

ABSTRACT

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THE CHANGING PATTERNS OF BANGLADESH FOREIGN POLICY:  
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE MUJIB  
AND ZIA REGIMES (1971-1981)

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This study has highlighted the changes in Bangladesh foreign policy during the Mujib and Zia regimes. It has uncovered the fact that the foreign policy of the Sheikh Mujib regime was shaped by the principles of the national liberation war of Bangladesh (secularism and socialism) although the post-liberation reality demanded the supremacy of the national interest in the foreign policy formulation of the new nation. Because of Mujib's central priority on the principles of the national liberation war, his foreign policy was tilted towards India and the Soviet Union, as the two key international actors of Bangladesh's national liberation war. Due to their skeptical role in the liberation war the United States, China, and the Muslim world were kept away from the preferential treatment. As the Indo-Soviet allies failed to meet the emerging needs and growing economic crisis, Mujib's foreign policy failed to achieve the national interest and it proved dysfunctional.

On the other hand, following the eclipse of the Mujib regime and at the beginning of the Zia era, a thaw began in the foreign policy decision-making process of Bangladesh. Ziaur Rahman considered the national interest as a vantage point and put top priority on it (self preservation, economic advancement, safe-guarding as well as augmenting national power and upholding national ideology). In order to achieve the national interest Zia very promptly transformed Bangladesh's foreign policy from the Indo-Soviet orbit, got rid of the socialist yoke, and aligned with the United States, China, and the Muslim world triangle. Zia's redesigned foreign policy has successfully explored sufficient external resources to meet the mounting economic crisis and to a great extent contributed to the economic development of Bangladesh. Although the Indo-Soviet threat was posed to the state under Zia, the new alliance of the United States, China, and the Muslim world effectively forestalled the threat and the national interest was served better than during the Mujib regime.

THE CHANGING PATTERNS OF BANGLADESH FOREIGN POLICY:  
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE MUJIB AND ZIA REGIMES  
(1971-1981)

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Foreign policy of a nation encompasses more than its behavior in the world.<sup>1</sup> Actually, the foreign policy that a nation pursues is a means to an end. Foreign policy is important to any new state, for it helps the state to reaffirm its independence and articulate its identity.<sup>2</sup> The main goal behind foreign policy pursuance is to attain the objectives that the country sets before itself. These objectives necessarily vary from country to country. Generally, foreign policy objectives may be determined by geo-politics, historical urges, national interests, people's aspiration, ethnicity, elite perception, economic compulsion, religious feelings, value system, domestic politics, domestic policy and external environment. In fact, shaping the foreign policy of a country is a complex and complicated political decision, particularly for the small states in the Third World. Difficulties for the analysis of

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<sup>1</sup>James A. Nathan and James K. Oliver, Foreign Policy Making and the American Political System (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1983), 1.

<sup>2</sup>Robert L. Rothstein, The Weak in the World of the Strong: The Developing Countries in the International System (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), 105.

foreign policy are also more acutely evident in the Third World countries. Korany perceives the Third World's foreign policy as the underdeveloped area of study of the underdeveloped countries.<sup>3</sup>

In the words of Korany:

Basic handicaps in the analysis of Third World foreign policy, especially of the decision making process, are the lack of data and the cult of secrecy practiced by many state authorities. In many Third World countries, the press is both technically less developed and more "guided" than that in the West. Moreover, the inadequacy of documentary and archival facilities makes the analysis of decisions very hazardous.<sup>4</sup>

#### Statement of the Problem

Since its emergence in 1971, Bangladesh has been pursuing foreign policies in order to achieve its national interest. Because of its lack of adequate economic strength and military power, the foreign policy of Bangladesh seeks to balance and harmonize the domestic and external environments. The success of its foreign policy can be observed in the bilateral and multilateral context, where it has taken various measures in order to influence the international environment.

This study seeks to examine the changing patterns of the Bangladesh foreign policy in the context of domestic

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<sup>3</sup>Bahgat Korany, "The Take-off of Third World Studies: The Case of Foreign Policy," World Politics 35, no 3 (April 1983): 465.

<sup>4</sup>Bahgat Korany, How Foreign Policy Decisions are Made in the Third World: A Comparative Analysis (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1989), 91.

political changes. Changes in the foreign policy decision making of Bangladesh will be examined by comparing the foreign policy decisions of Sheik Mujibur Rahman (1971-1975) and Ziaur Rahman (1975-1981) regimes.<sup>5</sup>

In the aftermath of independence, Sheik Mujibur Rahman's regime formulated a foreign policy in the light of the Liberation War of Bangladesh, which was guided by his own political philosophy, "Mujibism," based on the principles of nationalism, socialism, secularism, and democracy. These were also adopted as the state principles of Bangladesh by the Mujib government. Because of their supportive role in the Liberation War of Bangladesh, and the secular and socialist state policies, naturally Bangladesh's foreign policy during the Mujib regime became aligned with the Indo-Soviet axis. After the coup d'état of August, 1975, with the end of the Mujib regime and with the advent of Ziaur Rahman as a strongman in Bangladesh politics, both the domestic and foreign policy of Bangladesh have changed. Zia brought some major changes in the domestic policy. He replaced the state principles of secularism and socialism with "absolute trust and faith in Almighty Allah (God) and economic and social justice."<sup>6</sup> Moreover, Zia

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<sup>5</sup>Mujib regime started from December, 1971 and ended in August 1975 and Zia regime started in August 1975 and ended in May 1981. Sheikh Mujibur-Rahman and Ziaur Rahman were popularly known as Mujib and Zia.

<sup>6</sup>The Bangladesh Observer (Dhaka: April 22, 1977).

introduced a free market economy at the domestic level. At the international level, Zia reversed course and established close linkage with Pakistan, China, the USA, and the Muslim world. Zia's foreign policy was shaped by Western liberalism, principles of Islamic solidarity and the principles of friendship to all and malice to none.

However, the purpose of this study is to examine the changes in Bangladesh foreign policy, by comparing the foreign policy decisions of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Ziaur Rahman. In order to focus on the process of changes, the author will analyze Bangladesh's relations with India, Pakistan, the United States, the Soviet Union, China and the Muslim world during the Mujib and Zia regimes.

The main purpose of this research is to detail and explain the changes in foreign relations of the Bangladesh with each state during the Mujib and Zia regimes (1971-1981).

### Definition of Key Concepts

#### Foreign Policy

By its nature, foreign policy is a problematic study and complex phenomenon. For its study, one has to go deep into the motivation of a nation. Because of its complex nature experts on international politics suggested treating foreign policy as a separate discipline. Generally, it is believed that foreign policy is a wheel through which the process of international politics operates. Conceptually,

foreign policy is that part of the national policy of a state which relates to the external environment.<sup>7</sup>

According to K.J. Holsti, "the action of a state towards international environment and the conditions, usually domestic, under which - these actions are formulated concerned essentially with foreign policy."<sup>8</sup> Prince Otto Von Bismark defined foreign policy as, "the extension of domestic policy."<sup>9</sup> Henry Kissinger has given a simplistic definition. He stated, "foreign policy begins where domestic policy ends."<sup>10</sup> Modelski has defined foreign policy as "the process whereby a state adjusts its actions to those of other states so as to minimize adverse actions and maximize the favorable actions of foreign states."<sup>11</sup>

For an operational definition of foreign policy we can say that, it consists of the course of actions which a state usually undertakes in its efforts to carry out its national objectives beyond the limits of its own jurisdiction.

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<sup>7</sup>Md. Halim, "Foreign Policy of Bangladesh: Framework of Analysis" in Ahamed Emajuddin (Ed.), Foreign Policy of Bangladesh: A Small States Imperatives, (Dhaka: University Press Limited, 1989), 7.

<sup>8</sup>K.J. Holsti, International Politics: A Framework of Analysis, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: 1967), 21.

<sup>9</sup>Md. Halim, 80.

<sup>10</sup> Henry A. Kissinger, "Domestic Structure and Foreign Policy" in George S. Masalanat and Gilbert Abcarian (Eds.), International Politics: Introductory Readings, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970), 155.

<sup>11</sup>George Modelski, A Theory of Foreign Policy (London: Pall Mall, 1962), 3.

### Small States

Defining small states is indeed problematic. There is no consensus on it and the studies on small states as separate entities are misleading. In fact, in an extreme case, Behar has been quite critical about the strength of the concept of small states as an analytical tool and suggested abandoning smallness as a focus for research.<sup>12</sup> Others are not however, that rigid in their attitude towards this concept. Maniruzzaman thinks that the definition of small states depends upon its use.<sup>13</sup> Initially, the small states were identified as so because of their small geographical size.<sup>14</sup> However, now-a-days size alone does not define a small state. Size is now taken only as one of many criteria's. With the changing conditions of the world the definition and indication of small states have also been changing. It is argued by some scholars that the small states are very much dependent on larger countries. This is a contributory factor for their underdevelopment. Due to the existence of these dependency relationships, the small states are the underdogs, while the larger ones benefit out

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<sup>12</sup>R. Behar, "Small States: A Tool for Analysis" in World Politics 27, no. 3 (1975), 456-457.

<sup>13</sup>Talukder Maniruzzaman, The Security of Small States in the Third World (Canberra: Australian National University, 1982), 15.

<sup>14</sup>Percy Selwyn, "Introduction: Room for Maneuver" in Development Policy in Small Countries (London: Grooms Helms in Association with the Institute of Defense Studies, Sussex, 1975), 8.



of this dependence. According to Percy Selwyn there are five major areas where small states are dependent.<sup>15</sup>

1. Political Status
2. Monetary Policies
3. Trade
4. Aid
5. Operation of Multinational Corporations (MNCs)

1. Political Status. Politically, the small states are the client states of rich larger countries and in practice have no truly sovereign political existence. They can not determine what decision is to be taken, how to be taken, and for whom to be taken. All these are determined by the patron countries.

2. Trade. The heavy dependence of small states on external trade is very much evident. Moreover, they hold no influence on the market. This dependence can be compounded by extreme export specialization.

3. Monetary Policies. Small states are also dependent in respect of monetary policies. This is an area where there is more opportunity for maneuver. Many countries tie the value of their currencies to some of the international currencies such as the dollar, franc, or sterling and the world monetary crisis has forced small states to share some of these adverse effects.

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 20.

4. Aid. The aid relationship between donor countries and small recipient countries is well known as dominance of dependency between the donor countries and the small aid recipient countries. The donor countries dictate political and economic strategies in the recipient countries.

5. Operation of Multinational Corporations (MNCs). The Multinational Corporations invest their capitals in small states and expropriate the economic surplus from these countries. Selwyn has further shown the following features of small states from the economic point of view:<sup>16</sup>

1. Small poor states cannot afford equally protective tariff structure and may indeed have few industries to protect.
2. The small states are not self-contained in terms of factors of production.
3. Small states are generally more specialized in single commodity production and their internal economies are very weakly integrated.

Maniruzzaman is in favor of constructing a composite scores of war capability for each nation from the two quantitative criteria - GNP and military budget in order to identify the small states.<sup>17</sup> After careful examination of the above definitions, we would like to go for a weighted composite index to identify small states. We would thus call all those states of Asia, Africa, and Latin America as

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<sup>16</sup>Percy Selwyn, "Industrial Development in Peripheral Small Countries" in Development Policy in Small Countries (Groom Helm, London: in Association with the Institute of Development Studies, Sussex, 1975), 77-78.

<sup>17</sup>Maniruzzaman, 15.

small, which are characterized by: (1) small size, (2) low per capita income compared to industrialized countries, (3) high dependence on foreign capital, (4) weak defense capability, and (5) massive poverty.

### Capability

The elements of national power of a country constitute the capability of the nation to pursue foreign policy. Foreign policy formulation itself is concerned with striking an even balance between capability available to and objectives desired by that nation. When both capability and policy goals are in an even balance, we speak of national policy. But, when they are not, which is often the case, either capability or policy objectives is to be modified. Robinson has aptly pointed out:

Foreign policy goals must not range beyond the power available, for although national desires for good and for evil are infinite, the resources for obtaining them are strictly limited.<sup>18</sup>

### Domestic Policy

Generally, domestic policy of a nation consists of its governmental policy towards the political system, domestic economic policy and its social policy. Domestic policy and foreign policy together form the national policy of a state. Foreign policy is usually based on the requirements of the domestic policy. As Padelford, Lincoln and Olvey say:

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<sup>18</sup>Quoted in Md. Abdul Halim, 10.

Foreign and domestic policy must be mutually supporting, if national policy aspiration is to be achieved in an atmosphere of political stability.<sup>19</sup>

Perhaps, this dictum is more appropriate for Bangladesh where almost 60 percent of the annual budget and 80% of the development budget is financed by external assistance. In Bangladesh, foreign policy really begins at home. Each year the domestic policy makers appraise the foreign policy makers of the amount of foreign aid which would be needed for that year and the latter formulate foreign policy accordingly.

#### Domestic Politics

The domestic politics of a democratic country has important role on its foreign policy. The domestic politics consists of domestic political situations, psychology of the people, hopes and aspirations of the people, ethnic interest groups and special interest groups' attitudes, etc. Regarding domestic politics, Alan C. Isaak has pointedly argued: "To change any nations foreign policy its internal structure must change."<sup>20</sup>

The policy makers must try to understand the domestic politics. If they ignore it, they may not remain in power.

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<sup>19</sup>Norman J. Padelford, George A. Lincoln, and Lee D. Olvey, "The Dynamics of International Politics (New York: Macmillian Publishing Co. Inc., 1976), 201.

<sup>20</sup>Alan C. Isaak, Scope and Method of Political Science (Chicago, Dorsay, 1977).

This is true in the case of both democracy and totalitarian systems. Professor Northedge has rightly pointed out:

The formation of foreign policy...represents on domestic side, a continuous series of compromises and adjustments between the different elements of government and social structure.<sup>21</sup>

### The International Environment

The international environment refers to the attributes of the international system and to the characteristics and behaviors of the actors comprising it. It includes all aspects of external environment of a country or any action occurring abroad that conditions or otherwise influences the choices made by its officials.<sup>22</sup> Another way of defining international environment is to say that the international environment refers broadly to the impact of the state of the world on the particular state. The international environment exerts an important influence on the foreign policy of a country. The configuration of the international system on the distribution of power worldwide, may favor a country to pursue certain courses of action and the same condition may set limits to the maneuverability of another state.

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<sup>21</sup>F.S. Northedge, "The Nature of Foreign Policy" in F.S. Northedge (Ed.), The Foreign Policy of the Powers (London: Faber and Faber, 1968), 27.

<sup>22</sup>Charles W. Kegley, Jr. and Eugene R. Wittkopf, American Foreign Policy: Pattern and Process (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), 17-18.

### The Muslim World

The Muslim World consists of both of those states which are ruled by Islamic laws and those which are not ruled by the Islamic laws. But the rulers and majority of the population of these countries are Muslim. The Islamic world is comprised of those Muslim states which are exclusively ruled by the strict principles of Quran and Sunnah. Though very often both the terms of the Muslim world and Islamic world are used interchangeably, the two terms are different in real sense.

### Geo-politics

Rudolf Kjellen, a Swedish geographer first used the term geo-politics to describe the geo-political base of national power. In the Inter-War Period, the followers of Kjellen used geo-politics to develop a framework for German National Expansion. According to Karl Haushofer, geo-politics represented the relationship of political phenomena to geography.<sup>23</sup> James E. Dougherty and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr. argues that geo-political analysis is based upon a scientific knowledge of geography and its relationship to technology, resources and population.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Quoted in James E. Dougherty and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr., Contending Theories of International Relations (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1990), 64-65.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 65.

### State Actors

It implies that nation states play the role of key actors in framing the foreign policy of a nation. Bangladesh is no exception of this pattern. In the foreign policy decision-making process of Bangladesh, the impact of the state of the world plays a very crucial role both at political and economic levels. The behavior of other states directed towards Bangladesh influences the foreign policy makers of the country.

### Non State Actors

The "non state actors" are also very important variables in the foreign policy formulation of Bangladesh. It includes international intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), non governmental organizations (NGOs), and multinational corporations (MNCs). Non state actors have provided both forums for international contact and the glue of interdependence.

### Methodology

The methodological approach used in this study is an exploratory approach. This approach is used because it provides an opportunity for the researcher to undertake a comprehensive explanation and analysis of many components for the subject matter. While the hypothetical method, which is based on pre-conceived ideas or beliefs, which tend to confirm or disconfirm the hypothesis, it sometimes may lead

the researcher towards a biased study. Moreover, as I am not pre-occupied with any belief or hypothesis, regarding the foreign policy of Bangladesh I have chosen the method of exploratory study for conducting this research. By using this method an attempt will be made to collect and examine data on the foreign relations of Bangladesh in order to focus upon the changing patterns of Bangladesh foreign policy during the Mujib and Zia regimes (1971-1981).

For this study, data will be collected from both primary and secondary sources, viz: Government documents, independent reports, scholarly and journalistic articles, newspaper reports, and from published text and unpublished theses and dissertations. More specifically, primary sources include:

#### Documents

Bangladesh Documents, Congressional Records Department of State Bulletin, Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, and Ronald Reagan; Presidential Papers of Jimmy Carter: (White House Central Files [WHCF], Executive File, Name File and General File); The Anderson Papers, The Carnegie Papers, The American Universities Field Staff Report, Documents of the Bangladesh Government, viz; The E.R.D. Brief, The Flow of External Resources into Bangladesh, White Papers on the Ganges Water Dispute, The Amnesty International Report, Stockholm, International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)



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#### The Speeches and Statements

Jawharlal Nehru, M.A. Jinnah, Liakat Ali-Khan, H.S. Suhrawardi, Indira Gandhi, Z.A. Bhutto, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Ziaur-Rahman, and Maulana Bashani.

#### Political Auto-Biographies

A.K. Azad, India Wins Freedom.

Z.A. Bhutto, The Myth of Independence.

Ayub Khan, Friends Not Master.

Benazir, Bhutto, The Daughter of the East.

#### Secondary Sources Include

1. a. Articles in Professional Journals, viz, Foreign Affairs Foreign Policy. World Politics. The National Interest. Current History. ORBIS, Pacific Affairs. Asian Survey. Asian Studies. Asian Affairs. The Journal of Developing Areas. South Asian Review, World Affairs. Economic and Political Weekly, World View. International Affairs. BIISS Journal. Regional Studies. Journal of Comparative Politics. Pakistan Horizon. Indian Political Science Review, Problems of Communism, Current Digest of the Soviet Press. The American-Asian Review. The Australian Journal of Politics and History. Journal of Asian and African Studies. Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies.

b. Moscow Review. USSR and The Third World. Reprint from The Soviet Press, etc.

2. Books. Books related to Bangladesh politics and foreign policy.

3. Newspapers. The Bangladesh Observer, The Bangladesh Times, The Daily Ittefaq, New York Time. Washington Post. Baltimore Sun. The Time (London). The Observer (London). The Guardian (London). The Pravda (from the current digest of the Soviet Press). The Statesman. The Hindustan Times. The Patriot.

4. News Magazines. Time. Newsweek. U.S. News and World Report. The Economist. Far Eastern Economic Review. The Peking Review. The Bichitra, The Robbar, The Dhaka Courier.

5. Unpublished Works.

6. Thesis and Dissertations.

#### Research Nature and Research Questions

The nature of this research is an exploratory study. In order to carry out the exploration, the following research questions will be addressed in this study:

1. What were the underlying reasons behind the Indo-Soviet support in the Liberation War of Bangladesh? and Why did the USA, China and the Muslim World oppose it?

2. Why and how did the Mujib regime follow a "tilt" policy towards the Indo-Soviet axis?

3. Why did Bangladesh-Pakistan relations remain stagnant during the Mujib regime?

4. Why did the Mujib regime fail to develop a friendly and cooperative relationship with the US, China, and the Muslim world?

5. Why and how did Ziaur Rahman transform Bangladesh foreign policy from an Indo-Soviet orbit to a Western, Chinese and Muslim world triangle?

6. Why and how did Ziaur Rahman shift Bangladesh-Pakistan relations from confrontation to co-operation?

7. What kind of impact did the Western, Chinese, and Muslim world have on Ziaur Rahman's foreign policy?

8. What kind of impact did the Indo-Soviet alliance have on Ziaur Rahman's government?

9. What were the major foreign policy changes of Zia as compared to Mujib?

#### Theoretical Framework

A sound and well defined theoretical framework is an essential prerequisite for a scientific inquiry in social science research. Since no single theoretical framework is sufficient to explain a total picture of social reality, it is difficult to establish a theoretical framework in order to analyze the political reality in international relations. Because of the ever changing nature and fluid and dynamic character of the field, where multiple actors, issues and events interact with multi-dimensional goals and objectives, it is not so easy to analyze international relations, especially foreign policy in a rigid theoretical framework.

However, this study will be based on the theory of "national interest."

The modern concept of "national interest" in the study of international relations/politics originated after the emergence of nation-states. It has started to be used in international relations with the emergence of European-nation states in the 16th and the 17th centuries. The date usually given is that of the Westphalian state system that was established in 1648.<sup>25</sup> The concept of "national interest" evolved hand in hand with the evolution of national state system, the increase in influence of political control and the great expansion of economic relations.<sup>26</sup> National interest refers to matters important enough to a nation-state to become a goal of national policies.<sup>27</sup> There are different types of national interest; political, economic, ideological, military-security and socio-cultural. National interests are reflected both in domestic and external policies. Shifts and changes in the domestic coalitions and international relations may require a re-definition of

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<sup>25</sup>The Westphalian state system recognized equal sovereignty of European states, i.e., territorial integrity, neutrality as well as the right to preserve and promote their national interests. See, Lynn H. Miller, Global Order: Values and Power in International Policies (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1985), 17-34.

<sup>26</sup>Charles A. Beard, The Idea of National Interest (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1966), 21.

<sup>27</sup>Golam Mostafa, "National Interest and Foreign Policy: A Case Study of Bangladesh's Relations with the Former Soviet Union, 1980-1990"; Department of Political Science, Carleton Univ., Ottawa, Canada; An Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, 117.

national interest by a nation-state. Political, economic and technological changes also redistribute power, both at domestic and international levels, which may likewise compel nation-states to redefine their national interests.<sup>28</sup>

Although the term "national interest" has become widely used in the post-World War II period, particularly in defining and executing U.S. foreign policy, the concern among analysts, leaders and policy planners, for what comes to be seen as national interest started long ago. For example, in the late 19th century, Alfred Mahan defined national interest as the prime consideration of diplomacy and held:

Self interest is not only a legitimate, but a fundamental cause for national policy; one which need no cloak of hypocrisy...it is vain to expect governments to act continuously on any other ground than national interest. They have no right to do so, being agents and not principals.<sup>29</sup>

Although during the inter-war period, the idealist-utopian views dominated the international relations theory, the national interest was considered as the guiding force for U.S. foreign policy. U.S. Secretary of the State Charles Hughes stated in 1924:

Foreign policies are not built upon abstractions. They are the results of national interest arising

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<sup>28</sup>Robert Gilpin, War and Change in World Politics (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 13.

<sup>29</sup>Alfred T. Mahan, The Interest in America in Sea Power - Present and Future (Boston: Little and Brown, 1895); quoted in Golam Mastafa, 20.

from some immediate exigency or standing out vividly in historical perspective.<sup>30</sup>

While Charles A. Beard described national interest:

...as a pivot of diplomacy is now universally employed in international relations. Indeed it may be said that national interest -- its maintenance, advancement and defense by the various means and instrumentalities of political power -- is the prime consideration of diplomacy.<sup>31</sup>

Some scholars argue that national interest may be pursued for both offensive and defensive purposes and thus may be defined in an expansionist as well as in defensive matrix. It has been used to justify expansion and promotion of political, economic and ideological objectives globally as well as to secure the minimalist objectives of survival and the protection and preservation of a nation-state's sovereignty.<sup>32</sup>

In international relations, actually the concept of "national interest" is debatable and controversial. The term has been widely used by analysts, political leaders, diplomats and bureaucrats, but it has never been properly conceptualized. Different criteria have been used to define national interest. Stephen Krasner, for example, considered material objectives and ambitious ideological goals as

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<sup>30</sup>Charles Hughes, International Conciliation 194 (January 1924): 3.

<sup>31</sup>Charles A. Beard, The Idea of National Interest (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1966) 21.

<sup>32</sup>Golam Mostafa, 23.

national interests.<sup>33</sup> While Donald Nuechterlein used four aspects of national interest:

1. Defense interest; the protection of the nation-state and its citizens from the threat of physical violence by another country.
2. Economic interest; the enhancement of the nation-state's economic well-being in relations with other states.
3. World-order interest; the maintenance of an international political and economic system in which the nation-state can feel secure.
4. Geological interest; the protection and furtherance of a set of values which the citizens of a nation share and believe to be universally good.<sup>34</sup>

Neuchterlein's analysis provided a useful general framework for understanding the concept of "national interest" in its objective aspects. But, it ignored the subjective aspects that can be crucial because national interest is often defined and influenced by intangible factors such as attitudes, perceptions and priorities of given regimes, leaders or societies. Moreover, "national interest" is a very relative term. It also varies from time to time. Since nation-states are the products of historical experience, national interests also shaped by history. It changes, reshapes, and modifies by history. During the Cold War, for

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<sup>33</sup>Stephen Krasner, Defending the National Interest: Raw Materials, Investment and U.S. Foreign Policy (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1978), 10.

<sup>34</sup>Donald Nuechterlein, "The Concept of National Interest: A Time for New Approach," Orbis (Spring 1979): 85.

example, national interest became almost synonymous with national security. But, now that security perceptions are changing, many nations have become more concerned with their social, economic and environmental interests.

In the absence of universal definition of national interest, there are doubts among two groups of scholars. The first group of realists, define national interest solely in terms of material--military, political and economic. Others, on the other hand, insist that national interest should be defined more broadly. James Billington, for example, argues that national interest should be understood both in terms of material and non-material aspects.<sup>35</sup>

The realists' view of national interest is mainly derived from the notion of "raison d'etat" or state interest. For them, national interest is an objective category which is universally valid and is unaffected by the circumstances of time and place.<sup>36</sup> Classical realists consider national interest as a "perennial standard" or a "motive force" by which political actions of states should be guided:

According to Hans J. Morgenthau:

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<sup>35</sup>James H. Billington, "Reflections on the Non-Material Aspects of National Interests" in Professor Gifford (Ed.), The National Interest of the United States (Washington, D. C., Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars; University Press of America, 1981), 180-183.

<sup>36</sup>Hans J. Morgenthau, Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), 4.



It is not only a political necessity but also moral duty for a nation to follow in its dealings with other nations but one guiding star, one standard for thought, one rule of action; the national interest.<sup>37</sup>

The realists define national interests in terms of high politics (politics, military and security), not "low politics" (trade, finance, and monetary-exchange).

The realists' view of national interest seriously influenced U.S. foreign policy planning and execution in the post-World War II era. Henry Kissinger and Zbigniew Brezezinski were two of the realists who held high office in U.S. administrations, and brought new meaning and understanding to the concept of national interest in terms of security and finance.

Henry Kissinger's main preoccupation was to maintain international order, security and legitimacy. According to him, stability comes from legitimacy and legitimate order limits the scope for conflicts and guarantees the interest of all states by maintaining equilibrium.<sup>38</sup>

While Brezezinski defined national interest in terms of power and security, but involved wider considerations of political state craft, economic strength, technological innovation and ideological vitality.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>Hans J. Morgenthau, 10.

<sup>38</sup>Henry Kissinger, World Restored (New York: Library Grosset and Dunlop, 1964).

<sup>39</sup>Zbigniew Brezezinski, Between Two Ages: American Role in the Technetronic Era (New York: The Viking Press, 1970). Also see Zbigniew

While defining national interest, Irving Kristol has presented a series of definitions:

1. It is our national interest that no other super power emerge whose political and social values are profoundly hostile to our own.
2. It follows that it is our national interest that those nations which largely share our political principles and social values should be protected from those that do not.
3. Our relations with the other nations of the world will be decided candidly on a case by case basis. To the degree that any...nation has a foreign policy friendly towards us, we will surly be disposed to be friendly to it. To the degree that it displays hostility, we will reciprocate. Similarly to the degree that any country adapts its socio-economic-political arrangements to correspond to this prevailing in the west, we will find it easier to be more intimate in our friendship. To the degree that it does not, our relations will be at best cool and correct.
4. But what about the moral dimension of American foreign policy? It has always been there and since we are a traditional nation founded on a liberal creed, it always will be there.<sup>40</sup>

On the other hand Samuel P. Huntington, in his "Advice for a Democratic President," has equated national interest with economic renewal. According to him, the first priority of American foreign policy is economic renewal of the United States. Huntington said:

It is a long term imperative which requires fundamental changes in the major elements of American life and culture. Yet it is essential both to future American prosperity and to the

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Brezekinski, In Quest of National Security (Boulder & London: Westview Press, 1988).

<sup>40</sup>Irving Kristol, "Defining Our National Interest," The National Interest (Fall 1990): 16.

future American role to the world. The need for economic renewal is written in clear, familiar and dismal facts of the American economic performances and of the forces that shape economic performance include G.N.P. growth, productivity growth, technological innovations, saving rates, investment levels, educational quality, production of scientists and engineers and resources committed to research and development.<sup>41</sup>

While arguing for economic renewal Huntington further said, in the new world environment economic power is what counts.<sup>42</sup> Finally in his concluding argument he said:

The United States can only be involved and exercise leadership in the world, if it is economically dynamic, productive, and strong. To stay abroad, America must come home. And it must come home not to indulge or isolate itself, but to know itself.<sup>43</sup>

Since there is no universal definition of national interest, no matter whatever debates and differences are existing between the realists and the others, the definition of national interest depends on its use, and the fact remains that national interest plays a key role in shaping the foreign policy of a country.

According to Sondermann:

National interest is an effort to describe the underlying rationale for the behavior of states and statesman in a threatening international environment.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>Samuel Huntington, "Advice for a Democratic President: The Economic Renewal of America," The National Interest (Spring 1992): 14.

<sup>42</sup>Huntington, *Ibid.*, 17

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>44</sup>Fred A. Sondermann, The Theory and Practice of International Relations, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1978), 35.

In the foreign policy decision making process of a country, national interests are the ultimate determinants that the decision makers of a state ought to follow in formulating their foreign policy. National interests are typically seen as general conceptions of those essential elements that make up a state's most vital needs. Invariably, these include self-preservation, independence, territorial integrity, military, security, and economic well being.<sup>45</sup>

Regarding national interest, Mohammed Ali, Pakistan's ex-foreign minister has argued:

In international relations, there can be no eternal friends, nor can there be eternal enemies. The only thing eternal is the national interest. History teaches us that England and France have been fighting for a hundred years, and today, they are friends. We also know that during the last war, America and Russia fought together side by side, but today, they are at logger heads. So there is no eternal friendship in international relations and there is no eternal enmity.<sup>46</sup>

Ideally, national leaders and policy makers are charged with the responsibility of equally promoting and defending national interests. But sometimes such a task becomes almost an impossible one to accomplish. Hans J. Morgenthau

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<sup>45</sup>Thomas A. Bailey, A Diplomatic History of the American People (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1979), 1-2.

<sup>46</sup>Md. Ahsen Chaudhury, "Foundation of Pakistan's Foreign Policy" in Latif Admed Sherwani, et al., (Ed.), The Foreign Policy of Pakistan: An Analysis" (Karachi: Allies Book Corporation, 1964), 26.

clearly elucidated the importance of the national interest in international politics as follows:

...while the concern of politics with interest is perennial, the connection between interest and the national state is a product of history. The national state itself is obviously a product of history and as such is destined to yield in time to different modes of political organization. As long as the world is politically organized into nations, the national interest is indeed the last word in international politics.<sup>47</sup>

Although national interests may stand above particular interest and may be the last word in international politics, they also raise serious controversies, such as: a) What exactly the national interests of a nation are in any given situation: b) Whether or not they are being seriously threatened by external forces, and c) How best to promote and/or defend them.<sup>48</sup> Despite the controversies, nation states in the contemporary state system interact with one another and they promote and defend their national interests. Differences in national interests of states may lead to actual conflict, but such a clash "has never precluded reconciliation or even cooperation among nations in other areas."<sup>49</sup> According to Duchacek, "when the interests of several nations seriously clash, it does not mean that these nations are in national opposition at all times in all

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<sup>47</sup>Hans J. Morgenthau, Dilemmas of Politics (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 67-68.

<sup>48</sup>Ivo D. Duchacek, Nations and Men (Hinsdale: Dryden Press, 1975), 19.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid, 121.

respects."<sup>50</sup> Nation states sometime have harmonious interests, when they do, they often work together to solve mutual problems.

The theory of national interest is being used as the main theoretical framework for analyzing Bangladesh foreign policy. However, this study will not be guided by only one theoretical framework, because of its disadvantages of limiting us from exploring other competing and relevant theories that will be significant to the study. For example, David Easton has provided a rationale behind the limitations of paradigms. He has remarked:

Each type of theoretical orientation brings to surface a different set of problems, provides unique insight and emphasis and thereby makes it possible for an alternative and even competing theories to be equally and simultaneously useful though often for quite different purposes.<sup>51</sup>

#### State of Existing Literature

It is quite evident that apart from primary sources, review of some of the existing literature on the area, constitutes and gives focus to the present study. In this regard, the literature review covers the literature dealing with the Bangladesh politics and Bangladesh foreign policy in general and Bangladesh's relation with its neighbors and

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<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

<sup>51</sup>David Easton, A Framework for Political Analysis (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1967), 23.

great powers in particular, which will greatly facilitate the study by focusing on the tasks of this inquiry.

The relevant and useful literature on the subject can be classified to the following categories:

In the first place some studies unfolded the role of the great powers in the liberation war of Bangladesh.<sup>52</sup>

G.W. Chaudhury's work has shown the role of India, the Soviet Union, China and the USA in the Bangladesh crisis. His analysis reveals that it was India, which exploited the internal situation of the hostile neighbor Pakistan and enhanced the independence of Bangladesh. Among many reasons, he has uncovered that India cherished those values, which Sheik Mujibur Rahman (The Architect of Bangladesh Movement) had.<sup>53</sup> He also has maintained that Indian interaction in Bangladesh was against the UN charter and the bilateral agreements between India and Pakistan.

About the role of the Soviet Union in the Bangladesh crisis, Chaudhury has claimed that the Soviet Union supported the Bangladesh crisis in order to protect its own strategic interest in the subcontinent.

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<sup>52</sup>For example, G. W. Chaudhury, The Last Days of United Pakistan (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979); Mizanur Rahman Shelly, Emergence of a New Nation in a Multi-Polar World: Bangladesh (Dhaka: University Press Limited, 1979).

<sup>53</sup>G.W. Chaudhury, The Last Days of United Pakistan (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1974), 210.

Chaudhury's comments regarding the role of the Soviet Union is quite valid and acceptable, but it requires the explanation of Soviet strategic interest.

Regarding the role of China in the Liberation War of Bangladesh, Chaudhury argued that ideologically the Bangladesh movement was not a true national liberation war, because the movement had started with the help of India and the Soviet Union under a bourgeois party. From the standpoint of Peking, it was a conflict between two bourgeois elites - one in East Pakistan and the other in West Pakistan. So obviously, China supported the Pakistan government which had supported China faithfully in the Sino-Soviet rivalry in the area.

About the role of the US in the Liberation War of Bangladesh, the author clearly pointed out that the Nixon Administration wanted to have a political settlement of the Bangladesh crisis within the federal structure of Pakistan.

In his conclusion, Chaudhury has pointed out that India's military success in the third Indo-Pakistan War was almost a foregone conclusion.<sup>54</sup> This kind of argument is based on sound evidence and information and acceptable. But overall, Chaudhury's analysis, does not necessarily cover any aspect of Bangladesh foreign policy. It only focuses on the role of major powers in the Liberation War of Bangladesh.

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<sup>54</sup>G.W. Chaudhury, 228.



Mizanur Ruhaman Shelly's work has concentrated on the role of the super powers during the Bangladesh crisis. Shelly's book has set the discussion in the perspective of international power game, the origin and development of Bengali nationalism, the nature of Indian role in the liberation war of Bangladesh, the role of the Soviet Union, China and the US during the Bangladesh struggle of 1971.

Shelly's analysis regarding the role of the Soviet Union in the liberation war unfolded a new dimension. The author established this thesis that the reason behind the Soviet siding with India against Pakistan was to contain and encircle China. In fact, it was a part of Brezhnev's collective security plan in Asia, which Brezhnev announced in 1969 as the first secretary of the Soviet Communist Party. It was as follows: "the course of events is also putting on the agenda, the task of creating a system of collective security in Asia."<sup>55</sup>

But what important aspects are missing in Shelly's work? At first, Shelly has failed to show why the Soviets had to involve so deeply in the crisis. Actually, of all the super powers Russia was mostly interested in the Bangladesh movement because of geo-political reasons. Similarly, Shelly presented the role of China in the Bangladesh liberation war in an oversimplified way. According to Shelly "...the Chinese government remained silent with the East Bengal

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<sup>55</sup>Cited in Mizanur Rahman Shelly, 107.

issue.<sup>56</sup> In fact, this kind of comment simply misleads the researchers toward neutral political analysis. The fact was that from the very beginning to the end of the Bangladesh crisis, China strongly sided with Pakistan.<sup>57</sup>

Regarding role of the U.S.A. in the liberation war, the author mentioned that during the first phase of Bangladesh's liberation war, the U.S. posture was neutral and it described the problem in East Bengal as Pakistan's internal matter. The second phase started with the secret trip by Henry Kissinger, to China in July 1971. This marked the real beginnings of the Sino-U.S. detente. The third phase covered the period of Indo-Pakistan War. During this period, the United States backed Pakistan and accused India for the escalation of hostilities.<sup>58</sup>

In the broad analysis, it appeared that although Shelly's work lacks conceptual framework and provides very brief analysis, it is true that his work is informative and insightful. Nevertheless, it will help make insightful analysis on the great powers role in the liberation war of Bangladesh.

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<sup>56</sup>Shelly, 107.

<sup>57</sup>G.W. Chaudhury, 210-214; and also see Tariq Ali, "Pakistan and Bangladesh: Results and Prospects in Robin Blackburn (Ed.), Explosion in a Sub Continent (Penguin Books, 1975), 321.

<sup>58</sup>Shelly, 116-117.

The second category of studies<sup>59</sup> focuses on the international relations of the South Asian countries.

Brown's work is an account of history and contemporary social and political conditions of the subcontinent. The author unfolded the relations of South Asian countries with the United States from pre-independence period to the emergence of Bangladesh.

Palmer's study primarily deals with the internal dynamics and external policies of India and Pakistan with the historical background of their unhappy state of relations and the United States-South Asian contacts. It provides historical evidence and information regarding agreements and disagreements of the South Asian two hostile neighbors with the United States. It's a classic work of the author on South Asian international relations.

The third type of studies<sup>60</sup> deals with different aspects of Bangladesh foreign policy and various aspects of Great Power's South Asian Policy.

Lawrence Ziring's work is the testimony to the intense interest generated by events in South and Southeast Asia. The central thread of this study, however, is the posture of

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<sup>59</sup>W. Norman Brown, The United States and India, Pakistan, Bangladesh (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972). Norman D. Palmer, South Asia and the United States Policy (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1966).

<sup>60</sup>Lawrence Ziring (Ed.), The Subcontinent in the World Politics: India, Its Neighbors and the Great Powers (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1978).

the great powers. The probable aims and movements of the former Soviet Union and the United States in the region are given careful attention, and efforts are made to trace their historic involvement as well as project future attitude and performance.

Actually, this book is a collection of several articles. The first article of the book is, "South Asian Tangles and Triangles," written by Lawrence Ziring. In his article, Ziring has shown Indo-Bangladesh bilateral relations. His analysis is based on Mujib and Zia regimes. The main argument of the author is that the Mujib governments main source of power was his total dependence on India.

No doubt Mujib government was considered as a puppet government of India, but the problem of Ziring's analysis is that his observation lacks proper analysis and explanation for such a dependence on India.

On the other hand, the author has shown that Bangladesh-India relations took a turn for the worse with the assassination of Sheik Mujibur Ruhaman and the beginning of the Ziaur Ruhaman regime. At this time, Indian government tried to destabilize Zia's government.

Ziring in his article has covered various aspects of Bangladesh-India bilateral relations, but his analysis is very brief.

The second article of the book, "India and its Neighbors: Regional Foreign and Security Policies" is written by Leo E. Rose. The author has analyzed the Indian policy towards its neighbors. He has maintained that Indian foreign policy is based on universalistic moral principles of anti-colonialism, anti-neo-colonialism, and sovereign equality of all nation states, but when it gets down to immediate and vital interests, India has taken a hard line and shown uncompromising attitude.

While analyzing Bangladesh-India relations, the author characterized Bangladesh as a client/state of India. In his very brief discussion, the author did not analyze any variable responsible for the patron-client relations. Similarly, the author has mentioned that after the fall of the Mujib regime, Dhaka had cautiously redefined its foreign policy and the policy makers in Dhaka became hesitant to involve in any Indian devised regional security system. In order to prove such statements, sufficient information, evidence and analysis are required.

The fourth type of studies<sup>61</sup> exclusively focused on the changing relationship of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh with the great powers. Chaudhury's work makes a perceptive analysis of the main areas of agreements and disagreements between Pakistan, India and Bangladesh with the United

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<sup>61</sup>G. W. Chaudhury, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and the Major Powers (New York: Free Press, 1975); William J. Brands, India, Pakistan and the Great Powers (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1972).

States, the Soviet Union, and China. Chaudhury also unfolded the evolving process of Bangladesh in the context of the super power rivalry in South Asia. He further accounted the alliance and counter alliance of the South Asian states since the 1950s. It focuses on the roles of the great powers in the South Asian subcontinent and on the complex relationship in the context for power, influence and capability. Although Chaudhury's work is understandably biased (the author was cabinet member of the Pakistan government under President Yahya Khan). The overall study is very informative, analytical and insightful.

Brand's study focuses on the key policy issues and decisions and the pattern of relations between India and Pakistan, complicated by great powers. The author unfolded the role of the United States in South Asia after the demise of World War II and the end of colonialism. This volume provides many useful historical evidences and information which enabled the United States to help build its present state of relations, with the South Asian States.

After carefully reviewing the above scholarly literature's it has become evident that, most of the studies are concerned with the liberation war and the Mujib Regime (1971-1975). Not a single study is based on comparative foreign policy analysis of the Mujib and Zia Regimes. In addition, almost all the studies ignored the Bangladesh's relation with the Muslim World. The most remarkable and

common lapse of all literature is that they have not studied the foreign policy of Bangladesh within a systematic theoretical framework. The present study is an attempt in this direction.

#### Significance of the Study

This study is of enormous significance for an understanding of the foreign policy of Bangladesh. It focuses upon the changing patterns of Bangladesh foreign policy during the Mujib and Zia regimes (1971-1981). In fact, no comprehensive study has so far been conducted on the foreign policy of Bangladesh, especially on these two major regimes. This study is the first academic inquiry in the context and content of the comparative foreign policy of Bangladesh.

I hope it will enrich the existing literature on the subject. This study will contribute to related literatures, in political science, International relations, Diplomatic history, comparative politics, comparative foreign policy, and International Political-Economy. The information and analysis presented in this study will be useful to the students, scholars, and policy makers, who are working on the foreign policy of Bangladesh. This study is also considered significant because it suggests a new area or line of inquiry. It raises new questions and supplements the literature within the existing area of inquiry. Finally it demonstrates its ability to improve the existing level of

comprehension (it presents particular political phenomenon with a theoretical and analytical framework).

### Organization of the Study

This study will be presented into nine broad chapters, including the introduction. The introduction will highlight the problematics of foreign policy analysis, statement of the problem, definitions of key concepts, methodology, research nature and research questions, theoretical framework, literature review, significance of the study and finally organization of the study.

Chapter 2 will present the objectives, principles, elements and foreign policy decision making process in Bangladesh.

Chapter 3 will analyze the Bangladesh-India relations, which will cover the roots of the Bangladesh crisis in 1971, role of India in the Liberation War of Bangladesh and India-Bangladesh relations during the Mujib and Zia regimes (1971-1981), including the areas of cooperation and conflict.

Chapter 4 will focus on Bangladesh-Pakistan relations, which will unfold the role of Pakistan and the birth of Bangladesh and bilateral cooperation and disputes between Bangladesh and Pakistan, during the Mujib and Zia Regimes..

Chapter 5 will cover Bangladesh-US relations, which will uncover the role of the US in the Liberation War of Bangladesh, normalization and development of Bangladesh-US relationship during the Mujib and Zia regimes.



Chapter 6 will deal with the Bangladesh-Soviet Union relations, covering the role of the Soviet Union in the Liberation War of Bangladesh and Bangladesh-Soviet Union relations during the Mujib and Zia regimes.

Chapter 7 will detail the Bangladesh-China relations, including Chinese role in the Liberation War of Bangladesh and Bangladesh-China relations during the Mujib and Zia regimes.

Chapter 8 will analyze relations between Bangladesh and the Muslim world, focusing on the role of the Muslim world in the Liberation War of Bangladesh, and the gradual improvement of relations between Bangladesh and the Muslim world during the Mujib and Zia regimes.

Chapter 9 will offer the final analysis of the author on the overall foreign policy of Bangladesh based on the research findings. In this chapter, the author will show the changes in the foreign policy of Bangladesh with the changes of the regimes.

## CHAPTER II

### OBJECTIVES, PRINCIPLES, ELEMENTS AND FOREIGN POLICY DECISION MAKING PROCESS IN BANGLADESH

The foreign policy of a state can be identified as a complex and dynamic political course that it pursues in relation to other states with a view mainly to protecting its own interest and achieving its own objectives.<sup>1</sup> It is a sequence of interaction that spans national boundaries<sup>2</sup> and the entire exercise revolves around the hierarchy of interests which a government strives to advance or defend.<sup>3</sup>

British Prime Minister, Palmerstone once remarked:

We have no eternal allies and we have no perpetual enemies. Our interests are eternal and perpetual and those interests; it is our duty to follow.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Emujuddin Ahamed, Introduction in Emujuddin Ahamed (Ed.), The Foreign Policy of Bangladesh, (Dhaka: The University Press Ltd., 1989).

<sup>2</sup>James Rosenau, The Scientific Study of Foreign Policy (New York: The Free Press, 1971), 67.

<sup>3</sup>F.S. Northredge, "The Nature of Foreign Policy" in F.S. Northredge (Ed.), The Foreign Policy of the Powers (London: Faber and Faber, 1968), 16.

<sup>4</sup>Quoted in Chaudhury Mohammed Ahsen, "Foundation of Pakistan's Foreign Policy" in Latif Ahmed Sherwani et al. (Eds.), the Foreign Policy of Pakistan (Karachi: Allies Books Corporation, 1964), 26.

### Objectives of Bangladesh Foreign Policy

Since its emergence as an independent state in 1971, on the international scene, Bangladesh has remained busy defining its role and determining its objectives from different perspectives. Like all other actors, Bangladesh has certain "core values" and interests which it is committed to preserve and even willing to make supreme sacrifices for their preservation. Such core values and interests as self preservation, maintenance of territorial integrity and the unity of its people form the basic content of foreign policy in Bangladesh.<sup>5</sup> Economic development and the achievement of the higher level of living are also the primary objectives of Bangladesh foreign policy, which demands an uninterrupted external assistance in flow, because Bangladesh has very limited resources, poor infrastructure, and inadequate technical skills. To this end, interactions with other states through structured and well defined relationship with a view to satisfying domestic needs and aspirations, has been so much important for Bangladesh.<sup>6</sup> Trade, aid, access to communication flows, sources of supply and foreign market are thus the middle range objectives of Bangladesh foreign policy.<sup>7</sup> A peaceful world, prosperous and friendly neighbors in the region and

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<sup>5</sup>Emujuddin Ahamed, VI.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., vi.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

happy self-reliant homes for all its people are Bangladesh's long range visions.<sup>8</sup> In short, these are the values and interests that Bangladesh cherish most and its ruling elite of whatever ideological commitment it would strive to advance and defend.<sup>9</sup> After careful examination of Bangladesh's short range, middle range and long range visions, the major objectives of Bangladesh's foreign policy towards its national interest can be listed as follows:

Self-Preservation

Economic Advancement

Safeguarding as well as augmenting national power in relation to other states

Ideology; and

National Prestige.

#### Self-Preservation

Self-preservation is the fundamental objective of Bangladesh foreign policy. It refers to national sovereignty, territorial integrity, political-economic and cultural independence. It is directly linked with the question of national security. In the independent state system of the modern world, maintenance of national security has become a difficult task particularly for the small dependent states like Bangladesh. In principle, Bangladesh

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

seeks to ensure its national security. It neither wants any aggressive activities against any country, nor does it want to see its territory encroached by any external power. Actually national security of a state can be maintained through achieving national power, but for the small states of the Third World, it is difficult to achieve required defense and economic capability in order to ensure their national security. Bangladesh is no exception of this pattern.

Regarding the security of small states in the Third World countries, Maniruzzaman suggested excellent diplomacy to ensure the security of these states. According to him:

Since the small states by definition lack an adequate traditional war capability, they must make up for their deficiency by excellence in diplomacy. They cannot therefore afford to have ebbs and flaws in their diplomatic excellence. For a small state high quality diplomacy must be a constant phenomenon in its external relations.<sup>10</sup>

On the other hand, some scholars also believe that the security of small states are very much related with the cooperation among the small states themselves. In order to achieve this cooperation, regional cooperative organizations can play very effective role.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Talukder Maniruzzaman, The Security of Small States in the Third World (Australia, England, and Florida: 1982), 15.

<sup>11</sup>Zaglul Haider, "Indian Hegemony and the Security of South Asian States: SAARC Perspective", A Paper Presented at the 5th National Conference of the Bangladesh Political Science Association, 1991 (Held at Jahangir Nagar University, Dhaka).

Bangladesh is a peace loving country. To ensure peace, Bangladesh believes that it is only possible through protecting its national security. Bangladesh believes in the principle of no war, but peace and seeks to protect its national security by upholding national values.

#### Economic Advancement

Once the national security is taken care of, the next objective of the foreign policy of Bangladesh is economic advancement. One of the major causes for the Declaration of Independence of Bangladesh in 1971 was economic emancipation. Keeping it in mind, the national policy makers in Bangladesh have perceived that political independence is hollow if it does not provide the vision of a good life for the average Bangladeshi people. In an inter-dependent global economy the rich countries explore their markets, the poor countries seek to explore foreign aid and transfer technology from the rich developed countries. Having a very poor economy, Bangladesh is no exception of this pattern. Bangladesh at present requires foreign aid and assistance for a number of years to finance its development programs and projects. But this does not mean that Bangladesh will be purchased by money. Sacrificing its national independence and sovereignty, it can not accept any external aid. This spirit was clearly enunciated by the late Prime Minister Sheik Mujib:

We are not going to accept any foreign aid or assistance with strings, however difficult it might be to revive the war torn economy. Bangladesh is a self-respecting nation and would continue to remain sovereign and independent.<sup>12</sup>

Enshrining the above principles, Bangladesh has already exerted influence upon the friendly donor countries.

#### Safeguarding as well as Augmenting National Power

National power deserves serious consideration in the foreign policy making of a country. It connects the total strength of the country which plays an important role in pursuing its foreign policy. Norman D. Palmer and Howard C. Perkins have viewed:

Like sovereignty and nationalism, national power is a vital and inseparable feature of the state system. Power of some kind is the means by which states implement their policies, domestic as well as foreign.<sup>13</sup>

While K.J. Holsti regarded power in international politics as "the general capacity of a state to control the behavior of others to protect and extend their own interests."<sup>14</sup>

Ray S. Cline has described national power as:

A mix strategic, military, economic and political strength and weakness. It is determined in part by the military forces and the military establishment of a country but even more by the

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<sup>12</sup>Bangladesh Observer, February 14, 1973.

<sup>13</sup>Norman D. Palmer and Howard C. Perkins, International Relations (Calcutta: Scientific Book Agency, 1970), 684.

<sup>14</sup>K.J. Holsti, International Politics (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1977), 21.

size and location of the territory, the nature of frontier, the population, the raw materials, resources, the economic structure, the technological development, the financial strength, the ethnic mix, the social cohesiveness, the stability of political processes, decision making and finally the intangible quantity, usually described as national spirit.<sup>15</sup>

While among the realist scholars there are two types of definition of power. Some realists understand power to be the sum of military, economic, technological, diplomatic and other capabilities at the disposal of the state. Other see power as capabilities relative to the capabilities of other states.<sup>16</sup> National power of Bangladesh indicates all kinds of resources and capabilities at the disposal of the state.

Bangladesh is firmly determined to establish absolute control over its national resources, as well as to deny any foreign country, any claim to any resource in the territory including the sea-bed and territorial waters. Bangladesh must not yield to pressure of any foreign country demanding

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<sup>15</sup>To describe the elements of national power, Ray S. Cline has developed the following formula:

$$Pp = (C + E + M) \times (S + W)$$

1) Pp = Perceived power 2) C = Critical mass 3) E = Economic Capability 4) M = Military capability

5) S = Strategic purpose 6) W = Will to pursue national strategy. For details, see See Ray S. Cline, "World Power Assessment, 1977" in The Theory and Practice of International Relations, Fifth Edition, Fred A. Snodermann, Ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1978), 62-63.

<sup>16</sup>Paul R. Violti and Mark V. Kauppi, International Relations Theory: Realism, Pluralism, and Globalism (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987), 43-44.



undesirable shares in its resources. Moreover, the sole attempt behind the formulation of foreign policy objectives of Bangladesh is to safeguarding and augmenting its national power.

### Upholding National Ideology

In pursuing foreign policy, every state follows some particular ideology or at least has commitment to any major ideology prevalent in the contemporary world. As a small developing country, Bangladesh is not totally committed to the super power ideologies, i.e., capitalism or communism. Rather, it follows the non-aligned foreign policy as its development strategy and ideology. President Ziaur Rahman of Bangladesh affirmed in the sixth non-aligned summit at Havana that "the policy of non-alignment is a cornerstone of our foreign policy."<sup>17</sup>

In pursuing its foreign policy, Bangladesh subscribes non-aligned ideology because of its common experience, common perceptions, and unanimity of views. Other similarities include:<sup>18</sup>

- a. Politically all rejects bloc politics and political dominance and oppose the black hands of apartheid and colonialism.
- b. Economically all are raw material producing countries with a common interest in safeguarding

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<sup>17</sup>Government of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, External Publicity Division.

<sup>18</sup>Shaukat Hassan, "Bangladesh, Zia and the Non-aligned Movement," BIISS Journal Special Issue, no. 1 (1981): 85-86.

their resources. They all seek the re-distribution of the earth's resources. Moreover, all are capital scarce countries and all the countries desire to establish a New International Economic Order (NIEO).

c. Culturally none shares the Anglo-Saxon tradition and indigenously non-English speaking.

d. Technologically all the countries are underdeveloped and aims at achieving high technology.

### Upholding National Prestige

How far a country's foreign policy is effective depends upon its capability of upholding national prestige. In fact, national prestige can be enshrined through political development and economic advancement. Bangladesh is trying to uphold its national prestige in the world. Politically Bangladesh is trying to establish a stable democracy and economically, it is trying to upgrade the living standard of its citizens.

### Principles of Bangladesh Foreign Policy

Every state follows some principles upon which the entire foreign policy revolves. As an active member of the United Nations (UN) and Non-aligned Movement (NAM), Bangladesh follows the principles enshrined in the UN Charter and the principles of NAM. In fact, Bangladesh's foreign policy has stemmed out of constitutional declaration. Article 25 of the Bangladesh Constitution states:

Bangladesh shall base its international relations on the principles of respect for national sovereignty, and equality, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, peaceful settlement of international disputes and respect for international law and the principles enunciated in the UN Charter.<sup>19</sup>

The same article also states that Bangladesh "will strive for renunciation of the use of force in international relations and for general and complete disarmament."<sup>20</sup> The same article further upholds "the right of every person freely to determine and build up its own social, economic, and political system by ways and means of its own free choice and supports the oppressed people's throughout the world waging a struggle against imperialism, colonialism, or racism."<sup>21</sup> After careful examination of the constitutional declaration, the principles of Bangladesh foreign policy can be listed as follows:

Friendship to All, Malice to None

According to Article 1 (2) of the UN Charter, Bangladesh intends to develop friendly relations among nations based on the principles of equal rights and self-

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<sup>19</sup>The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Article 25, (Dhaka: The Government of Bangladesh: Ministry of Law, February 28, 1979), 8-9.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

determination of the people's and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace.<sup>22</sup>

This implies that as a new state, Bangladesh seeks to promote its national development through friendly cooperation with all like minded states. Moreover, it did not involve with any superpower in cold war politics. With a declared goal of "becoming the Switzerland of South Asia," Bangladesh decided to follow a non-aligned foreign policy. The spirit of non-alignment was reaffirmed in the constitutional provision of Bangladesh.<sup>23</sup>

#### Nonintervention in the Internal Matters of the Other States

Keeping harmony with Article 2(7) of the UN Charter, Bangladesh enshrines this policy.<sup>24</sup> Following this principle, Bangladesh makes it clear that neither it likes to emerge as an aggressor nor does it likes the act of aggressor. Bangladesh does not like to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state.

#### Equality and Mutual Benefit

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<sup>22</sup>UN Charter, Article 1 (2).

<sup>23</sup>Sayed Anwar Hussain, "Bangladesh and the Indian Ocean Zone of Peace" in Kabir and Shaukat Hassan (Eds.), Issues and Challenges Facing Bangladesh Foreign Policy (Dhaka: Bangladesh Society of International Studies, BSIS, 1989), 157.

<sup>24</sup>UN Charter, Article 2(7). For details, see A. Leroy Bennett, International Organizations: Principles and Issues (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1991), 437.

By virtue of the principle of equal rights and self-determination of people's enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, Bangladesh believes that all people's have the right to freely determine without external interference, their political status and to pursue their economic, social and cultural development and every state has the duty to respect this right in accordance with the provision of the Charter.<sup>25</sup>

Respect for Sovereignty, Territorial Integrity, and Political Independence of Other States

According to Article 2(4) of the UN Charter,<sup>26</sup> Bangladesh believes in the principle of equal treatment to all states irrespective of size, shape and power. By this principle, Bangladesh believes that all states enjoy sovereign equality. They have equal rights and duties and are equal members of the international community. In particular, sovereign equality includes the following elements, which Bangladesh believes:

- A. States are judicially equal
- B. Each state enjoys the rights inherent in full sovereignty.
- C. Each state has the duty to respect the personality of other states.

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<sup>25</sup>UN Charter, Article 2(1-2), For details, see Minchaun Kau (Ed.), A Comprehensive Handbook of the United Nations vol. 2, (New York: Monarch Press, 1979), 775.

<sup>26</sup>UN Charter, Article 2(4), For details, see A. Leroy Bennett, 437.

- D. The territorial integrity and political independence of each state are invariable.
- E. Each state has the duty to comply fully and in good faith with its international obligations and to live in peace with other states.
- F. Each state has the right to freely choose and develop its political, economic and cultural systems.

#### To Ensure International Peace and Security

As an active member of the United Nations, Bangladesh wants to play an important role in maintaining international peace and security. In order to ensure international peace and security, Bangladesh believes in the following principles:

- A. To refrain from threatening or using force contrary to the UN Charter.
- B. To refrain from any threat or acts directly or indirectly aimed at impairing the freedom, independence, or integrity of any state.
- C. To carryout in good faith its international agreement.
- D. Through national and international cooperation, efforts to achieve and sustain higher standards of living for all peoples. To settle international disputes by peaceful means and to cooperate in supporting the United Nations efforts to resolve outstanding problems.

In 1979, Bangladesh signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in the interest of global peace. In this regard, the role of Bangladesh is explicitly stated by K.M. Kaiser, Bangladesh's permanent representative to the UN, in his address to the Indian Ocean Ad Hoc Committee on July 1979:

We would...support measures to establish an institutional framework within any universal collective security system that may be finally worked out for the resolution of disputes among the littoral and hinterland states themselves and to ensure that peace in the region is not threatened by any country or group of countries. In our view, this is an important aspect of the problem as our main objective is to ensure peace and we do not foresee peace automatically prevailing in the area once big power rivalry is removed.<sup>27</sup>

### Peaceful Co-Existence

Bangladesh believes in the principle of peaceful co-existence. This was clearly declared by Prime Minister Sheik Mujibur Rahaman in 1972. He said, "I would like it (Bangladesh) to become the Switzerland of the East."<sup>28</sup> Moreover, Bangladesh follows the principle of peaceful co-existence from the strategic consideration of national security, and development. Secondly, Bangladesh is committed to the Pacific Settlement and finally, Bangladesh encourages peaceful change and development in international affairs.

### Elements of Bangladesh Foreign Policy

There are two elements of Bangladesh foreign policy:

1. Constant elements which includes geography, i.e., the location, the shape and size of the country along with the boundaries.
2. Variable elements composed of internal conditions of state such as domestic needs and values, quality of leadership, strength of

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<sup>27</sup>Cited in Bangladesh 3, nos. 20-1 (July 15, 1979): 8.

<sup>28</sup>Bangladesh Observer, (February 14, 1982), Quoted in Md. Abdul Halim, 7.

national institutions, nature of people's participation in politics, military capabilities, industrial capabilities, natural resources, food production, national morale, quality of diplomacy, and above all external environment.

### Constant Elements

Geographic factors of a country constitute its constant elements of foreign policy. Geography of a country is so much important in the foreign policy decision making process is that, Napoleon once said, "the foreign policy of a country is determined by its geography."<sup>29</sup>

The importance of geographical factors may better be understood if we consider the foreign policy of Great Britain. Sir Eyre Crowe once said:

The general character of England's foreign policy is determined by the immutable conditions of her geographical situation on the ocean flank of Europe as an Island state with vast overseas colonies and dependencies whose existence and survival as an independent community are inseparably bound up with the possession of preponderant sea power.<sup>30</sup>

The geographical location of Bangladesh is another preponderant fact that influences the decision makers. As a South Asian country, Bangladesh has common border with India on the West, North and also in part of the east leaving only the South where the Bay of Bengal embraces the Indian Ocean. Burma is linked to it on the Eastern flank and through

<sup>29</sup>Quoted in Md. Abdul Halim, 8.

<sup>30</sup>Quoted in Norman D. Palmer and Howard C. Perkins, International Relations: The World Community in Transition (Calcutta: Scientific Book Agency, 1970), 698.



Burma, Bangladesh is linked to the entire Southeast Asian region. China is not far off. In a way Bangladesh is a bridge head between the South Asian and the Southeast Asian regions.<sup>31</sup>

After the US withdrawal from Vietnam in the early 1970's and with the beginning of the fresh naval competition between the two super powers for the control of the Indian Ocean, the importance of Bangladesh due to geographic location has been enhanced to a great extent. Actually, the geo-political importance of Bangladesh is so much because of its location at the mouth of the Bay of Bengal which links with the Indian Ocean.

On the other hand, from the boundary consideration, we see that Bangladesh is surrounded by India on almost three sides, West, North and East. This is a point of weakness on its part. Another point of weakness stems from its small size and shape. It is a small country having hardly any "depth," seen in terms of diversifying its national capital and industrial establishment and thus vulnerable to any external attack. However, its main strength is the access to the Bay of Bengal which encounters all of its weakness.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>Emujuddin Ahamed, "Introduction" in Emujuddin Ahamed (Ed.), the Foreign Policy of Bangladesh (Dhaka: University Press Limited, 1981), vii.

<sup>32</sup>Halim, 9.

### Variable Elements

The variable elements of foreign policy are the internal conditions of a particular state viz., domestic needs and values, quality of leadership, strength of national institutions, nature of people's participation in the decision making process, military capability, industrial capacity, natural resources, food production, national morale, quality of diplomacy, and above all external environment.

About the variable elements of foreign policy, Henry Kissinger once said:

A nations value defines what is just, its strength determines what is possible, its domestic structure decides what policy can be implemented.<sup>33</sup>

From the point of view of natural resources, we see that though Bangladesh lacks minerals like coal, oil, iron, etc., it has vast resources of natural gas and a tremendous potential of hydro-electric power. Jute and tea are the major agricultural resources. Though Bangladesh suffers from the shortage of food, which really constrains its freedom of action in international affairs to a great extent, yet Bangladesh has agricultural land which is among the most fertile in the world. Bangladesh is trying to meet up its food shortage by using modern agricultural technology.

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<sup>33</sup>Quoted in Ambassador Tabarak Hussain, "Bangladesh Foreign Policy: Domestic Inputs," Paper presented in a Seminar on Nation Building in Bangladesh: Retrospect and Prospects, Organized by BIISS, (Dhaka: October 13-14, 1985).

Bangladesh is in its initial stage of industrial development. It has the potential of developing into an industrial nation by utilizing indigenous raw materials. Militarily, Bangladesh is not a weak state, it has about .10 million well disciplined regular armed forces, pledged to maintain the security and territorial integrity of the country. The regular government spending for the Bangladesh army is 22.2 percent.<sup>34</sup> What is needed at present is disciplined, enlightened leadership, high national morale and excellent diplomacy for pursuing an active and vigorous foreign policy on the part of Bangladesh.

#### Foreign Policy Decision-Making Process in Bangladesh

Foreign policy decision making is a complex task of devising strategies that utilize a nation state's capability to achieve the goals its leaders set.<sup>35</sup> It is more difficult for dependent developing countries like Bangladesh. In the foreign policy decision making process policy makers have to maintain balance between domestic and external environments. Domestic environment includes the domestic political situation, peoples aspirations, needs and requirements. Rosenau defined domestic and societal environment as those non-governmental aspects of political system that influence

<sup>34</sup>Cambridge Encyclopedia of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhatan, and Maldives (Cambridge University Press, 1989), 219.

<sup>35</sup>Richard L. Merritt, Foreign Policy Analysis (Lexington: Lexington Books, D.C. Health and Company, 1975), 1.

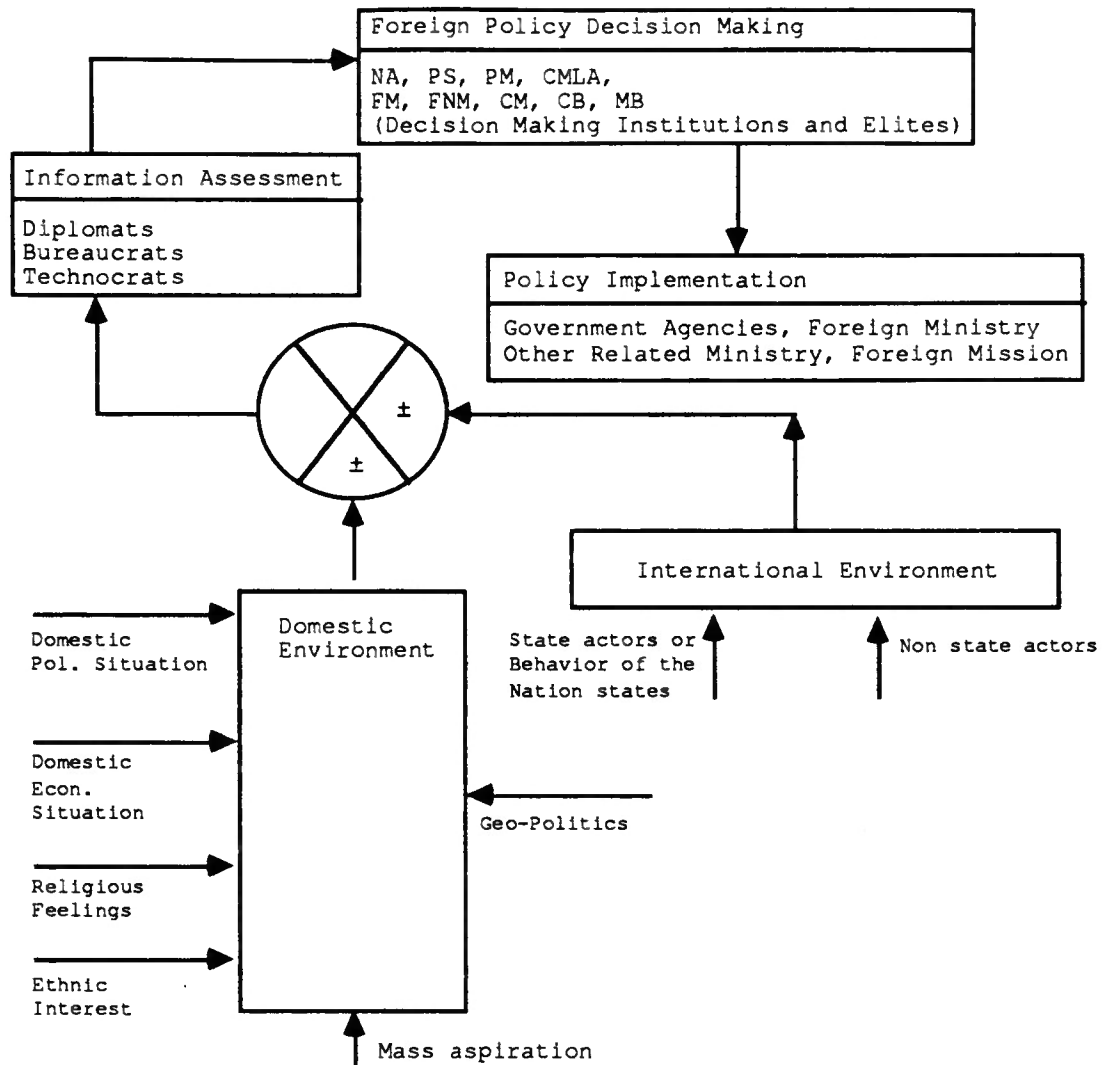
a states external behavior. Its major value orientations, its degree of national unity and the extent of the societal variables which can contribute to the contents of a nations external aspirations and politics.<sup>36</sup> While external environment involves the structure of international system, worldwide distribution of power and resources, varying levels of technology, enduring patterns of trade and other transactions, perceptions, norms of individuals and state behavior more particularly religion and other cultural components, which enables a country to pursue certain course of action.<sup>37</sup> Rosenau has viewed that the external environment or any actions occurring abroad influence the choice of a countries foreign policy. In addition, it encompasses the behavior of other countries towards the particular country and the response of that particular country to them.<sup>38</sup> Policy makers are to assess the information collected from both the domestic and external environment before making the foreign policy decision. In the true sense, foreign policy decision making is the joint product of both domestic and external environments. Foreign policy decision making process in Bangladesh can be shown by Figure 1.

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<sup>36</sup>Quoted in C.W. Kegley, Jr. and E.R. Wittkopf, American Foreign Policy (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), 19.

<sup>37</sup>Merritt, 1-2.

<sup>38</sup>Quoted in Kegley and Wittkopf, 17-18.



N.A.	National Assembly	F.N.M.	Finance Minister
P.S.	President	C.M.	Commerce Minister
P.M.	Prime Minister	D.M.	Defense Minister
C.M.L.A.	Chief Martial Law Administrator	C.B.	Civil Bureaucrats
F.M.	Foreign Minister	M.B.	Military Bureaucrats

Fig. 1. Foreign Policy Decision Making Process in Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, foreign policy decisions are made at the interaction of both formal and informal institutions. Formal institutions are, National Assembly (NA), President

(PS), Prime Minister (PM), Chief Martial Law Administrator (CMLA), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Commerce, other ministries, Civil Bureaucrats, and armed forces. While the informal institutions include Political parties, Press and Media, non-government institutions, and groups and associations.

During the short period of Parliamentary experience, the Prime Minister as the Executive head of the state was the key person in the foreign policy decision making process in Bangladesh (1972-1975). But, with the inception of a presidential form of government since 1975, the President has become the key figure. During the time of direct military rule the CMLA used to play crucial role in the foreign policy decision making process. Although Parliament had a clear constitutional role, the nature of the power structure did not allow it to play contributory role in the foreign policy decision making process during the authoritarian regime.

About the role of the Parliament, one political scientist wrote:

The authoritarian nature of the executive head in Bangladesh did not afford the Parliament an opportunity to exercise any meaningful role in the general conduct of foreign policy. The Parliament neither could effectively examine proposed legislation on foreign relations, nor examine or debate any vital document or agreement with foreign countries.

The Constitution of Bangladesh in 1975 (amended), empowered the executive authority to the President for the

foreign policy decision making process. He could formally appoint and recall diplomatic envoys, sign international contracts and deeds, letter of credence, warrants of credence and warrants of commission.

Foreign ministry also plays an important role among the formal institutions. Virtually, the foreign minister is responsible for making and implementing policies. Under the democratic government the role of the foreign minister is very prominent. But under the military rule, the foreign minister usually plays the role no better than the personal advisor of the CMLA. Operationally, the Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the headquarter of Bangladesh Foreign Affairs. Normally about one third foreign service personnel remain with the ministry and the rest remain posted in various embassy's and high commissions. The Embassy's or High Commissions of Bangladesh are headed by either Ambassadors or High Commissioners or Charge d' Affairs (CDA). The major foreign policy functions like representation, negotiation, protection of defined values and interest, reporting, advising, and consulting activities are conducted by the Embassy's or High Commissions. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the primary contact point for all foreign offices located in Dhaka. It act as a two way

communication center between the domestic and external system.<sup>39</sup>

In addition, many other related ministries viz., finance, defense, commerce, planning, Home affairs, and establishment also play very contributory role in the functional aspects of foreign relations. It is worthwhile to note here that the bureaucrats both civilian and military play a major role in the foreign policy decision making of Bangladesh too. Under normal conditions, when a democratic government is in power any foreign policy decision is usually initiated and made by the career diplomats and bureaucrats who hand it over to the Foreign Minister, and who in turn submits it to the Parliament for approval. Under martial law, the civil bureaucrats in collaboration with their military counterparts advise the CMLA and his advisors as to what particular foreign policy decisions are to be taken.

The role of the Bangladesh armed forces has clearly manifested by the invitation of UN Security Council to Bangladesh army to form a part of the UN peace keeping force in Namibia, Iran-Iraq border, in Somalia, Bosnia, and Haiti. The role of Bangladesh armed forces in the multinational force of Saudi Arabia, during the Persian Gulf crisis of

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<sup>39</sup>Ataur Rahaman, "Foreign Policy Making in Bangladesh: Institutions and Process" The BIJSS Journal 6, no. 3 (1985): 324.



1991 also demonstrate its significant role in the foreign relations of Bangladesh.

Besides formal institutions, informal institutions also play a very important role in the foreign policy decision making process of Bangladesh. Among those political parties play a very important role in influencing the foreign policy of the country outside the government. On the major foreign policy issues they give suggestions to the government, express their opinion through public meeting, public protest, and newspaper statements and influence the foreign policy decision.

The press and media also play important role by covering news and views, highlighting major issues, on foreign policy and analyzing the governments policies. Press and Media create public opinion and influence the foreign policy decision making process.

The Universities and special institutions, like Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS), Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), Bangladesh Institute of Law and International Affairs (BILIA), contribute to the foreign policy decision making process by undertaking studies on particular problems and issues of foreign policy.<sup>40</sup> These agencies seek to create greater awareness on foreign policy issues by undertaking studies, organizing lectures, seminars and workshops.

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 19.

### CHAPTER III

#### BANGLADESH-INDIA RELATIONS: MUJIB AND ZIA REGIMES (1971-1981)

Because of its multi-farious importance, "India Factor" is an undeniable variable in the foreign policy making of Bangladesh. Historically, Bangladesh experienced two long centuries of British-colonial rule as part of Bengal, a province of the undivided India. Geographically, it is bound by India on the west, the north and the northeast. Strategically, Bangladesh is located within the range of the Indian Security System. Despite having basic religio-cultural differences,<sup>1</sup> hardly any other factor merits greater consideration in the conduct of Bangladesh's foreign relations.

Actually, friendship with India was the cornerstone of Bangladesh's foreign policy under the stewardship of Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman. But the warmer friendship between Bangladesh and India was very short-lived. Mistrust and misunderstanding erupted with the changes of leadership in both countries. In fact, one of the major concerns in the South Asian subcontinent as Marcus Franda pointed out, was

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<sup>1</sup>Bangladesh is predominantly a Muslim country having 85% Muslim population. India is the only Hindu state in the world with 83% Hindu population. See The World Almanac (New York: Howard Company, 1993).

the failure of India and Bangladesh to make a meaningful progress towards cooperation.<sup>2</sup>

However, in this study an attempt will be made to make a comparative study of Bangladesh-India relations during the Mujib and Zia Regimes (1971-1981). To this end the following issues will be addressed in this chapter.

The Roots of Bangladesh Crisis.

The Bangladesh Liberation War and the Role of India.

Bangladesh-India Relations: Bilateral Cooperation.

Bangladesh-India Relations: Bilateral Disputes.

Summary.

#### The Roots of Bangladesh Crisis

The birth of Bangladesh in 1971 was the product of disintegration of Pakistan. Bangladesh (former East Pakistan) gained the bitter experience of about a quarter century of union with Pakistan. Actually, the illogical geographical boundary of Pakistan (East Pakistan was separated from West Pakistan by one thousand miles of Indian territory) ethnic, linguistic, and cultural differences between the two wings were compounded by economic exploitation and political domination of West Pakistani ruling elites over East Pakistan, which generated the seeds of nationalism among the people of East Pakistan and

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<sup>2</sup>Marcus Franda, Bangladesh: The First Decade (New Delhi: South Asian Publishers in association with the University Field Staff International, Hanover, New Hampshire, 1982), 124.

ultimately led to the creation of Bangladesh. In fact, the Bengali people were always unlikely partners in the Union of Pakistan - a geographical and cultural monstrosity.<sup>3</sup>

The Bengali's finally gave farewell to the West Pakistani ruling elites in the general election of 1970. In the election, Sheikh Mujib's Awami League emerged as the single majority party, while Z.A. Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) emerged as the second largest party.<sup>4</sup> The election results clearly reflected the polarization between East and West Pakistan. Even after the landslide victory of the Bengalis under the AL, leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the West Pakistani civil-military ruling elites refused to transfer power to the democratically elected leaders and finally, the Pakistani military dictator Yahya Khan opted for a military solution and responded with bullets, which created one of the biggest human tragedies since Hitler's collapse. The Pakistan military followed a systematic campaigns of indiscriminate slaughter.<sup>5</sup> In fact, the

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<sup>3</sup>The New York Times, December 9, 1971.

<sup>4</sup>The results of the national assembly election of 1970 were as follows: Awami League (AL)-160 seats; Pakistan People's Party (PPP)-81 seats; Muslim League (ML-)-9 seats; Muslim League (ML-Council)-7 seats; Jammāt-ul-ulema-i-Islam-7 seats; National Awami Party (NAP)-6 seats; Jammāt-i-Islami-4 seats; Pakistan Muslim League (PML)-2 seats; Pakistan Democratic Party (PDP)-1 seat; Markazi-Jamiat-up-ulema-i-islam-7 seats; Independents-16 seats. For details, see, Craig Baxter, Bangladesh: A New Nation in an Old Setting (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989), 96.

<sup>5</sup>G. W. Chaudhury, The Last Days of United Pakistan (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1974), 181.

military action destroyed the last hope of keeping the unity of Pakistan and on March 26, 1971, Bangladesh was declared an independent and sovereign state.<sup>6</sup>

#### The Bangladesh Liberation War and the Role of India

India started to get involved formally with the Bangladesh liberation struggle after the military crackdown in East Pakistan. Indian Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi expressed her views in the Lokshaba on March 27, 1971:

It is not merely a suppression of a movement but it is meeting an unarmed people with tanks. We are fully alive to the situation and we shall keep constantly in touch with what is happening and what we need to do. We must not take merely theoretical view. At the same time, we have to follow proper international norms.<sup>7</sup>

At the outset of the brutal atrocities of the Pakistani army, the Bengali leaders and the Bengali resistance forces crossed the border of India, which was followed by millions of innocent Bengali people, who took refuge in India after the inhuman massacre committed by the Pakistani Army. India granted refuge to the East Bengali people as it had followed this policy in similar developments in other neighboring

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<sup>6</sup>Major Ziaur Rahaman, an army major of the East Bengal Regiment, in 1971, made the declaration of the independence of Bangladesh. Later, he became a Lt. General and finally he was the President of Bangladesh from 1977-1981.

<sup>7</sup>Bangladesh Documents, Vol. 1, 669. Also see New York Times, March 28, 1971.

states, i.e., following the 1959 rebellion in Tibet and the December 1960 royal coup in Nepal.<sup>8</sup>

Finally the Indian Parliament took a resolution on the East Bengal which called upon the governments and people of the world to take urgent and constructive steps to make an end of the systematic genocide in East Bengal.<sup>9</sup> New Delhi's policy towards the East Pakistani political refugees took a noble form in early April, and the Indian government permitted the establishment of an Awami League headquarters, on Indian soil eventually in Calcutta.<sup>10</sup> On April 17, 1971, at Baidynatti Tala just across the border of East Pakistan (now, Mujibnagar under Meherpur District) AL leaders issued a declaration of independence and established a Bangladesh government in exile.

At this time, training camps for the Bangladesh Liberation Forces were established with Indian assistance at a number of places in Indian territory close to the East Pakistani border. India was equally careful in its establishment of training camps for the Bangladesh liberation forces. India wanted to make sure that these were under the control of reliable moderate AL leaders or

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<sup>8</sup>Sisson & Rose, 142.

<sup>9</sup>Indira Gandhi, India and Bangladesh: Selected Speeches and Statements (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1972), 16.

<sup>10</sup>Sisson & Rose, 142-143.

officers from the East Pakistani Rifles or Police, rather than the more radical political elements in the resistance.<sup>11</sup>

On the other hand, the continued army repression and fighting caused a tidal wave of refugees from East Pakistan. In fact, within the nine months of Bangladesh's freedom movement about ten million<sup>12</sup> Bengali refugees fled into India which made India more concerned.<sup>13</sup> As a matter of fact, India became actively involved in the Bangladesh struggle after massive refugees poured into India. According to an authoritative source, by the end of May 1971, nine million refugees had arrived in small hill state of Tripura, while the indigenous population of that state was only 1.5 million.<sup>14</sup>

Indian authorities were very much concerned about the permanent settlement of the Bengali's in India. In order to make a political settlement, that would enable the refugees to return to their homes, Indian government repeatedly emphasized an agreement between the central government of Pakistan and the Awami League under the leadership of Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman.

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid, 143.

<sup>12</sup>Bangladesh Documents, Vol. I & II (New Delhi, Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting), 81.

<sup>13</sup>Marcus Franda, 109.

<sup>14</sup>Sisson & Rose, 153.

On May 24, 1971, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister of India, openly threatened Pakistan in the Parliament:

Conditions must be created to stop any further influx of refugees and to ensure their early return under credible guarantees for their safety and well being. I say with all sense of responsibility that unless this happens, there can be no lasting stability or peace in this subcontinent. We have pleaded with other powers to recognize this. If the world does not take heed we shall be constrained to take all measures as may be necessary to ensure our own security and the preservation and development of the structure of our social and economic life.<sup>15</sup>

She also observed that there must be a political rather than military solution to Pakistan's problem in its Eastern Province, and that the great powers had a special responsibility to help see such a solution through.<sup>16</sup>

Realizing the situation, Mrs. Gandhi made two decisions by which the refugees were accommodated and later returned home. First, during a series of public meetings, Mrs. Gandhi spoke clearly that the 1971 refugees would not be allowed to remain in India as a permanent resident. Secondly, Mrs. Gandhi established special organization with the Union Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation, charged with the task of establishing and maintaining temporary camps for these refugees.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Lok Shaba Debates, (May 24, 1971), 187.

<sup>16</sup>Sisson & Rose, 153.

<sup>17</sup>Marcus Franda, 111.



With the continuous influx of refugees, India appealed to the international community for relief assistance. In fact, the refugee problem was a serious burden on Central and West Bengal Provincial governments (where maximum refugees were accommodated) to provide minimal necessities for the vast number of refugees without international assistance. While replying to a question in the Upper House of Parliament (Rajyasabha) on June 15, 1971, Mrs. Gandhi commented: "We will have to go through hell to meet this situation (refugee problem)."<sup>18</sup>

At this point, Indian government appealed to the international community especially to the great powers to see the reality of the situation and to press Pakistan for political settlement.<sup>19</sup> Initially, India adopted a cautious policy of limited help and also ruled out the possibilities of direct military intervention as the Bangladesh Government in Exile was preparing for such action.<sup>20</sup> But still like the U.S.A. and U.S.S.R., India was in favor of continuation of a United Pakistan.<sup>21</sup> India started to involve very actively in the Bangladesh Liberation struggle from the months of June-

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<sup>18</sup>Indira Gandhi, 16.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 18.

<sup>20</sup>M.G. Kabir, "U.S. Policy and the Bangladesh Crisis of 1971," BISS Journal 9, no. 2 (April 1988): 202.

<sup>21</sup>Christopher Van Hollen, "The Tilt Policy Revisited: Nixon-Kissinger Geo-Politics and South Asia," Asian Survey (April 1980): 391.

July 1977, when the recruitment of Mukti Bahini (freedom fighters) was intensified and India was giving training and providing arms and ammunition to fight against the strong regular army of Pakistan.<sup>22</sup>

The Indian government's desperate attempt against Pakistan was not equally supported by all decision makers of India. Several prominent Indian leaders publicly counseled against any form of Indian involvement in East Pakistan. These included C. Rajagopal Chari, Governor-General of India from 1947 to 1950, and a former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu; General Cariappa, the former Commanding General of the Indian Army and M. Karunanidhi, the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu in 1971, who cited the developments in East Pakistan as a warning to India to avoid creating conditions that would encourage autonomy movements in its own territory.<sup>23</sup>

Some politicians doubted the wisdom of Indian intervention in support of Bangladesh, on the grounds that this could prove to be a dangerous precedent for the Indian Bengalis.<sup>24</sup> Bangladesh they noted meant, "country of the Bengalis" and India had a large number of Bengali's in its population who might be attracted by the "Amra Bengali" (we

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<sup>22</sup>General Arora's Interview published in The Weekly Bichitra, December 13, 1991, 37.

<sup>23</sup>The Hindu, March 30, 1971.

<sup>24</sup>Lawrence Ziring, "South Asian Tangles and Triangles" in The Subcontinent in the World Politics: India, Its Neighbors and Great Powers (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1978), 80.

are Bengalis") concept of a united, independent Bengal.<sup>25</sup> Some were concerned with the international reaction, particularly from several Islamic states with whom India had important ties. From the security perspective some officials argued that Indian interests were better served by an East Pakistan that was in fact "captive" to India and thus a complication to decision making in Islamabad than they would be by a second largest Islamic state in the subcontinent.<sup>26</sup> Some of the Parliament members even expressed their fear when both houses of Parliament were adopting resolutions supporting the Bangladesh movement.<sup>27</sup>

The decision making elites of India could not totally ignore public views on the East Pakistani situation, but they handled all suggestions and criticisms quietly and considered the Indian long range national interests. Eventually, the decision of the government of India went in favor of military intervention. India rendered its aids and assistance to Bangladesh's liberation struggle into two ways:

1. the arming and training of guerrilla force known as "Mukti Bahini" and

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<sup>25</sup>Sisson & Rose, 151.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid, 151.

<sup>27</sup>Norman Brown, The United States and the India, Pakistan, Bangladesh (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1972), 218.

2. the invasion of East Bengal by the Indian army.<sup>28</sup>

India's actual intention behind the active support to the Bangladesh movement, was not only to support the just cause of the Bengali's, but to weaken its' birth rival Pakistan. Indian intentions were clearly expressed by the statement of K. Subramaniam, Director, Indian Institute of Defense Studies, on March 31, 1971, (within six days of the outbreak of the revolt in East Pakistan). According to him: "What India must realize is the fact that the break up of Pakistan is in our own interest, an opportunity, the like of which will never come again."<sup>29</sup>

This was supported by the London Times, which published an article prepared by K. Subramaniam in which he advocated the seizure of sections of East Pakistan and the establishment there of a provisional government of Bangladesh under Indian army protection.<sup>30</sup> Indian intentions were also confirmed by other political analysts. One Indian analyst uncovered the major Indian gains in the emergence of Bangladesh, as follows:

1. A political enemy on both of its borders will be replaced by a far weaker enemy on one side and a friend on the other.
2. The Kashmir question will be rid of what remains of its

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<sup>28</sup>Dilip Kumar Mukerjee, "India and Bangladesh" in L.M. Singhui, (Ed.), Bangladesh: Background and Perspectives (New Delhi: Institute of Constitutional and Parliamentary Studies, 1971), 42.

<sup>29</sup>The Hindustan Times, April 1, 1971.

<sup>30</sup>The Times (London), July 13, 1971.

- sting, domestic as well as international.
3. The claim of secular democracy to be the best government system for the multi-racial developing countries will be strengthened and the myth of an enduring nationhood based on religion will be exploded.
  4. The cynical role of China which has come out in support of the military regime in Islamabad in the region will be exposed and countered.<sup>31</sup>

Though some analysts wanted to prove that India supported Bangladesh movement purely on humanitarian ground or to strengthen democratic traditions in the region, these arguments cannot be rationalized if counter arguments are presented by asking what role did India play to stop the freedom movements in "Khalistan" and Kashmir? So it is clearly evident that the major intentions behind Indian involvement in the Bangladesh struggle were its politico-economic and strategic interests.<sup>32</sup>

One analyst pointed out that Indian desire to weaken her enemy coincided with the aspiration of Bengali nationalist forces and it suited both sides.<sup>33</sup>

Apart from material support, India also took serious diplomatic steps and tried to raise world opinion in support of the Bangladesh movement. It played a very active role to

<sup>31</sup>Ajit Bhattacharja, "Stakes in Bangladesh" in L.M. Singhui (Ed.), Bangladesh: Background and Perspectives (New Delhi: The Institute of Constitutional and Parliamentary Studies, 1971), 53.

<sup>32</sup>For detail discussion, see Imtiaz Ahmed, "The Superpower Strategy in the Third World: The 1971 South Asian Crisis" in Emajuddin Ahamed (Ed.), Foreign Policy of Bangladesh: A Small States Imperative (Dhaka: University Press Limited, 1982), 115.

<sup>33</sup>Moudud Ahamed, Era of Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman (Dhaka: University Press Limited, 1983), 182.

save the life of Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman, when President Yahya Khan was going to arrange a secret military trial for Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman to execute him. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi regarding this trial sent a message to the Heads of the government requesting them to exert their influence over President Yahya Khan so that the life of Sheikh Mujib could be saved.<sup>34</sup>

Actually from late May 1971, India started a campaign throughout the world directed at persuading other governments to pressure Pakistan to revise its policy in East Pakistan by suspending their economic and military aid to Pakistan.<sup>35</sup>

By the months of September and October, 1971, Indo-Pakistan border tension was gradually aggravating and India and Pakistan made repeated allegations against each other. In this situation the United Nations (UN) Secretary General, U Thant in a letter of October 20, 1971 to the heads of state of both India and Pakistan offered the use of his good offices in the potentially dangerous situation between the two rival countries. President Yahya Khan welcomed U Thant's offer but Mrs. Indira Gandhi emphasized the Indian view that only a political settlement in East Pakistan could solve the problem.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>Indira Gandhi, 36.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

Meanwhile, as part of India's broadly based international campaign, Mrs. Indira Gandhi visited to Washington in early November 1971. She went to Washington to convince the U.S. leaders that East Pakistan civil war was the result of West Pakistani repression and genocide.<sup>37</sup>

In Washington, President Nixon offered Mrs. Gandhi several proposals. First, he assured that the US would take full financial responsibility for the refugees support. Second, he referred to Yahya's agreement to unilaterally withdraw Pakistani forces from the East Pakistani-Indian frontier with only the understanding that India would respond in some way in the near future. But Mrs. Gandhi was unresponsive to the proposals. In fact, at that stage India was unwilling to give any opportunity to Pakistan to gain its control over the East Pakistan. Some analysts were convinced that the Indian government had decided to dismember Pakistan by force before Mrs. Indira Gandhi came to Washington and that the discussions there had been an exercise in futility.<sup>38</sup> India also sent its diplomatic mission to the Muslim world, to explain that the East Pakistani Civil War was not another Indo-Pakistan dispute (i.e., Hindu versus Muslims) but rather a conflict between two hostile Muslim communities -East and West Pakistan. This

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<sup>37</sup>Sisson & Rose, 194-195.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid, 195.

was an effort to diminish support for Pakistan among the Islamic states and India was partially successful.<sup>39</sup>

Finally leaving the devices of political and diplomatic settlements, India entered a war with Pakistan for the third time on December 3, 1971. All efforts of the United Nations, the United States, and other members of the international community to avert the war were considered by India as half-hearted and ineffective.

Eventually defeating the Pakistani army Indian forces entered into East Pakistan by the first week of December 1971. On December 16, 1971, Pakistan Army surrendered to the joint command of Bangladesh and India and Bangladesh achieved her final victory.<sup>40</sup>

Though the Indian intervention ended the liberation war of Bangladesh within a short period of history, it was not welcomed by all freedom fighters and the common people equally. Protesting seriously the Indian intervention, different sections of the "Mukti Bahini," especially the leftists, claimed that the Bangladesh liberation war was stopped by the AL with the help of India, just as it was about to become a people's war. The radical

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<sup>39</sup>Ibid, 204-205.

<sup>40</sup>On December 15, 1971, the instrument of surrender was signed in Dhaka at 16:31 hours by Lt. General A.K. Niazi on behalf of Pakistan Eastern Command, General Jagjit Singh Aurora, GOC-in-C of the Indian and Bangladesh forces in the eastern theater accepted the surrender. For details, see Indira Gandhi, 30.



leftists regarded the Bangladesh war as an unfinished revolution.<sup>41</sup>

The Indian intervention was also seriously criticized by the western press as an irresponsible task aimed at dismembering Pakistan.<sup>42</sup> As a matter of fact, with the liberation of Bangladesh and the break up of Pakistan, India proved herself as a regional "hegemon" and a "mini super power in the world." In fact, following Indian military victory over Pakistan, India prepared for the nuclear test, and a thaw began in South Asian power balance.<sup>43</sup>

#### Bangladesh-India Relations: Bilateral Cooperation

##### Political Level

Within a month of Bangladesh's independent existence just after Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman had arrived at Dhaka from the Pakistani prison and had taken up office as Prime

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<sup>41</sup>The radical leftist parties in Bangladesh viewed that the Bangladesh Revolution was not even a nationalist revolution, because the bourgeoisie leadership of the AL cannot be truly nationalist as they draw their support from imperialist powers and semi-feudal countries, only a party of proletariat can pursue the revolution correctly, see. Talukder Maniruzzaman, "Bangladesh an Unfinished Revolution?", Journal of Asian Studies 34, no. 4 (1974), 897.

<sup>42</sup>Washington Post and Guardian, two westerns newspapers criticized India for provoking a war. According to the newspapers, "The Indians have been rough, irresponsible, they have encouraged and directly taken part in the dismemberment of a sovereign state." See Washington Post, December 14, 1971 and The Guardian, November 25-30, 1971.

<sup>43</sup>Baldev Nayar, "Treat India Seriously," Foreign Policy 18 (Spring 1975): 149.

Minister, the Western Press raised the question of viability of the new state Bangladesh.

The Economist forecasted that one "real possibility before Bangladesh was to slip under the suzerainty of its ally and protector, India."<sup>44</sup> Following The Economist, Trevor Ling, a western scholar predicted four possibilities which confront the new state.

1. That both India and Bangladesh will remain satisfied with the present situation in which the latter is an independent, friendly state, external to India; this assume that no sufficiently strong dysfunctional factor (economic, international, or internal politics for instance) make a rearrangement necessary;
2. That Bangladesh will before long be brought under the umbrella of India as an additional Indian state, along side West Bengal;
3. That Bangladesh and West Bengal will become reunited to form a singly new state of Bengal within the Republic of India.
4. That Bangladesh and West Bengal might together form a breakaway "Greater Bengal" state entirely outside India.<sup>45</sup>

Eventually The Western forecasting proved fatal and Bangladesh has been surviving as an independent and sovereign state outside Indian orbit.

In the immediate post liberation period, Indian influence in the major policy-making was the notable feature of Bangladesh foreign policy. In fact, the major policy

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<sup>44</sup>The Economist, January 15, 1972

<sup>45</sup>Trevor Ling, "Creating A New State: The Bengali's of Bangladesh," South Asian Review 5, no. 3 (April 1972), 221.

decisions of Bangladesh were either dictated or influenced by India during this time. Indian Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi while welcoming Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman in New Delhi on his way back home after release from the Pakistani prison stated:

Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman had promised freedom to his people and given it to them. India had taken a pledge to free Bangladesh, free Mujib and finally send the refugees to their homes and hearth. We have also kept our promise.<sup>46</sup>

Mrs. Gandhi further added that it was her firm belief that secularism and democracy will prosper under the guidance of Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman.<sup>47</sup> Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman in his speech assured Mrs. Gandhi that, he believed the idea of secularism, democracy and freedom of man and peace of the world.<sup>48</sup> Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman ultimately kept his commitment by making nationalism, secularism, socialism and democracy as the guiding principles of Bangladesh Constitution.<sup>49</sup> In addition, Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman and AL adopted an Indian model of parliamentary system with a single dominant party and a relatively free political

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<sup>46</sup>Bangladesh Documents, (Vol. II), 606.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

<sup>48</sup>The Indian Express (New Delhi), January 11, 1972.

<sup>49</sup>The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Article 8(1) and 12. Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh (Dhaka: Law and Parliamentary Affairs, 1972).

process with restrictions on the extreme leftists and extreme rightists.<sup>50</sup>

In order to formalize the Bangladesh-India relationship, a 25-year treaty of friendship, cooperation and peace was signed between India and Bangladesh with a provision of renewal which followed the model of Indo-Soviet Treaty of 1971. This treaty was signed by Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman and Mrs. Indira Gandhi on March 17, 1972. But the treaty was denounced by the Bangladeshi people because of its very nature.<sup>51</sup> Many scholars and political observers speculated that it will generate "Indian hegemonism." They doubted that India could use the treaty as an excuse for intervention in Bangladesh.<sup>52</sup> In fact, after the Indian annexation of Sikkim in 1974, the fear of Indian "Expansionism" has flourished among the small neighboring countries like Bangladesh.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>Rounaq Jahan, "Bangladesh in 1972: Nation Building in a New State," Asian Survey 13, no. 2 (February 1973): 202.

<sup>51</sup>Article 9 and 10 of the treaty was very debated. Article 9 stipulated that each party shall refrain from giving assistance to any third party against the other party. Article 10 said that no party shall undertake any commitment secret or open towards one or more states which may be incompatible. For details see Moudud Ahamed, Era of Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman (Dhaka: UPL, 1983), 187.

<sup>52</sup>V.P. Dutt, Indian Foreign Policy (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Ltd., 1987), 239.

<sup>53</sup>Atiur Rahaman and Zaglul Haider, "Political Economy of South Asian Regional Cooperation," Bangladesh Historical Studies 11-12, (1987-1988), 105.

The very significant event of Bangladesh-India relations during the Mujib Regime (1972-75) was to return the 150,000 Indian troops who entered into Bangladesh with the Mukti Bahini to expedite the freedom of Bangladesh. The Indian Army and technical experts and advisors continued their presence to assist and guide the government of Bangladesh. By March 25, 1972, the last contingent of the Indian Army left Bangladesh. But the Indian Army before they were withdrawn took away the vast quantity of arms and ammunition left by the surrendering Pakistani Army and left the nascent Bangladesh Army virtually disarmed.<sup>54</sup>

Although several bilateral agreements were signed between India and Bangladesh during this time,<sup>55</sup> the people's hatred gradually grew against Mujib's subservient foreign policy to India, which ultimately generated anti-Indian and anti-Mujib sentiment. This was deepened, when it was rumored that the Bangladesh government in exile had signed a secret

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<sup>54</sup>Talukder Maniruzzaman, *Bangladesh in 1976: Struggle for Survival as an Independent State*, "Asian Survey" 17, no. 2 (February 1977): 191.

<sup>55</sup>The agreements were: A 25-year Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation, March 1972; A 1-year Trade Agreement, March 1972; An Agreement for the Establishment of a Permanent Joint River Commission, April 1972; A 5-year Protocol on Inland Water Transport, November 1972; The Delhi Declaration of 3-Way Repatriation, April 1973; An Agreement on Economic Cooperation and Land Demarcation, May 1974; An Interim Agreement on the Sharing of the Ganges Water, April 1975. See "Foreign Policy of Bangladesh-1," *Pakistan Horizon* 36, no. 3 (Third Quarterly 1983): 67-68.

treaty with India which was detrimental to the sovereignty of Bangladesh.<sup>56</sup>

The nationalist forces accused the Indian government for forcing Bangladesh to enter into unequal treaties.<sup>57</sup> Protesting the subservient foreign policy of Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman, the anti-Indian rightist elements and pro-Chinese leftist elements especially, the National Awami Party (NAP-Bashani) and Jatyo-Samajtantrik Dal (JSD-Rab-Jalil), described ruling AL as a "puppet" of India. During this time, most of the town and city walls were covered by posters bearing the slogan, "down with Indian imperialism."<sup>58</sup> Among many others, Maulana Bhasani,<sup>59</sup> a well known nationalist leader, emerged as a champion of anti-Indian lobby in Bangladesh. He warned Sheikh Mujib that, if he

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<sup>56</sup>Soon after the independence, Col. Taher and Col. Zia Uddin two freedom fighters had stated that the Bangladesh government in exile had signed a secret treaty with the Indian government detrimental to the security of Bangladesh. For details see Abu Taher's Last Testament: Bangladesh the Unfinished Revolution," Economic and Political Weekly, (Bombay: Special, August 1977), 1328.

<sup>57</sup>The Weekly Holiday, April 22, 1973.

<sup>58</sup>personally I watched these posters bearing anti-Indian slogans. Also see The Bangladesh Revolution and its Aftermath (Dhaka: Bangladesh Books International, 1980), 163.

<sup>59</sup>Maulana Bhasani started his political career under British India. He was a leader of the anti-British movement and a leader of the Pakistan movement in 1947. He was a leader of Pakistan Awami-Muslim League. Inspired by the Maoist revolution in China in 1949, he formed the Pakistan National Awami Party (PNAP). A great leader of the Bangladesh Revolution in 1971, he represented Chinese lobby in Bangladesh. He never cared for power, he always led the anti-establishment movement. He is one of the state's recognized national leaders of Bangladesh.

embraced India a day will come when they will all be in jail for collaboration.<sup>60</sup> He declared Jihad (Holy War) against Indian exploiters and urged the army, police and paramilitary forces to unite against Indian influence in Bangladesh.<sup>61</sup>

The Bangladesh-India honeymoon continued despite having strong anti-Indian tirade in Bangladesh. It was further demonstrated after Indian governments full support to the Mujib governments policy of one party authoritarian system in order to establish his so-called "socialism" or "second revolution."<sup>62</sup>

On the other hand, the Mujib government supported India's nuclear explosion, while other countries seriously criticized India's explosion of a nuclear bomb. Bangladesh's foreign minister Dr. Kamal Hossain said:

While other countries may have an opinion of their own, but I do not think India's nuclear explosion for peaceful purpose will create any tension in the subcontinent.<sup>63</sup>

Mujib's exclusive trust and fascination towards India was clear from his decisions of building his own Rakkhi

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<sup>60</sup>Motherland, May 15, 1973.

<sup>61</sup>Statesman, (Calcutta: June 4, 1973).

<sup>62</sup>Sayed Sirajul Islam, "The Role of the State in the Economic Development of Bangladesh During the Mujib Regime (1972-1975)," The Journal of Developing Areas 19, no. 2 (January 1985): 196.

<sup>63</sup>Lawrence Lifxhultz, "Bhutto's Trip: The Mood Changes," Far Eastern Economic Review (July 8, 1974): 12.

Bahini (security force) trained by the Indian military. In fact, Mujib's distrust of the regular Bangladesh army (most of the officers of the Bangladesh army were trained in Pakistan) dictated him to build this Rakkhi Bahini.<sup>64</sup> Some analysts argued that Mujib equipped Rakkhi Bahini because he did not trust the army as he knew that his Pro-Indian and Pro-Moscow foreign policy was most unpopular with it.<sup>65</sup>

However, the Bangladesh-India honeymoon was very short lived. It was over with the assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman and the end of the AL regime.<sup>66</sup> Since the coup d'état of August 15, 1975, India seemed to lose its trusted friend in Bangladesh. But despite this, India decided to maintain good neighborly relations with it. The underlying reason behind India's decision was the fear of China and Pakistan stepping into fill the vacuum left by Indian disassociation. Although New Delhi had no intention of openly antagonizing the new leadership in Bangladesh and its diplomacy remained as usual, the Indian Press had commented that US imperialist, Pak ruling circles and Maoist" conspiracies were behind the anti-Mujib Putsch of August

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<sup>64</sup>Ibid.

<sup>65</sup>G.W. Chaudhury, "Bangladesh's Coup and Counter Coups: International Implications, ORBIS 12, no. 4 (Winter, 1976): 1586-1587.

<sup>66</sup>For Mujib's assassination, see Lawrence Schultz, "Sheikh Mujib Pays The Ultimate Price," Far Eastern Economic Review (August 29, 1975), 10-14.



1975.<sup>67</sup> After Mujib's assassination, following a coup and counter coup of November 3, 1975 and November 7, 1975, General Ziaur Rahaman emerged as a strongman in Bangladesh politics.<sup>68</sup>

With the advent of Ziaur Rahaman, Bangladesh-India relations became clouded with mistrust and misunderstanding. But Zia tried to erase the misunderstanding through diplomatic measures for greater national interest. Though the air of suspicion apparently disappeared from the scene and both countries stressed the need to maintain peace, stability and cooperation in the region, still the relations were not expanding for Bangladesh's close linkage, with Pakistan, China, U.S.A., and the Muslim world. Bangladesh's rapid transformation from the Indo-Soviet orbit to its opposite bloc in international politics and the formulation of new policy decisions were important setbacks for India. Since then the Indian government started exerting pressure

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<sup>67</sup>Lawrence Lifschultz, New Delhi's Views on the Dhaka Coups," Far Eastern Economic Review, November 28, 1975.

<sup>68</sup>Major Ziaur Rahaman declared the formal independence of Bangladesh on March 27, 1971. Later, he became a Major General of the Bangladesh Army. After the military coup of August 15, 1975, Ziaur Rahaman became the chief of the army staff. After the November 7 revolution of 1975, Ziaur Rahaman was appointed the chief martial law administrator. He was the President of Bangladesh from 1977-1981. For details, see, Zaglul Haider, "The Bloodless Military Coup in Bangladesh: An Analysis," Journal of Political Science 2, (Dhaka University, 1983), 82-103.

to make the new Bangladesh government subservient to Indian desire.<sup>69</sup>

After becoming President in April 1977, Ziaur Rahaman by a Presidential Proclamation amended the Bangladesh Constitution deleting the state principle secularism, which was replaced by absolute trust and faith in Almighty Allah (God). In addition, it was added in the Constitution that the state shall endeavor to consolidate, preserve, and strengthen fraternal relations among Muslim countries based on Islamic solidarity.<sup>70</sup>

In 1979, this amendment was ratified by the Parliament. This constitutional change in Bangladesh reflected Bangladesh's major shift from the Indian secular mood of politics, which Bangladesh subscribed in 1972. Naturally, it was a matter of displeasure to India who played the key role in the Bangladesh crisis of 1971.<sup>71</sup>

In fact, there were several reasons behind India's dissatisfaction with Ziaur Rahaman's government in Bangladesh. First of all, the Indian government believed that Zia's military government ousted Mujib's government--a trusted friend of India. Aside, Ziaur Rahaman's emergence as

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<sup>69</sup>Lewis S. Simon, "How Indian Forces Beseiged Bangladesh Border Outposts," Washington Post, November 17, 1975.

<sup>70</sup>Proclamation (Amendment), Order No. 1, for details see, The Bangladesh Times, April 23, 1977. Also see, Kristen Westerguard, 92.

<sup>71</sup>Denzil Peiris, "Indo-Bangladesh Relations: Opening a Raw Wound," Far Eastern Economic Review, May 7, 1976, 10.

a strongman after Mujib, who shifted from indocentric policy and pursued both at home and abroad, a kind of policy which smack pro-Chinese, pro-Pakistani, and pro-American flavor. Actually, the deterioration of India-Bangladesh relations now "advanced by the alacrity" through Pakistan's formal recognition of Bangladesh.<sup>72</sup> All these things convinced India that Ziaur Rahaman was the key plotter behind the killing of Mujib.

Second, the Bangladesh army was controlled gradually by officers who were pro-Pakistani and anti-Indian. Because most of the senior army officers repatriated from Pakistan, had Pakistani military training and background, who did not like Mujib's own para-military force, i.e., Rakkhi Bahini, and who considered Mujib as a puppet of the Indian government.

Thirdly, the emergence of anti-Indian Bangladesh's right wing Islamic groups under the patronage of Ziaur Rahaman. While Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman banned the communal politics in Bangladesh, Ziaur Rahaman, provided the Political Parties Regulation (PPR) in 1976. Taking the opportunity, the Islam based political parties started normal political activities.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>72</sup>Lawrence Ziring, Bangladesh: From Mujib to Ershad (New York: Oxford, Karachi, 1992), 131-132.

<sup>73</sup>Emajuddin Ahamed, "Current Trends in Islam in Bangladesh," Economic and Political Weekly 18, no. 25 (June 18, 1983): 1116.

Fourthly, there was an increase in the pro-Chinese elements in Bangladesh under Zia Regime. While the Mujib Regime suppressed pro-Chinese elements for anti-Indian and anti-Mujib activities,<sup>74</sup> Ziaur Rahaman wanted to obtain the support of Chinese elements and internally maintained very good relations with them against the pro-Mujib activist.

Finally, after his assumption of power Ziaur Rahaman introduced a linguistic territorial Islamic nationalism, which he called Bangladeshi nationalism. In his Bangladeshi nationalism, Ziaur Rahaman's recognition of Islam was understood by India as a policy to counteract Indian influence. All these factors contributed to making Zia an anti-Indian element which deteriorated the relationship between the Zia and Indian government.

With the defeat of Indira Gandhi in the election of 1977 and with the emergence of Morarji Desai as the Prime Minister of India, the relationship between the two countries improved significantly. During the short period of Morarji Desai's reign as Prime Minister, a number of agreements were signed between the two countries.<sup>75</sup> Among

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<sup>74</sup>One study shows that over 60,000 pro-Chinese leftists were arrested by the AL government until the military coup of August 1975. Mujib's force, Rakkhi Bahini reportedly killed 60,000 leftist workers and sympathizers in their operation for wiping out miscreants in different parts of the country. For details, see U.A.B. Razia Akter Banu, "The Fall of Sheikh Mujib Regime: An Analysis," The Indian Political Science Review 15, no. 1 (1981), 16.

<sup>75</sup>During Morarji Desai's regime, a number of agreements were signed between Bangladesh and India. Among these: 1. A five year Ganges water sharing accord was signed on November 5, 1975. 2. An

these, accord of sharing the Ganges water was important. In December 1977, President Zia toured India and similarly the Indian Prime Minister Morarji Desai also paid a goodwill visit to Bangladesh in April 1979. The exchange of visits of the two heads of the government strengthened the relationship between India and Bangladesh.

With the return of Indira Gandhi into power in 1980, the relationship between the two countries deteriorated further. However, President Ziaur Rahman visited India in order to improve relations between the two neighbors.

In August 1980, Indian External Affairs Minister Narshima Rao visited Bangladesh. At the conclusion of his visit a joint statement was issued, which stated that the two sides had agreed that they will not allow their territories to be used for hostile activities against each other and they would maintain tranquillity on the border.<sup>76</sup> In September 1980, President Ziaur Rahman again paid a visit to India but Zia's move failed to satisfy India. The Indian River flow blockade attempts, unilateral seizure of two newly raised Islands in the Bay of Bengal, setting up of camps in Bangladesh territory and the failure to implement

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agreement to curb crimes including smuggling across the border was signed in September 1977. 3. The two countries reached an agreement on April 7, 1979 for greater economic cooperation, joint industrial ventures, harnessing of water resources, and rectifying the imbalance in trade. For details, see, Azizul Hogue, "Bangladesh in 1979: Cry for a Sovereign Parliament," Asian Survey 20, no. 2 (February 1980): 228.

<sup>76</sup>Azizul Hogue, "Bangladesh in 1980: Strains and Stresses Opposition in the Doldrums," Asian Survey 21, no. 2 (February 1981): 201.

1974 border agreement seriously strained the Bangladesh-India relations.

In fact, Bangladesh-India relations on the whole took a turn for the worse from Mrs. Indira Gandhi's return to power to the Ziaur Rahman's assassination in May 1981.<sup>77</sup> Because Zia showed his unwillingness to subscribe to Indian regional and global perceptions.<sup>78</sup>

#### Economic Level

Apart from political level, economic relations between Bangladesh and India also play significant role in the relationship between the two neighbors. During the initial period of the Mujib regime, India played a very meaningful role in the rebuilding of Bangladesh economy. In the economic field, India emerged as the paramount aid donor to Bangladesh.<sup>79</sup> In January 1972, Bangladesh and India issued a joint communiqué during the visit of Bangladesh's foreign minister, Abdus Samad Azad, to India and India guaranteed for full cooperation to Bangladesh in the economic reconstruction of the country. In fact, in the first six

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<sup>77</sup>President Ziaur Rahman was assassinated by an abortive coup on May 31, 1981 led by General Abul Manzur, General Officer Command of the Chittagong Cantonment.

<sup>78</sup>Shaukat Hassan and Abdur Rab Khan, "Bangladesh Floods: The Political Debate" in Issues and Challenges Facing Bangladesh Foreign Policy (Dhaka: BSIS, 1989), 85.

<sup>79</sup>Rahman Sobhan, The Crisis of External Dependence: The Political Economy of Foreign Aid to Bangladesh (London: Zed Press, 1982), 142.

months of Bangladesh's independence, 36 percent of all aid committed and 67 percent of aid disbursed came from India.<sup>80</sup> During this period India committed \$222.7 million and disbursed 81.5 percent of this. Of the total disbursement, 56.7 percent came as food, and the remaining were commodity and project aids.<sup>81</sup>

One dependable study conducted by Rehman Sobhan shows that India provided 800,000 tons of food grains, worth \$113 million after the liberation, was made as a grant. 75 percent of the \$894 million committed as commodity aid to Bangladesh until June 1972 came as a grant. Of the \$22 million in commodity loans, \$12 million was in soft loans, while the \$20 million of project loans was on soft terms.<sup>82</sup> But India's economic assistance to Bangladesh gradually slowed down with the beginning of Ziaur Rahman's regime. From 1975, India's economic assistance to Bangladesh and the economic relations between the two countries reached a low ebb, because of Bangladesh's rapid transformation from an Indo-Soviet orbit to its opposite bloc (Western and Islamic blocs). (Table 1)

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<sup>80</sup>Ibid., 141.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid.

<sup>82</sup>Flow of External Resources into Bangladesh (As of June 30, 1991) (Dhaka: Economic Relations Department, Ministry of Finance, 1992), 65.

TABLE 1

COMMITMENT AND DISBURSEMENT OF INDIAN AID TO BANGLADESH  
(From 1971-72 to 1981-82)  
(in million US \$)

Year	Commitment	Disbursement
1971-72	222.712	181.463
1972-73	15.576	34.395
1973-74	46.810	9.994
1974-75	17.500	19.609
1975-76	7.397	29.721
1976-77	0.00	21.045
1977-78	0.00	5.170
1978-79	15.00	0.993
1979-80	0.00	4.562
1980-81	0.00	2.770
1981-82	0.00	9.141
Total	324.9950	318.8630

Source: Flow of External Sources into Bangladesh (as of June 30, 1991) (Dhaka: Economic Relations Department, Ministry of Finance, 1992), 65.

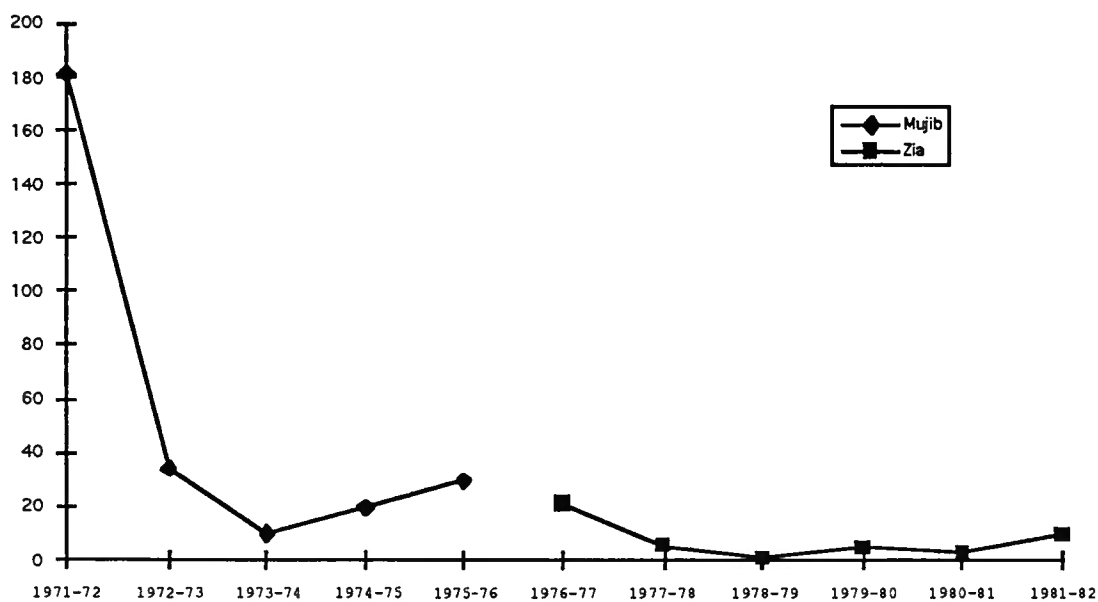


Fig. 2. Disbursement of Indian Aid to Bangladesh:  
A Comparison between the Mujib and Zia regimes.



Although there was no significant aid commitment during the Zia regime, it continued the previously committed aid to Bangladesh which totaled \$318.86 million from 1971 to 1981. Of the total aid, 56.8 percent were grants and the remainder were loans with 5 percent rate of interest, payable within 12 years, with 3 years grace period.<sup>83</sup>

Another form of Indian aid to Bangladesh in the post liberation period was its technical assistance. It played a crucial role in the rehabilitation of the war-damaged communication network, especially restoring the railway system. The Indian technicians temporarily repaired damaged railway lines, bridges, culverts, airfields, cleared mines, and unexploded bombs, naval clearance of mines and wrecks, restoration of wharves and jetties. The major success of the Indian technical service was the repairing of the Hardinge Bridge.<sup>84</sup>

Another major area of cooperation between Bangladesh and India was trade relations. The first formal step towards trade relations was the signing of the Trade and Payment Agreement (TPA) on March 28, 1972. The TPA provided that 10 miles or 16 kilometers to the border of each country will be free of customs and currency. But this pact in practice

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<sup>83</sup>Sobhan, 141.

<sup>84</sup>Indian technical service very promptly and very successfully repaired the 5385 feet long rail line and re-established the link between Northern and Southern Bangladesh. Several parts of the bridge were blown out by the retreating Pakistanis. See Morning News (Dhaka), April 6, 1973.

gave rise to whole scale smuggling. In fact, the high rate of smuggling at taka 15 billion annually was three times more than what Bangladesh earned from exports during the same period.<sup>85</sup> Actually, with the large scale smuggling a group of top Awami Leaguers and some of Mujib's close relatives were often accused to be involved. Mujib government's home minister even recognized that the smugglers were patronaged and protected by the top persons in the society.

Due to the large scale smuggling this pact embittered the economic relations between the two countries. Finally this trade pact was terminated at the end of the first year of independence in the face of strong public protest. Actually, the unequal real value between the Bangladeshi taka and the Indian rupees encouraged smuggling. The exchange rate of Indian rupees was fifty percent higher than the Bangladeshi taka (100 taka was equal to 50 rupees).<sup>86</sup> Moreover, the Indian government slackened the anti-smuggling operation along the Indian borders because smuggling always went in favor of India. Large scale smuggling deteriorated

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<sup>85</sup>V. P. Dutt, Indian Foreign Policy (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Ltd., 1987), 239.

<sup>86</sup>Talukder Maniruzzaman, "Bangladesh in 1979: Economic Crisis and Political Polarization, Asian Survey 15, no. 2 (February 1975): 119. For an exclusive discussion on smuggling, see W. B. Reddaway and Md. Mizanur Rahaman, "The Scale of Smuggling Out of Bangladesh," Economic and Political Weekly 11, no. 23 (June 5, 1976).

the economy of the newly emerged Bangladesh. One economist wrote:

A large factor in the deterioration of the economy has been the policy of maintaining an open border with India to try at the same time to maintain some domestic control of prices and the exchange rate is like turning on the central heating in a house in winter but keeping its doors and windows open.<sup>87</sup>

Under the trade relation, the balance of trade always was in favor of India during the Mujib regime. One estimate shows that by October 1972, the trade imbalance between the two countries was approximately 40 million rupees.<sup>88</sup> Although both parties agreed to remove the trade imbalance by increased exports from Bangladesh side, the trade gap widened gradually, which was considered by some analysts as total domination of India.<sup>89</sup>

A new trade agreement was signed between Bangladesh and India in July 1973, aimed at establishing a balanced trade between the two countries. Although it reduced the trade balance, still the trade imbalance between the two countries was \$81 million in 1974, which was in favor of India. (Table 2)

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<sup>87</sup>K. U. Ahmed, "The Condition of Bangladesh," South Asian Review 7, no. 4 (July 1974): 327.

<sup>88</sup>Denis Wright, Bangladesh: Origins and Indian Ocean Relations, 1972-1975 (London: Oriental University Press, 1988), 135.

<sup>89</sup>Chaudhury, 586.

TABLE 2  
 BANGLADESH-INDIA TRADE RELATIONS  
 (in million \$)

Year	Bangladesh's Export To India	Bangladesh's Import From India	Balance of Trade
1971-72	.7	93.9	-93.20
1972-73	23.3	174.0	-150.70
1973-74	.4	82.0	-81.60
1974-75	5.3	83.3	-78.00
1975-76	7.1	58.3	-51.20
1976-77	.6	46.6	-46.00
1977-78	2.3	43.6	-41.30
1978-79	12.1	40.0	-27.90
1979-80	8.0	55.6	-47.60

Source: Direction of Trade Statistics, International Monetary Fund (IMF) Annual (1972-1981)

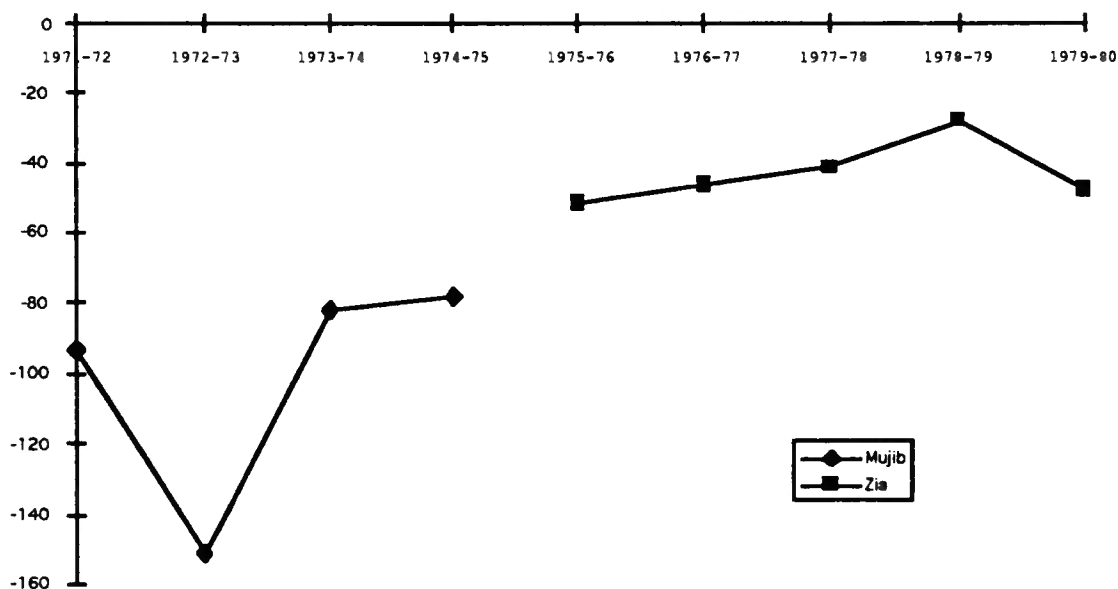


Fig. 3. Bangladesh's Balance of Trade with India: A Comparison Between the Mujib and Zia Regimes.

Following the collapse of the Mujib regime and the advent of the Zia regime, although economic cooperation between the two countries became confined within limited areas, Zia could substantially reduce the trade gap. Although the balance of trade was still favorable to India, it was reduced to a great extent. During 1975-76 the first fiscal year of Zia's regime, the trade imbalance between Bangladesh and India was \$-51.20 million, while it was \$-47.60 million in 1981. Bridging the trade gap was Zia's major success in Indo-Bangladesh relations.

Another aspect of Bangladesh-India trade relations was that Zia reportedly made an offer to sell natural gas to India. Zia government's intentions behind this policy was that the natural gas sales would immediately swing the balance of payments in favor of Bangladesh.<sup>90</sup> Zia's policy to sell natural gas to India was seriously protested by the nationalist political parties in Bangladesh, who adopted the slogan that "we will give blood but no natural gas." Ultimately this proposal was abandoned by the government.

#### Bangladesh-India Relations: Bilateral Disputes

India emerged as the closest friend of Bangladesh in the immediate post liberation period of 1971. But, gradually, the relationship between the two countries has become less cordial.

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<sup>90</sup>The Bangladesh Times, September 1, 1980.

India always tried to exert hegemonic influence on Bangladesh, since the latter's emergence. In fact, Bangladesh is one of the target points of Indian hegemonism. There have been many outstanding bilateral issues between the two countries which still remain unresolved for Indian unwillingness and unfriendly attitudes. These issues are the continuous sources of irritation. Following are the outstanding issues that strained the Bangladesh-India relations.

#### Ganges Water Dispute

Among the major problems between Bangladesh and Indian relations, the Ganges Water dispute is a predominant source of irritation since the independence of Bangladesh. Regarding its water resources, Bangladesh is at a serious disadvantage. The origin of most of the rivers of Bangladesh are outside the country. As a matter of fact, Bangladesh contains a combined delta of the Ganges, the Brahma Putra and the Meghna, bounded on the west, north and east by India, on the southeast by Burma and south by the Bay of Bengal.<sup>91</sup> From a geographical setting and hydrological position, India is in an advantageous position over Bangladesh. As a result of the increasing upstream withdrawal of water by India, the share of water left for

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<sup>91</sup>Except 174 miles of common border with Burma and 455 miles of seaboard, the rest of the border of about 2309 miles lies with India.

Bangladesh has been found to be progressively inadequate to meet her minimum needs during the dry season. India appears to have pursued a water diplomacy that proved to be detrimental to Bangladesh's interests. India has taken up an ambitious plan for constructing some 54 barrages, storage, dams and other multi-purpose projects for utilizing the existing water resources of the Ganges, the Brahma Putra and the Meghna basins, of which 38 projects have been marked for the Ganges basin only.<sup>92</sup>

India, the upper riparian country is constructing barrages, in almost all the major rivers and depriving Bangladesh from her due share in the water resources. The most conspicuous, "Farakkah Barrage" has been erected over the international river Ganges to divert its water to Bhagarati-Hoogly River in order to keep India's Calcutta port navigable and free from silts.<sup>93</sup> This barrage is designed to improve communication facilities including drainage, sanitation, and water supplies in Calcutta as well as inland transport throughout West Bengal. The other probable purposes of the project are to control the Ganges

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<sup>92</sup>The Bangladesh Times, April 12, 1976.

<sup>93</sup>India started the construction of the Farakkah Barrage in 1962 and completed it in 1970 at the cost of US\$ 208 million. The barrage is 75 feet high and 700 feet long. For details see, Ishtiad Hassan, "Bangladesh-India Relations: Issue and Problems" in Emajuddin Ahamed (Ed.), Foreign Policy of Bangladesh: A Small States Imperative (Dhaka: The University Press Limited, 1989), 37.

Water in order to irrigate the Indian states of Uttar Pradesh (UP) and Bihar.<sup>94</sup>

According to the Treaty of Friendship, Peace and Cooperation between India and Bangladesh (Article 6, provided for expert level joint studies of flood control, river basin, irrigation and other problems) on November 28, 1972, a Joint River Commission (JRC) was set up to maintain liaison between the two countries and to make a comprehensive study in the field of flood control, and irrigation by utilizing the joint rivers for the benefit of the people of both countries.<sup>95</sup> Interestingly the question of the apportionment of the Ganges Water remained outside the preview of the JRC. After a summit meeting of the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on May 16, 1974, a joint commission of India and Bangladesh stated that during the period of minimum flow in the Ganges, there might not be enough water to meet the needs of the Calcutta port and full requirements of Bangladesh and the fair weather flow of the Ganges in the lean months would have to be

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<sup>94</sup>The other possible purposes of the barrage are to control the Ganges Water to irrigate the Indian states of UP and Bihar. It is evident from a significant development of India in the field of irrigation since the 1960's. In 1950-60 the gross irrigated area of India was 22.6 million hectares. By 1979-80 the figure had risen to over 50 million hectares. For details see Narul Islam Nazem and Mohammed Humayun Kabir, "Indo-Bangladesh Common River and The Water Diplomacy," *BIISS Journal*, no. 5, (December 1986), 11.

<sup>95</sup>Ishitiaq Hossain, 37.



augmented to meet the requirements of the two countries.<sup>96</sup> The two sides also agreed to reach a mutually beneficial agreement before the Farakkah Barrage was commissioned in 1975. But controversy soon arose over the question of the augmentation of the fair weather flow of the Ganges. Bangladesh proposed augmentation through storage in the Ganges Basin while the Indian proposal included augmentation of the water through diversion of water from Brahma Putra by excavating a 200 mile long canal to the Ganges and the construction of two dams in the "Brahma Putra Basin" at "Dihang and Subansari."<sup>97</sup>

The Indian proposal was not accepted by the Bangladesh government on the grounds that the diversion of the Brahma Putra water during the lean months would cause adverse effects on its downstreams and the excavation of a link canal through Bangladesh would cause serious problems in Bangladesh. Moreover, both the countries also differed over the amount of water to be funneled into Bangladesh. India proposed to withdraw 40,000 cusecs of water of the total discharge of 55,000 cusecs at Farakkah during the dry season for the clearance of Calcutta port. The diversion of 40,000 cusecs of water at that time of the year would turn Bangladesh's northern region into deserts.

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<sup>96</sup>Bangladesh Documents, (Vol. II, No. 4), 13.

<sup>97</sup>Ishtiaq Hassain, 40.

However, during the Mujib regime, on April 18, 1975, a short term agreement was signed between Bangladesh and India which allocated 11,000-16,000 cusecs of water for India from April 21 to May 31, 1975 (41 days) and ensured the remaining 44,000-49,000 cusecs of water for Bangladesh. Though originally Bangladesh demanded for 55,000 cusecs now settled at 44,000-49,000 cusecs of water sacrificing its original demand after signing the agreement.<sup>98</sup> (See Table 3). The short term agreement expired on May 31, 1975. After the expiration of the agreement, India unilaterally began to withdraw 40,000 cusecs of water at Farakkah, which posed the threat of economic ruination to one third of Bangladesh.

TABLE 3

BANGLADESH-INDIA WATER SHARING ACCORDING TO SHORT  
TERM AGREEMENT OF APRIL 18, 1975  
(amount in cusecs)

10 Day Period	Supplies at Farakkah	Amt for Bangladesh	Amt for India
April 21-30, 1975	55,000	44,000	11,000
May 1-10, 1975	56,500	45,000	12,000
May 11-20, 1975	59,250	44,250	15,000
May 21-31, 1975	65,500	49,500	16,000

Source: Ishtiaq Hassain, "Bangladesh-India Relations: Issues and Problems" in Emajuddin Ahamed (ed.), The Foreign Policy of Bangladesh (Dhaka: The University Press Ltd., 1984), 41.

<sup>98</sup>Updated Bangladesh Proposal for Augmenting of the Dry Seasons Flows of the Ganges, Vol. 1, (Dhaka: Ministry of Agriculture, Water Development, and Flood Control, 1983), 1-2. Also see, Nazem and Kabir, 14.

The situation deteriorated drastically after the assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman through the coup d'etat of August 1975. In fact, India increased the diversions during the monsoon. In the dry months it continued to divert 40,000 cusecs of water at Farakkah unilaterally. Some political analysts argued that India seemingly did it from political motives, because Indira Gandhi's administration did not like the new government of General Ziaur Rahman. So, her government used the Ganges Water issue against the military government of Bangladesh and it viewed the violent overthrow of the Pro-Indian Mujib government as a manifestation of anti-Indian feelings in Bangladesh.<sup>99</sup> Protesting Indian unilateral withdrawal of the Ganges Water, on May 17, 1976 Maulana Bhasani, the veteran politician of Bangladesh organized a "Peace March" to Farakkah with several hundred thousands of people.<sup>100</sup> It was a silent non-violent march to demonstrate peoples demand for the due share of the Ganges. Peoples participation in the march was highly spirited by people of all walks of life. In fact, Maulana's intention was not to demolish the million dollar project of India, but to launch public agitation for Bangladesh's rightful share. Before the protest march,

<sup>99</sup>B.M. Monoar Kabir, "Indo-Bangladesh Water Dispute: A Comparative Study," Regional Studies (Islamabad) 9, no. 1 (Winter, 1990-91), 66-87.

<sup>100</sup>Bangladesh Observer, May 18, 1976. Also see, "Security Through Regionalism: India's Foreign Policy in the 1970's," Political Science Review 17, nos. 1-2 (1978).

Maulana Bhasani exchanged personal letters with Mrs. Indira Gandhi. In reply to Bhasani's letter, Mrs. Gandhi reminded him about the "156 Core" building cost of the Farakkah Barrage. She emphasized the necessity of the Barrage for the preservation of the port of Calcutta.<sup>101</sup> Maulana Bhasani as the mouthpiece of the anti-Indian camp greatly criticized India's decision and declared:

I, on behalf of the 80 million people of Bangladesh announce the firm belief that Indian government would not be able to subjugate or dominate the indomitable and freedom loving people of Bangladesh by political and economic aggression and pressure.

In fact, the change of government in Bangladesh in August 1975, caused Mrs. Indira Gandhi's displeasure and India's attitude towards the new government in Bangladesh became hardened. The new government of Bangladesh even failed to convince India to come to the negotiation table, even after serious efforts. President Ziaur Rahman himself was very much vocal about India's attitude. In response to India's attitude, he declared:

We are concerned about the aggressions being carried out from across the border and also about the deliberate withdrawal of the huge quantum of water from the Ganges to the detriment of Bangladesh. We will face up these aggressions at all costs.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>101</sup>Quoted in Kurshida Begum, Tension Over the Farakkah Barrage: A Techno-Political Tangle in South Asia (Steiner-Verlag-Wierbaden, 1988), 169.

<sup>102</sup>Bangladesh Observer, August 22, 1976.

Finally, under the circumstances and finding no other alternative to resolve the problem, bilaterally, the Zia government decided to internationalize the issue and raised it to the OIC foreign ministers meeting in May 1976, Non-Aligned (NAM) Summit in Colombo in August 1976 and in the UN General Assembly in November 1976.<sup>103</sup>

In the meantime, with the defeat of Indira Gandhi in the election of 1977 and with the emergence of Morarji Desai as the Prime Minister of India the relationship between Zia and Desai governments improved progressively. In November 1977, an agreement was signed between the two countries for a period of five years on the apportionment of the Ganges Water at Farakkah and augmentation of its flows. According to the agreement, out of total 55,000 cusecs of water at Farakkah, Bangladesh got 34,500 cusecs and India got 20,500 cusecs during the leanest period (April 21-May 30). The allocation was fixed on the basis of flows reaching at Farakkah based on 75 percent availability calculated from the recorded flows of the Ganges at Farakkah from 1948 to 1973. (Table 4) This was a diplomatic victory for Ziaur Rahman's government. This agreement was seriously

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<sup>103</sup>The UN General Assembly included the item titled, "Situation arising out of the unilateral withdrawal of the Ganges Water at Farakkah" in the agenda of the 31st Session of the General Assembly and allocated it to the special political committee. India was harassed at the diplomatic efforts of Bangladesh and finally agreed to solve the problem bilaterally. For details see, B.M. Abbas A.T., "Agreement on the Ganges", paper presented at the Regional Symposium on Water Resources Policy in Agro-Socio-Economic Development (Dhaka: August 7, 1985), 7-8.

criticized by the Indian National Congress and the Communist Party of India (CPI). The agreement had already been decreed as a sell-out by the government of the Indian state of West Bengal, which said that the central government had sacrificed the interest of

TABLE 4

BANGLADESH-INDIA WATER SHARING ACCORDING TO THE  
AGREEMENT OF 1977 (BETWEEN JANUARY 1 AND MAY 31)  
(amount in cusecs)

Period	Supplied at Farakkah (Based on 75% Availability from Observed Data)	Amt for Bangladesh	Amt for India
January:	1-10	96,500	58,500
	11-20	89,750	51,250
	21-31	82,500	47,500
February:	1-10	79,250	46,250
	11-20	74,000	42,500
	21-28/29	70,000	39,250
March:	1-10	62,250	38,500
	11-20	63,500	38,000
	21-31	61,000	36,000
April:	1-10	59,000	35,000
	11-20	55,500	34,750
	21-30	55,000	34,500
May:	1-10	56,500	35,000
	11-20	59,250	35,250
	21-31	65,500	38,750

Source: Kurshida Begum, Tension Over the Farakkah Barrage: A Techno-Political Tangle in South Asia (Stuttgart: Steiner-Verlag-Weisbaden, 1988), 182.

Calcutta to appease Dhaka.<sup>104</sup> In addition to pursuance of the provision of the 1977 agreement both Bangladesh and India came up with a proposal for augmenting the Ganges flow during the dry season. Bangladesh proposed augmentation by building a series of storage dams in Nepal, while India

<sup>104</sup>The Economist, (October 8, 1977), 69.

offered the link canal proposal; the 200 mile long canal connecting Brahma Putra with the Ganges. But Bangladesh rejected the proposal as totally unreliable, while India rejected the Bangladesh proposal.<sup>105</sup>

However, the agreement of the apportionment of the Ganges Water expired in November 1982. By this time political change took place both in India and Bangladesh. Indira Gandhi regained power in India through an interim election and after the assassination of Ziaur Rahaman, General Ershad took power by a military coup in March 1982. Before the expiration of the 1977 agreement, General Ershad and Mrs. Gandhi signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on October 7, 1982, for the sharing of the Ganges Water for the next 18 months instead of renewal of the 1977 agreement.<sup>106</sup> The 18 month period expired in May 1984 and the

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<sup>105</sup>Bangladesh rejected the proposal because the proposed link canal will ruin a vast area of agricultural land in Bangladesh. Moreover, in the future, the link canal may itself become the main flow of Brahma-putra as the canal will no longer remain a canal due to the rainy season floods and severe soil erosion. So, the Bangladesh government rejected the proposal describing it as logically unrealistic, technically impractical, and politically and economically disastrous. On the other hand, India rejected Bangladesh's proposal because India would not accept a third party. Despite the Nepalese agreement, India rejected the Bangladesh's proposal on the grounds that this scheme is too expensive and it would involve too many other states. For details see, Dilara Choudhury, "India-Bangladesh Relations: From Euphoria to Pragmatism," Regional Studies 7, no. 2 (Spring 1989): 46.

<sup>106</sup>The reason for which the 1977 agreement was not renewed was simple. The 1977 agreement provided a guarantee clause that if during the particular 10 day period, the Ganges flows at Farakkah, come down to such a level that the share of the Bangladesh is lower than 80% of the value shown in the agreement, it guaranteed supply of 80% water shown in the schedule. Indira administration did not want to continue this guarantee so a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed

MOU was again extended for another three years. In November 1985 another MOU was signed extending the duration of the former 3 year agreement into five years.<sup>107</sup>

### Shanti Bahini Dispute

The Shanti Bahini Dispute has become a major source of irritation between Bangladesh and India. This occurred after the political change of August 15, 1975 with the fall of Sheikh Mujib's regime and with the beginning of Ziaur Rahman's regime. India has given shelter, arms and ammunition and provided training to the tribal Chakma Rebels of Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT),<sup>108</sup> known as "Shanti Bahini" to destabilize the internal situation of Bangladesh. Moreover, introducing new formulas and conditions, India has created obstacles on the way of the peaceful solution of the "Shanti Bahini" problem.<sup>109</sup> In fact, the problem started in 1957 when the Pakistan government took up the implementation

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instead of extending the agreement and the guarantee clause was dropped.

<sup>107</sup>Dilara Chaudhury, 15.

<sup>108</sup> For details see, M.Q. Zaman, "Crisis in the Chittagong Hill Tracts: Ethnicity and Integration," Economic and Political Weekly 17, no. 3 (January 16, 1982): 75.

<sup>109</sup>The Shanti Bahini is the armed wing of the tribal political party, Jana Sanhati Samity, (JSS - The People's Solidarity Association) has been active since the mid-1970's. According to them, faced with the threat of losing their identities and the traditional tribal rights, the tribals began to respond to the government's policies of "detrribalization", through increased armed resistance. See "Human Rights in the Chittagong Hill Tracts" Amnesty International Report, 1989-90 (London: August, 1991), 4. Also see, M.Q.Zaman, *Ibid.*, 78.



plan of Kaptai hydro-electric projects which marked the beginning of resource appropriation from the CHT for the greater benefits of the growing industrial economy of the country. After the completion of the project in 1962, a huge number of people were forced to evacuate their homestead and the vast area went under water and about 100,000 hilly people of 1800 farmers families were displaced and submerged 40 percent of the total settled cultivable land.<sup>110</sup>

But the settlement of the displaced people has not yet been done. After the emergence of Bangladesh, Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman, dropped the special status of the CHT from the 1972 Constitution of Bangladesh, in order to integrate the hilly people with the mainstream of the country.<sup>111</sup> During the early days of Bangladesh's independence a delegation of the hilly people led by M.N. Larma met with Prime Minister Sheikh Mujib on February 25, 1972 and placed a four points demand which included:

1. Autonomy of the CHT with its own legislature.
2. Retention of the special status of the CHT according to the 1900 regulation in the Bangladesh Constitution.
3. Continuation of the tribal chief's offices, and

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<sup>110</sup>A. I. Akram, "The Security of Small States in South Asia" in The Security of Small States, Eds., M. Hafiz and A. Rob Khan, (Dhaka: University Press Limited, 1987).

<sup>111</sup>The Weekly Bichitra 2, Issue 2, (May 25, 1989).

4. Constitutional provisions restricting the amendment of the regulation and imposition of a ban on the influx of new tribal people.<sup>112</sup>

But Sheikh Mujib refused to recognize their demands separately from the mainstream of the people. He outrightly rejected their demands by identifying them as secessionists. He advised them to merge with the Bengali nationalism and "to do away with their ethnic identities." This uni-cultural state policy of Sheikh Mujib antagonized the tribal people and radicalized them to revolt against the government.<sup>113</sup> The reaction of the Chakma people came out through the formation of the Shanti Bahini, on January 7, 1973.<sup>114</sup> In fact, faced with the threat of losing their identities and traditional tribal rights, the tribals began to respond to the government's policies through increasing armed resistance. After launching of the Shanti Bahini in 1973, M. N. Larma, the leader of the Shanti Bahini tried to communicate with the neighboring countries. He at first contacted the Burmese Communist Party (BCP) as they were

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<sup>112</sup>"Human Rights in the Chittagong Hill Tracts", Amnesty International Report, (London: August 1991), 4. Also see, R.g. Chowdhury, "Tribal Leadership and Political Integration," unpublished report, Chittagong University.

<sup>113</sup>The CHT tribals refused to identify themselves with the Bengali nationalism. Chakma Leader M.N. Larma viewed in a parliamentary debate that, "I am a Chakma, not a Bengali. I am a citizen of Bangladesh, a Bangladeshi. You are also Bangladeshi, but your national identity is Bengali. The tribals can never be Bengali. See Bangladesh National Parliament Debate, (Vol. 1, No. 6, January 23, 1974), 292.

<sup>114</sup>The Weekly Friday, May 15, 1984.

motivated by the communist ideology and they represented the armed wing of the Rangamati Communist Party (RCP) established on May 16, 1972.<sup>115</sup>

Meanwhile, Larma having a negative response from the BCP, he took an initiative to get assistance from China, but it could not succeed.<sup>116</sup> Later he sought India's assistance to float a resistance against the Bangladesh government in 1974. But the endeavor failed due to the warmer relations of the Mujib government with India. Moreover, India made continued efforts to inform Bangladesh about the activities of the Shanti Bahini instead of providing them with any assistance.

But the situation changed dramatically with the assassination of Sheikh Mujib and with the emergence of Ziaur Rahman. Taking advantage of cooler relations with the Zia regime, India welcomed the Shanti Bahini, providing them shelter in the Tripura and Mizoram states of India, established training camps and provided guerrilla training while equipping them with modern weapons in order to destabilize the internal political situation of Bangladesh. Since then, the Shanti Bahini members started sporadic attacks on the non-tribal areas. This was followed by the counter attacks by the Law Enforcing Agency (LEA) of

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<sup>115</sup>Md. Zaglul Haider, "Ethnic Problems in Bangladesh: A Case Study of the Chakma Issue in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT)", (Unpublished). Also see, The Weekly Bichitra.

<sup>116</sup>The Weekly Friday.

Bangladesh. As a result, several hundred people were killed in several incidents and several thousands compelled to take refuge in India. Under the above circumstances, President Zia took several political-economic steps to ensure economic development and bring peace and stability back in the CHT. Among many other measures he adopted multi-sectoral development programs for CHT aided by Asian Development Bank (ADB) at the cost of 1138.4 million taka. He also introduced the quota system for the hilly people so that their seats can be reserved in the services and the higher education institutions.

Zia identified the problem of Chittagong Hill Tracts and instituted Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board, "for the economic development of the CHT, which was initiated by the Mujib regime. He launched a tribal convention in 1977 to maintain peace and stability in the CHT, but it reportedly failed to negotiate with the rebels for a peaceful solution.

In order to bring the Chakma rebels under control, President Zia adopted two strategies, 1) peaceful negotiation and 2) side by side, President Zia tried to balance the hilly people by encouraging the people of overcrowded districts of Bangladesh to settle in the CHT. The ultimate goal of this strategy was to integrate the tribal people with the mainstream of the country. The government of Bangladesh estimated that the Bengali settlers

accounted for 9 percent in 1951. This figure has increased as much as 11.6 percent in 1974 and 39.4 percent in 1987.<sup>117</sup>

To combat the situation, the Zia government adopted two tactics: peace negotiation, and a development program for the CHT. One of the two major thrusts for development has been the development of the communication system. The government undertook a comprehensive plan of worth \$39.5 million financed by the World Bank to improve and build new roads and highways even to the remotest place in the CHT.<sup>118</sup> The Zia government also introduced a cooperative farming project with the assistance of the Asian Development Bank.<sup>119</sup> The philosophy behind the project was that the successful implementation of the cooperative farming would achieve two purposes: first, it would resettle thousands of tribals who are now leading nomadic lives and secondly, it would help the government to establish law and order in the CHT.<sup>120</sup>

On the other hand, in order to reach a political settlement, President Zia initiated another endeavor to get an agreement with the tribal rebels in the late 1980's. The closed door dialogue was held in Rangamati Circuit House and

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<sup>117</sup>Census Reports of 1961, 1979 and Monthly Statistical Report of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 1987.

<sup>118</sup>The Bangladesh Observer, March 20, 1980.

<sup>119</sup>S. Kamaluddin, "A Peace Offensive in the Hills," Far Eastern Economic Review, May 2-8, 1980.

<sup>120</sup>M.Q. Zaman, 79.

substantial progress was also achieved. Bangladesh even tried to solve the problem by negotiation with India. Following the Indian Foreign Minister, Narashima Rao's visit to Dhaka in August 1980, both Bangladesh and India, in a joint statement, agreed not to allow its territory to be used for any hostilities against the other state and to maintain tranquility on the border.<sup>121</sup> In spite of all the noble efforts of the Bangladesh government, the problem remained unresolved during the Zia regime due to manipulative control of India over the Shanti Bahini. Though the problem is a socio-politico-economic one, for external intervention, the problem took very acute and complicated shape. In fact, India tried to keep the Bangladesh government under political pressure for its major change of foreign policy goals; and anti-Indian sentiments in Bangladesh during the Zia regime also accelerated to make the problem more acute. In fact, the problem could be solved politically if the external intervention is stopped.

#### Summary

This chapter is mainly concerned with Bangladesh-India relations during the Mujib and Zia regimes. From the above analysis it has been revealed that during the first phase of the Mujib Regime (1971-1975), the relationship between the two countries was very much cordial, partly because of

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<sup>121</sup>The Bangladesh Times, August 19, 1980.

India's crucial role in the Liberation War of Bangladesh and mainly for the Mujib government's submissive foreign policy. However, with the fall of the Mujib regime and the rise of Ziaur Rahaman, Bangladesh entered into the second phase and rapidly shifted from an Indo-Soviet bloc to its opposite bloc (western-chinese and islamic bloc). During this period (1975-1981) problems with India were regarded as the central problems of Bangladesh. Actually, with the Mujib's exit from the Bangladesh scene, the sweet relations between Bangladesh and India turned into sour. Since 1975, the government in Bangladesh has pursued policies which have been far less receptive of India's sentiments and concerns than was the case in the pre-1975 period. Because of Bangladesh's unwillingness to subscribe to India's regional and global perceptions and concerns, Bangladesh has since 1975, been perceived by India as being an unreliable and unfriendly country. The relationship improved temporarily during the short period of Morarji Desai's government. This time Zia successfully signed a five-year long agreement for the apportionment of the Ganges water, which was clearly a diplomatic gain of Ziaur Rahman over India. However, with the return of the Congress Party to power, India's policies towards Bangladesh reverted to the earlier pattern. During the whole period of Ziaur Rahaman, India tried to exert its hegemony by reviving the irritating bilateral problems, but Bangladesh seriously opposed these Indian efforts

bilaterally, regionally, and internationally, through its "outward looking" foreign policy.



## CHAPTER IV

### BANGLADESH - PAKISTAN RELATIONS: MUJIB AND ZIA REGIMES

Wayne A. Wilcox once wrote:

...if Pakistan is to become a nation, it requires years of common history and experience under gifted leaders, who while maintaining a consensus within their own circle, recognize their obligation to the broader public.<sup>1</sup>

After 24 years of independent existence, marked by several governments, Pakistan experienced three wars with India, a civil war, several natural disasters, and was separated into two distinct countries, Bangladesh and Pakistan. The years of common history and experience under gifted leaders never materialized.<sup>2</sup> The crisis of national integration started in 1947. Just after the birth of the Muslim state of Pakistan,<sup>3</sup> tensions deepened and widened

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<sup>1</sup>Wayne A. Wilcox, Pakistan: The Consolidation of a Nation (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), 221.

<sup>2</sup>Robert LaPorte, Jr., "Pakistan in 1971: The Disintegration of a Nation," Asian Survey 12, no. 2 (February 1972): 97

<sup>3</sup>Pakistan emerged as a Muslim state under the Indian Independence Act of 1947 on the basis of the "Two Nations Theory." The Two Nations Theory was that the Muslims constitute one nation and the Hindus another. For detail see Hector Bolitho, Jinnah, Creator of Pakistan, (London: John Murray, 1954). Also see Manzooruddin Ahmed, "Iqbal and Jinnah on the Two Nation Theory" in C. M. Naim (Ed.), Iqbal, Jinnah and Pakistan: The Vision and The Reality (Maxwell: School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University, 1979), 40-76.

gradually and finally resulted in the failure of national integration in Pakistan. It also led to the birth of a nation-state Bangladesh on the world map as a sovereign entity on December 16, 1971, after having witnessed a nine months long bloody civil war. Before 1971, Bangladesh gained a quarter century long experience of Union with Pakistan under the "internal colonialism."<sup>4</sup> The Bengali Nationalist Movement which started in 1950's as regionalism, later turned into an independence movement in the 1970's and finally contributed to the break up of Pakistan and the emergence of Bangladesh. The failure of the national integration of Pakistan once again proved as Rupert Emerson pointed out, "most of the new states of Asia and Africa are not yet nations in being but only nations in hope."<sup>5</sup>

The roots of the disintegration of Pakistan were very much visible within the federal structure of Pakistan. By any standard of federalism, the ruling elites in Pakistan totally failed to build up a truly federal government for Pakistan. Rather they established a colony and hinterland

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<sup>4</sup>The theory of internal colonialism is presented by the Mexican sociologist Pablo Gonzalez Casanova (1970). By internal colonialism he meant the same condition of traditional colonialism found internally in nations today. See Ronald H. Chilcote, Theories of Comparative Politics: The Search for a Paradigm, (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1981), 302.

<sup>5</sup>Rupert Emerson, From Empire to Nation (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), 94.

in East Pakistan for dumping the finished product of West Pakistan.<sup>6</sup>

It is noteworthy to mention as Morrise-Jones pointed out:

The birth of Bangladesh entailed the death of Pakistan that was itself brought into the world just under a quarter of a century ago. Evidently old age cannot be given as the cause of death. But what did happen to Pakistan, what was it that "went wrong".<sup>7</sup>

Immediately after the emergence of Bangladesh, the newly established state showed antagonism towards Pakistan for the loss of millions of lives and bloodshed. On the other hand, Pakistan was hostile towards Bangladesh for the eastern wing that it lost. It was very difficult for Pakistan to let go of its eastern wing. In fact, the Pakistanis were consoled by conceiving the notion that Bangladesh became independent with direct Indian and Soviet help and they continued their efforts in developing relations with Bangladesh. So naturally for attitudinal and psychological reasons, Bangladesh-Pakistan relations still remained under careful study.<sup>8</sup>

However, the normalization of relations between Bangladesh and Pakistan started after the formal recognition

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<sup>6</sup>Zillur R. Khan, "March Movement of Bangladesh: Bengali Struggle for Political Power" in South Asia Series: Occasional Papers, No. 21, (Asian Studies Center: Michigan State University, 1974), 205.

<sup>7</sup>W. H. Morris-Jones, "Pakistan Post-mortem and the Roots of Bangladesh," Political Quarterly 43, no. 2 (April-June, 1972): 187.

<sup>8</sup>Shirin-Tahir-Kheli, The Foreign Policy of "New Pakistan," ORBIS 20, no. 3 (Fall 1976): 742.

of Pakistan to the People's Republic of Bangladesh on February 22, 1974. Since then, hostilities between the two countries started to disappear from the scene. Pakistan realized that the alienation from an absolutely Muslim majority state in South Asia will encourage more deeply entrenched Indian vested interests in Bangladesh.<sup>9</sup> Yet even after Pakistan's recognition of Bangladesh, the former remained aloof from serious involvement with the latter. As a matter of fact, before the fall of the Mujib regime in 1975, both Bangladesh and Pakistan maintained very limited and cautious relations with each other. The underlying reasons were Bangladesh's pro-Indian, and pro-Soviet foreign policy and secular state policy and Pakistan's anti-Bangladesh propaganda throughout the world. Indeed, Bangladesh-Pakistan relations improved dramatically with the advent of Ziaur Rahman as a strong man on the Bangladesh scene. This happened because of Ziaur Rahman's shifting from an Indo-Soviet orbit to pro-Western, pro-Chinese and pro-Islamic foreign policy. However, the main objective of this study is to explore Bangladesh-Pakistan relations. To this end the following issues will be addressed in this chapter.

Role of Pakistan and the Birth of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh-Pakistan Relations: Mujib and Zia Regimes  
(1971-1981).

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<sup>9</sup>Vernon Marston Hewitt, The International Politics of South Asia (Manchester University Press, 1992), 36.

## Summary

### Role of Pakistan and the Birth of Bangladesh

Pakistan started its political journey as an Islamic state and was constitutionally named as the "Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan" with the national flag embodying Islamic symbols of the "crescent" and the "star" on a green border. While the founding fathers of Pakistan defined the Islamic State as absolute trust in Allah (God) and his Supreme Sovereignty.<sup>10</sup>

Although Pakistan was commonly known as an Islamic republic, it had never been allowed to function according to the principles of the Quran and the Sunnah of Islam. Rather its leaders followed Western lifestyle and western culture which were merely contradictions between the words and actions of the founding fathers. About founding fathers, commitment towards Islam, prominent Islamic scholar and politician, Sayed Abul-Ala-Moududi<sup>11</sup> was very critical. He stated:

Not a single leader of the Muslim League from Jinnah himself to the rank and file has an Islamic mentality or Islamic habits of thought or looks at political and social problems from the Islamic viewpoint.... Their ignoble role is to safeguard

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<sup>10</sup>Ziauddin Ahmad (Ed.), Quaid-i-Millat Liakat-Ali Khan, Leader and Statesman (Karachi: Oriental Academy, 1970), 57.

<sup>11</sup>Sayed Abul-Ala-Moududi founded Jamat-i Islami Party in 1941. He authored a huge number of books and articles on Islam and the Islamic movement.

merely the material interests of Indian Muslims by every possible maneuver or trickery.<sup>12</sup>

As a matter of fact, the founding fathers of Pakistan used "Islam" more as a slogan than practice. Actually, after the independence of Pakistan, Mohammed Ali Jinnah overnight transfigured himself from an Islamist to a liberal or secular leader. This liberal or secular trend is beautifully portrayed in his speech to the Pakistan's constituent assembly, where he had outlined the principles for the relationship between state and society in Pakistan:

You are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques, or to any other place of worship in this state of Pakistan.... You may belong to any religion or caste or creed that has nothing to do with the business of the state.... We are starting with this fundamental principle that we are all citizens and equal citizens of one state.<sup>13</sup>

This serious contradiction between the theory and practice of Islam among the ideolog's of Pakistan was considered a serious debacle for the political development of the new nation.

Apart from the ideological dilemma, the most formidable problem of nation building in Pakistan was the integration of Bengali sub nation. The crux of the problem was that the

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<sup>12</sup>Quoted in Tariq Ali, Pakistan: Military Rule or Peoples Power, (New York: William Morrow and Co., Inc., 1970), 33. Also see Aziz Ahmed, Islamic Modernization in India and Pakistan, 1857-1964 (Oxford, 1967).

<sup>13</sup>Jinnah's speech to Pakistan Constituent Assembly, August 11, 1947, in Speeches of Quid-i-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah, as Governor General of Pakistan (Karachi, 1948), 101.

Bengalis were not merely an ethno-cultural sub-group in Pakistan but actually constituted a majority (55.4%) of the country's total population.<sup>14</sup> The ethnic problem between the two halves of Pakistan, was widened and compounded by geographical distance, linguistic distinctiveness, political domination, cultural heterogeneity, social and above all economic exploitation by the West Pakistani ruling elites over the East Pakistani majority masses. These were considered as challenges toward the national integration of Pakistan. In reality, Pakistan faced almost all the problems of national integration.<sup>15</sup>

#### Rise of the Bengali Resistance and Vernacular Elites

The beginning of the crisis which the Pakistan government failed to handle successfully was the state language issue. This led to a movement to win recognition for Bengali as one of the national languages alongside Urdu, which began in 1948.<sup>16</sup> As the largest ethnic group, the Bengali's constituted about 56.4 percent in 1951 and 55.48

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<sup>14</sup>Rounaq Jahan, Pakistan: Failure in National Integration (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), 6.

<sup>15</sup>According to Myron Weiner, there are five problems of national integration: 1) Problem of creating a sense of territorial nationality, 2) Problem of establishing a national central authority, 3) Elite-Mass gap, 4) Lack of minimum value, and 5) Problem of integrative institution. For details see, Myron Weiner, "Political Integration and Political Development," The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences 258 (1965): 52-64.

<sup>16</sup>Farzana Shaikh, "Islam and the Quest for Democracy In Pakistan," The Journal of Common Wealth and Comparative Politics 24, no. 1 (March 1980): 80.

percent in 1961, and their commonly spoken language was Bengali. After the emergence of Pakistan, they wanted to make Bengali as one of the national languages side by side Urdu. While Urdu was the language of 3.37 percent in 1951 and 3.65 percent in 1961 in Pakistan. In fact, the West Pakistani people's most commonly spoken languages were different regional languages like Panjabi, Pushtu, Sindhi, Urdu, and Baluchi. From linguistic consideration, East Pakistan very closely approximated a linguistic unit while West Pakistan presented a complex polyglot.<sup>17</sup>

Despite meeting all the prerequisites of the national language the ruling elites in Pakistan considered only Urdu as the official language and ignored Bengali, the majority of the peoples language.

This action seriously disappointed the East Pakistani Bengalis, who fought for Pakistan. They then launched the resistance movement, for the recognition of Bengali as one of the state languages of Pakistan.

Following the violent language movement through 1948 to 1952, the Bengali language was recognized as one of the national languages of Pakistan in 1954. Embracing a violent language crisis, the Pakistani rulers experienced a "disastrous and disruptive beginning."<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Jahan, 12.

<sup>18</sup>K.B. Sayeed, The Politics in Pakistan: The Nature and Direction of Change (New York: Praeger Publisher, 1980), 67.



Following the language movement, the East Bengal people's grievance and dissatisfaction were first reflected in the first popular election to the provincial assembly in which the ruling Muslim League (ML) embraced a crushing and humiliating defeat to the opposition united front of East Bengal in 1954.<sup>19</sup> But the ruling elites did not allow the united front to function.

Again at the national level, after the death of Governor General M.A. Jinnah, Najimuddin became a figurehead Governor General and Liaquat Ali Khan emerged as executive prime minister. But after the assassination of Liaquat Ali Khan, Khawaja Nazimuddin became the prime minister, while Golam Mohammed, a "foul-mouthed" West Pakistani bureaucrat, became the very powerful Governor General. This time the prime minister became subordinate to the Governor General.

When the Executive Prime Minister Khawaja Nazimuddin tried to curb the Governor General's power by seeking an amendment of the India Act of 1935, the Governor General dismissed Prime Minister Khawaja Nazimuddin.<sup>20</sup> Nazimuddin's dismissal clearly demonstrates deprivation and disrespect of the ruling elites towards East Pakistan and its leadership,

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<sup>19</sup>Out of 309 seats in the East Pakistan, the ruling Muslim League won only 10 seats. All the provincial ministers including the Chief Minister, Nurul Amin failed to get elected. For detail analysis, see, Tariq Ali, Military Rule or People's Power (William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1970), 62.

<sup>20</sup>Pakistan did not have its own Constitution until 1956. It was ruled by the government of India Act of 1935 from 1947-1956.

and this was the real-po-li-tik of the West Pakistani ruling elites.<sup>21</sup>

In September 1956, Mr. H.S. Sharwardy, the most competent Bengali national leader, was appointed Prime Minister of Pakistan, who led a coalition government. But within a year Sharwardy had to resign at the point of growing hostility of the West Pakistani ruling elites.

#### Segmented Development Strategy in Pakistan

At the economic level, from 1947 to 1971, the ruling Pakistani elites followed a segmented development strategy. It ignored the eastern wing in its development plan, and developed West Pakistan at the cost of East Pakistan and successfully converted East Pakistan into an internal colony of the West Pakistan. In fact, the economic deprivation, exploitation and disparity between the East and West Pakistan constituted finally the disintegration and division of the country. While the East Pakistan's foreign exchange earning constituted almost three quarters of the foreign currency earnings during the first decade (50% in 1950-55 and 61% during 1956-60).<sup>22</sup> Unfortunately, the foreign

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<sup>21</sup>Before Najimuddin was removed as Prime Minister, he complained to Gholam Mohammed, "When I was Governor General, I never interfered with Liaquat." To this Gholam Mohammed replied, "Ah, but you see, I am not Najimuddin and you are not Liaquat.", cited in Tariq Ali, 66.

<sup>22</sup>Stephen Lewis, Economic Policy and Industrial Growth in Pakistan (London: 1969), 142. Also see Gehstar Poupanek, Pakistan's Development: Social Goals and Private Incentives (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1967), 23.

exchange earned by the east wing was appropriated by the west which was used to import raw materials for the west wing manufacturing. Another factor which led to the economic exploitation of the Eastern wing by the West was that most investment took place in the west and the east received less than one third of the total domestic investments and less than one third of the commodity imports. On the distribution of the expenditure from 1950 to 1970 only 23 percent of the expenditure was done in East Pakistan.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, in the interwing trade, the balance of trade was always in favor of West Pakistan.<sup>24</sup> Although East and West Pakistani Economists disagreed over the factors responsible for the growth in disparity, the East Pakistani Economists showed that their interests had been deliberately ignored and neglected by the West Pakistani ruling elites.<sup>25</sup>

In fact, disparity in per capita income continued to rise. While East Pakistan's per capita income rose from RS269 in 1959-60 to RS291.5 in 1968-1969, West Pakistan's per capita income rose from RS355 to RS473.4. The disparity index rose from 28 percent in 1959-60 to 62 percent in 1968-

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<sup>23</sup>A.M.A. Muhith, Bangladesh: Emergence of a New Nation (Dhaka: B.B.I., 1978), 108.

<sup>24</sup>Anisur Rahman, East and West Pakistan: A Problem in the Political Economy of Regional Planning (Cambridge: Center for Interational Affairs, Harvard University Press, 1968), 8.

<sup>25</sup>K.B. Sayeed, The Politics of Pakistan: The Nature and Direction of Change (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1980), 78.

69.<sup>26</sup> Acknowledging the regional disparity, Mahbub-ul-Haq the former Chief Economist of the Pakistan Planning Commission opined:

It shows that if there are wide economic disparities between two regions, the pull of free market forces will tend to aggravate them. Economic growth will tend to become concentrated in the relatively richer region, with its better infra-structure, more aggressive entrepreneurs, and known opportunities for investment. Private saving from poorer regions will also go to the richer region in search of profitable opportunities. Foreign investment will tend to follow to the richer region where some dynamism has been built up and returns seem to be safer and larger. Foreign aid and loans will be distributed more in favor of the richer region where those sound projects are located, on the basis of which foreign assistance has been negotiated. The Government becomes an unconscious ally in this process of concentration of economic forces-or "polarization process" as Myrdal has called it-by creating more infrastructure where bottlenecks are more obvious by distributing scarce resources like foreign exchange where demand for them is higher and by concentrating its administrative personnel in the more dynamic region where the problems of control are more keenly felt. This is clear that this is what has happened in the case of East and West Pakistan. This was but a natural sequence of events in the absence of a clearly defined regional policy.<sup>27</sup>

Having the experience of economic exploitation and appropriation by the West Pakistan the Two Economy Thesis was presented by the East Pakistan's economists in 1956, which recommended that the development in Pakistan be planned for two distinct economies for the two parts for the

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<sup>26</sup>Jahan, 29.

<sup>27</sup>Mahbub-ul-Haq, The Strategy of Economic Planning: A Case Study of Pakistan (Karachi: Oxford, 1963), 113.

country. The main hypothesis of the two economy theory was that the economy of the two regions be regarded as completely separate and that separate economic policies be pursued in each wing. Revenue was to be controlled by the regions themselves, each region had control of its foreign exchange earnings. Each should have the freedom to pursue separate foreign trade policies to enter into trade pact with foreign countries, to adopt credit and fiscal policies best suited to the growth of its economy. Although the two economy thesis was regarded as the economic manifesto for East Pakistan's Bengali autonomist's, it was rejected by the Ayub Regime, branding it as a prelude to political disintegration.<sup>28</sup>

#### From the Autonomy to the Independence

Against the growing economic and political deprivation, the six points movement of 1966 led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman popularized rapidly in East Pakistan. It took violent and radical character after the initiation of the Agartala conspiracy case in 1966, which accused Mujib and Awami league for secessionist movement. Following the Agartala conspiracy case, the students of East Pakistan formed a Students Action Committee and launched the 11 Points Movement in order to secure regional autonomy, which was more radical in character than any other previous movement.

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<sup>28</sup>Jahan, Ibid., 87.

The autonomy movement, in fact, crippled Ayub's administration. Finally on March 25, 1969, seeing his "political epitaph", Ayub quietly handed over power to General Yahya Khan, the Commander-in-Chief of the Pakistan Army.

After the exit of Ayub Khan from power, Yahya's entrance as chief martial law administrator once again placed the country under martial law. Assuming political power, President Yahya announced a legal framework order (LFO) under which the first general selection in Pakistan was ever held on December 7, 1970 on the basis of one man one vote. In the election, the Bengali finally divorced the West Pakistani ruling ideas and ideologies and voted for Awami League (AL). The election victory of Sheikh Mujib's AL gave it the position of a single majority party, while Z.A. Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) emerged as the second largest party. The election victory gave AL such an advantageous position, which led to AL taking a strong stand regarding the future constitution of Pakistan.<sup>29</sup>

On the other hand, Z.A. Bhutto "used" West Pakistan as a trump card for constitutional bargaining. He also used the West Pakistan's image and joined hand in hand with Yahya Khan in order to terrorize the majority party AL.

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<sup>29</sup>Mohammed Ayoob, "From Martial Law to Bangladesh" in Pran Chopra, (Ed.), The Challenge of Bangladesh (New York: Humanitarian Press), 49-50.

Finally, instead of showing respect to a democratic system, the West Pakistani ruling elites refused to accept the majority rule. The contention of the ruling elites was that the beginning of permanent Bengali domination could finally displace the political supremacy hitherto enjoyed by West Pakistan as a whole. President Yahya finally opted for a military solution.

On March 25, 1970, military crackdown followed a systematic campaign of indiscriminate slaughter. Actually Yahya Khan's military action destroyed the last hope of keeping up the unity of Pakistan. Finally Bangladesh emerged on the world map on December 16, 1971, after having a nine month long bloody liberation struggle. In fact, the collapse of Pakistan's political system or break up of Pakistan was the product of a 24 year long struggle against oppression, exploitation and subjugation of internal colonialism.

Following David Easton's "system theory," it can be argued that the political system in Pakistan broke down in 1971, largely because of output failure arising out of dissension and conflict between east and west Pakistanis. David Easton pointed out:

Major tendencies to output failure will be set in motion as a result of the degree of a internal dissension and conflict to be found among the members that they find themselves unable to cooperate, negotiate or compromise. Their differences even to the minimum extent necessary

so as to discover some kind of acceptable output resolution.<sup>30</sup>

In fact, the dissension arose largely because the power elites of West Pakistan formulated certain policies that provoked so much opposition and bitterness from the East that the system was brought to the verge of collapse. It might have been saved in March 1971, but the power elites were not prepared to let the system be transformed into one more acceptable to the East.<sup>31</sup>

Bangladesh - Pakistan Relations: Mujib and Zia Regimes  
(1971-1981)

The sudden but certain birth of Bangladesh was a matter of deep shock and great embarrassment for the people and government of Pakistan. In the redesigned South Asian subcontinent, both Bangladesh and Pakistan cautiously but seriously advanced towards establishing a relationship. But in the immediate post-liberation period, Bangladesh-Pakistan relations were conditioned by the following issues: release of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman from Pakistani Prison, recognition of Bangladesh and the release of the prisoners of war (POWs), repatriation of stranded Pakistanis and the Bengalis and distribution of assets and liabilities.

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<sup>30</sup>David Easton, A System Analysis of Political Life (New York: Wiley, 1965), 233.

<sup>31</sup>K.B. Sayeed, 65-66.



### Bilateral Disputes: Political Level

#### Release of Mujib, Repatriation of the POWs and the Stranded Bengalis and Recognition of Bangladesh

In the dawn of the independence, the release of Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman from the Pakistani Prison, was anticipated more than anything among the Bengalis. By exploiting the release of Sheikh Mujib, Z.A. Bhutto wanted to soften Bangladesh's attitude towards the POWs and towards future cooperation between Bangladesh and Pakistan. In fact, it was early January, 1972, while mooted the possibility of Sheikh Mujib's release, Bhutto had put forward the idea of an extremely loose federation between the two wings of the old Pakistan.<sup>32</sup>

Bhutto's decision to release Mujib was an attempt to create an image in Bangladesh, as a moderate, conciliatory and pragmatic leader, whose overwhelming objective was to heal the breach between the two peoples by returning their hero to them.<sup>33</sup>

It is true that it helped maintain political stability and peace in South Asia. Mujib was released quickly. After arrival, Mujib transformed himself from President to a Prime Minister and established his authority as an unchallenged

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<sup>32</sup>Time (US), January 10, 1972.

<sup>33</sup>The New York Times, January 3, 1972.

and unparalleled leader--who was commonly known as Bangabandhu (friend of Bangladesh).<sup>34</sup>

Before releasing Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Z.A. Bhutto asked him to consider keeping links with Pakistan, but Mujib did not promise to Mr. Bhutto that Bangladesh would maintain any link with Pakistan.<sup>35</sup> After his arrival at Dhaka, regarding the ties between Bangladesh and Pakistan, Sheikh Mujib said that the old ties between the East and West Pakistan had been snapped for good, and his Party would stand for "socialism, democracy, and secularism," which meant that Pakistan's concept of a Muslim state had been abandoned.<sup>36</sup>

Although Mujib demanded the trial for those guilty for killing three and a half million people in Bangladesh under international supervision<sup>37</sup> he appealed to his people not to seek revenge for the three million Bengalis who had been murdered by the Pakistani army during the nine months drive to suppress the Bangladesh liberation struggle. As a matter of fact, Mujib directed his people not to take any revenge

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<sup>34</sup>In the 1970s, the students of East Bengal gave the title of "Banga Bandhu" to Sheikh Mujibur Rahman for his uncompromising struggle against West Pakistani governing elites.

<sup>35</sup>Sheelendra K. Singh (Ed.), Bangladesh Documents, vol. 2 (New Delhi: Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1977).

<sup>36</sup>Holing Worth, "Mujib Cuts Ties with Pakistan," The Daily Telegraph (London), January 11, 1972.

<sup>37</sup>The Daily Telegraph (London), January 11, 1972.

upon those non Bengali Biharis who sided with the Pakistan army during the liberation struggle.<sup>38</sup>

Although Bhutto's gesture to release Mujib was the beginning of an uncomfortable journey towards the normalization of relationship between Pakistan and Bangladesh, both Mujib and Bhutto were under inside pressure from Bangladesh and Pakistan. The Bengalis, too, put Mujib under pressure, to make a settlement with Bhutto, so that stranded Bengalis can return home.<sup>39</sup>

Similarly, from Pakistan's side, Bhutto was under tremendous pressure for the return of 93,000 defeated Pakistani army troops. The families of the 93,000 soldiers, held in India were heavily pressuring Bhutto to recognize Bangladesh in order to make a settlement for their return home.<sup>40</sup> Though Bhutto was caught by divergent pressures,<sup>41</sup> he deliberately refused to recognize Bangladesh, because he believed that it was important to deny the existence of Bangladesh as a state in the national interest of Pakistan as long as possible so that negotiation on the POWs issue would be primarily between India and Pakistan. In order to

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<sup>38</sup>Fox Butterfield, "Sheikh Mujib Home: 500,000 Give Him Rousing Welcome," New York Times, January 11, 1972.

<sup>39</sup>The Economist (London).

<sup>40</sup>Salamat Ali, "Bhutto's Challenge," Far Eastern Economic Review, December 2, 1972.

<sup>41</sup>Some political parties in Pakistan argued that recognition of Bangladesh would amount to validation of Indian aggression and also lead to an upsurge into secessionist movement. Ibid.

strengthen his position, Bhutto appealed to the world community not to recognize Bangladesh, on the ground that Bangladesh was a client state of India as the Indian troops and officials were still present in Bangladesh. Moreover, he warned world nations that recognition of Bangladesh would rupture diplomatic relations with Pakistan and accordingly he did so with many countries.<sup>42</sup> But the continuous recognition of Bangladesh by the world proved Pakistan's strategy of diplomatic rupture unrealistic and unsustainable. The most important diplomatic attempt of Pakistan was to withdraw its membership from the Commonwealth just after Bangladesh's admission into it. Besides that, Bhutto toured Arab and Afro-Asian countries to persuade them against recognition of Bangladesh in 1972. At this point Bangladesh was receiving an abundance of world's sympathy and recognition.

As recognition of Bangladesh and the settlement of the POWs dispute bilaterally between Bangladesh and Pakistan were disgusting and disgraceful for Z.A. Bhutto, he adopted a tougher diplomacy aimed at creating world opinion favourable to Pakistan to return 93,000 POWs. He employed his talents and energy to convince the major power of the world that India had no right to hold the Pakistani prisoners and there could be no trial of the prisoners of

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<sup>42</sup>Wright, 169.

war because India was the aggressor and Pakistan army was only carrying out orders for withstanding a rebellion in East Pakistan which was the eastern wing of Pakistan up to December 15, 1971.<sup>43</sup> But the Mujib government took a very strong stand on the question of trials on the grounds of genocide and human torture. In one public meeting Sheikh Mujib challenged Pakistani leader Bhutto and declared:

Did you think [Mr. Bhutto] that I would forgive your soldiers who raped my mothers and sisters, burned my villages, and have killed my boys? Mr Bhutto, if I remain alive, their trial will be held in the soil of Bangladesh. Nobody can stop it. No matter how loudly you are shouting throughout the world I will not listen to anybody who raped and oppressed my mothers and sisters like animals, who killed my newly born baby by bullets...their trials will be held in the soil of this Bengal.<sup>44</sup>

But at the same time Bangladesh had attempted to ensure the security of the Pakistani nationals including the Biharis<sup>45</sup> in Bangladesh in order to avoid the retaliatory action by Pakistanis upon the Bengalis stranded in Pakistan. Sheikh

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<sup>43</sup>Moudud Ahmed, Era of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (Dhaka: University Press Limited, 1983), 196.

<sup>44</sup>Sheikh Mujib's speech at Rajshahi Madrasha Ground, May 9, 1972, in Banga Bondur Bhason (speeches of Banga Bondhu) (Ed.) Mizannur Rahman (Dhaka: Novel Publications, 1981), 55.

<sup>45</sup>Biharis were active supporters of Yahya Khan. When Bangladesh was liberated, most of the West Pakistanis were evacuated to India with the defeated army but the Biharis were left behind. Many observers expected a massacre, but it didn't happen. Thousands of Biharis including most of the communities' leaders were arrested. Scores of thousands were forced out of their homes and shot and robbed out of their homes. But bloodletting on the expected scale was forestalled, initially by the Indian army and subsequently by the authority of the prime minister, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. See Herbert Feiter, "Beharri Sorrow," Far Eastern Economic Review, May 13, 1972.

Mujib himself accused Pakistan on this ground. On February 23, 1972, he appealed to the United Nations Secretary General, Kurt Waldheim, to use his good office to ensure the security of the stranded Bengalis in Pakistan.<sup>46</sup>

Pakistan's refusal to recognize Bangladesh and Bangladesh's threat of trial of the war criminals increased hostility between the newlyborn Bangladesh and Pakistan. In addition the mediation attempt by third party like the U.K. and Indonesia also failed to break the deadlock between Bangladesh and Pakistan. On the other hand, the Pakistani authority adopted a new strategy for the reunification of Pakistan--a device to fold the question of recognition of Bangladesh. Bangladesh interpreted the issue as part of conspiracy between Pakistan and China to confuse the issue of Bangladesh's sovereignty.<sup>47</sup> In this hostile situation, Bangladesh planned a judicial tribunal including national and international juries, for the trials of war criminals.<sup>48</sup> On the other hand, following the precedents of all modern

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<sup>46</sup>Mujib complained to the U.N. Secretary General Kurt Waldheim that Bengalis in Pakistan were living in a state of insecurity, facing knife assaults and looting of their property and the hardship of life in concentration camps. The Statesman (Calcutta), February 23, 1972.

<sup>47</sup>Pakistan Senior Cabinet Minister Mr. M.K. Jatoi talked about the reunification of Pakistan to the world press, but Bangladesh's foreign minister, Mr. Abdus Samad Azad seriously protested it. Rounaq Jahan, "Bangladesh, in 1972: Nation Building in a New State," Asian Survey 13, no. 2 (Feb. 1973). Also see Asian Recorder 18, no. 15 (April 8-14): 109.

<sup>48</sup>S.M. Ali, "The War Trials," Far Eastern Economic Review, June 24, 1972. Also see Far Eastern Economic Review, April 9, 1973.

wars (modern wars are generally followed by a peace settlement by the contending parties irrespective of any victory or defeat for any side) through an intensive diplomatic effort, Pakistan and India signed the historic Simla accord on July 1, 1972. The agreement paved the way of the repatriation of the 93,000 prisoners of war and the return of Pakistan's occupied territory in the war of 1971. Benazir Bhutto wrote:

The Simla Accord returned the 5000 square miles taken from us by India. It led the foundation for the restoration of communication and trade between our two countries and did not prejudice the stand of Pakistan or India on the Jammu and Kashmir districts. The accord also paved the way for the return of our prisoners of war without the humiliation of the war trials that Mujib was threatening in Bangladesh.<sup>49</sup>

In fact, through the Simla Agreement, Pakistan bypassed Bangladesh and attempted to undermine Bangladesh's sovereign existence and tried to solve the POWs question bilaterally.<sup>50</sup> But still the Bangladesh government continued to stick with its own stand and continued to put pressure upon India to withhold the troops so that they could be tried. When the fact surfaced that India would return the POWs to Pakistan, Sheikh Mujib argued that India could not have done so as the criminals surrendered to the joint command of Indo-

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<sup>49</sup>Benazir Bhutto, Daughter of the East: An Autobiography (London: Mandarin Paperbacks, 1989), 65.

<sup>50</sup>Jagadish Raj, "Indo-Pakistan Relations since the 1971 War: An Indian Viewpoint," The Australian Journal of Politics and History 20, no. 1 (April 1974): 23-31.

Bangladesh forces.<sup>51</sup> In April, 1973, Bangladesh officially announced its decision to try 195 POWs on the grounds of genocide and human tragedy. But Pakistan demanded the unconditional release of all the POWs and responded to Bangladesh's decision by preparing a trial for a large number of Bengali civil-military officials, stranded in Pakistan on the grounds of subversion, espionage and high treason.<sup>52</sup> Bangladesh seriously protested Pakistani attempts by arguing that Pakistan does not have any legal rights to hold any such trial of innocent Bengalis and such an action would jeopardize the normalization of relations amongst the countries of the South Asian subcontinent.<sup>53</sup> The action and counteractions of Bangladesh and Pakistan made the repatriation of the POWs and stranded Bengalis uncertain.

Since the Simla Agreement had provided the provision to solve the trilateral problems through understanding between Pakistan, India and Bangladesh, the net result of this effort was the Indo-Bangladesh joint declaration of April 17, 1973. The declaration was issued after mutual agreement between Bangladesh and India. India also agreed to hand over 195 POWs to the government of Bangladesh for trials on criminal charges. The declaration said:

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<sup>51</sup>Moudud Ahmed, 197.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 200.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., 198.



1. Simultaneous repatriation of the Pakistani POWs and civilian internees other than the 195 POWs required for trial on criminal charges

2. Repatriation of the Bengalis detained in Pakistan.

3. Repatriation of the non-Bengalis in Bangladesh who owe allegiance to Pakistan and opted for Pakistan.<sup>54</sup> In the agreement, Bangladesh asserted that it should not take part in any discussion with Pakistan at any level except on the basis of sovereign equality, which meant Pakistan's recognition.<sup>55</sup> But Pakistan refused to recognize Bangladesh and asserted that Pakistan could not recognize the competence or the authority in Dhaka to try the POWs on criminal charges. Pakistan went to the Hague World Court and formally filed a petition to the International Court of Justice (ICJ), protesting the proposed trial and claimed that there was no ground in international law to justify the transfer of POWs by India.<sup>56</sup> Pakistan government further argued that since the alleged crime happened in a part of Pakistan and since the accused persons were citizens of Pakistan, according to the international law, only a

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<sup>54</sup>Mohammed Ayub, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh: Search for a New Relationship (New Delhi: Indian Council of World Affairs, 1975), 113-114. Also see Sabiha Hassan, "Foreign Policy of Bangladesh - 1," Pakistan Horizon 36, no. 3 (Third Quarter, 1983).

<sup>55</sup>The Bangladesh Observer, January 14, 1973.

<sup>56</sup>In May, 1973, Pakistan filed this case in the International Court of Justice (ICJ) but withdrew later in December, 1973.

competent tribunal of Pakistan could have the jurisdiction over this matter and it would be repugnant to Pakistan's sovereignty to surrender its exclusive jurisdiction. The Pakistan government also moved to the ICJ against the proposed trial with a request for an interim injunction against Indian transfer of 195 POWs to Bangladesh for war crime trials. In the meantime in July 1973, Bangladesh passed a law for the Punishment of Prisoners of War known as the International Crimes Act, 1973, and preparation for collecting evidences and the transfer of 195 POWs from India to Bangladesh was in the process of being finalized. At this point, Z.A. Bhutto raised the issue of the recognition of Bangladesh in Pakistan's Parliament.<sup>57</sup> In July 1973, the National Assembly of Pakistan gave President Bhutto the power to recognize Bangladesh, but Bhutto ruled out recognition of Bangladesh until all Prisoners of War (POWs, i.e. 195 held for trials) were released.<sup>58</sup>

At this stage, a series of discussions took place between India and Bangladesh and finally the Mujib government authorized supreme power to India to settle all matters with Pakistan and India consulting with Bangladesh signed the Delhi Agreement in 1973 with Pakistan, which

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<sup>57</sup>See Salamat Ali, "Bhutto's Challenge," Far Eastern Economic Review, December 1, 1972.

<sup>58</sup>Sabiha Hasan, "Foreign Policy of Bangladesh," Pakistan Horizon: 72.

ensured an arrangement for the simultaneous repatriation of the POWs (except the 195 charged on war crimes) and the stranded Bengalis in Pakistan. The agreement included an undertaking by Pakistan that it will not go for any trial of 203 Bengalis on espionage charges.<sup>59</sup> As far as the crime trial was concerned, the agreement said that the 195 accused would go to Bangladesh for trial only if Pakistan and Bangladesh agreed that the trials should take place.<sup>60</sup> According to the Delhi Agreement, repatriation took place from September 1973 to April, 1974.<sup>61</sup> The effect of the agreement was to convert the trials of 195 POWs into a negotiation point between Pakistan and Bangladesh, but it did not assure Pakistan that Bangladesh would forget and/or forgive the trials. Speaking on this point in an address to the U.N. General Assembly on September 29, 1973, Pakistan's President Z.A. Bhutto said:

The Delhi Agreement has left...unsolved the question of 195 Pakistani prisoners of war. Without an agreement for their repatriation, the full normalization of relations between the countries of the subcontinent is not possible.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>Retaliating Bangladesh's proposed trial of 195 POWs Pakistan also arranged such a trial of 203 Bengalis on espionage charges.

<sup>60</sup>The Times (London), August 19, 1973. Also see Hindustan Times (New Delhi: August 30, 1973).

<sup>61</sup>Government of Pakistan, Mr. Z.A. Bhutto, Prime Minister of Pakistan: Address to the General Assembly (September 20, 1973), 7.

<sup>62</sup>By April 1974, 400,000 Bengalis had been repatriated to Bangladesh. The stranded Bengalis had flown from Karachi to Dhaka through U.S. sponsored airlift. For details, see "Share and Share Unlike," The Economist (London), February 16, 1974.

So, on the question of recognition Bhutto remained silent up to the OIC Summit of 1974. Actually, Bhutto left no stone unturned in his campaign to free the accused POWs. Finally he used the OIC Summit as his last diplomatic maneuver to settle the POW's issue and the recognition of Bangladesh was his last trump card. As the Lahore Summit of the OIC was nearing, new diplomacy was devised to solve the Bangladesh-Pakistan dispute. To this end, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat used his offices to settle the recognition issue between Bangladesh and Pakistan. Bangladesh however firmly refused to attend the OIC Summit until and unless recognized by Pakistan. At this juncture, the Secretary General of the OIC, Mr. Hasan-al-Tohamy, visited Dhaka and on the eve of the Summit a seven member delegation led by foreign minister of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah-al-Ahmed-al-Jaber visited Bangladesh. The delegation returned to Lahore on February 22, 1974, and Z.A. Bhutto accorded the recognition of Bangladesh on the same day of February 22, 1974. As a gesture of good will, Sheikh Mujib flew to Lahore and attended the Summit, in spite of the annoyance of many Indians.<sup>63</sup> But the recognition of Bangladesh by Pakistan was very cautiously observed by India and the west. While Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, welcoming Pakistan's decision, hoped that it would restore normalcy in the subcontinent but at

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<sup>63</sup>In Calcutta, Indians burned the effigy of Sheikh Mujib for attending the OIC Summit. See Moudud Ahmed, 72.

the same time she regretted that India with 60 million Muslims had not been invited to the Lahore Summit.<sup>64</sup> Some observers in New Delhi even said that it would be quite like Bhutto to invite Mujib to become Prime Minister of a re-born Pakistan.<sup>65</sup> But some western observers had cautiously ruled out the possibility of Pakistan-Bangladesh-China axis. Even some western observers questioned, will Sheikh Mujibur Rahman from the need to maintain friendly relations with the rich Arab nations, come increasingly under the influence of Islamabad?<sup>66</sup> However, following Pakistan's recognition of Bangladesh on April 10, 1974, India, Bangladesh and Pakistan signed a tripartite agreement at the foreign minister level in New Delhi. According to the agreement, the Pakistan government condemned and was deeply regretful for the crimes that had been committed by the 195 POWs, and Bangladesh in the interest of reconciliation and durable peace in the subcontinent decided to drop the trials of the accused POWs for war crimes. It was also agreed that 195 officers selected for trial would be repatriated to Pakistan along with other prisoners of war and Pakistan agreed to

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<sup>64</sup>Salamat Ali, "Bhutto Embraces Bangladesh," Far Eastern Economic Review (March 14, 1974).

<sup>65</sup>Ibid.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid.

accept the stranded Pakistanis.<sup>67</sup> Through the agreement, Mujib had to reverse his self declared, continuously promised trials of war criminals while the western journalists commented that Bhutto got 93,000 POWs released in return for nothing at all.<sup>68</sup>

#### Repatriation of the Stranded Pakistanis (Biharis)

Who were the stranded Pakistanis? They were non-Bengali poor Muslims who fled their homes, and migrated to the East Pakistan following the partition of British India in 1947. Many of them from the state of Bihar but many others from Calcutta, northern India, Bombay, and Madras. But their common language was Urdu like any other Pakistani. In the erstwhile East Pakistan and present Bangladesh, they are known as Biharis. The Biharis were convinced to serve the Pakistani authority in the former East Pakistan in the same way that the Eurasians and immigrant minorities had served

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<sup>67</sup>In the Delhi agreement Pakistan proposed the repatriation of the stranded Pakistanis from Bangladesh to Pakistan. Pakistan placed three criteria for determining the eligibility for repatriation: 1. Central government employee; 2. Divided families; 3. Domiciled citizens. In addition, Pakistan also agreed to take 25,000 persons who constituted hardship. Pakistan confirmed that all those who fall under these categories would be received by Pakistan without any limits of number. See the text of tripartite agreement between Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, on April 9, 1974 (used from the embassy of Pakistan, Dhaka).

<sup>68</sup>The Economist (London), July 6, 1974, p. 50. The Guardian said in its editorial: "Mr. Bhutto, for all his protestations, had gained everything and lost virtually nothing. He renewed a highly advantageous peace settlement for New Delhi. He now got every one of his vanquished army home. See The Guardian (Manchester), February 23, 1974.

European rulers of Asian and African colonies.<sup>69</sup> During the liberation war of Bangladesh, these Urdu speaking "Biharis" collaborated with the Pakistan army as they wanted. Immediately after the liberation of Bangladesh, these people became unwanted and felt insecure. In 1972-1973 one million stranded Biharis were given an option to identify their citizenship either of Pakistan or of Bangladesh, through the International Red Cross Society. Among them 500,000 opted for residing in Bangladesh and the rest wanted their repatriation to Pakistan.<sup>70</sup> According to the agreement between Bangladesh-Pakistan and India (on April 10, 1974 in New Delhi), at the first stage of repatriation about 170,000 "Biharis" repatriated under the auspices of the International Red Cross. After a couple of months the repatriation of the stranded Pakistanis, initiated in 1973, had stopped because of the fund shortages of the International Red Cross Society.<sup>71</sup> Since then Pakistan became

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<sup>69</sup>After the military crackdown of General Yahya Khan on March 25, 1971, Biharis were Yahya Khan's active supporters and they participated and took leading part in genocide in East Pakistan. When Bangladesh became liberated, most of the West Pakistani civilians in the new nation were evacuated to India, with the defeated army. But the Biharis were left behind. See Herbert Feith, "Biharis Sorrow," Far Eastern Economic Review, May 13, 1972.

<sup>70</sup>Moudud Ahmed, 204.

<sup>71</sup>International Red Cross Society provided the airlifting facilities for the repatriation of the Biharis.

reluctant to accept the stranded Pakistanis.<sup>72</sup> During the Mujib-Bhutto talks in Bangladesh in 1974 Sheikh Mujib handed two demands to Bhutto from the priority list, and the first was Pakistan would repatriate all Biharis immediately, but Bhutto refused to take responsibility for these stranded Pakistanis.<sup>73</sup> After repeated reluctance was shown by Pakistan about the repatriation of the Biharis, the Mujib government tried to internationalize the issue and indeed raised the stranded Pakistanis issue in the Third World's Committee of the United Nations General Assembly in December 1974. They then raised it in the Commonwealth leaders Conference in Jamaica in May, 1975.<sup>74</sup> But these diplomatic measures taken by Bangladesh during Mujib's regime could not make any progress regarding the settlement of the problem and still Pakistan and Bangladesh could not establish diplomatic relations with each other.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>72</sup>In Pakistan opposition to the settlement of the "Biharis" came strongly from Sindh, where the Biharis were considered as economic and cultural threat to the Sindhi Population. Even Bhutto's Pakistan's People Party (PPP) did not appreciate and still not encouraging Bihari settlement in Sindh.

<sup>73</sup>While answering questions of the newsmen, Bhutto said that "I have not come to Bangladesh with a blank cheque." See Kai Bird and Sue Goldmark, "Dhaka and Bhutto: The Slow Thaw," Far Eastern Economic Review (January 30, 1976).

<sup>74</sup>M. Abdul Hafiz, "Bangladesh-Pakistan Relations: Still Developing?" Biiss Journal 6, no. 3 (1985): 360.

<sup>75</sup>See Talukdr Maniruzzuman, "Bangladesh in 1974: Economic Crisis and Political Polarization," Asian Survey 15, no. 2 (February 1975): 127. Also see Lawrence Lifschultz, "Bhutto's Trip: The Mood Changes," Far Eastern Economic Review (July 8, 1974).



But the *coup d'etat* of August 1975, which ended the era of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, began a new era for Bangladesh-Pakistan relations. With the emergence of Ziaur Rahman as the head man of Bangladesh, he initiated serious diplomatic efforts for the repatriation of the stranded Biharis. In 1977 President Ziaur Rahman paid an official visit to Pakistan during his South Asian tour and made substantial progress for the repatriation of the Buharis. Pakistan agreed to take back 25,000 stranded Biharis and 4,790 of them had been repatriated by sea. Pakistan again stopped the repatriation process on the ground of political instability.<sup>76</sup> Again in July, 1978, Bangladesh's foreign secretary visited Pakistan and urged the government of Pakistan to complete the process of repatriation of Biharis from Bangladesh.<sup>77</sup>

However, because of the better relations between the two Presidents, i.e. General Zia of Bangladesh and General Zia-ul Hoque of Pakistan, repatriation of Biharis by air was resumed briefly in September 1979. But once again the repatriation was stopped by Pakistan. At this point Bangladesh did not irritate Pakistan by raising the issue, because of Bangladesh - Pakistan's improved economic ties

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<sup>76</sup>Pakistan President General Zia-ul-Haq founded a trust in cooperation with the Mecca-based Muslim humanitarian organization-- Rabita-i-Alam Al-Islam for the repatriation and rehabilitation of the stranded Pakistanis, but it became ineffective after the death of President Zia-ul-Haque.

<sup>77</sup>The Weekly Robbar (Dhaka), September 11, 1983, p. 17.

and identical outlook in different regional and global issues.<sup>78</sup> Hence the Bihari issue remained unresolved during the Zia regime.<sup>79</sup>

#### Bilateral Disputes: Economic Level

##### Distribution of Assets and Liabilities

Another major irritation between Bangladesh-Pakistan relations was the distribution of assets and liabilities. After its independence Bangladesh claimed that it deserved a share of the common assets of the former united Pakistan. In a 1975 agreement, Bangladesh accepted half of Pakistan's pre-1971 external debt--but the asset sharing issue remained unresolved because of the unwillingness of Pakistan.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup>In May, 1976, Bangladesh-Pakistan signed a three years trade agreement for the first time after Bangladesh's independence. Moreover, during Zia's regime, Bangladesh and Pakistan pursued the identical policy regarding Afghan issue, PLO issue, in the NAM, and the United Nations. Pakistan supported Bangladesh in the UNGA for the apportionment of the the Ganges water in a case against India.

<sup>79</sup>During Erstad's regime (1982-1990) Pakistan's foreign minister, Lt. General Shahibjada Yakub Ali Khan came to Bangladesh in August 1983 and at the conclusion of his visit expressed to the journalists that Pakistan might take 50,000 more Biharis from Bangladesh on the basis of criteria set in the tripartite agreement in 1974. From October 1-6, 1984, during the official visit of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto to Bangladesh, the repatriation issue was discussed by President Erstad and Benazir Bhutto but no progress was achieved. In 1992, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia visited Pakistan and discussed the issue with Prime Minister Nawaj Sharif of Pakistan, but still it remained unsolved.

<sup>80</sup>Pakistan never agreed to talk regarding the sharing of assets from Bhutto to Nowaz Shashif, each of them diplomatically avoided the issue. For details, see James Heitzman and Robert L. Worden (eds.) Bangladesh: A Country Study (Area Hard Book Services, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1988). See also Craig Baxter, Bangladesh: A New Nation in an Old Setting (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1984).

According to the Bangladesh Planning Commission report, Pakistan should pay at least 2575.07 million rupees (257 crore 57 lakh) as Bangladesh's share of the united Pakistan's assets<sup>81</sup> (see Table 5).

TABLE 5  
CLAIM OF ASSETS BY BANGLADESH TO PAKISTAN

Organization	Amt. on basis of population	Amt. on basis of distribution of wealth
1. Nat. Bank of Pakistan	200 crore 83 lakh (2008.30)	176 crore 75 lakh (1767.50)
2. Industrial Dev. Bank	Not known	6 crore 82 lakh (68.20)
3. Agri. Dev. Bank of Pak.	9 crore 5 lak (90.50)	10 crore 19 lakh (101.90)
4. Investment Corp. of Bang.	16 crore 78 lakh (167.80)	24 crore 98 lakh (149.80)
5. Pakis. Ind. Credit & Inv.	4 crore 44 lakh (44.40)	3 crore 96 lakh (39.60)
6. Pakistan Refugee Rehab. Finance Corp.	Not known	1 crore 91 lakh (19.10)
7. Pakis. Insurance Corp.	Not known	21 crore -- (210.00)
8. Pakis. Still Mills	3 crore 19 lakh (31.90)	2 crore 85 lakh (28.50)
9. Oil & Gas Devel. Corp.	13 crore 74 lakh (137.40)	111 crore 52 lakh (115.20)
10. Pakis. Vak Petroleum	2 crore 16 lakh (21.60)	2 crore 16 lakh (19.30)
11. Pakis. Oil Field Ltd.	Not known	5 lakh (.50)
12. Pakis. Inter. Air (PIA)	8 crore 18 lakh (81.80)	7 crore 26 lakh (72.60)
13. Pakis. Sec. Plann. Corp.	--91 lakh (9.11)	--81 lakh (8.11)
14. Pakis. Tourism Div. Corp.	--46 lakh (4.06)	--40 lakh (4.00)
15. Karachi Elec Supply	Not known	7 crore 40 lakh (74.00)
16. Pakis. Elec Agency	5 crore 7 lakh (50.07)	4 crore 53 lakh (45.30)
17. National Ship. Corp.	Not known	16 crore-- (160.00)
18. Pakis. Television Corp.	35 crore-- (350.00)	11 crore-- (110.00)
19. Tele. Indust. of Pakis.	3 crore 15 lakh (31.50)	2 crore 81 lakh (28.10)
20. Print. Corp. of Pakis.	2 crore 55 lakh (25.5)	2 crore 25 lakh (22.5)
21. Trading Corp. of Pakis.	--58 lakh (5.80)	--52 lakh (5.20)
22. Jute Trading Corp.	--34 lakh (3.4)	--37 lakh (3.7)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>257 crore</b>	<b>79 lakh</b>

Source: Adapted from a report published in Robbar, a leading Bengalis National Weekly, Dhaka, September 11, 1983.

\* 10 million is equal to one crore

\*\* Figures in the bracket ( ) indicates million rupees

On the other hand the total external debt of Pakistan was some 3700 million rupees, according to the World Bank report and about 30 percent of it was spent in the former East

<sup>81</sup>Bangladesh Planning Commissions estimated figure is published in the weekly Robbar, a Bengalis weekly, September 11, 1983, p. 19.

Pakistan.<sup>82</sup> The Planning Commission's estimate shows that the liabilities of Bangladesh to Pakistan were 108.8 million rupees.<sup>83</sup> (Table 6)

TABLE 6

LIABILITIES OF BANGLADESH TO PAKISTAN  
(in crore and million rupees)

ORGANIZATION	AMOUNT
Equity Participation Fund	2 crore 63 lakh (26.30 million rupees)
House Building Finance Corporation	8 crore 25 lakh (82.50 million rupees)
TOTAL	10 crore 88 lakh (108.8 million rupees)

Source: Adapted from a report published in the Robbar (September 11, 1983): 14.

For obvious reasons the bulk of the national assets of former Pakistan remained in West Pakistan because public property expanded and concentrated in the urban centers of the West Pakistan. As the capital of the central government remained in West Pakistan, industrial centers and national institutions like shipping, airlines, and other important federal institutions were located in West Pakistan. For the discriminatory policy of the ruling elites of the central government, East Pakistan inspite of having a majority of the population, remained neglected

<sup>82</sup>Quoted in Ataur Rahman Khan, 324.

<sup>83</sup>Robbar, p. 14.

economically.<sup>84</sup> Later a substantial part of meager assets located in East Pakistan were allegedly taken away by the Pakistanis during the period of the liberation war.

Regarding the distribution of assets, Bangladesh proposed the following principles and demanded her share:

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| a. Population basis:                       | Bangladesh could demand 56% of the total assets.   |
| b. Equal distribution of the wealth basis: | Bangladesh could demand 50% of the total assets.   |
| c. Foreign currency basis:                 | Bangladesh could demand 51% of foreign exchange as East Pakistan contributed to national reserves. |
| d. Proportionate basis:                    | Bangladesh could demand 44% of the total wealth. <sup>85</sup>                                     |

Actually, the issue of the distribution of assets and liabilities hindered Bangladesh-Pakistan rapprochement since the beginning of Bangladesh's independent entity. In 1974, when Pakistan's Prime Minister, Z. A. Bhutto, came to Bangladesh, Mujib and Bhutto discussed the issue. Sheikh Mujib handed him a demand of 56 percent of the assets of the central government up to 1971.<sup>86</sup> During the Mujib-Bhutto talks Mujib proposed for an agreement and a joint commission

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<sup>84</sup>M. Rashiduzzaman, "East-West Conflicts in Pakistan: Bengali Regionalism, 1974-1980, in A.J. Wilson and D. Dalton (Eds.), National Integration (Honolulu: The University Board of Hawaii-Honolulu, 1982), 111.

<sup>85</sup>Syed Serajul Islam, 57-58.

<sup>86</sup>Kalbird and Sue Goldmark, "Dhaka and Bhutto: The Slow Thaw," Far Eastern Economic Review (January 30, 1976).

to examine the details. Mujib also demanded an immediate token payment within two months counting of quantifiable assets like gold reserves, ships and aircrafts, etc. to meet the increasing needs of Bangladesh.<sup>87</sup> But Bhutto did not agree with Mujib's proposal and instead suggested to form a joint commission to examine the issue. As a matter of fact he did not make any formal commitment on the issue.<sup>88</sup>

Finally, in the given situation, as Pakistan continuously showed its reluctance to resolve the issue, Bangladesh raised it in the Organization of Islamic Countries' Foreign Ministers' Conference (ICFM) held in Jeddah in July 1975, where Bangladesh's foreign minister sought the arbitration of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the UAE (United Arab Emirates), on the question of division of assets and liabilities between Bangladesh and Pakistan. But this diplomatic effort ultimately did not work. In fact, Pakistan's real intention about the distribution of assets was clearly reflected in 1973 in an article published in the Pakistan Horizon a Pakistan government sponsored foreign policy journal. A.A. Akmut, one Pakistani foreign policy analyst wrote:

The government of Pakistan too has left certain property in "Bangladesh." Some of these are fixed assets others are moveable. A good deal of

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<sup>87</sup>Iftakhar Ahmed Chaudhury, 213.

<sup>88</sup>"Pakistan and Bangladesh: Time to Pay Up," The Economist (London), July 6, 1976.

equipment of the armed forces has also fallen in the hands of Bangladesh and India. What will be the final disposition of such properties? Warlike stories are normally not returned to a defeated enemy -- to which the Chinese comporment provided an exception in 1962. This means that the government of Pakistan will refuse to accept liabilities in this regard. As regards foreign loans, the government has already indicated that it will not accept liability for payment in respect of such loans or part thereof, as were applied to East Pakistan. This is very well in accordance with the principles enunciated above. At the same time Bangladesh and her citizens will be debarred from deriving benefits from assets located in or under control of Pakistan. Thus the picture emerges that all rights and liabilities in Pakistani citizens in respect of assets located in or under control of "Bangladesh" have disappeared and cannot be revived. This is one of the burdens of war -- a price paid for defeat.<sup>89</sup>

Following the eclipse of the Mujib regime in Bangladesh and the collapse of the Bhutto rule in Pakistan, the new leaders of both countries took an effort to settle the matter. To this end President Zia of Bangladesh visited Pakistan in 1977. On conclusion of Zia's visit, it was stated in a joint communique that Pakistan was ready to discuss the question of division of assets and liabilities without any pre-condition.<sup>90</sup>

Following Zia's visit, the foreign secretary of Pakistan came to Bangladesh in October, 1980, and discussed the issue. This time it was agreed that a working group composed of inter-ministerial representatives and experts of

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<sup>89</sup>A.A. Akmut, "Rights and Obligations in Regard to Assets Located in 'Bangladesh'," Pakistan Horizon 26, no. 3 (Third Quarterly 1973): 9.

<sup>90</sup>Daink Ittefaq, December 23, 1977.

the two sides would meet in Islamabad and examine the question of the distribution of assets and liabilities. But it could not accomplish a successful agreement. In 1981, after the assassination of President Ziaur-a-Rahman, the issue remained unresolved. As a matter of fact, the sharing of assets and liabilities continues to trouble relations between the two nations, even after almost a quarter century of separation.

### Bangladesh-Pakistan Relations: Bilateral Cooperation

#### Political Level

Apart from the conflicting interests, there are specific areas of politico-economic cooperation between Bangladesh and Pakistan. Albeit, Pakistan recognized Bangladesh during Sheikh Mujib's regime, indeed there were no diplomatic ties. After formal recognition of Bangladesh, Pakistan's President Z.A. Bhutto came to Dhaka on June 27, 1974 for reconcili-ation. Beyond the attempt to heal the wounds, Bhutto's tour posed a serious policy question for Bangladesh over the definition of future relations with Pakistan and the emergence of a new and intricate balance in the subcontinent as a whole. Mr. Bhutto's visit to Dhaka clearly demonstrated Pakistan's desire for rapprochement with Bangladesh. Mr. Bhutto actually apologized for what he called the "shameful repression and unspeakable crimes



committed in Bangladesh by the Pakistani army in 1971."<sup>91</sup> While apologizing for the crimes committed by Pakistan's army in Bangladesh, Z.A. Bhutto offered this assessment:

[the events of 1971 were] a dramatic tragedy inflicted upon us by a demented power crazy junta. ...dictators were not our representatives anymore than they were yours. I will not defend what is indefensible. We were misinformed, misled and exploited. The people of Pakistan respect your decision and will cooperate with you to the extent that you desire. However, we should not forget there was once a dream without which there could have been neither Pakistan, nor Bangladesh.<sup>92</sup>

Bhutto received a tremendous welcome in Bangladesh, which is analyzed by some experts as demonstration of Muslim unity against Indian domination.<sup>93</sup> But Bhutto's tour could not achieve any progress towards the normalization of relations between Bangladesh and Pakistan.

Bhutto's unwillingness towards the settlement of the stranded Biharis issue and the distribution of assets and liabilities, marked the abrupt departure of Pakistan's entourage and led to the failure of the mission.

The diplomatic relations could not be established between Bangladesh and Pakistan up to 1975 until the coup

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<sup>91</sup>Lawrence Lifschultz, "Bhutto's Trip: The Mood Change," Far Eastern Economic Review, July 8, 1974.

<sup>92</sup>Although Z.A. Bhutto apologized for the crime committed by the Pakistan army, he did not apologize for his role. In a press conference concerning his role in the events of 1971, particularly his trips to the U.N. and Beijing, he replied: "Bangladesh was once part of Pakistan. How could I support the secession from Pakistan?" See Ibid.

<sup>93</sup>For an analysis of Bhutto's trip to Bangladesh, see, The Times (London), June 28, 1974.

d'etat of August 15, 1972 which killed Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and collapsed his regime. After the fall of the Mujib regime and with the end of the "entente cordial" that existed between Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Mrs. Gandhi and Leonid Brezhnev, Pakistan was the first country that renewed its recognition of Bangladesh and urged upon the Islamic and Third World countries to recognize Bangladesh: "This appeal stems from our anguished awareness of how our country was dismembered by international conspiracy culminating in aggression."<sup>94</sup> The Pakistan government also attempted to establish diplomatic relations with Bangladesh, just after the fall of Mujib. On December 29, 1975, Bhutto in an interview with Time Magazine, commented that no nation, India or any other can prevent good relations between Pakistan and Bangladesh if the people of the two countries want them. However, "to what extent the relationship is to develop is really for the people of Bangladesh to determine. It was they who wanted separation. It is now up to them to tell us how close they want to come to us. We do not want to kill Bangladesh with kindness."<sup>95</sup> Meanwhile, the new President of Bangladesh declared that his government would

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<sup>94</sup>The Times (London), August 16, 1973. For an excellent analysis of Bhutto's reaction after Mujib's fall, see G.W. Choudhury, "Bangladesh's Coup and Counter Coups: International Implications," Orbis 19, no. 41 (Winter 1976).

<sup>95</sup>Time (US), December 29, 1975. Also see, for comprehensive analysis, Shirin Tahir-Kheli, "The Foreign Policy of New Pakistan," Orbis 20, No. 3 (Fall 1976).

strengthen friendly relations with the neighbors. Eventually, Bangladesh-Pakistan diplomatic relations were restored by January 1976. This was followed by the restoration of tele-communication links and a signing of a trade agreement between the two countries.<sup>96</sup> Apart from this both countries had maintained friendly gesture on different occasions.<sup>97</sup>

In 1977, after the removal of President Bhutto from power, in Pakistan, and with the beginning of General Zia-ul-Haq's regime, Bangladesh-Pakistan relations improved significantly. In 1976, Bangladesh and Pakistan restored the trade links by signing a three-year trade agreement. In 1977 President Ziar Rahman paid an official visit to Pakistan during his South Asian tour. President Zia's visit improved Bangladesh-Pakistan relations substantially. Since then, the two countries continuously exchanged delegations in many fields. In July 1977, Pakistan's foreign minister, Mr. Agha Shahi came to visit Bangladesh and this was reciprocated by Bangladesh's foreign minister Professor Shamal Haque in 1977

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<sup>96</sup>Mohammad Ahsen Chaudhury, "Pakistan and the Changing Pattern of Power Relations in South Asia," Pakistan Horizon 31, no. 1 (Quarter 1978): 90.

<sup>97</sup>In September 1976, Pakistan's Prime Minister, Z.A. Bhutto sent a message to President Sayem of Bangladesh at the death of Bangladesh's Chief of Air Staff, Mohammed Khademul Bashar and similarly, Bhutto sent another messages to General Zia in November, 1976, at the demise of Maulana Abdul Humid Khan Bashani. Dawn, September 3, 1976 and November 18, 1970.

and both countries agreed to introduce transit visas for their citizens.<sup>98</sup>

Apart from bilateral relations both Bangladesh and Pakistan held identical views in regional and international forums, because both countries cherished and upheld the U.N. Charter, nonaligned Charter (NAM), OIC Charter and finally South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Charter in which Bangladesh and Pakistan held a common perception regarding South Asian economic development. Moreover, both Bangladesh and Pakistan showed their determination to keep the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace, and both countries believed that the Middle East problem could be settled only by means of unconditional and complete withdrawal of Israeli troops from Jerusalem. Both Bangladesh and Pakistan also shared the common perception regarding the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

Apart from the international level, at the domestic level, President Ziaur Rahman took certain steps which helped make Pakistan more friendly to Bangladesh. During Zia's regime the collaborator Act of 1972 (which means serious punishment for collaboration with the Pakistan government during the liberation war of 1971) was repealed and the citizenship was offered and restored to some prominent Bengalis who did not return from Pakistan and

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<sup>98</sup>See The Bangladesh Observer, August 11, 1983.

other countries to Bangladesh after 1971.<sup>99</sup> Moreover, the major constitutional amendment which strengthened Bangladesh's relations with Pakistan was Ziaur Rahman's assertion of "Bismilla her-Rahman-en-Rahim" ("in the name of God most gracious and most merciful") at the beginning of the Bangladesh Constitution.<sup>100</sup> Article 8(1) of the Constitution which declared secularism, one of the fundamental principles of state policy was amended and instead of secularism, absolute trust and faith in Almighty Allah was introduced by Zia. Moreover, he added a new clause in the constitution. He introduced a clause in Article 25, declaring the intention of the state "for establishing, preserving and strengthening fraternal ties with the Muslim states on the basis of Islamic solidarity,"<sup>101</sup> which marked the significant development of Bangladesh-Pakistan relations. In order to foster his Islamic belief and commitment, Zia always started his speech with *Bismilla her-Rahman-er-Rahim* and ended with "Bangladesh Zinabad-a-Urdo slogan" instead of "joy Bangla" (victory of Bengal), which was introduced by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. All these strategies at the domestic, regional and international

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<sup>99</sup>Robert S. Anderson, "Impressions of Bangladesh: The Rule of Arms and Politics of Exhortations," *Pacific Affairs*, no. 49 (1976): 450.

<sup>100</sup>The Government of Bangladesh, Ministry of Law, The Constitution of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh.

<sup>101</sup>*Ibid.*

levels made him friendly to Pakistan. Even some analysts have argued that in the 1980s, both Pakistan and Bangladesh committed to create an Islamic Republic under the auspices of the military leadership of General Ziaur Rahman of Bangladesh and General Zia ul-Haq of Pakistan.<sup>102</sup>

At the rapid development of Bangladesh-Pakistan relationship, the opposition political party used to accuse Ziaur Rahman for making an imaginary confederation with Pakistan. Even some analysts argue that the future possibility of Bangladesh-Pakistan confederation appeared as an external threat to the security of Bangladesh.<sup>103</sup> However, there is no doubt that Zia pursued an active foreign policy towards Pakistan designed to escaping Indian dominance and to pressuring India for making some concessions on the issues of the common Bangladesh-India problems.<sup>104</sup> Again political relations were enhanced and strengthened through cultural relations.

#### Economic Level

Besides political relations, economic cooperation is also a remarkable aspect of relations between the two

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<sup>102</sup>Vernon Marston Hewitt, The International Politics of South Asia (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992).

<sup>103</sup>The Awamileague leaders throughout the 1980s tried to create public opinion against Ziaur Rahman by propagating that he was forming a confederation with Pakistan.

<sup>104</sup>Talukder Maniruzzaman, Group Interests and Political Changes: Studies of Pakistan and Bangladesh (New Delhi: South Asian Publishers, 1982), 253. See also Vernon Mouston Hewitt, 37.

countries. During Mujib's regime there were no economic relations between Bangladesh and Pakistan.<sup>105</sup>

The economic relations began to expand during Ziaur Rahman's regime because of Zia's major transformation from Indo-Soviet "tilt" policy to Pakistan, West and Islamic world oriented foreign policy. Actually the initiative of economic cooperation was taken by Pakistan just after the fall of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. After the August coup of 1975 in Bangladesh, Prime Minister Z.A. Bhutto of Pakistan offered Bangladesh a gift shipment of 50,000 tons of rice and cloth.<sup>106</sup>

In 1977, during the official visit of Ziaur Rahman to Pakistan, both parties agreed to extend economic, commercial and technical cooperation. Moreover, the two sides emphasized the importance of mutually beneficial cooperation based on sovereign equality and non interference in each other's internal affairs. This was the mark of Pakistan's respect to the sovereign equality of Bangladesh after 1977. In order to promote economic cooperation, the two countries signed a number of agreements and the landmark among these agreements was the setting up of a joint economic commission

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<sup>105</sup>Although there was no formal relations between Bangladesh and Pakistan during the Mujib regime, but reliable sources confirm that there were trade links between the two countries which were operated through third parties such as Singapore and Thailand.

<sup>106</sup>Rahman Sobban, The Crisis of External Dependence: The Political Economy of Foreign Aid to Bangladesh (London: Zed Press, 1982), 240.

on July 21, 1979.<sup>107</sup> The joint economic commission was designed to provide an institutional framework for expanded technical and economic cooperation between the two countries. Under this technical cooperation, Bangladesh would provide the experience in the integrated rural development program (IRDP) and the cultivation program, in which Bangladesh had very good institutional framework, while Pakistan would cooperate in the field of cotton and wheat cultivation, horticulture, farming and railway.<sup>108</sup> Actually instituting joint economic commission<sup>109</sup> was the reflection of farsight of the Zia government's foreign economic policy which opened up enormous possibilities for

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<sup>107</sup>In order to promote bilateral economic cooperation the two countries entered into a number of agreements, namely, a trading agreement in April, 1976. An air service agreement in June, 1978, and the major agreement for setting up of a joint economic commission on July 21, 1979. For details, see External Resources Division (ERD), Brief on Second Meeting of Bangladesh-Pakistan Joint Economic Commission, Ministry of Finance, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Also see the Agreed minutes of the third meeting of the Bangladesh-Pakistan joint Economic Commission held from July 30-August 1, 1989, in Dhaka.

<sup>108</sup>The Bangladesh Observer, October 25, 1980. See also Syed Serajul Islam.

<sup>109</sup>The Joint Economic Commission was the product of the trade agreement of 1982. Article 9 of the agreement stated: "for the purpose of promoting the aims and objectives of these agreements, a committee of representatives to be designated by the respective government shall be established. The committee shall meet at least once a year or as often as may be mutually agreed upon, alternately in Bangladesh and Pakistan. The functions of the Committee will be: (a) to review the implementation of the provisions of this agreement, (b) examine and recommend measures for the solution of problems which may arise in the implementation of this agreement or in the course of the development of trade between the two countries, (c) consider proposals made by either of the governments within the framework of this agreement aimed at further expansion and diversification of trade between the two countries." See The Bangladesh Observer, July 25, 1979.



increasing economic and commercial exchange between Bangladesh and Pakistan. The Joint Economic Commission indeed augmented the volume of trade and commerce during Zia's regime, from 1975-1981 and Pakistan became the biggest buyer of Bangladesh's jute and tea. Bangladesh reciprocated this trade by importing huge quantities of cloth and cotton from Pakistan. Statistics show that the trade relations between Bangladesh and Pakistan augmented so rapidly that in 1976-77, Bangladesh's export earnings from Pakistan were 48.97 crore taka and Bangladesh's spendings for import were 8.05 crore taka. But in '81-'82 it increased so highly that Bangladesh's export earnings were 114.26 crore taka and spending for imports increased to 55.11 crore taka. The most important feature of trade relations between the two countries was that the balance of trade was always in favor of Bangladesh during Zia's regime.<sup>110</sup> (Table 7) In the economic field, another development of Bangladesh-Pakistan relations was that Pakistan's commitment and disbursement of aids increased significantly during Zia's regime. Data shows that from 1975-81, Pakistan's total commitment and disbursements were \$25.9 million, a significant improvement compared to Mujib's regime,<sup>111</sup> which was \$7.6 only. (Table 8)

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<sup>110</sup>For statistics, see Bangladesh Bank: Annual Export Receipt and Annual Import Payments. For details on Bangladesh-Pakistan economic relations, also see Zaglul Haider, "Bangladeshar Para-Rashtra Nity: Sheikh Mujib' O'Ziaur Rahmanar Shasan Kal (1972-82)," Slamaj Cirikkon (Shamaj Nirikoon Kendra: Dhaka University) No. 36, May 1990.

<sup>111</sup>Sobhan, 232.

TABLE 7  
 BANGLADESH'S TRADE RELATIONS WITH PAKISTAN  
 (in crore taka)\*

Year	Exports from Bangladesh	Imports from Pakistan	Total Trade	Balance of Trade
1972-75	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
1976-77	48.97	8.05	57.02	+) 40.29
1977-78	72.98	29.49	102.47	(+) 43.49
1978-79	60.61	29.76	90.37	(+) 30.85
1979-80	89.26	41.47	139.73	(+) 56.79
1980-81	89.05	96.52	185.37	(-) 7.47
1981-82	114.26	55.11	169.37	(+) 59.15

Source: ERD Brief, second meeting of the Bangladesh-Pakistan Joint Economic Commission, April 5-7, 1987. (Government of Bangladesh, External Sources Division, Ministry of Finance, March 1987).

\* 10 million is equal to one crore.

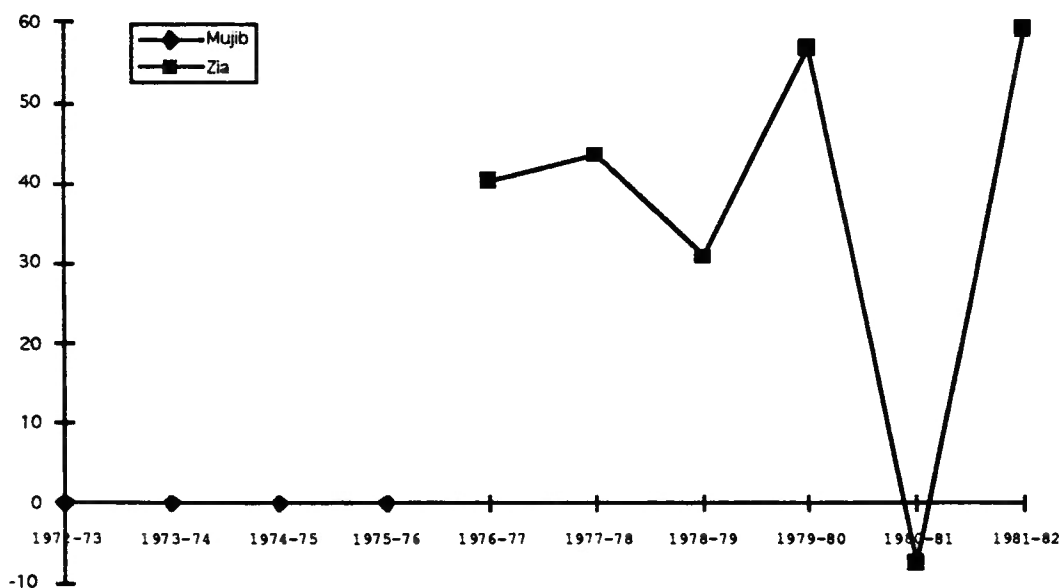


Fig. 4. Bangladesh's Balance of Trade with Pakistan: A Comparison Between the Mujib and Zia Regimes.

TABLE 8

PAKISTAN'S AID COMMITMENT AND DISBURSEMENT TO BANGLADESH  
(in million US \$) (1971-72 to 1981-82)

Year	Commitment	Disbursement
1971-72	0.00	0.00
1972-73	0.00	0.00
1973-74	0.00	0.00
1974-75	7.60	7.60
1975-76	25.00	25.00
1976-77	0.92	0.92
1977-78	0.00	0.00
1978-79	0.00	0.00
1979-80	0.00	0.00
1980-81	0.00	0.00
1981-82	0.00	0.00
TOTAL	33.52	33.52

Source: Flow of External Resources into Bangladesh (As of June 30, 1991). (Dhaka: Economic Relations Department, Ministry of Finance), 68.



Fig. 5. Pakistan's Aid Disbursement to Bangladesh: A Comparison Between the Mujib and Zia regimes.

### Summary

Under the above analysis it is uncovered that despite having its 25 years of union with Pakistan, Bangladesh has emerged as a separate state out of the failure of the political system in Pakistan. Albeit, national interest suggests that, in international relations there can be no eternal friends, no eternal enemies, only national interests are eternal, Bangladesh and Pakistan only recognized each other. They did not even establish diplomatic relations during the Mujib regime.

However, with the coup d'etat of August 15, 1975 and the emergence of Ziaur Rahman, Bangladesh-Pakistan relations improved significantly, because of Zia's foreign policy shifting from an Indo-Soviet nexus to pro-west, pro-China, and pro-Islamic triangle which was identical with Pakistan. Bangladesh-Pakistan's political rapprochement was followed up with the expansion of bilateral economic cooperation.

In the final analysis, it is discerned that the Bangladesh-Pakistan relationship was clouded with mistrust and misunderstanding during the Mujib regime, partly because of the initial reservation that Bhutto and Mujib had for each other and partly because of the Mujib government's, Pro-Indian, pro-Soviet, anti-Pakistan, and anti-Islamic foreign policy and Pakistan's anti-Bangladesh propaganda. On the contrary, Bangladesh-Pakistan relations improved dramatically during the Zia regime, because of Zia's

transformation from Indo-Soviet "tilt" to pro-west, pro-Islamic and pro-Chinese foreign policy, which was symmetrical with Pakistan and served the national interest of Bangladesh significantly.

## CHAPTER V

### BANGLADESH-US RELATIONS: MUJIB AND ZIA REGIMES (1971-1981)

#### Introduction

The emergence of Bangladesh as an independent entity in the wake of a brutal blood bath, certainly is a landmark event in the world's history.<sup>1</sup> This was the first country to achieve its independence since World War II through the instrument of civil war.<sup>2</sup> It had far reaching consequences in the world politics as it prepared almost all the superpowers and big powers to fight for another world war. It drew world attention when both superpowers, i.e., the USA and the former USSR and one great power, China, actively involved in the crisis and supported the conflicting parties in the cold war politics. Strategically, it was very important to the superpowers, because the Bangladesh crisis of 1971 erupted at a time when the United States under

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<sup>1</sup>Three million unarmed Bengali people were killed by the Pakistan army during the 9 month long civil war and the war created the biggest human migration since World War II. Almost 10 million people took refuge in India after the Pakistan army's brutality in East Bengal in 1971.

<sup>2</sup>Lawrence Ziring, "South Asian Tangles and Triangles" in Lawrence Ziring (ed.), The Subcontinent in the World Politics: India, Its Neighbors and the Great Powers (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1982), 4.

President Nixon, was busy recasting its global and Asian politics to suit the needs of the new international system.<sup>3</sup> Although in the total context of United States foreign policy, South Asia is generally considered a low priority area, it is given higher priority only when internal problems or intra-regional tensions threaten broader effects, as happened in 1971.<sup>4</sup> During the last part of the Bangladesh crisis when India and Pakistan directly were fighting each other, the US President Nixon ordered the nuclear carrier USS Enterprise to the direction of Bay of Bengal. In response the Soviet Union also sent its fleet to the Indian Ocean. China on its part was also mobilizing troops along the Sino-Indian border. The US-Soviet and Chinese maneuver could also have led the world towards a major confrontation.<sup>5</sup>

By 1971, South Asia became an international crisis area with many international repercussions. The United States and China apparently sided with Pakistan against India which was championed by the Soviet Union. Although the US people had only modest sympathy and support towards the liberation war of Bangladesh, officially the Nixon-Kissinger administration

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<sup>3</sup>Wayne Wilcox, "The Indian Ocean and the Great Powers in the 1970s," Mimeography (South Hamilton University 1973), 155.

<sup>4</sup>Norman D. Palmer, "The United States and South Asia," Current History 76, no. 446 (April 1929): 146.

<sup>5</sup>Sydney H. Schanberg, "Pakistan Divided," Foreign Affairs: An American Quarterly Review 15, no. 1 (October 1921): 131.

clearly sided with Pakistan and opposed the Bangladeshi movement. The US journalist Jack Anderson characterized it as a national tragedy, an abrogation of America's historic commitment to champion democracy throughout the world."<sup>6</sup>

Indeed, the US policy was so "tilted" towards Pakistan that Christopher Van Hollen, the deputy assistant secretary of state for near eastern and South Asian Affairs, in 1971, mentioned that Henry Kissinger warned government officials that he was "getting hell every half hour from the President that we are not being tough enough on India. The President does not believe we are carrying out his wishes," Kissinger complained. He wants to tilt in favor of Pakistan.<sup>7</sup> While Henry Kissinger himself admitted:

The India-Pakistan war of 1971 was perhaps the most complex issue of Nixon's first term. What made the crisis so difficult was that the stakes were so much greater than the common perception of them. The issue burst upon us while Pakistan was our only channel to China, we had no other means of communication with Peking.<sup>8</sup>

No matter what intentions America had behind its "tilt" towards Pakistan, evidence shows that the US clearly aided Pakistan and opposed the Bangladesh liberation war. The failure of the Nixon administration to condone Pakistan's

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<sup>6</sup>Jack Anderson with George Clifford, The Anderson Papers (New York: Random House, 1973), 212.

<sup>7</sup>Christopher van Hollen, "The Tilt Policy Revisited, Nixon-Kissinger Geopolitics and South Asia," Asian Survey 20, no. 4 (April 1980): 339.

<sup>8</sup>Henry Kissinger, White House Years (Boston, Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1979), 913.



military atrocities in Bangladesh and its support to the Yahya Khan's military dictatorship in Pakistan against the Bengali people led to the total erosion of the United States' prestige and credibility among the Bengali people.

But after the breakup of Pakistan and the birth of Bangladesh the US soon re-defined its policy and expressed its willingness to recognize the new reality in South Asia. As a matter of fact, the emergence of Bangladesh and the way in which it emerged called for a fundamental rudimentation of American policy towards the states of South Asia.<sup>9</sup>

However, Bangladesh-US relations began to improve after 1972, mainly because of Bangladesh's own initiative,<sup>10</sup> and partly because of US diplomatic admission that its 1971 behavior had been a "mistake."<sup>11</sup> President Nixon himself regretted very diplomatically:

We did not dispute the aspirations of the people of East Bengal for autonomy.... We opposed not

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<sup>9</sup>Wayne Wilcox, "Introduction" in The Emergence of Bangladesh: Problems and Opportunities for a Redefined American Foreign Policy in South Asia (Washington, D.C.: Foreign Affairs Study, 1973), 1-2.

<sup>10</sup>In a press conference on January 14, 1972, Mujib was asked if he would accept aid from the US, he said: "I will accept anything from anybody to save my people provided it is given without any condition." See Kessings Contemporary Archives, 1971-72, 26112.

<sup>11</sup>Christopher van Hollen, the deputy assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs during the Bangladesh crisis of 1971, wrote that Nixon Kissinger's tilt policy towards Pakistan was a mistake. See Christopher Van Hollen, "The Tilt Policy Revisited: Nixon-Kissinger Geo-Politics and South Asia," Asian Survey 20, no. 4 (April 1980): 341.

independence, but the outbreak of international war.<sup>12</sup>

Although the Nixon administration officially announced US recognition of Bangladesh on April 4, 1972, and established formal diplomatic relations on May 18, 1972,<sup>13</sup> US-Bangladesh relations were kept at a low profile during the first four years of Mujib regime (1972-1975). Mujib government's domestic and international policies created considerable frustration among the US policy makers. At the domestic level, the Mujib government's, socialist economic policy, and one party authoritarian system and at the international level, Bangladesh's shaping of a foreign policy towards Indo-Soviet and socialist direction were seen by the US administration with suspicion and were considered opposed to the US interest throughout the world.

But after the August coup of 1975, with the fall of the Mujib regime and starting of Ziaur Rahman's era, US relations with Bangladesh began to improve significantly. It reached its peak during the last part of Ziaur Rahman's regime, because of Zia's major shift both at the domestic and international levels. At the domestic level Zia introduced a multiparty democracy, a liberal economic policy, particularly free market economy, denationalization

<sup>12</sup>"US Foreign Policy for the 1970s: Shaping a Durable Peace." A report to the Congress by President Richard Nixon, Department of the State Bulletin 68, no. 1771 (June 4, 1973), 791.

<sup>13</sup>U.S. Department of the State Bulletin 67, no. 1735 (September 25, 1972): 355.

and encouragement of private entrepreneurship, instead of Mujib's one party political system and Socialist economic policy. While at the international level, Zia pursued pro-American, pro-west, pro-Chinese and pro-Pakistan foreign policy, instead of Mujib's foreign policy direction of pro-Indian, pro-Soviet and pro-socialist world. However, the major burden of this chapter is to explore US-Bangladesh relations. To this end the following issues will be addressed in this chapter.

Role of the USA in the Liberation War of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh-US Relations: Mujib and Zia Regimes

(1971-1981).

Summary.

#### Role of the USA in the Liberation War of Bangladesh

Clearly the US pursued a "tilt" policy towards Pakistan during the Bangladesh crisis of 1971. This "tilt" was not a sudden US action in the sub-continent, rather it was the product of decades long US policy towards South Asia. The historical evolution of the US policy towards South Asia unfolds the fact that the US took their interest in the region since the cold war politics erupted. The US shaped its policy to support the anti-communist regime in the cold war politics. During the Korean crisis of 1950, the US became sanguine to Pakistan, because Pakistan supported the US position in the crisis. Moreover, Indian socialist

economic policy under Nehru and siding with the Soviet Union, forced the US to side with Pakistan aimed at containing communist expansion. In order to formalize the US-Pakistan detente, Pakistan joined the US sponsored defense treaty, Southeast Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO) in 1954 and it also joined another western defense alliance, the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) in 1955. However, from 1954 to 1960, Pakistan was considered the closest ally of the US. A change in the US policy was revealed during the Sino-Indian border conflict of 1962. This time the US rushed increasing military aid to India, and the Kennedy administration pursued a Pro-Indian policy in South Asia. Since the Sino-Indian border conflict, India emerged as an important supporter of the US policy in Asia, as well as a useful collaborator of the United States in its containment policy of China. In response to new Indo-US rapprochement, Pakistan normalized its relation with the Soviet Union and developed cordial entente with China. Pakistan's close link with China jeopardized the US-Pakistan detente. Against this backdrop, during the Indo-Pakistan War of 1965, the US administration under President Johnson remained neutral in South Asian politics. As the Pakistani military was equipped with the American weapons, during the war, at the cutoff of the US military aid, Pakistani weapons were becoming inoperative for the lack of spare parts. Therefore, the

relationship between the US and Pakistan reached their lowest point in history.

The US policy towards South Asia further changed during the Nixon administration in the 1970s. The Sino-US rapprochement via Pakistan in the 1970s brought changes in the US policy towards South Asia. The Bangladesh crisis of 1971 gave the United States a new opportunity to be more friendly with Pakistan. Nixon's policy of "China" opening improved the US-Pakistan relations in the 1970s significantly, because Pakistan was the only trusted friend of China, through which the US could cultivate its relations. At this point the US did everything possible for Pakistan against the Bangladesh struggle.

#### United States' Mysterious Silence

As regards to the US role in the Bangladesh liberation war Amaury de Rincourt wrote:

When a new conflict occurred in 1971 over the East Bengali Revolt and the Savage repression that followed Pakistan leaders soon had to face the shattering of their dream of a United Muslim nation in the subcontinent.... In that war, the United States under Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger deliberately tilted in favour of Pakistan.<sup>14</sup>

Reincourt's observation clearly indicates the US position in the Bangladesh liberation war. However although the Nixon-Kissinger administration aimed at achieving its

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<sup>14</sup>Amaury de Rincourt, "India and Pakistan in the Shadow of Afghanistan," Foreign Affairs 61, no. 2 (Winter 1982-83): 420.

cherished goals, bluntly supported the military dictatorship of Yahya Khan against the aspiration of the freedom loving people, the US Congress, the US Press and intellectuals opposed the Nixon-Kissinger's "tilt" policy towards Pakistan. As a matter of fact just after the military crackdown in Dhaka, the Nixon administration followed a policy of mysterious silence, and the US administration described the East Bengal's crisis as Pakistan's internal matter.<sup>15</sup>

Although the Nixon administration maintained a studied silence in the wake of Pakistan's army's systematic genocide, the Bangladesh movement successfully attracted public and congressional sympathy and the media support. Even some analysts argued that the media's indignation with the policy eventually led to a new and more understanding policy toward the Bengalis.<sup>16</sup>

The indiscriminate massacre of Pakistan government officials could not change the Nixon-Kissinger administration's "tilt" towards Pakistan. It agitated many Congressmen and policy makers in the United States against

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<sup>15</sup>Joseph Sisco, Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs in a statement on April 2, 1971, stated:

The United States views the situation as basically an internal matter within Pakistan. See the statement by the State Department April 7, 1971, in US-South Asia Relations (Collection of speeches and statements), ed. R. K. Jain (New Jersey: Atlantic Highland, 1979), 3.

<sup>16</sup>Charles Peter O'Donnell, Bangladesh: Biography of a Muslim Nation (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1984), 190.

the US government's policy in South Asia. Senator Edward Kennedy expressed his deep concern and took serious view on the Senate floor and described the genocide of Pakistan army in East Pakistan.<sup>17</sup>

In addition, many Congressmen were critical of Nixon administration's policy in South Asia in general and in particular they were concerned about the use of American military hardware by the Pakistani forces.

Both houses of Congress in the foreign relation committees expressed their disenchantment with US policy towards the subcontinent. Early May 7, 1971, a subcommittee of the senate foreign relations committee voted to suspend arms sales to Pakistan and subsequently Senator Saxbe (from Ohio) and Senator Frank Church (from Idaho) introduced an amendment to the foreign assistance act to ensure that the United States in its assistance efforts help the people of East Pakistan.<sup>18</sup> Reliable reports also confirm that a group of liberal Republicans known as the Ripon Society issued a statement declaring that the continuance of US economic and military assistance to Pakistan would seriously jeopardize the freedom movement of Bangladesh. The statement said:

The American arms are now being used along with Russian and Chinese to establish a reign of terror in East Pakistan. The American government must not

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<sup>17</sup>Speech by Senator Edward M. Kennedy in the US Senate on December 7, 1971. Congressional Record (December 10, 1971), 451250.

<sup>18</sup>Newsweek, August 2, 1971.

be a party to the killing of defenseless civilians or the forcible repression of the struggle of the East Pakistanis for the control over their own lives.... Peace and stability will return to South Asia when an independent East Pakistan takes its place in the community of nations and the American diplomatic efforts should be directed to a valid realization of this goal.<sup>19</sup>

Apart from Congressional dissent, many American intellectuals pressurized the American administration not to act against the democratic aspiration of the East Bengali people. Besides congressional and intellectual concern, the US diplomats employed in Pakistan also became critical of US policy. On April 6, 1971, 20 US consulate officials led by Arthur Blood, the Consul-General in Dhaka expressed their common disgust with official American policy. The cable was entitled a "Dissent from US Policy Towards East Pakistan." The cable said:

Our government has failed to denounce the suppression of democracy. Our government has failed to denounce atrocities. Private Americans have expressed disgust. We as professional public servants, express our dissent with current policy and fervently hope that our true and lasting interests here can be defined and our policies redirected.<sup>20</sup>

In the face of the increasing domestic pressure for a positive attitude to the crisis, the administration came out with a public appeal requesting both India and Pakistan to

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<sup>19</sup>New York Times, April 7, 1971.

<sup>20</sup>From the Carnegie Papers (in 1973 the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace commissioned a major study and analysis of the conduct of the US government policy during the 1971 Bangladesh crisis.) Quoted in Lawrence Lipschultz, Bangladesh: The Unfinished Revolution (London: Zed Press, 1979), 158.



use restraint and work for peaceful political accommodation of the East Pakistan crisis.<sup>21</sup> On May 28, 1971, President Nixon sent letters to Indian prime minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi and Pakistan's President Yahya Khan outlining the US policy. Nixon wrote to Yahya Khan:

I urge you to continue to exercise restraint both along your borders with India and in your general relations with that country. We are counseling the government of India to do the same. It is only in a peaceful atmosphere that you and your administration can make effective progress toward the political accommodation you seek in East Pakistan.<sup>22</sup>

It is clear that Nixon urged Yahya for a political settlement but it failed to condemn military action of President Yahya Khan. On the other hand in a similar letter to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, Nixon wrote:

We have chosen to work primarily through quiet diplomacy. We have been discussing with the government of Pakistan and the importance of achieving a peaceful political accommodation and of restoring conditions under which the refugee flow would stop and the refugees would be able to return to their homes. The problems involved in this situation can and should be solved peacefully.... As one of Asia's major powers India has a special responsibility for maintaining the peace and stability in the region.<sup>23</sup>

However at this point, the US administration saw the crisis as an internal affair of Pakistan and Washington's main

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<sup>21</sup>Times of India, June 14, 1971.

<sup>22</sup>Richard Nixon, "US Foreign Policy for the 1970s: The Emerging Structure of Peace," a report to the Congress, Department of State Bulletin 66, no. 1707 (March 13, 1972): 385.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

concern was to prevent another Indo-Pakistan war, to provide the humanitarian assistance required in East Pakistan and to encourage a political settlement of the Pakistani civil war--preferably one that would maintain at least a unified Pakistan.<sup>24</sup>

#### U.S. Arms and Economic Aid to Pakistan

Although the United States urged for a political settlement to both Pakistan and India, after the military crackdown in the East Pakistan, there were many reports of the use of American Arms by Pakistan army in killing and destruction in the East Pakistan. The U.S. government could neither deny nor confirm the fact.<sup>25</sup> Senator Edward Kennedy criticized the US arms in his speech in the Senate:

Through this period of crisis our national leadership watched this tragedy in silence at no time has any official of our government including the President condemned the brutal and systematic repression of East Bengal by the Pakistan army--a repression carried out in part with American guns, bullets and aircraft.<sup>26</sup>

But this created serious agitation among the senators and the intellectuals of the USA. In early April 1971, a group of senators in a joint letter addressed to the

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<sup>24</sup>Rose and Sisson, 258.

<sup>25</sup>The main reason behind the Pakistan army's use of U.S. weapons in East Bengal was that since Pakistan was the member of US sponsored security alliances SEATO and CENTO, it modernized her army with 100% US made weapons and aircrafts.

<sup>26</sup>Speech by Senator Edward M. Kennedy in the U.S. Senate, December 2, 1971, Congressional Record (December 7, 1971), 45125.

Secretary of State William Roger, and expressed that they were: deeply distressed at bloodshed in East Pakistan and called on the Secretary to disclose even the most indirect American involvement there.<sup>27</sup>

In a letter to the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, on April 23, 1971, the Department of State explicitly stated that:

We have been informed by the Department of Defense that no military items have been provided to the government of Pakistan or its agents since the outbreak of the fighting in East Pakistan on March 25 and nothing is now scheduled for such delivery.<sup>28</sup>

In fact under the domestic pressure from the Congress and the public opinion, the State Department took a decision under which the state department ordered a total embargo on new licenses (retroactive to March 25, 1971), but stipulated that equipment under old licenses valid for one year that had already been delivered should not be stopped.<sup>29</sup>

Even after the existence of an arms embargo on Pakistan, the New York Times reported that violating the ban

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<sup>27</sup>"US Arms for Pakistan: A Shameful Record," Washington Post, July 15, 1971.

<sup>28</sup>Congressional Records, vol. 117, part 16 (June 22, 1971), 21317.

<sup>29</sup>Before the embargo, under the US-Pakistan agreement of October 2, 1970, Pakistan could purchase some lethal weapons and essentially in sophisticated military weapons. See New York Times, October 8 and October 11, 1970.

order the US administration was supplying arms and ammunition to Pakistan.<sup>30</sup>

But the administration's reply was that the items shipped to Pakistan were already in the "pipeline," that is, they had been purchased prior to March 25, 1971, and legal title to the equipment had been transferred to the agents of the government of Pakistan before that date. These shipments thus did not constitute a violation of April 6 suspension of military aid to Pakistan.<sup>31</sup>

No matter what the explanations and logics behind the State Department for the arms supply to Pakistan were, the US media was very critical of the official U.S. position, outlining of the break of the official embargo, and branded the Nixon administration's policy as an astonishing and shameful record. However, the US arms supply continued to be shipped to Pakistan despite strong protest both within and outside the country. But the US administration defended the US government's policy by stating three reasons:

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<sup>30</sup>The New York Times on June 22 disclosed that two shiploads of arms were going to Pakistan. On May 8, the Sundeerbans, a Pakistani ship carrying arms to Pakistan sailed from New York without public announcement or public knowledge. On June 25, 1971, the New York Times reported that a Pakistani freighter, the Koukahla loaded with military equipment sailed from New York to Karachi after the United States had banned delivering arms to Pakistan. On June 29, 1971, New York Times reported that yet another Pakistani freighter, Kaptai would send for Karachi about July 2, "presumably with items on the ammunitions control list," and that four and five other ships would be sent with similar cargoes before mid August.

<sup>31</sup>Congressional Record 117, part 18 (July 8, 1971), 24358.

First: An embargo would be seen as an ill warranted intrusion into an essentially internal problem which can only be regained by the Pakistanis.

Second: The cutting off of military supplies would encourage Pakistan to rely exclusively on other sources of supply, i.e. Soviet, Chinese and British arms shippers.

Third: An embargo would be seen as a symbolic sanction. Such sanctions would undermine US efforts to maintain a productive political relationship with the government of Pakistan, to encourage the government of Pakistan along constructive lines in the areas of mutual interest, namely in the area of relief, refugee return and of political accommodation.<sup>32</sup>

Although President Nixon told the Congress that no American arms were sent to Pakistan after November 1971, the Anderson Papers confirms by citing the minutes of the secret December 6 meeting of the Washington Special Action Group (WSAG),<sup>33</sup> that the Nixon administration tried to transfer military equipment to Pakistan through Jordan and Saudi Arabia. Such a transfer could not take place because of the opposition from certain influential senators.<sup>34</sup> State Department officials also questioned about the legitimacy of such an arms transfer to Pakistan through a third country.

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<sup>32</sup>Congressional Record 117, part 18 (July 8, 1971), 24398.

<sup>33</sup>The Washington Special Action Group (WSAG) was charged with meeting the special need for coordination in crisis situation. Not a decision-making body, the WSAG served as a management team assuring flexible and timely actions by the responsible departments in the context of Presidential decisions and the developing situation.

<sup>34</sup>Shirin Tahir-Kheli, "Bilateralism in South Asia," World Affairs 36, no. 1 (Summer 1973): 79.

Christopher van Hollen, Deputy-Assistant Secretary speaking for the State Department affirmed that:

The United States cannot permit a third country to transfer arms which we have provided them when we ourselves don't authorize sales direct to the ultimate recipient such as Pakistan, as we made a legislative decision not to sell to Pakistan.<sup>35</sup>

Nixon Administration's "tilt" policy to Pakistan, defying the strong opposition of the US Press and Congressmen were severely criticized by the U.S. Press.<sup>36</sup>

Although the World Bank, the US Congress and the Aid to Pakistan Consortium seriously opposed economic aid to Pakistan, President Nixon himself recommended economic aid to Pakistan in his news conference on August 4, 1971:

We don't favor the idea that the United States should cut off economic assistance to Pakistan. We believe that the most constructive role we can play is to continue our economic assistance to West Pakistan and thereby able to influence the course of events in a way that will deal with the problem of hunger in East Pakistan which would reduce the refugee flow into India and which will we trust in the future look toward a viable political settlement.<sup>37</sup>

Finally after serious internal and external pressures by late summer 1971, the US government had canceled virtually all economic and military aid programs to Pakistan. Despite this cancellation, the US continued food aid programs directed at preventing a serious famine in East Pakistan. In

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<sup>35</sup>Quoted in Ibid., 250.

<sup>36</sup>"Why Aid Pakistan," New York Times (June 30, 1971).

<sup>37</sup>Public papers of the President of the United States: Richard Nixon, 1971, p. 850.

fact, under the title of an aid program, the US continued its economic assistance to Pakistan. On the other hand externally India was seriously concerned about US aid to Pakistan and trying to influence the Congressmen, especially Democrats and the US media, against the Nixon administration's policy towards South Asia. While Nixon's National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger was visiting South Asia in June 1971, Mrs. Gandhi pressed Kissinger to cut off not only arms but also economic aid. Mrs. Gandhi pointed out that even though the value of this aid was miniscule the symbolism of any US support at all was a significant factor in Pakistani intransigence.<sup>38</sup>

Despite having serious opposition to the United States' aid policy to Pakistan, the Nixon administration continued assisting Pakistan, both directly and indirectly. So it was revealed that the Nixon administration remained determined in its decision of sending aid to Pakistan against domestic and international protest because Washington intended to view Pakistan as a balance against India on the subcontinent.<sup>39</sup>

#### U.S. Efforts for Political and Diplomatic Settlement

From the very beginning of the crisis, as a matter of fact, the United States wanted a political settlement within

<sup>38</sup>Henry Kissinger, 861.

<sup>39</sup>Sydney H. Schanberg, "Pakistan Divided," Foreign Affairs 50, no. 1 (October 1971): 133.

the framework of United Pakistan against the Bengali aspiration of an independent Bangladesh. At first the United States branded the Bangladesh liberation movement as a separatist movement. The spokesman for the State Department in its April 5, 1971 statement said:

The US State Department hopes that peaceful conditions can be reestablished in East Pakistan where fighting broke out last month between Pakistani forces and Bengali separatists. The US is naturally concerned at the reported loss of life, hardship and damage suffered by the people of Pakistan.<sup>40</sup>

The first US attempt to make a political settlement of the crisis was taken in June 1971. The US wanted to act as a channel between the Bengali leadership and Pakistan President General Yahya Khan. Lawrence Lifschultz mentioned that eight secret meetings were held between the leaders of the Bangladesh government in-exile and the US officials.<sup>41</sup> In fact, the US opened the negotiation with the Bangladesh government in exile's foreign Minister Khondaker Mostaque Ahmed for his American leanings.<sup>42</sup> While Tajuddin Ahmed, the prime minister of the exile government was kept carefully in the dark for his pro-Soviet and pro-Indian bias. The United

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<sup>40</sup>Statement by the spokesman of Department of State, April 5, 1971, in US-South Asia Relations, 1947-1982, vol. 3 (Collection of Statements and Speeches), 3.

<sup>41</sup>During US negotiation with leaders of the exiled Bangladesh movement K. Mostaq's two important proteges were his foreign secretary Mahbub Alam Charshi and an official assistant, Taheruddin Thakur, commonly known as Mostaque Triangle, used to present there. See Lawrence Lifschultz, 114.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 111.



States offered its service as a mediator between the government of Pakistan and the Awami League in late summer in 1971, but it became ineffective because of the unfavorable response and lack of interest from Pakistan.<sup>43</sup>

By the end of October 1971 the Indian Press was publicly warning against Bengali negotiations with foreign countries. This is how the US mediation of negotiation between the government of Pakistan and the Bangladesh government in exile was ended in a fiasco.<sup>44</sup>

Apart from mediation efforts, the United States also suggested to Pakistan for a political solution to the problem, instead of a military option. The United States pressured Pakistan not to take any action in the trial of Sheikh Mujib. In August the US Secretary of State William Rogers made a statement to his Pakistani ambassador Agha Hilary, and said that Pakistan could lose the support of the United States if Sheikh Mujib was executed.<sup>45</sup> On the other hand, the US effort to rescue Mujib from a death sentence also appeared in The Anderson Papers. It said that the U.S. policy and the local efforts of the Farland (US ambassador to Pakistan) kept Mujib alive.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>Sisson and Rose, 258. Also see Henry Kissinger, 872-873.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 873.

<sup>45</sup>For details, see Charles O'Dowell, Bangladesh: Biography of a Muslim Nation (Boulder and India: Westview Press, 1984), 14.

<sup>46</sup>The Anderson Papers, 222.

Again the United States presented its peace proposal for a political settlement of the Bangladesh crisis, during Mrs. Gandhi's visit to Washington in early November 1971. President Nixon presented a proposal for peace settlement to Mrs. Gandhi, which included that the United States would assume full financial responsibility for the refugees' support.<sup>47</sup>

Apart from this, the US also established contacts with the Bangladesh leaders in Calcutta and during August, September and October of 1971 no fewer than eight such contacts took place. The government of Pakistan accepted the US proposal, but the Indian government discouraged such negotiations. Kissinger conceded:

We told the government of India on many occasions the Secretary of State saw the Indian Ambassador 18 times, I saw him seven times since the end of August on behalf of the President. We all said that political autonomy for East Bengal was the inevitable outcome of a political evolution and that we favored it. The difference may have been that the government of India wanted things so rapidly that it was no longer talking about political evolution, but about political collapse.<sup>48</sup>

Throughout November 1971, tension erupted between India and Pakistan so dangerously that it seemed to be only

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<sup>47</sup>Carnegie Endowment Files, cited in Sisson and Rose, 194.

<sup>48</sup>Background briefing with Henry A. Kissinger, Congressional Record (December 9, 1971), 45735. Also see The Anderson Papers, 237. For an analysis of US proposal for peace settlement, see Wayne Wilcox, The Emergence of Bangladesh: Problems and Opportunities for a Redefined American Policy in South Asia (Foreign Affairs Study: 1973), 50-51.

a matter of time before war broke out. The United States again appealed to both the countries to defuse the situation. On November 12, 1971, Secretary of State William Rogers declared:

...diplomatically, we are going to do all we can to prevent a war from breaking out and obviously if a war should break out we are going to do everything we can to stay out. We have no intention of getting into any other war.<sup>49</sup>

On December 3, 1971, when the Indian army crossed the boundary of East Pakistan, it received strong US criticism. Realistically rather than formally, the war began from the last part of November. In this situation the US administration suspended all licenses for arms shipment to India.<sup>50</sup> When the formal Indo-Pakistan war broke out on December 3, 1971, at the request of the U.S., an emergency session of the Security Council was called. The US permanent representative to the UN George Bush made a statement in the Security Council, and called upon India and Pakistan for an immediate cease fire and mutual withdrawal of armed forces. George Bush held the view:

It is time that both countries dealt an immediate ceasefire and agree an immediate step to withdraw their forces.... Let us then all and quickly agree that a ceasefire in this tragic hour is essential and that a withdrawal of forces from foreign

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<sup>49</sup>Department of State Bulletin, vol. LXV (December 6, 1971), 652. The US Secretary of State William Rogers made this statement in response to a question "If a war breaks out between India and Pakistan whose side are we going to take?" it was asked during the question and answer sessions after his speech.

<sup>50</sup>New York Times, December 4, 1971.

territories must take place without delay, so that the progress can be made in building the condition in East Pakistan, political and economic and social, in which the refugees will return and in which peace can be assured.<sup>51</sup>

But the repeated US efforts to obtain a Security Council resolution for an immediate ceasefire and withdrawal of armed forces were blocked by Soviet vetoes.<sup>52</sup> On December 5, 1971, the US representative to the UN George Bush said that India was clearly the major aggressor.<sup>53</sup>

At this point the U.S. took the issue to the General Assembly and the General Assembly passed the ceasefire resolution with the vote of 104 to 11 with 10 abstentions.<sup>54</sup> Since the General Assembly resolutions are non binding, the US again brought the issue to the Security Council and in a resolution on December 12, called upon India to accept a ceasefire and withdrawal of armed forces according to the General Assembly resolution.<sup>55</sup> But the resolution was again vetoed by the Soviet Union. On December 12, George Bush said in his statement to the Security Council:

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<sup>51</sup>US representative George Bush made this statement in the UN Security Council on December 5, 1971. See The Department of State Bulletin, vol. 65, no. 1696 (December 27, 1971), 723.

<sup>52</sup>See particularly the UN Resolution S/10416 and S/10425.

<sup>53</sup>George Bush's statement on December 5, 1971, The Department of State Bulletin, vol. 65, no. 1696 (December 27, 1971).

<sup>54</sup>Ibid.

<sup>55</sup>See UN doc. S/10446.

What are India's intentions? Pakistan's aims have become clear: It has accepted the General Assembly's resolution passed by a vote of 104 to 11. My government has asked this question to the Indian government several times in the last week. I regret to inform the council that India's reply has been unsatisfactory and not reassuring.<sup>56</sup>

But in the face of repeated Soviet vetoes, all the US efforts towards a peace settlement had failed and finally the climax came. In mid December, when Dhaka and the whole of East Pakistan had fallen down, and the Pakistan army was defeated by the Indo-Bangladesh joint command, and President Nixon decided to send the formidable naval task force into the Bay of Bengal in order to show its last support towards Pakistan.<sup>57</sup> The immediate cause behind the United States' military showdown was that the United States had received convincing evidence that India wanted to seize a part of West Pakistan and destroy the Pakistan army. It is clearly acknowledged by President Nixon:

We received convincing evidence that India was seriously contemplating the seizure of Pakistan-held portions of Kashmir and the destruction of Pakistan's military forces in the West. We could not ignore this evidence, nor could we ignore the fact that when we repeatedly asked India and its supporters for clear assurances to the contrary we did not receive them. We had to take action to prevent a wider war.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup>Quoted in Henry Kissinger, White House Years, 911.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid. On December 10, the American nuclear carrier Enterprise's four escorts were ordered to sail from their station in the Gulf of Tonkin toward Singapore and on December 14 sailed down the Strait of Malacca into the Bay of Bengal.

<sup>58</sup>Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Richard Nixon, 1972 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1979), 301.

However, on December 16 after the defeat of the Pakistan army with the surrender of 90,000 Pakistan troops in East Bengal, India unilaterally announced its decision of a ceasefire on the western front.

Finally it becomes apparent that throughout the Bangladesh crisis of 1971, the United States, in addition to its political economic and military support to Pakistan, attempted to make an attempt to make a political settlement, in favor of its ally Pakistan. US efforts for a peace settlement is confirmed by President Nixon:

We established contact with Bengali representatives in Calcutta...President Yahya told us he was prepared to begin negotiations with any representative of this group not charged with high crimes in Pakistan...we informed India that we were prepared to promote discussion of an explicit timetable for East Pakistani autonomy. India was kept fully informed of all these developments at every stage. It indicated little interest.... But it is clear that a political process was in train which could have been supported and facilitated by all the parts involved if they had wished. This is the basis for profound disappointment we felt and expressed when war erupted.<sup>59</sup>

Of course, the US took certain overt and covert steps towards a peace settlement in South Asia which is commonly branded as "tilt" towards Pakistan. In fact, careful observation of the Nixon administration's policy from the beginning to the end of Bangladesh crisis unfolds the truth that the US policy was tilted towards Pakistan, while Joseph

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<sup>59</sup>Richard Nixon, "US Foreign Policy for the 1970s: The Emerging Structure of Peace," a report to the Congress, Department of State Bulletin (vol. LXVI, 1707, March 13, 1972), 385.

Sisco, Assistant Secretary of the State for Northeastern and Southeastern Affairs, characterized this "tilt" policy in the interest of all countries in the area as well as major powers who have an interest in the region.<sup>60</sup>

The US-Bangladesh Relations: Mujib and Zia Regimes,  
1975-1981

Political Level

Norman D. Palmer wrote:

United States relations with Bangladesh got off to a very shaky start because of the United States tilt towards Pakistan during the 1971 civil war. More realistically the United States may have realized its mistakes in 1971 and soon recognized new realities in the area and Bangladesh may have had no alternative to the United States for the economic assistance that she desperately needs.<sup>61</sup>

With the break up of Pakistan and the birth of Bangladesh, the Indo-Soviet axis gained a diplomatic victory over both the United States and China.<sup>62</sup> In such a changed situation the beginning of the US relations with Bangladesh were very shaky and were likely to remain strained as long as Nixon remained in the White House.<sup>63</sup> Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the chief architect of the Bangladesh liberation war, who was

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<sup>60</sup>Hearing before the subcommittee on Near East and South Asia, 125.

<sup>61</sup>Norman D. Palmer, "The United States and South Asia," Current History 76, no. 446 (April 1929): 180.

<sup>62</sup>Henry Kissinger, 911.

<sup>63</sup>Peter Lyon, "Bangladesh: Fashioning a Foreign Policy," South Asian Review 5, no. 3 (April 1972), 235.

soft towards the US in his early career, turned out to be a vocal opponent of the US policy and branded it as imperialistic by watching the reality of the United States' total support to West Pakistan's oppressive policies in the Bangladesh crisis of 1971.<sup>64</sup> But the Bangladesh-US relations improved slowly but steadily. The relations began to improve partly because of the US' admission that its 1971 "tilt" policy toward Pakistan was a mistake,<sup>65</sup> and primarily for Bangladesh's own initiative, because it had no alternative but the United States for the economic assistance that she needed.

However at the political level, the central issue of the US-Bangladesh relations was the question of recognition of Bangladesh. The US recognition of Bangladesh did not come in the immediate post liberation period. The US administration followed a policy of "wait and see" approach right after Bangladesh's emergence.

The US recognition was delayed by the Nixon administration primarily on two considerations: first, the US was concerned about the political implications of an

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<sup>64</sup>See G.W. Chaudhury, "The Sino-Indian Rift and its Impact on the South and Southeast Asia," Southeast Asia Spectrum 4 (January-March 1976): 14.

<sup>65</sup>According to some analysts: The US recognition of Bangladesh implied a recognition of a political-strategic error of the United States in 1971. For detailed discussion see Pradip Sarbadhikari, "Towards a Foreign Policy of Bangladesh," in the Occasional Papers: South Asia Series, No. 21 (eds.) Barbara Thomas and Spencer Lavan (Asian Studies Center: Michigan State University, 1972), 232.



immediate recognition of Bangladesh on regional affairs. The US did not want to recognize Bangladesh in such a way which would dissatisfy China and Pakistan.<sup>66</sup>

Secondly the Nixon administration did not recognize the Indian intervention and the presence of Indian troops in Bangladesh and it was seen by the American policy makers as an imitation of sovereignty.

Apart from the presence of Indian troops, the US government continued support for Pakistan, because of its SEATO commitments and refused to recognize Bangladesh. Recognizing Bangladesh would mean "betraying" to Pakistan. It is most likely that all these considerations served to delay the US recognition of Bangladesh. But despite the administration's delay, the US media and the US Congressmen individually were very sympathetic to Bangladesh and were very critical of the administration's policy. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee held hearing on resolutions demanding the immediate recognition of Bangladesh.<sup>67</sup> Four senators, Stevensen, Kennedy, Hookings (Democrat) and Saxbe (Republican) urged the US government for formal recognition of Bangladesh by arguing that the failure to recognize

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<sup>66</sup>US Secretary of State William Rogers news conference of December 23, 1971. See The Department of State Bulletin, vol. 66, no. 1699 (January 17, 1972), 54.

<sup>67</sup>For detailed discussion see O'Donell, 145.

Bangladesh prevented a freeflow of necessary aid.<sup>68</sup> Senator Kennedy played a very conspicuous role in the Congress. In February 1972, Kennedy visited Dhaka at the invitation of Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and he traveled to the war devastated areas of Bangladesh. Upon returning home, his statement in the US Senate, presented the preliminary report on his field trip to Bangladesh, in which he strongly condemned the US' delays regarding the recognition of Bangladesh and urged for an immediate recognition. Senator Kennedy held the view:

American policy in South Asia is in shambles. Recent actions and pronouncements from the administration suggest, however, that little is being done to change this. But it must change. So let us begin anew in South Asia--let us start with Bangladesh. Let us recognize this new nation and the urgent humanitarian needs of the people.<sup>69</sup>

Among others, Senator Stevenson visited Bangladesh in late January and attacked the Nixon administration's policy of non recognition and called President Nixon's policies toward Bangladesh "despicable."<sup>70</sup> The Congress persisted in pressuring its views. On March 22, 1972, the Senate passed a resolution calling for recognition and a similar resolution was adopted by the House. Finally the US administration

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<sup>68</sup>Most foreign aid sent to Dhaka during the first several months after independence was channeled through the United Nations or through the private agencies.

<sup>69</sup>Senator Edward M. Kennedy's statement in the US Senate presenting a preliminary report on his field trip to Bangladesh, February 25, 1972, in the Bangladesh Documents (vol. II), 203.

<sup>70</sup>The Bangladesh Observer, January 30, 1972.

responded to the changed situation and events of South Asia. On April 4, 1972, the US government announced its recognition of Bangladesh only after the complete withdrawal of Indian troops from Bangladesh territory. While announcing the recognition, the Secretary of State William Roger expressed the American intention to develop friendly bilateral relations in order to assist Bangladesh in its immense task of relief and rehabilitation.<sup>71</sup> The US recognition of Bangladesh was welcomed by Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who anticipated that the US recognition would lead to friendly cooperation between the two nations.<sup>72</sup> Following the US recognition, the US Embassy in Dhaka and the Bangladesh Embassy in Washington opened up in order to formalize the diplomatic relations on May 18, 1972.<sup>73</sup> Although the normalization process of the US-Bangladesh relations started during Mujib's regime, the US policy makers regarded Bangladesh as a low profile area and showed very limited interests.

At this point the US administration very carefully watched the events and incidents of South Asia and emphasized on peace and stability of the region, through which its ally Pakistan's greater national interest

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<sup>71</sup>Department of State Bulletin (April 24, 1972), 597.

<sup>72</sup>New York Times, April 6, 1972.

<sup>73</sup>Department of State Bulletin, vol. LXVI, no. 1720 (June 12, 1972), 809.

(especially the release of the Pakistani POWs) could be served. On May 3, 1973, in his fourth annual report to the Congress on US foreign policy, President Nixon said:

Today we can hope that the subcontinent has found a new foundation for stability. This will depend first and foremost on the normalization of relations between India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. This means to begin with resolving the issues left by the events of 1971: the repatriation of the prisoners of war and other personnel detained; recognition and establishment of diplomatic relations and resumption of trade and equitable division of assets and liabilities between Pakistan and Bangladesh.<sup>74</sup>

The reasons behind US reservations towards Bangladesh were Mujib government's domestic and international policies which were opposed to US objectives and interests. At the domestic level the Mujib government introduced state socialism and a one-party system, while at the international level, Mujib pursued a foreign policy tilted towards an Indo-Soviet and socialist world. So, the Nixon administration very carefully observed Mujib government's domestic and foreign policy and expressed considerable frustration.

In fact, at the very beginning, the Mujib government's hardliner leader, finance minister Tajuddin Ahmed, opposed the US assistance, unless it was channeled through the World Bank or any other international agency. This was because of

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<sup>74</sup>Public Papers of the President of the United States: Richard Nixon, 1973 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975), 454.

his personal socialist views.<sup>75</sup> His main intention was to follow a socialist path of development. But there was also a strong pro-US faction within the Mujib government, particularly headed by Khandakar Mostaq Ahmed, who influenced Sheikh Mujib to pursue a capitalist path of development.<sup>76</sup> However, the debate ended when Mujib declared that Bangladesh would welcome aid unconditionally from external sources. Tajuddin was overshadowed by Sheikh Mujib who recognized that the urgent need of the country dictated accepting the assistance from every available source. Moreover Mujib's decision to replace the pro-Soviet foreign minister Abdus Samad-azad by pro-western Dr. Kamal Hassain in March 1973, was the clear reflection of Mujib's willingness to improve relations with the USA and the west. But the US-Bangladesh relations still remained very strained, what is described by Joseph J. Sisco, as limited to the dramatic relief effort to Bangladesh.<sup>77</sup>

While outlining the U.S. policy towards Bangladesh President Nixon said:

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<sup>75</sup>Craig Baxter, Bangladesh: A New Nation in an Old Setting (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1984), 107.

<sup>76</sup>Khondaker Mastaq Ahmed, was the foreign minister of Bangladesh government in exile with whom US government had contact during the liberation war of Bangladesh and the US administration tried to make a political settlement of the Bangladesh crisis through the Mostaq channel. He was the influential commerce minister of Mujib government.

<sup>77</sup>Statement by Joseph J. Sisco, Assistant Secretary for near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, Department of State Bulletin, vol. LXVIII, no. 1762 (April 2, 1973), 405.

Our interest in Bangladesh is in its stability--lest turmoil there affect other nations and in its genuine non-alignment and peaceful policies. Instability anywhere in the subcontinent is an invitation to interference from outside.<sup>78</sup>

However, the US-Bangladesh relations remained very confined within very limited areas during late 1972 and early 1973. At this time the Mujib government was clearly critical of US policy in the North Vietnam and sided with the Soviet Union.<sup>79</sup> Mujib declared in the annual convention of the ruling party Awami League in 1972:

We achieved our independence at the cost of life and blood, not through the negotiation or roundtable conference. So, we shall support, the oppressed people against imperialists--if it is Africa, or Latin America, or Arab country; we will not change our policy.<sup>80</sup>

Moreover, regarding the US bombing in North Vietnam, anti-American demonstrations continued in the major cities of Bangladesh and the angry demonstrators buried the United States information Service (USIS) in December 1972.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>78</sup>"US Foreign Policies for the 1970s: Shaping a Durable Peace," a report to the Congress by President Richard Nixon, Department of State Bulletin, vol. LXVIII, no. 1771 (June 4, 1973), 791.

<sup>79</sup>In 1972, I was a student of sixth grade, and I personally experienced the anti-American procession and demonstration. In almost every day the college and university students including the strong labor union in Bangladesh brought out procession expressing solidarity with the oppressed people of North Vietnam. The students raised slogans: "Down with US imperialism. We support the heroic people of Vietnam."

<sup>80</sup>Inaugural speech of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in the 2nd annual council session of the Bangladesh Awami league. In the Speeches of the BangaBandhu (Banga Bandur Bhason) (ed.) Mizaner Rahman (Dhaka: Novel Publications, 1988), 142.

<sup>81</sup>Baxter, 107-108.

Despite the hostilities exhibited towards the US, the Mujib government was trying to improve relations with the United States. In the autumn of 1974 Sheikh Mujib visited the United States to address the General Assembly session of the United Nations. During the visit, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger met with Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman briefly at the UN General Assembly. Mujib also saw President Ford for a brief session.<sup>82</sup> Although the Kissinger-Ford meeting promised US help to Bangladesh, they failed to change the attitude of the US administration towards the new nation. The US administration eventually did not support the Mujib government because of the US dissociation with the Mujib government's domestic and international policies.

However, in October 1974, the US Secretary of State Dr. Henry Kissinger as part of his South Asian tour, visited Bangladesh, and had a meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. He regarded him as a man of vast conception and assured all possible help for the development of Bangladesh. After meeting with the Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Secretary Kissinger remarked in a news conference on October 30 at Dhaka:

...and Bangladesh would not exist if the prime minister were not a man of vast conception. I expressed to the prime minister that the United States ever since the independence of Bangladesh

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<sup>82</sup>See Lawrence Lifschultz, Bangladesh: The Unfinished Revolution (London: Zed Press, 1979), 139.

has believed very strongly in the progress of and development of Bangladesh and we will do what is within our capabilities to help with the problems of food and with problems of development.<sup>83</sup>

It is interesting to note that Mujib showed his sincerity and willingness to strengthen Bangladesh's relations with the US by firing the hardliner Finance Minister, Tajuddin Ahmed, just before Henry Kissinger's visit to Dhaka.<sup>84</sup> In fact it was a signal of Mujib's interest towards the USA and the west.

Although Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, from the beginning of his statesmanship, aligned with India and the Soviet Union, his relentless effort for opening relations with the United States, was of course dictated by national interest, which demanded emergency economic aid to withstand hunger, starvation and famine, in the newly born war ravaged country-Bangladesh. Because, the assistance, Bangladesh received so far from the Soviet Union, socialist countries and India, were quite inadequate for meeting the growing needs of the people.

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<sup>83</sup>Remarks by the Secretary Kissinger to the press, Dhaka, October 30, 1974 following a meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. See Department of State Bulletin, vol. LXXI, no. 1848 (November 25, 1974), 715.

<sup>84</sup>Tajuddin Ahmed was commonly known as a pro-Soviet and pro-Indian, key figure in Mujib's cabinet. He was fired by Sheikh Mujib on October 26, 1974. It is believed that Mujib was under heavy pressure from the World Bank, IMF and the US lobby and this combined with the Awami League's own factionalism and the role of pro-west Khondaker Mostaque faction was responsible for the ouster of Tajuddin Ahmed.



There is no doubt that Mujib's effort for promoting relations with the USA significantly increased US aid to Bangladesh, but it was not enough. In fact the US government could not trust Mujib administration, for the lack of his total commitment towards the west. Mujib government's alignment with the Soviet Union and the socialist world on the one hand and its aid seeking to the west, especially to USA for meeting its emergency needs were not appreciated by the US policy makers and the US did not respond at the call of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman properly.

However, following the August coup of 1975, the US-Bangladesh relations changed dramatically. After the military coup and counter coup of November 3, 1975, and November 7, 1975, Ziaur Rahman emerged as a strong man in Bangladesh politics. He at first acted as a defacto and later emerged as a de jure leader and became the president of the country in April 1977 and stayed in power for over four years until his assassination on May 30, 1981.

Ziaur Rahman understood the economic realities of Bangladesh and responded to the national interest which demanded the economic advancement of the country and meeting the immediate economic necessity of the people. Zia pursued pragmatic policies both on the domestic and external fronts. At the domestic level, instead of Mujib's one party system, he introduced multi party system, held elections, from the union level to the parliamentary and presidential levels.

Zia also altered Mujib initiated socialist path of development. He introduced free market economic system which encouraged privatization and denationalization at the domestic level.

At the international level, Zia transformed from Mujib's pro-Soviet and pro-Indian policy to pro-US, pro-Chinese, and pro-Muslim word policy. Zia's most domestic and foreign policy significantly increased the credibility of his regime in the eyes of US policy makers. The immediate goal of Zia's foreign policy was to counteract Indo-Soviet influences over Bangladesh, but not to antagonize India and the Soviet Union.<sup>85</sup> At this point Zia developed warmly Bangladesh-US relations, which was observed by India and Soviet Union with suspicion, because of their loss of trusted friend, Sheikh Mujib in Bangladesh.

Although the United States started changing its attitude towards Bangladesh from the very beginning of the Zia regime, still it did not consider Bangladesh for preferential treatment. At this point Bangladesh's position to the US State Department was as follows:

Bangladesh would appear to be fairly far down the list of countries that need to be recognized and there are no significant US-Bangladesh policy issues that require discussion.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>85</sup>Talukder Maniruzzaman, Group Interest and Political Changes: Studies of Pakistan and Bangladesh (New Delhi: South Asian Publishers), 253.

<sup>86</sup>The above mentioned statement was made by the National Security Council when the Ambassador of Bangladesh, M.R. Siddiai requested an

Zia steadily moved Bangladesh closer to the United States during the Carter administration, while the Carter administration also demonstrated its interest towards Bangladesh from the very beginning of the Zia regime<sup>87</sup> and pledged to work with Zia towards peace and prosperity.<sup>88</sup>

On the other hand, as a member of the UN Security Council Bangladesh's role also impressed the United States. Bangladesh's constructive role in the UN Security Council was highly appreciated by the Carter Administration during the US hostage crisis in Iran in 1979.

Zia administration also pursued an identical policy with the USA on major international issues. Bangladesh played a meaningful role in the United Nations by initiating a resolution condemning the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan which was hailed by the US administration. But the two countries also disagreed on a number of issues, especially those concerning the Middle East. Zia's policy regarding the Middle East was that peace process in the region could be

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appointment with the US Vice President in February 1977. The US National Security Council replied: We see no need for the Vice President to meet with the Ambassador of Bangladesh and recommended against his doing so, unless the Vice President has personal reasons for wanting to do so or intends to receive a large number of ambassadors. See Memo, 70-77 Jeanne W. Davis to Danis Cliff, 2/12/77 "CO14, EX" Box-Coll, WHCF-Subject File-Jimmy Carter library.

<sup>87</sup>"Ziaur Rahman, President of Bangladesh," Box 3742, letter, Secretary of State, Washington, D.C. to the U.S. Embassy Dhaka. WHCF-Name File, Jimmy Carter library.

<sup>88</sup>The message said: "My heartiest congratulations on your victory in the June 3 presidential election. I look forward to continuing to work with you toward peace and prosperity for our peoples. see "Ziaur Rahman, President of Bangladesh" Box 3742, Telegram, President Carter to President Zia, 06/07/1978, WHCF-Name File, Jimmy Carter library.

established only after the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Israeli forces from the occupied territories and the establishment of a Palestine state, while US policy towards Israel was very soft.<sup>89</sup> Despite the differences of opinion the US-Bangladesh relations during the Zia regime did not deteriorate, rather improved significantly. Apart from this at the inspiration of the US, Bangladesh signed the Treaty of the Non Proliferation of the Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and Bangladesh became the 111th Party of the NPT.<sup>90</sup> The US welcomed Bangladesh's accession and hoped that its initiative will spur others in the region to follow Bangladesh's lead.<sup>91</sup> In addition to this, Zia's domestic economic policy and foreign policy were highly applauded by the state department and the US repeatedly expressed its willingness to continue its assistance towards Bangladesh.

However, it is explicitly clear that Bangladesh under Zia had build confidence among the US policy makers, that the US interest in Bangladesh can be best served by his administration. But still the US political interest in Bangladesh was limited and the US policy makers thought that instability in Bangladesh could have impact on the

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<sup>89</sup>Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Jimmy Carter (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1978), 1927. Also see Ibid., vol. 2 (June 30-December 31, 1978), 1979.

<sup>90</sup>Department of State Bulletin 79, no. 2032 (November 1929): 48-49.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., 49.

subcontinent as a whole and the primary US objective in Bangladesh was claimed by the US officials as developmental and humanitarian.

Zia met President Jimmy Carter twice, first in Tokyo and second time in Washington. After the Tokyo meeting, President Carter invited President Zia, the second time for a meeting and stressed on the deepening relationship between the US and Bangladesh.<sup>92</sup>

Although Zia successfully managed to get an invitation from the White House, for this Zia had to play a tougher diplomacy and eventually worlds heavyweight champion Muhammed Ali worked as a conduit for a meeting between President Zia and President Carter, which was described by the National Security Council Advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, as "Zia's latest ploy (to which incidentally we give full marks for imagination.)"<sup>93</sup>

Zia met with Carter a second time in Washington when he went to address the UN General Assembly session in 1980. President Zia and President Carter reviewed the bilateral relations and discussed regional and international issues of mutual concern. During the meeting President Carter applauded Bangladesh's democratic election, economic

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<sup>92</sup>"Ziaur Rahman, President of Bangladesh," Box 3742 letter from President Jimmy Carter to President Ziaur Rahman, WHCF-Name File, Jimmy Carter library.

<sup>93</sup>Folder-WHCF-Sub-Exec" 1/20/77-1/20/81" Box Coll, Jimmy Carter library.

development and the role of Bangladesh in the Muslim world and the United Nations, and in the world affairs, especially regarding the US hostage issue. President Carter also branded President Zia as a very fine leader of Bangladesh. Carter said:

President Ziaur, the very fine leader of Bangladesh. Since their war of independence in 1971, tremendous progress has been made under his leadership.... The open and free election process which resulted in the election of President Ziaur has been an inspiration to the world. Also we have been very grateful at the leadership that President Ziaur has placed personally not only among the Muslim nations and the community there but indeed throughout the entire world community. As a member of the United Nations Security Council, Bangladesh played a very important and statesmanlike role during the difficult months just passed (hostage crisis).<sup>94</sup>

President Carter also appreciated President Zia's statement in the United Nations General Assembly where he called upon the OPEC nations with their tremendous influx of capital to invest in the developing nations like Bangladesh to provide a better life and employment for the people there.<sup>95</sup>

While President Zia in his speech said:

We are very grateful indeed, Mr. President, for your special interest in the development, the economic development in Bangladesh, for which during your period, we have received full support and especially in the food sector, the support that you have given us. I can assure you that our

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<sup>94</sup>Public Papers of the President of the United States: Jimmy Carter, 1980-81 (Book II, May 24 to September 190) (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office) 1577-1579.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., 1578.

people are grateful to the American people and to you, Mr. President, for the important role that your great country has played, the people of the United States and yourself to uphold the charter of the United Nations for maintenance of peace and stability in the world is something that we praise you for and especially your value that you attach to the question of human rights and human dignity is something that all of us, the whole world, could be proud of.<sup>96</sup>

President Zia applauded President Carter for the meaningful role of the USA, especially in the social, political and economic development in Bangladesh including the restoration of democracy and launching of the second five year plan. While President Carter highly applauded President Ziaur Rahman's leadership and assured him of all possible cooperation in the successful implementation of the second five year plan. Moreover, both President Carter and President Zia characterized US-Bangladesh relations as excellent.<sup>97</sup>

As a symbol of warm relations between Bangladesh and the US, Ziaur Rahman signed an agreement at Washington on July 13, 1978, concerning Peace Corps program in Bangladesh,<sup>98</sup> but the agreement drew serious criticism inside the country which knowingly was never implemented.

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<sup>96</sup>Ibid., 1579.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid.

<sup>98</sup>Agreement concerning the Peace Corps programs in Bangladesh, signed at Washington on July 13, 1978. See Department of State Bulletin 78, no. 2018 (1978).

In November 1980, following the defeat of President Jimmy Carter in the US presidential election and with the election of Ronald Reagan as the leader of the United States of America, Bangladesh's President Ziaur Rahman in his message reminded President-elect Ronald Reagan that Bangladesh-US relations was excellent, and expected the growing cooperation of the two countries will reach at a higher level during the tenure of Ronald Reagan. Reagan, as a gesture of friendship and cooperation nominated Ms. Jane A. Coon as US Ambassador to Bangladesh on May 28, 1981.<sup>99</sup> As a matter of fact, Bangladesh-US relations improved further during Ronald Reagan's regime except a little misunderstanding over a "news item" published in the Bangladeshi newspapers that Bangladesh was permitting the US to build a naval base at Saint Martin Island. The opposition parties seriously protested such a policy on the ground that it was opposed to Bangladesh's non-aligned character. This created a serious misunderstanding regarding the US interest in Bangladesh. But Bangladesh government removed the confusion and totally refused to admit it, and regarded it as totally baseless.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>99</sup>Public Papers of the President of the United States: Ronald Reagan, 1981 (January 20 to December 31) (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office), 472.

<sup>100</sup>The Daily Ittefaq, December 18, 1980.



However, Zia government could successfully impressed Reagan administration and improved further significantly the relationship between the two countries, which is demonstrated by the Assistant Secretary of the State for Near East and South Asia, Mrs. Jane A. Coon's statement before a House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee, on March 23, 1981, which recommended for Bangladesh 904 million dollars, PL-480 programs of 107.7 million dollars and IMET funding of 225,000 dollars, which was more than the previous fiscal year.<sup>101</sup>

Nevertheless, Bangladesh-US relations were excellent, although Bangladesh had no cultural pact with the USA for unknown reasons. The United States also avoided the military relationship with Bangladesh despite request for military equipment. It was not until 1977 that a defense attache was added to the US Embassy staff in Dhaka. The international military education and training (IMET) was begun shortly before that. This small program brought a limited number of Bangladesh military personnel to the United States for specialized training. The State Department while justifying the IMET Program had remarked "We will help to improve an institution which contributes to stability in Bangladesh and

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<sup>101</sup>Statement by Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for NEA, Jane A. Coon, before a House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on March 23, 1981. See Jain, 169.

in the region."<sup>102</sup> However, at the political level in spite of having differences of opinion on different issues, Bangladesh-US relations were considered excellent. Actually the US administration highly appreciated Zia's policy, both at home and abroad, partly because of Zia's pragmatic foreign policy and partly for his rapid shift from Indo-Soviet axis to the west especially to the USA. In fact the US administration highly appreciated Ziaur Rahman's policy of political evolution, presidential elections of 1978, parliamentary election of 1979, withdrawal of restrictions on press freedom, withdrawal of martial law and finally the release of the political prisoners. Mr. Howard B. Schaffer, the country director for India, Nepal and Sri Lanka Affairs, has pointed out clearly in his "Review of US Policy in the 1980s":

Bangladesh states that its foreign policy is one of friendship towards all and genuine nonalignment. Relations with the United States are excellent and probably as good as they have ever been since that nation's birth. Our interests in Bangladesh reflect our desire for stability and humanitarian interest in improving the lot of Bangladesh's desperately poor majority. We welcome Bangladesh's position as a moderate in

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<sup>102</sup>State Department, Congressional Presentation, FY 1978, Security Assistance Program, vol. 1. Carter administration's fiscal year 1978, IMET budget requested for Bangladesh of \$200,000 and the fiscal year 1979 IMET budget requested for Bangladesh of \$250,000, intended to bring some Bengali military officers (it was 27 in 1979) to the United States for training. Also see International Policy Report, vol. iv, no. 1 (1978).

multilateral forums such as the United Nations and the nonaligned.<sup>103</sup>

The development of Bangladesh-US relations further reflected during Reagan administration. President Ronald Reagan personally sent a message to acting President Abdur Sattar of Bangladesh on the death of President Zia to demonstrate US friendship towards Bangladesh. In the message Reagan said:

I was shocked and deeply grieved to learn of the assassination of President Ziaur Rahman. The United States, indeed the world, had cause to respect President Zia's profound and compassionate commitment to a better life for the people and his dedication to the rule of law. His wisdom in international affairs will be sorely missed. I am confident that the people of Bangladesh are united in their determination to assure that the stability and progress of recent years will survive this tragedy.<sup>104</sup>

Again, the US Ambassador to the UN Jeane A. Kirkpatrick visited Bangladesh, to show the support of Reagan's administration to cooperate with Bangladesh steadfastly, after the assassination of President Ziaur Rahman. She said:

The United States looks forward to continued cooperation with Bangladesh in the field of economic development and in search of solution for problem for politically and economically interdependent world.... Our collaboration and consul-

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<sup>103</sup>Howard B. Schaffer, "Review of US Policy in the 1980s," Address before the Foreign Policy Conference for Asian-American at Hunter College in New York City on December 1, 1979. (Mr. Schaffer was country director for India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka Affairs in the Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs.) Department of State Bulletin 8, no. 1035 (Feb. 1980): 65.

<sup>104</sup>Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Ronald Reagan, 1981 (January 20 to December 31, 1981) (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1982), 413.

tation with Bangladesh is particularly important because we recognize Bangladesh as one of those countries which plays a peculiarly positive role-- a voice of reason and moderation inside the United Nations.<sup>105</sup>

In the final analysis, our findings reveal that during the Mujib regime, the US-Bangladesh relations at the political level were unstable and stagnant because of Mujib government's pro-Soviet and ambiguous policies towards the USA, but unlike Mujib, Zia pursued clear domestic and foreign policies identical with the United States, which helped reach US-Bangladesh relations at its peak.

#### Economic Level

In the economic development of a country it is almost impossible to find out a single country which did not depend on foreign aid. Bangladesh is not an exception of this pattern. Soon after its emergence Bangladesh required a large amount of foreign aid for the reconstruction and rebuilding of the war-ravaged economy. At the initial stage Bangladesh's finance minister Tajuddin Ahmed refused to accept any US aid partly because of the U.S. policy against the Bangladesh liberation war in 1971 and partially because of Bangladesh's socialist development strategy under Mujib regime.<sup>106</sup> After the failure of Indo-Soviet authorities in

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<sup>105</sup>Statement by US Ambassador to UN Jeane J. Kirkpatrick at a news conference at Zia International Airport, August 21, 1981. See Jain, 172.

<sup>106</sup>Excluding pro-Soviet Tajuddin Ahmed, Muzaffar Ahmad, President of Bangladesh National Awami Party (NAP) opposed US aid to Bangladesh

meeting the growing needs of Bangladesh, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman realized the necessity of western aid in general and US aid in particular and welcomed foreign aid unconditionally from external sources.<sup>107</sup> After Mujib's willingness expressed, the US administration slowly but steadily came forward with assistance. In fact the US relief efforts in Bangladesh continued even in the absence of diplomatic relations. Although the United States formally recognized Bangladesh in 1972 and established diplomatic relations in May 1972, as a matter of fact since January 1972 first under the banner of the United Nations and from May 1972 (after the establishment of diplomatic relations) also directly, the United States contributed over a third of a billion dollars (1/3 billion) for relief and rehabilitation in Bangladesh.<sup>108</sup> In fact the total US government contribution to the UN relief operation up to April 1972 was \$100 million and included some \$500,000 of food.<sup>109</sup> In order to cope up with the staggering social and

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under any circumstances and publicly declared his intention to work for a close alliance between Bangladesh and the Soviet Union.

<sup>107</sup>See Kessing Contemporary Archives: 1971-72, 2612.

<sup>108</sup>US Foreign Policy for the 1970s: Shaping A Durable Peace--A Report to the Congress by President Nixon, "Department of State Bulletin LXVII, no. 1971 (June 4, 1973) 791.

<sup>109</sup>This information is provided by the former US representative to the UN George Bush in a letter to the UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim on April 3, 1972. See Department of State Bulletin LXVI, no. 176, May 15, 1972.

economic problems the United States contributed \$267.5 million up to April 1972.<sup>110</sup> (Table 9)

TABLE 9

U.S. ASSISTANCE TO BANGLADESH DURING  
THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF 1972

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U.S. Food and Logistical Support Through the United Nations

1. 700,000 tons of Food for Peace	
2. High Protein Food for UNICEF Child Feeding	\$188.2
3. Grant to Aid for Bangladesh	\$35.3
4. SS Man Batton	\$4.0
5. Air Crop Services (Southern Air)	\$2.0
	\$132.2

U.S. Grant to Voluntary Agencies for Relief Operation in Bangladesh

CARE - Housing	\$5.3
Catholic Relief Service-housing and rehabilitation	\$8.0
Church World Service-housing	\$1.0
American Red Cross-nutrition and medical assistance	\$1.0
Community Development-foundation-housing	\$.2
Medical Assistance Program	\$.9
Foundation for Airborne Relief Air Crop Services	\$1.5
Education and Health Services	\$1.6
	\$19.5

Grant to the Government of Bangladesh for the Following Purposes:

Essential Commodity Imports	34.4
Repair of Coastal Embankments	15.0
Rehabilitation of Power Station and Lines	16.3
Rehabilitation of Schools and Libraries	13.3
Land Excavation, Inland Waterways and Dredging	6.0
Rural Health Centers	5.0
Airport and Other Needs	25.0
	115.0
Other Relief Assistance	1.0
	267.5

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Source: Department of State Bulletin 67, no. 1731 (August 28, 1972): 233.

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<sup>110</sup>Department of State Bulletin LXVII, no. 1971, August 28, 1972.

Maurice J. William Deputy Administrator of the Agency for International Development and the coordinator of the US relief assistance to Bangladesh in a report said that the aid contributed about 1/3 of combined contribution of all donor countries.<sup>111</sup> Among the \$267.5 million, food and logistical supports were \$132 million, grants to UN voluntary agencies were \$19.5 million and economic assistance to the government of Bangladesh was \$115 million (Table 9).

According to the United Nations Relief Operations Dhaka (UNROD) an amount of foreign assistance to Bangladesh up to April 1972 in food grains, other commodities and cash showed that the US had already become the second largest donor (after India). During the same period the USSR contributed only \$6.8 million or 1.7 percent of the total aid contributed to Bangladesh by 16 countries.<sup>112</sup> In September 1972 President Nixon's advisory panel members visited Bangladesh and recommended for \$100 million of grant in aid for Bangladesh for the fiscal year of 1972-73 in addition to appropriate amount of PL-480 food stuffs.<sup>113</sup> The advisory

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<sup>111</sup>Ibid.

<sup>112</sup>New York Times, April 26, 1972.

<sup>113</sup>Advisory panel members letter to President Nixon, September 8, 1972. Department of State Bulletin (October 30, 1972), 504.

panel's request was highly evaluated by President Nixon in order to help the war affected people of Bangladesh.<sup>114</sup>

By June 1973 the United States provided Bangladesh with \$433 million for grant assistance which was roughly one third of the total amount of the foreign assistance to Bangladesh.<sup>115</sup> By 1973, the US had become the single largest donor of Bangladesh. President Nixon gave an account of US aid to the Congress in 1973:

We provided \$144 million in PL480 food and grants for food distribution; \$21 million in grants to American voluntary agencies to aid in the resettlement of thousands of Bengali families; a \$35 million grant to the UN relief operation in Dhaka, mainly for food distribution and \$145 million in bilateral grants to the Bangladesh government for essential commodities and to restore transportation services, power stations, hospitals, and schools for the rehabilitation of the economy.<sup>116</sup>

Precluding these, the United States contributed \$2 million to support the two-way airlifting for the repatriation of the Bengalis and the Pakistanis.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>114</sup>President Nixon's letter to the members of his advisory panel on South Asian Relief assistance. Department of State Bulletin 67, no. 1740 (October 30, 1972).

<sup>115</sup>US Assistance to Bangladesh from independence to June 30, 1973 (Dhaka: US Office of the Coordinator of Relief and Rehabilitation), 3.

<sup>116</sup>"US Foreign Policy for the 1970s: Shaping a Durable Peace," A Report to the Congress by Richard Nixon. Department of State Bulletin 68, no. 1971 (June 4, 1973), 791.

<sup>117</sup>The US contributed in response to appeals from the United Nations Secretary General Kurt Waldheim and Sadruddin Agha Khan, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNCHR). Other contributors were: Australia, Denmark, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and Turkey. East Germany and the Soviet Union bilaterally and the U.K. through the UNCHR, have contributed the use of aircraft. For details,



Although the US emerged as the single largest donor of Bangladesh by 1973, Bangladesh required much more for reconstruction work and Bangladesh expected more than what the US contributed. But the US policy makers expressed their frustration over the administration's failure of the foreign aid management and limitless corruption of the Mujib administration and regarded Bangladesh as an "international basket case."<sup>118</sup> Moreover, the US administration was dissatisfied with Bangladesh government for its policy of state socialism at the national level and alignment with the Soviet Union, and socialist world at the international level.

By 1974, Bangladesh desperately needed huge amounts of foreign aid to forestall famine in Bangladesh aroused by flood, damage of regular crops, as well as mismanagement and corruption of the ruling class. At this point Mujib tried to deepen its close relation with the western world. In September 1974, while addressing the UN General Assembly, Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman appealed for urgent

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see Department of State Bulletin 64, no. 1976 (November 26, 1973), 669.

<sup>118</sup>In December 1971, at a meeting of the National Security Council, Under Secretary of State U. Alexis Johnson remarked that the new nation of Bangladesh was likely to become an "international basket case" to which Henry Kissinger replied that it would not necessarily be "our basket case." When columnist Jack Anderson revealed the minutes of this meeting a month later, the phrase "international basket case" became an integral part of Bangladesh's reputation. For details see "Bangladesh Aid to the Needy?" International Policy Report, Center for International Policy, Washington, D.C., vol. iv, no. 1 (May 1987) "Box 11" RG 220, Jimmy Carter library.

international aid to save Bangladesh from near starvation. Bangladesh by then became almost bankrupt, countries' foreign reserves were very insufficient. It needed desperately essential commodities, but had no money to pay for them. Inflation was running at the rate of 50 percent per year. The nation's gross national product was ten percent, less than 1969-70 when it was still East Pakistan. It had a balance of payment deficit of about \$1000 million and flood loss was estimated to be over \$4000 million.<sup>119</sup>

However, at this staggering economic crisis, Bangladesh's prime minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman met with President Gerald Ford and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. Although Sheikh Mujibur Rahman returned to Bangladesh with the vague promise of the US help to Bangladesh in the severe food crisis, Mujib's meeting could not produce any significant result, that led to the Bangladesh officials believe that the US had ignored Mujib's plea for emergency aid and considered Bangladesh as a low priority area.

The US cool response towards Bangladesh in fact can be seen as a reason against Mujib government's, socialist policy at the national level and internationally alignment with the Soviet Union and the socialist world in general, and in particular Bangladesh's role against the US policy in

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<sup>119</sup>Sabiha Hasan, Foreign Policy of Bangladesh, Pakistan Horizon, 77.

Vietnam, Bangladesh's trade with Cuba against the US economic sanction. Although Mujib undertook several steps in order to attract western aid especially the US, i.e. in July 1974 the Mujib government announced a new investment policy which comprised the raising of the ceiling on domestic private investment to taka 30 million and the allowance of foreign investment without any ceiling. By the mid 1974 Mujib government decided to accept credit from the IMF<sup>120</sup> and at the same time Bangladesh invited the World Bank to form an Aid Consortium and to increase its aid to Bangladesh. In October of 1974, aid to Bangladesh Consortium was formed.<sup>121</sup>

In its first meeting at Paris the consortium granted credit worth \$950 million, thus giving the regime in Dhaka the lease of life it desperately needed.<sup>122</sup> While the economic crisis was turning to famine the US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger visited Dhaka in October 1974 and

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<sup>120</sup>In 1974 Bangladesh decided to draw on the second credit tranche from the IMF. Unlike the 1st credit tranche which was fairly unconditional, while the drawing on second credit tranche of the IMF was subject to certain conditions regarding Bangladesh's monetary and fiscal policies. See Nurul Islam, Development Planning in Bangladesh: A Study of Political Economics (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1977), 148-149.

<sup>121</sup>Faced with the acute balance of payment crisis in mid 1974, Bangladesh government requested the World Bank to constitute a formal and regular consortium of donors under its chairmanship. Accordingly, Bangladesh consortium was established. The members of the Aid to Bangladesh Consortium were: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, West German, Iran, Japan, Kuwait, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, the U.K., the U.S., the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the EEC, the IMF and the UNDP.

<sup>122</sup>Ishaq Hassain, 29.

promised to meet Bangladesh's food crisis within the capabilities of the United States.<sup>123</sup> But Kissinger's assurance proved vague and such commitment was used exclusively for political reason, especially for aggrandizing the so-called American national interests. Kissinger stated the policy of foreign aid before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in June 1974:

Our economic assistance is designed to reinforce developing nations efforts to bring a better life to their citizens, increasing their states in a cooperative global economy. There is no alternative for a network of relations that remove the incentive for war and deepen the stake in peace. If this is the reality, then obviously programs of foreign assistance are not handouts, they are done on behalf of international order and on behalf of an approach to the solution of problems that is in all our interests and very much in the American interests.<sup>124</sup>

In the case of Bangladesh, as Mujib administration's over all policies were disapproved by the US administration despite having its certain policies influenced by the west, the US administration used food aid as a trump card, in its game, and delayed the shipment of the committed aid to Bangladesh in addition to the cancellation of two crucial grain shipments contracted by the Bangladesh with US grain

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<sup>123</sup>Secretary Kissinger's remark to the press conference at Dhaka, October 30, 1974. Department of State Bulletin LXXI, no. 1848 (Nov. 25, 1974).

<sup>124</sup>Speech of Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, quoted in the Department of State Bulletin (July 8, 1974), 49-55. For a comprehensive analysis of US aid policy see David Gordon, "United States Foreign Aid in Perspective," Current History 77, no. 448 (July/August 1979).

exporters under short term deferred loans because of their doubts over Bangladesh's credit worthiness.<sup>125</sup> The US food policies eventually contributed greatly to the famine of 1974 which caused the death of more than hundreds of thousands of people. This also helped making Mujib politically unpopular and discredited. Finally, the US hostile attitude towards Mujib administration in Bangladesh and failure of the Mujib administration to cope with the growing economic crisis and political instability, forced Mujib to opt for a socialist model of government with a one party authoritarian system--BAKSAL. In fact, during Mujib's regime, although the US provided significant amount of foreign aid (694.58 million) in addition to contribution to the UN-led humanitarian assistance program, but it was insufficient. During this period the trading relations between the United States and Bangladesh were also insignificant. During 1972-75, Bangladesh's export to the US was \$222.80 million while Bangladesh's import from the US was \$905.50 million.<sup>126</sup> and the balance of trade was always negative for Bangladesh and always in favor of the United

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<sup>125</sup>From 1972-73 to 1975-76 the total amount of US aid to Bangladesh was 694.58 million dollars, where food aid was \$409.58 million dollars, project aid was \$103.83 million and commodity aid was \$181.49 million. See ERD Brief on Bilateral Economic Assistance Program to Bangladesh as of September 20, 1990.

<sup>126</sup>Ibid.

States (Table 10).<sup>127</sup> Apart from these in the economic field, the two countries also signed several agreements in the field of mutual interest but it did not make any difference or change of US attitude toward Bangladesh. However, the US-Bangladesh cautious relations changed dramatically with the collapse of the Mujib regime through the August coup of 1975 and with the beginning of the Zia regime. Ziaur Rahman pursued an outward looking policy.

TABLE 10  
BANGLADESH'S TRADE RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES  
(million of US \$)

Year	Export	Import	Balance to Trade
1972	44.3	151.5	(-107.20)
1973	72.8	186.6	(-113.80)
1974	52.4	221.2	(-168.80)
1975	53.3	346.2	(-292.90)
1976	64.5	157.0	(-92.50)
1977	67.1	146.9	(-79.80)
1978	79.0	192.5	(-113.50)
1979	86.9	211.9	(-125.00)
1980	73.2	359.5	(-286.30)
1981	80.1	155.9	(-79.80)
1982	78.3	186.5	(-108.20)
TOTAL	791.90	2315.70	(-1563.80)

Source: Direction of Trade Yearbook, International Monetary Fund (1971-1977), 1979-1983. Compiled, tabulated and edited by the author.

<sup>127</sup>The total of Bangladesh's exports from 1972-1975 to the United States was 222.80 million dollars, while Bangladesh's imports during the same period from the United States was \$905.50 million. Figures taken and collected from the Direction of Trade-Yearbook: IMF, 1979/1983.

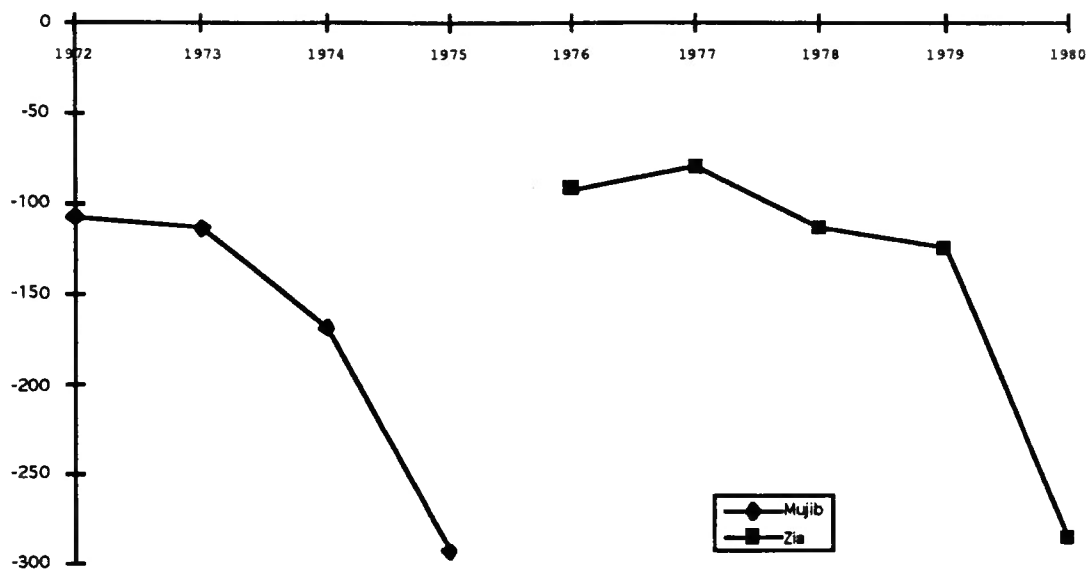


Fig. 6. Bangladesh's Balance of Trade with the United States: A Comparison Between the Mujib and Zia Regimes.

Moreover, responding to Bangladesh's national interest Zia rapidly shifted from Mujib's socialist economic policy and opted for free market economy, which greatly attracted the western donors, especially the USA. Moreover Zia's encouragement for privatization, and denationalization, greatly impressed the US policy makers. In December 1974 the Zia government issued the revised industrial policy and announced its decision to pay compensation to the former share holders of the industrial enterprise which had been nationalised and the ceiling on private investment was again raised from TK 30 million to 100 million.<sup>128</sup>

<sup>128</sup>Nurul Islam, 254-55.

Before that the government amended the nationalization order enabling the government to transfer nationalized enterprises to its original Bengali owners.<sup>129</sup> The effect of the new policy was a marked improvement in the private sector. Zia's economic policy was highly applauded by the western donors, especially US policy makers. In a statement on March 16, 1978, before the subcommittee on the Asia and Pacific Affairs. Mr. Adolph Dubs, deputy Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, stated that: "Economically Bangladesh is better off now than at any time since independence."<sup>130</sup>

Zia met President Carter twice, in Japan and in Washington and received promises of continued economic assistance from the United States, especially for his second five year plan. Although Zia requested increased American investment in Bangladesh, the Americans did not invest in the industries of Bangladesh. Immediately after Zia's assumption of power, the IMF established a special trust for Bangladesh, the World Bank, International Development Association (IDA) and the Asian Development Bank--all US led organizations announced major credits for Bangladesh.<sup>131</sup> Their credits increased Bangladesh's dependence on western

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<sup>129</sup>Kirsten Westergaard, 93.

<sup>130</sup>Department of State Bulletin 78, no. 2014 (May 1978), 50.

<sup>131</sup>Robert S. Anderson, "Impression of Bangladesh: The Rule of Arms and the Politics of Exhortation," Pacific Affairs 49 (1976): 455.



aids, particularly on the USA. Although some intellectuals and politicians, defined Zia's policy of taking aid as over dependence on foreign aid, while the world bank report called it efficient government management.<sup>132</sup> Of course many analysts were very critical of it. Rahman Sobhan regarding World Banks' role wrote:

Within the framework of entente cordial which prevail between the World Bank and the policy makers of Bangladesh, the bank continues to be a major political force.... It is not surprising that the banks growing monopoly over Bangladesh economy influences the perspective of both domestic policy makers and donors.<sup>133</sup>

Although Zia's policy of aid dependence was criticized by many politicians and intellectuals, it was Zia's credit that his government received admiration from the US and the western donors for his pragmatic foreign economic policy.<sup>134</sup> During the Zia regime (1975-76 to 1981-82), the average U.S. foreign aid disbursement was \$190.36 million while during the Mujib regime, it was \$135.52 million dollar despite having huge amounts of U.S. relief and through bilateral and multilateral agencies (Table 11).

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<sup>132</sup>Quoted in Ibid.

<sup>133</sup>Rahman Sobhan, The Crisis of External Dependence: The Political Economy of Foreign Aid to Bangladesh (London: Zed Press, 1982).

<sup>134</sup>Azizul Hague, "Bangladesh 1979: Cry for a Sovereign Parliament," Asian Survey 20, no. 2 (February 1980): 229.

TABLE 11

COMMITMENT AND DISBURSEMENT OF US AID TO BANGLADESH  
(figures in million US\$)

Financial Commitment					Disbursement			
Year	Food	Project	Commodity	Total	Food	Project	Commodity	Total
1972-73	146.600	156.436	119.134	422.170	---	7.991	37.829	45.820
1973-74	32.400	35.620	13.600	81.620	48.761	38.501	13.672	100.934
1974-75	239.300	60.300	---	299.600	149.674	90.041	70.118	259.833
1975-76	173.750	11.260	---	185.010	210.847	17.292	59.863	288.002
1976-77	59.200	30.235	---	89.435	44.603	7.662	4.900	57.165
1977-78	24.900	78.397	41.830	145.127	75.555	13.664	40.409	129.628
1978-79	99.500	147.603	6.100	153.203	55.800	38.854	76.391	171.045
1979-80	68.000	3.992	1.900	73.892	126.875	36.922	13.810	177.607
1980-81	80.107	87.881	6.400	174.388	50.900	46.001	35.965	132.866
1981-82	32.500	104.175	22.500	159.125	70.700	28.081	17.625	116.406

Source: "Statement of Commitment and Disbursement of US Assistance to Bangladesh from Fiscal Year 1972-1973 to 1990-1991" (As On September 30, 1990). Brief on US Bilateral Assistance Program to Bangladesh (as on September 30, 1990), (Dhaka: External Resources Division, Ministry of Planning).

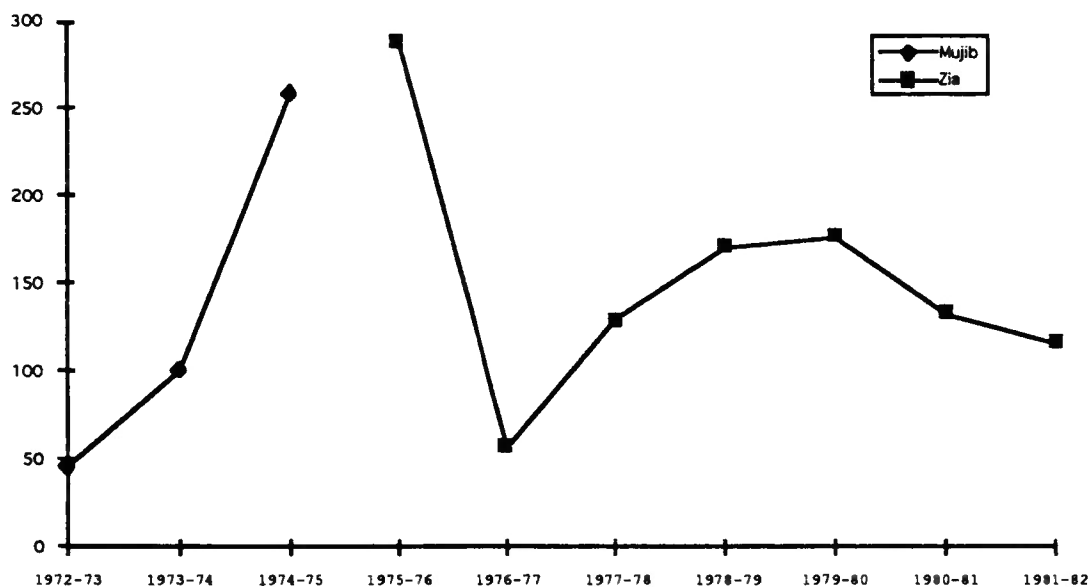


Fig. 7. Disbursement of U.S. Aid to Bangladesh: A Comparison Between the Mujib and Zia Regimes.

Apart from this during Zia's regime the United States had shown keen interest in different sectors of Bangladesh's development. In fact the western donors especially the US agencies responded positively to meet up the food requirements of Bangladesh. The major donor agencies were US food for peace and PL 480, the US AID, CARE, food for work.<sup>135</sup> Among sectoral allocations, the United States provided aid for the institutional development in the field of agriculture.<sup>136</sup> The US aid granted \$6.5 million to the agricultural research institute in Dhaka. Moreover, the United States highly applauded Zia's population control policy. Zia declared population control as first priority of the government's program of action. While during the Mujib regime it was not seemingly taken care of.<sup>137</sup> The United States also showed interest and provided financial

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<sup>135</sup>For details, see Robert S. Anderson, "Impression of Bangladesh: The Rule of Arms and the Palizis of Exhortation," Pacific Affairs, 49, 1976.

<sup>136</sup>Apart from US bilateral assistance, US supported Agency IDA provided a total of \$869.7 million on loan up to November 30, 1977. Following were the sectoral allocations of IDA. Agriculture and rural development \$215.9 million (of which irrigation was \$113.9 million). Transport and telecommunication-\$67.1 million, industry was \$28.0 million, cyclone rehabilitation \$25.0 million, education \$22.1 million, urban water supply \$22.1 million, population planning \$15.0 million, miscellaneous \$49.0 million. And the total project aid was \$444.7 million which the commodity aid (import credits) were \$425.0 million. See "Bangladesh: Aid to the Needy," International Policy Report: Centre for International Policy, Washington, D.C. pamphlet--Presidential Commission on World Hunger, General Records-Subject File, "Box" Carter library.

<sup>137</sup>Kushwant Singh, "The International Basket Case," New York Times Magazine, January 26, 1978-79.

assistance for developing fertilizer plants and rural electrification programs in Bangladesh. In 1981 the US provided \$18 million as grant and \$32 million as loans for developing fertilizer plant, and \$1.3 million as grants and \$18 million as loans for rural electrification. Moreover, the United States also showed interest for the exploration of oil in Bangladesh. Three US oil companies began drilling in 1975 through concession.<sup>138</sup> Each company invested \$10 million in Bangladesh between 1974-80. By the end of 1980 the United States emerged as one of the best friends of Bangladesh, a major foreign donor and partner in 133 accords and the United States agencies operated a wide variety of development project in Bangladesh.<sup>139</sup>

So it can be deducted that Bangladesh-US relations were excellent under Zia and the flow of US aid increased and the extent of dependence also increased significantly. In this regard Rehman Sobhan rightly pointed out that there was no area in the development field where donors did not have a say.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>138</sup>See Robert S. Anderson, "Impression of Bangladesh: The Role of Arms and the Politics of Exhortation," Pacific Affairs 49 (1976): 459.

<sup>139</sup>Ibid.

<sup>140</sup>Rahman Sobhan, The Crisis of External Dependence: The Political Economy of Foreign Aid to Bangladesh (London: Zed Press, 1982), 146.

### Summary

In the final analysis it is revealed that as part of its global strategy, the US sided with Pakistan while pursuing its South Asia policy, during the liberation war of Bangladesh in 1971, which was against the Bangladesh struggle.

However, after emergence of Bangladesh, despite having its initial reservation for the newly born Bangladesh, it soon realized the new reality in South Asia and recognized Bangladesh and established diplomatic relations with it. But the relationship between the USA and Bangladesh was confined within limited cooperation during the whole period of Mujib regime, because the US policy makers were very suspicious about Mujib administration's domestic and foreign policy.

Domestically Mujib government at first adopted a multiparty system in its first constitution in 1972 and later rejected it in 1975, and introduced one party authoritarian system, following the Soviet "totalitarianism" and banned all political parties including the freedom of press. This policy of Mujib government, seriously alienated Bangladesh from the United States. At the same time internationally, Mujib government followed a pro-Soviet and pro-Indian foreign policy in general which was against American interest. Specifically, Mujib government's policy against US policy in Vietnam war and trading relations with

Cuba forced the United States to show a hostile attitude towards Bangladesh.

However, after the fall of the Mujib regime and with the rise of the Zia regime, Bangladesh-US relations improved significantly, because of Zia's shift from Mujib's policy both at the domestic and international levels. At the domestic level, Zia introduced free market economy, privatization and denationalization policy instead of Mujib's socialist system. Internationally Zia followed an "outward looking" foreign policy aimed at improving Bangladesh's relations with the west, particularly with the USA. In international forums, both Bangladesh and the USA pursued identical policy, unlike Mujib's era. Bangladesh's role against Soviet invasion in Afghanistan, highly impressed the United States. Moreover as a member of the Security Council, Bangladesh played a very constructive role during the US hostage crisis in Iran, which was also applauded by the US State Department.

Finally, by the 1980s the USA emerged as the best friend and the largest donor and partner in 133 different accords. In fact, the US policy makers were very confident in Zia's foreign policy and regarded the US-Bangladesh relations as excellent and probably as good as they have ever been, since the birth of Bangladesh. But at the same time Bangladesh's dependence increased on the US.

## CHAPTER VI

### BANGLADESH-SOVIET UNION RELATIONS: MUJIB AND ZIA REGIMES (1971-1981)

#### Introduction

As regards to former Soviet Union's perception toward the Third world one analyst pointed out:

If one were to take an opinion poll of the public as well as specialists, one would find out that the majority believe that the USSR tries to utilize Third world areas to its sole diplomatic and economic advantage, to disrupt their ties with the west and to change the course of their socio-political development.<sup>1</sup>

Although the people of the Third world countries had traditionally been regarded by the Soviet policy makers as potential allies of the communist world, in the immediate post World War II period the Soviet leadership were largely preoccupied with the problems of internal reconstruction and East European countries. They had paid superficial attention toward the Third world. Following the death of Stalin in 1953 the Soviet policy underwent a dramatic change toward the Third world and they re-oriented their policy toward the

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<sup>1</sup>Elizabeth Kridl Valkenier, "The Soviet Union and the Third World: From Khrushchev's Zone of Peace to Breznev's Peace Program" in Roger E. Kanet and Donna Bahry (eds.) Soviet Economic and Political Relations with the Developing World (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974), 3-4.

new states.<sup>2</sup> Actually in the late 1950s and early 1960s with the rise of the nationalist movement and the end of the colonialism, a large number of new states emerged in Asia, Africa and Latin America and the Soviet ideologues and policy makers extended their support to the new states against colonialism. In the 1960s the Soviet Communist Party (CPSU) declared its alliance with these new states who fought colonialism and semi colonial yoke, in the vital interests of world socialism and world national liberation movement. The (CPSU) considered its national responsibility to help the people who were following the path of achieving and strengthening national independence.<sup>3</sup> But although the Soviets used to claim that their policy was based primarily on a concern for the economic growth and political independence of the Third world countries, the evidence indicates that the Soviet involvement was indirectly related to specific Soviet interests. In the 1950s and early 1960s the Soviet policy in the Third world was determined by its competition with the United States and China.

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<sup>2</sup>Roger F. Pajak, "The Effectiveness of Soviet Arms Aid Diplomacy in the Third World," Robert H. Donaldson (ed.) The Soviet Union in the Third World: Success and Failure (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1981), 384.

<sup>3</sup>Materials of the xxll congress of the CPSU. Translated and cited by A.A. Jamal in his "Bangladesh-USSR Relations in the Soviet Perspective," in Muzaffar Ahmad and Abul Kalam (eds.) Bangladesh Foreign Relations: Changes and Directions (Dhaka: University Press Limited, 1989), 39.



In fact during the periods of 1950s and 1960s the Soviets were largely motivated by an attempt to undercut the position of the United States in virtually any part of the world and they were operating on the assumption that any increase in the Soviet contacts would result almost automatically in a reduction of American influence. When the Chinese entered the competition in the early 1960s, the Soviets responded by expanding aid commitments to a number of African countries that had begun to develop competition with the Chinese.<sup>4</sup>

The Soviet policy towards Bangladesh was no exception of its total policy objectives toward the Third world countries. The emergence of Bangladesh was augmented by the Soviet military and diplomatic support during the Bangladesh struggle of 1971.

The Soviet Union was the first super power, which deplored publicly the Pakistan government's military crackdown in Bangladesh. It was also the first superpower which officially recognized Bangladesh within a month of its independent existence and it was one of the first states which established diplomatic relations with Bangladesh by the late January 1972.<sup>5</sup> Bangladesh also very highly regarded the Soviet contribution in the liberation war of Bangladesh.

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<sup>4</sup>Roger E. Kanet, "The Soviet Union and the Developing Countries: Policy or Policies?" in Kanet and Bahry, *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>5</sup>See USSR and Third World 2, no. 3 (1972): 141.

Immediately after independence the Mujib regime adopted the principle of socialism as a state policy, and nationalized industries, banks, insurances and other major economic institutions in the period of 1972/1974. Finally the Mujib government introduced a one party authoritarian system in 1975 under the name and style of BAKSAL (Bangladesh, Krishak, Sramik Awami League at the domestic level, which was parallel to the one party system in the Soviet Union). Internationally the Mujib government also aligned with the Soviet Union, India and other socialist countries, against the western, Chinese and Islamic world. In return the Soviet Union also extended its cooperation towards rehabilitation and the reconstruction of Bangladesh, significantly. The Mujib regime clearly maintained warmer relations with the Soviet Union. But it changed dramatically once Ziaur Rahman came to power after the military coup of August 15, 1975. At the domestic level, Zia changed secularism as a state principle, and introduced "faith and trust in the Almighty Allah (God), which was opposed to socialist ideology. Moreover, Zia encouraged privatization and denationalization with the state patronage.<sup>6</sup> At the international level, Zia reshaped his foreign policy and aligned with the USA, China, and the Muslim world and shifted from Mujib's tilted policy toward the Soviet Union and India. Such rapid transformation

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<sup>6</sup>The Socialist principles imply that religion and private property are the instruments of exploitation. In a socialist state religion and private property do not have any official recognition.

of Zia's foreign policy produced cooler relations between Dhaka and Moscow.<sup>7</sup>

However, this chapter seeks to analyze the Bangladesh-Soviet Union relations during the two major regimes of Mujib and Zia.

To this end, the following issue will be addressed in this chapter.

Role of the Soviet Union in the Liberation War of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh-Soviet Union Relations: Mujib and Zia Regimes (1971-1981).

Summary.

Role of the Soviet Union in the Liberation War of Bangladesh

Obviously, the support of the Soviet Union to the cause of Bangladesh was an important factor in the successful culmination of the liberation struggle.<sup>8</sup> Throughout the crisis Moscow consistently supported India in tangible and intangible ways and championed the cause of Bangladesh."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>See Talukdar Maniruzzaman, Group Interest Changes: Studies of Pakistan and Bangladesh (New Delhi: South Asian Publishers, 1982), 253. Also see Ataur Rahman "Bangladesh and Big Power Politics in the Subcontinent," The Journal of Political Science 11, no. 1 (Dhaka University, 1985):

<sup>8</sup>M.S. Rajan, "Bangladesh and After," Pacific Affairs 45, no. 2 (Summer 1972): 191.

<sup>9</sup>Norman D. Palmer, "The New Order in South Asia," Orbis 15, no. 4 (Winter 1972): 1189.

Actually the Soviet Union's close ties with India was a vital factor in shaping the Soviet policy towards the Bangladesh crisis in 1971. However, the Soviet support to the Bangladesh struggle could be seen in three dimensions.

1. The Soviet role during the initial stage of crisis.
2. Indo-Soviet treaty of 1971 and the Soviet aid to India and the Bengali guerrillas.
3. India-Pakistan war and the Soviet role in the emergence of Bangladesh.

#### The Soviet Role During the Initial Stage of Bangladesh Movement

Right before the breakout of the Bangladesh crisis in the 1970's, the overall situation in the South Asian subcontinent were conducive for the Soviet Union. Mrs. Bandar Naike won the election in Ceylon, Mrs. Indira Gandhi was back in power with two-thirds majority in the Lokshaba and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman won the general election in Pakistan with a landslide victory. All of the leaders had a friendly attitude towards the Soviet Union. Mujibur Rahman certainly seemed to be the next prime minister of Pakistan, which made a favorable environment for the Soviet Union in South Asia in the cold war politics.<sup>10</sup>

The Soviet Union's growing interest about Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's election victory grew because of Mujib's

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<sup>10</sup>G.P. Desh Pande, "Soviet and Chinese Stakes" in Mohammed Ayooob and Aninrudha Gupta, Bangladesh: A Struggle for Nationhood (Delhi: Vikas Publishers, 1971), 118.

commitment to non-alignment and the immediate withdrawal from the US sponsored defense alliances SEATO, CENTO and all other military pacts.<sup>11</sup> The Soviet Union was impressed by Mujib's foreign policy orientation and extended its support toward Mujib's struggle for Bangladesh's freedom movement just after the military crackdown of March 25, 1971.

The Soviet Union was the first country among the major powers that condemned the Pakistan army's massacre on March 25, 1971. On April 2, 1971, President Podgorny sent a letter to President Yahya Khan to end the "bloodshed and repercussions in East Bengal and opted for a peaceful solution." Podgorny wrote to Yahya Khan:

We consider it our duty to address you, Mr. President, on behalf of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, insistently appealing for the adoption of the most urgent measure to stop the bloodshed and repressions against the population in East Pakistan and for methods for a peaceful political settlement.<sup>12</sup>

The Pakistan government rejected Pogorny's message on the grounds that the message could not be considered as a friendly gesture.<sup>13</sup>

President Yahya Khan in his reply to President Podgorny declared that Pakistan was determined not to allow any

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<sup>11</sup>Manifesto of the Awami League issued on the eve of the general election. See Bangladesh Documents, vol. 1, 81.

<sup>12</sup>Moscow Home Service April 3, 1971, 19:00 and Tass in English 19-12 GMT Summary of the World Broadcast, SU/3652/A3/1.

<sup>13</sup>Mehrunnisa Ali, "East Pakistan Crisis: International Reactions," Pakistan Horizon 24, no. 2 (Second Quarter 1971): 55.

country to interfere in Pakistan's internal affairs. President Yahya Khan's reply to President Podgorny was as follows:

...no country including the Soviet Union can allow or has ever allowed anti-national and unpatriotic element to proceed to destroy it or to countenance subversion. The open and unashamed interference by India in the present situation in my country has only one objective, i.e. to inflame the situation further by encouraging and materially assisting a handful of people to create disturbances. We therefore once again call upon the Soviet Union to use her undeniable influence with India to prevent her from meddling in Pakistan's internal affairs. That would indeed be in keeping with the Soviet Union's interest in the maintenance of peace and tranquillity and continued economic progress in the subcontinent.<sup>14</sup>

The Soviet protest against the military actions undertaken by Yahya was not seen by the Pakistani authority as a friendly gesture. Pakistani policy makers considered it as a high handed attitude on the Soviet's part and argued that the Russians who had crossed international boundaries and invaded Czechoslovakia and Hungary should not tell Pakistan to stay out of a part of its own territory and to stop the repression.<sup>15</sup> The key actor of the 1971 crisis in Pakistan, Z.A. Bhutto, seriously criticized President Podgorny's message and regarded it as a "blatant interference in the internal affairs of Pakistan" and

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<sup>14</sup>See Pakistan Horizon 24, no. 2 (Second Quarter 1971): 151-152.

<sup>15</sup>Shirin-Tahir-Kheli, "Bilateralism in South Asia," World Affairs (Quarterly Review of International Problems) 136, no. 1 (Summer 1973): 80.

pointed out that the Soviet note to Pakistan was against the famous doctrine of the Soviet leader V.I. Lenin, on the state conduct on the question of foreign interference.<sup>16</sup>

Although the Soviet Union from the very beginning of the crisis clearly sided with India against Pakistan, Moscow still urged a peaceful solution of the conflict within the framework of a United Pakistan. Nevertheless, the Soviet Union rushed substantial quantities of arms to India, to ensure that their friend would be well armed, if it found a military solution necessary.<sup>17</sup> At the same time the Soviet Union continued to believe in a peaceful solution to the problem and the integrity of Pakistan.<sup>18</sup>

The rationales behind the Soviet Union's approach for a united Pakistan were:

1. Encouragement of the secessionist movement would have jeopardized Soviet interest in Pakistan.

2. The Soviet Union did not want to take any risk of creating a new state-Bangladesh. On the contrary, it supported United Pakistan with secular leadership like Sheikh Mujib.

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<sup>16</sup>Imtiaz Ahmed, "The Super Powers Strategy in the Third World: The 1971 South Asian Crisis" in Emajuddin Ahmad (ed.) Foreign Policy of Bangladesh: A Small Study Interactive (Dhaka: UPL, 1982), 116.

<sup>17</sup>Robert H. Donaldson, "Soviet Security Interest in South Asia," in Lawrence Ziring (ed.) The Subcontinent in the World Politics: India, Its Neighbors and The Great Powers (New York: Praeger Publisher, 1982), 191.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 116.

3. The breakup of Pakistan, could have thrown the entire subcontinent into chaos and spread the seeds of secession to the rest of Pakistan and it would encourage the Indian secessionist movements too.<sup>19</sup>

4. Finally, the Soviet Union did not want to lose the support of the West Asian Islamic states by dismembering Pakistan--which was the largest Muslim country in the world. So the Soviet Union at the first phase of the Bangladesh liberation war (March to July 1971) wanted a settlement within a united Pakistan. So, among the Soviet policy makers, alignment with the United Pakistan was more preferable than honeymoon with the newborn Bangladesh.

The Indo-Soviet Treaty of 1971 and the Soviet Aid to India and the Bengali Guerrillas

Although the Soviet Union supported the Bengali cause following the 1970s general election, still it believed in the concept of a United Pakistan, and transfer of power to the AL leaders. It was not prepared to encourage a secessionist movement in Pakistan. But the Soviets became unhappy with the US-Chinese strong move towards Pakistan. In fact, the Sino-American détente brought the Soviet Union very close to India. This was further strengthened by the failure of the Soviet attempt to build a collective security system, in order to counter the Sino-American

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<sup>19</sup>Vijay Sen Budhraj, "Moscow and the Birth of Bangladesh," Asian Survey 13, no. 5 (May 1973): 485.



influence in Asia. In July 1971 the US National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger's secret visit to Peking for a Sino-American détente through the mediation of Pakistan, prompted the Soviet Union sign the treaty of peace, friendship and cooperation with India on August 8, 1971. In fact both India and the Soviet Union confronted the Sino-American détente. They were more bitter because of Pakistan's mediatory role. So naturally, the Indo-Soviet treaty in such an important moment, was anticipated by the Soviet Union and effective for India. This treaty indicated to Pakistan that India was not alone. The main significance of the treaty was its timing. In view of American and Chinese support for Pakistan and India's consequent isolation as Rajan pointed out, the treaty gave an instantaneous psychological boost to the Indian government and people."<sup>20</sup> In fact the decisive provisions of the treaty were Articles VIII and IX. Under Article VIII, both parties made commitments not to join any alliance or launch attacks directed against each other. Under Article IX each party promised that in case of an attack or threat directed toward either by a third party, it would immediately start mutual consultation with a view of eliminating this threat.<sup>21</sup> While interpreting the treaty

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<sup>20</sup>M.S. Rajan, "Bangladesh and After," Pacific Affairs 45, no. 2 (Summer 1972): 198.

<sup>21</sup>For the text of the "Treaty of the Peace Friendship and Cooperation between India and Soviet Union see R.K. Jain, Soviet South

Henry Kissinger pointed out that with the treaty Moscow threw a lighted match into a powder keg.<sup>22</sup>

The Indo-Soviet treaty of 1971 provided India with greater vigor than ever before and the Soviet Union recognized the Indian determined support to Bengali guerrillas and successfully deterred the Pakistani regime.<sup>23</sup> While in Pakistan, the Soviet-Indian treaty evoked bitter reaction and it was believed that the treaty would provide India with sufficient support for the cause of Bangladesh movement. It was considered by the Pakistani authority as a Soviet strategic move to have control over the Indian Ocean.

Even after the Indo-Soviet treaty was signed Russia did not want to abandon Pakistan entirely to China,<sup>24</sup> and took no such strong action against Pakistan until November 1971. But the Article IX of the treaty clearly signaled to Pakistan that if it attacked India, Moscow should not be expected to remain neutral. In fact, the treaty provided an opportunity for mutual consultation in the event of an attack or threat thereof on either party in order to remove that threat. Accordingly, the first consultation under the treaty did

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Asia Relations: 1974-1978 (Atlantic Highland: Humanities Press, 1979), 117.

<sup>22</sup>Henry Kissinger, White House Years (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1979), 867.

<sup>23</sup>Summit Ganguly, The Origins of War in South Asia (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1986), 127.

<sup>24</sup>Sydney H. Schanberg, "Pakistan Divided," Foreign Affairs 50, no. 1 (October 1971): 132.

take place at the end of October 1971.<sup>25</sup> Actually Russia moved very cautiously and maintained a posture of substantial neutrality, until July 15, 1971, announcement of President Nixon's impending visit to Peking (commissioned by Pakistan's mediation).<sup>26</sup>

A gradual shift in the Soviet policy was visible from September, 1971 when Prime Minister Indira Gandhi visited Moscow. Although the Soviet Union regarded the conflict in East Pakistan as an internal problem of Pakistan, it approved Indian military intervention in East Pakistan if necessary.<sup>27</sup> Actually, the Soviet Union still wanted the peaceful settlement of the East Pakistan crisis within the structure of a United Pakistan. Because, for the Soviet military strategists, West Pakistan was more important than East Pakistan.<sup>28</sup> So Moscow instead of dismembering Pakistan wanted a definite decrease in the Sino-US influence in Pakistan, through the mechanism of a transfer of power to

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<sup>25</sup>M.S. Rajan, "Bangladesh and After," Pacific Affairs 45, no. 2 (November 1972), 198.

<sup>26</sup>Mohammed Ahsen Chaudhury, "Pakistan and the Changing Pattern of Power Relations in South Asia," Pakistan Horizon 31, no. 1 (First Quarter, 1978).

<sup>27</sup>Budhraj, 483. Also see Bhabani Sen Gupta, 58.

<sup>28</sup>Soviet Union could not ignore the strategic location of West Pakistan where the United States had intelligence base, close to the USSR. Moreover West Pakistan was also linked with China by two roads—the old silk route reopened in August 1970 and the Kara Koram Highway completed in January 1971.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.<sup>29</sup> It therefore stressed upon the release of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the political settlement of the East Pakistan crisis.

Following Mrs. Indira Gandhi's visit to Moscow, the Soviet Union's attitude towards Pakistan was increasingly changing.<sup>30</sup> A few days later the Soviet President visited New Delhi and offered all possible assistance to India for a political settlement in the spirit of existing friendly relations with India.<sup>31</sup> On October 24, 1971, Indian Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi started her tour to six western capitals including Washington in order to gain western support for military intervention in East Pakistan. But Mrs. Gandhi failed to convince President Nixon of the necessity for a military solution. At the end of October 1971, a joint consultation between India and the Soviet Union was held in Delhi. The Indian side was led by foreign secretary T.N. Kaul and S.K. Banerji, Secretary East, while the Soviet side was led by Mr. N.P. Firyubin the deputy minister for foreign affairs. The consultation took place in accordance with the

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<sup>29</sup>Moscow strongly supported Sheikh Mujibur Rahman because Mujib was supposed to be a Nehru of Pakistan—an advocate of nonalignment, secularism, socialism and democracy.

<sup>30</sup>See the Soviet Prime Minister Mr. Kosygin's speech at a luncheon given in honor of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. See R. K. Jain, 123.

<sup>31</sup>Jain, 129.

Article IX of the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation.<sup>32</sup>

At the beginning of the November, tension in the South Asian subcontinent was aggravating. Both India and Pakistan accused each other of border violations. The Soviet Press became overtly critical of Pakistan's policy in East Pakistan and started to focus upon the success of the liberation forces.<sup>33</sup> From November it was very clear that Moscow had decided for an all out support for India in case of any probable Indo-Pakistan war. The Soviet's abrupt but certain change of attitude towards the East Pakistan crisis stemmed out of two reasons:

First of all, the Soviet calculation revealed that the Chinese, even if they wished could perhaps do little to save East Pakistan, because technically winter was the most in convenient season for military movement in the Himalayan passes, which were likely to be snowed in.

Secondly, an in-flux of Soviet arms to India had continued and the top ranking Soviet diplomatic and military officials (who visited New Delhi by the end of October) were convinced that India was in a position to destroy the war machine of the unpopular military dictatorship in East Pakistan with the Soviet military and diplomatic support.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>Jain, 129.

<sup>33</sup>Muhith, 34.

<sup>34</sup>Budhraj, 493.

Indo-Pakistan War of 1971 and the Role of the Soviet Union

Following the Indo-Soviet Friendship Treaty, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, during her visit to Moscow in September 1971, had requested urgent and an immediate supply of the Soviet arms to India. It has recorded that in November three shiploads of arms were dispatched and an emergency airlift was launched to provide a limited quantity of specialized equipment, and spare parts, that the Indian army and air force had required.<sup>35</sup> Pakistan was continuously protesting this massive arms supply to India, which totally upset the military balance in South Asia and increased tension between India and Pakistan. By November 1971, the Soviet Union completed its arms delivery to India, which was required to defeat Pakistan in case any war broke out. From early November 1971 the Soviet Press became strongly critical of Pakistan. After the formal declaration of war on December 3, 1971, the Soviet Union strongly sided with India and presented the Soviet doctrine to defend the Bangladesh struggle as a struggle for national liberation. The Soviet leaders defined the national liberation movement as:

any war that is waged by a people for the sake of freedom and social progress, for liberation from exploitation and from national oppression or in

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<sup>35</sup>Sisson and Rose, 243. See The Times (London) November 6, 1971 and the Dawn (Karachi). Also see Zubeida Mustafa, "USSR and Indian Action in East Pakistan," Pakistan Horizon 24, no. 4 (Fourth Quarter 1971).

defense of its state sovereignty against an aggressive attack is a just war.... The main types of war rarely emerge in "pure" form; several types often intertwine and one type changes into another.... National liberation wars of oppressed people against colonialists may go hand in hand with civil war against internal reactionary forces.<sup>36</sup>

Following the escalation of fighting to the West Pakistan border, the Soviet Union warned Pakistan about its "grave responsibility" in "following this dangerous course." The Soviet Union asserted that the developments which "are taking place in direct proximity of the Soviet borders, therefore involve the interests of its Security." So, the Soviet government called for the steadfast ending of the bloodshed and for a political settlement in East Pakistan on the basis of respect for the lawful rights and interests of the people.<sup>37</sup> After the Soviet direct support to India against Pakistan, relations between the Soviet Union and Pakistan deteriorated rapidly.<sup>38</sup> Aside from this, the Soviet Union also lent its unqualified support to the Bangladesh liberation war in the Security Council, debate which was convened to discuss the Indo-Pakistan conflict.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>Marxism-Leninism on War and Army: A Soviet View (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1972), 70, 88.

<sup>37</sup>Statement released by TASS on December 5, 1971.

<sup>38</sup>See Mustafa, 61.

<sup>39</sup>Statement by Mr. Jacob Malik the representative of the USSR, December 4, 1971. See Bangladesh Documents, 47 (New Delhi, 1972), 438-441.

The Soviet Union proposed in the security council that the representatives of the Bangladesh movement be given a hearing. But the Soviet resolution was rejected by the council, having been vetoed by China.<sup>40</sup>

During December 4, 1971 and December 21, 1971, when the Security Council debated over the conflict, the Soviet Union consistently supported the Bangladesh movement and vetoed three times to prevent the Security Council from adopting a US sponsored resolution calling for a ceasefire. On December 5, the Soviet representative Mr. Jacob Malik said:

It is only the people in East Pakistan in the persons of their elected representatives, who can decide upon their future fate in relation to whether East Pakistan remains part of Pakistan or whether it will establish an independent autonomous and separate state. No one should deny the right of those elected representatives.<sup>41</sup>

In fact, expressing identical views with the Indian government, the Soviet representative first vetoed an American draft resolution proposing that the Security Council should call upon India and Pakistan to cease fire immediately and to withdraw their troops from each other's territories and to allow posting of the UN observers on both sides of India-Pakistan borders. At the next meeting the USSR again vetoed and prevented an adoption of an African-Latin American draft resolution which called for a cease

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<sup>40</sup>Mustafa, 71. Also see Budhraj, 995.

<sup>41</sup>Statement by Mr. Jacob Malik, representative of the USSR, in the Security Council, December 5, 1971. See Bangladesh Documents, 442-445.



fire and withdrawal of forces, and also urged that efforts be intensified to bring about conditions necessary for the voluntary return of the East Pakistani refugees to their homes. The matter was next referred to the General Assembly, under the "Uniting for Peace Resolution," and the General Assembly passed the "Ceasefire Resolution" with the vote of 104 to 11 with 10 abstentions.<sup>42</sup> Since the General Assembly resolution was nonbinding, the United States again brought the issue to the Security Council and in a resolution on December 12, called upon both India and Pakistan to accept ceasefire and withdrawal of their forces, according to the resolution of the General Assembly. But the Soviet Union again vetoed for the third time in the Security Council.

Finally, after the surrender of the Pakistan army on December 16, 1971, the USSR quickly endorsed India's unilateral ceasefire order on the western front, which in effect ended the war. Besides diplomatic move, the Soviet Union was also prepared militarily to face any Sino-US involvement in the crisis. It is reported that from December 3, 1971, three Soviet warships passed from the Strait of Malacca into the Indian Ocean.<sup>43</sup>

So in the final analysis it has become unfolded that the Soviet military and diplomatic support towards the

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<sup>42</sup>See U.N. doc. A/Res/2793 (xxvi).

<sup>43</sup>Jack Anderson, The Anderson Papers (New York: Random House, 1973), 259.

Bangladesh liberation struggle made it possible to emerge the new state Bangladesh within a short period of nine months guerrilla fight. Actually Moscow's immediate interest in the Bangladesh liberation struggle is clearly stated by Bhabani Sen Gupta:

An independent Bangladesh separated from Pakistan, closely linked to India and hence disposed to be an ally against a hostile China constituted a political asset of no mean consequence to Moscow.<sup>44</sup>

Apart from encountering Sino-Soviet rapprochement, many analysts believed that the Soviet policy towards the Bangladesh war was formulated in the light of the USSR's long term strategic interests in the region.<sup>45</sup>

Bangladesh-Soviet Relations: Mujib and Zia Regimes  
(1971-1981)

Bangladesh-Soviet Relations: Political Level

Many political observers and analysts firmly believe that the Soviet support for India's policy towards the Bangladesh struggle was a decisive factor for the birth of

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<sup>44</sup>Bhabani Sengupta, 58.

<sup>45</sup>Syed Anwar Hossain, "Role of the Super Powers and the Emergence of Bangladesh: A Review Article," Politics, Administration and Change 5 (July-December 1980): 124. One study has shown that India already has granted the USSR bunkering and other naval facilities in the Andoman and Nicobar Islands. A Soviet supply depot and training mission have been established at "Visakapatnam." If the USSR becomes India's sole arms supplier it could effectively influence Indian policies in its own favour. See Mustafa, 61.

an independent Bangladesh.<sup>46</sup> Moreover the Soviet Union was the first major power which recognized Bangladesh and moved fast to demonstrate its keen interest in Bangladesh, against the declared hostility of China and the United States.<sup>47</sup> On January 25, 1972, the Soviet President N.V. Podgorny and Prime Minister Alexei Kosygin sent messages to President Abu Sayed Chaudhury and Premier Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, recognizing Bangladesh and within a month established diplomatic relations.<sup>48</sup> Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman also responded with gratitude to the Soviet leaders.<sup>49</sup>

Following the Soviet recognition, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman paid an official visit to Moscow from March 1-5 1972 and signed a joint declaration.<sup>50</sup> The Soviet Union also pledged its readiness to extend cooperation in the development of Bangladesh.<sup>51</sup> In response to the Soviet cooperation and friendship the Mujib government adopted the principles of

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<sup>46</sup>Peter Lyon, "Bangladesh: Fashioning a Foreign Policy," South Asian Review 5, no. 3 (April 1972): 235.

<sup>47</sup>Philips Talbot, "Impression of Bangladesh: A Visitor's Report," Asia, no. 24 (Winter 1971-72): 13.

<sup>48</sup>R.K. Jain, 148.

<sup>49</sup>Bangladesh Observer (Dhaka), February 24, 1972.

<sup>50</sup>Pravda, March 5, 1972 (Reprint from the Soviet Press, 14, no. 5, Sept. 3, 1971).

<sup>51</sup>See "Joint Declaration by USSR and People's Republic of Bangladesh," Pravda (March 5, 1972). Reprint from the Soviet Press 14, no. 5 (September 3, 1971).

socialism and secularism, which were very close to the communist ideology. As a first step towards socialism, the Mujib government followed a socialist policy at the domestic level and pursued a foreign policy aligned with India-Soviet Union and other socialists states, against the US-China and the Muslim world at the international level.

In order to strengthen its relation with the Soviet Union, in the immediate post-liberation period, pro-western Khondaker Mustaq Ahmed was ousted from the important office of the Minister for Foreign Affairs and pro-Soviet Abdu Samad Azad was appointed as the foreign minister. On the other hand the key portfolio of the ministry of finance was awarded to Tajuddin Ahmad, who was well known as an ardent supporter of the Soviet socialism. At the domestic level, Mujib government introduced state socialism, which meant to Sheikh Mujib and his party Awami League a policy of nationalization.<sup>52</sup> Mujib government in order to materialize its "so called socialism" nationalized all the banks, insurances and major industries. By 1972, 86 percent of the total industrial assets came under public ownership as compared to 35 percent before independence.<sup>53</sup> Besides nationalization of industries and public sector agencies, it

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<sup>52</sup>See Rounaq Jahan, Bangladesh Politics: Problems and Issues (Dhaka: University Press Limited, 1980), 101. Also see Abul Fazal Huq, "Constitution-Making in Bangladesh," Pacific Affairs 46, no. 1 (September 1973).

<sup>53</sup>Kirsten Westergaard, State and Rural Society in Bangladesh: A Study in Relationship (London: Curzon Press, 1985), 75.

also had set up a number of new corporations to establish state control over the economy. To encourage the development of the public sector, governmental allocations of development funds had been heavily utilized for the public sectors. Simultaneously the government discouraged the private sector by fixing lower limits of investment.<sup>54</sup> Moreover, Mujib government also introduced a land reform, where a ceiling of 100 bighas (33 acres) was imposed and land revenue on small holding (below 25 bighas or 8 acres) was abolished.<sup>55</sup> Although Mujib government wanted to establish socialism through a number of socialist economic policies<sup>56</sup> the Awami League regime was actually an intermediate regime.<sup>57</sup> Moreover socialism was introduced as a general principle without any clear guidelines as to how to implement it or it was not clear what would be the ultimate role of the public sector.

However Mujib's socialist policy at the domestic level impressed the Soviet Union. Many political observers believed that Mujib's socialist path of development was designed and guided by the Soviet Union. It was reported that, during the last phase of Bangladesh struggle, before

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<sup>54</sup>A.M.A. Rahim, "An Analysis of the Planning Strategy in Bangladesh," Asian Survey 15 (May 1975): 386.

<sup>55</sup>Westergaard, 75.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid.

the fall of Dhaka a Russian delegation headed by first deputy minister Kuznetsov arrived in New Delhi to work out the organization of the Bangladesh government.<sup>58</sup> It is also recorded that the USSR offered to train national cadres for various branches of industry and agriculture of Bangladesh. On the other hand the Mujib government followed a pro-Indian and pro-Soviet foreign policy at the international level. Some analysts argued that the main Soviet objective in Bangladesh was to bring Bangladesh under the umbrella of the "Asian Collective Security Scheme." It was achieved, when Bangladesh and India signed the friendship treaty in March 1972, which was similar to the Indo-Soviet treaty of August 1971.<sup>59</sup> In fact in the Soviet Bangladesh joint declaration during Mujib's visit to Moscow, the Soviet Union applauded Mujib's socialist foreign policy having non-aligned character<sup>60</sup> while Bangladesh was very much impressed by the foreign policy of the Soviet Union aimed at strengthening

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<sup>58</sup>Sabiha Hasan, Foreign Policy of Bangladesh-1, Pakistan Horizon, 73.

<sup>59</sup>The USSR offered to train "national cadres for the various braches of industry and agriculture of Bangladesh." See A.T.R. Rahman, "Administration and Its Political Environment in Bangladesh," Pacific Affairs 47 (1974): 189. Also see Hasan, 75.

<sup>60</sup>In an interview with a TASS correspondent Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman said that the main principles of the foreign policy of Bangladesh would be non participation in military blocs, neutrality, peaceful co-existence, independence and friendship with all countries. See Pravda (January 18, 1972) reprinted in the USSR and The Third World 2, no. 2 (February 13, 1972): 78.

friendship and cooperation with all nations and all around support for national liberation movement.<sup>61</sup>

Following Mujib's visit to the Soviet Union, the Secretary General of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Leonid Brezhnev, assured to do everything for the development of Bangladesh. Brezhnev proclaimed:

Our line of support for the Republic of Bangladesh and cooperation with it stems from the fundamental policies of the communist party and Soviet states. For our part we shall continue to do everything we can for the development and strengthening of our relations with the Republic of Bangladesh.<sup>62</sup>

At the international level, the Mujib government pursued a pro-Soviet foreign policy siding with the Vietnam against the US policy. Bangladesh also supported the Arab cause, against "continuing Israeli occupation of Arab territories which was identical with the Soviet position against the US foreign policy toward southeast Asia and the Middle East."<sup>63</sup>

Another aspect of Bangladesh-Soviet relations was that the Soviet Union also played very important role for the admission of Bangladesh into the United Nations (UN). On January 24, 1972, the UN Security Council met to consider the admission of the new members concerning the application

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<sup>61</sup>Pravda (March 5, 1972) in Reprint from the Soviet Press 14, no. 5 (September 3, 1971).

<sup>62</sup>Jain, 157.

<sup>63</sup>See USSR-Bangladesh joint Declaration, Pravda, march 5, 1972, Reprint from The Soviet Press 14, no. 5 (September 3, 1971.).

of Bangladesh. On the same day the Soviet Union co-sponsored a draft resolution (s/10771), which was introduced by the permanent representative of India. The draft resolution proposed that the Security Council should recommend to the General Assembly the admission of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh as a member of the United Nations.<sup>64</sup> The Soviet representative said in the Security Council:

Bangladesh without any doubt entirely meets all the requirements which the United Nations charter in Article 4 lays down for membership of the United Nations. The Soviet Union wholeheartedly supports the application of Bangladesh for admission to membership of the United Nations and is in favor of the immediate adoption by the Security Council of an appropriate recommendation on this matter to the General Assembly. As a co-sponsor of this draft resolution, we appeal to all members of the Security Council without exception and first and foremost to all the permanent members of the Security Council to adopt this important decision unanimously.<sup>65</sup>

Despite strong Soviet diplomatic move in favor of Bangladesh's admission into the United Nations, China vetoed against Bangladesh's membership, which was seriously criticized by the Soviet Union.<sup>66</sup>

After the Chinese veto, the Security Council was unable to take any decision regarding Bangladesh's admission. The

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<sup>64</sup>Statement by the Soviet representative in the Security Council, August 24, 1972. See Jain, 158.

<sup>65</sup>Statement by the Soviet representative in the UN Security Council, August 24, 1972, in *Ibid.*, 159.

<sup>66</sup>Statement by the Soviet representative in the Security Council on August 25, 1972, see Jain, 170.



question of the admission of Bangladesh therefore came to the General Assembly for consideration. Again in the General Assembly Soviet Union played very strong role and patronized a resolution of 23 nations, which was led by Yugoslavia, which called for an early and unconditional admission of Bangladesh. The Soviet Union clearly stated that the admission of Bangladesh into the United Nations would correspond with the interest and the task of further normalization of the situation in the Indian subcontinent. While 16 other nations adopted another resolution which made Bangladesh's admission contingent with the settlement of the Pakistani Prisoners of War (POW). It called for the repatriation of the POWs in accordance with the Geneva convention of the 1949 and relevant provisions of Security Council Resolution 307 (1971). After consulting both resolutions, the President of the General Assembly stated that the admission of Bangladesh into the UN should be considered along with the overall solution of the existing political, legal and humanitarian problems.<sup>67</sup>

In response to the Soviet support towards Bangladesh in international forums, Mujib government reciprocated it towards the Soviet Union and its allies throughout the world. One major example of Bangladesh's identical policy with the Soviet Union was Bangladesh's trade contract with

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<sup>67</sup>Jain, 171.

Cuba in 1974 which seriously aggravated the US-Bangladesh relations.<sup>68</sup>

Although the Mujib government internationally pursued a pro-Soviet foreign policy, at the domestic level Mujib's party Awami League (AL) was not aligned with the pro-Moscow political parties, i.e. the National Awami Party (Muzaffar) and the communist party of Bangladesh (CPB). Even the AL was reluctant to recognize the role of the communists in the liberation struggle of Bangladesh, while the Soviet mass-media in contrast tried to boost the image of the communist party of Bangladesh (CPB).<sup>69</sup> Following independence, during 1972-1973, the CPB and NAP(M) became critical of the Mujib government for its non radical policies and its acceptance of US aid.<sup>70</sup> Mujib government however did not give upper hands to the pro-Soviet NAP(M) and CPB. Before the national elections of 1973, the NAP(M) and CPB with the inspiration of the Soviet Union approached the AL to form a United democratic front. Actually, it was a strategy approved by Moscow designed to achieve the acceptability of the communists in a predominantly Muslim state and to ensure the share of the communists in the power structure.

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<sup>68</sup>See Rahman Sobhan, "Politics of Food and Famine in Bangladesh," Economic and Political Weekly 14, no. 48 (Dec. 1 1974): 121. Also see Far Eastern Economic Review, December 23, 1972 and January 15, 1973.

<sup>69</sup>Sen Gupta, "Moscow and Bangladesh," Problems of Communism (March-April 1975), 62.

<sup>70</sup>See Far Eastern Economic Review, December 23, 1972 and January 15, 1973.

Contemplating the communist's goals, the AL turned down the communist proposal and each party contested in the elections separately. Although in the elections, the Soviet Union provided its all out support to the pro-Soviet NAP(M) and the CPB, the NAP(M) won a single seat and the CPB won nothing, while the AL won all but eight seats in the assembly.<sup>71</sup>

In August 1973, anti-Mujib underground activities intensified, the pro-Chinese activists were conducting armed struggle against the Mujib regime, law and order situation was at a breaking point and economy was about to collapse. At this juncture, the pro-Soviet parties NAP(M) and CPB utilized the internal situation of the country and in August 1973 again approached the AL with the inspiration of Moscow and proposed for the formation of a popular united front among the party organizations outside the government.<sup>72</sup> In the face of hostile opposition from the pro-Chinese, pro-American and pro-Islamic forces, Mujib accepted the proposal

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<sup>71</sup>In the elections the AL won 291 seats out of 300, with 73 percent vote while NAP(M) won 1 seat with 8 percent vote cast. It was ridiculous that Moscow radio described the NAP(M) as the runner up in the race although its total vote was just over one tenth of that polled by the AL. Rounaq Jahan, "Bangladesh in 1973: Management of Factional Politics," Asian Survey 14, no. 2 (February 1974), 128. For the Moscow radio comments see Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), March 8, 1973.

<sup>72</sup>It is recorded that in August 1973 a delegation of the CPB went to Moscow to confer with the leaders of the Soviet communist party. It was agreed that CPB and NAP(M) would concentrate their efforts on achieving the unity of democratic and national patriotic forces. See Izvestia (Moscow) August 19, 1973.

and launched the "united front" in October 1973 which gave the communists an opportunity to work together with a popular party in power.

While reporting this development the Pravda observed:

The long and difficult struggle for freedom and independence convinced the people of Bangladesh that only the united actions of all national patriotic forces made it possible to achieve national independence. The two year period of independent development (since) has shown that this unity is also necessary now at the important stage of building a peace loving democratic, independent state. That is why the broad progressive public in Bangladesh considers the creation of a united front of the three parties to be an important step on the road to strengthening the independence and social gains of the young republic.<sup>73</sup>

Since then, the communists had started exerting influence on Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and AL. Finally Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, following the Soviet model, introduced a Presidential form of government with one-party authoritarianism. In fact the CPB with the Soviet approval came out with the prescription of this new model.<sup>74</sup> CPB chief Monisingh asserted:

Bangladesh has neither a strong capitalist class of big landlords. This makes it very different from that of India. We therefore need not live in a parliamentary system, which can only lead to a stratification of the classes and which in effect legitimizes exploitation of the poor by the rich. The parliamentary system cannot but be a major roadblock to significant social changes. What we need is an effective, efficient, honest and

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<sup>73</sup>Pravda, October 23, 1973.

<sup>74</sup>Bhabani Sen Gupta, 62.

ideologically sound government, a government of progressive and democratic forces under the leadership of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.<sup>75</sup>

The Soviet prescription through the local communists in Bangladesh (CPB and NAP(M) was welcomed by the pro-Soviet factions of the Awami League (Tajuddin-Sheikh Moni group) which suggested Sheikh Mujib to accept the new model.

Mujib's new model of government replaced the parliamentary system by a presidential one, provided the president, supreme executive and legislative authority and even placed the judicial system under his control. Mujib declared himself as president of the republic for a five year term and under the same amendment of the constitution he dissolved all existing political parties and imposed one party rule in Bangladesh.<sup>76</sup> Through the introduction of the one party authoritarian system, Mujib, a firebrand of democracy, transfigured himself into a stalwart of autocracy.<sup>77</sup> However after the change of political system by Mujib government, according to the policy prescription of the Soviet Union (via the local communists), Bangladesh-Soviet Union relations became exceptionally warm and the

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<sup>75</sup>CPB Chief Monisingh's interview with Bhabani Sen Gupta, See Ibid.

<sup>76</sup>For a detail analysis on BAKSAL, see Rounaq Jahan, Bangladesh Politics: Problems and Issues (Dhaka: UPL 1978), 95-130. See Taluder Maminuzzaman, "Bangladesh in 1975: The Fall of the Mujib Regime and the Aftermath," Asian Survey 16, no 2, 101.

<sup>77</sup>Shawkatara Husain, "Military intervention in the Politics of Bangladesh," Politics, Administration and Change v, no. 2 (1980): 90.

Soviet Union seemed to be the guardian of the one party authoritarian system in Bangladesh.

Besides political relations, Bangladesh-Soviet Union cultural ties during the Mujib regime were also exceptionally warm. After the independence of Bangladesh in December 1972 a cultural agreement providing for the mutual exchange of personnel and knowhow was signed in Dhaka.

In the cultural field, one major achievement of the Soviet Union in Bangladesh was that the Soviet Union trained a good number of Bangladeshi students, and professionals during the Mujib regime, who many observers believe were supposed to help Mujib, run the new model of government. Soviet Ambassador in Bangladesh figured out that since independence more than 1700 Bangladeshi engineers, doctors, veterinary surgeons and specialists in many other fields had received higher education in the USSR up to 1990 and over 600 Bangladeshi students were studying in the Soviet Universities and colleges on the basis of annually provided scholarship by the USSR for the Bangladeshi citizens.<sup>78</sup>

However, with the fall of the Mujib regime through a military coup of August 15, 1975, Bangladesh-Soviet relations changed overnight. Following the eclipse of the Mujib regime, Ziaur Rahman emerged as the key figure of Bangladesh politics, who reshaped Mujib's policy both at domestic and international levels. At the domestic level,

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<sup>78</sup>Ibid.

through constitutional amendment, Zia abolished Mujib's principles of secularism and socialism, and introduced absolute trust in Almighty Allah (God) instead of secularism. Socialism was replaced by social and economic justice. As a matter of fact Zia followed the capitalist path of development with free market economy, i.e., privatization and denationalization policies, against the socialist development strategy. On the other hand at the international level Zia disengaged Bangladesh from the Indo-Soviet orbit and rehsaped Bangladesh's foreign policy into pro-Western, pro-Islamic and pro-China oriented which worked against Indo-Soviet axis. The replacement of the Soviet trusted friend, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with pro-Western, the pro-Chinese, and pro-Islamic Ziaur Rahman was observed by the Soviet authority with resentment and concern about potential Chinese gains in Bangladesh. The Kremlin in its first reaction on August 22, 1975 expressed that Mujib's overthrow might swing Bangladesh away from the Soviet Union and imperialism, Maoism, and internal reactionary forces might exert influence on future developments.<sup>79</sup> While Izvestia commented:

The coup deprived the country of an acknowledged leader of the liberation movement, whose declared goal was to carry out progressive social and economic reforms. The Soviet people will remember Mujibur Rahman not only as an inspirer and leader of the national liberation movement in Bangladesh

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<sup>79</sup>Christopher S. Wren, "Moscow Fears Bangladesh May Look to Peking," New York Times, August 27, 1975.

but also as an advocate of closer ties of friendship between the newly-independent republic and the Soviet Union and other countries of the socialist community.<sup>80</sup>

After the fall of the Mujib regime, the relationship between Bangladesh and the Soviet Union was almost frozen for quite some time. In the following years the Soviet Union showed considerable dissatisfaction in their attitudes toward Zia regime. Because under Zia Bangladesh strengthened ties with US-China and the Muslim world, while its relations with the Soviet Union and India declined significantly.<sup>81</sup> Although the Soviet Union was dissatisfied with Bangladesh's policy both at domestic and international levels, it did not want to push Bangladesh to the Sino-US orbit. In December 23, 1976, the Soviet deputy foreign minister visited Bangladesh to normalize relationship.<sup>82</sup> During this period, the main Soviet objectives in Bangladesh was to disengage Bangladesh from the Sino-US axis. In an article Pravda commented:

The Soviet public in common with progressive circles in other countries of the world is concerned over the attempts of reactionary and left wing extremist forces to create an atmosphere of terror, victimization of genuinely democratic figures and organization in Bangladesh. If right wing and left wing extremist forces are not given

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<sup>80</sup>M. Rastarchuk, "Bangladesh after the coup," Izvestia, September 1, 1975, collected in Jain, 191.

<sup>81</sup>Robert H. Donaldson, "Soviet Security Interests in South Asia," in Lawrence Zining (ed.) The Subcontinent in World Politics (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1982).

<sup>82</sup>The Bangladesh Observer, December 24, 1975.



a rebuff, this may be gravely detrimental to the democratic gains of the Bangladesh people, to what was achieved in its struggle of many years for national freedom and independence.<sup>83</sup>

However, the Soviet efforts could not shift Zia's policy from the US-Chinese and Muslim world orientation, what suited most with the national interest of Bangladesh. Zia himself declared:

...the most significant development in the field of foreign policy of Bangladesh is that Bangladesh is now in a position to make her own decisions and formulate her own independent policy to serve her national interests.<sup>84</sup>

Ziaur Rahman although pursued a tilt policy toward the US-China and the Muslim world, he did not want to antagonize the super power like the Soviet Union and tried to normalize the diplomatic relations with it.

Towards normalization of relations with Moscow, Health Minister Professor B. Chaudhury made a good will visit to Moscow on July 17, 1978 and handed a message of President Ziaur Rahman to the Secretary General of the communist party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) Leonid Brezhnev; while Brezhnev reciprocated by sending a telegram to Zia after his election as President.

But Bangladesh's denunciation of the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan and its strong initiative for a resolution in the United Nations condemning the Soviet invasion clouded

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<sup>83</sup>Pravda, Nov. 23, 1975, reprinted in Jain, 211.

<sup>84</sup>The Bangladesh Times, August 21, 1977.

the Dhaka-Moscow relations. Moreover Bangladesh was very vocal against the Vietnamese invasion in Kampuchea and strongly demanded the withdrawal of the Vietnamese forces. Zia's strong criticism against the Pro-Soviet elements in Bangladesh who wanted to stage Afghan style revolution also displeased the Soviet Union. Bangladesh-Soviet relations seriously strained in 1979, when Bangladesh openly charged the Soviet Union for opening a Soviet consulate at the port city Chittagong, without prior permission.<sup>85</sup> Similarly in June 1981, Bangladesh made an official protest to the Soviet Union over the Soviet attempt to smuggle sophisticated electronic equipment into the country. In this connection the Soviet diplomats involved were recalled on Bangladesh's government's request.<sup>86</sup>

Besides diplomatic level, an anti-Soviet and pro-Chinese lobby was very active during the Zia regime, because in the Mujib era the pro-Chinese and pro-Islamic political activists were the victims of Mujib's oppressive machineries. Ziaur Rahman patronized the Chinese and Islamic elements in Bangladesh for creating his support base against pro-Indian and pro-Soviet elements.

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<sup>85</sup>Azizul Haque, "Bangladesh in 1980: Strains and Stresses-- Opposition in the Doldrums," Asian Survey 21, no. 2 (February 1981): 201.

<sup>86</sup>In April 1982 again two Soviet diplomats were expelled by Bangladesh on the grounds of espionage.

At this point a clear anti-Indian and anti-Soviet foreign policy of Bangladesh was discerned. Moreover the pro-Chinese politicians stimulated the government for maintaining a careful distance from the Indo-Soviet axis.<sup>87</sup>

Because of the lack of cordial political relations there was no significant development in the cultural field except signing of a program of cultural and scientific exchange between the USSR and Bangladesh.<sup>88</sup>

However, because of major shifts in Zia's policy from Indo-Soviet axis to the US-Chinese and Muslim world, especially with gradual increase of Chinese influence in his foreign policy decisions, Soviet influence in Bangladesh declined significantly, which strained the Bangladesh-Soviet relations. Although Zia's foreign secretary visited the Soviet Union to normalize relations, still the Soviet policy of limited relations remained unchanged because of Zia's "tilt" policy towards the US-China and the Muslim world.<sup>89</sup> Consequently, Dhaka-Moscow relations remained stagnant during Zia's regime, unlike Mujib era. But it was diplomatically correct, because the national interest of Bangladesh demanded the warmer relations with the US-China

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<sup>87</sup>Holiday, October 17, 1976.

<sup>88</sup>The program cultural and scientific exchange between the USSR and Bangladesh was signed in Dhaka on May 20, 1978. See USSR and the Third World 8, nos. 2-3 (February-June 30, 1978).

<sup>89</sup>Bangladesh's secretary of foreign affairs made a special visit to Moscow in December 1975, but it did not promote Bangladesh's relation with the Soviet Union.

and the Muslim world, for advancing the economic progress instead of economic stagnation.<sup>90</sup>

### Economic Level

Considering the Soviet efforts in the liberation war of Bangladesh many observers expected that the Soviet Union will emerge as the main patron of the economic aid to Bangladesh for meeting the immediate necessity of the war ravaged economy. But the rising expectation soon transferred into a heightened frustration only when the Soviet Union provided inadequate economic aid to Bangladesh even during the Mujib regime which was familiar to the world as a pro-Indian and pro-Soviet regime. Moreover, the wide gap between the Soviet aid commitment and disbursement further eroded the Soviet credibility among the people of Bangladesh (Tables 12, 13).

Although the Indo-Soviet lobbies in Bangladesh used to claim Bangladesh Soviet-relations as excellent at the economic level, it was far from satisfactory in a real sense. The critics saw in it a sinister design of the social imperialist.<sup>91</sup> Many observers believed that the Soviet

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<sup>90</sup>Soviet Economic aid to Bangladesh was very insufficient for rebuilding Bangladesh's war ravaged economy. While US aid to Bangladesh was much more higher than the Soviet Union. By the 1980s the US emerged as the largest donor of Bangladesh. See Craig Baxter Bangladesh: A New Nation in an Old Setting (Westview Press, 1984), 107.

<sup>91</sup>Virendva Narain, Foreign Policy of Bangladesh (Jai Pur: Alekh Publishers, 1987), 125.

economic aid to Bangladesh immediately after its emergence was a gesture of friendship.

TABLE 12  
SOVIET COMMITMENT OF FOREIGN AID TO BANGLADESH  
(million US dollars)

Year	Food		Commodity		Project		Total
	Grant	Loan	Grant	Loan	Grant	Loan	
1971-72	--	4.351	25.65	--	--	18.02	48.02
1972-73	--	--	4.00	6.50	--	44.44	54.45
1973-74	--	32.00	--	4.04	--	--	36.04
1974-75	--	13.57	--	8.80	--	45.50	67.87
1975-76	--	--	--	--	--	--	<u>206.87</u>
							(subtotal 71-75)
1976-77	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
1977-78	--	--	--	--	--	6.53	6.53
1978-79	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
1979-80	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
1980-81	--	--	--	--	--	71.56	71.56
							<u>78.09</u>
							(subtotal 75-81)
TOTAL		49.92	29.65	29.88	--	186.05	284.96

Source: Reproduced from The Flow of External Resources Into Bangladesh (as of June 30, 1991) (Dhaka: Economic Relations Department, Ministry of Finance 1992), 65.



Fig. 8. Disbursement of the Soviet Aid to Bangladesh: A Comparison Between the Mujib and Zia Regimes.

TABLE 13  
DISBURSEMENT OF THE SOVIET AID TO BANGLADESH  
(million US dollars)

Year	Food		Commodity		Project		Total
	Grant	Loan	Grant	Loan	Grant	Loan	
1971-72	--	--	--	--	--	--	00
1972-73	--	4.35	29.65	6.5	--	2.30	42.80
1973-74	--	32.00	--	3.34	--	5.40	40.75
1974-75	--	13.57	--	4.05	--	7.59	25.21
1975-76	--	--	--	3.66	--	6.87	10.54
1976-77	--	--	--	--	--	4.89	4.89
1977-78	--	--	--	1.78	--	22.47	24.26
1978-79	--	--	--	--	--	6.61	6.61
1979-80	--	--	--	--	--	8.45	8.45
1980-81	--	--	--	--	--	3.02	3.01
TOTAL	--	49.92	29.65	19.33	--	67.59	166.52

Source: Reproduced from The Flow of External Resources Into Bangladesh (as of June 30, 1991) (Dhaka: Economic Relations Department, Ministry of Finance 1992), 65.

Actually it was neither Soviet friendship nor love for Bangladesh. It was both strategic and ideological Soviet designs of Sino-US containment policy of 1960s. In fact the Soviet economic aid to the Third world countries was spelled out according to the 22nd CPSU Congress held in 1961:

the CPSU regards it as its international duty to assist the people who have set out to win and strengthen their national independence, all people who fight for complete abolition of the colonial system.<sup>92</sup>

Following the Bangladesh liberation war, the Soviet Union obviously wanted Bangladesh to be in the anti-imperialist bloc in order to withstand the Sino-US détente

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<sup>92</sup>Road to Communism: Documents of the 22nd Congress of CPSU (Moscow: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1971), 491.

in the South and Southeast Asia. But the Soviet Union failed to keep Bangladesh within Soviet orbit completely, even at the time of the pro-Soviet Mujib regime, because of the Soviet inability to provide adequate aid to Bangladesh in order to avert famine, rehabilitate refugees and for remodeling the war torn economy. There was also an initial reservation among the leaders of the ruling party about western aid, particularly the USA, but the Soviet aid policy to Bangladesh forced it to embrace the US aid. About the Soviet response to Bangladesh's request during the Mujib regime, Rahman Sobhan wrote:

When Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman went to the USSR in February 1972 he carried a big shopping list for commodity assistance. This was met by only a small grant to procure certain commodities provided by the USSR. Towards the end of 1972 another big list worth around one billion dollars was prepared by the Bangladesh Planning Commission for commodity assistance from the USSR. This did not appear to have been given any urgent attention by the USSR aid agencies.<sup>93</sup>

However, the economic relation between the USSR and Bangladesh established at first through the inauguration of the weekly Dhaka-Moscow air service of the Soviet airline, Aeroflot on February 2, 1972.<sup>94</sup> It was followed by a visit of a Soviet economic delegation to Bangladesh which assured the resumption and speedy completion of the Soviet projects

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<sup>93</sup>Rahman Sobhan, The Crisis of External Dependence: The Political Economy of Foreign Aid to Bangladesh (London: Zed Press, 1982), 126.

<sup>94</sup>Bhabani Sen Gupta, 56.

located in Bangladesh's territory. Moscow also agreed to divert the flow of aid amounting to 38 million rubles previously negotiated with Pakistan, for the completion of those projects located in Bangladesh.<sup>95</sup>

The Bangladesh-Soviet economic cooperation started to grow up following the official visit of Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to Moscow during March 1-5, 1972, and the two sides examined the questions of economic cooperation and signed an agreement, which incorporated the construction of a thermal power station, radio broadcasting stations, an electrical equipment plant and a geological project for oil and gas.<sup>96</sup>

Besides this, Bangladesh and the Soviet Union signed a joint declaration which incorporated the Soviet assistance to Bangladesh for the reconstruction of a merchant marine, development of a sea fisheries, and reconstruction of a railway transport. Under the joint declaration, the Soviet Union also agreed to provide helicopters to Bangladesh for the improvement of air communication with the interior areas of the country.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>95</sup>Those projects were: 1. The Ghorasal Power Project and the installation of two powerful radio transmission lines.

<sup>96</sup>Joint declaration by the USSR and the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh, Pravda March 5, 1972 (in reprint from The Soviet Press 14, no. 5 September 3, 1971).

<sup>97</sup>Ibid., 21. See USSR and the Third World 2, no. 4 (1972): 191.



In March 1972, Bangladesh and the Soviet Union signed a financial and technical aid agreement, under which arrangement previously made by the Soviets with Pakistan would be fulfilled in Bangladesh.<sup>98</sup> Another major aspect of the Soviet economic cooperation with Bangladesh was the Soviet salvage operation. A Soviet salvage delegation arrived in Dhaka on May 22, 1972. The Soviet Union signed an agreement with the Bangladesh government providing for free Soviet assistance in restoring normal conditions for navigation in the seaports of Bangladesh. Within a few days of signing the salvage operation, twenty Soviet ships arrived in Chittagong and the Soviet navy began to organize salvage operations in the Bangladesh ports of Chittagong and Khulna where blockages had been created (in response to the news that the US Seventh fleet was about to enter the Bay of Bengal). However within a short period, with their ceaseless and skilled efforts, they cleared the port of Chittagong and Chalna free from mines and sunken ships which impeded shipping traffic.<sup>99</sup> While many political observers argued that Bangladesh's security within the Soviet orbit was underlined by the Soviet presence in Chittagong. A Soviet fleet comprising monitor ships traversed the Bay of Bengal

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<sup>98</sup>Charles Peter O'Donnell, Bangladesh: Biography of a Muslim Nation (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1984).

<sup>99</sup>Also see Peter Lynn, "Bangladesh: Fashioning a Foreign Policy" South Asian Review 5, no. 3 (April 1972): 235.

under the pretext of port cleaning operation.<sup>100</sup> In this regard many Bangladeshi's contemplated that the Soviet Union might be attempting to convert the Chittagong port into a Soviet military base. While, the Bangladesh government categorically denied publicly that the Soviet Union had given any naval base in Bangladesh.<sup>101</sup>

Another major example of the Soviet economic cooperation in Bangladesh was its technical assistance for the exploration of natural gas. With the technical cooperation of the USSR, drillings in "Jaldi" and "Simutang" had been completed by the mid 1972, while the direct participation of the Soviet experts in Begumganj and Kamta gas fields were also very important contributions of the USSR. In fact the Soviet Union extended its cooperation by supplying equipments, materials, spare parts, and deportation of the Soviet specialists. Apart from this, during the Mujib regime Bangladesh and the USSR signed a contract in 1972 and extended economic and technical assistance for setting up of one 1,000 KWT medium wave station and six 2-KWT ultra wave transmitters.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>100</sup>Mohammad Ahsen Chaudhury, "Pakistan and the Changing Pattern of Power Relations in South Asia," Pakistan Horizon 31, no. 1 (First Quarter, 1978): 90. Also see Craig Baxter, 109.

<sup>101</sup>Bangladesh's foreign minister Abdus Samad Azad said that the Soviet Union had not been given a naval base in Bangladesh. See The Bangladesh Times, July 27, 1972.

<sup>102</sup>The Asian (Hong Kong), March 12, 1972. Also see Bhabani Sen Gupta, 60.

In the field of trade and commerce, the Soviet barter trading placed very important position. Under the barter protocol of mutual deliveries of commodities, Bangladesh's export included the traditional commodity of Bangladesh viz: Jute, cloth, jute bags, tea, goat skins, etc. While Bangladesh's import from the Soviet Union included machinery equipment, spare parts, cotton, petroleum products, books, etc. During the Mujib regime, although the Soviet Union was a major trading partner of Bangladesh, the balance of trade was mostly in favor of the Soviet Union and against Bangladesh (Table 14).

TABLE 14

## BANGLADESH'S TRADE RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION

Year	Bangladesh's Export to the USSR	Bangladesh's Import From the USSR	Balance of Trade
1972	12.2	40.6	(-28.41)
1973	15.8	94.8	(-79.01)
1974	25.5	61.7	(-36.21)
1975	22.4	66.9	(-44.5)
1976	15.6	34.5	(-18.9)
1977	21.9	45.5	(-23.6)
1978	40.1	44.3	(-4.2)
1979	55.9	28.8	(+27.1)
1980	37.3	47.2	(-9.9)
1981	33.4	40.0	(-6.6)

Source: Tabulated from: 1. Direction of Trade Statistics Yearbook 1979 (Washington D.C.: IMF, 1979), 75; 2. Direction of Trade Statistics Yearbook 1982 (Washington D.C.: IMF, 1982), 81; 3. Direction of Trade Statistics (Washington D.C.: IMF, 1984), 87.

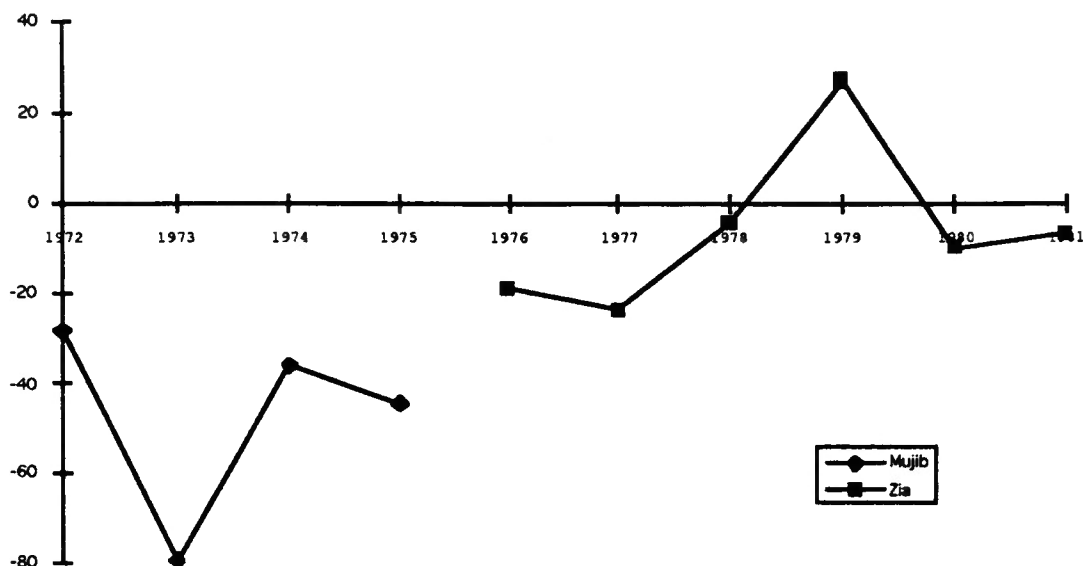


Fig. 9. Bangladesh's Balance of Trade with the Soviet Union: A Comparison Between the Mujib and Zia Regimes.

One landmark example of the Soviet assistance towards Bangladesh was that during the food crisis of late 1973 and early 1974, Bangladesh persuaded the USSR to divert 200,000 tons of food grain procured by it from Australia and Canada to meet the food crisis in Bangladesh, while Bangladesh wanted to return it by subsequent diversion to USSR of shipments from the US to Bangladesh under food aid. But the USA declined to support such an exchange and as a result Bangladesh was forced to negotiate a credit with the USSR to pay for the grain over a 10 year period.<sup>103</sup>

<sup>103</sup>Rahman Sobhan, 127.

Finally, in the aftermath of the severe economic crisis and political instability, the Mujib government adopted a socialist development strategy. Following Mujib's option for socialist model of economy in 1975, it was widely believed that this would highly be rewarded with the Soviet economic assistance, but actually nothing at all came out of the USSR. In fact the total Soviet aid commitment to Bangladesh (food commodity and project aid) from 1971 - 1975 was \$222.3 million while during the same time the total disbursement was \$108.77 million (See Tables 12 and 13). Actually the Soviet economic aid in terms of outright grants and loans was quite inadequate for the stupendous requirements of Bangladesh.<sup>104</sup> This obviously discredited Mujib government among the Bangladeshi people and helped erode the Soviet image in the eyes of the Bangladeshi masses.

However, after the military coup and counter coups of 1975, with the emergence of Ziaur Rahman as the key figure of Bangladesh politics and after Zia's restructuring of domestic and international policies (especially Zia's transformation from the centrally planned economy to a free market economy and Zia's shift from Indo-Soviet orbit to pro-western pro-Chinese and the Muslim world triangle), the Soviet-Bangladesh economic relations slowed down gradually

<sup>104</sup>See Report on Bangladesh-Soviet Union Bilateral Trade and Economic Cooperation (Commercial Section, Embassy of Bangladesh, Moscow).

and at certain point became stagnant. During the whole period of Zia's regime, Moscow's economic relations with Dhaka remained very confined within limited areas. The trade turnover, which had increased rapidly during Mujib's period began to fall down sharply during Zia's regime. On the contrary, Bangladesh had improved its economic tie with Washington-Beijing and the Muslim world, against the Indo-Soviet axis. During this period the Soviet economic aid was so insignificant that the total Soviet aid commitment during this period was \$78.03 million and the disbursement was \$57.76 million.<sup>105</sup>

During this time the Soviet Union only continued financing the old projects, committed during the Mujib regime. Besides this, agreement between the techno-export of the Soviet Union and petro-Bangla was signed in February 1977 for two years which provided for additional technical know-how and equipment for oil and gas exploration. In May 1977, the sixth barter trade protocol was signed between the two countries which provided for exchange of commodities each way during 1977. In 1978, the Soviet aided General Electric manufacturing plant was set up in Chittagong, which

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<sup>105</sup>The total Soviet aid commitment during 1972-1981 was \$284.90 million and disbursement was \$166.52 million while total Soviet commitment during Mujib regime (1971-1975) was \$206.87 million and disbursement was \$108.76 million. On the contrary during Zia regime, the total Soviet commitment was \$78.03 million and the disbursement was \$57.76 million. See Flow of External Resources into Bangladesh (as of June 30, 1991) (Dhaka: Economic Relations Department, Ministry of Finance, 1992), 65.

was a major aspect of economic cooperation between the USSR and Bangladesh during the Zia regime.<sup>106</sup> In addition the Soviet Union also rendered assistance in geological exploration for gas and oil during this period.

Finally, it has been discerned that the economic cooperation between Bangladesh and the Soviet Union reached at an stagnant position after the fall of the Mujib regime and it remains unchanged throughout the whole period of Ziaur Rahman, because of Zia's rapid transformation of domestic policy, i.e. from socialist to capitalist path of development and it was further affected by Zia's rapid shift of foreign policy from Indo-Soviet orbit to "tilt" towards Washington-Beijing and Ryadh--opposed to the Soviet Union and its ally-India.

#### Summary

In the final analysis it is uncovered that the Soviet support towards the Bangladesh struggle of 1971 stemmed out of the Soviet strategic consideration.

Following the Bangladesh Revolution, the Mujib government, followed a clear pro-Soviet policy and adopted socialism, and secularism as state principles, at the domestic level and pursued pro-Indian and pro-Soviet foreign policy at the international level. Finally having influenced by the Soviet Union the Mujib government adopted a socialist

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<sup>106</sup>USSR and Third World 8, nos 4,5,6 (July-December 1978): 70.

political and economic system and introduced a single party dictatorship, with the slogan of Ek Neta, Ek Desh, Bangabandhu, Bangladesh (one leader, one country, Banga Bandu, Bangladesh). Although the Soviet Union attempted to bring Bangladesh under the umbrella of a socialist system, all its dreams nipped in the bud, with the assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Mujib's assassination was observed by the Soviet Union as an embarrassment.

However, with the advent of Ziaur Rahman as the key political figure of Bangladesh scene, Bangladesh shifted its foreign policy from the Indo-Soviet orbit overnight and the Bangladesh and the Indo-Soviet triple entente clearly disappeared from the scene. Ziaur Rahman domestically changed Mujib's policy of socialism and secularism and instead introduced free market economy, while absolute trust and faith in Almighty Allah (God) replaced secularism which were totally opposed to socialism and secularism. At the international level Zia initiated a pro-western, pro-Chinese and a pro-Muslim world foreign policy and came out of Indo Soviet orbit. In particular Zia formalized Bangladesh's relations strongly with the USA-China and the Muslim world. Zia's rapid transformation from India and the Soviet Union was marked by them with great disappointment, which reflected in Bangladesh-Soviet relations during the whole period of Zia regime (1975-81). The Soviet Union placed considerable reservation in their attitude towards Zia



regime at the political level, and at the same time the Soviet economic aid program slowed down considerably from its initial high level of activity. Again the Bangladesh-Soviet strained relationship was impregnated by Dhaka's denunciation of the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan which augmented the Bangladesh's relations with the USSR to a new low.

## CHAPTER VII

### BANGLADESH-CHINA RELATIONS: MUJIB AND ZIA REGIMES (1971-1981)

#### Introduction

The close ties between Bangladesh and the Peoples Republic of China stemmed out of increasing Chinese alignment with the Third World countries.<sup>1</sup> Actually both at domestic and international levels, Beijing's leaders and spokesmen unambiguously assert that China is a member of the Third world. Moreover, Chinese hold the view that China does not only belong to the Third world, because it has shared the same historical experience with other Third world

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<sup>1</sup>Mao divided the world into three spheres; the first world is composed of the two super powers, the United States and the USSR; the second world comprising the developed world of Europe and Japan; the Third world encompasses socialist countries and oppressed underdeveloped nations. Mao described the Third world as the main force in world wide aggression against imperialism and hegemonism. See Lilian Craig Harris, Washington Papers: China's Foreign Policy Toward the Third World (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University, 1985), 3. Another school of thought believes that the Third world is simply a residue; what is left when one has subtracted from the world as a whole the industrialized west--mostly living under a system of capitalist or mixed economies--and communist empires of Russia, China and their satellites. That residue contains countries of different degrees of economic advancement and with a vast number of different types of social and government organizations. See Max Beloff, "The Third World and the Conflict Ideologies" in W. Scott Thompson (Ed.), The Third World: Promise of US Policy (San Francisco: ISC Press, 1993), 90.

nations, but strengthening [its] unity and cooperation with Third world nations is (China's) basic foreign policy.<sup>2</sup>

Vice Premier Teng Hsiao-Ping very confidently claimed Chinese membership to the Third World in April 1974 in a special session of the United Nations General Assembly. He clearly enunciated:

Judging from the changes in international relations, the world today actually consists of three parts or three world, that are both interconnected and in contradiction to one another. The United States and the Soviet Union make up the first world. The developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America and other regions make up the Third world. The developed countries between the two make up the second world.... China is a socialist country and a developing country as well China belongs to the Third world...China is not a super power, nor will she ever seek to be one.<sup>3</sup>

Aside from China's self claim to the Third world membership, it is very much symmetrical with the developing states of the Asia, Africa and Latin America. The strongest theme in Chinese foreign policy is to change the old order and to set up a new international economic order.<sup>4</sup> China's role as an actor in the global politics, especially in the international institutionalized framework, is welcomed by

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<sup>2</sup>Banyue Tan, "Ten Questions in Foreign Relations," Translated in Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Daily Report China (June 11, 1984): A3.

<sup>3</sup>Peking Review, April 12, 1974. Also see Peter Van Ness, "China and the Third World," Current History 67, no. 397 (September 1974): 176.

<sup>4</sup>Bruce Larkin, "China and the Third World," Current History 69, no. 48 (Sept. 1975): 75.

the developing and under developed countries, which provided much needed impetus to the Third world's political and economic agenda in the context of the Non-Aligned Movement and the North-South dialogue.<sup>5</sup> Some analysts argue that China's principal identification is not with the socialist states but with the less developed states of Asia, Africa and Latin America.<sup>6</sup> In 1954 at the first National Peoples Congress, Chinese Premier Chou en-Lai announced the five principles of peaceful co-existence,<sup>7</sup> as the basis of Chinese foreign policy which is being followed by the Third world nations as the cornerstone of their foreign policies. Following the "Bandung Conference" of 1955 China brought the theme of solidarity and cooperation of the Afro-Asian countries into its political phrase book.<sup>8</sup> Actually China repeatedly sided with the Third world countries in global

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<sup>5</sup>Robert A. Manning, "The Third World Looks at China," China and the Third World: Champion or Challenger? (eds.) Lilian Craig Harris and Robert L. Worden (Dover, Mass.: Auburn House Publishing Co., 1986), 141.

<sup>6</sup>Larkin, 75.

<sup>7</sup>The five principles are: 1) mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, 2) mutual non-aggression, 3) non interference in each other's internal affairs, 4) equality and each other's mutual benefit, 5) peaceful co-existence. See Harris and Worden, 2.

<sup>8</sup>Although the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) was well represented at the symbolic founding of the Third world conference at Bandung, there were differences of opinion in the conference. Some Bandung participants agreed that China was closer in outlook to the Nonaligned states than to the developed nations. Others believed that China was closer to the developed nations because of its immense population and potential national power. See Harris and Worden, 3.

forums, against the industrial north.<sup>9</sup> Of course there are valid arguments that China's foreign policy continues to be propelled by the consideration of national interest and China's identification with the Third world contribute towards the achievement of those Chinese objectives, which are ensuring national security and international recognition of China's position of prominence and authority.<sup>10</sup>

China's close tie with the South Asian countries, especially Bangladesh, is no exception of its policy towards gradual alignment with the developing countries of Afro-Asia and Latin America. Bangladesh's national interest also demands close cooperation with China for improving South-south cooperation and the economic development of the developing countries. Bangladesh's strategic interest also demands cordial link with China against Indian expansionism and hegemonism.<sup>11</sup> At this level, both high and low foreign

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<sup>9</sup>In the special session of the United Nations in April 1974 Chinese Vice Premier Teng Hsiao-Ping, enthusiastically endorsed the Arab's use of oil as a political weapon during the Arab-Israeli war, hailing it as a pioneering action and proposed that "what was done in the oil battle should and can be done in the case of other raw materials." See Peter Van Ness, "China and the Third World," Current History 67, no. 397 (Sept. 1974): 107.

<sup>10</sup>Harris and Worden, 5.

<sup>11</sup>The small states of South Asia looked towards India with suspicion and mistrust. They accuse India for not considering its small neighbors as sovereign equals. Moreover, Indian annexation of Sikkim in 1974 and recently Indian intervention in Sri Lanka in 1986, have accelerated the fear of Indian hegemonism and expansionism among the neighboring states.

policy of Bangladesh demanded alignment with China.<sup>12</sup> Apart from these, there are many commonalities between Bangladesh and China which strengthen the link between the two countries. These are:

First of all, both countries have agrarian economy, dominance of rural population, absence of super technology, unskilled labor forces and the burden of over population.

Secondly, both countries share similar experience of struggle against national repression, foreign domination and occupation, which make both of them natural ally of each other.

Thirdly, as an initiator of South Asian association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Bangladesh has drawn very close to China.

Fourthly, both countries adopted the five principles of peaceful co-existence and follow a non-aligned foreign policy with a tilt toward Third world countries.

Finally, Bangladesh and China hold identical views on many regional and global issues in various regional and global forums.<sup>13</sup>

Recent past in June 1990, Chinese Premier Li Peng while meeting with visiting Bangladesh's Prime Minister Khaleda Zia said "it is consistently the policy of China to be friendly to Bangladesh,"<sup>14</sup> while Bangladesh's Prime Minister

<sup>12</sup>High foreign policy is concerned with national security and survival and low foreign policy, deals with matters relating to foreign trade, investment and economic cooperation among countries. See R.N. Cooper, "Trade Policy in Foreign Policy," Foreign Policy, 1978.

<sup>13</sup>Zaglul Haider, "Bangladesh-China Relations: A Review," Regional Studies (Islamabad) 9, no. 2 (Spring 1991): 72.

<sup>14</sup>See "Bangladesh's Prime Minister in Beijing," Beijing Review 34, no. 26 (July 1991): 7.

Khaleda Zia said that Bangladesh held identical views with China regarding international situation.<sup>15</sup> But the present state of excellence between Bangladesh-China relations did not prevail during the liberation struggle of Bangladesh. China seriously opposed the liberation movement of Bangladesh, because of Indo-Soviet "tilt" towards the movement against Chinese trusted friend Pakistan. Moreover China did not consider Bangladesh struggle as a real liberation war. From the Chinese point of view it was not a genuine guerrilla war fought by peasants and workers. Rather, it was a separatist movement launched not by the masses but by a handful of persons who wanted to dismember Pakistan.<sup>16</sup>

Because of its skeptical role in the liberation war of Bangladesh, its revolutionary image received a setback in Bangladesh. But following the birth of Bangladesh mistrust and misunderstanding disappeared gradually from the scene. During the first four years of the Mujib regime (1971-1975) there were no diplomatic relations in effect between Bangladesh and China. At this point the absence of formal

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<sup>15</sup>See "Bangladesh Prime Minister in Beijing," Beijing Review 34, no. 26 (July 17, 1991): 7.

<sup>16</sup>G.W. Chaudhury, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and the Major Powers (New York: Free Press, 1975). Also see Mizanur Rahman Shelly, "Emergence of a New Nation in a Multipolar World: Bangladesh (Dhaka: University Press Limited, 1979): ix. Also see Syed Anwar Husain, "Role of the Super Powers and the Emergence of Bangladesh: A Review Article," Politics, Administration and Change 5, no. 2 (July-Dec 1980): 128.

ties was caused by the strong Chinese reservation about Bangladesh. Immediately after the emergence of Bangladesh, the increasing influence of the Indo-Soviet axis in Bangladesh and the fashioning of the Mujib government's foreign policy tilted towards Indo-Soviet orbit seriously inhibited the process of China's rapprochement with the new nation Bangladesh. As Indo-Soviet axis was appeared to be annoying to China, Premier Chou en-Lai commented: "the fall of Dhaka to the Indian army on December 16, 1971, is not the end of the problems but just the start of them."<sup>17</sup> However, the situation changed dramatically following the pre-dawn coup of August 15, 1975, which caused the assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and toppled his pro-Indian and pro-Soviet government. With the emergence of Ziaur Rahman at first defacto and later de'jure leader, Bangladesh-China relations began to normalize. It was improving significantly, right after Zia's rapid transformation of Bangladesh's foreign policy from Indo-Soviet orbit to its opposite camp of Sino-US and the Muslim world. Since then the two countries have been maintaining very friendly relationship, which is regarded by both Bangladesh and China as the "time tested" friendship.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Quoted in G. W. Chaudhury, The Last Days of United Pakistan (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1974): 224.

<sup>18</sup>See Peking Review 34, no. 26 (July 17, 1991).



However, this chapter seeks to undertake a comparative study of Bangladesh-China relations during the Mujib and Zia Regimes (1971-1981). To this end this chapter will be organized into the following subsections:

Role of China in the Liberation War of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh-China Relations: Mujib and Zia Regimes  
(1971-1981).

Summary.

#### Role of China in the Liberation War of Bangladesh

Chinese interest in the South Asian region was not a new event. China became active in the South Asian politics since 1960s. From the Sino-Indian War of 1962, China started to play a very crucial role in the sub-continent. In the aftermath of the U.S. "tilt" towards India in the 1962 Sino-Indian War, Pakistan chose to adopt "bilaterism," which propelled Pakistan's closer tie with China. Again during the Indo-Pakistan War of 1965 over the Kashmir issue, China strongly sided with Pakistan and showed its resolve to support Pakistan against Indian aggression of Pakistan's territory.<sup>19</sup> Chinese unconditional support towards Pakistan during the 1965 war enabled her to be a trusted friend of Pakistan. By the late 1960's Peking-Pindi nexus became so

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<sup>19</sup>S. P. Seth, "China as a Factor in Indo-Pakistan's Politics," The World Today 25, no. 1 (January 1969): 43. Also see William J. Brands, India, Pakistan and the Great Powers (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1972), 290.

deep rooted that the Indo-Soviet axis power was looking for an opportunity so that the increasing influence of China in South Asia could be checkmated.

In the aftermath of Brezhnev's collective Security Plan of 1969, and after the cultural revolution of China, both the Soviet Union and China had competitively shown their interest in Pakistan in order to forestall each other's influence. After the resignation of Ayub Khan and installation of General Yahya Khan in 1969, Chinese premier Chou-en-lai assured continued support for Pakistan, while the Soviet Union began to influence Pakistan to subscribe the "Asian collective security system." The Chinese were anxious about the Soviet pressure on their time tested friend--Pakistan. While criticizing the collective security system, Chou-en-lai viewed:

The so-called Asian collective security system is a new step taken by social imperialism in its intensified efforts to rig up a new anti-China military alliance. Flaunting the sign board of "collective security" social imperialism actually aims at aggression and expansion against Asian countries, trying to force them to abandon their sovereignty and independence.... The Chinese government will always firmly support the Pakistan people against foreign aggression, firmly support the Kashmir people in their struggle for the right to national self determination.<sup>20</sup>

Against the backdrop of Pakistan-China honeymoon, the Bangladesh liberation struggle of 1971 drew special attention of China toward Pakistan. Chinese immediate

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<sup>20</sup>Washington Post, April 9, 1971.

reaction to the Bangladesh crisis was expressed on April 6, 1971 and China accused India of interfering in the internal affairs of Pakistan and bluntly endorsed Pakistan's position. China designed its policy towards the crisis from its regional and global perceptions. In the first place, Pakistan's strategic location and geographical proximity to China brought the two countries closer to each other. They have a common border of about 300 miles and a common hostile neighbor.<sup>21</sup>

Secondly, Chinese hostility with the Soviet Union and the USA and adversarial relations with India and deep friendship with Pakistan directed it to support Pakistan's position.

Thirdly, being the largest Muslim country Pakistan had special position in the Muslim world. China wanted to promote its relation with the Muslim world via Pakistan. As a matter of fact China's Pakistan connection helped in normalizing its relation with Iran and Turkey.<sup>22</sup>

Finally, maintaining peace, stability and security of Pakistan was very important in the interests of China. A threat to Pakistan's independence would endanger the peace and security of the proximate region. Therefore, very obviously Chinese national interest directed her to side

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<sup>21</sup>Both Pakistan and China are bordered with India and Soviet Union--common hostile neighbor.

<sup>22</sup>Mehrunnisa Ali, "East Pakistan Crisis: International Reaction," Pakistan Horizon 24, no. 2 (Second Quarter 1971): 40.

with Pakistan in the Bangladesh crisis.<sup>23</sup> Although Chinese revolutionary image was tarnished in Bangladesh, it did not hesitate to provide moral and material support to Pakistan. It was a carefully designed policy decision of China. It was a case of siding with a friend without any consideration of justice or injustice. Following the Pakistani military crackdown in Bangladesh on March 26, 1971, the new China news agency reported that Pakistan army had taken action to suppress the secessionist movement.<sup>24</sup> Chinese official reaction was expressed by a letter of Chou en-lai to Pakistan's president Yahya Khan, which appeared to express strong support for Pakistan. The letter included:

Your excellency may rest assured that should Indian expansionists dare to launch aggression against Pakistan. The Chinese government and the people as always support the Pakistan and people in their just struggle to safeguard state sovereignty and national independence.<sup>25</sup>

The pro-Chinese elements in Bangladesh were confused and upset at China's support towards Pakistan, despite Yahya Khan's military atrocities which were apparently in conflict with the principles of revolutionary social changes.<sup>26</sup> About

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>Richard Sisson and Leo E. Rose, War and Secession in Pakistan, India and the Creation of Bangladesh (Berkeley: University of California, 1990), 250.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Ataur Rahman, "Bangladesh and Big Power Politics in the Subcontinent," The Journal of Political Science (Dhaka University) 2, issue 1 (November 1985): 17.

the embarrassment of the pro-Chinese leftists, Maniruzzaman wrote:

The pro-Peking leftists who had already split into several factions prior to the liberation struggle became totally confused when Peking chose to support the Yahya regime in its brutal suppression of the liberation movement.<sup>27</sup>

Despite the disappointment of pro-Chinese elements in Bangladesh, China rationalized its support towards Pakistan by the five principles of peaceful co-existence, what Mao Zedung initiated. The Chinese while justifying their position in Bangladesh presented these five principles of peaceful co-existence and argued:

We firmly maintain that all nations should practice the well known five principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, non aggression, non interference in each others internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit and peaceful co-existence.<sup>28</sup>

The Chinese decision of extending open support to the military atrocities of Yahya Khan frustrated the Maoist activists in Bangladesh, because they thought that the Bengalis were ideologically more close to China. The Bengalis resisted the friendship with the imperialist power and Pakistan's joining of the regional defense treaties like SEATO and CENTO, and cherished Maoist ideology. In fact, very logically, the Bengalis sought Chinese support. But in

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<sup>27</sup>Talukder Maniruzzaman, "Radical Politics and the Emergence of Bangladesh," in Paul R. Brass and Marcus Franda (eds.) Radical Politics in South Asia (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1973), 273.

<sup>28</sup>Renmin Ribao, "What are Indian Expansionist Trying to Do?" Peking Review (April 16, 1971): 11.

the Bangladesh crisis, China clearly confronted its revolutionary ideologies and supported the military dictator Yahya Khan.<sup>29</sup> While the pro-Chinese leftists considered that Chinese role towards the Bangladesh movement was wrong and they also opposed the Awami League and Indian dominance in the Bangladesh struggle. Some pro-Chinese elements under the leadership of Maulana Bhasani fled to India and fought to liberate Bangladesh from India. While other groups considered the Chinese attitude towards Bangladesh struggle was wrong but they also contemplated that the Awami League led movement was a design of Indian expansionism and Soviet social imperialism.<sup>30</sup> So they did not go to India and fought from inside the country against Pakistani occupation forces. As a matter of fact China, which once had championed the cause of national liberation movement, and had pledged its adherence to the five principles of peaceful co-existence, now opposing the Bangladesh liberation war, siding with the military dictator of Pakistan, really amazed the freedom loving people throughout the world, including many Chinese.<sup>31</sup> While Chinese support was considered by Pakistan as bluntest foreign policy decision that emerged from Peking in a long

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<sup>29</sup>A.M.A. Muhith, Bangladesh: Emergence of a Nation (Dhaka: Bangladesh Books International 1978), 352.

<sup>30</sup>See Talukder Maniruzzaman, 275.

<sup>31</sup>For details, see A.M.A. Muhith, 353.

time.<sup>32</sup> Pakistan Times commented regarding Chinese support: "In the hour of our need and trials and tribulations, the great people's Republic of China unfailingly comes to our aid with its moral and material support."<sup>33</sup>

So it is clear that the Chinese policy throughout the crisis had two distinct features: (1) it was a policy of strict non intervention, and (2) unconditional and blanket support for Pakistan's state sovereignty.<sup>34</sup> Although the pro-Chinese political activists in Bangladesh expected Chinese support for their liberation struggle, due to its support for Pakistan, China lost its political credibility among many Bengalis and the pro-Chinese elements in Bangladesh became political orphan throughout the whole period of crisis. This really had upset the pro-Chinese elements in Bangladesh. Actually, the rationales for Chinese policy towards Bangladesh were:

First of all, China considered the Bangladesh struggle as a secessionist movement. It was difficult for China to support a separatist movement when China itself was seeking the unification of Taiwan with the mainland.

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<sup>32</sup>Dawn (Karachi), May 27, 1971.

<sup>33</sup>Editorial, The Pakistan Times (Lahore), April 14, 1971.

<sup>34</sup>Tariq Ali, "Pakistan and Bangladesh: Results and Prospects," in Robin Blackburn (ed.) Explosion in a Subcontinent (Penguin Books, 1975), 321.

Secondly, according to the Chinese standard it was not a genuine guerrilla war fought by peasants and workers. It was a separatist movement launched by "handful of persons," who wanted to sabotage the unity of Pakistan.

Thirdly, the Bangladesh movement was considered by China as a struggle between aggression and anti-aggression, between division and anti-division and between subversion and anti-subversion.<sup>35</sup>

Fourthly, China did not approve Awami League's policy and leadership. The Awami League stood for close relations with India and Mujib was well known as pro-American from his early political life. Therefore it was doubtful that after assuming power, the party would work for the workers and peasants.

Finally, China believed that those who were fighting for Bangladesh were being aided financially and militarily by foreign powers which aimed at the dismemberment of Pakistan while the Chinese perception of guerrilla war was that guerrillas must fight their own war without the aid of an outside power.<sup>36</sup>

Considering all these factors, China interpreted the liberation war of Bangladesh as a criminal act of Indian

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<sup>35</sup>See Mizanur Rahman Shelly, Emergence of a New Nation in a Multipolar World: Bangladesh (Dhaka: University Press, 1979), 95-107.

<sup>36</sup>G.W. Chaudhury, 210-214. Mizanar Rahman Shelly, 95-107. Also see Meherunnisa Ali, "China's Diplomacy During the Indo-Pakistan war, 1971" Pakistan Horizon 26, no. 1 (First Quarter 1972): 59.



expansionism backed by the "Soviet social imperialism" the two forces which consistently supported the Bengali struggle in 1971. So China officially regarded the Bangladesh struggle as a counter revolutionary effort in the East Bengal in order to aggrandize its narrow class interests with the help of reactionary and revisionist external powers.<sup>37</sup> Even after the birth of Bangladesh, Peking Review in its editorial said:

What kind of "fait accompli" is the so called Bangladesh after all? The whole world can see that it has been created by the Indian government through naked aggression and subversion with the support of the Soviet revisionism. By putting up the signboard of so-called support to "national self-determination" Soviet revisionism cannot cover up in the least the essence of the issue.<sup>38</sup>

China not only provided political support to Pakistan, it also continued its economic and military aid to Pakistan after Pakistan army's massacre of March 25, 1971. It also allowed the unloading of a large shipment of arms consigned to the Pakistani army in East Pakistan that had been shipped before March 25, but did not reach at the Chittagong harbor until April 1971.<sup>39</sup> Although Beijing honored its previous military aid to Pakistan, it was unwilling to endorse new

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<sup>37</sup>Lee Lescaze, "Watchful Dragon," International Herald Tribune (April 13, 1971).

<sup>38</sup>Renmin Ribao, "It is Impermissible to Legalize india's Invasion and Occupation of East Pakistan" Peking Review 15, no. 5 (February 4, 1972): 8.

<sup>39</sup>Sisson and Rose, 251.

arms aid throughout 1971.<sup>40</sup> Despite having Chinese strong support towards Pakistan, Beijing clearly informed Islamabad its unwillingness to intervene directly in the hostility.

However, China remained silent in the crisis from April to November 1971, despite Indian charge, that China was deploying troops on India's Himalayan border as a diversionary tactic to bolster the morale of its ally Pakistan and reduce pressure on it by heightening Indian concern about the Sino-Indian border situation.<sup>41</sup> By this time Henry Kissinger had completed his secret visit to Peking via Pakistan and Sino-American rapprochement was in progress. Following Kissinger's visit to Peking, on August 9, 1971, India and the Soviet Union signed the friendship treaty, which threatened China, and prohibited China from the possibility of its involvement in the crisis. Like the U.S.A., the Indo-Soviet treaty was felt by Peking as a "bombshell" too.<sup>42</sup> At this point although China continued its support to Pakistan, it was also urging for a negotiation

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

<sup>41</sup>The Indian defense minister, Jag Jivanram on June 8, 1971, told the Parliament that 100,000 Chinese troops in Tibet were believed to be exposed along the Indo-Tibetan border. However, on July 28, 1971, the Indian ministry of defense informed the parliament that there was no Chinese troop movement along the Indo-Soviet border. See Chester Bowles, "America and Russia in India," Hindustan Standard (June 27, 1971). Also see CDSR 27, no. 23, (1971).

<sup>42</sup>Henry Kissinger wrote in his White House years "On August 9 came the bombshell of the Soviet-Indian Friendship Treaty." See Henry Kissinger, White House Years (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1979), 861.

between Pakistan and India. This was hinted by the Chinese leaders when Z.A. Bhutto was sent to Beijing by Yahya Khan in 1971. At a banquet given in honor of Pakistani leader, the then acting Chinese foreign minister Chi-Peng-Fei urged that a reasonable settlement should be sought by the Pakistani people themselves. Chi Peng Fei said:

The Chinese government and people are greatly concerned over the present tension in the subcontinent. We maintain that the internal affairs of any country must be handled by its own people. The East Pakistani question is the internal affair of Pakistan and a reasonable settlement should be sought by the Pakistan people themselves and it is absolutely impermissible for any foreign country to carry out interference and subversion under any pretext.<sup>43</sup>

As a matter of fact Bhutto's visit to China was very important at that point, because the Pakistan authority wanted to secure Beijing's military support in the context of: (1) Indian military deployment on the East Pakistan border, (2) increased guerrilla activities inside the East Pakistan, (3) Indo-Soviet defense treaty of August 1971, (4) Indian mobilization of world support towards intervention in Pakistan, (5) the US decision to stop the arms supply to Pakistan, and finally, Pakistan was asking a reward from China for the mediatory role towards the US-China rapprochement. However, China showed her reluctance towards military aid to Pakistan.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>Chi Peng-Fei's speech, Peking Review (November 12, 1971), 5.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

In a return banquet given by Bhutto which was attended by Chinese premier Chou en-lai, the Chinese leader dwelt on Sino-Pakistan bilateral relations and made no comment on external threat to Pakistan.<sup>45</sup> This came as a disappointment to Mr. Bhutto who told newsmen that Pakistan could hope for very little help from China.<sup>46</sup> Actually China urged Pakistani leaders for a political settlement in East Pakistan regardless of Chinese support to maintain integrity to Pakistan.<sup>47</sup> One of the reasons behind China's unwillingness of involvement in a military confrontation in South Asia was Indo-Soviet Treaty of friendship, which concerned China very much. After the treaty China preferred a diplomatic settlement because:

- China was not strong enough to confront India and the Soviet Union simultaneously.

- China itself was passing through a series of political crises.

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<sup>45</sup>See, Premier Chou-en-lai's speech at a return banquet given by Pakistan's leader Mr. Z.A. Bhutto in Peking Review (November 12, 1971), 23.

<sup>46</sup>G.W. Chaudhury, 201. Another study shows that Bhutto asked the Chinese Premier whether China would come to assist Pakistan in the event of war with India. Premier Chou replied that war was unlikely, but if it occurred Chinese military forces would not intervene directly in support of Pakistan although China would support Pakistan politically and provide material assistance. See Sisson and Rose, 251.

<sup>47</sup>Myedul Hasan, Muldahara Ekattar, (Dhaka: UPL 1986), 139. Also see M.G. Kabir, "US Policy and the Bangladesh Crisis of 1971," Biiss Journal 9, no. 2 (1988): 205.

- China and the Chinese peoples liberation army (PLA) had not yet fully recovered from displacement caused in all sectors of the society by the cultural revolution.

- The PLA was involved in management, reconstruction and administrative-tasks that occupied the elite units of the main forces and their officers, all of whom were deeply involved in politics at every level.

- Technically winter was the most inconvenient season for military maneuvers in the Himalayan passes which were likely to remain snowed in.

- Under these conditions China and PLA were very anxious to fight for Pakistan--a matter of secondary interest to China.<sup>48</sup>

However, prior to the beginning of the formal Indo-Pakistan war on December 3, 1971, China on the one hand supported Pakistan against "Indian aggression" and opposed the Bangladesh liberation war. On the other hand, it called for a peaceful settlement of the crisis of Pakistan, through consultations and mutual withdrawal of forces. But after the breakup of the war, from late November and early December 1971, China in consultation with the USA started strong

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<sup>48</sup>Yaacov Y.I. Vertzberger, China's Southwestern Strategy: Encirclement and Counter Encirclement (New York: Praeger Publishers), 54. Also see Zaglul Haider, "BD-China Relations: A Review," Regional Studies 9, no. 2 (Spring 1991): 74. Also see Vijay Sen. Budhiraj, "Moscow and the Birth of Bangladesh," Asian Survey 13, no. 5 (May 1973): 492.

diplomatic efforts in favor of Pakistan.<sup>49</sup> On the evening of December 4, 1971 at the UN Security Council's urgent meeting, Chinese permanent representative, Mr. Huang Hua denounced the Indian government's action against Pakistan and stated:

The question of East Pakistan is purely the internal affair of Pakistan in which no one has any right to interfere. It is impermissible for the Indian government to commit armed aggression against Pakistan by using the question of East Pakistan as a pretext. The Indian government asserts that it has sent troops to East Pakistan for the purpose of self defense. This is a sheer gangster logic. The facts show that it is India which has committed aggression against Pakistan and not Pakistan which has "menaced" the security of India.<sup>50</sup>

On December 5, 1971 China vetoed on the Soviet proposal for inviting a representative of Bangladesh and considered the Bangladesh concept as "so-called Bangladesh."<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>About the US-China secret diplomatic understanding Henry Kissinger wrote:

"November 23 was also the day of my first secret meeting with the Chinese in New York. Huang Hua was now permanent representative of the Peoples Republic of China to the United Nations.... At this point I could do little more than brief Huang Hua on the military situation. I showed him the draft resolution we would submit to the Security Council, if the issue were taken up there, indicating we had not made a final decision. Huang Hua emphasized that China would support Pakistan in the Security Council, but would follow Pakistan's lead as to whether to take the issue there."

For details, see Henry Kissinger, White House Years (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1979), 889.

<sup>50</sup>Peking Review (December 10, 1971), 7.

<sup>51</sup>Peking Review 50 (December 10, 1971), 8.

On the other hand, on the same day, China proposed a draft resolution in the Security Council and called upon India and Pakistan to cease hostility and to withdraw respectively from the international border between India and Pakistan and to disengage from each other, so that conditions could have been created for a peaceful settlement of the disputes between India and Pakistan.<sup>52</sup>

But China's call for troops withdrawal was resisted by both India and the Soviet Union and Chinese diplomatic efforts had failed. As Bangladesh war neared its climax in December 1971, China's criticism appeared to be sharper against Indian expansionism and "Soviet Social imperialism." China compared the Bangladesh struggle with the Tibetan uprising of 1959. On December 8, 1971 the People's Daily of China commented:

The Indian government's criminal act of engineering of so-called Bangladesh is consistent with the tactics used by the Indian reactionaries in carrying out aggression against its neighbors. It invariably exerts the utmost efforts to show discord among the nationalities of its neighbors, grooms a number of running dogs which bark at its command and engineers subversion and secession. It acted in this way against the Tibetan region of China.<sup>53</sup>

When Indo-Pakistan war was progressing towards an end, China very consistently viewed the problem as a Soviet bid to fish in a troubled water. On December 10, 1971, refuting

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<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 10.

<sup>53</sup>Quoted in Mizanur Rahman Shelly, "Chinese Attitude Towards Bangladesh," Asian Affairs 2, no. 2 (July-December 1980): 193.

a TASS statement that the Pakistan government's action in East Pakistan was the main cause of the tension between India and Pakistan, the Peking Review in its editorial critically evaluated the Tass statement as "sheer nonsense" and refuted the Soviet statement by saying that the East Pakistan question was entirely Pakistan's internal affair and asked the Soviet Union, how can the internal affair of a country become the main cause of tension between states?<sup>54</sup>

However, China was so sanguine towards Pakistan, against the Bangladesh struggle that on December 15, 1971, prior to the surrender of Pakistan's army, the Chinese representative in the UN Security Council expressed its firm support towards the Pakistan government.<sup>55</sup> Finally on December 16, 1971, when Pakistan army surrendered to the Indo-Bangladesh joint command, the Chinese government further expressed their resolute support toward Pakistan.

The statement said:

The Chinese government and people firmly support the Pakistan government and people in their struggle against aggression, division and subversion.... We hold that there can be no neutrality on the question of aggression versus anti-aggression, of division versus anti-division and of subversion versus anti-subversion.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>Renmin Ribao, "Refuting the TASS Statement," Peking Review 50 (December 10, 1971): 11.

<sup>55</sup>Statement by the Chinese representative Huang Hua in the UN Security Council, December 15, 1971 in R.K. Jain (ed.) China South Asian Relation (compilation of documents) (Sussex: Harvester Press, 1981), 231.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 235.



Following Indian recognition of Bangladesh, Peking denounced it as a "New Delhi farce" and interpreted that as a puppet regime forcibly imposed upon the East Pakistan people by India. It also accused the Soviet Union as the real director of the "Bangladesh farce."<sup>57</sup> Peking very strongly attacked Indian expansionists for trying to dismember Pakistan and establish a puppet state in East Bengal, like that which the Japanese had set up in Manchuria in East China.<sup>58</sup>

Even after the birth of the Bangladesh, the Chinese vice premier Li Hsien-nien, in a statement on December 26, 1971 declared:

We sternly condemn the Indian aggressors for these sanguinary crimes. The Indian government must stop forthwith the massacre and persecution of the Pakistan people and immediately and unconditionally withdrew its aggressor forces from East Pakistan and all the other places they have occupied.<sup>59</sup>

Although many analysts argued that China opposed the Bangladesh struggle because Chinese did not consider it as a real national liberation movement, from the Maoist point of view. It is very much over simplification of Chinese policy towards the Bangladesh movement. It is easily understandable

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<sup>57</sup>The Daily Telegraph (London), December 8, 1971. Also see Mehrunisa Ali, "China's Diplomacy During the Indo-Pakistan War 1971," Pakistan Horizon 26, no. 1 (First Quarter 1972): 55.

<sup>58</sup>Peking Review 50 (December 10), 11.

<sup>59</sup>R.K. Jain, 237.

that the Chinese policy of supporting Pakistan against the Bangladesh movement was shaped by Chinese national interest and more specifically, geo-political factors.<sup>60</sup>

Bangladesh-China Relations: Mujib and Zia Regimes  
(1971-1981)

Political Level

Following the birth of Bangladesh, during the short span of the Mujib regime (1971-1975), there was no diplomatic tie between Bangladesh and China. At this point prominent pro-Chinese politician, Mulana Bashani wrote a letter to chairman Mao and premier Chou, urging them to recognize Bangladesh, but China remained silent and instead, showed gesture of good will for Pakistan. To make Pakistan happy, it also closed the Chinese consulate in Dhaka, on the view of occupation of East Pakistan by Indian troops. In fact China had suffered a major setback in the Bangladesh conflict of 1971, which increased Indo-Soviet influence in the subcontinent--the enemies of China.

In the redesigned context of South Asia, immediately, after the emergence of Bangladesh, Tajuddin Ahmed, the premier of the new nation, Bangladesh pledged Chinese recognition of Bangladesh and said that China was a great nation with the tradition of fighting against imperialism

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<sup>60</sup>Syed Anwar Husain, "Role of the Super Powers and the Emergence of Bangladesh: A Review Article," Politics, Administration and Change 5, no. 2 (December 1980): 129.

and expected that China would change its attitude towards the new nation.<sup>61</sup> But China did not respond to the call of Tajuddin and refused to recognize Bangladesh. Siding with Pakistan China also protested strongly the alleged killings of the stranded Pakistanis in Bangladesh and sent a letter to the Security Council urging to end the killings of Pakistanis in Bangladesh.<sup>62</sup> Aside from this, China supported Bhutto's position for the so-called unity of Pakistan with its former Eastern wing Bangladesh. The Chinese premier Chou-en-lai declared during Pakistan's President Z.A. Bhutto's visit to China in 1972:

The Chinese government and people resolutely support the Pakistan government and people in their just struggle in defense of state sovereignty and territorial integrity and against foreign aggression and interference and resolutely support the people of Kashmir in their just struggle for the right of national self-determination. We firmly maintain that the resolution of the UN General Assembly and the Security Council should be respected and implemented and that the Indian government should withdraw its armed forces from Pakistan's territory and cease its military provocation against Pakistan.<sup>63</sup>

In August 1972, Bangladesh's foreign minister Abdus Samad Azad again expressed Bangladesh's desire to establish diplomatic relations with China. Abdus Samad Azad said:

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<sup>61</sup>USSR and the Third World 2, no. 1 (December 6-January 16, 1971): 13.

<sup>62</sup>The Daily Telegraph (London), December 29, 1971. Also see Peking Review, December 31, 1971.

<sup>63</sup>See Peking Review 15, no. 5 (February 4, 1972), 6.

We have extended our hands of friendship towards China and we sincerely hope that this will be reciprocated by the Chinese leaders who I am sure will find profound good will and respect for them among the people of Bangladesh.<sup>64</sup>

But China did not respond to the call of Bangladesh and refused to recognize the newly independent country. On August 26, 1972 when Bangladesh applied for the membership of the United Nations, Chinese representative to the UN Hoang-Hua vetoed the application and moved a separate resolution urging that the application be refused until all Pakistani prisoners of war (POWs) had been repatriated and all the foreign soldiers removed from Bangladesh.<sup>65</sup> Naturally the Chinese action caused much disappointment among the Bangladeshis. Mujib government believed that "Peking was continuing a deliberate policy calculated to create tension and instability in the subcontinent."<sup>66</sup> Regarding Chinese image in Bangladesh after the veto the Far Eastern Economic Review reported:

China's own supporters here have been discomfited by the veto various Maoist elements had hoped that despite the past China held initiative in regaining ground sooner or later. Today many pro-Peking elements feel the veto has stung Bengali nationalism so deeply that China has robbed itself

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<sup>64</sup>Bangladesh Observer (August 27, 1972).

<sup>65</sup>G.W. Chaudhury, 239.

<sup>66</sup>A.L. Khatib, "Dhaka Wags a Sad finger at China," Far Eastern Economic Review, September 9, 1972.

of the capacity to normalize relations at a time of its own choosing.<sup>67</sup>

Chinese veto to the United Nations against Bangladesh's entry, was seriously criticized even by the most prominent pro-Peking leader Maulana Bashani.<sup>68</sup> However after the recognition of Bangladesh by Pakistan on February 22, 1974 and the agreement for the repatriation of the Pakistani POWs. China refrained from vetoing Bangladesh's entry into the world body and enabled Bangladesh to become a member of the United Nations in September 1974.<sup>69</sup> Welcoming Bangladesh's admission into the UN the Chinese representative to the UN Chuang Yen expressed China's desire to establish good neighborly relations with Bangladesh. Chuang Yen said:

We are ready to develop good neighborly relations with the countries on the subcontinent, on the basis of the five principles of peaceful co-existence and further enhance our traditional friendship with their peoples. The Chinese government and people will always firmly support the people in South Asia in their struggle against hegemonism and expansionism.<sup>70</sup>

Though Chinese attitude towards Bangladesh started changing from the mid 1974, still it did not recognize Bangladesh

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<sup>67</sup>Ibid.

<sup>68</sup>Maulana Bashani said in a statement that "I do vehemently protest in the bitterest language," against the Chinese veto. See Ibid.

<sup>69</sup>The UN Security Council on June 10 meeting adopted a resolution recommending the UN General Assembly to admit Bangladesh to the UN membership.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid.

till the last day of the Shiekh Mujib era. China even did not have any diplomatic relations with Bangladesh during the Mujib regime. Moreover the pro-Chinese elements were very active and critical of Mujib governments pro-Indian and pro-Soviet policies. During 1973/75 the Mujib government was seriously threatened by the guerrilla activities of the pro-Chinese activists, and the government responded with brutal and coercive machineries<sup>71</sup> and killed and arrested several thousands of pro-Chinese leftist activists as a means to stop the guerilla activities. Among the pro-Chinese leftists who had been killed by the Mujib's para-military force, Siraj Sikder was very prominent. He was the chief of the East Bengal Sarbohara Party and became the main challenge to the Sheikh Mujib regime.<sup>72</sup> As the guerrilla activists intensified their fight against the Mujib government, Mujib's coercive and repressive machineries also became acute which attempted to crush the pro-Chinese elements very brutally. Mujib government's action against the pro-Chinese guerrillas increased Chinese dissatisfaction towards the Mujib regime and despite having Mujib government's repeated

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<sup>71</sup>For details, see Talukder Maniruzzaman, "Bangladesh in 1974: Economic Crisis and Political Polarization," Asian Survey 15, no. 2 (February 1975): 121.

<sup>72</sup>Siraj Sikder was arrested on January 1, 1975 and a day after arrest he was killed brutally by the Mujib's Rakkhi Bahini. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the then prime minister of Bangladesh indirectly admitted the responsibility of Siraj Sikder's killing by publicly declaring, "Where is Siraj Sikder?" See Nural Amin, "Pro Chinese Communist Movement in Bangladesh," Journal of Contemporary Asia 15, no. 3 (1985): 156.

urges and efforts, still Peking did not recognize and Bangladesh-China relations could not yet be formalized.

But Bangladesh-China relations started anew overnight. In the wake of the military coup of August 15, 1975 and the assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and with the emergence of Ziaur Rahman as a defacto leader, China recognized Bangladesh. China saw Mujib's overthrow as a matter of embarrassment for both India and the Soviet Union. It recognized Bangladesh on August 31, 1975 and opened a diplomatic mission in Dhaka to demonstrate its support to the new regime. While Bangladesh government warmly welcomed the recognition and expressed the confidence that the relationship will be strengthened and consolidated in the mutual interest and benefit of the two countries and the two peoples.<sup>73</sup> Following recognition, both Bangladesh and China have established diplomatic relations on October 4, 1975.<sup>74</sup> Regarding Bangladesh-China rapprochement, Peoples Daily wrote:

We are pleased with the decisions and we are convinced that the existence of Bangladesh which firmly defends state sovereignty and national independence and pursues a genuinely nonaligned policy will surely be conducive to safeguarding

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<sup>73</sup>Peking Review 18, no. 36 (September 5, 1975): 6.

<sup>74</sup>For details see USSR and the Third World 5, nos. 6-8 (1975): 280.

peace and security in the South Asian subcontinent and in Asia.<sup>75</sup>

After diplomatic relations, Chinese influence increased substantially in Bangladesh. The Maoist elements became very active and they officially set up Bangladesh-Chinese friendship society. But India and the Soviet Union became very much disappointed in the gradual increase in Chinese influence in Bangladesh. A Moscow broadcast (in English) for South Asia commented:

Reactionary forces in Bangladesh supported by imperialism and Maoism are active as reports from Dhaka indicate. They are using every possible means to create chaos in the country and are trying to present themselves as the country's leading political force. They use terror, blackmail and political demagoguery, justifying their actions by alleged threats from outside such as a "Soviet menace." This anti-Soviet hysteria is being deliberately whipped up by leftist and rightists, pro-imperialist forces and is aimed at separating the people of Bangladesh from their reliable friend, the Soviet Union. The reactionaries use the myth of a so-called Soviet menace to suppress the forces of progress and democracy inside Bangladesh which are the main obstacle preventing the reactionaries from achieving their objectives.<sup>76</sup>

In fact, the reasons behind the increasing Chinese influence in Bangladesh were that the new administration gave up Mujib's Pro-Indian and Pro-Soviet foreign policy and pursued a non-aligned and independent foreign policy outside the Indo-Soviet orbit, which was supported by China. Moreover,

<sup>75</sup>Quoted in G.W. Chaudhury, "Bangladesh's Coup and Countercoups: International Implications," ORBIS 19, no. 4 (Winter 1976): 1595.

<sup>76</sup>USSR and the Third World 5, nos. 6-8 (July 7-December 31, 1975): 281.



the Chinese objectives in Bangladesh were to relinquish the primary role of India and the Soviet Union, which was possible only after the overthrow of Sheikh Mujib in August 1975.<sup>77</sup>

Actually Bangladesh-China rapprochement and Bangladesh and Indo-Soviet ambivalence can be seen from Ziaur Rahman's redesigned foreign policy perspectives. Ziaur Rahman's new move towards changing relations with Pakistan and the Muslim world, simultaneously deteriorated Bangladesh-India relations, which significantly have improved the Bangladesh-China relations. But the Bangladesh-China honeymoon was a very disgraceful matter to both India and the Soviet Union.

Bangladesh's rapprochement with China was growing faster as Bangladesh was moving away from Indo-Soviet orbit. At this stage Bangladesh's primary interest in China was Chinese support in case of probable threat from India.<sup>78</sup> While analyzing the Bangladesh-China friendship Peking Review commented:

China and Bangladesh have been friendly to each other. Their friendly good-neighborly relations have been growing continuously since the establishment of diplomatic ties. China resolutely supports the Bangladesh peoples struggles to safeguard its national independence and develop its national economy. Bangladesh supports the

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<sup>77</sup>Shirin Tahir-Kheli, "Chinese Objectives in South Asia: Anti-Hegemony vs. collective Security," Asian Survey 18, no. 10 (October 1978): 1011.

<sup>78</sup>Zaglul Haider, "BD-China Relations: A Review," Regional Studies 9, no. 2 (Wpring 1991): 76.

Chinese people in their struggle against imperialism and hegemonism.<sup>79</sup>

Bangladesh-China relationship was further expanded and formalized after the then chief martial law administrator, General Ziaur Rahman paid his first visit to China on January 2-6, 1977. During this time China pledged its full support and cooperation towards Bangladesh against "expansionism and hegemonism" by which China meant Indian and the Soviet Union's maneuvering in Asia.<sup>80</sup>

At the welcome banquet given by the state council, vice premier Li Hsien-nien stated:

There is a profound traditional friendship between the peoples of China and Bangladesh.... The Chinese government and the people firmly support the government and people of Bangladesh in their just struggle to safeguard national independence and state sovereignty and resist foreign interference.<sup>81</sup>

In reply Ziaur Rahman welcomed the growing cordiality of the two countries' relations. Speaking at the banquet Gen. Zia proclaimed:

Bangladesh stands shoulder to shoulder with the people of the third world in their struggle against expansionism and hegemonism. Bangladesh supports the just struggle of the Third world countries for establishment of a new international economic order.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>79</sup>Peking Review 19, nos. 32-33 (August 19, 1976).

<sup>80</sup>G.W. Chaudhury, "China's Policy Toward South Asia," Current History (April 1974): 117.

<sup>81</sup>Peking Review 20, no. 2 (January 7, 1977): 19.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid.

Moreover during Zia's visit, China held identical views with Bangladesh as regards to the Middle East and Indian ocean.<sup>83</sup> Aside from Bangladesh-Chinese shared perception regarding the regional and international issues, China supported Bangladesh against India on the question of the apportionment of the Ganges water dispute over the Farakkah barrage. Following Ziaur Rahman's visit to Peking the political relations between Bangladesh and China improved so meaningfully that the Chinese offered military supplies to Bangladesh and China reportedly pledged to send four squadrons of Mig- 21s for the Bangladesh air force.<sup>84</sup>

Bangladesh-China relations further accelerated after Chinese vice premier Li Hsien-nien's visit to Bangladesh, in March 1978, who was accompanied by foreign minister Huang Hua. The visit of Chinese leaders to Bangladesh was a milestone between the two countries. In the banquet given in honor of vice premier Li, president Zia indicating Indian hegemonism, pointed out:

It is heartening to us as well as to other countries of the Third world that the friendly people of your great country share with us the vision of a world order free from imperialism, colonialism and hegemonism in any form.<sup>85</sup>

While supporting Bangladesh's standing Li enunciated:

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<sup>83</sup>Peking Review 20, no. 2 (1977): 20.

<sup>84</sup>Chaudhury, Current History, 157.

<sup>85</sup>Peking Review 21, no. 13 (March 31, 1978): 3.

We always maintain that all countries, big or small, are equal and that big countries should not bully small ones and strong countries should not presume weak ones. Whether a country treats others as equals or seeks hegemony is a major criterion for judging whether that country follows the five principles of peaceful co-existence.<sup>86</sup>

Following vice premier Li's visit Ziaur Rahman went to North Korea on their tenth anniversary of the founding of the "Democratic Republic," where he had very fruitful dialogue with the Chinese vice premier Teng Hsiao-Ping who was the head of the Chinese delegation. This further strengthened the Bangladesh-China relations.

But in 1978, Bangladesh's relationship with China was going to be rifted just after the appointment of S.M. Kibria as the secretary for foreign affairs, who was noted for pro-Moscow leaning.<sup>87</sup> In 1978, S.M. Kibria arranged a visit for the Vietnamese vice premier to Dhaka at the height of Sino-Vietnamese tension. The Chinese leaders were displeased with this gesture of Bangladesh government to their enemy. In fact, it was clearly provocative for Bangladesh to welcome the Vietnamese vice premier when China was extending its hands of friendship towards Bangladesh.<sup>88</sup> Moreover, Kibria was also making hectic efforts to re-establish honeymoon

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<sup>86</sup>Ibid., 4.

<sup>87</sup>Foreign secretary S.M. Kibria is well known for pro-Moscow leanings. It is believed among the observers and intellectuals that he was trying to influence the Mujib government to subscribe the Brezhnev's collective security plan in Asia. For details see Chaudhury, 158.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid.

relationship with Moscow as it was during the Mujib regime, which seriously angered China. Of course, such an action would upset China and would go against Bangladesh's national interest because Bangladesh needed very badly China's friendship and cooperation at that stage.

But as President Zia took timely actions, Bangladesh-China relations did not deteriorate, rather it improved significantly. Regarding Vietnamese aggression in Kampuchea Bangladesh clearly supported Chinese position and Bangladesh's foreign minister Shamsul Haq said:

With a view of achieving a durable peace...it is therefore essential that all foreign troops from the area of conflict should be withdrawn so that the people themselves are able to resolve problem in a peaceful manner, without outside interference.<sup>89</sup>

While Bangladesh's representative K.M. Kaiser in the UN Security Council called for the withdrawal of all troops from Kapuchea.<sup>90</sup>

Bangladesh-China relations improved amiably after the second visit of President Zia to China in 1980. This time President Zia and Premier Hua Guo-feng had a wide ranging exchange of views and reached complete agreement on major international issues like Afghan question and Kampuchea question. Regarding Afghan question Chinese premier said

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<sup>89</sup>Speech by Bangladesh Foreign minister Shamsul Huq in Peking on November 15, 1975. See Jain, China-South Asia Relations (a collection of documents) (Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1981).

<sup>90</sup>Statement by Bangladesh representative K. M. Kaiser in the UN Security Council on Sino-Vietnamese Conflict (Feb. 24, 1979): 271.

that a genuine settlement of the question could be possible only when the Soviet Union withdraws all its troops unconditionally and the Afghan people should be allowed to decide their own destiny. While Bangladesh's president held identical views with China and was opposing the invasion and occupation of Afghanistan by foreign troops, strongly demanded the withdrawal of all foreign troops from that country.<sup>91</sup>

Regarding the Vietnamese aggression in Kampuchea, both leaders held the view that the settlement could only be possible only when Vietnam completely withdraws its occupation troops and the people of Kampuchea can handle their own affairs.<sup>92</sup>

Apart from growing bilateral relations with China, during Zia regime, the activities of the pro-Chinese activists also increased significantly. The pro-Chinese radical activists extended their support to Ziaur Rahman, as the Bangladesh-China relations improved steadily. In fact there were several reasons behind pro-Peking radical elements' support towards the Zia regime:

First of all, Zia wanted to improve Bangladesh's relations with China in order to "counteract any undue dependence on India." This was the long cherished goal of

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<sup>91</sup>Beijing Review, no. 31 (August 4, 1980): 8.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid.

the pro-Chinese elements in Bangladesh since the days of independence. At this point the pro-Chinese could translate their policy into reality through Zia.

Secondly, domestically, Ziaur Rahman was trying to reduce the influence of the Awami League and so, he needed the support of the anti-Awami League forces. At this point the pro-Chinese activists clearly strengthened the hands of Zia because they were the worst sufferers of the Awami League regime.

Thirdly, Maulana Bashani, Mohammad Toha, and the prominent pro-Chinese leaders, supported Zia's assumption of power to resist Indian hegemonism and the Soviet social imperialism. While many renowned pro-Chinese leaders got important portfolios in Zia's cabinet including Senior Minister Mashiur Rahman, Deputy Prime Minister S.A. Bari A.T. and Education Minister Kani Zafar Ahmed. In fact an important part of Zia's political party--Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)--came out of pro-Chinese political parties.

Finally, Ziaur Rahman's policy of canal digging and mass literacy program greatly attracted the pro-Chinese radicals, which they regarded as revolution by Zia. Although these were liberal economic programs, Zia used these as revolutionary tactics.

In addition to amalgamation of many pro-Chinese leaders with Ziaur Rahman's political party - B.N.P., a good number

of pro-Chinese political parties still survived as independent political party during Zia's regime.<sup>93</sup> So it is discerned that both domestically and internationally Chinese influence increased significantly in Bangladesh politics during the Zia regime, which had seriously upset both the Soviet Union and the pro-Soviet elements in Bangladesh.

Criticising Chinese influence in Bangladesh, the Soviet news media TASS reported:

After the establishment of diplomatic relations with such countries as Saudi Arabia and the Peoples Republic of China, right wing forces including the Bashani group notorious for its extremist and Maoist views became noticeably more active in Bangladesh. On the initiative of Bashani group, a society for Bangladesh-Chinese friendship was officially set up.... Its leadership comprises figures of the most differing complexions, who strike anti-Indian and anti-Soviet attitude. All these people were opponents of the foreign policy of late President Mujibur Rahman.<sup>94</sup>

Apart from excellent political relations, Bangladesh-Chine relations were further strengthened by the cultural agreement between the two countries which was signed on November 17, 1979.<sup>95</sup> Under this agreement both countries exchanged tourists, students, cultural delegations, Buddhist Delegation and Journalists. Moreover after this agreement educationists, scientists, and technocrats of both countries

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<sup>93</sup>See Nurul Amin, *The Pro-Chinese Communist Movement in Bangladesh*, Journal of Contemporary Asia 15, no. 3 (1985).

<sup>94</sup>USSR and Third World 2, nos. 6-8 (1975): 281.

<sup>95</sup>For details, see, The Bangladesh Observer, November 19, 1979.



got opportunities for exchange of experience and knowledge through exchange of visits between the two. Apart from this an agreement between NCNA and the Bangladesh News Agency (BSS) on exchange of news was signed in Peking on April 28, 1978,<sup>96</sup> which strengthened the ties between the two countries.

Finally it can be argued that during the Mujib regime (1971-75) Bangladesh-China relations had no existence on the earth, rather China regarded Bangladesh as a puppet state of Soviet social imperialism and Indian hegemonism. But after the assassination of Sheikh Muzibur Rahman, China recognized Bangladesh as an independent state, established diplomatic relations and effectively strengthened relations from its nadir to its peak, because of Zia's sudden but certain shift from the Indo-Soviet orbit and alignment with the Peoples Republic of China. In fact, in view of Sino-Soviet rivalry in South Asia, Bangladesh-China rapport was important in the interest of China to keep Bangladesh away from the Indo-Soviet orbit. For Bangladesh, it was an imperative from the perspective of its national interest to strengthen its tie with China in order to checkmate the hegemonism of giant neighbor India.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>96</sup>See USSR & Third World 8, nos. 2-3 (February-June, 1978): 25.

<sup>97</sup>See Talukder Maniruzzaman, The Bangladesh Revolution and its Aftermath (Dhaka: Bangladesh Books International Limited, 1980) p. 203. Also see M. Rashiduzzaman, "The Political Evolution of Bangladesh." Current History 76, no. 44 (April 1979): 183.

Economic Level

As China did not recognize Bangladesh during the Mujib regime, there was no direct economic link between the two countries from 1971 to 1975. Only very insignificant volume of trade was conducted through third countries, although unofficial delegations used to visit China to participate in trade fairs, to explore possibilities for the expansion of commercial ties between the two countries. In fact, the economic relations between Bangladesh and China were virtually nil during the Mujib regime, as China gave no project or commodity aid to Bangladesh barring a small amount of food aid as grant.<sup>98</sup> Following the military coup of August 15, 1975, and the assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, China recognized Bangladesh, and opened a diplomatic mission in Dhaka, while the Bangladesh mission in Beijing began its operation formally in January, 1976. Since then the economic relations between Bangladesh and China have been growing steadily. At this point Bangladesh's national interest demanded Chinese economic aid and cooperation, in the nation-building activities of Bangladesh. Because Indian and the Soviet economic assistance were virtually stopped, after the overthrow of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman--a trusted friend and ally of both India and the Soviet Union. The political changes through the August coup of Bangladesh

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<sup>98</sup>Sabia Hasan, "Foreign Policy of Bangladesh," Pakistan Horizon (Winter 1982): 77.

in 1975 paved the way for the normalization and development of economic cooperation between China and Bangladesh.

In 1977 General Ziaur Rahman, the then commander in chief of the Bangladesh armed forces, paid a four-day official visit to China. Zia's visit opened up a new chapter in the field of Bangladesh's economic relations apart from political rapport. An economic and technical cooperation agreement and a trade and payment agreement (TPA) were signed in Peking on January 4, 1977.<sup>99</sup> While on March 10, 1977, a Chinese trade delegation signed the first purchase contact with Bangladesh jute mills corporations (BJMC). Another agreement signed on March 16, 1978, and China agreed to buy 4,000 bales of jute goods from Bangladesh.<sup>100</sup> On the other hand at this time Bangladesh had started to import inexpensive and reliable goods from China, from bus tires to surgical instruments.<sup>101</sup>

Following Zia's visit to Peking, Chinese vice-premier Li Hsien-nien also visited Bangladesh from March 18-21, 1978, and the two countries signed two agreements on

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<sup>99</sup>For the agreement see Peking Review 20, no. 2 (January 7, 1977): 3.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid.

<sup>101</sup>Robert S. Anderson, "Impression of Bangladesh: The Rule of Arms and Politics of Exploration," Pacific Affairs, no. 49 (1976): 450.

economic and technical cooperation and on scientific and technical cooperation.<sup>102</sup>

The economic and technical cooperation stipulated an interest-free Chinese loan of US \$58.3 million (580 million Taka) payable for ten years. During this time China for the first time had started giving economic aid to Bangladesh. Though the quantum of Chinese aid was smaller than that given by the Western industrial countries, it was nevertheless liberal.<sup>103</sup> Table 15 shows China's foreign aid disbursement to Bangladesh during the Mujib and Zia regimes.

TABLE 15

CHINESE FOREIGN AID DISBURSEMENT TO BANGLADESH  
(in million US\$)

Year	Disbursement			Non Project Aid Disbursement			Project Aid Disbursement		
	Grant	Loan	Total	Grant	Loan	Total	Grant	Loan	Total
1972-75	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
1975-78	1.000	2.000	3.000	1.900	--	--	--	--	--
1978-80	--	4.000	4.000	--	--	--	--	--	--
1980-81	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	8.514	8.514
1981-82	--	--	--	--	2.667	2.667	--	11.347	
	11.347								

Source: Flow of External Resources into Bangladesh (Ministry of Finance, Government of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh, December 1987) (as of June 1987).

<sup>102</sup>Chinese Foreign Minister Huang Hua and Dr. M.N. Huda adviser to the Bangladesh's president (in charge of the ministry of planning) signed both agreements on March 21, 1978. See Peking Review 21, no. 13 (March 31, 1978).

<sup>103</sup>A Brief on Bangladesh-China Economic Relations, External Resources Division, Ministry of Planning, Government of Bangladesh, July 1987.



Fig. 10. Chinese Aid Disbursement to Bangladesh: A Comparison Between the Mujib and Zia regimes.

Bangladesh-China economic cooperation augmented further following president Zia's second visit to China in 1980. This time Zia claimed that China had extended its total support to Bangladesh in its effort to meet the challenges. In the economic field, this time the Trade and Payment Agreement (TPA) was replaced by a five-year Long Term Trade Agreement (LTTA) which was signed in Dhaka in 1980 for the period of 1980-84.<sup>104</sup>

The LTTA stipulated each way trade of US\$ 200 to 250 million. It provided for barter trade as well as trade in convertible currencies. It also provided mutual most-favored nation's treatment in matters relating to shipping, and imposition of custom duties, etc.<sup>105</sup> Apart from this, the two governments also signed agreements on maritime transport,

<sup>104</sup>On its expiry, another identical long term agreement for the period of 1985-1989 was signed in Dhaka in December 1986.

<sup>105</sup>Ibid., 23.

economic and technical cooperation and science and technology.<sup>106</sup>

Besides agreements for economic cooperation and development from 1976/1982, China signed 4 credit protocols and provided 163 million RMBY under credit protocol.<sup>107</sup> (Table 16). Although economic cooperation between Bangladesh and China increased substantially during the Zia regime problems raised in bilateral shipping and civil aviation agreements. Bangladesh-China bilateral shipping agreement was signed in November 1978. The agreement provided for sharing of cargo on 50:50 basis and according to "most favored nation's treatment" to each other's vessels. Bangladesh shipping corporation (BSC) started its Far East Service from April 1980 and for the discharge of export cargo and inward sailing, connected China for loading import cargo. But the BSC vessels could not avail 50 percent share of export cargo due to lack of cooperation from the Chinese side.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>106</sup>Ibid.

<sup>107</sup>Bangladesh-China Joint Commission Report, 1989, 45.

<sup>108</sup>Ibid., 26.

TABLE 16

## CHINESE STATE CREDIT TO BANGLADESH (in million RMBY)

Credit Available	Date of Credits/Agreements	Breakup of Credit Available			Amount Allocated/Disbursed		Amount Utilized	
		P.A.	CA	Total	P.A.	C.A.	P.A.	C.A.
First credit	Dec. 9, 1976	3.00	-	3.00	3.00	--	3.00	--
Second credit	Mar. 3, 1978	80.00	20.00	100.00	80.00	19.86	79.20	17.70
Third credit	July 24, 1980	25.00	25.00	50.00	23.37	25.00	22.87	25.00
Fourth credit	Nov. 29, 1982	3.82	6.18	10.00	3.82	6.18	1.50	6.18
Total		111.82	51.18	163.00	110.19	51.04	106.70	48.88

1 RMB Y = US \$ 0.269

PA = Project Aid

CA = Commodity Aid

Source: Bangladesh-China Joint Commission (5th Session) Beijing, October 27-31, 1989. Brief for the Bangladesh Delegation, External Resource Division, Ministry of Planning, Government of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh), Annexure B.

Apart from shipping agreement, another problem was regarding civil aviation. An air transport agreement between the government of Bangladesh and the People's Republic of China was signed on July 24, 1980 during the state visit of President Ziaur Rahman to China. It was agreed at the time of concluding the agreement that the two sides would hold negotiation in Dhaka on route schedule and other relevant issues facilitating the commencement of the air service between the two countries. Since then Bangladesh had been trying to settle this matter. But Chinese authorities showed less interest by arguing that the existing traffic between the two countries was inadequate and thereby commencement of

air service between the two countries would not be economically viable.<sup>109</sup>

Apart from these minor problems, the economic relations between Bangladesh and China was excellent during the Zia regime. Besides Chinese foreign economic aid, foreign military aid was also another major area of cooperation between the two countries. Beijing came forward as Dhaka's major arms supplier after the Soviet Union scrapped all military assistance to Bangladesh following the collapse of the Mujib regime. China built the largest arms and ammunition factory in Bangladesh (at Joydevpur) and also took over Bangladesh's Soviet built MIGs which Moscow refused to service after the overthrow of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Reliable sources confirm that China delivered 14, F-6 in 1977 and 24 F-6 in 1979.<sup>110</sup>

It also received 18T-59 MBT in 1981.<sup>111</sup> One analyst has uncovered the fact that China had agreed to send four squadrons of MIG 21s for the Bangladesh Air Force. The Chinese were willing to provide as many as 12 squadrons but Bangladesh was unable to accept so many because of the lack

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<sup>109</sup>Ibid., 27.

<sup>110</sup>SIPRI, *World Armament and Disarmament Yearbook 1979 and 1980* (London, 1979), 207-208 and (London, 1980), 135.

<sup>111</sup>Sabia Hasan, 81.



of storage and maintenance facilities.<sup>112</sup> China also provided training to the Bangladeshi pilots in order to operate these fighters.<sup>113</sup>

Bangladesh-China trade relation was another successful story of Zia regime. During the period the quantum of trade between Bangladesh and China rose significantly. Although the balance of trade was always in favor of China, Bangladesh increasingly bridged the trade gap by increasing volume of export to China (Table 17). Moreover, an additional advantage of trading with China was the facility for barter trade which made the trade relations more easier. Table 17 shows that during 1971-1981 Bangladesh's total import from China amounted to US\$ 353.80 million while Bangladesh's export to China was \$115.10 million. At this time, trade imbalance against Bangladesh amounted to \$241.70 million. Another form of trade relationship between Bangladesh and China was barter trade.

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<sup>112</sup>G.W. Chaudhury found this information from his discussion with Bangladesh's president Ziaur Rahman in March 1977. See Chaudhury, Current History, 157.

<sup>113</sup>Ibid.

TABLE 17

BANGLADESH'S TRADE RELATIONS WITH CHINA  
(in million US\$)

Bangladesh's Export to China	Bangladesh's Import From China	Balance of Trade
1972 - NIL	- NIL	
1973 - NIL	- 1.4	(- 1.4)
1974 - NIL	- 1.6	(- 1.6)
1975 - NIL	- 2.9	(- 2.9)
1976 - 6.0	- 7.0	(- 1.00)
1977 - 15.3	18.5	(- 3.20)
1978 - 24.4	44.5	(- 20.10)
1979 - 19.4	64.8	(- 48.40)
1980 - 31.1	99.7	(- 68.60)
1981 - 18.9	113.4	(- 94.50)
<b>TOTAL - 115.10</b>	<b>353.80</b>	<b>(-241.70)</b>

Source: Direction of Trade Yearbook (Washington, D.C.: 1979) 75.  
Direction of Trade Statistics (Washington, D.C.: IMF 1984),  
85.

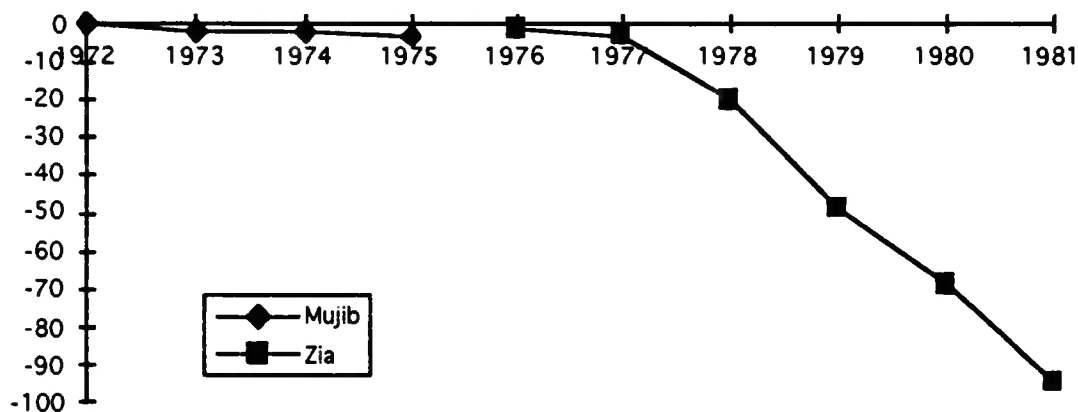


Fig. 11. Bangladesh's Balance of Trade with China: A Comparison Between the Mujib and Zia regimes.

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between Bangladesh and China in 1975, the two countries also exchanged many goods and commodities under barter

agreements.<sup>114</sup> So in the final analysis it is discerned that Bangladesh-China relations improved significantly during Zia's regime, for his realistic foreign policy response towards the national interest. Externally, friendship with China forestalled the Indo-Soviet menace to Bangladesh and internally Chinese economic cooperation contributed significantly towards the economic growth and development.

#### Summary

During the liberation war of Bangladesh the Chinese played very skeptical role. Its reservation about the liberation struggle of Bangladesh stemmed out of its global perceptions viz: hostility towards the Soviet Union, adversarial relations with India and strong tie with Pakistan. Following the independence of Bangladesh, the clouds of mistrust and misunderstanding hindered the Bangladesh-China rapprochement. During the short span of Mujib's regime (1971-1975), despite having Mujib administration's deliberate aspiration, China refused to recognize Bangladesh and also vetoed against Bangladesh's admission into the UNO in 1974. At this stage China branded

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<sup>114</sup>Bangladesh's export to China includes: raw jute, jute goods, leather, leather products, hides and skins, paper and paper products, newsprint, electric cable, telephone cable, spices, rayon, cellophane, molasses, and fertilizer. While Bangladesh's import includes: coal, cement, liquid industrial products, metal and minerals, pig iron, dyes and chemicals, machinery and tools, cereal and food stuffs, oil gas, rape seeds, edible oil, spare parts for textile and jute mills. See, Sultan Ahmed, "Communication and China's External Relations with Particular Reference to Bangladesh," Asian Affairs 4, no. 4: 445.

Mujib administration as a puppet government of the Indian hegemonism and the Soviet social imperialism. The Mujib administration failed to redress the Chinese grievances and could not pursue an independent foreign policy outside the Indo-Soviet orbit, what China wanted. In fact the August coup of 1975 paved the way for the normalization of relations between Bangladesh and China. The fall of the Mujib regime began a thaw in Bangladesh-China relations. Since then Bangladesh-China relations have been growing warmer. From 1976-1982 during the total reign of Ziaur Rahman, Bangladesh-China relationship reached its peak which was formalized by high level diplomatic visits and through a series of agreements for bilateral economic cooperation including the Long Term Trade Agreement (LTTA). Zia overnight shifted from the Indo-Soviet orbit and directed Bangladesh's foreign policy towards China, which was highly applauded by China and it emerged as one of the closest friends of Bangladesh.

In the final analysis, it is clear that Bangladesh's national interest and Chinese national interest intersected each other in 1975, after the fall of the Mujib regime. Since then Bangladesh-China relationship has been progressively growing and by the 1980s it reached its peak from its nadir.

## CHAPTER VIII

### BANGLADESH AND THE MUSLIM WORLD<sup>1</sup> MUJIB AND ZIA REGIMES (1971-1981)

#### Introduction

Portraying Bangladesh's Muslim characteristics, Philips

Talbott wrote:

Bangladesh emerged as a state of 70 to 75 million people, roughly 85 percent of them Muslims in an area the size of Wisconsin. By population it thus ranks as the eighth or ninth largest state in the world. It is also the second largest Muslim state, after Indonesia (and before India and Pakistan which now rank third and fourth respectively in Muslim population).<sup>2</sup>

However, although a predominantly Muslim state, Bangladesh began its political career with a secular constitution.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The term Muslim world is used here to denote the member countries of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), because OIC is the first formal institutional step which accommodated all Muslim countries in the world. While discussing the Bangladesh's relations with the Muslim world, I have discussed only Bangladesh's relation with those countries having good political and economic relations. The countries having insignificant relations with Bangladesh are precluded. Bangladesh's relation with Pakistan is deliberately excluded from this chapter because Chapter IV has dealt with only Bangladesh-Pakistan relations.

<sup>2</sup>Philips Talbott, "The Subcontinent: Ménage à Trois," Foreign Affairs 50, no. 4 (July 1972): 700.

<sup>3</sup>Sheikh Mujib explained secularism in the following words:

Secularism does not mean absence of religion. The 75 million people of Bangladesh will have the right to religion by law. We have no intention of that kind....

While the constitution imposed embargo on religious politics and abolished political recognition of religion by the state, and discrimination on religious grounds.<sup>4</sup> Although Bangladesh identified itself as a Muslim state by attending at the Islamic conference (OIC) in Lahore in 1974, Bangladesh's relations with the Muslim countries were very cool. Because most of those countries opposed the Bangladesh liberation war and the creation of Bangladesh was seen by them as an Indo-Soviet ploy which led to the dismemberment of the largest Muslim country in the world--Pakistan. Again, after the birth of Bangladesh, Mujib's secular state principles, identical with India and socialist state ideology, opposed to Islamic culture and ideology widened the gap between Bangladesh and the Muslim world. Moreover, Pakistan's campaign among the Muslim nations against Bangladesh and the Israeli bid to be friend by announcing its recognition of Bangladesh<sup>5</sup> also antagonized the Muslim

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Muslims will observe their religion and nobody in this state has the power to prevent that. Hindus will observe their religion and nobody has the power to prevent that. Buddhist and Christians will observe their religion and nobody has the power to prevent that. Our only objective is that nobody will be allowed to use religion as a political weapon. See Sheikh Mujib's speech in the Parliament, November 4, 1972, Bangladesh Observer, November 5, 1972.

<sup>4</sup>Quoted in S.M. Shamsul Alam, "Islam, Ideology, and the State in Bangladesh," Journal of Asian and African Studies 25, nos. 1-2 (1993): 96.

<sup>5</sup>The Israeli Parliament-Knesset-recognized Bangladesh in April 1972. Moreover, on July 12, 1971, it took a resolution by condemning

states. Actually, Bangladesh's emergence as an independent state by dismembering the powerful Muslim state Pakistan was seriously misperceived by the Muslim states particularly by the Arab states. Bangladesh, however, very rapidly gained the support of the Muslim world by adopting various strategies and diplomatic measures, which soon began to bring dividends and by the end of 1973 Bangladesh got recognition from as many as 38 states. Although the Lahore Summit of the OIC worked as a watershed, in which Bangladesh was admitted as a full member of the OIC, many powerful Muslim states including Saudi Arabia still did not recognize Bangladesh. Bangladesh-Muslim world relations dramatically shifted after the coup d'etat of August 15, 1975 which caused the fall of the Mujib regime. After Mujib's assassination the successive government decided to change the name of the predominantly Muslim country from the People's Republic to the Islamic Republic of Bangladesh. This decision originated out of the drive of the new government to have better relations with the Muslim world.<sup>6</sup>

Bangladesh-Muslim world relations developed significantly with the advent of Ziaur Rahman and Bangladesh achieved a very prestigious position in the OIC during the Zia regime. Zia's sponsorship of the constitutional

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the mass killing and destruction of the Pakistani army. See Nurul Momen, Bangladesh: The First Five Years (Dhaka, 1980), 181-184.

<sup>6</sup>G.W. Chaudhury, "Bangladesh's Coup and Counter Coups: International Implication," ORBIS 19, no. 4 (1976): 1591.

amendment, which deleted secularism as one of the fundamental principles of state policy and absolute trust and faith in Allah (God) further strengthened Bangladesh's relationship with the Muslim world.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, the Zia government added a new clause to Article 25 of the constitution which said: The state shall endeavor to consolidate, preserve, and strengthen fraternal relations among Muslim countries based on Islamic solidarity.<sup>8</sup> As a matter of fact Bangladesh-Muslim world relations reached to its peak from its nadir during the Zia regime and Bangladesh played a vanguard role in promoting the interest of the Muslim Ummah.<sup>9</sup>

About the Bangladesh-Muslim world relations under Zia, Rodney Tasker wrote:

Although he [Zia] has not proclaimed the country with its 85% Muslim population, an Islamic state, he has changed the constitution to bring the country closer to the Islamic fraternity than Mujib's secular state. This has brought quick dividends as regards relations with Saudi Arabia, which would have no dealing with the Mujib regime. Since Zia came to power, diplomatic relations have

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<sup>7</sup>Muhammed A. Tayyeb, "Bangladesh: The Dilemma of Independence," Asian Affairs: An American Review (January-February 1978): 178.

<sup>8</sup>The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Government of Bangladesh, Ministry of Law, February 28, 1979.

<sup>9</sup>Shaukat Hassan, "Bangladesh Foreign Policy: Introductory Remarks," in M.G. Kabir and Shaukat Hassan (eds.) Issues and Challenges Facing Bangladesh Foreign Policy (Dhaka: Bangladesh Society of International, 1989), 15.



been established with Saudi Arabia which is now the fourth largest aid donor to Bangladesh.<sup>10</sup>

However, in order to make a comparative study of Bangladesh-Muslim world relations during the Mujib and Zia regimes, the following issues will be addressed in this chapter.

Role of the Muslim World in the Liberation War of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh-Muslim World Relations.

Summary.

Role of the Muslim World in the Liberation War of Bangladesh

Most of the Muslim countries of the world either explicitly or implicitly supported Pakistan and condoned the Bangladesh liberation war in 1971.<sup>11</sup> From the very beginning to the end, the Muslim world misinterpreted the Bangladesh movement. They regarded it as the internal problem of Pakistan and left the solution of the problem in the hands of the military ruler of Pakistan. Regarding the Muslim worlds concern about the Bangladesh movement, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh wrote to the OIC Secretary General Tenku Abdul Rahman in March 1972:

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<sup>10</sup>Rodney Tasker, "In Pursuit of a Vision," Far Eastern Economic Review, October 12, 1979.

<sup>11</sup>Richard Hrair Dekmejian, "The Islamic Revival in the Middle East and North Africa," Current History (April 1980): 168.

It is a matter of regret that you have not felt it necessary to say anything about the position of Bengalis in Pakistan. I have also to recall with regret that during the last nine months when three million Bengalis were killed in cold blood by the West Pakistani forces you did not raise your voice to stop the killings of innocent Muslims and of other communities in the second largest Muslim state.<sup>12</sup>

It was in fact very surprising that most of the Muslim countries, especially the Arab world, had failed to raise their voice or protest or even express their sympathy for the innocent people of Bangladesh against the military attacks of Pakistani rulers. This demonstrates that they were supposed to be "paralyzed into action," for not offending Pakistan and thus considered the Bangladesh movement as an internal affair of Pakistan.<sup>13</sup> Actually almost all the Muslim states overtly and covertly supported Pakistan against Bangladesh struggle. Although the Muslim world's attitude towards Bangladesh was not directed by the Islamic theory of international relations,<sup>14</sup> it served their

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<sup>12</sup>Times of India, March 28, 1972.

<sup>13</sup>Z.V.B. Karnik, "Challenge to the U.N.O.," United Asia 23, no. 3 (1971): 204.

<sup>14</sup>According to the Islamic theory of international relations, relations among nations are based upon ten identifiable sources:

i) Qur'an, ii) the sunnah or the traditions or practices of the prophet Muhammad, iii) diplomatic conduct of the Khulfa Rashidun (Orthodox Caliphs), iv) the practice of Muslim rulers not repudiated by the juris consults, v) recognized Muslim jurist's opinion, which are divided into two categories: a) Ijma: consensus of opinion and b) Qiyas: individual opinion, vi) arbitral awards, vii) treaties, pacts, and other conventions, viii) official instructions to commanders, admirals, ambassadors, and other state officials, ix) international

national interest. Among the Muslim countries, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Morocco, Iran, Kuwait, UAE and other sheikdom of the Persian Gulf directly supported Pakistan with their utmost vigor, while other Arab states like Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Algeria remained comparatively silent like the Muslim countries of Southeast Asia.<sup>15</sup> As a matter of fact, despite having many differences with Pakistan, still the Muslim countries supported Pakistan<sup>16</sup> against the Bangladesh

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legislation regarding conduct of foreigners and foreign relations, x) custom and usage. For details see Hafeez Malik, "Islamic Theory of International Relations," Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies 2, no. 2 (Spring 1979): 86. See also Muhammad Hamidullah, Muslim Conduct of State (Lahore: Ashrat, 1961), 121.

<sup>15</sup>Asgar Ali, "Bangladesh and Muslim World," United Asia 23, no. 3 (1971): 195. Also see Denis Wright, Bangladesh: Origins and Indian Ocean Relations (1971-1975).

<sup>16</sup>Among Muslim countries, Iran with whom Pakistan had close historical, geographical, and cultural ties and association through RCD and CENTO called upon all nations of the world not to interfere in the internal affairs of Pakistan. Turkey, also a member of RCD and CENTO, expressed the view that the matters should be settled without any foreign influence. Indonesia officially regarded the happenings in Pakistan as its internal affair and that outsiders had "no right whatsoever to interfere." Indonesian foreign minister officially said that Indonesia will not recognize Bangladesh government in East Pakistan because it does not want to see other people's countries split. Malaysia also declared that the developments in East Pakistan was the internal matter of Pakistan. President Bakar of Iraq and Saudi Arabian foreign minister in an official statement declared on behalf of their respective countries full support for the territorial integrity of Pakistan. Similarly Syria, Jordan, Yemen, Morocco, Senegal and Libya extended their firm support to Pakistan's unity and integrity. President Boumedienne of Algeria warned the outsiders that "any attempts aimed at aggravating the crisis would widen its dimension and generate conflict that can only favor intervention of imperialism in an already stricken region." President Anwar Sadat of United Arab Republic (UAR) bluntly declared: "Whatever happens we shall continue to support the integrity of Pakistan." See Dawn (Karachi), March 30, 1971, April 4, 1971, April 10, 1971, April 19, 1971; Pakistan Times (Lahore) April 5, 1971, Dawn, April 21, 1971, June 15, 1971.

struggle. During the crisis, they extended their support to Pakistan by:

- (i) adhering the principle of non-interference,
- (ii) branding the East Bengal crisis as an internal matter of Pakistan,
- (iii) and asking foreign powers not to interfere in the internal affairs of Pakistan.<sup>17</sup>

Apart from individual support of the Muslim countries, the OIC extended its unequivocal support towards Pakistan. In fact, the third conference of the foreign ministers of the OIC declared its full support to Pakistan, its territorial integrity, national sovereignty and independence.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, the media of Muslim countries<sup>19</sup> and

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<sup>17</sup>Mehrunnisa Ali, "East Pakistan Crisis: International Reaction," Pakistan Horizon 24, no. 2 (Second Quarter 1971).

<sup>18</sup>See Justice Quaderuddin Ahmed, "The East Pakistan Crisis and the Jeddah Conference of Muslim Countries," Pakistan Horizon 25, vol. 1 (First Quarter, 1972).

<sup>19</sup>An Iranian newspaper Kayhan International described the situation in East Pakistan as an internal matter and warned that any attempt at meddling with the internal affair of Pakistan would amount to a direct attack on the country's sovereignty and integrity. International Tribune of Indonesia pointed out that the objective of India was to weaken Pakistan internally and through its dismemberment to retain Indian hold over Kashmir. The Baghdad Observer said: Pakistan deserves all the good will of the Arab people and their warmest manifestation of friendship, especially at this moment of stress. L'opinion of Rabat condemned India for "obviously aiding and abetting the rebellion in East Pakistan." For details see Mehrunnisa Ali, "East Pakistan Crisis: International Reactions," Pakistan Horizon 24, no. 2 (Second Quarter 1971): 57.

international Muslim organizations<sup>20</sup> strongly supported Pakistan and opposed Bangladesh movement. Actually, the support of the Muslim world towards Pakistan was justified by Z.A. Bhutto as follows:

Pakistan is also a leading member of the Muslim world, which sweeps in a vast area from the Atlantic through Africa and the Middle East to Indonesia, touching the shores of the Pacific. Imperishable affinities born of culture, religion and historical experience bind us to other Muslim nations and underline our community of interest. Together with our neighbors, Iran and Turkey, we have established an organization for regional cooperation for development. We have supported the just cause of the Arab world, which in turn stood with us in our hour of trial in 1971. Their subsequent support has strengthened our position immeasurably. Not only has it demonstrated to Pakistan the friendship of her Muslim brethren, but it has displayed to the world the solidarity of the Muslim nations.<sup>21</sup>

Although Bhutto defined the support of the Muslim state towards Pakistan as solidarity of the Muslim nations, there were several reasons actually behind their support against Bangladesh and towards Pakistan.

1. Solidarity of the Muslim countries is one of the fundamental principles of the OIC. Although 85 percent

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<sup>20</sup>Muslim organization all over the world expressed their sympathy and support to Pakistan in its effort to maintain its territorial integrity. In a statement by Syed Amin-Al-Hussein, President of the Motammar Al-Alam-Al-Islami, condemned the continuous interference of India and other foreign power. The Islamic World Congress, the joint secretariat of five international Muslim organizations and the Moroccan Istiglal Party, all condemned Indian interference and extended their support to Pakistan's unity and integrity. Cited in Dawn (Karachi), April 18, 1971, May 19, 1971, and May 18, 1971.

<sup>21</sup>Z. A. Bhutto, "Pakistan Builds Anew," Foreign Affairs 51, no. 3 (April 1973): 553.

Muslim population was fighting for Bangladesh in 1971, the movement was actively supported by the Hindu India and the socialist Soviet Union. The Muslim states considered the Indo-Soviet instrumental role towards Bangladesh movement as a grand design to dismember the largest Muslim country, Pakistan, and so they opposed the struggle as an internal matter of Pakistan which could be solved without outside interference.

2. Strategic considerations of the Muslim world also led them to rally behind Pakistan. Indo-Bangladesh joint action against Pakistan with the material support of the Soviet Union was seen by the Muslim world as a Soviet-diplomatic device for the expansion of its control towards South Asia. It was very surprising because it happened at a time when Soviet influence in West Asia and in the Middle East was almost declining. In fact, the Soviet involvement with Pakistan crisis also concerned the security of many Muslim states, especially who had close border with the Soviet Union. The Muslim world as a whole was worried about the expansion of the Soviet interference, from Pakistan to Afghanistan, Iran and other Persian Gulf states, which would inevitably threaten the existing status quo in West Asia and the Middle East.

3. Pakistan's relation with the Muslim world was very prominent and its position was very important as the largest Muslim state and the most active member of the OIC. Moreover

as the West Pakistani elites ruled the country from 1947 to 1971, and since West Pakistan was the capital of the country and center of the economic activity, so by understanding Pakistan, mainly they understood West Pakistan.<sup>22</sup> East Pakistani leaders and East Pakistan were not that much familiar with the Muslim world. Moreover, the foreign policy matters of Pakistan had been dealt by the elites of the central government who were mostly from the West Pakistan. East Pakistan had no separate entity in foreign policy issues. So during the crisis of 1971, the Muslim countries did not get clear picture about what was going on in East Pakistan. By presenting the whole East Pakistan crisis to the Muslim world, from the West Pakistani viewpoint, Pakistan created a wrong impression in the Muslim world about the political development in its erstwhile eastern wing.

4. Finally, the early recognition of Bangladesh by Israel created widespread misperception in the Arab world. In fact the freedom movement of Bangladesh got Israeli support. Israel expressed the sympathy for the newborn country Bangladesh in early 1972 when it was not yet recognized by any Arab country. Bangladesh realized that Israeli intention did not originate out of just sympathy and sincerity but it was designed to create a psychological

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<sup>22</sup>Golam Mostafa, "Bangladesh Foreign Policy, The Middle East Factor," BISS Journal 7, no. 1 (January 1986).

image among Bangladesh and the Islamic world. So Bangladesh didn't accept Israeli recognition. Although Bangladesh categorically regretted the Israeli recognition and emphasized its unwillingness to have any relations with Israel, it aroused considerable Arab concern.

Bangladesh-Muslim World Relations:  
Mujib and Zia Regimes (1971-1981)

Bangladesh-Muslim World Relations: Political Level

Denouncing the role of the Muslim world, during the liberation war of Bangladesh, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared that: "Arab world did nothing about my people who are also followers of Islam, by permitting Pakistani cruelty."<sup>23</sup> Even after the emergence of Bangladesh, many countries of the Muslim world refused to recognize it. Many of the Muslim countries wanted the reunification of Bangladesh with Pakistan. Although Bangladesh emerged as the second largest Muslim state after Indonesia with its 85 percent Muslim population, Bangladesh was not recognized by any Muslim country. In fact there were several factors which delayed the Muslim worlds recognition of Bangladesh.

1. India's support of Bangladesh against Pakistan was seen by the Muslim states with suspicion and mistrust. Some even considered the Bangladesh movement as an act of ruining

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<sup>23</sup>Times of India, March 28, 1972.



an Islamic state, which was well known to the Muslim world as Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Some analysts argued that the ruling elites in Pakistan used Islam as an instrument to support unpopular regime and an inequitable social, economic and political order.<sup>24</sup> Moreover Pakistan armies brutal atrocities in the name of Islam was placed to the Muslim world by Pakistani authority as conspiracy and propaganda against Islam and the Muslim Ummah. So the Muslim world considered the birth of Bangladesh as the dismemberment of Pakistan and they refused to recognize the break away nation.

2. The early recognition of Bangladesh by Israel, a common enemy of the Muslim world (all Muslim countries boycotted Israel from their international relations) also created wide misperceptions in the Muslim world. Although Bangladesh categorically rejected the Israeli recognition and expressed its unwillingness to have any relations with Israel, it created considerable camouflage that whether Bangladesh was anti-Islamic or not.

Moreover during the Bangladesh liberation war of 1971, the Pakistani military junta played up its Islamic image and branded the Bengalis as Kafirs (infidels) and in this war of

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<sup>24</sup>Mohammad Ayoob, "Two Faces of Political Islam: Iran and Pakistan Compared," Asian Survey 19, no. 6 (June 1979): 537.

infidels, they very successfully gained the support of the Muslim world.<sup>25</sup>

On the other hand, Bangladesh's increasing cordial détente with Hindu India and socialist Russia aggravated Muslim world's concern over Bangladesh. The presence of Indian soldiers in the Bangladesh soil also let the Muslim world believe that Bangladesh was a periphery of mighty India. So they did not consider that the recognition of Bangladesh would strengthen Muslim solidarity in the world.

3. After the birth of Bangladesh Mujib's constitutional option for secularism, paralleled India, contributed to the view that Mujib was taking away the country far from Islamic Ummah. Moreover, Mujib's banning order on Islamic politics and abolition of Islamic foundation, just after the independence of Bangladesh, although established Mujib as a secular leader and gave Bangladesh--a secular state character, it prohibited Mujib and Bangladesh from fraternal relations with the Muslim world. Actually, Mujib's secular policy led to the banishment of Islam from public life and demonstrated an intense hostility towards Islam as a political and cultural symbol.<sup>26</sup> It is believed that Mujib

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<sup>25</sup>Ahmed Shafiqul Haque and Muhammad Yeahia Akhter, "The Ubiquity of Islam: Religion and Society in Bangladesh," Pacific Affairs 60, no. 2 (Summer 1987): 202.

<sup>26</sup>M. Rashiduzzaman, "Islam, Muslim Identity and Nationalism in Bangladesh," Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies 17, no. 1 (Fall 1994): 41.

introduced secular state principles in order to retain the loyalty of the Hindu minority which constituted 12 percent of the population of Bangladesh.<sup>27</sup> Here the main drawback of the Mujib's policy was that he failed to realize that Islam was not only the dominant majority faith but an unyielding political identity impossible to ignore.<sup>28</sup> So, the Muslim world at large did not consider it an imperative to recognize Bangladesh immediately after its independence.

4. Some vital factors which delayed the recognition of Bangladesh by the Muslim world were Pakistan's threat to the world nations that those recognizing Bangladesh would face certain rupture of diplomatic relations with Pakistan, and Islamabad actually did follow through with the threat. Pakistan believed that it was in its interest to deny the viability of Bangladesh as a state as long as possible, so that negotiations on the prisoner of wars (POWs) would be primarily a matter between India and Pakistan. Recognition of Bangladesh would give it a stronger negotiating position on this question, and Bhutto was keenly aware that Mujib was determined to try Pakistani soldiers accused of atrocities during the war.<sup>29</sup> In particular, Bhutto pleaded to the Muslim world for holding recognition of Bangladesh. More

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<sup>27</sup>Zillur R. Khan, "Islam and Bengali Nationalism," Asian Survey 25, no. 8 (August 1985): 846-847.

<sup>28</sup>Rashiduzzaman, 58.

<sup>29</sup>Wright, 172.

specifically Bhutto led a mission to the Muslim world in late January 1972 and appealed to the Muslim leaders not to recognize immediately to Bangladesh. Bhutto's main argument was that their withholding of recognition would give him time to restore relations with Bangladesh and negotiate the settlement of the POWs issue.

Although the Muslim world as a whole withheld the recognition of Bangladesh immediately after its emergence, the Mujib government worked hard to establish relations with the Muslim world. To Mujib, recognition of Bangladesh by the Muslim world specially nine oil rich Arab country out of the thirteen OPEC members was more important than Islamic solidarity. At this point Bangladesh seriously needed foreign aid and wanted assistance from the Arab world, for the reconstruction of the war ravaged economy.<sup>30</sup> To this end, at the domestic level, Mujib administration released the leaders and workers of the Islamic parties under general amnesty, who were detained for collaboration with the Pakistan army during the Bangladesh war. The Mujib government also retained "Islamiyat" (Islamic studies) and Arabic in the academic syllabus of the school as a symbol of Islamic flavor. Moreover, the government re-established the Islamic foundation--an academy for research and publication on Islam. To convince the traditional Ulemas (Islamic

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<sup>30</sup>Syed Anwar Husain, "Bangladesh O' Islami Bessaw," 38.

scholars) and the strict followers of Islam, Mujib increased slightly the budgetary allocation for madrasa education, as a means to gain the support of the traditional Ulema's and pious masses for his regime. All these steps were part of Mujib's strategy, designed to persuade the Muslim world that "Islam" was not in danger in Bangladesh.<sup>31</sup>

At the international level, the Mujib administration was taking several steps to meet the differences between Bangladesh and the Muslim world. As a first step of Mujib's diplomatic move, Bangladesh attended the Afro-Asian solidarity conference (AAPSO), on January 10, 1972, held at Cairo.<sup>32</sup> In this conference, Bangladesh was admitted as a full member of the AAPSO with the vote of the majority members of the Arab world. Following Afro-Asian solidarity conference several Muslim countries, especially Malaysia and Indonesia officially recognized Bangladesh by March 1972. At the end of 1972 among the Arab countries, Iraq and the Peoples Democratic Republic of Yemen recognized Bangladesh among the Arab world. Bangladesh continued its diplomatic

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<sup>31</sup>See S.M. Shamsul Alam, "Islam, Ideology and the State in Bangladesh," Journal of Asian and African Studies 28, nos. 1-2 (1993): 97. Also see Akmal Hussain, "Bangladesh and the Muslim World," in Emajuddin Ahmed (ed.) Foreign Policy of Bangladesh: A Small States Imperative (Dhaka: University Press Limited, 1984): 87.

<sup>32</sup>A four member Bangladesh delegation was sent to Cairo to attend the AAPSO conference, which was led by Mollah Jalal Uddin. In this conference Pakistan was seriously condemned and accused for genocide in East Bengal in 1971. Protesting Bangladesh's presence in the conference, Pakistan boycotted the opening session of the conference.

efforts toward the Muslim world after the AAPSO conference. In September 1973 Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman participated in the fourth summit conference of the Non-Aligned movement (NAM) held in Algiers, an event now regarded as a landmark in Bangladesh's relation with the Muslim world. In the NAM summit Mujib personally appealed to King Faisal of Saudi Arabia, President Anwar Sadat of Egypt, Col. Gaddafi of Libya and the Lebanese Prime Minister for better relations.<sup>33</sup> All of these events helped remove many of the earlier misgivings about Bangladesh. Following the Algiers Summit two important Arab countries, Egypt and Syria recognized Bangladesh. After the NAM Summit, Egypt, Algeria and Malaysia started strong diplomatic efforts in favor of Bangladesh, among the Muslim countries, which resulted in the recognition of Bangladesh by many of the Muslim countries by August 1975.<sup>34</sup>

Bangladesh continued to strengthen the Islamic connection by identifying itself with the Arab cause against the Israeli aggression. After the outbreak of the fourth

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<sup>33</sup>Mastafa, 39. Also see Syed Anwar Hussain, 32.

<sup>34</sup>The Muslim worlds' recognition of Bangladesh: Malaysia/Indonesia, March 1972; Iraq, June 24 1972; Afghanistan, Feb. 18 1973; Algeria/Mauritania/Tunisia, July 17 1973; Morocco, July 20 1973; Egypt, Sept. 15 1973; Syria/Zaire/Gabon, Sept. 15 1973; Sudan, Sept. 16 1973; Libya, Sept. 19 1973; North Yemen, Nov. 1973; Kuwait, Feb. 22 1974; Jordan, Nov. 1973; Pakistan/Turkey, March 6 1974; UAE, Aug. 16, 1975; Saudi Arabia, Aug. 19 1975; Iran, Aug. 20 1975; Quatar, Aug. 21 1975. See Zaglul Haider, "Bangladesher Parorashtra Nity," Samaj Nirikkon, no. 36 (May 1990), CSS: Dhaka Univ.: 60.

Arab-Israeli war in October 1972, Bangladesh expressed its total solidarity with the Arab world. It very strongly condemned the Zionist aggression and sent a 28-member medical team to Syria for the treatment of the war victims and 5,000 freedom fighters as a voluntary force to fight for the Arab cause against Israel.<sup>35</sup> Bangladesh's clear stand in the Arab-Israeli war and its diplomatic and moral support for the Arab cause impressed the Arab world, and received wider Arab confidence and following the war Bangladesh had successfully improved its relations with the Muslim world. Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman conceded that Bangladesh's support to the Arabs during the Arab-Israeli war of 1973 have established Bangladesh as a true friend of the Arabs.<sup>36</sup>

Apart from early recognition, among the Muslim countries Malaysia and Indonesia, supported Bangladesh's membership in the United Nations. Malaysia on September 23, 1972 and Indonesia on October 2, 1972, made strong pleas for the admission of Bangladesh into the United Nations. Although Afghanistan recognized Bangladesh later, on February 18, 1973, still it advocated for Bangladesh's admission into the UN. Moreover before formal recognition

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<sup>35</sup>Hussain, 37.

<sup>36</sup>Sheikh Mujib's Address to the Nation on the Victory day of Bangladesh, December 16, 1973, Bangladesh Documents (vol. 2, October-December 1973), 14.

Egypt, Iraq and South Yemen voted in favor of Bangladesh's membership in the World Health Organization (WHO).

Bangladesh's relations with the Muslim world took a dramatic turn in the Lahore Summit of the OIC. The second largest Muslim country—Bangladesh refused to attend the OIC summit at Lahore unless Pakistan recognize Bangladesh. At this stage President Anwar Sadat of Egypt played the role of conduit between Dhaka and Islamabad. Finally after tough diplomacy by the Muslim world, Pakistan recognized Bangladesh on February 22, 1974 and on February 24, 1971, Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman led a 22 member Bangladesh's delegation to the Lahore Summit of the OIC. Since then Bangladesh emerged as an important member of the OIC. In the OIC Summit Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman unequivocally supported the Arab and the Palestinian cause. Sheikh Mujib proclaimed:

We must regain our right over Jerusalem. We salute the brave martyrs and valiant heroes of the Ramadan war, who by their valor and their sacrifices destroyed many myths and created new executive conditions with all promise that right and justice will eventually triumph.<sup>37</sup>

In fact on the eve of the Lahore Summit Bangladesh was recognized by Pakistan, Iran, Turkey, and later on by Qatar, UAE, Bahrain and Oman. The Lahore Summit of the OIC was a landmark development. It gave Bangladesh the full

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<sup>37</sup>Speech of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the Second Islamic Summit Conference in Lahore on February 24, 1974. Bangladesh Documents 2, no. 3 (January-March 1974): 22.



membership of the OIC. Moreover Bangladesh was considered as an influential member of the OIC and the Muslim world. Shortly after obtaining its membership of the OIC Bangladesh displayed its commitment to the Islamic Ummah and became the co-founder of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) in April 1975. This bank was established with the aim of giving support to the ongoing development projects of the Islamic countries.<sup>38</sup>

Besides, OIC membership, as a gesture of friendship, prime minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman visited Egypt in November 1974. It was Egypt which received Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman first amongst the Arab states. During Mujib's five day visit to Cairo, he had meeting with President Anwar Sadat and other ranking ministers and signed a cultural agreement for consolidating cultural educational and technical aid between the two countries, based mainly on exchange scheme.<sup>39</sup>

Although among the Muslim countries all but Saudi Arabia recognized Bangladesh by August 1975, Mujib could not establish any strong tie with them because of his domestic policy option for secularism and socialism and alignment with India, Soviet Union and the socialist world, at the international level. In spite of Mujib's strong diplomatic

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<sup>38</sup>Husain, "Bangladesh and the Organization of Islamic Conference."

<sup>39</sup>Morning News (Dhaka), November 7, 1974, November 10, 1974.

effort to cultivate close friendship, the Muslim world ended its responsibility by recognizing it as a legitimate state only.

The August coup of 1975 and the abrupt change in Bangladesh politics is considered as a breakthrough for Bangladesh's relation with the Muslim world. After the assassination of President Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the new government at first declared a change from the Peoples Republic to the Islamic Republic.<sup>40</sup> This decision was announced to demonstrate its desire to have better relations with the Muslim countries. But later reconsidering imminent danger from secular India, Islamic republic was repealed and Peoples Republic was re-announced.<sup>41</sup>

In fact after the abrupt change of government in August 1975, Saudi Arabia, the leading member of the Arab world and the largest oil rich country recognized Bangladesh on August 16, 1975. At this point Pakistan renewed its recognition to the new regime in Bangladesh and Pakistan's leader Z.A. Bhutto, appealed to the OIC and the Third World countries to recognize the new regime.<sup>42</sup> Actually, with the advent of Ziaur Rahman at first defacto and later dejuré leader,

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<sup>40</sup>New York Times, August 16, 1975.

<sup>41</sup>G.W. Chaudhury, "Bangladesh's Coup and Counter Coups: International Implications," ORBIS 29, no. 4 (Winter 1976): 1591.

<sup>42</sup>The Guardian, August 16, 1975.

through the process of military coup, Bangladesh was looking for an Islamic identity both at the domestic and international levels.<sup>43</sup> To this end Zia brought revolutionary changes both at the domestic and foreign policy. The Zia regime substantially shifted from the Mujib regime and at first changed the constitution and gave increasing attention to Islam in the constitution. In the preamble of the constitution, he introduced "Bismilla-hir-Rahmanir-Rahim" (in the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful) in 1977 by a Presidential Proclamation and by the same proclamation, he amended Article 8(1) of the constitution and dropped secularism from the constitution and instead inserted "absolute trust and faith in Almighty Allah shall be the basis of all actions," in the constitution.<sup>44</sup> Zia totally deleted Article 12, which contained the mechanism for implementation of the principles of secularism. While defending the constitutional amendment Zia said in an interview:

In 1977 we changed our constitution and the constitution brought in Islamic provisions. We give religion due importance in our national life. Our people are very religious.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>Vernon Maston Hewitt, The International Politics of South Asia (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992): 97.

<sup>44</sup>The full text of the proclamation (amendment) order 1977 in Bangladesh Observer (April 23, 1977).

<sup>45</sup>Ziaur Rahman's interview with the Far Eastern Economic Review, October 12, 1979.

Socialism, another principle of the constitution, was also re-defined by Zia as social and economic justice. By another presidential proclamation Article 38 of the constitution, which forbade the operation of the religion based political parties, was abolished and thus allowed the Islamic political parties return to the political arena in Bangladesh.<sup>46</sup>

Again at the international level, Zia made a drastic change and shifted Bangladesh foreign policy from Indo-Soviet orbit and brought it close to the west, China and the Muslim world. In order to strengthen Bangladesh's relationship with the Muslim world, Zia inserted a new clause to Article 25 of the constitution which stated: "The state shall endeavor to consolidate, preserve, and strengthen fraternal relations among Muslim countries based on Islamic solidarity."<sup>47</sup> As a matter of fact Zia pursued a pro-Islamic foreign policy in order to achieve the national interests. In the post-August coup of 1975 period, peoples grievances against Mujib's "secular stance," led to the development of Islamic feeling among them. At this point,

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<sup>46</sup>Rounaq Jahan, Bangladesh Politics: Problems and Issues (Dhaka: UPL 1987), 207.

<sup>47</sup>See Article 25 of the Constitution of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh, The Government of Bangladesh, Ministry of Law (Dhaka: Bangladesh Government Press, February 27, 1979). Also see Ahmed and Nazneen, 796. Also see. Shaukat Arasan, "Bangladesh Foreign Policy: Introductory Remarks," in M.G. Kabir and Shaukat Hiassan (eds.) Issues and Challenges Facing Bangladesh Foreign Policy (Dhaka: BSIS, 1989), 3.

the whole nation by and large aspired to have alignment with the Muslim world. To Zia it was a domestic compulsion to have fraternity with the Muslim world.<sup>48</sup> He utilized the popular sentiments and established prompt rapprochement with the Muslim world which served both national interest and regimes interest. At that point Bangladesh's national interest mainly demanded economic assistance from the oil rich Arab countries. Because in the backdrop of the inadequate Indo-Soviet contribution for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Bangladesh's economy, it desperately needed petro dollars to finance its ambitious economic programs.<sup>49</sup> To this end, apart from constitutional changes at the domestic level, Zia also started the use of Islamic customs and traditions and emphasized on Islamic festivals in the social life of the nation.<sup>50</sup>

Moreover Zia promulgated the political party's regulation (PPR) in July 1976 in order to regulate the activities of the political party, which gave enormous opportunity to the banned Islamic parties. Taking the advantage of the PPR, many political parties including

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<sup>48</sup>K.M. Mohsin, "Trends of Islam in Bangladesh," a paper presented in a seminar on "Islam in Bangladesh: Society, Culture and Institution," organized by Bangladesh Ithias Samity, December 24-26, 1982), 6.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid. Also see S.M. Shamsul Alam, 101. Also see Zillur R. Khan, Also see Ahmad and Nazneen, 796.

<sup>50</sup>Based on my personal observation of Zia regime from 1972-1981.

Jamaat-i-Islam, Muslim league, and other Islamic parties re-started their political activities as independent parties. Zia also tried to be closed to the Arab world, by restoring the citizenship of several Islamists who remained overseas by repealing the collaborators Act.<sup>51</sup>

In fact, Zia seriously attempted to identify and present Bangladesh as a genuine Muslim state to the Muslim world having Islamic customs, tradition and prestige. Zia's constitutional changes and domestic Islamic reforms impressed the Muslim world and they extended their cooperation towards Bangladesh.

The Zia administration rapidly solidified itself with the Muslim countries and repeatedly expressed its interest in the promotion of Bangladesh's relation with the Muslim world.<sup>52</sup> In 1977 President Zia paid an official visit to Saudi Arabia, which in fact laid down the foundation for the further development of Bangladesh's relation with the Arab world. In the same year Zia visited Iran, Egypt and Pakistan and in 1978 he visited Kuwait and Iraq, which significantly

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<sup>51</sup>Robert S. Anderson, "Impressions of Bangladesh: The Role of Arms and the Politics of Exhortation," Pacific Affairs no. 49 (1976): 453.

<sup>52</sup>The then chief martial law administrator and the defacto leader of Bangladesh, General Ziaur Rahman declared in a public meeting in Dhaka in 1976: "We have religious, historical, cultural relations with all the Muslim countries of the world and we want to further strengthen our relation with them." See Chief of Staff and Deputy Chief Martial Law Administrator, Major General Ziaur Rahman's speech at Suhrawardy Uddyan, on May 1, 1976 in the Bangladesh Observer (May 2, 1976).

increased Bangladesh's activity with the Muslim world.<sup>53</sup> With the expansion of Bangladesh's relation with the Muslim world, Bangladesh also received very crucial support from the Muslim world in time of need. At the international level, when Bangladesh contested for the Security Council Seat, its candidature was supported and endorsed by the 9th Islamic Foreign Ministers conference held in Dakar, Senegal.<sup>54</sup> Similarly, Bangladesh's position over Farakkah and Ganges water dispute with India, was supported and endorsed by the Seventh Islamic Foreign Ministers Conference in May 1976. Farakkah issue was included in the Joint Communique of the Seventh Islamic Foreign Ministers Conference.<sup>55</sup>

By establishing close ties with the Muslim world, in fact President Zia emerged as an active and influential leader of the OIC. Bangladesh became the member of:

1. Fifteen member permanent committee on Jerusalem known as the Al-Quds committee,
2. Three member Al-Quds Summit Committee,
3. Nine member OIC Peace Committee (Islamic Peace Committee) formed to mediate in the protracted and fratricidal war between Iran and Iraq,

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<sup>53</sup>See Sabiha Hasein, "Foreign Policy of Bangladesh," Pakistan Horizon 36, no. 4 (1984): 87.

<sup>54</sup>Mastafa, 41.

<sup>55</sup>Syed Anwar Husain, Bangladesh and the Organization of Islamic Conference," Asian Affairs no. 49 (1984): 25.

4. Thirteen member permanent committee of the Islamic solidarity fund.

No doubt Bangladesh's entrance in the above listed vital committees of the OIC demonstrate Bangladesh's important position both in the OIC and the Arab world. Apart from this, Bangladesh played very effective role and pursued very balanced foreign policy towards the Muslim world in different issues, during the crisis time of the Ummah. Bangladesh's role in different crisis ridden issues are listed below:

#### Palestine Issue

Regarding the Palestine issue Bangladesh took very strong, unequivocal, unambiguous, and persistent policy. On this issue, Zia government did not differ with the Mujib's policy. Like Mujib's Palestine policy, President Zia also clearly maintained that the just and lasting peace in the Middle East was possible only through restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinians and immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces from the all occupied Arab territories including the Holy City-Jerusalem, and recognition of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as the only legitimate organization of the Palestinians. In June 1976, Bangladesh initiated a proposal in the UN Security Council, which demanded the immediate withdrawal of the Israeli forces from the Arab territories occupied since



1967.<sup>56</sup> The principled position taken by Bangladesh was highly appreciated by the Muslim world as a whole, and as recognition of Bangladesh's active role it was elected member to the Jerusalem Committee both at the ministerial and summit levels. Bangladesh was also elected to the eight member non-aligned committee on Palestine. As members of all these committees Bangladesh played a very constructive role towards speedy and comprehensive solution to the core problem of the Middle East crisis.

#### Afghanistan Issue

Afghan issue was another major diplomatic issue which Bangladesh handled very carefully. It was a herculean diplomatic task for Zia regime for two reasons: (1) the problem involved a super power (Soviet Union) that played very contributory role in the emergence of Bangladesh as an independent nation, (2) as a vanguard member of the OIC and the Islamic world, Bangladesh had a special responsibility towards Afghanistan and the Muslim world. However, contemplating Bangladesh's national interest and the interest of the Muslim Ummah, Bangladesh clearly took very strong stand against the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan. Following the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan in 1979, Bangladesh called for an extraordinary session of the OIC

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<sup>56</sup>Bangladesh Observer, May 22, 1976. Also see Syed Anwar Husein, "Bangladesh O' Islami Bissaw," 44.

and sponsored a resolution for the suspension of Afghan membership from the OIC.<sup>57</sup> Secondly, both in the Security Council and General Assembly Bangladesh, along with five other Non-Aligned countries, co-sponsored a draft resolution calling for immediate withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan.<sup>58</sup> Moreover at the Non-Aligned forum, Bangladesh categorically condemned the Soviet military invasion in Afghanistan and expressed solidarity and support to the liberation struggle of Afghan people against the Soviet supported Karmal regime, and strongly demanded the immediate withdrawal of the Red Army from Afghanistan.<sup>59</sup>

Actually, Bangladesh's strong stand stemmed out of several factors:

1. Since the Arab countries were very important donors of Bangladesh and the Soviet invasion was seemingly opposed by the Arab world and the Muslim world and Bangladesh had a moral obligation to take a principled stand against the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan.

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<sup>57</sup>Syed Anwar Husain, 28.

<sup>58</sup>On January 5, 1980, Bangladesh along with five other non-aligned countries co-sponsored a draft resolution calling for an immediate withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan. But it was vetoed by the Soviet Union on January 8. Bangladesh played a very instrumental role in the adoption of a draft resolution by the General Assembly calling for an immediate withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan. For details see Nurul Momen, "Bangladesh at the Security Council: The Arab-Israeli Issue," in Emajuddin Ahamad (ed.), Foreign Policy of Bangladesh: A Small State Imperative (Dhaka: UPL 1984), 106.

<sup>59</sup>Shaukat Hassan, "Bangladesh, Zia and the Non-Aligned Movement," BISS Journal Special Issue no. 1 (1981): 91.

2. Although Moscow played a meaningful role in the liberation war of Bangladesh, following the Mujib regime, Moscow's economic aid to Bangladesh decreased substantially and it was virtually insignificant during Zia's regime. So from the viewpoint of national interest, Bangladesh had no obligation to support the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan.

3. Communist invasion in Afghanistan, against a Muslim state and a non-aligned country seriously concerned the whole Muslim Ummah. As a leading member of the OIC and the Muslim world, Bangladesh shared that concern.

4. Finally, Bangladesh sided with the United States, the key player in opposing the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan, which was incidentally the largest donor and diplomatic friend of Bangladesh. It gave Bangladesh a golden opportunity to come closer to the United States. Although Bangladesh's role in the Afghan crisis seriously antagonized India and the Soviet Union, it helped Bangladesh to be friendly with the United States and the Muslim world, which was more important from the point of view of Bangladesh's national interest. From the security of small states perspective, Bangladesh also took the right decision, because the best way to ensure the security of small states

is to resist superior force once a conflict has developed.<sup>60</sup> Of course, the handling of Afghan crisis was a major success of Zia's foreign policy decision.

### Iran-Iraq War

The Iran-Iraq war seriously concerned Bangladesh during the Zia regime, because of its close fraternal relations with both countries. From the very outbreak of the war in September 1980 Bangladesh called upon the conflicting parties to cease hostility and solve the dispute through peaceful negotiation. To this end, Bangladesh in its own capacity supported Resolution No. 479, adopted by the UN Security Council, and called upon Iran and Iraq for immediate cease-fire on the basis of UN resolution and international law.<sup>61</sup>

A major initiative for peaceful settlement of the war was taken in Taif in the third OIC summit in 1981. In this summit a nine member OIC peace committee was formed including Bangladesh (Islamic Peace Committee) to mediate the fratricidal war between Iran and Iraq. In the Taif summit Bangladesh proposed concrete measures to bring about an immediate cessation of hostilities and a just and

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<sup>60</sup>Talukder Maniruzzaman, The Security of Small States in the Third World (London, England: Miami, Florida, USA, 1982).

<sup>61</sup>Abdur Rab Khan and Golam Mostafa, "Middle East Situation Since Camp David: Implication for Bangladesh," BIISS Journal 3, no. 1 (1982): 47-64.

honorable settlement of the dispute in accordance with international law.<sup>62</sup> As a member of the OIC peace committee, President Zia along with nine-members committee eight times took efforts for peaceful settlement. Zia visited Iran and Iraq along with other committee members and met with the leaders of both countries with concrete peace proposal.<sup>63</sup> But because of the uncompromising attitude of both Iran and Iraq, the Islamic peace committee was not successful in peace settlement.<sup>64</sup> However, in its individual capacity Bangladesh under the Zia regime attempted to maintain a very balanced relation with both Iran and Iraq.<sup>65</sup>

#### Bangladesh-Muslim World Relations: Economic Level

Since the very beginning of Bangladesh's independent existence, Bangladesh was trying to explore foreign aid from external sources in general and Muslim world in particular especially from oil rich Arab countries. But in the immediate post liberation period, as the political relations of Bangladesh were not so much cordial, economic relations

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<sup>62</sup>Address by President Ziaur Rahman at the Third Islamic Summit Conference, January 25-28, 1981, Taif Saudi Arabia (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Bangladesh), cited in Mastafa.

<sup>63</sup>See Syed Anwar Husain, "Bangladesh O' Islami Bissawa," 47.

<sup>64</sup>Syed Anwar Husain, "Bangladesh and the Organization of Islamic Conference," 29.

<sup>65</sup>After the Zia regime, during the rule of General Ershad, Bangladesh clearly had warm relation with Iraq, which lowered the relations with Iran. Diplomatically it was inconsistent with the national interest of Bangladesh.

also could not develop significantly with the Muslim states especially with the Arab countries. Although Mujib administration, by dint of its toughest diplomacy succeeded in getting recognition from most of the Muslim countries except Saudi Arabia, it could not acquire significant economic aid from these countries. In fact, faced with mounting economic crisis at the domestic level (while foreign currency reserves reached at almost zero in 1973-74), Bangladesh was desperately looking for economic assistance from the Muslim world. But Mujib government's secular and socialist approach proved fatal to achieve the flow of Arab aid except very few donations. Among those Egypt donated ten thousand pounds of flood relief,<sup>66</sup> while Saudi Arabia contributed US \$10 million through the United Nations for famine relief,<sup>67</sup> and the UAE offered US \$5 million. Although the economic assistance from the Muslim world during the Mujib regime was insignificant, Sheikh Mujib and his cabinet colleagues in order to improve economic relations undertook a serious diplomatic effort and toured the Arab countries in September 1974. Following Mujib's relentless diplomatic effort in October 1974, Mujib received a pledge of US \$51 million from Iraq and US \$10

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<sup>66</sup>Egyptian Gazette (Cairo), August 29, 1974. Also see Denis Wright, 242.

<sup>67</sup>Dawn (Karachi), August 29, 1974.

million in food aid from Saudi Arabia.<sup>68</sup> During the total period of Mujib regime (1971-1975) economic assistance from the Muslim world was negligible except very insignificant donations from the Arab countries. Until 1974-75 fiscal year, there were no bilateral food, project or commodity aid from any Muslim country. Some analysts believe, the reasons for the lack of aid from the Muslim world, during the two and half years of Mujib regime were its suspicion and lack of confidence in Mujib government.<sup>69</sup> Although no Muslim country extended their bilateral economic aid to Bangladesh, Iran, UAE and Kuwait joined hand in hand with 17 non-communist countries and 9 international organizations and formed the aid to Bangladesh consortium in October 1974.<sup>70</sup> Apart from this during the devastating flood and mounting economic crisis of 1974, Bangladesh received aid from Muslim countries, the OPEC and Islamic Development Bank (IDB) amounting to \$166.2 million.<sup>71</sup> Although trading relations were in existence, these were confined within limited areas and the volumes of trades were insignificant. (Table 18)

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<sup>68</sup>Dawn (Karachi), October 16, 1974.

<sup>69</sup>Armal Hussain, "Bangladesh and the Muslim World," in Emajuddin Ahamad (ed.), Foreign Policy of Bangladesh (Dhaka: UP2, 1984), 89.

<sup>70</sup>Talukder Maniruzzaman, "Bangladesh in 1974: Economic Crisis and Political Polarization," Asian Survey 15, no. 2 (February 1975): 120.

<sup>71</sup>See Rahman Sabhan, The Crisis of External Dependence: The Political Economy of Foreign Aid to Bangladesh (London: Zed Press, 1982), Table 5.1, 123.

TABLE 18  
 BANGLADESH'S TRADE RELATIONS WITH THE MUSLIM WORLD  
 (in million US \$)

Country	Total										Total Import	Balance of Trade		
	1972	1973	1974	1975	1972	1973	1974	1975	1972	1973			1974	1975
Turkey	.5	1.0	.7	5.0	7.20	nil	.1	nil	nil	.1	nil	nil	.2	
Algeria	.1	.4	.7	.5	1.70	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	.2	+7.00
Indonesia	nil	.3	12.9	nil	13.20	nil	6.5	nil	nil	6.5	nil	nil	6.5	+1.70
Iran	.3	7.7	6.8	15.6	30.40	nil	6.8	3.8	12.8	24.30	12.8	12.8	24.30	+6.70
Iraq	2.5	3.8	11.6	12.7	30.60	nil	4.9	16.2	20.1	41.20	20.1	20.1	41.20	+7.00
Kuwait	.3	.3	.3	nil	.9	nil	9.7	26.7	3.2	39.60	3.2	3.2	39.60	-10.60
Libya	nil	.1	nil	.2	.3	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	-39.00
Nigeria	.9	1.7	2.4	3.4	8.40	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	+3.00
Oman	nil	nil	nil	nil	--	nil	nil	3.1	23.3	26.40	3.1	23.3	26.40	+8.40
Quator	nil	.1	nil	nil	.1	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	=26.40
Saudi Arabia	.1	.1	nil	nil	.2	9.2	10.0	1.9	3.8	24.90	1.9	3.8	24.90	+1
Un. Arab Emir.	nil	.1	nil	.1	.2	nil	nil	32.9	33.1	66.00	32.9	33.1	66.00	-24.70
Bahrain	2.4	5.1	12.5	15.8	35.80	nil	2.4	.1	nil	.1	nil	nil	.1	-65.80
Egypt	.1	nil	nil	nil	--	nil	nil	5.9	3.3	11.60	5.9	3.3	11.60	--1
Jordan	.5	.4	.5	.3	2.20	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	+1
Lebanon	1.3	3.4	.7	6.8	12.20	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	+2.20
Syrian Arab Rep.	nil	nil	nil	nil	--	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	-16.90
Yemen Arab Rep.	nil	.1	nil	nil	--	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	+1
Yemen P.D.R.P.	nil	.2	.2	.4	.8	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	--1
Afghanistan	nil	.1	nil	nil	.1	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	4.0	nil	nil
Brunei	nil	.2	.1	.4	.7	nil	3.1	2.4	nil	9.5	2.4	nil	9.5	8.80
Malaysia	nil	nil	nil	nil	--	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	
Maldives	.5	.8	1.5	.4	3.2	nil	nil	1.6	nil	1.6	1.6	nil	1.6	1.6
Morocco	nil	nil	.2	.3	.5	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	1.6	nil	1.6	+5
Senegal	nil	.4	.1	.5	1.0	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	+1.0
Sierra Leone	nil	nil	nil	nil	--	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil
Somalia	4.7	2.8	8.8	8.2	24.5	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	+24.50
Sudan	.2	.1	.5	.5	1.3	nil	nil	nil	1.7	nil	nil	1.7	nil	-40
Tunisia	.1	.6	.5	nil	1.2	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	+1.20
Uganda														

Source: Direction of Trade Annual 1971-1977 (IMF: Washington DC, 1978), 74-75.



Actually one landmark event of Bangladesh-Muslim world relations during the Mujib regime was that Bangladesh was the co-organizer of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), founded in April 1975. Unfortunately before getting much of its economic benefit, the Mujib regime collapsed in August 1975. Because of Bangladesh's ideological differences with the Muslim world, under Mujib, despite having Middle Eastern countries increasing demands for more migrant workers, they did not consider Bangladesh.<sup>72</sup> So Bangladesh could not become a supplier of manpower to the oil rich Arab world and it was deprived from badly needed foreign currency while the country's foreign exchange reserve was virtually nil by 1974.

So clearly it is unveiled that, as political relations between Bangladesh and the Muslim world were insignificant, economic relations also remained stagnant during the Mujib regime. Despite having Mujib's relentless effort to promote relations with the Muslim world, it did not have significant impact on rapprochement, because of Mujib's secular and socialist approach for state management and external grouping with the secular India, socialist Russia, and the Communist world.

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<sup>72</sup>See Mokerrom Hussain and Richard F. Lowy, "Migration from Bangladesh to the Middle East: Volume Trend and Consequences," Asian and African Studies 24, no. 1 (March 1990): 76.

However, with the assassination of Sheikh Mujib and the collapse of his regime, like the political relations, economic relations between Bangladesh and the Muslim world advanced substantially. Instead of socialism and secularism, the new government of Ziaur Rahman introduced "Islamic Provision Bimillah-hir-Rahman-ir-Rahim" in the constitution and deleted secularism, while instead of socialist strategy of development introduced free market economy, with state patronaged policy of denationalization and privatization. While at the international level, Zia administration shifted from Indo-Soviet orbit and aligned with the Muslim world, by introducing provision in the constitution that the state shall endeavor to consolidate preserve and strengthen fraternal relations with the Muslim countries.

Actually Zia highly prioritized Bangladesh's national interest and strengthened relations with the Muslim world by changing the domestic and foreign policy decisions of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. As Ziaur Rahman made serious attempt to augment relations with the Muslim world, especially with the Arab world, the Arab leaders also responded positively towards Bangladesh. In fact, the more political relations had developed, the more economic aid had come from them. Eventually, Middle Eastern countries emerged as a major source of aid to Bangladesh.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>73</sup>Seven years of external assistance to Bangladesh, (ERD, Ministry of Planning, Government of Bangladesh), 1982. Dhaka, June

As an attempt to improve relations with the Muslim world, Zia very frequently visited the Arab countries. In 1977, President Zia paid an official visit to Saudi Arabia, Iran and Egypt. In 1978 he visited Kuwait and Iraq. During 1977-1978, several good will delegations, from both Bangladesh and the Muslim states visited each other and signed number of agreements which formalized and strengthened Bangladesh's economic relations with the Muslim world.<sup>74</sup> Islamic multi-lateral organizations like OPEC and IDB also became important donors for the development projects in Bangladesh during the Zia regime. In fact during 1974 to 1981, IDB provided Bangladesh \$25.1 million while during the same period OPEC supplied \$24.3 million which were mostly harnessed and received during the Zia regime.<sup>75</sup>

Apart from this, bilaterally, Bangladesh and Iran signed an agreement on economic and technical cooperation in 1977. While \$300 million Saudi Development fund was set up in 1976 to finance a \$516 million railway construction

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1978. Also see Sabiha Hasan, "Foreign Policy of Bangladesh II," Pakistan Horizon 36, no. 4 (1984): 87.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., 88.

<sup>75</sup>OPEC and IDB are two multilateral institutions of the Muslim world. OPEC started funding Bangladesh from 1974-75 fiscal year, which covered only one year of the Mujib regime. IDB was founded in April 1975, but with the collapse of the Mujib regime it could not receive any benefit from this, while the whole benefit of these two institutions were enjoyed by the Zia regime (1975-1981). See Rahman Sobhan, 230; also see Ibid., 143.

project in Bangladesh.<sup>76</sup> In fact the OPEC countries (Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE) emerged as important donor countries for Bangladesh. During 1971-1981, the OPEC countries disbursed \$509.6 million,<sup>77</sup> in which only \$166.2 million was during the Mujib regime (1971-1975)<sup>78</sup> and the remaining 343.40 million was disbursed during Zia's regime (1975-1981).<sup>79</sup> Besides aid from bilateral and multilateral sources, Bangladesh proposed for the establishment of the Islamic Center for Technical and Vocational Training and Research (ICTVTR) in Dhaka and it was approved at the 9th OIC foreign minister's conference in April 1978, in Dhakar, Senegal.<sup>80</sup> During the Zia regime Bangladesh became the member of the Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Commodity Exchange (ICCICE).<sup>81</sup> Its membership facilitated Bangladesh for trade, commerce and industrial cooperation with the Muslim world. Bangladesh,

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<sup>76</sup>Rahman Sobhan, The Crisis of External Dependence: The Political Economy of Foreign Aid to Bangladesh (London: Zed Press, 1982), 230-31.

<sup>77</sup>Rehman Sobhan, 231.

<sup>78</sup>\$166.2 million includes ADB and OPEC's aid too.

<sup>79</sup>Based on the calculation of difference.

<sup>80</sup>The objective of the center is to assist "the process of converting the vast manpower stock of the Islamic countries into a viable human capital for development by imparting technical and vocational training. See Syed Anwar Husain, "Bangladesh and the OIC," 20.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., 21.

under President Zia also played a very instrumental role in the OIC for transforming the Islamic solidarity into a politico-economic reality. To this end Bangladesh tabled a number of proposals at the 10th OIC foreign ministers conference in May 1979. The proposals included:

1. an exchange of capital human resources.
2. proper harnessing of manpower resources for productive uses,
3. concerted efforts to generate required resources to meet the basic necessities of life, and
4. formation of an Islamic economic community.<sup>82</sup>

Among these, the proposal for the formation of Islamic economic community was crystallized into an idea of Islamic Common Market (ICM) and was co-sponsored by Bangladesh and Turkey at the third Islamic Summit at Taif.<sup>83</sup> The idea behind this proposal was to ensure greater cooperation among the Muslim countries. The ultimate objective of the common market was to commence full economic integration among the member states. The proposal is still under consideration.

Bangladesh's constructive role in the OIC for the economic development of Islamic Ummah placed it in an important position in the OIC and the multilateral

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<sup>82</sup>Bangladesh Observer, May 22, 1976.

<sup>83</sup>"Bangladesh in the Third Islamic Summit Conference," Bangladesh in International Affairs 4 (January 1981): 10-13.

institutions of the Muslim countries like OPEC and IDB during the Zia regime.

Aside from this, Bangladesh's instrumental role in the OIC and IDB, gave Bangladesh a very potential labor market for its laborers (both skilled and unskilled) in the Middle East. Although Bangladesh first entered in the Middle Eastern labor market in 1976, it achieved remarkable success in the following years of Zia's regime. With an intensive effort very soon it was able to achieve remarkable success in securing employment in different Arab and Gulf states. In 1976 the total Bangladeshi manpower employed in the Middle Eastern countries was 5591 (91.3%) of the total overseas employment, while by 1981, it was increased at 55787 (96.1%) of the total employment abroad. (Table 19)

TABLE 19  
BANGLADESH'S MANPOWER EMPLOYMENT IN THE MUSLIM COUNTRIES  
(No. of persons)

Year	Algeria	Iran Bahrain	Irav	Jordan	Kuwait	Libya	Oman	Qutar	South	UAE	Yemen	Total	Total O'seas Employ- ment	ME as % of Total Employ- ment	
1976	--	338	281	587	--	643	173	113	1221	214	1989	--	5559	6087	91.3
1977	11	870	339	1238	--	1315	718	1492	2262	1379	5819	--	15443	15725	98.2
1978	17	762	982	1454	--	2243	2394	2877	1303	3212	7512	--	22756	22809	99.7
1979	25	827	4	2362	73	2289	1969	3777	1383	6490	5055	--	24254	24485	99.0
1980	3	1351	2	1927	127	3687	2976	4745	1455	8695	4895	--	29815	30573	97.5
1981	--	1392	--	13153	66	5464	4162	7351	2268	13384	6418	--	53658	55787	96.1
Total	56	5540	1608	20721	266	15641	12392	20355	9892	22079	31688	--	151485	155461	96.97

Source: Golam Mostafa, "Bangladesh's Foreign Policy: The Middle East Factor,"  
BISS Journal 7, no. 1 (January 1986): 47.

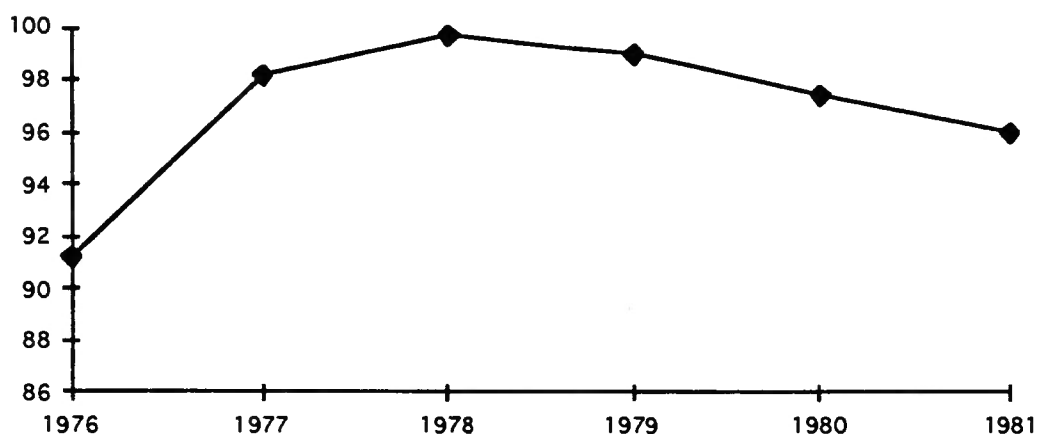


Fig. 12. Bangladesh's Overseas Employment in the Muslim World:  
The Zia Regime.

With the increasing outflow of manpower to the Middle East countries, the remittance also increased significantly. In 1976 the total remittance was U.S. \$9 million, while in 1981 it reached \$171.6 million, which was almost twenty times higher than 1976. (1 dollar is taken as 40 taka.) (Table 20)

TABLE 20

REMITTANCE FROM THE OVERSEAS EMPLOYEES  
TO THE MIDDLE EASTERN COUNTRIES

Year	in core taka*	in million \$
1976	35.85	8.96
1977	125.16	31.29
1978	165.59	41.39
1979	266.74	66.68
1980	523.81	130.95
1981	686.35	171.58
TOTAL	1803.50	450.85

Source: Table prepared from Golam Mostafa, "Bangladesh Foreign Policy: The Middle East Factor," *BISS Journal* 7, no. 1 (January 1986): 49.

\* 40 taka is taken as one(1) dollar.

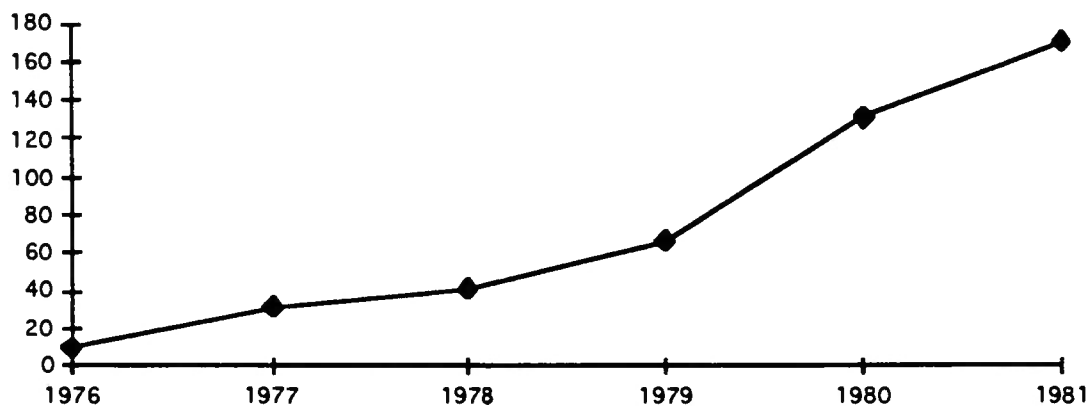


Fig. 13. Remittance from the Overseas Employees: The Zia Regime.

Another success story of Bangladesh's relations with the Muslim world, was its trade relationship during the Zia regime. It is true that the balance of trade between Bangladesh and the Middle Eastern countries are always negative because Bangladesh imports very costly petroleum and petroleum products from the Middle Eastern countries, while exports mainly tea, jute, jute goods, fish, fish preparation, vegetables, animals, sanitary filling and ready-made garments, to the region.

Although Bangladesh's balance of trade was always negative with the Middle Eastern countries the fact is that the Bangladesh's export to these countries increased over the years during the Zia regime, while it was seriously strained under the Mujib regime. (Table 21)



TABLE 21  
 BANGLADESH'S TRADE RELATIONS WITH THE MUSLIM WORLD  
 (in million US \$)

Country	Export						Total Export	Import						Total Import	Balance of Trade
	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981		1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981		
Malaysia	.9	.3	.5	.5	2.9	.2	5.30	5.3	7.4	13.6	20.3	46.3	56.7	149.60	-144.30
Maldives	.1	n	n	n	n	n	.1	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	+1.1
Turkey	6.0	5.2	8.4	8.5	7.	n	45.90	n	n	10.8	.9	.1	n	11.80	+34.10
Bahrain	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	6.7	.3	n	-7.00
Egypt	14.8	15.9	15.6	17.6	17.6	11.5	97.0	n	2.8	2.3	1.5	8.4	3.6	18.60	+78.40
Jordan	n	n	n	n	n	.1	.1	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	+1.1
Lebanon	n	n	1.1	n	n	2.1	3.2	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	+3.2
Syr. Arab Rep.	6.3	7.4	10.5	9.7	13.2	32.3	79.40	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	+79.40
Yem Arab Rep.	.1	.5	n	n	1.0	.6	2.20	n	.7	.2	n	n	n	.90	+1.30
Yem P O Rep.	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	1.2	.2	n	n	n	n	1.40	-1.40
Algeria	.1	1.0	.1	1.5	.5	3.3	6.30	n	n	n	n	n	.2	.2	+6.10
Indonesia	.2	n	n	n	.7	2.6	3.5	.1	.5	.8	1.8	15.2	45.0	n	n
Iran	11.4	14.2	15.2	17.6	47.8	43.7	149.9	46.6	50.9	51.1	.2	39.9	4.9	193.60	-43.70
Iraq	3.6	1.5	16.4	13.7	18.9	13.2	67.30	3.3	.9	4.1	46.3	26.0	.6	80.76	-13.46
Kuwait	.2	.1	.4	.6	.3	.6	2.20	5.2	26.3	11.8	19.4	12.3	28.2	103.20	-101.00
Libya	.2	.5	n	n	.1	n	.8	n	n	n	.1	n	n	n	n
Nigeria	3.1	7.8	5.6	2.0	1.9	2.2	24.80	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	+24.80
Oman	n	n	n	n	n	.1	.1	27.7	.5	n	n	.8	n	29.00	-28.90
Satar	n	.1	.1	.1	.3	.4	1.0	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	+1.00
Saudi Arabia	n	.5	.3	.4	.9	4.7	.8	3.8	22.5	17.6	88.5	225.8	306.5	664.7	-657.90
UAE	.2	.7	1.4	1.6	1.1	1.8	6.70	18.0	80.5	61.8	73.2	137.2	161.4	532.10	-525.40
Guinea	.4	.1	.1	n	.1	.1	.8	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	+1.8
Morocco	1.0	1.4	.8	3.0	1.7	.5	8.40	.6	n	n	n	n	n	n	+7.80
Sierra Leone	.2	.1	.5	n	n	n	.8	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	+1.8
Somalia	n	n	n	.4	n	n	.4	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	+1.4
Sudan	6.8	15.6	4.0	18.4	34	35.0	114.30	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	+114.30
Tunisia	1.3	1.6	.2	n	.5	.9	4.5	n	.6	n	n	n	n	n	+3.90
Afghanistan	.6	.8	1.2	.9	1.0	1.5	6.0	1.0	n	n	n	n	n	n	+5.00
Senegal	.6	.3	n	.3	n	n	1.2	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	+1.2
Uganda	.4	.7	n	n	n	n	1.1	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	+1.1

Source: Direction of Trade Statistics: Yearbook 1982 (IMF: Washington, D.C., May 6, 1982), 79-80.

Data available shows that Bangladesh's export to Middle East was 9 percent in 1976-77, which increased significantly during the Zia regime and rose to as high as 21 percent in 1980-81.<sup>84</sup> While Bangladesh's import also increased during this period, simultaneously with the exports. Bangladesh's total import from the Middle Eastern region, constituted 8.5 percent during 1975-76 and it reached at 22.4 percent in 1981.<sup>85</sup> Apart from those in the trading field, another development was Bangladesh's trade relationship with the African Muslim countries and southeast Asian countries. Although relations with the Muslim countries of Southeast Asia and African states established during the Mujib regime, Zia augmented economic relations with these countries significantly.

#### Summary

Finally, it is revealed that at the political level, Bangladesh-Muslim world relations started to grow since the post-liberation period. During the first phase (1971-1975), Mujib regime was exclusively engaged in diplomatic efforts for obtaining recognition from the Muslim world. Mujib's domestic policy, especially secularism and socialism as

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<sup>84</sup>See Annual Export Receipts 1983-84, Statistical Department (Bangladesh Bank, Table II), 48-156.

<sup>85</sup>See Bangladesh's Import From the Middle East, Annual Import Payment: 1983-84 (Statistical Department: Bangladesh Bank, Table II).

state principles and constitutional measures of the Mujib administration against Islamic politics constrained Bangladesh-Muslim world relations. While at the international level, Bangladesh's alignment with the Hindu India and the socialist Russia and the communist world hostiled Muslim world's attitude towards Bangladesh. Actually, during the Mujib regime, the Muslim world, particularly the Arab world, remained hostile to Bangladesh, especially hostile to the secular character of the constitution, hostile to the commitment to socialism and hostile to the alignment of the state with the Soviet Union, socialist world and India. Following the August coup, with the advent of Ziaur Rahman Bangladesh rapidly changed both of its domestic and foreign policies. Through constitutional amendments, Zia deleted secularism from the constitution and gave Islamic flavor to it, by inserting "Bis Millah-er-Rahmanir-Rahim" in the preamble of the constitution. Moreover socialism was re-defined as social and economic justice, while free market economic system was patronized by the state. At the international level Zia overnight shifted from Indo-Soviet orbit and aligned with the Muslim world. In order to ensure special relations with the Muslim world, Zia pledged to consolidate, preserve and strengthen fraternal relations with Muslim countries, based on Islamic solidarity. Zia's effort brought Bangladesh back

to the very heart of the Muslim world, and Bangladesh became a leading member of the OIC and the Muslim world.

Similarly, because of weak political relations during the Mujib regime, economic relations were very insignificant. Until 1974-75 the Muslim countries, especially Arab world, did not contribute Bangladesh any food project or commodity aid, except very insignificant amount of donation as part of humanitarian assistance.

Although trade relation was in existence during the Mujib regime it was also confined within limited countries and the volume of trade was insignificant.

Following the fall of the Mujib regime, Bangladesh's political alliance with the Muslim world improved significantly which culminated the economic relations subsequently. Apart from bilateral economic relations, IDB and OPEC, the two multilateral institutions of the Muslim world came forward to assist Bangladesh's development project with substantial economic aid. During Zia's period, Bangladesh's overseas employment and Bangladesh's trade relation improved significantly with the Muslim world. While in 1976, the total remittance from the Middle East was 9 million, it reached as high as 171.6 million, which was almost twenty times higher than 1976. Moreover, by 1980s the Muslim world emerged as a major donor of Bangladesh.

So in the final analysis it is unveiled that economic relations are dependent on political relations. As Mujib's

political relation with the Muslim world was cooler than Zia, Mujib's economic relation was weaker with the Muslim world than Zia too.

## CHAPTER IX

### CONCLUSIONS: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

In the final analysis, it has been revealed that in the foreign policy decision-making process of a developing country like Bangladesh, national interest is supreme and sovereign. It is not only a legitimate but a fundamental cause for national policy. According to the theory of national interest, in the post-liberation period, Bangladesh's national interest demanded such a pragmatic foreign policy which would ensure self preservation, economic advancement, safeguarding national power in relation to other states, upholding national ideology, values and national prestige.

Immediately in the post liberation period, the Mujib regime, which shouldered the responsibility of formulating the foreign policy unfortunately could not follow the theory of national interest, rather followed the principles of the national liberation war in framing the foreign policy of Bangladesh. Although in the post-liberation reality any rationally shaped foreign policy of a country is supposed to be directed by the theory of national interest, Mujib's foreign policy was guided by the principles of the national liberation war, i.e., socialism and secularism,

which dictated Bangladesh's alignment with the pro-liberation forces at the international level viz: India and the Soviet Union which consequently projected Bangladesh's hostility towards the anti-liberation forces at the international level. For example, Mujib's foreign policy was formulated as anti-U.S., anti-China and anti-Muslim world who supported Pakistan against the Bangladesh struggle in 1971. Though Mujib's policy demonstrated his deep commitment and clear allegiance to the values of the national liberation war, it undermined the national interest. In the aftermath of the devastating war, Bangladesh needed huge amounts of external aid, in order to remodel its war-torn economy. Although both India and the Soviet Union provided significant amounts of foreign aid to the Mujib regime, it was quite inadequate for its enormous needs. India was incapable of fulfilling Bangladesh's gargantuan needs, while the Soviet Union failed to provide adequate aid to Bangladesh for sustaining its economy. On the other hand, the USA, the western world, China, and the Muslim world did not respond to Mujib's call positively, because of his socialist and secular policy at the domestic level, and pro-Indian and pro-Soviet policy at the international level. Due to the lack of adequate external assistance, Mujib failed to meet the minimum needs of the people, and distrust and disappointment erupted against the Mujib regime and his pro-Indian and pro-Soviet policy proved

ineffective while the values of the national liberation war, especially socialism and secularism appeared to be extra burden on the people of Bangladesh. This ultimately dissociated Mujib from mass aspiration and eroded his credibility. Eventually Mujib had to pay the ultimate price and his regime was overthrown through the military coup of August 1975, without any public protest.

However, with the eclipse of the Mujib regime, and the emergence of Ziaur Rahman, at first defacto and later dejure leader, rapid and major changes occurred both at the domestic and international levels. At the domestic level, Zia deliberately distracted from the so-called values of the liberation war viz; socialism and secularism. He at first amended the constitution, and abolished secularism and inserted Bismilla-her-Rahmanir-Rahim in the preamble of the constitution and pledged to maintain fraternal relations among Muslim countries, based on Islamic solidarity. At this landmark decision, the Muslim world quickly and unequivocally responded to Zia's call with moral and material support unlike Mujib. On the other hand, instead of socialism, Zia introduced free market economy which was highly applauded by the USA and the west and the US policy towards Bangladesh changed quickly and mistrust, misunderstanding and reservation of the US and western policy makers about Bangladesh gradually disappeared from the scene.



On the other hand, at the international level, Ziaur Rahman very promptly shifted from the Indo-Soviet orbit and aligned with the USA, west, China and the Muslim world. Although Zia's policy gradually weakened and rifted Bangladesh's relations with India and the Soviet Union, it could not pose serious threat to Bangladesh's national interest. In order to forestall Indo-Soviet threat and to ensure the security of Bangladesh, Zia established strong ties with the USA, China and the Muslim world. While at the increasing flow of foreign aid and the growing economic cooperation between Bangladesh and its new allies, (i.e., US, China and the Muslim world), Zia could successfully renovate the new economy and his foreign policy was regarded as pragmatic both at home and abroad and it was mostly in conformity with the national interest of Bangladesh. However, in this chapter I shall focus on the fundamental changes in the Bangladesh's foreign policy from the Mujib to Zia regime. The changes will be shown in terms of Bangladesh's relations with the key countries.

#### Bangladesh and India

In the post liberation period, as regards to Bangladesh's relations with India, Mujib's foreign policy was considered pro-Indian. This was because India supported the Bangladesh struggle with utmost vigor. Finally through the Indo-Pakistan war of 1971, the Bengali freedom fighters liberated Bangladesh, under the overt and covert support of

the Indian army. In fact, India's decision to dismember Pakistan stemmed out of several factors:

(1) The Bangladesh liberation war was the prime time to dismember its birth rival--Pakistan, otherwise such an opportunity would never come again.

(2) Pakistan--a political enemy on both sides of the border will be replaced by a far weaker enemy on the one side (Pakistan) and a friend on the other (Bangladesh).

(3) India desired to emerge as an Asian super power and to maintain its hegemony will be fulfilled.

(4) Finally, India wanted to establish a weak and subservient government in Bangladesh.

However, following the independence, Mujib clearly followed a "tilted" policy towards India, in order to pay back his debt which he owed to India during the liberation war. To this end, at the domestic level, Mujib followed the Indian model of secularism and multi-party democracy with a single dominant party system. At the international level Mujib pursued a pro-Indian foreign policy, which was formalized by the signing of a Treaty of Peace, Friendship, and Cooperation between Bangladesh and India, for a period of twenty-five years. This generated "Indian hegemonism," and led Mujib to pursue a subservient foreign policy to India. Taking full advantage of Mujib's submissive foreign policy, India politically treated Bangladesh as a weak client state. This was demonstrated in the Indo-Bangladesh

Treaty of Peace and Friendship, which forbade Bangladesh to undertake any commitment, secret or open, towards one or more states, which may be incompatible with that treaty.

At the political level again India showed its chauvinism with Bangladesh regarding the Ganges water dispute. Though according to the Bangladesh-India Treaty of Friendship, Peace and Cooperation, a Joint River Commission (JRC) was set up to meet the water disputes, interestingly enough the question of the apportionment of the Ganges water remained outside the purview of the JRC. Although a short term agreement from April 21 to May 31, 1975 (41 days) was signed during the Mujib regime, which ensured 44,000-49,000 cusecs of water for Bangladesh, India unilaterally withdrew vast quantities of water (40,000) at Farakkah just after the end of the 41-day agreement which posed a serious threat of economic ruination to one third of Bangladesh.

At the economic level, although India emerged as a major donor, it was unable to provide sufficient economic aid to Bangladesh in order to keep the economy running. Moreover following the dawn of independence, India treated Bangladesh as a subservient economy and Bangladesh economy became dependent.

Indian dominance was evident after Indian Army's (150,000 Indian troops who entered into Bangladesh to expedite the liberation of Bangladesh) looting of the vast quantity of arms and ammunition left by the surrendering

Pakistani army. The systematic looting of the Indian army especially in the mills and factories has angered and enraged Bangladesh's civil-military officials.

Another aspect of Bangladesh-India relations during the Mujib regime was the border trade pact. This pact in practice gave rise to the whole scale smuggling. Because of the large scale smuggling this pact embittered the economic relations between the two countries. Bilaterally although Bangladesh-India relations were formalized by a series of economic agreements and although India provided immediately the technical assistance to Bangladesh in order to operate roads, bridges and other communication system, Indian limitless smuggling from Bangladesh made Bangladesh's mills and industries almost ineffective and its economy was virtually going to collapse. Albeit, India emerged as the largest donor of Bangladesh, Mujib's policy made Bangladesh a totally subordinate and dependent on India.

But following the coup d'etat of August 15, 1975 with the fall of the Mujib regime the new leader of Bangladesh made an effort to translate the national interest of Bangladesh into reality and very promptly shifted from his predecessor's policy both at the domestic and international levels. At the domestic level, Zia changed his policy from Mujib's old route of secularism and socialism. Zia abolished secularism through constitutional amendment and instead constitutionally pledged to provide absolute trust and faith

in Almighty Allah. Zia gave farewell to socialism by introducing a free market economy, i.e., privatization, denationalization and encouragement of the private ownership--a clear path of capitalist development.

While at the international level, Zia shifted from the Indo-Soviet orbit very rapidly and tied the fate of Bangladesh with the USA, the west, China and the Islamic world. At this point national interest of Bangladesh demanded economic development and national security of the country. Zia's new alignment with the USA, China and the Muslim world, resulted in an adequate amount of foreign aid which was utilized for the national economic development of the country. Regarding the political security, although hostile India and the Soviet Union posed a new threat to Bangladesh, its strong tie with China, the Muslim world and the USA worked as a counter balance. Although Bangladesh under Zia was considered as an unreliable and unfriendly country by India, Zia successfully accomplished the national interests. Whereas the Mujib government failed to solve the major issue, like the Ganges water dispute, Zia by his challenging foreign policy internationalized the issue by raising it in the OIC, the NAM and in the UN General Assembly and pressurized India, which ultimately forced the post-Indira, Janata government to sign an agreement for the apportionment of the Ganges water between the two countries for a period of five years.

While at the economic level, Bangladesh-India relations became very stagnant during the Zia regime. It was mainly confined within the traditional trade relations between the two countries. Because of Zia's shifting from the Indo-Soviet orbit, India slowed down its economic assistance to Bangladesh, but his foreign policy opened up several new avenues and explored supplementary foreign assistance from the U.S., China, and the Muslim world which ultimately better served the national interest of the country, as compared to the Mujib regime.

#### Bangladesh-Pakistan Relations

After the failure of the national integration of Pakistan, in the redesigned south Asian region, both Bangladesh and Pakistan very cautiously but seriously tried to establish a new relationship. For Pakistan it was an imperative to get released the 90,000 prisoner of war (POW's) including 195 alleged war criminals who were supposed to be tried by the Bangladesh government. For Bangladesh it was essential because it needed Pakistan's recognition in order to normalize its relations with the Muslim world and China. Finally on the eve of the Lahore summit of the OIC in 1974, Pakistan recognized Bangladesh and successfully gained the released of 90,000 prisoners of war including the 195 war criminals. Through Pakistan's recognition, Bangladesh got an opportunity to expand

cooperation with Pakistan, but still there were no diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Because of the lack of diplomatic tie there was no trade link between the two countries and economic relations remained virtually nil.

Although national interest implies that there is no eternal friend and no eternal enemy, national interest is the prime concern, in the international relation, Mujib's foreign policy was directed by the principles of national liberation war which generated hatred against Pakistan for its genocide and destruction in Bangladesh during the struggle. Of course Mujib's foreign policy was consistent with the principles of the national liberation war but it was incompatible with the national interest. Consequently, Bangladesh-Pakistan relations remained totally stagnant with mistrust, misunderstanding and enmity to each other. Following the August coup of 1975, the new leader Ziaur Rahman's new direction of foreign policy decision led Bangladesh to move towards rapprochement with Pakistan. After the fall of the Mujib regime and with the end of the entente cordial that existed between Mujib-Gandhi and Brezhnev, Pakistan was the first country that renewed its recognition of Bangladesh and urged upon the Islamic and Third World countries to recognize Bangladesh. Pakistan's new approach was reciprocated by Bangladesh and both countries established diplomatic relations. However Ziaur

Rahman's constitutional measures of deleting secularism and farewell to socialism at the domestic level and constitutional commitment to maintain fraternal relations with the Muslim world at the international level, were highly appreciated by Pakistan and prompted close cooperation and friendship between the two countries. During the Mujib regime, hostilities froze the relationship between the two countries, the ice started melting under the Zia regime. As a matter of fact, Ziaur Rahman accomplished quite a good number of achievements in bilateral relations. Both countries held identical views in regional and international forums and Pakistan emerged as a trusted friend of Bangladesh. Bangladesh raised its voice with Pakistan against the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan and supported Pakistan's readmission into the Commonwealth. While Pakistan strongly endorsed Bangladesh's position in the UN General Assembly against India regarding the Ganges water dispute. Apart from this, regarding bilateral problems though Bangladesh-Pakistan cordiality could not solve the distributions of the assets and liability issues, it settled partially the repatriation of the stranded Pakistanis issue what was a major success of Zia's policy towards Pakistan. Actually Bangladesh and Pakistan worked in the spirit of partnership during the Zia regime which served Bangladesh's national interest, better than the Mujib regime.



Again at the economic level, Bangladesh-Pakistan established economic relations with the advent of Ziaur Rahman. In order to promote economic cooperation the two countries signed a number of agreements and the landmark among those agreements was the setting up of a joint economic commission. The joint economic commission indeed augmented the volume of trade and commerce between Dhaka and Islamabad and Pakistan became the biggest buyer of Bangladesh's jute and tea. Another important aspect of Bangladesh's economic relations with Pakistan was that the balance of trade was always favorable to Bangladesh. Finally, it has been discerned that at the economic level, Bangladesh-Pakistan relations improved significantly during the Zia regime and Bangladesh's national interest was protected through Bangladesh's favorable balance of trade.

#### Bangladesh and the USA

Following its emergence as an independent state Bangladesh's relation with the United States was clouded with mistrust and misunderstanding for two reasons: First of all, the United States pursued a "tilt" policy towards Pakistan during the liberation war of Bangladesh, because Pakistan was the former ally of the USA, the partner of the US sponsored defense treaties, i.e. SEATO and CENTO and finally Pakistan played the role of the conduit between the US and China for Nixon-Kissinger's rapprochement process.

Secondly, in the post-liberation period, the Mujib administration adopted a socialist development strategy at the domestic level and at first adopted and later rejected a multi party system, and instead introduced one party authoritarian system following the Soviet system. It also externally aligned with India, the Soviet Union and other countries of the socialist camp, which were opposed to the capitalist development strategy, western democracy and US foreign policy. Specifically Mujib's policy against the US role in Vietnam war and Bangladesh's trade relations with Cuba, branded Mujib as an anti-American international lobbyist. Subsequently the US statesman and policy makers were skeptical about Mujib's national and international policies.

Although during the economic crisis of 1973/74, Mujib administration was trying to revise its policy according to the prescription of the world bank and the IMF, the Mujib government could not regain credibility among the U.S. and the Western donors. Moreover the failure of the Mujib administration to utilize the huge amount of foreign aid in the nation building activities during 1972/74 further eroded Mujib's credence among the donors. The west, particularly the US administrators and policy makers expressed considerable frustration with the Bangladesh government and regarded Bangladesh as a low priority area. So, it has been discerned that in the wake of the birth of Bangladesh, in

order to meet the growing economic necessity, Bangladesh's national interest demanded warm relations with the United States and increasing US aid as India and the Soviet Union failed to provide Bangladesh with adequate economic assistance. But Mujib followed the principles of the national liberation war and pursued a pro-Indian, pro-Soviet and pro-socialist foreign policy, which was not suited with the national interest of Bangladesh.

However, following the August coup of 1975 and the emergence of Ziaur Rahman as the new head of the government, Bangladesh's relation with the USA flourished significantly because of Zia's shifting from Mujib's domestic and international policies. At the domestic level Zia introduced free market economic policy instead of Mujib's socialist development strategy. Internationally Zia followed an "outward looking" foreign policy, aimed at promoting Bangladesh's relations with the west, particularly with the USA.

In international forums both Bangladesh and the USA pursued an identical policy, unlike the Mujib regime. Bangladesh's role against the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan, highly impressed the United States. Moreover as a member of the Security Council Bangladesh played a very constructive role during the US hostage crisis in Iran. In return the United States came forward with its economic assistance for implementing the second five year plan of

Bangladesh. Finally by the 1980s the USA emerged as the largest donor of Bangladesh and partner in 133 different accords. Moreover the US policy makers were very confident in Zia's foreign policy and regarded the US-Bangladesh relations as excellent. Finally, it has been understood that the US-Bangladesh friendship reached from the nadir to its peak during the Zia regime and served the national interest of Bangladesh better than the Mujib regime.

#### Bangladesh and the Soviet Union

The Soviet Union was the only super power which actively supported the Bangladesh liberation war. After the birth of Bangladesh, Mujib government subscribed to the socialist development strategy at the domestic level and allied with the Indo-Soviet nexus at the international level. Of course Mujib's pro-Soviet policy at the domestic and international levels better suited the principles of the national liberation war. But it failed to meet the national interest of Bangladesh in the post liberation period. Bangladesh under Mujib subscribed the Soviet model of socialism and one party authoritarian system, at the national level. Mujib also supported the Soviet policy in Vietnam and Cuba against the US policy at the international level. But the Soviet Union failed to meet up with the economic needs of Bangladesh in the post-liberation period. It was expected that the Soviet Union will emerge as the main patron of Bangladesh in the economic field, but the

rising expectation soon translated into a heightened frustration, only when the Soviet Union proved totally unreliable. Moreover, the wide gap between the Soviet aid commitment and disbursement further eroded the Soviet credibility among the people of Bangladesh. Immediately in the post liberation period, the Soviet Union obviously wanted Bangladesh to be in the anti-imperialist bloc in order to withstand the Sino-US détente in South Asia. But the Soviet Union failed to keep Bangladesh within its orbit completely, because the Soviet declined in providing adequate economic aid to Bangladesh in order to avert famine and help re-model the war ravaged economy which ultimately contributed to the fall of the Mujib regime.

However after the demise of the Mujib regime and the rise of Ziaur Rahman, the Soviet Union observed the development in Bangladesh as an embarrassment. Ziaur Rahman sharply shifted from the Indo-Soviet orbit overnight. He changed Mujib's policies of socialism and secularism and introduced the principle of free market economy instead of socialism while "trust and faith in Almighty Allah" replaced secularism. Again, at the international level, Zia adopted pro-US pro-Chinese and pro-Islamic foreign policy and got out of the Indo-Soviet orbit. Zia's rapid transformation from the Indo-Soviet orbit was marked by serious disappointment, which manifested in the poor Bangladesh-Soviet relations during the whole period of Zia. The Soviet

Union placed special reservation in their attitude towards the Zia regime at the political level the Soviet economic aid program was also slowed down considerably from its initial high level of activity during the Zia regime. Again Dhaka's denunciation and active role in the UN against the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan created a new impediment. This contributed to Bangladesh's relations with the Soviet Union sinking to a new low. Although Zia's policy antagonized the Soviet Union at both the political and economic levels, its rapprochement with the USA, China and the Muslim world encountered the Soviet threat, and preserved the national interest.

#### Bangladesh and China

The frozen Bangladesh-China relations during the Mujib regime (1971-1975) became mutually warming with the beginning of the Zia regime. As a matter of fact, despite Chinese historical commitment of support to the national liberation struggle against repression, foreign domination and occupation, it is amazing to note that during the national liberation war of Bangladesh, it played a very negative role against the freedom struggle and directly supported economic and military assistance to the military dictator of Pakistan. Actually China's reservation about the liberation struggle of Bangladesh was determined by its global perceptions viz: hostility towards the Soviet Union, adversarial relations with India and strong ties with

Pakistan, which enabled the Sino-US rapprochement in 1971. In fact because of its "tilt" policy towards Pakistan, Beijing fully supported Islamabad during the 1971 crisis which tarnished its revolutionary image in Bangladesh. Apart from its global perception, from the Maoist revolutionary point of view, the liberation war of Bangladesh was that it was a criminal act of Indian expansionism backed by the Soviet social imperialism, the two forces which consistently supported the Bangladesh struggle in 1971. So, the Chinese officially regarded the Bangladesh liberation war as a counter revolutionary movement to aggrandize the narrow class interest, with the help of reactionary and revisionist external power. According to the Chinese standard it was not a genuine guerrilla war fought by peasants and workers. It was a separatist movement launched not by the masses but by a handful of persons who wanted to sabotage the unity of Pakistan.

So following the dawn of independence, mistrust, misunderstanding and misperception obstructed the Bangladesh-China relations. China did not even recognize Bangladesh during the Mujib regime, because of its pro-Indian and pro-Soviet foreign policy, which was opposed to China's global policy. Moreover, China considered the Mujib regime as a government backed by the Indian hegemonism and the Soviet social imperialism. Although Bangladesh's national interest demanded the normalization of relations

with China and gaining Chinese economic and technical assistance for the rebuilding of the war damaged economy, the Mujib administration successfully failed to re-dress the Chinese grievances and was unable to pursue an independent foreign policy outside the Indo-Soviet orbit, which was anticipated by China.

On the other hand after the fall of the Mujib regime, China recognized Bangladesh and established diplomatic relations. Actually China saw Mujib's overthrow as a disgraceful matter for both India and the Soviet Union. Since then the Bangladesh-China rapport have been growing warmer, because of the new ruler's reluctance to subscribe the Indo-Soviet models at the domestic level and his rapid shifting from the Indo-Soviet orbit at the international level and alliance with China, the USA and the Muslim world. In the economic field, Bangladesh-China relations increased also substantially during the Zia regime which were virtually nil during the Mujib era. The economic relations were formalized through a series of agreements for bilateral economic cooperation including the long-term trade agreement (LTTA). Moreover China responded to Bangladesh's economic development by providing aid on easier conditions unlike many western countries. Actually President Zia stressed on the national interest of Bangladesh, which demanded close cooperation with any great power like China in the wake of Indo-Soviet hostility and the termination of Indo-Soviet



economic aid to Bangladesh. Zia's realistic policy overnight shifted from the Indo-Soviet orbit and directed Bangladesh's foreign policy closer to China which suited with the national interest of both Bangladesh and China.

In the final analysis it is unveiled that Bangladesh's national interest and Chinese national interest intersected each other and reached at an equilibrium point, following the collapse of the Mujib regime and the rise of the Zia regime. Since then the Bangladesh-China relationship has been progressively improving and by the 1980s it reached its peak from its nadir.

#### Bangladesh and the Muslim World

Bangladesh's relations with the Muslim world were bleak and frustrating during the Mujib regime, partly because of the Muslim worlds support towards Pakistan during the liberation war and their deliberate "tilt" towards Pakistan but mainly because of Mujib's domestic policies of secularism and socialism--the forbidden ideologies of Muslim states and Mujib's international alliance with the Hindu India and the Socialist Russia. Of course, there were valid reasons for supporting the Pakistan against the Bangladesh liberation struggle. Their first consideration was the solidarity of the Muslim countries. Albeit 85 percent of the Muslim population were fighting for the Bangladesh struggle, the active support of the Soviet Union and India towards the Bangladesh movement provided the Muslim world with the grand

design of the Indo-Soviet allies to dismember the largest Muslim country--Pakistan. Secondly, Israeli moral support to the Bangladesh movement and its early recognition of Bangladesh created widespread misperception and skepticism among the Muslim world about the Bangladesh struggle. Thirdly, during the Bangladesh struggle of 1971, the Muslim world did not get a clear picture about what was going on in the East Pakistan. The East Pakistan crisis was presented to the Muslim world from the West Pakistani viewpoint. In fact, Pakistani rulers gave very distorted impressions about the political development in East Pakistan and most of the Muslim countries were confused about the happenings in East Pakistan. They were either not clear about the underlying reasons or the undercurrents of the Bangladesh movement.

Fourthly, Indo-Bangladesh joint action against Pakistan with the material support of the Soviet Union was observed by the Muslim world, as a Soviet bid to fish in troubled water and materialize its "collective security plan." In fact the Soviet active involvement in the Pakistan crisis in 1971 concerned the security of many Muslim states especially who had close borders with the Soviet Union. The Muslim world as a whole was worried about the expansion of the Soviet influence from Pakistan to Afghanistan, Iran and other oil rich Persian Gulf and Middle Eastern countries, which would inevitably pose a threat to the interest of the Muslim states, and break down the existing status-quo in

West Asia and the Middle East. Finally, Pakistan's relations with the Muslim world were very prominent and its position was very important as the largest and most active member of the Muslim world. So, they did not want the dismemberment of the largest member of the Ummah and opposed the Bangladesh movement.

However, following the emergence of Bangladesh, the Mujib regime tried to get the Muslim world's political as well as economic support for the re-modeling of the national economy, but it was mainly busy in getting the recognition of the Muslim world. Although it received recognition of all but Saudi Arabia, it failed to receive significant economic support from them which was crucial for the very survival of the country. Of course the national interest of Bangladesh, at this point, demanded its alliance with the Muslim world and their economic cooperation, but this could not be accomplished by the Mujib regime. Because Mujib's domestic and foreign policy was based on the principles of the national liberation war (secularism and socialism) which was opposed to ruling ideology of the Muslim world. So the Muslim world remained hostile to the Mujib regime, especially hostile to the secular character of the constitution, hostile to the commitment of socialism and hostile to the alignment of the state with the Soviet Union, socialist world and India.

But, during the post-Mujib regime a thaw began because of Zia's response to the national interest instead of stressing the principles of the national liberation movement. Scanning Bangladesh's national interest Zia brought a structural change both in the domestic and foreign policy of Bangladesh. By amending the constitution Zia deleted secularism from the constitution and gave Islamic character to it by inserting Bismillah-hir-Rahman-ir-Rahim in the preamble of the constitution and declared absolute trust and faith in Almighty Allah (God). While the free market economic system was introduced instead of a socialist development strategy. Again at the international level, Zia overnight shifted from the Indo-Soviet orbit and aligned with the Muslim world. In order to ensure special relations with the Muslim world, Zia introduced a constitutional provision, which declared that the state shall endeavor to consolidate, preserve and strengthen fraternal relations among the Muslim countries based on Islamic solidarity. Zia's policy of closer relations with the Muslim world was reciprocated unequivocally by the Muslim world, and Bangladesh became a leading member of the OIC and the Muslim world, which was formalized by securing its membership in the Alqud's committee, Alqud-Summit Committee, OIC Peace Committee, permanent committee of the Islamic Solidarity fund, and the appointment of the assistant secretary general of the OIC from Bangladesh. Similarly at the economic level,

because of weak political relations during the Mujib regime, economic relations were also very meager. But Zia's political alliance with the Muslim world and its commitment towards the Muslim countries both at the domestic and international levels, significantly improved Bangladesh's economic relations with the Muslim world.

Apart from bilateral economic relations with the Muslim countries, IDB and OPEC the two multilateral institutions of the Muslim world came forward to assist the development projects in Bangladesh. During the Mujib regime, the Muslim world did not provide any food, project or commodity aid except some donations. During the Zia regime, the situation reversed dramatically, and the Muslim world provided significant aid to Bangladesh in addition to a large number of overseas employment opportunities in the Arab world. Moreover bilateral trading between Bangladesh and the Muslim world improved substantially during the Zia regime.

At last, it is clearly apparent that Mujib's foreign policy continued to be dictated by the principles of the national liberation war, not by the theory of the national interest and, thereby it took the pro-Indian and pro-Soviet stances which was very much against the USA, the west, China and the Muslim world, and ultimately could not serve the economic interest of the country, since India and the Soviet Union proved totally ineffective in meeting the gargantuan needs of Bangladesh. While Zia's foreign policy was directed

towards the national interest of Bangladesh and distracted from the unproductive values of the national liberation war, which was widely appreciated by the USA, China, and the Muslim world.

Appendix A shows a comparison between the Mujib and Zia regimes.

## APPENDIX

### A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE MUJIB AND ZIA REGIMES

#### Mujib Regime

##### i. Guiding Principle

Principles of the national liberation war viz: nationalism, socialism, secularism democracy.

##### ii. Foreign Policy

Indo-Soviet centrism.

#### Zia Regime

##### i. Guiding Principle

Theory of National Interest: no eternal friend, no eternal enemy, national interest is supreme viz: self preservation, economic advancement, safeguarding national power, upholding national ideology, values and national prestige.

##### ii. Foreign Policy

Transformation from the Indo-Soviet orbit to the US-China and Muslim world triangle.

### BANGLADESH-INDIA RELATIONS

#### Political level

- (1) Indian assistance to set up the new government after liberation.
- (2) Signing of a 25 years long treaty of peace, friendship and cooperation.
- (3) Indian dominance over Bangladesh.

#### Economic Level

- (1) Indian significant amount of aid to Bangladesh for the reconstruction of the war-ravaged economy.
- (2) Indian technical assistance for repairing the roads, bridges and communication networks.
- (3) Rampant smuggling of Indian goods to Bangladeshi market and the ruination of Bangladesh's local industries and inflation in Bangladesh.
- (4) Balance of trade was favorable to India.
- (5) National interest was undermined.

#### Political level

- (1) Dispute over the apportionment of the Ganges water.
- (2) Zia's internationalization of the Farakkah issue against India and a five year long agreement with India for the apportionment of the Ganges water.
- (3) Overall attitude of India was hostile and unfriendly.

#### Economic Level

- (1) India reduced bilateral economic aid to Bangladesh and it was very insignificant during the Zia regime.
- (2) Zia's policy enabled to control smuggling from Bangladesh to India, substantially. Although balance of trade was still negative, Bangladesh's export to India also increased significantly.
- (4) Bangladesh's national interest was well protected.

## BANGLADESH-PAKISTAN RELATIONS

### Political Level

- (1) Repatriation of the prisoners of war from Bangladesh to Pakistan.
- (2) Repatriation of the stranded Bengalis from Pakistan to Bangladesh.
- (3) Pakistan's recognition of Bangladesh.
- (4) No diplomatic relations between Bangladesh and Pakistan.
- (5) Repatriation of the stranded Biharis remained unsettled.
- (6) Internationally Bangladesh's alignment with anti-Pakistani camp and totally different foreign policy from Pakistan.

### Economic Level

- (1) Distribution of the assets and liabilities remained unsettled.
- (2) Because of the lack of diplomatic relations economic cooperation was stranded.
- (3) Bangladesh's national interest was not protected.

### Political Level

- (1) Pakistan was the first country that recognized the new regime after the fall of the Mujib regime.
- (2) Set up of diplomatic relations.
- (3) Repatriation of the stranded Pakistani issue was partially resolved.
- (4) Pakistan's support to Bangladesh for the apportionment of the Ganges water in the UN, NAM and OIC.
- (5) Bangladesh supported the admission of Pakistan into the commonwealth.
- (6) Internationally identical policy with Pakistan.

### Economic Level

- (1) Joint Economic Commission was established.
- (2) Trade relations improved.
- (3) Balance of trade was favorable to Bangladesh.
- (4) Distribution of assets and liabilities still remained unsettled.
- (5) Bangladesh's national interest was served.

## BANGLADESH-USA RELATIONS

### Political Level

- (1) US recognition was delayed because the US was concerned about China and Pakistan's reaction. The presence of Indian troops in Bangladesh was also seen by the USA as an imitation of sovereignty.
- (2) Mujib government's socialist domestic policy and international alignment with the Soviet Union and the socialist world seriously disappointed the US policy makers.
- (3) Mujib's anti-American policy towards Vietnam, hindered the Bangladesh-US relations.

### Political Level

- (1) Zia's total commitment towards the capitalist path of development.
- (2) Zia's rapid shifting from the Indo-Soviet orbit and alignment with the US-China and the Muslim world helped build confidence among the US leaders.
- (3) Zia's identical policy with the USA about Soviet invasion in Afghanistan made Bangladesh a trusted friend of the USA.
- (4) Zia's supportive policy towards the release of the US hostages in Iran was highly applauded by the USA.



## BANGLADESH-USA RELATIONS (continued)

- (4) Mujib's installation of one-party rule finally eroded the bonds of friendship with the USA.

Economic Level

- (1) Mujib's socialist development strategy made Bangladesh an unfriendly country to the US administration.
- (2) Mujib administration's misuse of foreign aid disappointed the US policy makers.
- (3) The US administration branded the Mujib government as an international basket case.
- (4) Mujib administration's trade relations with Cuba created mistrust and misunderstanding among the US policy makers.
- (5) Because of the weak political relations, there was a wide gap between the commitment and disbursement of the US aid to Bangladesh.
- (6) Bangladesh's national interest was seriously hampered.

Economic Level

- (1) Zia's free market economic policy impressed the US policy makers.
- (3) US-emerged as the largest donor and partner in 133 different accords by 1980s.
- (4) Apart from bilateral assistance US-sponsored multi-lateral institutions like IMF, IBRD, IDA, and ADB announced major credits for Bangladesh.
- (5) Bangladesh's foreign aid management was appreciated by the western donors.
- (6) Bangladesh's aid inflow from the USA increased.
- (7) Bangladesh's national interest was augmented significantly.

## BANGLADESH-SOVIET UNION RELATIONS

Political Level

- (1) The Soviet military and diplomatic efforts greatly facilitated the emergence of Bangladesh.
- (2) Mujib government's socialist development strategy created a new Soviet satellite in Bangladesh.
- (3) Mujib government's identical policy with the Soviet Union against the US invasion in Vietnam and against US policy towards Cuba made Bangladesh close ally of the USSR.
- (4) Mujib subscribed the Soviet one-party authoritarian system.

Political Level

- (1) Zia's overnight shifting from the Indo-Soviet orbit and the new alignment of Bangladesh with the USA, China and the Muslim world--the opposite camp of the socialist world.
- (2) Bangladesh's active role and sponsorship of a resolution in the UN GA and the NAM against the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan.
- (3) Bangladesh's role against Vietnamese aggression in Kampuchea also clouded the Bangladesh-Soviet relations.
- (4) Bangladesh openly charged the Soviet Union for opening a Soviet consulate at the port city of Chittagong without prior permission of the Bangladesh government.

## BANGLADESH-SOVIET UNION RELATIONS (continued)

Economic Level

- (1) The Soviet Union provided significant but insufficient amount of aid to Bangladesh which could not meet the increasing necessity of Bangladesh.
- (2) The Soviet slavage operation in the Bangladesh ports of Chittagong and Khulua.
- (3) The Soviet Union provided barter trading facilities to Bangladesh.
- (4) Balance of trade was always in favor of the USSR.
- (5) Bangladesh's national interest was not ensured, because the Soviet Union was unwilling to provide necessary aid to Bangladesh to meet the immediate necessity of the post-independent Bangladesh.

Economic Level

- (1) Zia's free market economic policy went against Soviet Socialist policy.
- (2) Bangladesh-Soviet trade turnover which increased rapidly during Mujib's period began to fall down sharply during the Zia regime.
- (3) There was a large gap between the Soviet aid commitment and disbursements.
- (4) The Soviet Union only continued financing the old projects, committed during the Mujib regime.
- (5) Although the Soviet aid to Bangladesh was virtually stopped yet Bangladesh received huge amounts of aid from the US-China and the Muslim world, which was greater than the Soviet amount and thus Bangladesh's national interest was served.

## BANGLADESH AND CHINA RELATIONS

Political Level

- (1) Because of its "tilt" towards Pakistan Beijing fully supported Islamabad which tarnished its revolutionary image in Bangladesh.
- (2) China refused to recognize Bangladesh during the Mujib regime because of his pro-Indian and pro-Soviet policy.
- (3) China branded Mujib administration as a puppet government of the Indian hegemonism and the Soviet social imperialism.
- (4) China vetoed against admission of Bangladesh into the UNO in 1974.

Political Level

- (1) China recognized Bangladesh and established diplomatic relations with Bangladesh.
- (2) Zia's shifting from the Indo-Soviet orbit and alignment with the West and China was applauded by the Maoists.
- (3) Bangladesh under Zia regime showed the common perception with China in its anti-Indian and anti-Soviet attitude.
- (4) Bangladesh's relation with China forestalled Bangladesh's undue dependence on India.
- (5) China supported Bangladesh's Farrakah issue against India.

## BANGLADESH AND CHINA RELATIONS (continued)

Economic Level

- (1) The economic relation was nil during the Sheikh Mujib's period.
- (2) Although Bangladesh's national interest demanded the normalization of relations with China and required Chinese economic and technical assistance for the reconstruction of Bangladesh's war-torn economy yet Mujib administration failed to address the Chinese grievances.

Economic Level

- (1) Since the emergence of Ziaur Rahman, Bangladesh-China relations had been growing steadily.
- (2) Economic and technical cooperation agreement and a trade and payment agreement (TPA) were signed in Peking in 1977.
- (3) Economic and technical cooperation stipulated an interest-free Chinese loan of \$58.3 million payable for ten years.
- (4) A five-year long term trade agreement (LTTA) was signed in Dhaka in 1980.
- (5) China provided better trade facility to Bangladesh.
- (6) China provided Bangladesh most favored nation's treatment in trade relations.
- (7) Chinese military aid to Bangladesh was another major area of cooperation Beijing came forward as Dhaka's major arms supplier after the Soviet Union scrapped all military assistance to Bangladesh following the collapse of the Mujib regime.
- (8) Bangladesh's alignment with China forestalled Indo-Soviet threat and Chinese economic and technical assistance helped rebuild the national economy and thus the national interest of Bangladesh was achieved.

## BANGLADESH AND THE MUSLIM WORLD RELATIONS

### Political Level

- (1) The birth of Bangladesh was considered by the Muslim world as a device of the Indo-Soviet axis power to dismember Pakistan.
- (2) Mujib's secular state principle and socialist development strategy was against the basic principles of Islam and the Muslim world.
- (3) Although most of the Muslim countries recognized Bangladesh during the Mujib regime, it is true that they had simply recognized the existence of Bangladesh but they did not involve in any economic activities or did not show any interest about Bangladesh.
- (4) Although many Muslim countries recognized Bangladesh, yet the oil rich Saudi Arabia did not recognize during Mujib regime.
- (5) Bangladesh got admission in to the OIC in 1974.
- (6) Mujib's ban order on Islamic politics seriously disappointed the Muslim world.

### Economic Level

- (1) No bilateral aid (food, project or commodity aid to Bangladesh), except a few donations.
- (2) Although Bangladesh was the member of the OIC, because of its stranded political relations, economic relations became stagnant.
- (3) Because of its poor political relations with the Muslim world, OPEC and IDB did not provide significant amount of aid and assistance to Bangladesh.

### Political Level

- (1) Zia's shifting from the Indo-Soviet orbit, and alignment with the Muslim world and the West impressed the Muslim world.
- (2) Abolition of secularism and and socialism and insertion of of trust and faith in Almighty Allah in the constitution and Zia's constitutional pledge for maintaining fraternal relations with the Muslim world made Bangladesh a close friend of the Muslim world.
- (3) Bangladesh became a leading member of the OIC and the Muslim world. It became a member of the 15 member Alquods committee, 3 member Alquods Summit Committee, 9 member OIC Peace Committee, and 15 member Committee of the Islamic solidarity fund.
- (4) Zia pursued an identical policy with the Muslim world regarding Palestine issue and the Middle East peace process.
- (5) The Muslim world extended its support towards Bangladesh against Indian hegemonism. It supported Bangladesh against India regarding Farrakkah issue.

### Economic Level

- (1) Zia's free market economic policy was appreciated by the Muslim world especially in the Arab world.
- (2) The Arab world became a major donor of Bangladesh during the Zia regime.
- (3) OPEC and IDB two multilateral institutions of the Muslim world came forward to assist Bangladesh's development projects.

## BANGLADESH AND THE MUSLIM WORLD RELATIONS (continued)

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| <p>(4) National interest demanded petro dollars from the Middle Eastern countries and trade and commerce with other Muslim countries, but Mujib's policies of socialism and secularism at the domestic level and alignment with the Indo-Soviet axis at the international level hindered the Muslim world from cooperation with Bangladesh.</p> | <p>(4) Middle East became a potential labor market for Bangladesh's skilled and unskilled manpower.</p> <p>(5) Bangladesh's export increased significantly.</p> <p>(6) Bangladesh's national interest was served both politically and economically. At the political level, Zia's relations with the Muslim world worked as counter balance against India and the Soviet Union. At the economic level, the aid from the Middle East, the OIC, the OPEC and the IDB greatly regulated Bangladesh's economic development and thus the national interest was served.</p> |
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