

THE PAKISTANI SURRENDER

A combination of various factors - military, organisational, political and psychological - enabled the Indian Army to make steady progress on almost all the fronts in Bangladesh - a land which, because of its riverine terrain, is regarded as one of the most easily defendable regions in the world. A clear-cut politico-military goal, better strategic planning and flexibility, initiative and boldness displayed by local commanders in its implementation, inter-services coordination, overwhelming support of the local population, co-operation of the Mukti Bahini and the national ideological fervour were some of those important factors.

THE DESPERATE SITUATION

The Indian Air Force and the Indian Navy had been contributing significantly to the swift advance of the Indian Army on one hand and blocking the attempts of Pak troops to escape, on the other. Within three days of the commencement of the war, the IAF had eliminated the PAF in the Eastern Theatre by destroying many of the planes and grounding the surviving aircraft by severely damaging the airfields(1). During the whole war, the IAF was complete master of the Bangladesh skies, and provided effective close support to ground troops and straffed with telling effect the ships and rivercraft carrying the Pak troops.

The naval aviation played a similar role from the south. And the aircraft carrier Vikrant and other ships of the Eastern Fleet successfully blocked the passage to and from the Bangladesh coast. As a result, no supplies and reinforcements could come to the beleaguered Pak troops from outside, and their escape routes by sea were cut off.

The cumulative effect of the efforts of Indian Army, Air Force and Navy in the Eastern Theatre was two-fold - liberation of large areas of Bangladesh and lowering of the morale of Pakistani troops.

Various units of 4 Corps from the east and of 101 Comn Zone Area from the north were rapidly approaching Dhaka. The position as it existed on 14/15 December was :-

4 Corps Sector

Over nine battalions belonging to 311 Mtn Bde and 73 Mtn Bde (under 57 Mtn Div) and of 301 Mtn Bde

(under 23 Mtn Div) supported by tanks, medium guns and field artillery had already firmed up on the western bank of the river Meghna poised for advance to Dhaka.

Of the above formations 301 Mtn Bde had reached the eastern bank of the Lakhya river on 14 December(2). The 14 Guards of 73 Mtn Bde, advancing along the Narsingdi-Pubail-Tungi axis had contacted Tungi on 14 December whereas another unit of the bde - 19 Raj Rif - secured Pubail on 15 December(3). Of the units of 311 Mtn Bde, 4 Guards had contacted Demra on 14 December; 2 EB Bn, after crossing the river Lakhya in the north, had secured Rugganj by 14 December, and 10 Bihar had crossed the same river north of Demra in area Pubgaon on night 13/14 December(4). Meanwhile, one 120 mm mortar (belonging to 65 Mtn Regt) had been taken across the rivers Lakhya and Balu and at 1600 hrs on 14 December, Dhaka itself was shelled for the first time(5).

On 15 December 311 Mtn Bde, supported by tanks and field artillery was ready to enter Dhaka any moment, and 73 Mtn Bde was ready to advance to Kurmitola(6).

101 Comn Zone Area Sector

By the evening of 14 December, 95 Mtn Bde with 1 Maratha LI and 6 Sikh LI, supported by light guns and field artillery, had established firm base on the river Turag(7). On 15 December, 6 Sikh LI had secured the eastern bank of the river Turag(8).

The 13 Guards (under FJ Sector), advancing along the Sabhar-Mirpur-Dhaka axis had captured Dhaka High Power Transmitting Station at Sabhar at 0830 hrs and had cleared the town by 1730 hrs on 15 December(9). 2 Para (allotted to FJ Sector) had started advance towards Mirpur Br at 2200 hrs on 15 December(10).

The military situation was, thus, "getting completely out of hand"(11) for the Pakistani occupation army. The encirclement of Dhaka by Indian Army was tightening rapidly. The writing on the wall was clear. The fall of Dhaka was not only inevitable but imminent too. Some of the besieged Pakistani 'fortresses' like Sylhet, Bhairab Bazar, Chittagong, Faridpur and Khulna, were still holding out, but the Pakistani troops confined there were in no position either to fall back upon Dhaka or to slip out of Bangladesh. Their passage for withdrawal or escape was blocked by land, air and sea.

Even before the commencement of the war, the morale of the Pakistani occupation troops in East

Bengal was not high(12). Most of them, who had been indulging in killings, looting and rape for months, had been partly dehumanised and, thus, susceptible to quick demoralisation. One of the important factors for bringing that state of affairs might have been the high number of casualties which they were made to suffer during their operation against the freedom fighters(13).

Now, with hopeless military situation on the ground and the ever-present threat of air attacks, while located amidst a vehemently hostile population in a territory wherefrom all escape routes were sealed off, the Pakistani soldiers were being more and more overpowered by a sense of isolation and encirclement and feelings of desperation and hopelessness. In such a state of mind, some Pak units fought bitterly and desperately, but, by and large, the worsening situation was increasing the demoralisation(14).

At such a critical moment, some developments took place, including a number of steps deliberately taken by India, which proved nerve shattering for the Pak soldiers and officers alike. Those developments and steps can be described under the name of 'psychological and propaganda war'.

PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE

Even before the outbreak of the war, the deployment, manoeuvres and activities of Indian Army were so planned that the Pakistani military leadership got an impression that India wanted to occupy only some territory along the Indo-East Bengal border. Niazi was, thus, inducted to move his troops forward to defend important towns on the border, leaving the Dhaka region with insufficient troops to defend it. It was a strategic advantage gained by India initially and the Pakistani forces played into her hands. The recognition of the Provisional Government of Bangladesh by India on 6 December and an agreement on 10 December between the two Governments to set up Joint Command of Mukti Bahini and the Indian forces under Lt Gen Jagjit Singh Aurora, GOC in C, Eastern Command(15) made it clear to Pakistan that India was irrevocably committed to the ouster of Pakistanis from East Bengal lock, stock and barrel. The realisation must have shattered not only their plans but also their morale.

Para dropping of troops by India in the war-zone was in itself a confidence shaking step for Pakistanis, and the media now played its part. A Press agency erroneously reported, and the news was broadcast by BBC, that on 11 December 5,000

para-troopers were dropped near Tangail(16). In fact, the troops so dropped were only one battalion from 50 Para Brigade. The impact of this inadvertent error must have been considerable on the Pakistan Army.

The Indian 'electronic warfare' programme had successfully broken the Pakistan Code and the Indian wireless intercept service worked very well(17). As a result, several important communications about plans and projections of the Pak high command were intercepted, decoded and suitable action taken accordingly. For example, on 11 December at 0930 hrs, Indian forces intercepted and decoded a message(18) about the presence of two coasters and five disguised merchant ships at Gupta Crossing, obviously for rescuing Pakistani troops by 'RK 623'. Suitable preventive action was taken and Gen Manekshaw, in a message to Maj gen Farman Ali and the Pak Flag Officer Commanding, broadcast over AIR, warned that the merchant ships and armed forces would be destroyed "if you endeavour to try this"(19).

Further, the message about the scheduled Cabinet meeting in the Government House in Dhaka on 14 December was intercepted(20). Immediately arrangements were made to bomb the Government House at that time. There were several similar instances of interception of important messages by India, whereby the sense of insecurity and impending doom was increased among the Pakistanis.

Headquarter Eastern Command at Calcutta issued leaflets which had a great demoralising effect on the Pak Army. One such leaflet (Officers and Jawans of the Pakistan Army, Lay down arms; Before the time slips out of hands - Lay down arms) issued on 7 December in Urdu, Roman Urdu, Pushtu, Roman Pushtu and Bengali, was air-dropped in thousands over Pak positions on 8 and 9 December(21). The leaflet conveyed to Pak troops that their position in Bangladesh was hopeless and their only chance for survival was to lay down arms and surrender to the Indian Army. That was the only way open to them if they wanted to go back home and be with their children. The leaflet also warned that the Bengalees were out for their blood and only the Indian Army could save them. It further promised safety to them if they surrendered to the nearest Indian troops as soon as possible(22). Such leaflets were also dropped over Dhaka on 13 December(23).

Hand-written messages in Urdu were also distributed among the Pak troops. One such message "Kuchh Yaad Dilaoon" (Refresh your memories) asked the Pak troops why they were going into the jaws of death.

It exhorted Pak troops to save themselves for their own sake. The message asked them to think the whole affair and get rid of the chains of bondage which selfish officers of theirs had fastened on them. Two more such messages entitled "Sachhcha Mussalman" (True Muslim) and "Hukm Ki Tameel" (Compliance of the order) reminded the Pak troops that the crimes of killing children and innocent, poor and unarmed people, raping of women and arson and looting that they had been committing on the orders from their officers were contrary to the tenets of Islam. The messages asked the Pak soldiers if they did not repent those sins, and then the message went on to advise the Pak troops to refuse to obey such orders(24). These messages came like "psychological hammer blows to a crumbling morale and put the fear of God and Mukti Bahini in the Pakistani troops"(25).

But the biggest blow to the eroding morale of Pakistani soldiers was given by the calls and warnings issued by the Chief of the Army Staff, Gen Mankshaw, to Pakistanis to surrender to the Indian forces. On 8 December, after the fall of Jessore, one of the strongholds of the Pak Army in Bangladesh, Gen Manekshaw issued the first of the series of messages addressed to Pakistani troops in Bangladesh. The message(26), broadcast over All India Radio at frequent intervals, warned the Pakistani troops collecting and concentrating in areas Barisal and Narayanganj in the hope that they might be able to escape or be picked up, that certain death awaited them if they endeavoured to do that, because of the appropriate measures taken by the Indian Navy. The message, however assured them that "Once you surrender, you shall be treated with dignity and as per the Geneva Convention".

India's Chief of the Army Staff, issued another appeal to Pak troops on 10 December, saying, "Your resistance is gallant but fruitless. You are unnecessarily suffering casualties. Your commanders are giving you false hopes". In the appeal, Gen Manekshaw warned them that "you have no chance of being rescued or getting away. For the sake of your families surrender and surrender quickly(27).

Fully informed about the state of lowering morale of officers and soldiers of the Pak Army in Bangladesh, the Indian Army Chief, on 11 December, addressed a message to Maj Gen Rao Farman Ali, Military Adviser to the Pakistani Governor in Dhaka, advising surrender. In the message(28), Gen Manekshaw referred to the advice tendered by him earlier to the Pak soldiers to surrendder and said "Resistance is senseless and will mean the death of many poor

soldiers under your command quite unnecessarily". Repeating the guarantee already given by him for "complete protection and just treatment under the Geneva Convention to all military and quasi-military personnel who surrender", the COAS once again asked Rao Farman Ali to heed his advice and surrender. The message was broadcast at frequent intervals on AIR and also conveyed through leaflets dropped in the Dhaka area(29).

On 13 December the Indian Army Chief broadcast another message(30) to Maj Gen Farman Ali asking him to surrender otherwise he would be compelled to order the Indian Army, "now closing in around Dacca" which had come "within the range of my artillery", to reduce those garrisons with the use of force. The guarantee for full protection and just treatment in case of surrender was reiterated.

At the same time, India's Chief of the Army Staff in a message(31), conveyed through leaflets airdropped in and around Dhaka, told all non-Bengali civilians in the area, who were reported to have been armed by the Pakistani Army and were "being egged on to fight", that "such fighting will be futile". They were advised to "surrender to the nearest Indian Army Unit" and lay down their arms. In that case, they were assured of full protection by the Indian Army.

These and several other similar psychological steps proved very effective in hastening further demoralisation of Pakistani soldiers and officers. The state of morale of the Pak Army could be seen from some of the intercepted messages. On 5 December, HQ of a Pak unit, probably either 1 Baluch or 8 Baluch of 205 Inf Bde, asked one of its sub-units to "leave everything and save your life"(32). Some unit in Laksham area (Comilla Sector) informed its control at 1600 hrs on 6 December that "Phunk nikal gai hai, Allah hin bachay"(33) (Extremely Frightened, God alone can save). On 12 December it was disclosed that Brigade Commander of 34 Inf Bde had asked his men to disperse and seek shelter wherever possible(34).

Consequently, the bulk of the Pakistan Army operating in Bangladesh was soon demoralised, disorganised and paralysed. It was no longer in a position to offer effective resistance. To many of the Pakistanis, surrender to the Indian Army appeared to be the only way for survival. Intercepted messages indicated that several Pak garrisons had asked permission to surrender(35). On 4 December, at 1900 hrs the post of Kamalpur surrendered(36). On 11 December the Jamalpur garrison surrendered(37). There were several other individual cases of surrender by or

capture of Pakistani troops in different sectors. The incidents of Pak troops and officers having given up fighting and being taken prisoners by the Indian Army near Hajiganj in the Chandpur Sector on 10 December(38), in the Sylhet area on 11 December(39), at Janglia near Comilla on 12 December(40) and in the Jhenida Sector on 15 December(41) may be cited as examples.

The feeling of uncertainty and insecurity over-powered several officers. Two highly decorated Pak officers reportedly approached their Press Officer and said: "You have access to General Niazi. Why don't you tell him to be realistic, otherwise all of us will die a dog's death"(42). Air Commodore Inam-ul-Haq, Air Officer Commanding PAF, Dhaka, thus gave his assessment of the situation to Air HQ Peshawar on 8 December (1115 hrs): "I think within 48 hrs they (the Indians) are likely to engage DACCA. We have already started destroying TOP SECRET papers and are preparing to demolish all vital equipment(43). The message further informed: "I do not think we shall be able to fly much. So I am putting my maintenance personnel on guard duties and (as) ground combatants. I doubt if we shall be able to fly any more(44). The above message is clear indication of a serious state of demoralisation developing among Pak military leadership in the Eastern Theatre.

Maj Gen Rahim Khan, GOC, 39 Pak Inf Div, who was wounded when fleeing from Chandpur, while convalescing at Farman Ali's residence, on 12 December, told his host, Lt Gen Niazi and Maj gen Jamshed that "cease-fire alone was the answer"(45). And Rahim "insisted that it was already too late"(46).

Lt Gen A.A.K. Niazi, GOC, Eastern Command, Pakistan Army, seems to have given up hopes soon after the commencement of the war. On 7 December when he met the civilian Governor, Dr A.M. Malik, to report on the military situation, "the burly figure of General Niazi", informs Siddiq Salik, "quaked and he broke into tears. He hid his face in his hands and started sobbing like a child"(47). Dr. Malik then tried to console him saying "I know, General Sahib, there are hard days in a commander's life. But don't lose heart. God is great"(48). At the conclusion of the meeting Dr. Malik suggested, "as the situation is bad, I think I should cable the President to arrange a cease-fire". Niazi, naturally, concurred Dr. Malik sent a message to Yahya Khan accordingly, but no action was taken by Pindi on the proposal(49).

On 9 December Dr. Malik sent a signal to Yahya Khan which said, "Once again (I) urge you to consider an immediate cease-fire and political settlement"(50). Yahya Khan ignored it again.

However, the same day, Niazi sent a four-point message(51) to Yahya Khan in which he admitted that the "situation (was) extremely critical", and requested for air support and reinforcements by airborne troops.

The above message of Lt Gen Niazi moved Yahya Khan to act and he sent a telegram(52) to Governor the same night (i.e. on 9 December) leaving the matter "entirely to your good sense and judgement" and informing him that any decision taken by the Governor would be approved by the President and accepted by Niazi, Gen Abdul Hamid Khan, COS, Pakistan Army, also sent a similar message separately to Lt Gen Niazi on 10 December in which he, too, admitted that "it is now only a question of time before the enemy (i.e. India) with its great superiority in numbers and material and the active cooperation of rebels will dominate East Pakistan completely"(53).

Governor Malik, therefore, initiated another move to secure a cease fire. He began his proposals(54) saying "as the conflict arose as a result of political causes, it must end with a political solution". Dr. Malik then pleaded for the UN to effect an immediate cease fire and arrange for a peaceful transfer of power to the elected representatives of East Bengal. He asked for the repatriation with honour of the Pakistani armed forces as well as the peaceful evacuation of West Pakistani civilians who opted for transfer. Guarantees regarding the safety of all persons settled in 'East Pakistan' since 1947 as well as against reprisals should also be given. These proposals were sent to Yahya Khan from Dr. Malik in a signal on 10 December to apprise the Pakistan President of the move alongwith the information about the next step that he was going to take in the matter.

In the meantime, Maj Gen Rao Farman Ali, Military Adviser to the Governor, obviously with the consent(55) of the Governor, passed on the proposals to Paul Marc Henry, representative of UN Secretary General who was then in Dhaka. These proposals also asked the Soviet, British, French and US representatives in Dhaka and the Chinese delegation in New York to jointly take control of 'East Pakistan' and implement the proposals(56). Henry referred the proposals immediately to the UN Secretariat. Even efforts were started to convene the Security Council to consider those proposals when Yahya Khan "rescinded and disowned"(57) them. Governor Malik was also informed that his proposals had "gone too far" and that he was expected to take the decision "within the

framework of a United Pakistan"(58). This abortive effort, however, clearly revealed to the world that the end of their resistance in the Eastern Theatre was imminent(59).

On 12 December, Dr. Malik once again sent a note to President Yahya Khan urging him "to do everything possible to save the innocent lives"(60). But this note, too, met with the same fate. Yahya Khan and his advisers in Islamabad still had some hopes.

HOPES OF CHINESE AND US HELP

Lt Gen Niazi is reported to have told Maj Gen Jacob, after the war, that he had recognised defeat and had wanted to surrender at least seven days before he actually capitulated. But direct orders from Yahya Khan prevented it(61).

The Pakistan military junta, from the very early stages of the war, had been exhorting Lt Gen Niazi and other top officials in Dhaka to continue fighting by giving assurance of direct military intervention by "yellow" friends (i.e., the Chinese) from the north and by "white" friends (i.e., the Americans) from the south(62), or "something big"(63) round the corner. On 5 December, the COS, Pakistan Army, is reported to have told Niazi that there was every hope of Chinese activities soon(64). A reference to such assurances was alluded to in the message of Dr. A.M. Malik, sent to Yahya Khan on 7 December, in which it was said that at that stage nothing short of direct intervention would do, and that any such action by friends should be within the next 48 hrs(65). Lt Gen Niazi's pleading with the high command in Rawalpindi to get Chinese action expedited were met invariably with reassurances on that account(66). From the 7 December message of Dr. Malik, the authorities in Islamabad got so alarmed that they assured Dhaka that Chinese activities had already begun(67). As late as 12 December, President Yahya Khan was reported to have claimed that the Chinese Ambassador in Islamabad had assured him that "within 72 hours (from 12 December) the Chinese Army will move towards the border"(68). Even as late as a day before Yahya Khan admitted the "loss of East Pakistan", the Pakistan President reportedly assured the PDP leader Nurul Amin, (who was designated Prime Minister by Yahya Khan and later became Vice President of Pakistan under Z.A. Bhutto), that the Pakistan forces "were in control and were expecting a Chinese intervention and the American Seventh Fleet any moment"(69).

From the available evidence, it is difficult to come to a definite conclusion whether Yahya Khan and

his advisers in Islamabad really believed in such assurances which they were giving to the Pakistan Army in Bangladesh(70).

In some quarters it was held that because of the growing Indo-Soviet friendship, the Pakistan leadership honestly felt that China would militarily intervene on the side of Pakistan in a war with India. Similarly, because of the vital role being played by Pakistan in the overall big-power politics of the US, Washington, too, would go all out to help Pakistan in any Indo-Pakistan conflict. But there is another opinion, held principally by Pakistanis(71), that the assurances about foreign intervention were a hoax played by the authorities in Pindi to keep the fighting in East Bengal going, hoping in the meantime to secure an honourable cease fire through the UN.

Irrespective of the genuineness of the belief of Yahya Khan and his advisers in those assurances, it had some temporary effect on the Pakistani soldiers. They "looked to the skies (for Chinese) and the seas (for Americans) and tried to buy time for those friends to reach them"(72). The Pakistani occupation army and its cohorts continued to swing between hope and despair, depending upon the chances of such physical intervention appearing bright or dim.

Lt Gen Niazi enquired from the Chinese Counsel General in Dhaka on 4 and 6 December what his government was planning to do to effectively intervene in the conflict. On both the occasions, he received the same reply: "I have no orders from my government"(73). Similarly, the senior American representative in Dhaka, when contacted, expressed his ignorance of any such move by the US administration(74).

Headquarters Eastern Command, Pakistan Army, impatiently rang up important sources in Rawalpindi to know the latest about the friendly intervention. The reply everytime was 'soon'. A disgruntled Staff Officer commented; 'Ask them how soon is their "soon"'. Finally, Eastern Command asked GHQ, "Tell us definitely how long have we to wait for "friends?" 'For thirty-six hours more' was the reply. The new deadline was set for the evening of 12 December(75).

In a message conveyed to Dhaka at 1530 hrs on 11 December, it was mentioned "something will come (in the sky). Aega, Aega, something big is coming"(76). The same evening, at 2030 hrs in a conversation with someone in Dhaka, Nurul Amin told from Islamabad: "Those who are in SOUTH by sea and those in NORTH by Air. Movements are going on...."(77). No wonder,

when, on 11 December in the afternoon, 2 Para was airdropped near Tangail, Pakistani soldiers and their commander, Brig Qadir thought they were the much awaited Chinese coming from the air. After an initial flurry of hope the Brigadier reverted to reality(78).

The hopes of direct intervention by China and the USA helped Lt Gen Niazi to maintain a bold posture in spite of the military situation deteriorating fast. On 11 December, he was heard assuring some nurses in Dhaka not to worry because "big help was on the way"(79). When Brig Atif of Mynamati garrison asked advice from Dhaka on 12 December whether he should surrender to the Indian Army, he was told to hold on, as "somethins big was expected to happen"(80).

But that "Something big" did not happen. China did not physically intervene in the war. For a variety of reasons such an action on the part of China seemed most unlikely. China had nowhere, at least in the public pronouncements of its leaders, specifically promised to intervene physically on the side of Pakistan(81). Further, the domestic situation in China - in the throes of the Cultural Revolution - was not such as to allow it the luxury of a military conflict particularly in distant East Bengal. China had kept its options on the Bangladesh issue open by refraining from criticising either Sheikh Mujib or the Awami League, but condemning only India and the Soviet Union. By direct involvement in the military conflict, Beijing would have closed those options.

Again, the Chinese, ultra conscious of their international prestige as a military power, were unwilling to risk that prestige unless they were sure of success. That would have required mobilization and launching of a large force. Beijing had more than half a million troops tied up along the 4,500 km long border with the Soviet Union. It would not have been easy for China, to spare sufficiently large number of troops to open a war front with India. Moreover, trans-border operations by a large force through the Himalayan passes, blocked by winter snows, would have been very difficult, if not impossible. And, India in 1971 was not India of 1962. Hit and run tactics minor border incursions would have made little impact on India. Last, but not the least, China had to think of the likely Soviet retaliation(82) in the wake of the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation.

As early as 5 December, the Soviet news agency, TASS had issued an official statement which had asked all countries to keep away from involvement in the India-Pakistan conflict and warned that the Soviet

Union could not remain indifferent, particularly when it was taking place close to the USSR's borders and, therefore, involved the interests of its security(83). At the time, when the reports about likely Chinese intervention in the Indo-Pak war were circulating rapidly, the Soviet military attache in Kathmandu was reported to have met his Chinese counterpart and advised him that "China 'should not get too serious about intervention, because USSR react (sic), had many missiles, etc.,'"(84). Further according to a subsequent report(85), the Soviet Ambassador in New Delhi, Nikolai M Pegov was said to have promised on 13 December 1971, that "if China should decide to intervene in Ladakh.... the Soviet Union would open a diversionary action in Sinkiang".

India's assessment, therefore, was that due to various political and military considerations the chances of physical intervention by China were not high. The conclusion was that "other than making noises" and possibly creating small border incidents the Chinese would do nothing substantial"(86). And India's assessment proved correct.

Short of direct intervention China did everything. It extended verbal, political, moral and material support to Pakistan liberally. It also made some troop movements and other gestures(87) which turned out to be merely symbolic and psychological steps on the part of China to frighten India. But Mrs. Gandhi did not frighten easily, as her worst critics had to admit. There are some indications(88) of the Chinese naval presence, too, in the vicinity of the war zone, which could have helped in evacuating the beleaguered Pakistanis from Bangladesh. But India's retaliatory naval capability deterred the Chinese from making any overt move.

China also sent two Protest Notes to the Government of India, on 16 December and 27 December 1971(89) against alleged intrusions into its territory by Indians on 10 December and then on 15 December, by land and by air. India, naturally, rejected those false and baseless protest notes, which were regarded as a feeble demonstration of China's proclaimed solidarity with Pakistan. Ironically, the first note was given on 16 December, six days after the alleged intrusion and, more significantly, on the very day that the Pakistan Army in Bangladesh was surrendering.

THE US SEVENTH FLEET

After having failed to secure a cease fire through the UN on terms favourable to Pakistan, the United States decided to display its naval power in

pursuance of what was described as the desire of President Nixon "to tilt in favour of Pakistan".

On the specific orders of President Nixon(90) a strong task force(91) spearheaded by nuclear-powered aircraft carrier Enterprise was instructed to proceed from the Seventh Fleet to the Bay of Bengal to be available in the vicinity of the area of conflict.

On 9 December the task force moved out from the Bay of Tonkin to assemble in the Malacca Straits the next day. The same day it was ordered by the US Defence Department to sail towards the Bay of Bengal. On 12 December the task force entered the Bay of Bengal off the Malaysian peninsula. For eight days the task force continued cruising in the south-eastern area of the Bay of Bengal, between Penang and Achin(92).

It is very difficult to form a definite opinion about the exact purpose behind the dispatch of this strong naval flotilla to the area of conflict. It was officially claimed(93) that the task force was sent to evacuate US citizens, 47 of them in total, who had, of their own choice, stayed back in Bangladesh while other foreigners, including many Americans, were evacuated under Indian safe conduct(94). This ridiculous explanation could never justify the dispatch of such a strong armada to the war zone.

Writing in Washington Post, the American journalist Jack Anderson, who claimed to have studied secret White House papers, gave the following reasons behind the US Government decision to send the Enterprise to the Bay of Bengal:-

- i. to compel India to divert both ships and planes to shadow the task force;
- ii. to weaken India's blockade of 'East Pakistan' ports;
- iii. to divert the Indian aircraft carrier Vikrant from its military mission; and
- iv. to force India to keep planes on defence alert, thus reducing offensive operations against Pakistani ground forces(95).

On balance it could be said that the task force was sent by the US to influence the course of the war in favour of Pakistan without involving Washington directly in the conflict, if possible, or even by direct intervention, if necessary(96).

The Nixon administration probably expected that the mere appearance of the US task force in the vicinity of the war area would unnerve the Government of India. It would weaken the operations of the Indian Army, thereby helping Pakistan to extricate itself with honour from the hopeless situation in Bangladesh. Even if the task force would not save 'East Pakistan' at least it might provide facilities to the Pakistani troops in Bangladesh to make good their escape to West Pakistan(97), which would also strengthen Pakistan's military efforts in the Western Theatre. Even otherwise, the presence of a nuclear-powered naval flotilla of the US would act as a strong deterrent for India from what the Nixon administration assessed to be India's intentions of "extinguishing"(98) West Pakistan.

The very advent of the Enterprise in the Bay of Bengal was a cause of jubilation for the Pakistanis in Bangladesh. The Biharis in Dhaka started distributing sweets on the streets(99). Lt Gen Niazi, in his message to Gen Manekshaw, in which he had sued for peace, could gather courage to ask for the regrouping of Pakistani troops at designated places, obviously for evacuation to Pakistan. This condition he set forth in his message in reply to the repeated demands made by the Indian Army Chief for the Pakistani troops in Bangladesh to surrender to the Indian Army(100).

India first came to know of the US move through an intercepted message at 1730 hrs on 10 December(101). There were spontaneous demonstrations by public, and Press comments, protesting vehemently against this US 'gunboat diplomacy'. Numerous leaders of public opinion including Members of Parliament, extended full support to the government to face the challenge boldly.

The US move was indeed highly provocative and hostile(102). But the government as well as the armed forces of India refused to be intimidated; they stood firm. Both types of contingencies - direct as well as indirect intervention by the US task force in the war - were thoroughly examined. The US naval force could intervene directly in two ways. They could helidrop US marines in Bangladesh as an assault group to support the beleaguered Pakistani troops. Direct aerial attacks by Enterprise-based fighter bombers on strategic targets in India and the Indian troops and warships in and around Bangladesh could be another scenario of a direct US intervention. In the first case it was thought that a maximum of about 5,000 US marines would be of no consequence.

But the latter case opened up ominous

possibilities. The United States would then have become a belligerent party. The Soviet Union would in that case have felt obliged to come in directly on the side of India(103). A Russian task force consisting of destroyers, cruisers, minesweepers, tankers and other supporting ships, equipped with atomic missiles, was already in the Indian Ocean. Russian nuclear submarines were also there to support the force. According to Jack Anderson, the commander of the Russian task force was authorised to take action if the Americans or Chinese intervened(104). These Soviet ships remained in position of alertness till the Pak troops surrendered in Bangladesh on 16 December and cease fire was agreed upon in the Western Theatre a day later(105). Moreover, the First Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister V.V. Kuznetsov, on a visit to India, postponed his return until 16 December to watch the developing situation from close quarters. Soviet leaders and Press also made the Soviet intentions very clear. L.I. Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party, on 14 December warned the outside powers from interference in the war between Pakistan and India. Tass, on 13 December and Pravda on 16 December, too accused the US of grossly blackmailing India by gunboat diplomacy and warned that the US action would complicate the situation(106). So a direct US intervention in the Bangladesh conflict would have resulted in a grave Super Powers confrontation, with incalculable consequences, India decided to ignore this scenario.

Indirectly, the US task force could help Pakistan in two ways. By its very presence the task force might compel the Indian Navy to divert its attention from the operations in Bangladesh to the defence of the Indian coastline. But this contingency, it was decided, could be best answered by completely ignoring the task force. India did not send a single ship or aircraft to shadow the task force.

The other and the most likely scenario of indirect intervention was "to close Chittagong within range of their air-power, put up a formidable air umbrella over the merchant ships awaiting escape and actually provide air escort for them till they reached the waiting fleet"(107). According to Admiral S.M. Nanda, Chief of the Naval Staff, "the three Service Chiefs sat down and evaluated the various courses of action for the Seventh Fleet. We decided that if there were no ports in Bangladesh from where the Seventh Fleet could operate, and no airfields to land its aircraft, and no ships to evacuate Pakistani personnel, there was very little it could do"(108). The Indian Navy, jointly with the IAF, intensified

bombings of ports, ships, and runways, in the coastal areas of Bangladesh including Cox's Bazar, Chittagong, Barisal and Chalna. About 50 smaller vessels were also sunk between 11 and 14 December(109) thereby completely choking the ports and rendering the air strips totally unusable.

On the other hand, the swift progress of Indian Army in reaching Dhaka, the collapse of resistance and surrender by the Pakistan Army in the East when the task force was still 1,500 nautical miles away from Chittagong, left neither Pakistan nor the US any options. The US task force could only stand an important witness to the emergence of an independent and sovereign Bangladesh without in any way affecting the course of the war. The unilateral declaration of cease fire by India on the Western Front further exposed the utter futility of the 'mission' of the Seventh Fleet, and on 21 December, it sailed away towards the southern waters of the Maldivé islands (now the Republic of Maldives).

SURRENDER AT DHAKA

Neither the Chinese from the north nor the Americans from the south made any effective intervention in the war in favour of Pakistan. The much expected Pakistani success, or what Lt Gen Niazi recently termed "some deterrent action against India"(110) on the Western Front, which could have lifted the sagging spirits of the Pak soldiers in Bangladesh, too, did not come about. And there was no hope of its materialising.

The military situation in Bangladesh was deteriorating for Lt Gen Niazi, not by days but by hours. According to F.M. Khan, "The command in Dacca was completely paralysed; the continuous Indian air attacks on Dacca and the area around it were making it more confused(111). The rapid Indian advance coupled with various psychological moves of the Indian Army had completely demoralised the Pak military leadership in Bangladesh. In a conversation between two very high ranking officers/officials between Dhaka and Rawalpindi on 13 December the one from Dhaka pleaded: "Muamla yahan par kuchh nahin raha. Jo kahte hai, khuda ke waste maanlo nahin to kal sham taq yahan par katleam ho jaega : Yeh situation bach nahin sakti ...Speak to 'Bara Sahib' (Presumably President of PAKISTAN) at once...(112) (Here everything is finished. For God's sake accept what they are saying, otherwise by tomorrow evening there will be general massacre. This situation cannot be averted.....). About Lt Gen Niazi, his Press Officer wrote later that he, too, had "lost all hope of foreign help. He

slumped back into his earlier mood of despondency and hardly came out of his fortified cabin. He rode the chariot of time without controlling its speed or direction"(113). The feeling of insecurity and imminent defeat was overpowering the Pak occupation army leadership. On 14 December, the flow of panic signals between Dhaka and Rawalpindi increased, clearly indicating the near collapse in Dhaka(114).

At that critical moment for the Pakistanis in Bangladesh came the shattering bombardment of the Government House by the Indian Air Force jets on 14 December, just at the time when Governor Malik was holding an important meeting with his 'Cabinet'. In panic, Dr. Malik and his 'Cabinet' sent in their resignation en masse, and sought sanctuary in the Hotel Intercontinental, which had been converted into a neutral zone by the International Red Cross. Almost all the top civilian officials had already done the same. This was the collapse of the 'East Pakistan Government' in Bangladesh. This development came as the proverbial last straw on the camel's back in so far as Lt Gen Niazi was concerned. The moment of decision had arrived and Niazi could no longer postpone it. He had only one way open to him, viz., to sue for peace.

Niazi had a day earlier on 13 December, sent a distress signal to Rawalpindi, and had been advised to keep on fighting and to hold on to as much territory as possible, since within a matter of hours the Security Council might bring about a cease fire(115). Niazi had also during the night of 13/14 December requested Gen Hamid, COS Pak Army to "See that some action is taken on them (Niazi's proposals) soon"(116), and Hamid also had advised Niazi on the same lines. But now after the collapse of the East Pakistan government, it seems that the point of no return had been reached.

And at last the gravity of the situation in Dhaka was realised by the military junta in Islamabad also. President Yahya Khan sent a signal to Niazi on 14 December at 1302 hrs (IST) which said: "You have now reached a stage where further resistance is no longer humanly possible nor will it serve any useful purpose. It will only lead to further loss of life and destruction. You should now take all necessary measures to stop the fighting and preserve the lives of all armed forces personnel, all those from West Pakistan and all loyal elements....."(117). The message reached Dhaka in two hours. And the same evening Lt Gen Niazi decided to initiate the necessary steps for getting the fighting stopped.

Niazi approached Spivack, the US Consul-General in Dhaka, with a proposal for immediate cease fire to be transmitted to Gen Manekshaw, COAS, Indian Army. Niazi also sent a copy of the proposals to Yahya Khan on 15 December. But Spivack, for no satisfactory reason, did not transmit the message to Gen Manekshaw. Instead, he sent it to Washington. The US authorities have claimed that they tried to consult the Pakistan President before taking any action(118). The result was that the urgent message of Niazi took more than 20 hours to reach Manekshaw.

Meanwhile, the cease fire message of Lt Gen Niazi was soon carried in news flashes all over the world(119). On 15 December, Governor Malik and Rao Farman Ali also reportedly sent a message to the UN Secretariat that Pakistan was desirous of ending hostilities in 'East Pakistan' and wished a few hours' cease fire for discussion of conditions.

The Indian Army had come to know indirectly about the Pakistani initiative for cease-fire. To remind Lt Gen Niazi or anybody else not to change his mind, India stepped up air attacks. Eight 500 lbs bombs were dropped on Niazi's command post in Dhaka cantonment, and the new site selected for the Eastern Command in Dhaka town was bombed even before the Headquarters had started shifting there(120).

The message of Lt Gen Niazi finally reached Gen Manekshaw through the American Embassy at New Delhi at 1430 hrs (IST) on 15 December. The proposal for immediate cease fire, which was also witnessed by Maj Gen Farman Ali, included the following conditions: (i) Regrouping of Pakistani armed forces in designated areas by mutual agreement; (ii) guarantee for safety of all military and para-military forces; (iii) safety of all those who had settled in 'East Pakistan' since 1947; and (iv) no reprisals against those who helped the administration since March 1971. Gen Manekshaw replied to the message the same evening at about 1830 hrs. In his reply, the Indian COAS, referred to the assurances he had given and said: "Since you have indicated your desire to stop fighting I expect you to issue orders to all forces under your command in Bangla Desh to cease-fire immediately and surrender to my advancing forces wherever they are located"(121). Gen Manekshaw then reiterated his assurances that "personnel who surrender shall be treated with the dignity and respect that soldiers are entitled to" and that there would be no reprisals. "Immediately I receive a positive response from you I shall direct Gen Aurora, the Commander of Indian and Bangladesh forces in the Eastern Theatre to refrain from all air and ground action against your forces.

As a token of my good faith I have ordered that no air action shall take place over Dacca from 1700 hrs today (i.e. 15 December)". In order to discuss and finalise matters quickly a radio link on listening watch was arranged. Gen Manekshaw's reply also warned Lt Gen Niazi that "should however you do not comply with what I have stated you will leave me with no other alternative but to resume my offensive with the utmost vigour at 0900 hrs Indian Standard Time on 16 December". This message was broadcast over AIR Calcutta after every half hour(122). The ball was now in Niazi's court.

By the morning of 16 December, 2 Para backed up by artillery had firmed up on the western bank of the Mirpur bridge on the Buriganga, the gateway to Dhaka city from the west. Two battalions (6 Bihar and 13 Guards) were poised behind 2 Para for any offensive task(123). 1 Maratha and 13 Rajputana Rifles (95 Mtn Bde) had reached the outskirts of the capital from the direction of Tungi in the north(124). All these units belonged to the 101 Comn Zone Area. Of the 4 Corps troops, 19 Raj Rif of 73 Mtn Bde had cleared Pubail of Pak troops on 15 December and the tactical headquarters of the Bde was moved to that place the same afternoon(125). 14 Guards of 73 Mtn Bde, after by-passing Pubail from south, had contacted Tungi on 14 December when further advance was halted in order to avoid the danger of a clash with 101 Comn Z A advancing from the north(126). 10 Bihar of 311 Mtn Bde had crossed the river Balu - the last water obstacle towards Dhaka, on 15 December. 4 Guards of 311 Mtn Bde had contacted Demra on 14 December and were poised to cross the river Lakhya in the morning of 16 December(127). 2 EBR, which was part of 311 Mtn Bde, had crossed the river Lakhya in the north and secured Rupganj by 14 December(128). 14 Jat of 301 Mtn Bde, which was advancing towards Dhaka from south-east, had captured Nabiganj on the eastern bank of the Lakhya river by the evening of 15 December. This, and another bn of 301 Mtn Bde, viz., 1/11 GR, were poised to cross the river Lakhya by the morning of 16 December(129).

No less than five brigades of the Indian Army were thus surrounding Dhaka, ready to assault it from the west, the north, the east and the south-east. There was no organised force in Dhaka to offer effective resistance. Maj Gen Jamshed had collected scattered elements from infantry, engineers, signals, EME, ordnance, and ASC to build up a strength of about twelve companies, besides 1,500 E.P.C.A.F., 1800 policemen and 300 Razakars. The total came to about 5,000 men, commanded by surplus staff officers. Most of them had only .303 rifles. There were only one

squadron of tanks, three 3" mortars, four recoilless rifles, two six-pounder guns and some LMGs. There was shortage of ammunition for the armour and artillery(130). After the surrender, Maj Gen Jamshed is also reported to have confessed to Maj Gen Nagra that he was completely unnerved by the capture of Mirpur bridge by the Indian troops and the inability of retreating Pak troops to demolish it, since he had no proper infantry formations/units of artillery to defend Dhaka city(131). While the IAF had been repeatedly strafing strategic positions in and around Dhaka, the capital was virtually defenceless against those aerial attacks. Only one day's supply of anti-aircraft ammunition at the current rate of consumption was left with the Pakistanis. To cap it all, a hundred thousand citizens of Dhaka were waiting to rise up and butcher the Pakistanis at the first opportunity.

In this state of affairs, the assurances repeatedly given by Gen Manekshaw to Pakistani troops of safety and dignified treatment if they surrendered to the Indian Army must have appeared the only way for the Pak troops to escape certain death either at the hands of the advancing Indian troops or at the hands of Bangladeshi freedom fighters. Gen Hamid, too, had suggested to Niazi to accept the terms given by COAS India(132). The above factors helped Lt Gen Niazi to make up his mind. And, he decided to respond positively to Gen Manekshaw's message(133). Lt Gen Niazi is said to have tried to contact Gen Manekshaw on the chosen frequencies, but for unknown reasons that contact could not be established. It was through the United Nations communications network that Niazi's reply to Manekshaw's message could reach Lt Gen Aurora, GOC-in-C Eastern Command, and then Gen Manekshaw on 16 December at about 0830 hours, barely one hour before the expiry of the 'bombing pause' declared by the Indian Army Chief. Lt Gen Niazi's message(134) while informing that he was "going ahead with the cease-fire formalities"(135) requested that "due to communications difficulties and isolation" of Pak forces, "truce be extended for another 6 hours" (i.e. upto 1530 hours IST) and also suggested for a preliminary staff meeting in Dhaka to "facilitate matters".

Sam Manekshaw, in a reply message(136) to Lt Gen Niazi conveyed agreement to pause in bombing and air action over Dhaka till 1500 hours 16 December. The message also stated that Maj Gen Jacob, COS, Eastern Command, would be reaching Dhaka by helicopter by 1230 hrs (IST) to negotiate the terms of surrender and told Niazi: "Your forces in Dacca must surrender at 1600 hrs Indian Standard Time today and other garrisons

elsewhere in Bangladesh as early as possible as they receive orders from you".

In the meantime, at 0730 hrs on 16 December Maj Gen Nagra, GOC 101 Comn Z A, accompanied by Brig H S Kler and Brig Sant Singh, had reached the western side of the Mirpur bridge by helicopter. The message of Lt Gen Niazi asking his troops to ceasefire had been intercepted and Nagra was told that there had been no exchange of fire from 0500 hrs. Nagra, therefore, sent the following message to Niazi through his ADC, Capt HK Mehta: "My dear Abdullah, I am here. The game is up. I suggest you give yourself up to me and I will look after you, Gandharv"(137). Nagra had been some years earlier the Indian Military Attache in Pakistan and knew Niazi personally(138). In response, Maj Gen Mohammed Jamshed, GOC, 36 Pak Inf Div and Garrison Commander of Dhaka, was sent to surrender to Maj Gen Nagra and to conduct him to Niazi's headquarters(139). After Nagra had sent messages to Calcutta and HQ 4 Corps about the meeting, he, accompanied by Brig Kler, Brig Sant Singh and some other officers left for Niazi's headquarters at about 1030 hrs. On seeing Maj Gen Nagra enter his office, Lt Gen Niazi broke down and remarked: "Pindi mein bethe hue haramzadon ne marwa diya" (The bastards in Pindi got us into a mess)(140). He literally cursed Yahya Khan and Hamid for all the tribulations he and his troops had had to go through.

In pursuance of the last message of Gen Manekshaw, the Chief of Staff, Eastern Command, Maj Gen J.F.R. Jacob, accompanied by Col (Int) M.S. Khara arrived at Tezgaon airport of Dhaka approximately at 1235 hrs on 16 December. Maj Gen Nagra and Brig Baker Siddiqui, Niazi's Chief of Staff, were present there to receive him. They were taken straightaway to Pakistan Army Headquarters in Dhaka. Lt Gen Niazi, Maj Gen Rao Farman Ali, Maj Gen Jamshed, Rear Admiral Sharif and Air Cmde Inam met them there. A draft surrender agreement which Maj Gen Jacob had taken alongwith him was discussed with the Pakistani officers. The Pakistanis wanted certain changes(141), but they were firmly told that no changes could be considered about the terms of surrender. However, their apprehensions about the treatment they would get and the security of their supporters were assuaged satisfactorily. The Pakistanis deliberated among themselves for a while, and finally agreed(142). The Instrument of Surrender was accepted and initialled at 1445 hrs. The Pakistani forces in Bangladesh were to surrender formally at a ceremony to be held in Dhaka the same afternoon. The arrangements for the surrender ceremony were finalised. A message was flashed to HQ Eastern Command at Calcutta about the

initialling of the agreement. Simultaneously, Lt Gen Niazi issued orders informing all his formations and units about it.

Before leaving the Mirpur bridge for Lt Gen Niazi's headquarters, Maj Gen Nagra had ordered 2 Para to get ready to move into Dhaka(143). Nagra had left the bridge for the city at about 1030 hrs, and at 1045 hrs 2 Para entered Dhaka. By about 1300 hrs, 6 Bihar and 13 Guards had also arrived and elements of 95 Mtn Bde followed soon(144). In the meantime, 4 Guards and 5 Independent Armoured Squadron, heralding the arrival of the formidable 4 Corps, also reached the airfield before the surrender took place(145).

When the Indian troops entered the Bangladesh capital, the streets were deserted. But soon word went round that they had arrived. In no time, people were out on the roads shouting "Joi Bangla", "Joi Mitro Bahini", "Joi Indira Gandhi"(146).

The scene was well-set for the momentous event - the surrender of Pakistan forces in Bangladesh to the Indian Army. Endless crowds of excited Bangladeshes converged from all directions on Ramna Race Course (also called Paltan Maidan), the ground where the ceremony was to be held. It was this very ground from where nine months ago Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had given the clarion call against repression and the military dictatorship.

A group of helicopters flying in formation landed at the Tezgaon airfield in the afternoon on 16 December. Lt Gen Jagjit Singh Aurora, GOC-in-C Eastern Command and his wife, accompanied by Air Marshal H.C. Dewan, Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Air Command, Vice Admiral N. Krishnan, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Naval Command, Lt Gen Sagat Singh, GOC, 4 Corps, and all his divisional commanders, Group Captain Khondakar, Chief of Staff of the Mukti Bahini Command, Ashok Ray of the MEA and a number of press representatives had arrived for the surrender ceremony. Lt Gen Niazi, accompanied by his senior officers had already arrived to receive Lt Gen Aurora and his party. Amidst shouts and slogans, all of them drove with Niazi to the Race Course.

The setting sun over the Ramna Race Course appeared highly symbolic. It signalled the end of the twenty four-year long Pakistani domination over the people of East Bengal. Arriving at 1620 hrs, Lt Gen Aurora inspected a guard of honour presented by troops of 2 Para Battalion under Lt Col K.S. Pannu, Commanding Officer, and a Pakistani contingent also

presented guard of honour to Lt Gen Aurora. At 1631 hrs (IST) witnessed by nearly one million Bangladeshes and scores of foreign media men, Lt Gen Aurora for India and Bangladesh signed the Instrument of Surrender. Niazi then removed his laynard and surrendered his pistol to Lt Gen Aurora signifying the completion of the last act of submissiion and surrender(147).

The million Bangladeshes present at the ceremony were, understandably, 'raring to go' at the Pakistanis. They would have lynched Niazi and his officers then and there. Consequently, they were removed to the cantonment area under escort. Lt Gen Aurora, the Commander of the Indian and Bangladesh forces, went to meet the crowd as requested, and received a thunderous ovation from the liberated people. At times the crowds literally mobbed him in their effort to show their appreciation. It took Lt Gen Aurora over twenty minutes to get away to the airfield for the return journey. Before leaving, he instructed Lt Gen Sagat Singh to stay in Dhaka and take control of the situation(148). Under Lt Gen Sagat Singh, Commander of the Indian forces in Dhaka, Maj Gen Nagra of 101 Comn Z A was made responsible for disarming the Pak troops and guarding them and the civilians of West Pakistan in Dhaka cantt area, and Maj Gen Gonsalves, GOC, 57 Mtn Div, was ordered to look after the maintenance of law and order in the city(149).

The formal surrender ceremony had taken place on 16 December at 1631 hrs, but the Pakistani troops in Dhaka were allowed to keep their arms for their own safety till the Indian Army was in a position to protect them fully. Further, though major fighting had been brought to a halt before the Dhaka surrender, but some fighting still continued at Khulna, around Sylhet and near Comilla, apparently because the word about surrender had not reached there or because of some local commanders' defiance of the instructions from the headquarters. Consequently, cease fire and surrenders by Pakistani troops in different sectors went on from 16 to 21 December 1971.

Maj Gen Mohammad Jamshed, GOC, 36 Pak Inf Div and garrison commander, Dhaka had formally surrendered to Maj Gen Nagra at the Mirpur bridge at 1040 hrs on 16 December(150), but the Dhaka garrison surrendered a day later. By then many stragglers had come into the city, and total of 100 officers, 4,000 JCOs (of Army, EPCAF and Pclice) and 16,000 soldiers are claimed to have surrendered to Indian Army in Dhaka on 17 December(151). They laid down their arms at 1100 hrs on 19 December at the golf course in the

cantonment(152).

In the South-Western Sector, Maj Gen Ansari, GOC 9 Inf Div and his troops surrendered to the Indian Army at the river Madhumati in the Magura area at 1530 hrs on 16 December(153), at Faridpur at 1030 hrs on 17 December and at Khulna at 1400 hrs on 17 December(154). In the North-Western Sector, Pak soldiers in Bogra started surrendering early on morning of 16 December culminating on 18 December with the surrender of GOC, Pak 16 Inf Div, Maj Gen Nazar Hussain Shah(155). While the Pakistani troops located at Rangpur surrendered at 1500 hrs on 16 December(156), those at Nator(157), Ishurdi(158) and Pabna(159) laid down their arms on 21 December. The garrison at Saidpur surrendered at 1545 hrs on 17 December(160). The Pakistani troops in Chittagong surrendered on 16 December(161), and the garrisons at Bhairab Bazar(162), Mynamati(163) and Sylhet(164) - showed the white flag at 1000 hrs, 1100 hrs and 1500 hrs respectively on 17 December. In all, 92,208 Pakistanis(165) - (including personnel belonging to army, para-military forces, navy, air force, police, and civilians) were taken prisoners by the Indian Army in Bangladesh. The above number does not include para-military personnel of Bangladesh origin, who were handed over to the Bangladesh government.

Talking to newsmen, Lt Gen Aurora expressed his gratefulness to God "in bringing about this moment of triumph and joy to the people of Bangla Desh"(166). Dhaka went delirious with joy. The cool wind of freedom, it seemed, had made the people to forget all the traumatic experiences of the past, particularly, the last nine months. "The euphoria of liberation burst out in Bangladesh" wrote an Indian journalist. Describing the mood of the people at their release from the Pakistani bondage, he reported: "Even among the ruins of the old order based on hatred, people wiped off their tears and rejoiced. Hope of the future, of their own Bangladesh, overpowered the anguish of the past. It was like the bursting of a radiant dawn after long and howling night of storm"(167). The elation of the people at their release from Pakistani control had to be seen to be believed. There were cracker displays all around and the capital city was aglow with a million lights(168).

Indira Gandhi, justifiably displaying a sense of achievement, informed Lok Sabha at about 5.30 p.m on 16 December about the surrender of the West Pakistani forces in Bangladesh and, amidst thunderous applause, she announced: "Dacca is now the free capital of a free country"(169). The commitment that India, her

people and the Government had made to the people of Bangladesh had been fulfilled.

CEASE-FIRE IN THE WEST

With the surrender of the Pakistan Army in Dhaka and the liberation of Bangladesh, India's principal objective in the war was achieved. The same evening a statement of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was released to the Press and broadcast over All India Radio which declared: "We have repeatedly declared that India has no territorial ambitions. Now that Pakistani armed forces have surrendered in Bangladesh, and Bangladesh is free, it is pointless in our view to continue the present conflict. Therefore, to stop bloodshed and unnecessary loss of life we have ordered our armed forces to cease fire everywhere on the Western Front with effect from 2000 hrs IST on Friday, 17 December 1971. It is our earnest hope that there will be corresponding immediate response from the Government of Pakistan"(170).

The next day the Prime Minister herself made statements to that effect in both Houses of Parliament. The offer was conveyed to the UN by Minister of External Affairs Swaran Singh and it was sent to the Government of Pakistan through the Swiss Embassy(171).

Sharing with the Members of Parliament the motivations of the Government behind this move the Defence Minister Jagjivan Ram declared in Lok Sabha on 18 December: "It will now be our endeavour to forge, through bilateral negotiations, a new relationship with Pakistan, based not on conflict but on cooperation, guaranteeing to us the security of our borders and our vital road communications, and assuring to the peoples of two countries freedom from fear of recurring wars and an opportunity to devote their full attention to economic and social progress"(172).

But, later on, the United States claimed for itself the credit for the stoppage of war in the Western Theatre. It was alleged that after the liberation of Bangladesh, India intended to intensify the war to dismember West Pakistan. It was the presence of the US task force in the Bay of Bengal and the diplomatic pressure that the Americans could exert on India through the Soviet Union which made India desist from continuing the war(173).

This claim appears totally baseless and is not supported by any available records in the Government of India. It was clearly an attempt to salvage some

of the US prestige and to convince the Pakistani people that their Uncle Sam was not totally ineffective. India never coveted an inch of Pakistan territory. This she had demonstrated after the 1965 conflict, and assurances to that effect had been reiterated on numerous occasions.

As stated earlier, India had put before herself only limited objective in the war. It was the liberation of East Bengal in order to facilitate the return of nearly ten million refugees to their homes with safety and honour, and in the west the Indian objective was not to allow the Pakistan Army to make any significant or substantial gains.

It is true that India was in a better and more advantageous position militarily on the Western Front. India would have been justified in continuing the war for the purpose of inflicting maximum damage to the war making potential of the aggressor, militarist Pakistan, and to straighten the cease fire line satisfactorily in POK which Pakistan claimed to be a 'disputed territory'. But that was not India's objective. And the decision to declare unilateral cease fire was India's own.

There were some people in India who had reservations about this step of the Government of India. They wanted India to continue the war to inflict a decisive defeat in the West also and thus teach Pakistan a lesson. But, in the calculations of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, with which most Indians perhaps concurred, the political spin-off from the declaration of unilateral cease fire in the Western Theatre immediately after the liberation of Bangladesh far outweighed the military gains to be made by a prolongation of the war. This move was the most effective way to demonstrate to the world that India then, as ever, was for peace and did not entertain any desire for territorial expansion.

But it took Gen Yahya Khan quite some time to respond to the peace move of Indira Gandhi. Ironically, when India announced her decision to declare unilateral cease-fire, the Pakistan President, was indulging in bravado and rhetorics. Addressing his countrymen on Radio Pakistan after the surrender of the Pakistan Army to the Indian Army in Dhaka but lacking courage to acknowledge it in so many words, Yahya Khan ranted that "a temporary setback in one theatre of war does not by any means signify an end of the struggle... We may lose a battle, but final victory in this war of survival shall inshallah be ours", he declared. Yahya Khan also gave a call to all his 'friends' to "stand by us, and rest assured

that the people of Pakistan and their armed forces will not cease their struggle until aggression is vacated...."(174).

But the very next day all that proved just empty rhetoric, and the reality of the situation dawned on him. Pakistan was in no position to continue the fight. The political situation inside Pakistan was getting explosive for the Army. The IAF had played havoc with the oil and ammunition stocks and both would run out of stock in a few weeks with no chances of replenishment because of the blockade of the ports by the Indian Navy(175). On the battle front itself, the Pakistani position was not good and the Indian Army had occupied more enemy territory than the Pakistan Army(176).

Above all, the two countries on whom Pakistan had placed so much reliance for sustaining its war effort appeared in no position to extend active help. While China was still extending verbal and material support but nothing more, the United States had in fact openly welcomed India's declaration of unilateral cease-fire. Even before Gen Yahya Khan made his broadcast on 16 December, a White House spokesman had said in Florida that USA had written off 'East Pakistan' and was now directing its efforts towards saving West Pakistan from the same fate(177). The Indian unilateral declaration of cease-fire on the Western Front was greeted by the USA as "an encouraging turn"(178). The United States, which had been reconciled to the creation of an independent Bangladesh and which had been professedly worrying about the safety of West Pakistan if the hostilities continued, could not but welcome India's declaration.

On the afternoon of 17 December, Radio Pakistan made an announcement in the name of President Yahya Khan which said: "I have, in response to the Indian offer, ordered my forces also to ceasefire today with effect from 14.30 GMT, which correspond to 7.30 p.m. (WPST) and 8.30 p.m. (EPST)"(179) and 2000 hrs Indian Standard Time. The Pakistani response was also conveyed to the Government of India through American and Swiss diplomatic representatives(180). The acceptance by Pakistan of India's offer of ceasefire and its immediate enforcement drew curtain on the fourteen-day Indo-Pakistan War.

GAINS AND LOSSES

India had to pay a heavy price both in men and material in the war of 1971. A total of 12,189 officers and men of the Indian armed forces were either killed or wounded or reported missing during the war, as detailed below:-

ARMY CASUALTIES

Eastern Command(181)

	<u>Killed</u>	<u>Missing</u>	<u>Wounded</u>
Officers	68	--	207
JCOs	62	4	169
ORs & NCsE	1,348	43	3,828
<hr style="border-top: 1px dashed black;"/>			
Total	1,478	47	4,204=5,729
<hr style="border-top: 1px dashed black;"/>			

Western Command(182)

	<u>Killed</u>	<u>Missing/PW</u>	<u>Wounded</u>
Officers	84	19	162
JCOs	61	22	111
ORs & NCsE	1,285	791	3,257
<hr style="border-top: 1px dashed black;"/>			
Total	1,430	832	3,530=5,792
<hr style="border-top: 1px dashed black;"/>			

Southern Command(183)

	<u>Killed</u>	<u>Missing/PW</u>	<u>Wounded</u>
Officers	7	2	23
JCOs	7	--	7
ORs & NCsE	76	15	222
<hr style="border-top: 1px dashed black;"/>			
Total	90	17	252=359
<hr style="border-top: 1px dashed black;"/>			

Total Army Casualties - 11,880.

Indian Navy

Officers	20
Sailors	180
Total	----- 200 -----

Indian Air Force

Officers, Airmen and civilians - 109

Pak casualties were estimated to be much more as indicated below:-

Eastern Command (Bangladesh)(184)

Regulars:

	<u>26 Mar-3 Dec 1971</u>	<u>4-16 Dec 1971</u>	<u>Total</u>
Killed	4,500	2,261	6,761
Wounded	4,000	4,000	8,000

Para Military Forces:

Killed	909	719	1,628
Wounded	674	314	988

Western Command(185)

Killed	3,730
Wounded	11,302

Southern Command

Killed	336
Wounded	97

Navy

Killed	485
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Air Force

Not known.

Apart from above, about 74,000 military and para-military personnel had surrendered to the Indian Army in Bangladesh and 545 Pakistani soldiers in the Western Theatre were captured by the Indian troops(187).

Losses in weapons and equipment in respect of tanks, guns, class 'B' vehicles and aircraft and ships of two rival forces were estimated as detailed below:-

INDIAN

ARMY(188)

<u>Sr. No</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>West Comd</u>	<u>East Comd</u>	<u>South Comd</u>	<u>Total</u>
1.	Tanks('A' Vehicles)	43	18	8	69
2.	25-Pdr Guns	2	--	1	3
3.	5.5 in Guns	1	--	--	1
4.	130 mm Guns	5	--	--	5
5.	M.G. 7.62 mm	151	63	1	215
6.	M.M.G. 7.62 mm/ MAG-58	39	7	1	47
7.	MMG 30" Browing	40	8	7	55
8.	Vehicles(all types) ('B' Vehicles)	457	92	121	670

AIR FORCE

Aircraft 71

NAVYWarships 1 (Khukri)
Aircraft 1 (Alize)PAKISTANIPAKISTAN ARMY(189)

<u>Sr. No.</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Western Theatre</u>	<u>Eastern Theatre</u>	<u>Total</u>
1.	Tanks ('A' Vehicles)	181	72	253
2.	25-Pdr Guns	9		
3.	122 mm Howitzers	6	105	120
4.	37 mm LAA Guns	--	35	35
5.	6 Pounder AA Guns	15	--	15
6.	Machine Guns Med Machine Guns}	313	475	788
7.	L. Machine Guns	66	1,303	1,369
8.	Vehicles(all types) ('B' Vehicles)	220	1,272	1,492

PAK AIR FORCE

Aircraft 75

PAK NAVY

Destroyers	1 (Khaibar)
Minesweepers	1 (<u>Muhafiz</u>)
Submarines	1 (<u>Ghazi</u>)
Patrolcraft	3 (<u>Jessore</u> , <u>Comilla</u> and <u>Sylhet</u>)
Converted Gun boats	14

The Pakistani losses in personnel and equipment were heavy, but its armed forces in the West were still largely intact at the end of the hostilities. The Army still had about 10 divisions (including two armoured) of a total of 14 divisions. The PAF had avoided getting decimated by drastically reducing its sorties, and the Navy had saved itself by hiding in Karachi harbour.

CONCLUSION

Leaving aside the fact that the war left thousands of families wiped out of destitute and homeless, it cost the Indian Exchequer alone more than

2150 million rupees(190), which included expenditure incurred on actual operations, various compensations and allowances, and on the maintenance of Pakistani prisoners of war. On the other hand, the two-week war, according to one estimate, cost Pakistan Rs.4000 million(191). These, of course, were only the direct costs, leaving out the equipment and stores destroyed and the facilities damaged, which would total thousands of millions more.

Apart from liberating the whole of Bangladesh, the Indian Army made significant and substantial territorial gains on the Western Front. A total of about 16,279 sq km territory was gained only about 359 sq km from India(192). The loss of Chhamb area west of the river Manawar Tawi did, however, create some problems for India. One of them was of refugees. People from across the river as well as from Jaurian, east of Manawar Tawi had to be evacuated and lodged in temporary camps to be settled in suitable places subsequently.

India's success in the war brought in its train a number of highly significant, although intangible, gains for the country, her government and her people.

The emergence of a sovereign independent Bangladesh with the dismemberment of Pakistan was the first instance of its kind after the Second World War. India's military victory over Pakistan having been instrumental in bringing about that historic development, the prestige of India rose high in the comity of nations. She emerged as the pre-eminent power in the region, thereby nullifying the efforts of outside powers to enforce the so-called doctrine of 'Balance of Power' in the sub-continent. India also successfully demonstrated to Pakistan the futility of seeking confrontation instead of friendship with India.

The rise of Bangladesh as an independent nation after the dismemberment of Pakistan gave a death blow to the myth wishfully entertained by leaders of Pakistan that religion was the criterion of the formation of nations in the Indian sub-continent. The "Two-Nation" theory having thus been given a decent burial in December 1971, it was expected that many among the minority community in India, who looked outward would now look inward and would join the mainstream of national life.

There might be many centrifugal elements in the Indian society. On occasions, they create troubles for the people. But under the surface there is a strong sense of national unity which comes into play

in the fullest measure when the nation's security and territorial integrity is threatened. The war of 1971 provided an eloquent example of this innate unity of the people of India. There was total communal harmony in the country during the year-long crisis.

The myth about the so-called martial races, propounded by the British rulers of India, was exploded again in the war of 1971. The Pakistanis and, probably, some others, too, had been under an illusion that in fighting qualities one Pakistani soldier was equal to three or four, or even ten, Indian soldiers. The surrender at Dhaka should have been an eye opener to all those who had been suffering from that illusion. In the process, the Indian Army fully retrieved its reputation, which it had enjoyed earlier, but was unnecessarily and sadly tarnished in 1962. The operations in the Ladakh and Kargil areas of Jammu & Kashmir proved that the Indian Army was capable of operating at high altitudes and in very low temperatures successfully. Not only these, but the exemplary behaviour displayed by Indian soldiers generally during and after the war even enhanced that reputation.

The successful conduct of operations with smooth inter-Services coordination under the overall guidance of and directions from the civilian leadership justified the efficacy of the system of command and control adopted in the Indian polity and the armed forces. Because the system had worked, its defects and weaknesses were discounted and considered imaginary.

In some quarters within the country, there were doubts about the comparative effectiveness of Soviet arms. But the war of 1971 proved clearly that the Soviet military equipment used by the Indian armed forces was equal, if not superior, to the American, European or Chinese in its usefulness in actual war.

The Indo-Soviet friendship, particularly the Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation, successfully withstood the testing time, justifying thereby the saying: "A friend in need is a friend indeed".

The creation of a friendly independent Bangladesh, it was hoped, had secured India's eastern flank. It would be a damper for anti-India elements, both from within and without, in their designs against India's security in her north-eastern region.

The fortitude, courage, and patience and iron-will displayed by India under the leadership of

Indira Gandhi in meeting the challenge thrown by the crisis provided the clearest possible proof that India had matured as a self-confident and strong nation. She was capable of going to any length, including the resort to arms, to uphold her cherished values and to protect her vital national interests even in defiance of big powers. Indira Gandhi's assertion, in a speech on 10 December, that India would "not give in to any threat or any type of pressure"(193), in pursuit or defence of her national interests, truly reflected the self-confidence and inherent strength of the Indian nation. There was no sign of panic in the country during the war. Life in the country went on as usual. The Parliament met every day during the war.

The above mentioned intangible gains to India as a fallout of her successful conduct of the war appeared very significant, immediately after the conflict. How permanent and lasting those gains would ultimately prove, only the future could tell.

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NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. From Official Records.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Khan, F.M., p.172.
12. According to Salik, the then Press Officer of the Pakistan Army, Eastern Command, the Pak troops were "in a low state of training, equipment, and morale... They had known no rest or relief for several months.... Worst of all, several of them had no heart in the operations", Salik, p.117.
13. In the 'counter-insurgency' operations the Pak Army had lost 237 officers, 136 JCOs, and 3,559 other ranks. Ibid., p.118.
14. Foreign correspondents visiting Jessore after its capture reported that the morale of Pakistani troops was very low and that accounted for their failure to stand up to the Indians. Bhargava, p.134.
15. Mankekar, D.R., p.63.
16. Official Records say, that 130 transport aircraft dropped para bde South of Tangail at 1600 hrs on 11 December.
17. Palit, pp.153 & 155.
18. From Official Records.
19. Ibid.
20. The information received was: "At 1200 hrs we are going to Government House". Quoted in Sukhwant Singh (I), p.221.
21. From Official Records.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. Mankekar, D.R., p.60.
26. From Official Records.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
36. According to an exchange of wireless messages between the post commander and his battalion

- commander, the post in the early morning had asked permission to withdraw but this was refused. Sukhwant Singh (I), p.189.
37. A total of 376 all ranks including 2 Officers, 9 JCOs and 209 ORs, belonging to 31 Baluch and the remainder to artillery and para-military forces surrendered there. Sukhwant Singh (I), p.198.
38. Salik, pp.176-177.
39. From Official Records.
40. Salik, pp.178-179.
41. Lachhman Singh (I), p.118.
42. Salik, p.195.
43. From Official Records.
44. Ibid.
45. Salik, p.205.
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid., p.194.
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid. According to F.M. Khan, the Governor in his message maintained that at that stage any lip service from Western Powers or even material help short of direct physical intervention would not help. He gave notice that if any friend was expected to help then action should have an impact within the next 48 hrs. In that case the fight would continue otherwise he did not think it worthwhile to sacrifice so much when the end seemed inevitable. Khan, F.M., p.175.
50. Salik, p.196.
51. Reproduced in Ibid.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid., p.197.
54. Ibid., p.198.
55. According to F.M. Khan the proposals were approved by Lt Gen Niazi, Maj Gen Jamshed and Admiral Sharif. Khan, F.M., p.184. But Niazi, according to Maj Gen Palit, later on made it clear that he had not authorised any such approach to the UN by Farman Ali. Palit, p.132.
56. Khan, F.M., p.184.
57. Agha Shahi's statement in New York, New York Times, 12 December 1971.
58. Salik, p.199.
59. The London Observer (11 December 1971), reporting this development commented that the Pak Government was "completely resigned" to the loss of 'East Pakistan'. Cited in Mankekar, p.65.
60. Salik, p.206.
61. Mankekar, p.75. F.M. Khan too, is of the view that "by all available evidence, General Niazi had given up hope by 10 December". Khan, F.M., p.182.
62. Salik, p.199. Also Lachhman Singh (I), p.227.
63. Sukhwant Singh, p.219.

64. Khan, F.M., p.174.
65. Ibid., p.175.
66. Ibid., p.174.
67. Ibid.
68. A top secret message disclosed by Jack Anderson, the American journalist, in an article in Daily Telegraph (London), 10 January 1971, reproduced in Jackson, p.230.
69. Nurul Amin's speech in Karachi, 5 January 1972, cited in Chopra (I), p.209.
70. Various public statements of Gen Yahya Khan and the PPP leader, Z.A. Bhutto, who was subsequently designated Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, spoke differently on the subject.
71. Khan F.M. and Salik are among them.
72. Salik, p.199.
73. From Official Records.
74. Ibid.
75. Ibid.
76. Ibid.
77. Ibid.
78. Salik, p.190.
79. Ibid., p.201.
80. Lachhman Singh (I), p.219.
81. A member of the Z.A. Bhutto - led delegation to China (November 1971), when questioned about the nature of help China had promised to Pakistan said: "Yes, the Chinese are great friends. They have advised us to win the people of East Pakistan". Salik, p.112.
82. One Chinese diplomat remarked in answer to a question from a Pakistani about the possibility of active Chinese aid to Pakistan 'You know Russia is not afraid of China'. Khan, F.M., p.145.
83. Choudhry, pp.139-140.
84. The dispatch of Col Melvin Holst, American Military Attache in Kathmandu, cited by Jack Anderson in an article in Daily Telegraph, 10 January 1972, reproduced in Jackson, p.230.
85. A CIA report, claimed to have been picked up from a 'reliable source', cited in Ibid., p.231. President Nixon in his Foreign Policy Report, too, stated that the Soviet Union was willing to make military moves to deter China on India's behalf. USIS News Text, (Karachi), 9 February 1972, p.16, quoted in Mehrunnisa Ali, 'China's Diplomacy during the Indo-Pakistan War, 1971', Pakistan Horizon (Karachi) Vol.XXV, No.1, 1972, p.62. This report, however, has not been confirmed by any of the available official Indian sources.
86. From Official Records.
87. CIA reported that 'the Chinese have been passing

- weather data for locations in Tibet and along the Sino-Indian border, since 8 December'. See Jack Anderson's article in Daily Telegraph (10 January 1972), reproduced in Jackson, p.230.
88. Some intercepted messages between China and Pakistani High Command indicated that Chinese rescue ships had been assembled in the Ganges delta for the evacuation of Pakistani forces in Bangladesh, reported Daily Telegraph, 13 & 14 December 1971, cited in Mehrunnisa Ali, p. 58. See also Sharma, p.365.
 89. Text of the Note reproduced in Pakistan Horizon (Karachi), Vol.XXV, No.1, 1972, p.156.
 90. This decision was taken by Nixon on 9 December following the secret meeting of Washington Special Action Group (WSAG) on 8 December. Gupta, p.113. At this meeting, it is reported that the CIA produced a report which allegedly contained minutes of an Indian Cabinet discussion, in which Indira Gandhi was said to have "indicated that before heeding a UN call for cease-fire, she intends to straighten out the southern border" of POK and, "prior to terminating present hostilities" she intended "to attempt to eliminate Pakistan's armour and air force capabilities". See memo on 8 December WSAG Meeting, New York Herald Tribune, (Paris ed.), 15 January 1972, reproduced in Jackson, p.225.
 91. The task force, spearheaded by nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Enterprise - the largest ship in the world, consisted of 10 huge fighting vessels. Besides Enterprise, one amphibious assault helicopter carrier, one guided missile frigate, three guided missile destroyers, two amphibious ships and two medium size destroyers were included in the task force. Gupta, p.115.
 92. Indira Gandhi had informed the opposition leaders on 16 December that the task force was 1,500 nautical miles from Chittagong, approximately 30 hours from the Bangladesh coast. Ibid., p.113.
 93. Announcement by the Defence Secretary Melvin Laird, on 14 December, that the US had contingency plans for the evacuation of American citizens in Bangladesh, Jackson, p.139. See also the statement by a Pentagon spokesman Jerry W. Friedheim on 21 December 1971, AR 15-21 January 1972.
 94. Gupta, p.122. Also Sen Gupta, pp.423-424.
 95. Washington Post, 31 December 1971, cited in Gupta, p.120. According to Jack Anderson, the Soviet Ambassador to India, Nikolai M. Pegov was said to have opined that "the movement of the Seventh Fleet is an effort by the US to bully

India, to discourage it from striking against West Pakistan, and at the same time to boost the morale of the Pakistani forces". Article in Daily Telegraph, 10 January 1972, reproduced in Jackson, p.231.

96. A secret order from Washington asked the task force to conduct "Naval, air and surface operations as directed by higher authority in order to support US interests in the Indian Ocean area". Quoted by Jack Anderson in Washington Post, dated 31 December 1971, cited in Gupta, p.122. In a recent interview to Time, Richard Nixon disclosed that he visualised the Chinese "climbing the walls" and if Soviet reacted the US would have certainly joined in. In that case he was also "thinking of using the atom bomb". (Quoted in Times of India, 23 July 1985). That the US expected the Chinese to intervene directly in the Indo-Pak War has also been confirmed by Henry Kissinger in a recent interview to Washington Post (11 August 1985), as reported in Times of India, 13 August 1985.
97. On 15 December it was officially stated in Washington that the task force might help to evacuate Pakistani forces from the East after a cease fire. Jackson, p.139.
98. Assistant Secretary of State (NEEAR), Joseph Sisco's comment in 6 December WSAG meeting. Memo on 6 December Meeting, reproduced in Ibid., p.223.
99. Sen Gupta, p.427.
100. The fact that it took nearly 20 hours for the US to relay this message to India probably hinted at the possibility of the United States considering to take some overt action in the matter.
101. Krishnan, p.52.
102. Indira Gandhi, in a letter (7 June 1979) to Maj Gen Lachhman Singh (Retd), described the US move as "a threat to our sovereignty and interference in our internal affairs". Reproduced in Lachhman Singh (I), p.298.
103. Sharma, p.244.
104. Gupta, p.128.
105. Sharma, p.244.
106. Gupta, p.126.
107. Krishnan, p.57. According to Gupta, p.114, orders were issued to the pilots in the task force for readiness to man their aircraft.
108. Speech on 31 January 1972 at a Press Association luncheon reception held for the three Service Chiefs. Choudhry, pp.129-130.
109. Chopra (I), p.203.
110. Dawn (Karachi), 18 July 1983.

111. Khan, F.M., p.186.
112. From Official Records.
113. Salik, p.206. As against this as well as against all available evidence, Lt Gen Niazi, putting up a brave face, reportedly told correspondents in Dhaka: "It does not matter if we don't have enough men to defend the city. It is now a question of living or dying and we shall fight to the last man". Quoted in Mankekar, p.66.
114. Sukhwant Singh (I), p.221.
115. Ibid.
116. Salik, p.206.
117. Khan, F.M., p.187. Also Salik, p.207.
118. According to Maj Gen (Retd) DK Palit, the message of Lt Gen Niazi relayed to Washington reached Secretary of State William Rogers who in turn, conveyed it to the White House. From the White House came back word that a surrender by Niazi without the knowledge of his C-in-C Yahya Khan was unacceptable. Attempts were then made to contact Yahya Khan but he was not available. After fruitless efforts the whole night Yahya Khan could be contacted and his authorisation received only the next morning. Palit, p.135.
119. Khan, F.M., p.187.
120. Ibid., p.188.
121. From Official Records.
122. Ibid. The message was delivered to Niazi at 0020 hrs on 16 December.
123. From Official Records.
124. Ibid. Also Salik, p.209.
125. From Official Records.
126. Ibid.
127. Ibid.
128. Ibid.
129. Ibid.
130. This utter inadequacy of forces in Dhaka before surrender was hinted at the time when Pak Generals discussed as to what should be their response to the message sent by Maj Gen Gandharv to surrender. Maj Gen Farman Ali asked Niazi, in Punjabi "Kuj palley hai?" (Have you anything in the kitty?). Lt Gen Niazi looked towards Maj Gen Jamshed who nodded in negative. And then Maj Gen Nagra's message was responded to positively. Salik, pp. 203 & 210.
131. From Official Records.
132. COS, Pak Army in a signal to Niazi late at night on 15 December suggested that the terms laid down by India might be accepted as they appeared to meet his requirements. Khan, F.M., p.188.
133. But, in an interview to Asiaweek, AAK Niazi has blamed President Yahya Khan squarely for the surrender. Giving a different version of

developments, Niazi said: "We were willing to fight until the last man, the last bullet, but I was forced to surrender. (President) Yahya Khan sent me a message saying, 'I am proud of you but please surrender'". But Niazi disobeyed and vowed to fight till the end. Niazi recalled that Yahya Khan told Dr. Malik on telephone, "Tell that bloody man (i.e., Niazi) to stop". According to Niazi when Malik failed to convince him that surrender was the best course, Malik himself resigned. But on 15 December events on the West Pakistan borders took a turn for the worse, and Yahya made a last desperate attempt to get Niazi to lay down arms. "Continuing war" Yahya told Niazi, "could lead to further loss of life and destruction". Reluctantly, Niazi agreed to surrender next evening (i.e., on 16 December). "There was nothing (else) I could do", said AAK Niazi. "Whatever Happened To...", AAK Niazi, the Man who 'Lost' East Pakistan, Asiaweek reproduced in Nawa-i-Waqt (Rawalpindi), 16 February 1982.

134. From Official Records.
135. In a message to his troops in Bangladesh very early in the morning of 16 December, Lt Gen Niazi informed about the sequence of developments leading to his request for a ceasefire which was agreed to by India. "Regretfully", Niazi's message said, "it involves laying down of arms. Like good soldiers I expect that in the disciplined manner you will comply with this". The message then enumerated assurances given by COAS, India to him. The order was effective from 0500 hrs, 16 December. "You will stop all aggressive action and wait for my further instructions", the message said. Ibid.
136. Ibid.
137. Sukhwant Singh (I), p.213.
138. Ibid.
139. From Official Records.
140. Lachhman Singh (I), p.239.
141. According to Salik, Maj Gen Farman Ali objected to the clause pertaining to the 'Joint Command of India and Bangladesh'. Salik, p.211.
142. This account is based broadly on the account given in Official Records.
143. From Official Records.
144. Ibid.
145. Lachhman Singh (I), p.239.
146. Sukhwant Singh (I), p.214.
147. From Official Records.
148. Ibid.
149. Ibid.
150. Ibid.

151. Ibid.
152. Lachman Singh (I), p.242; Salik, pp.211-212.
153. From Official Records.
154. Ibid.
155. Ibid.
156. Ibid.
157. Ibid.
158. Ibid.
159. Ibid.
160. Ibid.
161. Ibid.
162. Ibid.
163. Ibid.
164. Ibid.
165. For details see Chapter XVIII.
166. Times of India, 17 December 1971.
167. Choudhry, p.79.
168. Times of India, 17 December 1971.
169. LSD, Vol.X, No.25, 16 December 1971.
170. AR, 15-21 January 1972.
171. LSD, Vol.X, No.26, 17 December 1971.
172. Ibid., No.27, 18 December 1971. A similar statement was made by Minister of State (Defence Production) in Rajya Sabha. RSD, Vol.78. No.27, 20 December 1971.
173. In an interview in Time, published on 26 December 1971, Nixon hinted at it while saying that there were no differences between the Soviet Union and the US at the end of the Bangladesh crisis and the Soviet restraint helped to bring about "the cease-fire that stopped what would inevitably have been the conquest of West Pakistan as well". Quoted in Jackson, p.140.
174. New York Times, 17 December 1971.
175. Sharma, R.S., p.142. In WSAG meeting on 6 December Richard Helms, Director, CIA, reportedly informed that the P.O.L. supply situation for Pakistan at that time "looked very bad. The overland L.O.C's from Iran, for example, were very tenuous". Memo on 6 December meeting, reproduced in Jackson, p.221.
176. Gen Hamid, COS, Pakistan Army, while ordering 'Freeze Tikka', gave two reasons for that - First the war was not going on well in 1 Corps area and secondly, he did not believe in the PAF's ability to support operations. F.M. Khan, p.217.
177. Dinesh, p.182. As a matter of fact, the State Department was reconciled to the loss of 'East Pakistan' from the beginning of the war (see Samuel de Palma's and Richard Helms statements in WSAG meeting on 4 December and 6 December reproduced in Jackson, pp.217 and 220. As early as 6 December 1971, top ranking US functionaries

like Dr. Kissinger, Ambassador Johnson, and Maurice Williams of AID had already started referring to 'East Pakistan' as Bangladesh. Ibid., p.221.

- 178. Dinesh, p.183.
- 179. Text of President Yahya Khan's broadcast, reproduced in Pakistan Horizon, Vol.XXV, No.1, p.144.
- 180. Dinesh, p.184.
- 181. From Official Records.
- 182. Ibid.
- 183. Ibid.
- 184. Ibid.
- 185. Ibid.
- 186. Ibid.
- 187. For details see Chapter XVIII.
- 188. From Official Records.
- 189. Ibid.
- 190. The exact estimate of expenditure, Rs.215,32,74,675/58 p. which included expenditure incurred on Pakistani PsOW under Indian protective custody upto 28 February 1974, is based on the Official Records.
- 191. Sethi, p.147.
- 192. Details of the areas are given in Chapter XVIII.
- 193. Sethi, p.148.

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