

India's Politico-Military Strategy for the 1971 India–Pakistan War

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India displayed its firm political resolve, robust military capability and deliberate decision-making process in the 1971 India–Pakistan War to achieve significant strategic success. The politico-military strategy evolved progressively from a cautious response to a firm decision to employ the Armed Forces at an appropriate time as the last instrument. India adroitly calibrated an indigenous freedom movement led by Mukti Bahini and concurrently launched a diplomatic outreach campaign to shape the environment in its favour. India outmanoeuvred Pakistan to compel it to launch pre-emptive airstrikes on 3 December 1971 in order not to be seen as an aggressor. India, apprehensive of international pressure to impose an early ceasefire and considering Dacca, the nerve centre, an ambitious objective, opted to capture the geographical space. Yet, it secured the surrender of Pakistani forces in Dacca. The Pakistani opposition crumbled under the weight of synergised military operations in the backdrop of failed UN Security Council Resolution.

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INTRODUCTION

The simmering discontent between East and West Pakistan reached a climax in the beginning of 1971. The West Pakistan-dominated military

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government denied the legislated right to the East Pakistani political party, Awami League, to form a government after it had won an absolute majority in the National Assembly elections held in December 1970. The failure of political negotiations between the military Government of West Pakistan, under General Yahya Khan, and Awami Party leader, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, led to large-scale protests, often turning violent. The Pakistan Army, overwhelmingly drawn from the West, launched a ruthless military crackdown, 'Operation Searchlight', on 25 March 1971, to suppress the people of East Pakistan. Predictably, the people retaliated against the military operation leading to an open rebellion. The brutality of the army operation led to a large-scale exodus of refugees, including thousands of former East Pakistani regular soldiers and paramilitary troops, into India. The earlier political demand for autonomy of East Pakistan turned into a secessionist movement. The leaders of the Awami League, who managed to escape the carnage and reach India, proclaimed the 'independence of Bangladesh' and formed a 'Provisional Government of Bangladesh' (PGB) in exile on 17 April at Mujib Nagar near Calcutta (Kolkata).

The continuous refugee deluge precipitated an enormous economic and security crisis in India. There was a nationwide uproar by the politicians—cutting across party lines, particularly from the affected states—the media and the public against the atrocities perpetrated by the Pakistan Army against the hapless populace of East Pakistan. The people demanded recognition of Bangladesh's government-in-exile and immediate military intervention to liberate East Pakistan from the clutches of Pakistan. Despite the public outcry, widespread sympathy for the Bengalis, and the demand for recognition and application of force in April 1971, the Indian government acted cautiously.

This article examines the macro perspective of the evolution of policy formulation and the resultant armed forces' strategy to achieve the political objective. The article comprises three main sections. The first section traces the evolution of India's politico-diplomatic strategy, starting from formulating the political objective and the various means to achieve the same. The constraints of achieving the desired outcome through diplomacy, indirect military support, and recurring economic cost and other political developments increased India's propensity to exercise the last resort, that is, the military option. The second section discusses India's war-fighting military strategy on the eastern, western, and northern fronts, with East Pakistan as the centre of gravity. The

gradual escalation of sub-conventional military activities in East Pakistan provoked Pakistan to carry out pre-emptive air strikes on Indian airfields on 3 December 1971, marking the commencement of the 1971 India–Pakistan War. A quick military campaign led to the capitulation of the Pakistan Army and the liberation of Bangladesh. The third section critically analyses India's politico-diplomatic and military strategy in the backdrop of geopolitics playing out between the superpowers beyond the battlefield, followed by the conclusion. The article does not examine the military's operational and tactical-level execution unless to derive a specific point.

The research and analysis of India's politico-diplomatic–military strategy sheds light on its political resolve, robust military capability, and deliberate decision-making process to transform a humungous human crisis into a significant strategic success without succumbing to the intense international pressure.

INDIA'S POLITICO-DIPLOMATIC STRATEGY

The refugee influx presented a significant challenge to the government. The initial response of the Indian government to the military action in East Pakistan was circumspect; it wanted neither to arouse greater hostility in Pakistan against India nor to encourage demands for immediate action from political groups in India.¹ India granted asylum to the Awami League political leaders and other cadres. Still, it did not recognise the PGB. The Army Chief, General (Gen) SHFJ Manekshaw, advised against military intervention due to the likely Chinese threat, the impending monsoons, and the considerable time required for building logistics. Despite reservations by a few Cabinet ministers, the government accepted the Chief's advice to plan a military intervention with adequate preparations for assured success. Also, India would have found it difficult internationally to justify military action without exploring diplomacy and other options. However, domestically, the decision did not cut much ice with the public and the intelligentsia. K. Subrahmanyam, a strategic analyst, stated: 'the breakup of Pakistan is in our interest, and we have an opportunity the like of which will never come again' and suggested, 'intervention on a decisive scale sooner than later is to be preferred'.²

Formulation of Political Objective and Strategy

By the end of April, it was not only the continuous unabated refugee deluge but also the changing demographic composition that became

worrisome for India. The change in demographic composition, from 20 per cent to 80 per cent Bengali Hindu refugees by the end of April 1971, made India apprehensive of their non-return even after a political settlement. Further, India feared the destabilising influence of refugees on its fragile socio-economic-cum-security structure in the north-eastern states and the re-ignition of insurgency extremist movement by Bengali radicals in West Bengal and neighbouring states. It constituted an ‘indirect aggression’ to the country’s core values of integrity and unity. India concluded that Pakistan was trying to solve its internal problems by cutting down the size of its population and changing the communal composition through an organised and selective programme of eviction.³ The Indian Prime Minister (PM) stated in the Parliament on 24 May 1971:

what was claimed to be an internal problem of Pakistan has also become an internal problem for India; Pakistan cannot be allowed to seek a solution of its political or other problems at the expense of India and on Indian soil. If the world does not take heed, we shall be constrained to take all measures as may be necessary to ensure our security.⁴

This was a significant statement that reflected the Indian government’s policy.

The policy focuses on three main issues: ‘the end to be achieved, the way it is to be achieved, and the means allocated to achieve the desired end.’⁵ The strategy is the bridge that connects the means with the ends. India strategised to orchestrate the refugee crisis by a deft exploration of available means to achieve a strategic objective. It devised the following politico-diplomatic–military strategy:

- *Political*: Seek the transfer of power to the moderate Awami League leadership in East Pakistan that would create conducive conditions for the return of the refugees.
- *Diplomacy*: Mobilise international support for a political solution in East Pakistan that should lead to a moderate Awami League-led government.
- *Indirect military support*: Provide calibrated indirect military support to the Mukti Bahini to compel Pakistan to seek a political settlement and wear down the Pakistan Army.
- *Direct military support*: If all the above proved unsuccessful, be prepared to escalate to direct military intervention as a last resort

at an appropriate time. War, after all, is an act of policy to attain a political purpose.

Diplomacy

Though belonging to two different realms, diplomacy and military are considered two sides of the same coin. Diplomacy is the first line of engagement to avert a war, and the military is the last resort to wage it. India put in a sustained diplomatic effort to highlight to the world community the human tragedy unfolding in East Pakistan, urging it to restrain Pakistan from its repression policy. The PM, ministers, and diplomats visited the United States (US), the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), Britain, France, Germany, Canada, the Islamic world, and the United Nations (UN) to pressurise Pakistan to negotiate a political settlement. It could not, however, elicit support from the US, which mattered the most. India also rejected the UN proposal of deploying observers on the border to monitor the refugees, which hardened its stance against India and made the world believe Pakistan's accusations of India instigating the rebellion in East Pakistan. The possibility of international pressure against Pakistan further receded.

India revisited the friendship treaty with the USSR, under negotiation for nearly six years, and signed the Treaty of Peace, Friendship, and Cooperation in New Delhi on 9 August 1971. The treaty, with regards to China, stipulated: 'In the event of either party being subjected to an attack or a threat thereof, the parties shall immediately enter into mutual consultations in order to remove such threat and to take appropriate, effective measures to ensure peace and security of their countries'.⁶ Concerning Pakistan, it stipulated both sides 'to abstain from providing assistance to any third party that engages in armed conflict with the other party'.⁷

Thus, the world, on the whole, showed sympathy for India, but considered the evolving situation to be an internal matter, which encouraged Pakistan to continue its repression policy. The treaty, however, assured India of the USSR support in the war.

Indirect Military Support

Indian planners were aware that armed intervention in April–May 1971 would evoke hostile reactions worldwide, with its efforts to garner sympathy and support for Bangladesh being drowned in the Indo-Pak conflict.⁸ India, therefore, planned a guerrilla campaign to harass the

Pakistani forces and compel them to seek a political solution. The Indian Army trained, armed, and guided the Mukti Bahini, organising it into brigades and battalions. It included the East Pakistan regular troops who had deserted the Pakistan Army. It planned that the Mukti Bahini would have an initial strength of 20,000 personnel, gradually enlarged to 1,00,000.⁹ This would enable India to slowly upscale the scope of guerrilla activities in a planned manner.

Meanwhile, the Mukti Bahini leaders were disenchanted as they felt that India was not doing enough as it had neither recognised the PGB nor intervened militarily. They did not consider Pakistan strong enough to counter India militarily due to the geographical constraint of maintaining its forces in East Pakistan and concerns of Indian retaliation in the West.¹⁰

Preparations for Direct Military Intervention

Indian Armed Forces concurrently began deliberate preparations and training for the impending contingency of going to war. The armed forces built up the reserves, raised/relocated additional formations/units, and undertook forward dumping of ammunition and supply stocks. The Indian Army raised 2 Corps Headquarters (HQ) and relocated the formations employed in counter-insurgency for operations in East

Table I Relative Military Capability of India and Pakistan¹¹

<i>Formations/Units</i>	<i>Western Theatre</i>		<i>Eastern Theatre</i>	
	<i>India</i>	<i>Pakistan</i>	<i>India</i>	<i>Pakistan</i>
<i>Army</i>				
Infantry/Mountain Divisions	13	10	11	4
Armoured Divisions + Independent Armed Brigades	1 + 4	2 + 3	2 Regiments + 2 Squadrons	1 + 1
Parachute Brigades	1		1	
Mukti Bahini/East Pakistan Civil Armed Force			1,06,844	25,000
<i>Air Force</i>				
Combat Aircraft	350	254	160	19
<i>Navy</i>				
Aircraft Carrier	–	–	1	–
Submarines	2	3	1	1
Cruisers/Destroyers/Frigates	16	6	5	–

Pakistan. It enjoyed a distinct quantitative advantage over the Pakistan Army in the eastern theatre, with Mukti Bahini as the force multiplier. It was near parity on the western front, though Pakistan claimed its technological superiority in its armoured fleet. The Indian Air Force (IAF) and the Indian Navy enjoyed a qualitative and quantitative advantage over their Pakistani counterparts. Having 350 and 160 combat aircraft in the western and eastern theatres¹², the Indian Air Force was a potent force. The Indian Navy had an aircraft carrier, besides cruisers, frigates, and destroyers. Having been left out in the 1965 war with Pakistan, it was eagerly waiting for its first operations. The relative military capability of India and Pakistan is given in Table 1.

A Secretaries Committee, comprising of the secretaries of defence, home, finance, external affairs, and others, was set up to take executive decisions dealing with the war preparations.¹³ The Pakistan Army had augmented its troop levels in East Pakistan from 14,000 to 60,000 (about four infantry divisions and 25,000 paramilitary forces).¹⁴ India, on its part, suitably calibrated its military preparations in the light of its public declarations of seeking a political solution through diplomacy. Gen Yahya Khan, on the contrary, built up the war phobia. He stated in August 1971: 'war with India is very near, and Pakistan would not be alone in case of war.'¹⁵

Political Developments

The Pakistan government published a white paper on 5 August 1971 blaming the Awami League for the crisis. It ordered an in-camera trial of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman for treason and disqualified 79 of 160 Awami League members in the National Assembly, charging 30 of them with treason. It also published the district-wise tally of refugees in late August 1971, putting the total figure at just over 2 million, closely resembling the number of Muslims among the Bengali refugees.¹⁶ The development convinced India of the unlikelihood of the emergence of any political solution and reinforced its apprehension of the Pakistani government not allowing the Hindus to return to their homes.

Economic Constraint and Cost–Benefit Ratio

As mentioned earlier, the continuous influx of refugees posed a substantial economic burden on India. Up to the end of July 1971, 7.23 million refugees had taken shelter in India. By 15 December 1971, the estimated figure was 10 million. The approximate cost of maintaining

the refugees was Rs 525 crores, while the external aid received was a meagre Rs 112.5 crore.¹⁷ The estimated cost of the war was around Rs 500 crore.¹⁸ An economic assessment in July 1971 underlined that India was not immediately vulnerable on account of foreign exchange reserves until March 1972, even if international aid was adversely affected by the suspension of existing commitments if India opted for war.¹⁹ Thus, as an aid recipient, though India was susceptible, the size of the debt made the creditors vulnerable to our reactions.²⁰ The one-time cost of the war was cheaper than the recurring cost of maintaining the refugees. The cost-benefit analysis, therefore, favoured the war.

By the end of August 1971, the aforementioned developments catalysed a strategic shift in India's approach. It increased its propensity for the military option, yet it projected itself amenable to a political solution to establish a conducive environment for the return of refugees.

INDIA'S MILITARY STRATEGY

India calibrated the war-avoidance and war-fighting strategies through a judicious blend of sub-conventional and conventional operations, respectively, with a decisive shift of focus towards the latter. Diplomacy continued to explicitly impress the international community to pressure Pakistan for a political solution. It implicitly aimed to expose the inability of the world community to evolve an acceptable political settlement, enabling it to exercise the best possible option.

War-fighting Strategy: Conventional Operations

Pakistan strategised to mount a major offensive to capture maximum territory in the West to offset the likely losses in the east. It planned a defensive posture on the eastern front and firmly held the cities and garrisons located along the major roads. It hoped that world pressure, particularly from the US, would prevent India from launching an offensive in East Pakistan. It further believed that China would militarily intervene, and the UN might effect an early ceasefire. India's military strategy envisaged a 'Defensive along the Northern borders, an Offensive-Defensive in the West and a Swift Offensive in the East.'²¹ The following were the military objectives:²²

1. *Northern borders*: To defend territorial integrity against likely Chinese offensive by deploying adequate forces in a defensive position.

2. *Western theatre*: To prevent Pakistan from capturing any Indian territory of consequence in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), Punjab, Rajasthan or Gujarat by adopting a holding strategy, with plans to execute limited offensive operations.
3. *Eastern theatre*: To assist the Mukti Bahini in liberating a part of East Pakistan, enabling the refugees' return to live under their government.

India maintained the defensive deployment of four divisions along the northern borders against China: 17 and 27 Mountain Divisions remained deployed in Sikkim, with 2 and 5 Mountain Divisions in Arunachal Pradesh. The 6 Mountain Division less a brigade was relocated from the Uttar Pradesh–Tibet border in central sector to be kept as a reserve in 33 Corps zone for any contingency requirements against China.

The terrain of East Pakistan, now Bangladesh, was interspersed with numerous rivers and nullahs. Three rivers, the Ganges, the Brahmaputra and the Meghna, bifurcated it into four distinct sectors: western, north-western, northern and south-eastern. The land strategy envisioned capturing maximum territory bordering the Brahmaputra and the Meghna river lines and setting up a 'provisional Bangladesh government', with Khulna and Chittagong being the principal objectives.²³ Subsequently, it envisioned the liberation of the whole of East Pakistan.²⁴ The eastern theatre planned a multi-pronged offensive to achieve a quick victory as follows (see Map 1):

1. *Western sector*: 2 Corps with 4 Mountain Division and 9 Infantry Division to capture Jessore, Jhenida and secure Khulna and Faridpur.
2. *North-Western sector*: 33 Corps with 20 Mountain Division and two independent brigade groups to capture Bogra/Rangpur.
3. *Northern sector*: 101 Communications Zone with a mountain brigade and a sector to capture Jamalpur and Mymensingh and secure Tangail with airborne forces.
4. *South-eastern sector*: 4 Corps with 8, 23, and 57 Mountain Divisions planned to capture Meghna Bulge between Chandpur and Ashuganj, Sylhet, Daudkandi–Mynamati, and Chittagong.
5. Dacca was to be captured by any formation after defeating the enemy in detail.²⁵
6. The IAF aimed to achieve total air superiority in the East and support the army and navy operations, besides attacking



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Map I Map Showing the Sectors and the Indian Army Plan

the enemy's strategic targets. It had considerably enhanced its transport fleet in the East to accelerate operations.

7. The Indian Navy deployed the aircraft carrier, *INS Vikrant*, in the East to secure a complete blockade of the East Pakistan coasts and Chittagong and Khulna Ports.

Pakistan, in turn, had deployed a division in each sector to deny ingress to the Indian Army in the east.

The western theatre adopted a holding strategy with plans to execute limited offensive operations. Western Command's 15 and 11 Corps deployed 10 divisions to defend J&K and Punjab and conduct limited offensive operations. The strike 1 Corps, with three infantry divisions, was tasked to protect the sensitive Samba–Pathankot area and launch the main offensive in Shakargarh sector after Pakistan's likely attack. The 1 Armoured Division was the Army HQ reserve positioned near Ferozpur to execute the offensive after discerning Pakistan's intentions. The Southern Command held the deserts of Rajasthan sector with two divisions. It planned minor offensive operations in Jaisalmer and Barmer sectors to capture territory. The Pakistan Army deployed three corps (1, 2 and 4) on the western front, with 10 infantry divisions, two armoured divisions, and three independent armoured brigades.

India tentatively decided to execute its military strategy at the end of November or early December, should no political solution emerge until then. The mountain passes along the northern borders would get snow-covered, minimising possible Chinese attack. This time, however, coincided with the session of the UN General Assembly. India presumed that the USSR veto power would forestall or delay any action by the UN Security Council against India.

Escalation: Sub-conventional Operations

The Army aimed to secure maximum area in the shortest possible time, due to the imminent international pressure. Air Chief Marshal P.C. Lal observed: 'caution dictated that the military people commanding the East should work to limited objectives, but go about achieving them as rapidly as possible.'²⁶ Therefore, the Army HQ envisaged escalating the sub-conventional military operations in East Pakistan with a sophisticated combination of employing the regular troops along the international border to draw the Pakistan Army away from the interior and tasking Mukti Bahini to establish its control in the interior. Commando troops were stealthily embedded to fight alongside Mukti Bahini within East Pakistan territory.²⁷ Appreciating that India would capture limited areas close to the border to carve out liberated zones to establish a puppet Bangladesh government and recognise the same internationally, the Pakistan Army moved out in strength away from Dacca to build robust defences around significant areas and towns.²⁸ A Pakistani Commanding

officer confirmed the same: 'our intelligence evaluators appear to have concluded that India would attempt to secure a small chunk of East Pakistan where the Bangladesh Government would be installed; we modified our plans to adopt a forward defensive posture.'²⁹

The denuding of the hinterland interior enabled the Mukti Bahini to dominate the geographical space. Irked by intensified activities in the East, Pakistan concurrently mobilised in the West to deter India from the war in the east. India refrained from moving any forces to the western border to avoid any provocation to Pakistan to start a war, yet it was worried about the Pakistani attack. India was in a dilemma: moving troops in anticipation of an attack could create a misunderstanding; if not done, it would seriously jeopardize the western front's defense.³⁰ India carried out war preparations in a progressive manner after ascertaining Pakistani moves. The Pakistan Army was battle-ready by mid-October, while the Indian Army attained a minimum operational readiness by mid-November.³¹

From the second week of October 1971, India further exacerbated its operations within East Pakistan, leading to a sharp increase in their scale and intensity. The Pakistani and Indian forces were engaged in air and tank battles between 19 and 22 November.³² Indian troops, after 21 November 1971, began to position themselves within East Pakistan to improve their defensive posture and secure suitable launch pads for subsequent offensive operations.³³ The tactical conflict between the two sides was in full force by end November. It was a matter of time as to who would convert the ongoing conflict into war.

The Pakistan Army considered attacking India in the western theatre on 22 November; however, President Yahya restrained from it, hoping the UN Security Council would intervene in Pakistan's favour. He made the last-ditch attempt to install a civilian government in Dacca,³⁴ but it did not work. The Indian PM, in the last week of November 1971, accorded approval to launch a full-scale offensive in East Pakistan on 4 December 1971.³⁵ The Pakistani President, too, had decided, on 30 November 1971, to launch an invasion on the western front on 2 December 1971, but postponed it by a day. Finally, Pakistan launched pre-emptive airstrikes on 3 December 1971, at 5.45 p.m., on several Indian airfields in the western sector.³⁶ The Indian PM declared hostilities on Pakistan and decided to recognise Bangladesh. The Indian Armed Forces launched attacks on 4 December 1971, concurrently in the western and eastern theatres.³⁷

The War and the Victory

The Indian Army's multi-pronged offensive into East Pakistan made rapid progress. It captured Jessore, Jhenida, Jamalpur, Mymensingh, the Daudkandi–Chandpur area, and the eastern bank of the Meghna River by 10 December. The IAF neutralised the Pakistani Air Force effectively and achieved total air superiority by 7 December, paving the way for uninterrupted close air support and heliborne/airborne operations. It then shifted a few fighter squadrons to the West. The Indian Navy sunk the Pakistani Navy submarine, *Ghazi*, outside Visakhapatnam harbour and established a naval blockade to prevent any Pakistani build-up in the region. However, the sinking of the *Ghazi* is still shrouded in mystery. It remains unclear whether it was sunk or was it a suicidal foray into a mined area.³⁸ Nevertheless, it provided the necessary freedom of action to *INS Vikrant* in the Bay of Bengal.

To exploit the rapidly deteriorating situation, the Indian Army modified its plans. India pulled out two brigades from the Chinese border on 8 December.³⁹ It also airdropped a parachute battalion at Tangail on 11 December. The advancing 4 Corps, employing a combination of helicopters and river crafts, built up almost a division-sized strength across the Meghna River by 12 December. As the US Seventh Fleet entered the Bay of Bengal on 13 December 1971, India carried out intensive bombings on naval assets to render them unusable. The IAF launched a successful airstrike at the governor's house on 14 December, causing a huge psychological blow to Pakistan. The planned amphibious operation with a brigade of the Army at Cox's Bazaar on 14–15 December night was unsuccessful. By the morning of 16 December, the Army had encircled Dacca with nearly five brigades. Four infantry battalions and an independent armoured squadron entered the city by the afternoon.

All of this intensified psychological pressure on the Pakistan Army to surrender. On the other hand, the Pakistan government desperately sought an UN-sponsored ceasefire as a face-saving mechanism to avoid the ignominy of surrender. Time was of utmost essence. Poland submitted a resolution to the UN Security Council for discussion on 15 December. It asked India and Pakistan to accept an immediate ceasefire; withdraw forces from each other's territory; renounce claims to any occupied territories; and transfer power in East Pakistan to the representatives elected in December 1970 elections. A ceasefire, followed by troops' withdrawal before the capture of Dacca, would have deprived India of Pakistani forces' surrender and substantially curtailed its capacity

to ensure the smooth accomplishment of Bangladesh's liberation—the desired end state. The resolution failed due to Bhutto's ulterior motive,⁴⁰ leaving Pakistan Army with no option but to surrender on 16 December 1971. India announced a unilateral ceasefire on the western front, which Pakistan accepted, ending the 14-day war on 17 December 1971.

The western theatre saw intensified operations all along the front: 15 Corps captured Turtok, vital posts in Kargil, a significant portion of the Lipa Valley in Kashmir and the Chicken's Neck area in the Jammu region. The Pakistan Army, as appreciated, launched offensives in Punch and Chhamb sub-sectors. The Indian Army defended Punch resolutely but suffered a significant reverse in Chhamb. The 11 Corps captured Jassar Enclave and Sehjra Bulge, but lost Kasowal Enclave. It also suffered a reversal in the Ferozepur and Fazilka sub-sectors.

The strike 1 Corps launched the main offensive in the Shakargarh sector on 5 December, when the likely Pakistani offensive did not materialise. It achieved limited success, failing to exploit the battle opportunities. The Southern Command captured Parbat Ali overlooking the Naya–Chor defences in the Barmer sub-sector. It tenaciously defended the Longewala post in the Jaisalmer sub-sector, with the air force playing a significant role. However, it could not successfully pursue Rahim Yar Khan, despite Pakistan troops being in total disarray. The Army did not issue orders to execute any offensive to the reserve 1 Armoured Division. The Indian Navy conducted a well-planned missile attack on Karachi harbour, causing substantial damage.

India, thus, achieved a decisive victory over Pakistan, securing the surrender of nearly 93,000 Pakistani soldiers and capturing 16,282 square kilometres of territory against the loss of 375 square kilometers on the western front.⁴¹

ANALYSIS OF INDIA'S STRATEGY

The paradigm of war typically follows the sequence: confrontation—crisis—conflict—war—resolution. The 1971 India–Pakistan War too generally unfolded in this pattern. India's decision to resolve the unprecedented refugee crisis evolved progressively, with the military replacing the politico-diplomatic strategy in a phased manner. An extensive diplomatic campaign followed the formulation of a political objective. Support to the indigenous liberation movement was progressively escalated to the conflict stage, finally leading to war in December 1971.

Political Objective

The PM's informal decision-making body, comprising a small informal core group of experienced and trusted bureaucrats, functioned very efficiently, exercising general authority.⁴² It relegated the formal apex body, Parliamentary Affairs Committee (PAC), to a traditional structure without authority and power.

India formulated a clear-cut political objective and asserted to the world that it would not accept any 'peaceful solution' that did not ensure the return of refugees. Mr K. Subrahmanyam called the PM's discreet and the first official threat to the possible use of force to achieve the political objective as 'a shift from the diplomacy of persuasion to the threat of force to avoid a compulsive drift into a war later on.'⁴³ The return of refugees to their native place after displacement triggered by military genocide was also a humanitarian and just cause: 'Just war should be dictated by a right intention, for an injury received, not for territorial conquests or any secular or religious crusades.'⁴⁴ The massive refugee deluge constituted an 'indirect aggression', threatening India's vital national interest of socio-cultural identity.

Military Intervention and Recognition of PGB

Before formulating the political objective and exploring other alternatives, India's decision not to exercise the military option, and recognise the Bangladesh government-in-exile, was eminently correct and necessary to shape the world opinion, in April–May, in its favour. Recognition would have been premature and drawn flak internationally. Going to war without exploring diplomacy and engagement with the international community would have led to collective world isolation, as most countries considered the uprising an internal affair of Pakistan. The PM believed that India should 'tread the path with a great deal of circumspection, and not allow feelings to get the better of us.'⁴⁵ She was apprehensive of being accused of adopting double standards in recognising PGB and applying force in East Pakistan while maintaining that J&K was an internal matter that brooked no interference. It also fitted very well with the military requirements of training, equipping, strategic positioning of forces, and calibrating the indigenous freedom movement of Bangladesh. It enabled India to project its military intervention, to support a Muslim-led East Pakistan liberation movement rather than another Indo-Pakistani conflict. The trained Mukti Bahini acted as a force multiplier during the war. Though India ruled out the military option in April–May 1971 on

politico-diplomatic–military considerations, the narrative built over the years ascribed ‘military consideration’ being the dominant reason.

Diplomatic Strategy

Indian diplomacy succeeded in projecting the unfolding crisis in East Pakistan, but the international community viewed it from its national interests. The US’ interest in building a long-term relationship with China, assisted by Pakistan, dictated its policy. Richard Nixon, the US President, and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger believed that ‘if they allowed India to humiliate Pakistan, their reputation in the eyes of China would suffer irreparable damage’.⁴⁶ The US, therefore, decided to buy time and deter India from military intervention, at least until Nixon’s trip to Beijing.⁴⁷ India, in turn, was justified in rejecting the UN proposal of deploying observers on the borders to monitor the refugees. The UN plan merely focused on the consequence without addressing the root cause of the political problem. India rightly apprehended that UN observers’ deployment would label the ongoing crisis as an Indo-Pakistan dispute and divert attention from Pakistan’s military oppression and fundamental issue of the return of refugees.

Several analysts and political observers believed that the Indo-Soviet treaty achieved deterrence against China and set the stage for India’s decision for military intervention, which is not the correct inference. The US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, stated, ‘the Soviet Union had seized a strategic opportunity’ by assuring India of its continued support and providing a hedge against Chinese intervention in support of Pakistan.⁴⁸

China was perhaps the first country that saw the writing on the wall of Bangladesh’s inevitable secession as early as April 1971 and accordingly calibrated its policy regarding India and Pakistan. Concerned about the developing strategic cooperation between Russia and India, China did not want to push India further close to the Soviet Union.⁴⁹ It also intended to keep Bangladesh from becoming an independent nation by using its influence to counter India and Russia. Overtly, China assured Pakistan of support against any Indian military adventure and supplied it with military hardware to equip two new divisions.⁵⁰ Secretly, it conveyed its disapproval of the military crackdown and urged Pakistan to seek a political solution.⁵¹ By July 1971, the Indian government had copies of letters in which the Chinese government had explicitly stated that its military force would not intervene in another Indo-Pakistan war.⁵² The

September 1971 coup attempt by Mao's designated successor, Lin Bao, supported by some air force and army elements, led to the grounding of the air force for some time. It further reinforced India's appreciation of China's unlikelihood to intervene militarily.

India appreciated that both the US and China would support Pakistan in any UN resolution on Bangladesh; therefore, the USSR veto was crucial to counter the same. The treaty assured USSR support in the UN and strove to neutralise the growing US–Pakistan–China relationship. It also pre-empted USSR military assistance to Pakistan. The treaty envisaged support only if the country was subjected to aggression by another country. India, therefore, assiduously orchestrated its military strategy to provoke Pakistan to attack first and then, retaliated in defence.

The unwillingness and inability of the international community to influence Pakistan for a political settlement in East Pakistan exposed its limitations to address an unparalleled human tragedy. This response suited India's objectives and made it easy for India to determine the course of action in its national interest. The more international pressure proved ineffective, the closer Indian thinking moved to the only alternative, namely, war, and the more India thought of war, the more it alienated official thinking in other countries.⁵³ Its shift to a proactive strategy from September onwards was most timely and prudent. By calibrating the escalation from September onwards to peak by the end of November, with military intervention in December, India achieved military superiority against Pakistan through deft use of terrain, timing, and force generation. It could also exploit geography and weather as deterrence against likely Chinese threat along the northern borders.

Impact of Indirect Military Support

The synchronised intensified activities, as part of the well-planned escalation matrix along the borders and harassing actions in the interior, forced the Pakistan Army into a decision dilemma about India's likely strategic objective. Would India capture limited areas close to the border to carve out liberated zones to establish a puppet Bangladesh government and recognise the same internationally or launch a full-fledged military offensive to capture the whole of Bangladesh? India succeeded brilliantly in creating an impression of capturing key areas close to the border to install a puppet Bangladesh government and achieved strategic deception, causing a psychological dislocation in Pakistan's political and military leadership. Pakistan relocated from the interior near Dacca to significant towns

closer to the border, enabling the Mukti Bahini to dominate the critical geographical mass.

Indian Army's occupation of East Pakistan territory since 21 November provoked Pakistan to initiate the war and it fell into India's strategic ploy. The Pakistani officers were greatly incensed with their leadership for not reacting to the Indian occupation of its territory. They felt strongly about declaring war on India as a matter of pride, prudence, and necessity.⁵⁴ Adding fuel to the fire, Bhutto warned President Yahya that if he did not react forcefully to India's aggression, he would be lynched by the people.⁵⁵ Yahya ordered pre-emptive airstrikes on 3 December 1971. D.P. Dhar, a member of PM's core group, welcoming the Pakistani strikes, succinctly remarked, '*The fool has done exactly what one had expected.*'⁵⁶ India earned a fig leaf for not being seen as an aggressor, though some analysts believed India started the war in November 1971. Richard Sisson and Leo Rose observed that the war began on 21 November, when Indian military units occupied East Pakistan territory in more realistic terms.⁵⁷ However, this observation is incorrect. Before 3 December, there were routine tactical-level engagements between the two armies, with air force employed only once. However, Sisson and Rose's observation that India's decision was based on expectations that did not materialise is correct. 'The escalating threat of war narrowed expectations of peacefully arranged outcomes; indeed, the field of expectation became so narrow that it excluded the contemplation of alternatives.'⁵⁸

War-fighting Military Strategy

Considering East Pakistan to be the centre of gravity where the war was to be won or lost, the overall Indian military strategy was eminently logical, sound and prudent. A quick offensive in East Pakistan was imperative to achieve a decisive victory before the international community could intervene. With a strategy precisely opposite to India's, Pakistan had planned to defend East Pakistan by exploiting its armour superiority in the West, hoping to compel India to withdraw forces from the East, enabling the international community to intervene. However, Pakistan could not aggressively pursue its offensive plans in the West. In East Pakistan, the strength of the Pakistan Army, in conjunction with the terrain's defence potential, was adequate to contest the Indian offensive and buy time for international intervention. India's superior strategy outmanoeuvred Pakistan Army, who lost the will to fight aggressively. A critical analysis of India's military strategy is given next.

Eastern Theatre: Dacca Not a Military Objective

The Indian Army did not earmark Dacca—the capital and geopolitical centre of power of East Pakistan—a military objective, not even a contingency task. The Army left it to be considered during the operations as and when the opportunity came up.⁵⁹ The planners appreciated its capture as an ambitious proposition, considering crossing one of the three rivers—the Padma, the Jamuna, or the Meghna—a tall order in the face of enemy opposition to an attack on Dacca. Major General K.K. Singh, the Director of Military Operations, felt that ‘the Indian Army with its inherent inhibitions against anything unorthodox and a more speedy type of manoeuvre was ill-suited for attempting the capture of Dacca.’⁶⁰ The Army Chief, overruling Eastern Command’s proposal to keep Dacca as the final objective in August 1971, felt that by capturing Khulna and Chittagong, Dacca would automatically fall and hence, there was no need to take it.⁶¹ However, both Khulna and Chittagong did not fall until 16 December—the day the Pakistani forces surrendered. Hard-fought tactical battles between the two armies convinced India to bypass fortified positions, and accordingly, it carried out some modifications in the operational plans.

The Indian Army, learning from the 1965 war experience, factored in the likely international pressure for a ceasefire. It appreciated that its military’s rapid progress would lead to the eventual collapse of the Pakistani resistance, rendering Dacca untenable before a ceasefire. Apprehending that an early ceasefire might end the war without capturing the entire country, it opted to secure maximum territory. Thus, the task assigned to Eastern Command was ‘limited to occupying the major portion of Bangladesh instead of the entire country’.⁶² India, however, did not expand its strategic aim to secure Dacca even after achieving significant success in the first week of the war. Instead, it needlessly captured some tactical objectives that did not contribute to the strategic aim of a swift offensive to occupy vast territory. The advance to Khulna after the fall of Jessore; the capture of Hilli, Jhenida, Rangpur; and the attack on Mynamati are examples. The Indian Army justified fighting attrition battles for these tactical objectives to have substantial territory in its control before any UN-sponsored ceasefire. Gen K.V. Krishna Rao, former Army Chief, rightly lamented: ‘If forces employed on these strategically unimportant and infructuous missions could be utilized for developing thrust towards Dacca, perhaps its capture would have been further speeded up, and the number of casualties reduced.’⁶³ There is

merit in this observation. The campaign could have been executed more expeditiously if Dacca had been kept as a strategic military objective, with complementary thrust lines developed along the western, northern and south-eastern sectors.

In the final analysis, the manoeuvre executed by crossing the mighty Meghna River posed a significant threat to Dacca, which made the Pakistani position militarily untenable. Lieutenant General (Lt Gen) Sagat Singh's boldness to achieve a brilliant manoeuvre, transporting more than a division-size force by helicopters and river crafts across the Meghna River, made the crucial difference. However, the same boldness and ability to execute manoeuvre operations were missing in other senior commanders. The 2 Corps lost an opportunity to reach Dacca first due to inflexibility to exploit initial success after the early capture of Jessore. Even 33 Corps failed to optimise its full combat potential and remained engaged in tactical battles that did not contribute strategically to the overall campaign. Despite India having credible intelligence about Chinese non-military intervention and the Indo-Soviet treaty's deterrence, it remained unduly worried about the Chinese threat. The Army did not employ 6 Mountain Division barring a brigade from supplementing any offensive and pulled out forces from the Chinese border only on 8 December 1971.

The Meghna River's crossing demonstrated the highest degree of close coordination between the Army and the air force. Lt Gen Sagat Singh and Group Captain Chandan Singh meticulously planned and brilliantly executed the heliborne lift of almost three brigades in over 350 sorties. The synergy assumed greater significance as it was not pre-planned but optimally exploited the Pakistan Army's rapid collapse. The pressure exerted by the Indian Navy on Chittagong and Cox's Bazaar, including interdiction of Pakistani shipping, added to Pakistan's psychological pressure to surrender. Mukti Bahini played a valuable role in providing intelligence and harassing Pakistani forces by raiding isolated/lightly held posts and static installations; however, they could not undertake independent operations.

Western Theatre: Cautious Approach

The Western theatre, adhering to its strategy to hold ground, considerably succeeded in thwarting Pakistani designs and capturing significant territory. India took a considerable risk in deploying its defensive formations quite late to avoid provoking any Pakistani offensive. Had Pakistan mounted a surprise attack, the situation would have become

precarious for the Army. The Western Army Commander, Lt Gen K.P. Candeth, remarked, 'Until the third week of October, the Western border was virtually open and, had Yahya Khan attacked before the middle of October 1971, he would have certainly succeeded in overrunning a large part of Punjab.'⁶⁴ The decision not to launch the 1 Corps offensive until Pakistan mounted its offensive led to the loss of initiative and surprise but ensured the Pathankot corridor's security. Excessive caution in its employment limited its potential and could not secure Zaffarwal or Shakargarh. In the Chhamb sector, the field commander's obsession with offensive operations led to the neglect of defensive preparations despite impending enemy attack inputs. The defensive plans were also faulty. The main defences were sited well in-depth, with only covering troops operating forward. It overlooked the implications of the loss of territory in a short war. Pakistan's inability to successfully pursue the offensive after securing a foothold across the Munawar Tawi River saved the day for India. Unfortunately, the corps did not attempt to muster the available forces to exploit denuding of the area by Pakistani troops and remained content to keep the defensive line resting on Munawar Tawi River. Inactivity is inexcusable in the context of short wars.⁶⁵

In Rajasthan, the Barmer sector's offensive achieved significant success and set the stage for further exploitation, but the lack of adequate logistic support inhibited it. After successfully thwarting the Pakistani attack on Longewala, the Jaisalmer sector's operations exhibited extreme caution and failed to pursue the retreating enemy. The 1 Armoured Division remained unemployed throughout the war, catering to a Pakistani threat that did not materialise. Nor did it pose any threat to Pakistan, despite its offensive in Shakargarh and Rajasthan, drawing in additional Pakistan forces. India did not visualise how to employ its offensive forces should Pakistan fail to launch its attacks. Arjun Subramaniam commented aptly, 'The anticipated mother of all battles between the two armored divisions remained in the realm of fiction.'⁶⁶ Gen Krishna Rao was correct in asserting that India could have made substantial gains in the Western theatre if the strategy could have been executed more vigorously.⁶⁷ Indian Army failed to employ its total resources optimally and allowed the opportunities to slip by.

War Termination

As India's offensive made rapid progress in East Pakistan, the US despatched its Seventh Fleet to the Bay of Bengal on 13 December 1971.

India, apprehending the US aim to deter it from liberating Bangladesh, bombed the Chittagong naval port to render it unusable and claimed to remain undeterred. However, the US aim of dispatching the Seventh Fleet was different. Realising the inevitability of Bangladesh's independence, the US invented an intelligence input about India's plans to partition West Pakistan and even created the bogey of a global conflict to rope in the USSR. It asserted that the fleet prevented India from dismembering West Pakistan after the liberation of Bangladesh. Henry Kissinger wrote, 'by using diplomatic signals, and behind the scenes pressures, we (implying the USSR) had been able to save west Pakistan from the imminent threat of Indian aggression and domination.'⁶⁸

With East Pakistan as its centre of gravity, India had strategised to conduct holding and limited offensive operations in West Pakistan. Even after the Pakistani forces' surrender and pressure from some political leaders, the Indian government did not alter its pre-war strategy. It considered the political advantages of international prestige and goodwill accruing from a unilateral ceasefire of far greater significance than inflicting additional attrition and capturing crucial territory. As the loss of East Pakistan had become a reality, the US dispatched the Seventh Fleet to exhibit explicit support to Pakistan and an implicit resolve to China and the Soviet Union. Subrahmanyam commented: 'The story of an Indian plan to launch an offensive in West Pakistan was invented to justify the sending of Enterprise mission; this kind of disinformation is standard practice in intelligence operations.'⁶⁹

CONCLUSION

In 1971, India comprehensively achieved its political objective through a decisive military victory. The establishment of lasting peace after the war is an essential ingredient of the paradigm of war, but it has rarely happened. If we go by the Clausewitzian dictum that the object of war is not victory but enduring peace, most wars would fall short of the standards.⁷⁰ The 1971 Indo-Pakistan War partially exemplifies the same. India comprehensively attained the national interest of maintaining its socio-cultural identity. 'India had not only won a decisive military victory but had seemingly exorcised the specter of the "two-nation" theory that had haunted the subcontinent since 1947.'⁷¹ The creation of friendly Bangladesh on the eastern borders has significantly denied external support to the lingering insurgencies in the North-East.

However, the political gains should provide the victor enough bargaining leverages to extract concessions from the vanquished to

establish enduring peace by resolving lingering issues. India did not dictate terms to Pakistan on the Kashmir issue in the Shimla Agreement despite its leverages. The inception of proxy war in J&K in the late 1980s made this conviction grow stronger. The Treaty of Versailles that imposed humiliating conditions on Germany after its defeat in World War I, leading to the rise of Nazism and World War II, perhaps influenced Indian decision-makers not to inflict further humiliation on Pakistan by imposing a solution to the Kashmir problem. It was a noble and well-meaning intention. India possibly miscalculated that strengthening the civilian democracy in Pakistan would resolve the Kashmir issue amicably. However, the unfolding of the crisis under intense international pressure signified India's steely political resolve, robust military capability, tremendous synergy exhibited by all the organs of the government and immense public support for a national cause spearheaded by a well-oiled apex decision-making apparatus.

India orchestrated the refugee crisis by a deft calibration of politico-diplomatic–military strategy. It took a deliberate decision to intervene after exhausting other alternatives, which proved eminently right militarily. Some historians and scholars, even in hindsight, favoured early intervention. S. Raghavan commented, 'Had such an intervention been successfully undertaken, it would have mitigated the brutalities visited upon the Bengalis, and the incalculable loss of life and violation of human dignity.'⁷² A military campaign conducted at the time and place of India's choosing was necessary for assured success. A stalemate would have resulted in an UN-sponsored ceasefire, with India failing to achieve its political objective. India formulated a workable, clear political objective of the return of refugees, asserting to the world that it would not accept any 'peaceful solution' that did not ensure their return, and then steadfastly pursued it. India calibrated military and diplomacy very effectively. Seeing the unwillingness and inability of the international community to nudge Pakistan to a political solution, India affected a timely strategic shift in its approach and assiduously calibrated the military support to Bangladesh's indigenous freedom struggle, ostensibly signaling its deference to a political settlement.

Its well-planned escalation matrix provoked Pakistan to initiate the war for which India had prepared diligently. Just war theorists rightly alluded to India's application of force for a humanitarian cause. 'Indian involvement was a better case of humanitarian intervention not because of the singularity and purity of the government's motives but because its various motives converged on a single course of action that was also

the course of action called by the Bengalis.⁷³ India did not prosecute military operations in West Pakistan after the Pakistan Army's surrender in the East and thus could not create long-term strategic deterrence on any futuristic Pakistani misadventure. It overlooked the Clausewitzian theory of suppressing the will of the enemy: 'If our opponent is to be made to comply with our will, we must place him in a situation which is even more oppressive to him than the sacrifice which we demand.'⁷⁴

On balance, the 1971 India–Pakistan War was India's triumphant moment. India achieved a decisive politico-military victory, creating a new state of Bangladesh by splitting its arch-rival Pakistan. It was one of the shortest wars in world history but had profound global ramifications. The Shimla Accord signed between the two warring sides in July 1972 did not usher in enduring peace; yet, it has been a touchstone of India's foreign policy ever since, framing its bilateral interaction with Pakistan. Sisson and Rose summed up aptly: 'There was strong and consistent control in democratic India during the Bangladesh crisis, but relatively weak and inconsistent control in authoritarian Pakistan; democratic India was the hard state; authoritarian Pakistan the soft.'⁷⁵

NOTES

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3. 'Haksar to Sikri, 13 May 1971', Subject File No. 166 (III Instalment), Haksar Papers, NMML.
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5. Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World*, New York: Vintage Books, 2008, p. 262.
6. S.N. Prasad and U.P. Thapliyal, *The India–Pakistan War of 1971: A History*, Dehradun: Natraj, 2014, p. 467.
7. Ibid.
8. 'Haksar's Note to Indira Gandhi on Meeting with Opposition Leaders on 07 May 1971', Subject File No. 227, Haskar Papers, NMML.
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11. Prasad and Thapliyal, *The India–Pakistan War of 1971*, n. 6, pp. 109, 207, 354; K.V. Krishna Rao, *Prepare or Perish: A Study of National Security*, New Delhi: Lancer, 1991, p. 157; Major General Lachhman Singh Lehl, PVSM, VrC (Retired), *Victory in Bangladesh*, Dehradun: Natraj Publishers, 1981, p. 33; Colonel John Gill, *An Atlas of the 1971 Indo-Pak War: The Creation of Bangladesh*, Department of Defence, Near East South Asia Centre for Strategic Studies, 2003, pp. 69–90.
12. Prasad and Thapliyal, *The India–Pakistan War of 1971*, n. 6, pp. 109, 207, 354; K.V. Krishna Rao, *Prepare or Perish: A Study of National Security*, n. 11, p. 157; Major General Lachhman Singh Lehl, n. 11, p. 33; Colonel John Gill, *An Atlas of the 1971 Indo-Pak War: The Creation of Bangladesh*, n. 11, pp. 69–90.
13. Sukhwant Singh, *India's Wars since Independence*, New Delhi: Lancer, 2009, p. 48.
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15. Krishna Rao, *Prepare or Perish*, n. 11, p. 158.
16. Raghavan, *1971: A Global History of the Creation of Bangladesh*, n. 9, p. 209. Also see 'Agha Shahi to U Thant, September 2, 1971', S-0863- 0001-02, UNSG U Thant Fonds, UN Archives, New York. Fonds are the records of U. Thant, UN Secretary-General, relating to his responsibilities as chief administrative officer of the Secretariat and as chief coordinator of the legislative, political, socio-economic and military bodies of the UN.
17. Raghavan, *1971: A Global History of the Creation of Bangladesh*, n. 9, pp. 206–07.
18. K. Subrahmanyam, *Bangladesh and India's Security*, Dehradun: Palit and Dutt Publishers, 1972, p. 106.
19. 'Note on "Economy under Conditions of Crisis" by Mr. PN Dhar, Economist and Secretary to the PM, July 21, 1971', Subject No. File 260 (III Instalment), Haksar Papers, NMML, quoted in Raghavan, *1971: A Global History of the Creation of Bangladesh*, n. 9, p. 207.
20. Ibid.
21. Krishna Rao, *Prepare or Perish*, n. 11, p. 170; and Prasad and Thapliyal, *The India–Pakistan War of 1971*, n. 6, pp. 105–06.
22. Prasad and Thapliyal, *The India–Pakistan War of 1971*, n. 6, p. 105.
23. J.F.R. Jacob, *An Odyssey in War and Peace*, New Delhi: Roli Books, 2011, pp.79–80. Also see Raghavan, *1971: A Global History of the Creation of Bangladesh*, n. 9, p. 238.
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27. Raghavan, *1971: A Global History of the Creation of Bangladesh*, n. 9, p. 213.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 222.
29. Hakeem Arshad Qureshi, *The 1971 Indo-Pak War: A Soldier's Narrative*, Karachi: Oxford, 2013.
30. Krishna Rao, *Prepare or Perish*, n. 11, p. 208.
31. *Ibid.*
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33. Sisson and Rose, *War and Secession*, n. 1, p. 213.
34. Raghavan, *1971: A Global History of the Creation of Bangladesh*, n. 9, p. 232. Also see Gul Hassan Khan, *Memoirs of Lt Gen Gul Hassan Khan*, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1993, p. 322.
35. Raghavan, *1971: A Global History of the Creation of Bangladesh*, n. 9, p. 232, quoting personal interview with P.N. Dhar, 24 November 2009. Also see Katherine Frank, *Indira: The Life of Indira Gandhi*, London: HarperCollins, 2001, p. 338; Depinder Singh, *Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw, MC: Soldiering with Dignity*, Dehradun: Natraj, 2002, p. 157; and S. Muthiah, *Born to Dare: The Life of Lt Gen Inderjit Singh Gill*, New Delhi: Penguin, 2008, p. 186.
36. Raghavan, *1971: A Global History of the Creation of Bangladesh*, n. 9, pp. 233–34. Also see Shuja Nawaz, *Crossed Swords: Pakistan, its Army, and the Wars Within*, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 295; Hasan Zaheer, *Separation of East Pakistan: The Rise and Realisation of Bengali Muslim Nationalism*, Dhaka: University Press, 2001, p. 360; and Aboobaker Osman Mitha, *Unlikely Beginnings: A Soldiers' Life*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 353.
37. Raghavan, *1971: A Global History of the Creation of Bangladesh*, n. 9, p. 234.
38. Arjun Subramaniam, *India's Wars: A Military History, 1947–1971*, Noida: HarperCollins, 2016, p. 378.
39. Jacob, *An Odyssey in War and Peace*, n. 23, p. 84.
40. Bhutto had calculated that only an ignominious surrender of the Pakistan Army would lead to his political ascendancy; and he was proven right in this regard. On 20 December 1971, five days after the resolution was submitted, he took over as President and Chief Martial Law Administrator of Pakistan. The previous day, when President Yahya, seeing an opportunity to avoid surrender, rang up Bhutto in New York to ask him to accept the Polish resolution, the latter pretended not to hear despite repeated calls and

- admonished even the operator, who intervened to state that the telephone connection was good. See Raghavan, *1971: A Global History of the Creation of Bangladesh*, n. 9, p. 261, quoting 1614th Meeting of the UN Security Council, 14–15 December 1971, S/PV.1614, UN Archives, New York. While speaking in the Security Council, Bhutto censured the UN for not acting on time, tore up a copy of the resolution and walked out of the session. No further discussion took place, and the resolution was dead.
41. Prasad and Thapliyal, *The India–Pakistan War of 1971*, n. 6, pp. 415, 416, 428, 438.
 42. The core group was comprised of: P.N. Haksar, Principal Secretary to the PM; P.N. Dhar, Secretary in PM's Office; D.P. Dhar, former Ambassador to the USSR and Chairman of the Policy Planning Committee; R.N. Kao, Director of the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW); T.N. Kaul, the Foreign Secretary; and some other administrative secretaries, like G. Ramchandra, M. Malhotra, Sharada Prasad and B.N. Tandon. At the Cabinet level, Swaran Singh, the Foreign Minister, Jagjivan Ram, the Defence Minister, and Y.B. Chavan, the Finance Minister, were the principal advisors. Mr Haksar and D.P. Dhar were close advisors and confidants of the PM. See Sisson and Rose, *War and Secession*, n. 1, p. 138; and J.N. Dixit, *India–Pakistan in War and Peace*, New Delhi: Books Today, 2002, p. 181.
 43. Subrahmanyam, *Bangladesh and India's Security*, n. 18, p. 227.
 44. David Fisher, *The Just War Tradition*, Palgrave Macmillan, 1985, p. 23.
 45. Raghavan, *1971: A Global History of the Creation of Bangladesh*, n. 9, p. 60.
 46. *Ibid.*, p. 227.
 47. *Ibid.*
 48. Raghavan, *1971: A Global History of the Creation of Bangladesh*, n. 9, p. 108, quoting Henry Kissinger, *The White House Years*, London: George Weidenfield & Nicholson, 1979, pp. 866–67.
 49. *Ibid.*, pp. 192–93.
 50. Gen Yahya Khan's interview in Newsweek, 8 November 1971, quoted in Prasad and Thapliyal, *The India–Pakistan War of 1971*, n. 6, 2014, p. 75.
 51. Raghavan, *1971: A Global History of the Creation of Bangladesh*, n. 9, p. 188; and Sisson and Rose, *War and Secession*, n. 1, p. 203. Also see 'Zhou to Yahya, April 11', in J.A. Naik, *India, Russia, China and Bangladesh*, New Delhi: S. Chand, 1972, p. 138, and *Pakistan Times*, 13 April 1971, for the text of Zhou En-lai's letter as circulated by the Pakistani government.
 52. Sisson and Rose, *War and Secession*, n. 1, p. 203. The source of this information includes one former official of the Pakistan Foreign Service who provided copies of the Sino-Pakistani correspondence to Indian intelligence services at the home of a well-known Indian journalist in New Delhi.

53. Pran Chopra, *India's Second Liberation*, Delhi: Vikas, 1973, p. 81.
54. Sisson and Rose, *War and Secession*, n. 1, p. 228.
55. *Ibid.*, p. 230, quoting interviews in Pakistan and the US, 1979.
56. J.N. Dixit, *Liberation and Beyond: Indo-Bangladesh Relations*, New Delhi: Konark Press, 1999, p. 89, quoted in Raghavan, *1971: A Global History of the Creation of Bangladesh*, n. 9, p. 234.
57. Sisson and Rose, *War and Secession*, n. 1, p. 214.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 280.
59. Singh, *India's Wars since Independence*, n. 13, p. 79.
60. Raghavan, *1971: A Global History of the Creation of Bangladesh*, n. 9, p. 236.
61. Jacob, *An Odyssey in War and Peace*, n. 23, p. 80.
62. Raghavan, *1971: A Global History of the Creation of Bangladesh*, n. 9, p. 236, quoting Singh, *India's Wars since Independence*, n. 13, pp. 68–69, 72, 90–91.
63. Krishna Rao, *Prepare or Perish*, n. 11, p. 200.
64. K.P. Candeth, *The Western Front: Indo-Pakistan War 1971*, Dehradun: The English Book Depot, 1997, p. 12.
65. Singh, *India's Wars since Independence*, n. 13, p. 256.
66. Subramaniam, *India's Wars: A Military History*, n. 38, p. 418.
67. Krishna Rao, *Prepare or Perish*, n. 11, p. 244.
68. Richard Nixon, *The Memoirs of Richard Nixon*, New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1978, p. 530, quoted in Raghavan, *1971: A Global History of the Creation of Bangladesh*, n. 9, p. 262.
69. K Subramanyam with Artur Monterio, *Shedding Shibboleths India's Evolving Strategic Outlook*, Delhi: Wordsmiths, 2005, p. 330.
70. V.R. Raghavan, 'Wars Old and New: Structural Changes', adapted from the Field Marshal Memorial Lecture delivered on Infantry Day, 27 October 2015, published in *USI Journal*, Vol. CLXV, No. 602, October–December 2015, p. 463.
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72. *Ibid.*, p. 272.
73. Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations*, New York: Basic Books, 1977, p. 147.
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75. Sisson and Rose, *War and Secession*, n. 1, p. 277.