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Resignation of Governor of East Pakistan. - Unconditional Surrender of Pakistani Forces.

After long discussions with his Ministers the Governor of East Pakistan, Dr. A.M. Malik, wrote a letter tendering his resignation to President Yahya Khan in the afternoon of Dec. 14 in an air-raid shelter in his garden; his official residence had been destroyed in an air raid shortly before. He then took refuge with his family and his Ministers in the Intercontinental Hotel, which had been declared a neutral zone for foreigners, wounded soldiers and other non-combatants and was administered by the Red Cross. 16 senior officials, including the Inspector-General of Police, had already sought refuge in the hotel.

On Dec. 15 the Indian forces closed in on Dacca from all sides. A column advancing from the east crossed the River Lakhya, the last natural obstacle in their way, and began mortaring the city only a mile or two outside. To the south troops which had crossed the Meghna from Daudkandi began moving northward. The force which had pursued the retreating Pakistanis from Kushtia succeeded in crossing the Madhumati at Magura, and advanced towards Dacca from the west. At Khulna, where the Pakistanis were still resisting strongly, the Indian Army occupied one of the suburbs.

General Niazi sent a message to General Manekshaw in the afternoon of Dec. 15 through the U.S. Consulate in Dacca and the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi proposing a cease-fire; in it he asked for facilities for regrouping his forces with their weapons in designated areas pending their repatriation to West Pakistan, a guarantee of safety for the paramilitary forces and for all those who had settled in East Pakistan since 1947, and an assurance that there would be no reprisals against those who had collaborated with the martial law authorities. In his reply, however, General Manekshaw insisted on the unconditional surrender of the Pakistani forces.

"Since you have indicated your desire to stop fighting," said General Manekshaw, "I expect you to issue orders to all forces under your command in Bangladesh to cease fire immediately and surrender to my advancing forces wherever they are located. I give you my solemn assurance that personnel who surrender shall be treated with the dignity and respect that soldiers are entitled to, and I will abide by the provisions of the Geneva Conventions. Further, as you have many wounded, I shall ensure that they are well cared for and your dead given proper burial. No one need have any fear for their safety, no matter where they come from, nor shall there be any reprisals by forces operating under my command.

"Immediately I receive a positive response from you, I shall direct General Aurora, the commander of Indian and Bangladesh forces in the eastern theatre, to refrain from all air and ground action against your forces. As a token of my good faith I have ordered that no air actions shall take place over Dacca from 1700 hours today. I assure you I have no desire to inflict unnecessary casualties on your troops, as I abhor loss of human lives. Should, however, you not comply with what I have stated, you will leave me with no other alternative but to resume my offensive with the utmost vigour at 0900 Indian Standard Time on Dec. 16."

On the morning of Dec. 16 U.N. officials in Dacca discovered that General Niazi was unable to inform General Manekshaw of his acceptance of these terms because communications at his headquarters had been put out of action by Indian bombing. A message was therefore sent to New Delhi through U.N. radio facilities, 10 minutes before General Manekshaw's ultimatum was due to expire, asking for a six-hour extension of the bombing pause and for an Indian staff officer to negotiate terms of surrender. Major-General J. F. R. Jacob, Chief of Staff of the Eastern Command, arrived by air from Calcutta at 1.20 p.m. and at once began discussions with General Niazi. An Indian battalion had already entered the city unopposed during the

morning, and was joined in the afternoon by four more, including two battalions of the *Mukti Bahini*; they were greeted in the streets by thousands of jubilant Bengalis, who hugged and kissed the soldiers and garlanded them with flowers. The surrender terms agreed upon between General Niazi and General Jacob provided that all Pakistani regular, paramilitary and civilian armed forces would lay down their arms, and guaranteed that they would be treated in accordance with the Geneva Conventions and that foreign nationals, ethnic minorities and personnel of West Pakistani origin would be protected. After they had been accepted and initialled General Aurora flew to Dacca, accompanied by the Navy and Air Force commanders and the *Mukti Bahini* Chief of Staff (Group Captain Khondkar). General Niazi signed the surrender documents and presented them to General Aurora at a ceremony

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on Dacca racecourse at 4.31 p.m., while Indian troops held back the cheering crowds.

The text of the instrument of surrender signed by General Aurora and General Niazi was as follows:

"The Pakistani Eastern Command agree to surrender all Pakistani armed forces in Bangladesh to Lieut.-General Jagjit Singh Aurora, G.O.C.-in-C. of the Indian and Bangladesh forces in the eastern theatre. This surrender includes all Pakistani land, air and naval forces as also all paramilitary forces and civil armed forces.

"These forces will lay down their arms and surrender at the place where they are currently located to the nearest regular troops in the command of Lieut.-General Jagjit Singh Aurora.

"Pakistani Eastern Command shall come under the orders of Lieut.-General Jagjit Singh Aurora as soon as this instrument has been signed. Disobedience of orders will be regarded as a breach of the surrender terms and will be dealt with in accordance with the accepted laws and usages of war.

"The decision of Lieut.-General Jagjit Singh Aurora shall be final should any doubt arise as to the meaning or interpretation of the surrender terms.

"Lieut.-General Jagjit Singh Aurora gives his solemn assurance that personnel who surrender shall be treated with the dignity and respect that soldiers are entitled to in accordance with the provisions of the Geneva Convention, and guarantees the safety and well-being of all Pakistan military and paramilitary forces who surrender.

"Protection will be provided to foreign nationals, ethnic minorities and personnel of the West Pakistan region by the forces in the command of Lieut.-General Jagjit Singh Aurora."

Fighting continued at Khulna and in the Sylhet area until the morning of Dec. 17, as the Pakistani forces in these sectors had not received instructions. By Dec. 23, however, 89,000 regular and paramilitary troops had surrendered; they were not disarmed until they were taken to camps where full protection could be provided, as it was feared that the local population would take revenge on them. General Niazi and General Furman All were flown to India on Dec. 20, and a first group of 630 prisoners of war left Dacca for internment camps in India on Dec. 28. General Manekshaw had stated on the previous day that present plans were for all Pakistani prisoners of war to be moved to India by Jan. 15, 1972, and that he hoped that 25,000 Indian soldiers would have left Bangladesh by that date.

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Analysing the reasons for the Indian victory at a press conference in Calcutta on Dec. 17, General Aurora attributed it to the deployment of the Pakistani troops, commenting that "if they had concentrated their forces between the two big rivers, the Meghna and the Madhumati, I think they could have kept on for several

months".

"Individually the Pakistani soldiers, units and sub-units fought extremely well, with resolution and competence," General Aurora said. "But I consider their overall plan of how to fight the war was faulty. I think they should have realized that if they were going to keep themselves stretched out, fighting as units and sub-units, they would not be able to support each other and could be separated and dealt with piecemeal.... We have captured large quantities of ammunition.... From the point of view of ammunition they could have gone on fighting for a long time. But they had to have mobility to move and regroup. They had lost this mobility because of our techniques and our air superiority, and they realized they could not retrieve the situation. The Pakistanis were surprised by our technique of by-passing cities. They did not expect our movement to have been so fast, and were surprised by our crossing rivers so quickly."

After paying tribute to the contribution of the Navy and the Air Force, General Aurora said that in many respects the Pakistanis had had superior weaponry; they had had more automatic weapons and more recoilless anti-tank guns, for example. The Indian Army had had more tanks, however, and the American *Chafee*, which the Pakistanis had used, was inferior to the Soviet *PT-76*, which was exceptionally mobile on soft ground and had enabled the Indian forces to move with much greater speed than the enemy had anticipated.

In the fighting on the West Pakistan border and the ceasefire line in Kashmir, which continued until Dec. 17, the Pakistan Army made some gains in the Chhamb area of Kashmir, whilst the Indian Army overran much larger areas of Punjab and Sind. Details are given below.

The Kashmir Front. The heaviest fighting in Kashmir took place around Chhamb, west of Jammu, where the Pakistan Army had previously launched an offensive during the war of 1965 [see page 21104]. The Pakistanis opened their offensive on Dec. 4, and after heavy fighting compelled the Indian forces on Dec. 7 to evacuate Chhamb, a town of about 20,000 people on the west bank of the Manawar Tawi river. Pakistani attempts to establish themselves on the east bank, however, were repulsed on Dec. 8 and 10 with heavy casualties.

The Pakistani forces made a series of attacks on Poonch during Dec. 4–6, but without success. In the north of Kashmir the Indian forces occupied 33 Pakistani posts in the Kargil sector.

The Punjab Front. Fighting continued throughout the war on the Punjab frontier in the Amritsar-Lahore, Ferozepur-Hussainawala and Fazilka-Sulemanki sectors; the only major gain made by either side was the occupation by the Indian forces on Dec. 6 of the Khem Karan salient, north of Ferozepur. The Indian Army also launched an offensive on Dec. 6 into the Shakargarh salient, west of Pathankot; this culminated on Dec. 15–16 in the largest tank battle of the war on the western front, in which the Indians claimed that 45 Pakistani *Pattons* had been destroyed.

The Sind Front. Pakistani armoured and infantry forces crossed the Sind border into Rajasthan on Dec. 4, driving towards the junction at Ramgarh. After advancing 15 miles they were attacked by Indian aircraft and artillery at Longewala on Dec. 5, and were forced to withdraw into Sind on the following day. Indian sources claimed that the Pakistanis had lost 34 tanks and 80 vehicles, most of them destroyed by air bombing.

About 100 miles to the south Indian troops entered Sind on Dec. 5 and occupied the railhead at Gadra; engineers relaid in a single night six miles of railway track which had been torn up, enabling supplies to be carried to the front. Indian attempts to capture the important road and rail centre of Naya Chor (35 miles west of the border, on the edge of the Sind Desert) were unsuccessful, however. Indian troops also entered Sind in three other sectors: north of Jaisalmer, where they occupied a number of Pakistani posts; in the Nagar Parkar area on the Gujarat border; and in the Rann of Kutch, where they re-occupied the territory ceded to Pakistan in 1968.

At the cease-fire the Pakistani forces held about 50 square miles in the Chhamb sector and two small areas of Indian territory in the Hussainawala and Fazilka sectors. The Indian Army occupied about 50 Pakistani posts and several other small areas north and west of the cease-fire line in Kashmir; about 400 square miles in the Shakargarh salient; the Khem Karan salient and several border posts on the Punjab frontier; and about 1,000 square miles in the Sind and Kutch deserts.

Following the Pakistani surprise attack, the Indian Air Force began a series of retaliatory raids on all the military airfields in West Pakistan on Dec. 3, and during the next 24 hours attacked airfields near Karachi, Rawalpindi, Lahore and Peshawar. Indian spokesmen claimed that 10 Pakistani aircraft had been shot down, and nine more destroyed on the ground at Musroor (near Karachi), for the loss of only three Indian aircraft.

The Indian Air Force established its superiority from an early stage of the war, and especially after the destruction of the Pakistan Air Force in East Pakistan had enabled aircraft to be transferred from the eastern to the western front. Indian aircraft flew more than 100 sorties over West Pakistan during the night of Dec. 4–5, compared with only 20 flown by the Pakistan Air Force. Whereas the Indian Air Force operated by both day and night, the Pakistan Air Force made very few daylight raids on Indian airfields after Dec. 6. By that date India claimed to have shot down a total of 52 Pakistani aircraft, whereas Pakistan claimed to have shot down 81 Indian planes.

Indian bombing caused heavy civilian casualties in Karachi, where 150 people were reported to have been killed near the docks and in the industrial areas during a raid on Dec. 9, and 54 on Dec. 15. In a protest to the International Red Cross the Pakistan Government alleged on Dec. 10 that 305 people had been killed in indiscriminate bombing and strafing by the Indian Air Force; three of the six incidents cited, however, involved airports from which military aircraft were taking off or passenger trains carrying military personnel. Indian official sources alleged on Dec. 21 that 178 civilians had been killed by indiscriminate Pakistani bombing.

The Indian Navy took advantage of its superior strength to impose a strict blockade of both East and West Pakistan. The Government on Dec. 4 empowered the Navy to stop and search ships, including those of neutral countries, and to order them to Indian ports if they were found to be carrying cargo of military importance to Pakistan.

The U.S. State Department alleged on Dec. 5 that an American merchant ship had been bombed and machine-gunned by Indian aircraft off Chittagong on the previous day, and that another had been intercepted by Indian warships and escorted into Madras. An Indian spokesman denied on the following day that any ship had been attacked in the Bay of Bengal, and stated that the second ship had not been intercepted at sea, but had been detained at Madras until an assurance was given that it was not carrying contraband.

In the biggest naval battle since the Second World War, an Indian task force sank the Pakistani destroyers *Khaibar* (formerly H.M.S. *Cadiz*) and *Shah Jehan* (formerly H.M.S. *Charity*) and two minesweepers off Karachi in the early hours of Dec. 5, and subsequently shelled naval installations in the port. The submarine *Ghazi*, the largest in the Pakistan Navy, was sunk in the Bay of Bengal during the night of Dec. 3–4, and a second Pakistani submarine on Dec. 5. The Indian frigate *Khukri* was sunk by a Pakistani submarine on Dec. 9 in the Arabian Sea, 191 of the crew of 288 being lost.

Indian warships and aircraft again bombarded Karachi harbour in the early morning of Dec. 9, setting fire to oil storage tanks. A British cargo ship, the *Harmattan*, was hit by a missile, seven of the crew being killed, whilst a Panamanian freighter was sunk and a Greek tanker set on fire. After the British Government had lodged a strong protest against the attack on the *Harmattan*, Mrs. Gandhi sent a personal message on Dec. 11 to the Prime Minister, Mr. Heath, expressing her "deepest regret" and offering to "mitigate the sufferings of the dependants of those who lost their lives". The Indian Government announced on Dec. 10 that neutral shipping would be given until 6 p.m. on Dec. 12 to leave Karachi and clear Pakistani territorial waters.

Mrs. Gandhi announced the surrender of the Pakistani Army in East Pakistan in the *Lok Sabha* at 5.30 p.m. on Dec. 16 amid scenes of wild jubilation. She spoke as follows:

"... Dacca is now the free capital of a free country... This House and the entire nation rejoice in this historic event. We hail the people of Bangladesh and their hour of triumph. We hail the brave young men and boys of the *Mukti Bahini* for their valour and dedication.

"We are proud of our own Army, Navy, Air Force and the border security force, who have so magnificently demonstrated their quality and capacity.... India will remember with gratitude the sacrifices of those who have laid down their lives, and our thoughts are with their families.

"Our armed forces are under strict orders to treat Pakistani prisoners of war in accordance with the Geneva Convention and to deal with all sections of the population of Bangladesh in a humane manner. The commanders of the *Mukti Bahini* have issued similar orders to their forces.

"Although the Government of Bangladesh have not yet been given the opportunity to sign the Geneva Convention, they also have declared that they will fully abide by it. It will be the responsibility of the Government of Bangladesh, the *Mukti Bahini* and the Indian armed forces to prevent any reprisals.

"Our objectives were limited—to assist the gallant people of Bangladesh and their *Mukti Bahini* to liberate their country from a reign of terror, and to resist aggression on our own land. The Indian armed forces will not remain in Bangladesh any longer than is necessary.

"The millions who were driven out of their homes across our borders have already begun trekking back. The rehabilitation of this war-torn land calls for dedicated teamwork by its Government and people.

"We hope and trust that the father of this new nation, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, will take his rightful place among his own people and lead Bangladesh to peace, progress and prosperity...."

In a broadcast at 8.30 p.m. on this date (Dec. 16) President Yahya Khan admitted defeat in East Pakistan, though without mentioning that the Army had surrendered, and declared that the war would go on.

"In East Pakistan," President Yahya Khan declared, "despite heavy odds, the valour and courage with which our armed forces faced the enemy will become a golden chapter in our history. They have again re-created the great traditions of the soldiers of Islam. The enemy outnumbered us several times, and as a result of the enemy's blockade no supplies or reinforcements could reach them either by sea or by air. Despite these severe handicaps, they went on fighting with great courage and determination against the fierce attacks of a ruthless and traitorous enemy. The enemy had greater weapons and had the support of a big Power [i.e. the Soviet Union]. Assisted by these factors, the enemy overcame us in East Pakistan.

"However, in such a great war a setback on any one front does not at all mean that the war has come to an end.... Our heartfelt sympathies at this time are with our brothers in East Pakistan, who are undergoing various hardships and sufferings at the hands of the Indian warmongers. We have this message alone for them: have confidence, the war continues...."

"We are not alone in this historic struggle. We gratefully acknowledge the support of the People's Republic of China and the United States. We have received renewed encouragement from the voices raised by these two great Powers in the U.N. to maintain peace and justice in the subcontinent and to maintain the territorial integrity of a nation...."

"We will continue to fight the enemy on every front, and also continue our efforts to form a representative Government in the country, which the enemy, by launching an attack, tried to set aside. According to the programme, the Constitution will be announced on Dec. 20. This guarantees the maximum autonomy to East

Pakistan on the basis of one Pakistan, for whose establishment and protection the people of both wings of the country sacrificed so much. A Central Government will be formed after this, and subsequently Provincial Governments will come into being...."

Mrs. Gandhi shortly afterwards announced that she had ordered a unilateral cease-fire on the western front from 8 p.m. on Dec. 17.

"We have repeatedly declared that India has no territorial ambitions," she said. "Now that the Pakistani armed forces have surrendered in Bangladesh and Bangladesh is free, it is pointless in our view to continue the present conflict. Therefore, in order to stop further bloodshed and unnecessary loss of lives, we have ordered our armed forces to cease fire everywhere on the western front with effect from 20.00 hours Indian Standard Time on Friday, Dec. 17. It is our earnest hope that there will be a corresponding and immediate response from the Government of Pakistan."

After the Indian Government's decision had been formally communicated to President Yahya Khan through the Swiss Embassy, he announced in a statement broadcast at 3.30 p.m. on Dec. 17 that he had also ordered a cease-fire from 8 p.m. When his decision became known, heavy fighting which was in progress in the Shakargarh and Naya Chor areas subsided several hours before the cease-fire was due to come into effect. President Yahya Khan said in his broadcast:

"I have always maintained that war solves no problems and there should be negotiations between India and Pakistan for resolving outstanding disputes. In pursuance of this stand, Pakistan had accepted several proposals made by the U.N. General Assembly and by friendly countries which could have averted the present situation between India and Pakistan.

"Pakistan had also accepted the three resolutions of the security Council as well as the General Assembly resolution calling for a cease-fire, withdrawal of armed forces to their respective borders, and a political solution to the problems facing Pakistan. The General Assembly resolution had the overwhelming support of 104 member-nations of the international community, and the world expected India to respond to it in the interest of peace. It is unfortunate that India showed a total disregard of all these urgent expressions of world opinion, which would have spared bloodshed and suffering.

"Now India has made an offer of cease-fire on the western front. Pakistan is already committed to a cease-fire, along with other consequential steps, through its acceptance of the General Assembly resolution, and is willing to reciprocate within the framework of this resolution. If India is sincere, it should proceed through the U.N. to formalize it. In keeping with the foregoing and in the interest of peace, I have responded to the Indian offer and have ordered my armed forces to cease fire from 14.30 hours G.M.T. (20 hours I.S.T.)."

Leaders of all the Indian political parties paid tribute to Mrs. Gandhi for her conduct of the war at a meeting in the Central Hall of Parliament on Dec. 18. In her reply she emphasized that India had declared a cease-fire on her own initiative, and not because "somebody had asked us to do so"; her remark was believed to refer to statements by U.S. officials that President Nixon had played a major part in bringing about a cease-fire. President Giri conferred the *Bharat Ratna* (Jewel of India), the highest Indian award, on Mrs. Gandhi on the same day; the honour had previously been conferred on only 14 persons since its institution in 1955, among them her father, the late Jawaharlal Nehru, and her predecessor as Prime Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri, who was awarded it posthumously in 1966.

Indian casualties in the war were officially given as 1,047 killed, 3,042 wounded and 89 missing in East Pakistan and 1,426 killed, 3,611 wounded and 2,149 missing on the western front. No official details of Pakistani casualties were issued, but according to reports from Dacca between 5,000 and 6,000 Pakistani soldiers were killed in East Pakistan between Nov. 10 and Dec. 16, and between 6,000 and 7,000 were

missing. According to Indian official sources, the Indian forces lost 73 tanks and 45 aircraft on both fronts, and Pakistan 246 tanks and 94 aircraft. Pakistan's naval losses were particularly heavy—two out of eight warships, two out of four submarines, two out of eight minesweepers, and 16 gunboats. The Indian Navy lost only one frigate.

A number of breaches of the cease-fire were reported on the western front in the second half of December. The most serious occurred on Dec. 27–28, when according to Indian sources the Pakistan Army shelled Indian positions in the Ganganagar area of northern Rajasthan and made an infantry attack, two Indian officers and three soldiers being killed.—(Indian and Pakistan High Commissioners' Offices, London - Government Press Information Department, Rawalpindi - The Hindu, Madras - The Statesman, Calcutta - Times - Daily Telegraph - Guardian - Financial Times - Sunday Times - Observer - New York Times)

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