 127

The Sri Lankan obsession with projecting a neutral posture also led him to refer, on the one hand, to the statement of the United States Ambassador and yet see merit in the Soviet argument that a political settlement must precede the cease-fire. As if this was not enough, he spoke in the same vein about "seeking to stop the bloody conflict" and his country's overwhelming commitment "for the preservation of integrity and unity of Pakistan as a single state". It was indeed quite paradoxical when after this he did not consider the refugee problem "as an


entirely and exclusively internal problem".\textsuperscript{128}

The Nepalese responses exemplified the predicament of all small states when its representative stated:

As a small country surrounded by infinitely bigger and more powerful neighbours, and incapable of either of defending itself alone from external attack or of imposing our will on others - however right that will may be, politically or morally - by means of the use or threat of force, Nepal can do nothing except base...its national policy on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations... those principles are: sovereign equality of states, respect for territorial integrity of states, non-use of force or the threat of force against other states, and non-interference in the affairs of other states.\textsuperscript{129}

He too referred to the imperative of an immediate cease-fire as well as political will of the parties concerned in a rather ambivalent way. However, Nepal unlike Sri Lanka, did not vote for the 34-Power resolution and preferred to abstain.

Malaysia also decided not to take a clear position. While referring to "intolerable burden and strain on India" its representative refrained from making any comment about the causes of the conflict.\textsuperscript{130}

\textbf{Outside Afro-Asia}

Chile, Yugoslavia and Cyprus - the three nonaligned outside the Afro-Asian region, however, took a sympathetic view of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{128} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{129} Ibid., p.22.
\item \textsuperscript{130} Ibid., p.22.
\end{itemize}
India's concern in this conflict. While Chile decided to abstain from voting on 34-Power resolution as a mark of protest, both Yugoslavia and Cyprus despite revealing full understanding of the realities did vote in its favour. Cuba, the oldest Latin American nonaligned, was the only country apart from India which voted against the resolution although it preferred not to speak during the debate over the 'Uniting for Peace' exercise.

Chile, which was recently admitted to the nonaligned movement, showed a remarkable understanding of the crisis which culminated in the Indo-Pak conflict. Its representative found the two resolutions namely the 34-Power (A/L, 647/Rev.A) and the Soviet resolution (A/L 648) inadequate and called for a new resolution wherein the essence of the two drafts should be coalasced to provide the basis of consensus. As he felt, "It is useless to call for a cease-fire if, at the same time, we do not contemplate a more positive measure to implement the cessation of fighting instead of a mere formalistic appeal destined to remain unheeded." The new draft resolution according to him should be based on the principles of:

Cease-fire, withdrawal of troops, protection of human rights, the adoption of immediate measures aiming at resolving the political problems in the zone involved in order to ensure the return of refugees, non-interference, self-determination, territorial integrity and the active presence of the United Nations together with other principles considered as fundamental
to international peace and security.\textsuperscript{131}

Cyprus, the Mediterranean nonaligned, which had openly supported India in its conflict with China in 1962 and with Pakistan in 1965, once again extended its appreciation for the Indian stand but in a peculiar manner. Although Cyprus voted in favour of the 34-Power resolution which was ostensibly meant to forestall India's efforts to liberate Bangladesh, its representative went out of his way to highlight Indian concern and also the unrealistic nature of the resolution. Cyprus, accordingly to him, voted for the resolution despite its shortcomings due to "its paramount duty under the Charter to vote in favour of a draft resolution calling for cease-fire and the cessation of hostilities in that area". He, however, found that "the resolution just adopted not sufficiently balanced since it does not provide for a political solution and the restoration of conditions of normalcy in the area in the operative part as it does in the fourth preambular paragraph ...." He also recognized that:

India has been under the gravest provocation as a tragic sequence of events in East Pakistan and the suppression of human rights in that country .... it should have been arrested by a political solution and byconcerted action of the international community through the United Nations.\textsuperscript{132}

\textsuperscript{131} Ibid., pp.23-24.
\textsuperscript{132} Ibid., pp.45-46.
Yugoslavia, too, faced difficult policy options in the wake of 1971 conflict. On the one hand, was its expressed commitment to the principle of non-interference and preservation of territorial integrity which Pakistan had cleverly projected, and on the other hand was the established fact of inhuman atrocities committed by the Pakistani government on Bengalis, alienating them completely from the western wing.

However, Yugoslavia did not remain silent like another premier nonaligned, Egypt. At the United Nations debate the Yugoslav representative took upon the crucial task of unravelling the root causes of the current crisis and attributed it to "the armed suppression of Pakistan authorities of the elected representatives". He also highlighted the basic principles of the Charter especially "the respect for human rights and fundamental freedom including the realization of the right to self-determination". 133

Thus, Yugoslavia turned out to be the only nonaligned country in a group of fifty-three to openly acknowledge the context of human rights and self-determination. Indeed, it was a bold step on the part of Yugoslavia, more so in view of domestic ramifications of mentioning the right to self-determination in its post-colonial context. Yet the Yugoslavs could not fully resolve the existing contradictions between the

imperative of self-determination for Bengalis and the issue of preserving the national unity of Pakistan.

This predicament was clear when even at that late stage with the emergence of Bangladesh very much on the anvil, Yugoslavia proposed a peaceful settlement consisting of three basic elements:

1. Immediate cease fire and cessation of hostilities between Indian and Pakistani armed forces and between Pakistani armed forces and civilian population.

2. Withdrawal of foreign troops to their own territories and the solution of crisis by peaceful means and methods.

3. Effective measures should be taken immediately to solve the crisis in East Pakistan in cooperation with the elected representatives there. This, however, depends primarily upon the Government of Pakistan.134

According to the Yugoslav representative, "these three elements should constitute the basis for a workable and action oriented resolution of the General Assembly". He, therefore, wanted some improvement in the operative part of the draft resolution (A/L. 647/Rev.1), which could stress in a more balanced manner the need for an early political settlement and uprooting the causes of the conflict. He also referred to two fundamental principles upon which a solution should be sought

134 Ibid.
namely, the 1970 Declaration on Friendly Relations UN Res. 2625 (xxv), and the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security-UN Res. 2734 (xxv).

The Yugoslav exposition of the causes of the conflict-violation of human rights and the issue of self-determination and also the mention of Declaration on Friendly Relations in this context did reinforce India's case. But the Yugoslav vote in favour of the 34-Power resolution undid it all. A lopsided impression was thus created that Yugoslavia had let down India.

Though, India did not respond to the recommendatory resolution 2793 (xxvi) sponsored by the 34-Powers in the General Assembly and nine days after the resolution was passed on 16 December 1971, Bangladesh emerged as an independent sovereign state, yet the massive mandate against India's action coming mainly as a consequence of an unsympathetic nonaligned world disappointed many quarters. It was felt that the nonaligned countries which stood for social justice, human rights and people's right of self-determination in their international proclamation, failed to appreciate the real issues involved in this conflict. Giving vent to India's overall

disappointment M.C. Chagla remarked, "Look at the nonaligned countries, we have prided ourselves of our nonalignment. What have the nonaligned countries done? Nothing". 136

India's disappointment was based on hard facts. As discussed earlier, the nonaligned by and large remained nonchalant towards India's plea for international intervention to stem the genocidal violation of human rights of Bengalis. In the early phase of the nine-month crisis India virtually had to plead to its fellow nonaligned not to take an anti-Indian stand. Swaran Singh's visit to Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Nepal and Pakhruddin's diplomatic sojourn in Egypt clearly revealed the inhibitions of these nonaligned countries regarding passing any judgement on what they considered to be an essentially internal affair of Pakistan. Even Yugoslavia, which had come out openly in favour of India's stand on Kashmir during the Indo-Pak conflict of 1965, found it difficult to oblige India this time. During his visit to India in October 1971, President Tito shared India's concern, called for a political solution of the problem, yet he remained far more concerned with the preservation of Pakistan's integrity.

During the UN September/October 1971, none of the non aligned referred to the violation of human rights, so clearly

brought out by the international mass media while as many as ten nonaligned highlighted the crisis as essentially an internal affair of Pakistan. Even Yugoslavia made it a point to reiterate its principled opposition to any interference in this internal matter of Pakistan. The nonaligned by and large were concerned with social and humanitarian aspects of the crisis and only two nonaligned sought a political solution of the conflict.

The overall nonaligned inhibition to take a firm attitude towards the crisis was also apparent in the evasive manner in which this issue was dealt with at the Ministerial Consultative Meeting of the Nonaligned Countries held in New York during August/September 1971. The issue of Bangladesh was given a very low priority and India after much persuasion could only extract a rather mild resolution from this gathering. Even that was, however, given a secondary place in the appendix of the final documents released after the meeting. Moreover, despite this collective resolution calling for "an early and effective action at the international level to create confidence and ensure the inalienable rights of the refugees", only twenty-four non-aligned preferred to refer to the issue during the September/October Assembly debates and the remaining thirty-one remained silent.

The nonaligned refusal to acknowledge the grave human tragedy in East Pakistan became all the more conspicuous in
view of the positive views expressed by a number of socialist countries and a good many western countries. Even if it is true that India had not pinned much hope on the United Nations' intervention, there is no gainsaying the fact that a positive and decisive attitude from the fifty-four-strong nonaligned group at the United Nations could have brought sufficient diplomatic pressure on Pakistan to rectify its genocidal policy in East Pakistan. 137

During the Uniting for Peace exercise, the nonaligned supported and voted for the 34-Power resolution which meant to block the process of liberation of Bangladesh. Only Cuba among the nonaligned group joined India in voting against the resolution, while five other nonaligned abstained (Burma was absent). Remaining 39 nonaligned including such premier members of the NAM as Egypt, Yugoslavia, Indonesia voted in favour. Their attitude ignored the realities of the conflict and in turn put the onus of aggression on India. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who later became the President of Pakistan, described the support of these Third World nonaligned countries to the Pakistani stand as, "a moral victory for Islamabad and a proof of India's isolation". 138

137 As wrote The Guardian, "Pakistan can be moved but only by the unrelenting diplomatic attack", The Guardian (London), 6 October 1971.

One is, indeed, struck by the overwhelming concern expressed by the majority of nonaligned regarding the national unity of Pakistan despite the genocidal killings undertaken by the Yahya regime which had irrevocably eliminated the moral bases of any modern nation-state. The nonaligned as far apart as in Asia, Africa and Latin America, irrespective of different regions, religions and ideologies, made it a point to voice their opposition against foreign intervention symbolized in India's action to resolve the civil war in East Pakistan. Most of them saw in this conflict a threat to their very state-structure based as it was on the concept of territorial integrity and domestic jurisdiction. While the stark fact of the genocidal violation of human rights was rarely referred to, shibboleths of inadmissibility of use of force, non-intervention were time and again mentioned. In short, when it came to choose between a quintessence of a liberation movement based as it was on true assertion of self-determination and the territorial concept of independence, the nonaligned by some implicit consensus seem to have opted for the latter.

This despite the fact that East Bengal nearly fulfilled all the criteria laid down to identify a group of people entitled to exercise the right of self-determination. 139 Apart from the

geographic separation, the Bengalis were a distinct collectivity having a common language, culture, history and tradition distinct from that of West Pakistan. And to cap it all, the overwhelming majority of struggling Bengalis came to acquire a common economic and political outlook in the wake of more than two decades of "intra-imperialism" pursued by West Pakistani rulers. The ruthless suppression of their long-standing quest for autonomy and eventually the mass genocide unleashed by the West Pakistani army had left them with no option but to opt for a separate nationhood.

How does one understand the attitude of the nonaligned countries? Why was it that the majority of them including all the premier nonaligned, prefer to ignore the real issues such as violation of human rights, issue of self-determination and national liberation movement and instead supported an aligned Pakistan against a nonaligned India? Why is it that most of the nonaligned refused to pass value judgement on the conflict despite their often proclaimed policy of making an independent and objective assessment of international issues—to decide each issue on its merits?

Obviously, it is not possible here to ascertain precisely the compulsions, motivations and priorities of each and every nonaligned numbering more than fifty and to speculate why they reacted in the manner they did. But on the basis of their responses, primarily reflected through the United Nations debates, certain broad generalizations may be attempted.
Evidently the most crucial factor which led to the ambivalent attitude of the nonaligned countries towards the issues involved in the Indo-Pak conflict was the threat it posed to the existing state structure. Having assumed a recent statehood, these post-colonial states were far more affected by the legal-political inertia which operates against any demand of change in the existing state system.140

As highlighted in the first chapter of this work the non-aligned by and large consist of plural societies whose religion, language and cultural affinities do not often coincide and have often to cope with sectional disaffections and tension between the majority and the minorities.141 Thus any formal position in favour of disintegration of Pakistan was unwelcome to them as it might have set a dangerous precedent which could be cited against them in a future situation.

These internal compulsions were particularly conspicuous in voting patterns of the African nations. Of the forty African non-aligned, all except Senegal and Malawi, who abstained, voted for the Argentinian resolution calling for a cease-fire without any political settlement. Especially those countries which were

140 "The states - at least in words if not in deeds-are always prone to take a formal-legal position in situation of the kind that was developing in East Bengal". Misra, n.13, p.49.

facing problems of secession and disintegration, such as Uganda, Kenya, Sudan, Chad, Zaire, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Somalia and Zambia, argued vehemently for the preservation of territorial integrity of Pakistan. Senegal and Malawi which abstained from voting had hardly to face the problem of secession.\textsuperscript{142}

In fact after independence, the African nations have tended to become increasingly hostile to the idea of intervention challenging the integrity of state frontiers. As observed by Immanual Wallerstein, "Every African nation ... has its own Katanga. Once the logic of secession is admitted there is no end except in anarchy."\textsuperscript{143} Hence, the vote of the African nonaligned for the Argentinian resolution was a vote against secession and dissociative movement. They seem to have essentially gone by the general policy stand taken by the Organization of African Unity on its commitment to respect the existing frontiers and the territorial integrity of the states.

The concern for upholding Pakistan’s territorial integrity was also shared by many Asian nonaligned, namely, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Burma, Nepal and a number of Arab states. The reason was the same as in case of African states. For instance, an open


Sri Lankan support to Indian action would have had serious ramification in its own domestic arena, especially on the Tamilian demand for a separate state. M.C. Chagla referred to these domestic considerations bluntly when he stated:

... many countries have skeletons in their cupboard. They have minorities whom they have not treated well and they feel that if they support Bangladesh, these minorities will also rise in revolt, in rebellion, against the oppressive policies being pursued by the administration.  

If the 'spectre of Biafra' moulded the overall attitude of the African nonaligned, religious loyalties largely determined the attitude of the Arab nonaligned. Much in contrast to their earlier moderate attitude, the Arab nonaligned this time stood in unison to protest against what they perceived as the dismemberment of Pakistan. Even the prominent nonaligned such as Egypt and Algeria which had professed a progressive secularism refused to recognize in East Pakistan a democratic struggle being waged against a worst kind of oppressive exploitation. Egypt was no more guardian of Indian interests in Arab arena. For President Sadat an expressed commitment to Pakistan's unity was the only concern and not even once did he mention the violation of human rights and the exploitative nature of the Pakistani regime.

144 Ghatate, n.136, p.85.
The main systemic constraint superimposed on the domestic compulsion was the intense involvement of the Great Powers in this conflict. While in 1965, the two Super Powers were more or less in unison to put an immediate end to the hostilities, in 1971 they were far more split than ever. While America had revived its military alliance with Pakistan thus forgoing an axis of which China was the third member, the conclusion of Indo-Soviet treaty brought the Soviet Union directly into the fray. In fact, some nonaligned countries had started doubting the non-aligned status of India in the wake of its treaty with the Soviet Union.145

This global polarization had an obvious impact on the responses of the nonaligned. Being vulnerable to some or the other Great Power, despite their proclaimed nonaligned status, most of the nonaligned preferred to stay away from the conflict. If Syria, Senegal and Malawi remained relatively less hostile to India it was because of the Soviet influence and Sudan, Libya and to some extent Algeria, saw in the emergence of Bangladesh the culmination of an alleged 'Soviet Machiavellian' design and thus opposed it.146 Chinese involvement too inhibited many South and Southeast Asian nonaligned such as Burma, Nepal, Malaysia and Indonesia which could not take a forthright position.147 Similarly, Yugoslavia perhaps did not go entirely


147 Misra, n.13, p.49.
in India's favour to assert its independence vis-a-vis the
Soviet Union. 148

The nonaligned dilemma was perhaps best reflected by the
ambivalent attitude of Yugoslavia. In October 1971, during
his visit to India, President Tito shared India's concern
regarding the crisis in East Pakistan. Yet in the same month
its representative reiterated the Yugoslav resolve to consider
the crisis as an internal affair of Pakistan. During 'Uniting
for Peace' exercise, Yugoslavia offered a strong defence of
the Indian position, the only nonaligned to have mentioned
violation of human rights and self-determination, and yet it
voted for the 34-Power resolution demanding immediate cease-
fire. It was much later that President Tito admitted:

Self-determination was our principle and the
people of Bangladesh had the right of self-
determination. India only helped this nation
to put an end to further slaughter ... Ten
million refugees, the horrible massacre, which
started in Bangladesh and the arrest of Sheikh
Mujibur Rahman left no alternative. India
played a positive role in the affair. We think
so. 149

In fact, it has been difficult for the nonaligned to
reconcile the conflicting principles of non-intervention and
assistance to just liberation struggles or between the true

148 Blinkenberg, n. 4, p. 375.
149 President Tito's interview with Zagreb daily
Vjesnik, cited in Times of India, 24 February
1977.
content of self-determination and territorial concept of independence. The Indo-Pak conflict embodying such complex issues was indeed a rare occasion in the annals of nonaligned history which brought into question the whole process of nation-building as it has operated in most parts of Asia and Africa. Naturally it profoundly affected the internal and external environment of the nonaligned and defied their policy resolve to judge the real issues involved according to their merit.