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## ‘We have to tread warily’: East Pakistan, India and the pitfalls of foreign intervention in the Cold War

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### ABSTRACT

This article examines the East Pakistan crisis of 1971 as a watershed moment in Cold War humanitarian politics. It argues that the absence of an effective international framework of multilateral foreign intervention or peacekeeping forced the key external actors to resort to covert forms of intervention, while publicly pledging adherence to non-interference in the domestic affairs of Pakistan. The article demonstrates that covert intervention by India, the United States and the United Nations not only undermined the credibility of the Cold War international system, but also fuelled the drift to the Indo-Pakistani war that ultimately ended the crisis.

### KEYWORDS

East Pakistan; foreign intervention; humanitarianism; human rights; Indo-Pakistani Conflict

When the West Pakistan military cracked down with massive force on the East Pakistani autonomy movement in the night of 25/26 March 1971, killing an estimated 4000–6000 civilians, hunting down Hindus, and making global headlines about ‘genocide’, they seemed to create the ideal scenario for Pakistan’s rival, India, to intervene and permanently alter the balance of power in South Asia.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, on 4 April, the influential Indian strategist Krishnaswamy Subrahmanyam argued in a memo on India’s strategic options that ‘[t]he break-up of Pakistan will alter fundamentally the South Asian political system. . . . The initiative for escalation must always be held by India to extract maximum advantage out of this situation’.<sup>2</sup> Many Indian politicians and journalists agreed, urging the government under Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to recognise Bangladesh and intervene militarily. But the government hesitated to act for over eight months, despite the fact that the number of East Pakistani refugees entering India’s eastern border regions rose to a staggering 10 million people by the end of the year. On 26 March 1971, one day

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<sup>1</sup>These are the figures given by US consul for Dhaka, Archer Blood, writing to Secretary of State William Rogers, March 31, 1971, Record Group (henceforth RG) 59, Subject Numeric Files 1970–73 (henceforth SNF), Entry 1613, box 2530, National Archives and Record Administration, Washington, DC (henceforth NARA). British and United Nations sources give similar estimates. See Pakistan Situation Report, 1600 Hours, March 28, 1971, Prime Minister’s Office Files (henceforth PREM) 15/567, The National Archives, London (henceforth TNA); Karlfritz Wolff to U Thant, ‘The Crisis in East Pakistan March–April 1971’, April 19, 1971, S-0868-0001-03, United Nations Archives, New York (henceforth UN Archives). On the issue of ‘genocide’ in the East Pakistan crisis see Sarmila Bose, ‘The Question of Genocide and the Quest for Justice in the 1971 War’, *Journal of Genocide Research* 13, no. 4 (2011): 393–419.

<sup>2</sup>Subrahmanyam, ‘Bangla Dsh: Policy Options for India’, April 4, 1971, Haksar Papers, 276, III. Instalment, II. Subject Files, Nehru Memorial and Museum Library, New Delhi (henceforth NMML).

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after the outbreak of mass violence in East Pakistan, Gandhi's influential private secretary, P.N. Haksar, noted that

[w]hile our sympathy for the people of Bangla Desh is natural, India, as a State, has to walk warily. Pakistan is a State. It is a member of the U.N. and, therefore, outside interference in events internal to Pakistan will not earn us either understanding or goodwill from the majority of nation-States.<sup>3</sup>

Haksar confirmed this view even after India had finally launched its offensive. On 9 December 1971, in a confidential memo, he emphasised the need for India to continue to 'tread warily': it had no territorial designs on East Pakistan, would not use the opportunity of Pakistan's weakness to attack in Kashmir, and would pull its troops out quickly from East Pakistan.<sup>4</sup> One week later, the war had ended in Indian victory and the creation of independent Bangladesh.

The East Pakistan crisis also seemed to present a textbook case for United Nations (UN) action. Yet despite the mounting number of accounts of genocide, the exodus of millions of refugees into India, the resulting threat of an Indo-Pakistani war – and, potentially, a wider Cold War military confrontation – the UN failed to move past carefully worded appeals for restraint and the delivery of strictly non-political, humanitarian aid. Although there was strong pressure by Western publics, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and a significant number of diplomats and individual politicians to take a more resolute stance against the atrocities committed by the Pakistani authorities, Western states and the international community were divided on the issue whether to exert *any* kind of diplomatic, moral or economic pressure to resolve the crisis, not to speak of sanctions or a UN peacekeeping force. All they were ultimately able to agree on was non-interference in the internal affairs of Pakistan.

Shortly after the crisis was over, political scientists and legal scholars began pondering the reasons for Indian restraint, international inaction and the likely repercussions of unilateral Indian intervention for international law and the international system. Their studies have tended to focus on the key decision makers in the United States (US) and India to identify the 'real' motives of their states' actions. Most of these studies argue that the US 'tilt' to Pakistan was a major strategic mistake that exacerbated the crisis and, in its final stages in December 1971, even threatened further escalation.<sup>5</sup> With regard to India, they have generally concluded that the Gandhi administration cloaked its economic and strategic preferences for a return of the refugees and the weakening of Pakistan in humanitarian rhetoric,

<sup>3</sup>Haksar to Gandhi, March 26, 1971, Haksar Papers, 164, III. Instalment, II. Subject Files NMML. On Haksar see Srinath Raghavan, *1971: A Global History of the Creation of Bangladesh* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 59–60 and, more recently, Jairam Ramesh, *Intertwined Lives: P.N. Haksar and Indira Gandhi* (New Delhi: Simon & Schuster, 2018).

<sup>4</sup>Haksar, 'A Note on India's Objectives in the Current Conflict with Pakistan', December 9, 1971, Haksar Papers, 173, III. Instalment, II. Subject Files, NMML.

<sup>5</sup>One of the earliest works is Onkar Marwah, 'India's Military Intervention in East Pakistan, 1971–1972', *Modern Asian Studies* 13, no. 4 (1979): 549–80. More recent studies by political scientists include Gary Bass, *The Blood Telegram: Nixon, Kissinger, and a Forgotten Genocide* (New York: Knopf, 2013); Gary Bass, 'The Indian Way of Humanitarian Intervention', *Yale Journal of International Law* 40, no. 2 (2015): 227–94; Sonia Cordera, 'India's Response to the 1971 East Pakistan Crisis: Hidden and Open Reasons for Intervention', *Journal of Genocide Research* 17, no. 1 (2015): 45–62; Chandrashekhar Dasgupta, 'The Decision to Intervene: First Steps in India's Grand Strategy in the 1971 War', *Strategic Analysis* 40, no. 4 (2016): 321–33; Christopher Clary, 'Tilting at Windmills: The Flawed U.S. Policy Towards the 1971 Indo-Pakistani War', *Journal of Strategic Studies* 42, no. 5 (2019): 677–700; and Zorawar Daulet Singh, *Power and Diplomacy: India's Foreign Policies During the Cold War* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2019).

gradually building pressure on Pakistan and creating alliances that ultimately allowed it to launch its military offensive. In these accounts, the UN remained largely inactive due to Cold War alliances and the predominance of the norm of non-intervention.<sup>6</sup> Most legal and international relations scholars have deemed the Indian intervention one of the few Cold War cases of *de facto* humanitarian intervention – given its humanitarian outcome and the lack of UN sanction.<sup>7</sup>

Only in the past 10 years have historians begun to examine the East Pakistan crisis with greater scrutiny, seeking to avoid the partisanship of earlier approaches and exploring the case in greater depth.<sup>8</sup> Overall, their studies draw a more complex picture of the crisis. In one of the first historical studies of the crisis, Dirk Moses identified multiple ‘dilemmas’ confronting the UN, notably uneasy tensions between notions of self-determination, state sovereignty, genocide prevention and human rights.<sup>9</sup> More recently, Florian Hannig explored how the East Pakistan conflict boosted the role of the UN to deliver aid in humanitarian emergencies.<sup>10</sup> In a broader study on Cold War Asia, Paul Thomas Chamberlin placed the East Pakistani crisis in the wider context of the wars and massive violence that swept Asian countries as a result of Cold War clashes, decolonisation, and efforts to create modern nation states.<sup>11</sup> Meanwhile, Gil Loescher underlined the key importance of the East Pakistan crisis for the rise of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to become the single largest UN organisation and ‘a principal actor’ in world politics.<sup>12</sup>

Yet scholars have thus far overlooked the central role that a wider dynamic of covert intervention played in the escalation of the East Pakistan crisis. In his comprehensive account of the conflict, Srinath Raghavan, for instance, explores in depth Indian unofficial political and military support of East Pakistani rebels, but he does not engage with simultaneous covert attempts by UNHCR and US diplomats and politicians to resolve the crisis through a large-scale repatriation of the refugees. As a result, Raghavan omits the obstructive Indian strategy of blocking UN access to the refugee camps while cajoling refugees not to return to East Pakistan unless a political solution to the crisis had been

<sup>6</sup>On the role of the UN, see the detailed and useful, albeit rather exculpatory, early account in Thomas W. Oliver, *The United Nations in Bangladesh* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978). For a more recent historical assessment see A. Dirk Moses, ‘The United Nations, Humanitarianism, and Human Rights: War Crimes/Genocide Trials for Pakistani Soldiers in Bangladesh, 1971–1974’, in *Human Rights in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 258–79.

<sup>7</sup>See Thomas M. Franck and Nigel S. Rodley, ‘After Bangladesh: The Law of Humanitarian Intervention by Military Force’, *American Journal of International Law* 67, no. 2 (1973): 275–305; Nicholas J. Wheeler, *Saving Strangers: Humanitarian Intervention in International Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), ch. 2; Simon Chesterman, *Just War or Just Peace?: Humanitarian Intervention and International Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 71–5; and Thomas G. Weiss, *Humanitarian Intervention: Ideas in Action*. 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Polity, 2012), 41.

<sup>8</sup>For a review of the literature see Raghavan, 1971, 4–8.

<sup>9</sup>Moses, ‘War Crimes/Genocide Trials’, 278.

<sup>10</sup>Florian Hannig, ‘The Power of the Refugees: The 1971 East Pakistan Crisis and the Origins of the UN’s Engagement with Humanitarian Aid’, in *The Institution of International Order: From the League of Nations to the United Nations*, ed. Alannah O’Malley and Simon Jackson (London: Routledge, 2018), 111–35.

<sup>11</sup>Paul Thomas Chamberlin, *The Cold War’s Killing Fields: Rethinking the Long Peace* (New York: Harper, 2018), chs. 10 and 11. Chamberlin’s analysis closely follows Gary Bass’s account and highlights the failure of the United States to halt the violence and broker a peaceful political solution.

<sup>12</sup>Gil Loescher, *The UNHCR and World Politics: A Perilous Path* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 6. See also his other studies: Gil Loescher, ‘The UNHCR and World Politics: State Interests vs. Institutional Autonomy’, *International Migration Review* 35, no. 1 (2001): 33–56; Gil Loescher, ‘UNHCR’s Origins and Early History: Agency, Influence, and Power in Global Refugee Policy’, *Refuge* 33, no. 1 (2017): 77–86. For a critical appraisal of UNHCR as a self-serving bureaucracy, see Michael N. Barnett and Martha Finnemore, *Rules for the World: International Organizations in Global Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004), ch. 4.

found.<sup>13</sup> Gary Bass and Sonia Cordera, in their studies, likewise overlook this clash of multiple covert intervention strategies pursued by foreign governments, NGOs and the United Nations.<sup>14</sup>

This article examines the East Pakistan crisis of 1971 as a conflict exacerbated by failed covert intervention. In this view, the period of limbo between March and December 1971 exposed both the surging but politically vague humanitarian rhetoric before the ‘human rights revolution’ of the late 1970s and the limitations that the Cold War international system placed on effective international action in a globalising world. In these early years of what Kevin O’Sullivan has recently called the ‘NGO Moment’, governments and their publics, the UN, NGOs and individuals explored, experimented with, and, through their actions, negotiated the form and place of human rights in the international fabric of the ‘Global Cold War’.<sup>15</sup> Through their (often covert) actions, but also their inaction, actual and potential interveners grappled with issues around humanitarian intervention and the international system that still resonate today: do human rights violations justify military intervention, even if it is not authorised by the UN Security Council? At what point does an ‘internal affair’ become a ‘threat to peace and security’? Do human rights include the right to self-determination? And, most crucially, which political force has the authority and legitimacy to decide on outside intervention and to implement the measures? As these issues remained unresolved at the public level of international politics and diplomacy, the key external powers – India, the United States and the UN – but also allegedly non-political humanitarian activists chose covert forms of diplomatic, economic and military intervention to resolve the crisis according to their strategic interests.

Recent theories of covert intervention help explain why states and other external interveners chose secret rather than public action to influence events in East Pakistan. Despite differences of emphasis, these studies concur that covert intervention becomes highly likely when international law and the wider international climate prevent overt action, which is the preferred option as it is usually much more effective.<sup>16</sup> Overt interventions, particularly when not internationally sanctioned, come with the risks of reputational damage and potential charges of hypocrisy for the intervener.<sup>17</sup> As we will see, these reputational fears, along with concerns over military escalation, are precisely the reason why India

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<sup>13</sup>Raghavan, 1971.

<sup>14</sup>Bass, *Blood Telegram*; Bass, ‘The Indian Way’; and Cordera, ‘India’s Response’.

<sup>15</sup>On the ‘NGO Moment’, see Kevin O’Sullivan, *The NGO Moment: The Globalisation of Compassion from Biafra to Live Aid* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021). There is a burgeoning literature on human rights and humanitarianism. See, among many others, Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010); Akira Iriye, Petra Goedde, and William I. Hitchcock, eds., *The Human Rights Revolution: An International History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Jan Eckel and Samuel Moyn, eds., *The Breakthrough: Human Rights in the 1970s* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014); Barbara J. Keys, *Reclaiming American Virtue: The Human Rights Revolution of the 1970s* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014); and A. Dirk Moses, Marco Duranti, and Roland Burke, eds., *Decolonisation, Self-Determination, and the Rise of Global Human Rights* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020). On the ‘Global Cold War’, see Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). More recently, scholars have taken Westad’s approach further to the Global South. On India, see most recently Manu Belur Bhagavan, ed., *India and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2019).

<sup>16</sup>See Austin Carson, *Secret Wars: Covert Conflict in International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018); Rory Cormac, *Disrupt and Deny: Spies, Special Forces, and the Secret Pursuit of British Foreign Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); Lindsey A. O’Rourke, *Covert Regime Change: America’s Secret Cold War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018); and Michael Poznansky, *In the Shadow of International Law: Secrecy and Regime Change in the Post-War World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020).

<sup>17</sup>Poznansky, *Shadow of International Law*, 4.

refrained from military action for over eight months and chose covert forms of intervention instead. Covert intervention, where the intervening power publicly dissociates itself from the action, reduces the financial, political and moral risks while still allowing external actors to pursue their strategic goals. As the East Pakistan crisis demonstrates, the problem with covert intervention is that it is usually much less effective. Interveners are often forced to use intermediaries, cannot co-ordinate their actions effectively with only a small circle of policymakers and military planners involved, and normally have only a limited budget and limited means at their disposal to avoid exposing themselves.

Drawing on primary documents from archives in India, the UK and the United States as well as theories of covert intervention, this article argues that the absence of an effective overt framework of multilateral foreign intervention or peacekeeping forced all principal external actors to resort to covert forms of intervention, while publicly pledging adherence to non-interference in the domestic affairs of Pakistan. The secret nature of foreign interference limited its scope and injected a substantial degree of vagueness and uncertainty in the underlying policy aims. More important, there ensued a dynamic of multiple competing strategies of covert intervention that cancelled each other out. Pulling in different directions, these competing efforts had the combined effect of aggravating the crisis and undermining the chances of a negotiated solution. They thus generated a momentum for escalation that became one of the main causes of the war, when the Indian government ultimately concluded that military action was the only viable solution to an increasingly protracted situation.

The article explores this drift to war and the competing attempts at covert intervention in three main sections. The first section examines the initial reactions, strategic discussions and policy choices of India, the United States and the United Nations towards East Pakistan. The following part investigates the attempts of these main external actors to mitigate and resolve the crisis as they faced mounting public and domestic political pressure to act. The third section demonstrates how these covert forms of interference cancelled each other out and further exacerbated an already tense situation.

### **Getting involved: East Pakistan as a setting of foreign intervention**

The military operation of 25/26 March 1971 followed an established pattern of Pakistani leaders seeking to resolve difficult political and constitutional problems in the country's eastern 'wing' by imposing martial law and using overwhelming military force to stifle protest.<sup>18</sup> By the time of the fall of the Ayub Khan military regime in 1969, tensions between the politically, militarily and economically dominant, mostly Urdu-speaking western part of Pakistan and its more populous, Bengali-speaking eastern part had reached breaking point. The matter was further complicated by a strong simultaneous impetus for democratic reform. President Yahya Khan, who had come to power with the promise of democratic reforms and of a more equitable balance between the two wings, sought to achieve these aims by announcing the first free general elections across Pakistan. After being postponed due to the severe cyclones that hit East Pakistan in October and November 1970, the elections finally took place on 7 December 1970.

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<sup>18</sup>For a concise account of the historical context of the crisis, see Raghavan, 1971, ch. 1.



The elections resulted in a landslide victory for the Awami League in East Pakistan. Led by Mujibur Rahman on the basis of a ‘Six Point Programme’, the Awami League demanded far-reaching autonomy for East Pakistan in all matters except foreign policy, the military and common currency. In the West, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto’s People’s Party of Pakistan won most seats, but given the demographic structure of the country, Rahman had won the majority of seats in the National Assembly and could thus claim the position of prime minister. In the following three and a half months, Yahya, Rahman and Bhutto failed to reach a compromise on the constitutional outlook of the state and the distribution of power. Rahman insisted on a loose confederation in which he would serve as prime minister, which Yahya and Bhutto feared would cause the break-up of the country. On 23 March, the final round of negotiations between Yahya and Rahman in East Pakistan’s capital Dhaka broke down. In his assessment of the following military crackdown, the Indian deputy high commissioner in Islamabad, A.S. Chib, reported that

[i]t was as if the Army had finally decided that the very basis of the 6-point Awami League programme, and its espousal of liberal and Secular values which are a part of Bengali culture, had become an unacceptable threat to Pakistan’s Islamic ideology and to its existence.<sup>19</sup>

As the military launched its ‘Operation Searchlight’ in the late hours of 25 March 1971, it transformed a difficult political and constitutional crisis into a setting of civil war. Witnessing the scenes, US consul in Dhaka, Archer Blood, noted that the military operation was carried out with precision and followed a clear plan – to gain physical control of the city of Dhaka, to neutralise opposition and to use ‘maximum violence in short order to shock and terrorize the population into quick submission’.<sup>20</sup> Yet the regime’s strategy of striking a quick and heavy military blow against the core of the Awami League to fix a protracted political problem gravely backfired. It quickly became clear that the ruthless and often arbitrary use of force was less a demonstration of strength than a means to compensate for numerical weakness in the face of an overwhelmingly hostile population. Due to lack of military discipline and a growing sense among the mostly Punjabi soldiers and officers that they were waging a war against an internal enemy, the violence quickly spiralled out of control.<sup>21</sup> British diplomats reported that members of the Pakistani military had ‘admitted that they are conducting a punitive campaign against the “enemies of the people” by deliberately setting fire to property and machine-gunning the owners’. The same report stated that Pakistani general Akbar Khan had ‘said that the Pakistan authorities would send the whole of the army [into East Pakistan] if necessary rather than see Pakistan disintegrate’.<sup>22</sup>

The army’s repressive and arbitrary measures had the double effect of politicising a hitherto largely nationally indifferent rural population and pushing a growing stream of refugees across the border to India. British correspondent Clare Hollingworth, who had travelled extensively within East Pakistan and along the Indo-Pakistani border, observed that the East Bengalis were ‘pro Mukti Bahini [East Pakistani rebels] to a man’.<sup>23</sup> Facing

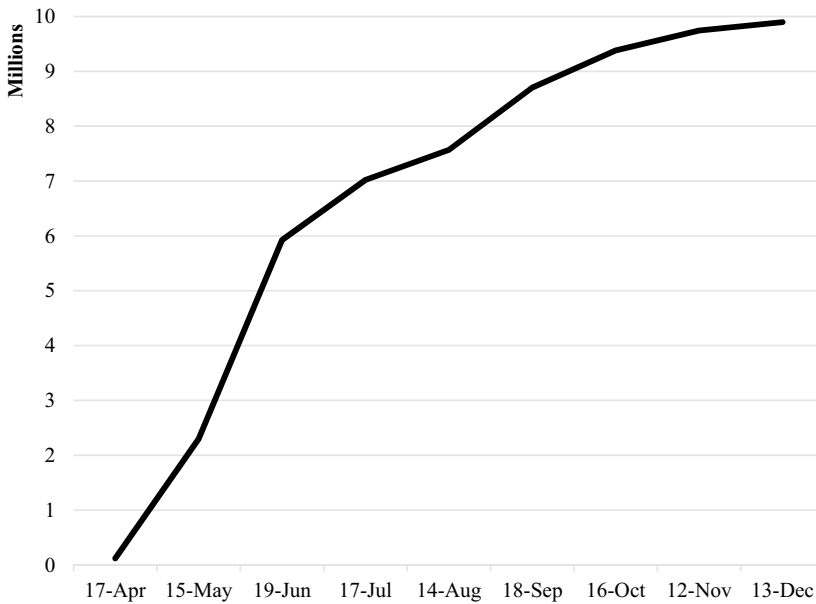
<sup>19</sup>A.S. Chib, ‘Political Report for the Month of March’, April 8, 1971, HI/1012(30)/71, NAI.

<sup>20</sup>Blood to Rogers, April 9, 1971, RG59, SNF, Entry 1613, box 2530, NARA. See also the similar later assessment by A.J. Collins, British Deputy High Commission Dhaka, to Giles L. Bullard, British High Commission Islamabad, September 21, 1971, Dominion’s Office (henceforth DO), 133/207, TNA.

<sup>21</sup>On the Pakistan military see Shuja Nawaz, *Crossed Swords: Pakistan, Its Army, and the Wars Within* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 249–67.

<sup>22</sup>Pakistan Situation Report, 1600 Hours, March 28, 1971, PREM 15/567, TNA.

<sup>23</sup>Minute by Terence Garvey, September 16, 1971, DO 133/207, TNA.



**Figure 1.** East Pakistani refugees in India, 1971. Sources: Pramod Kumar, ‘Refugees Statistics – 15 November, 1971’, November 16, 1971, NAI, HI/1012(30)/71; ‘Weekly Issue of Refugees Statistics’, December 13, 1971, *ibid*.

the continued punitive raids of the Pakistani military and struck with fear by rumours of massacres and genocide, a growing number of East Bengalis sought refuge in neighbouring India. According to official Indian figures, which were overall deemed reliable by Western and UN observers, their number rose to over seven million in mid-July and reached a peak of just under 10 million in early December on the eve of war (Figure 1).

Indian politicians insisted early on that the refugees would have to return, but resisted strong pressures in parliament and by the press to use the heat of the moment and the influx of refugees to intervene militarily in East Pakistan. Consequently, the resolution passed in the Lok Sabha, the Indian parliament, on 30 March 1971 alluded to the international protection of human rights and self-determination and expressed its sympathy for the cause of ‘Bangla Desh’, appealing to ‘the conscience of mankind’ to restore peace and ensure ‘the just aspirations of the people are respected’.<sup>24</sup> To the chagrin of more radical members of parliament and nationalist journalists, the resolution fell short of diplomatic recognition of Bangladesh or concrete threats of Indian military intervention.

As the Haksar Papers at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library in New Delhi reveal, the Indian leadership was careful not to jeopardise India’s reputation as leader of the non-aligned world by violating the UN Charter and invading a sovereign state and member of the UN.<sup>25</sup> The journalist K.P. Misra aptly summarised this course of restraint: ‘The

<sup>24</sup>Resolution by the Lok Sabha on the situation in East Pakistan now called the Bangla Desh’, March 3, 1971, Haksar Papers, 164, III. Instalment, II. Subject Files, NMML.

<sup>25</sup>See the influential studies by Raghavan, 1971, notably chs. 3 and 9, and Bass, *Blood Telegram*; Bass, ‘The Indian Way’.



argument of military intervention is hollow. Such short cuts to greatness . . . may weaken India internally and tarnish whatever image she has externally'. Instead, Misra went on to say that

India should make vigorous efforts to bring about some sort of international intervention, which would stop the blood bath in East Pakistan and create condition [sic] which would enable the people of Pakistan to follow the logic of the democratic process which was begun last year.<sup>26</sup>

Indeed, in this early phase at least, Indian public restraint and global diplomatic efforts indicate the Gandhi administration's aim of seeking a solution to the crisis within an international framework. It is true that India's diplomatic strategy to 'internationalise' the conflict primarily aimed at branding Pakistan as the aggressor and sharing the burden of accommodating the refugees with the international community. But this strategy of restraint was also the expression of the desire to find an overt, multilateral political solution to the conflict that would prevent India from the need to carry out a unilateral military intervention, which was both militarily risky and might jeopardise India's international reputation.<sup>27</sup>

The Indian government used the language of human rights and self-determination to forge such an international alliance and increase pressure on the Pakistani government.<sup>28</sup> In fact, Indian diplomats and politicians defined the conflict as a massive and premeditated violation of human rights, including the right to self-determination, that was spilling over into India and required international action. In their public moral outrage and restraint, Indian leaders were effectively soliciting the international community to deliver a way out of the crisis. In countless meetings with diplomats and politicians from numerous other countries, Indian representatives experimented with a range of arguments about human rights abuses, self-determination, the economic burden of the refugees and threats to Indian national security as well as to the peace and security of the wider South Asian region. A good example of this experimental approach is a letter by Indira Gandhi to British prime minister Edward Heath in May 1971, wherein Gandhi mentioned the 'grave security risk' resulting from the refugee crisis (Indian national security), the violation of the East Bengalis' desire for 'democracy' and 'nationalism' (self-determination), and the danger the crisis posed to 'the peace and stability of the sub-continent' (threat to international peace).

Arguably, over the nine months of the crisis, Indira Gandhi and her close advisers did not pursue a calculated, well-defined, realpolitik-driven strategy of creating the diplomatic and military circumstances that would allow them to finally strike at Pakistan, as Singh argues.<sup>29</sup> Instead, while they certainly pursued a covert strategy of increasing pressure on East Pakistan and worked hard to maintain control over the crisis (see [Section 2](#)), their actions and diplomatic efforts reveal a significant degree of uncertainty

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<sup>26</sup>K.P. Misra, 'East Bengal: India's Alternatives', *Hindustan Times*, April 7, 1971, 7.

<sup>27</sup>For the costs and benefits of overt versus covert intervention, see Poznansky, *Shadow of International Law*, 4–5.

<sup>28</sup>For an analysis of the use of human rights arguments by the Indian delegation to the UN see Bass, 'The Indian Way'. On the importance of human rights and humanitarian activism in the East Pakistan crisis more generally, see Raghavan, 1971, ch. 6 and O'Sullivan, *NGO Moment*, ch. 2.

<sup>29</sup>See Singh, *Power and Diplomacy*, ch. 7. Raghavan's account of highlighting contingency in Indian policymaking is more compelling, although it seems to downplay the aggressive character of Indian policy seeking to maintain control over the crisis and its outcome (see [Section 2](#)); see also Raghavan, 1971, 8.

as to the precise form of political settlement and the means to achieve it. Sir Terence Garvey, recently appointed as British high commissioner in New Delhi, informed the Foreign and Commonwealth Office that in his view, 'it [is] quite possible that the Indian Government has not yet got any clear idea of what it wants, or of what it is likely to get, in the next couple of months', and that the Indians were 'reacting' to events rather than following a clear strategy.<sup>30</sup> Even as late as 2 November 1971, Garvey mentioned in a conversation with Haksar that it appeared to him that 'Mrs Gandhi really did not know where she was going, or what to do, or what she wanted others to do. Mr Haksar said that this was more or less correct'.<sup>31</sup>

Of course, these statements should not be taken at face value, and as will be demonstrated in Section 2, Gandhi's public hesitation and restraint did not prevent her from pursuing a policy of covert intervention in East Pakistan that aimed to 'bleed' the Pakistan army.<sup>32</sup> But even the internal communication shows marks of inconclusiveness and indecision – in the same policy brief, Haksar outlined India's strategy in conditional form: exerting growing pressure on the Pakistani military 'would require consolidation and centralisation of political direction from the Bangla Desh Government', and '[t]he main characteristics of this *would* be guerilla [sic] tactics, with the object of keeping the West Pakistan army continuously off their balance and to, gradually, bleed them'. Haksar concluded, in much more certain language, that:

We cannot, at the present stage, contemplate armed intervention at all. It will not be the right thing to do. It will evoke hostile reactions all over the world and all the sympathy and support which the Bangla Desh has been able to evoke in the world will be drowned in Indo-Pak conflict. The main thing, therefore, is not a formal recognition, but to do whatever lies within our power to sustain the struggle.<sup>33</sup>

Contrary to the Indians, the US government under President Richard Nixon and his National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger chose to treat the violence in East Pakistan as an internal affair of Pakistan. Given the US Cold War alliance with Pakistan and preoccupied with the wider geopolitical ramifications of the crisis for US policy towards China, Nixon and Kissinger secured the continuation of economic and military aid to Pakistan, albeit at a lower level, and refused to publicly condemn the human rights violations committed by the West Pakistani military.<sup>34</sup>

This 'tilt' towards Pakistan caused frustration and opposition among several American diplomats, policymakers in the State Department, and influential senators. Among the latter was Edward Kennedy, who shortly after the beginning of the crisis denounced the 'indiscriminate killings' by the Pakistani military and, after a visit to India in August 1971, publicly called the actions of the Pakistani army 'genocide'.<sup>35</sup> The most

<sup>30</sup>Garvey to Sutherland, May 28, 1971, DO 133/203, TNA.

<sup>31</sup>Garvey to Sutherland, November 2, 1971, PREM 15/960, TNA.

<sup>32</sup>Haksar, policy brief for Indira Gandhi's meeting with opposition leaders, May 7, 1971, Haksar Papers, 166, III. Instalment, II. Subject Files, NMML; also for the following quotations, my emphasis.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>On US policy towards East Pakistan see Bass, *Blood Telegram*, Raghavan, 1971, ch. 4, and, more recently, Clary, 'Tilting at Windmills'.

<sup>35</sup>Kennedy's statement about 'indiscriminate killings' caused much misapprehension in the Pakistani government. See the minutes of a meeting between Sisco, Van Hollen and Fuller and Pakistani ambassador Hilaly on April 6, 1971, RG59, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, Records Relating to India 1966–75, Entry A1(5640), Lot 76D30 (henceforth LOT), box 20, NARA. On Kennedy's visit to India in August 1971 see the reports in S-0228-0003-11, UN Archives and WII/121(60)71, NAI.

serious challenge to US policy came from the US consul in Dhaka, Archer Blood, whose dissent was supported by the US ambassador to India, Kenneth Keating and several members of the State Department, notably Christopher Van Hollen and Anthony C.E. Quainton.<sup>36</sup> Witnessing the violence first hand, Blood entitled an early cable ‘selective genocide’ and, frustrated about the continued silence in Washington, shortly later lamented the ‘moral bankruptcy’ of the US government.<sup>37</sup> In another, less-often cited telegram four days later, Blood argued that ‘[i]n a country wherein our primary interests [are] defined as humanitarian rather than strategic, moral principles indeed are relevant to issue’.<sup>38</sup> In his view, the crisis would inevitably lead to the break-up of Pakistan, and the United States should not choose the ‘likely loser’.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, Blood concluded, both moral and strategic considerations compelled the US government to condemn the human rights violations of the Pakistan army publicly and immediately stop any economic and military aid to Pakistan.

Crucially, however, Blood limited his dissent to calls for the public condemnation of Pakistan’s military repression of the East Bengali population and the immediate cessation of all aid. In retrospect, writing in the late 1990s, as NATO’s bombing campaign in Kosovo was underway, Blood clarified that a similar military humanitarian intervention in East Pakistan would have been ‘inconceivable’ at the time.<sup>40</sup> Likewise, Senator Edward Kennedy, one of the most prominent and outspoken critics of US policy in East Pakistan, hardly thought in terms of any measures beyond moral and economic pressure. When pressed during his visit to India in August 1971 on his views about a solution to the crisis, Kennedy became ‘uneasy’ and reacted in an evasive manner, expressing his hopes for a peaceful settlement.<sup>41</sup>

Scholars have emphasised the deep rift that ran through the US administration. In this view, Nixon and Kissinger deliberately sidelined the State Department due to their geostrategic as well as personal ‘tilt’ to Pakistan and President Yahya, as well as their marked antipathy towards India.<sup>42</sup> Yet closer inspection of policy planning and decision-making indicates that both camps gravitated towards a middle ground of official non-interference combined with secret diplomatic and economic pressure on Islamabad. When Kissinger presented Nixon with three policy options for East Pakistan – ‘unqualified backing for West Pakistan’, ‘neutrality which in effect leans toward the East [Pakistan]’ and ‘an effort to help Yahya achieve a negotiated settlement’ (Kissinger suggested option 3, which Nixon approved) – this came close to the three policy options discussed in the State

<sup>36</sup>See Van Hollen to Joseph Sisco, ‘Policy Dilemmas’, April 6, 1971, RG59, LOT, box 20, NARA; Anthony C.E. Quainton, Political Officer for India, to Grant E. Mouser, American Embassy New Delhi, December 29, 1971, RG59, SNF, Entry 1613, box 2369, NARA.

<sup>37</sup>Blood to Rogers, March 28, 1971, RG59, Entry 1613, box 2530, NARA; Blood to Rogers, ‘Dissent from U.S. Policy Toward East Pakistan’, April 6, 1971, box 2535, NARA (this document is also available online at <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB79/BEBB1.pdf>, accessed 13 July 2022).

<sup>38</sup>Blood to Rogers, April 10, 1971, RG59, Entry 1613, box 2365, NARA.

<sup>39</sup>Blood to Rogers, ‘Dissent from U.S. Policy’.

<sup>40</sup>See Archer K. Blood, *The Cruel Birth of Bangladesh: Memoirs of an American Diplomat* (Dhaka: University Press, 2002), 259.

<sup>41</sup>Sydney H. Schanberg, ‘Kennedy, in India, Terms Pakistani Drive Genocide’, *New York Times*, August 17, 1971, 3.

<sup>42</sup>See Bass, *Blood Telegram*; Raghavan, 1971, ch. 4; Chamberlin, *The Cold War’s Killing Fields*, 268–9; Clary, ‘Tilting at Windmills’. For the important aspect of cultural stereotypes, see Andrew J. Rotter, *Comrades at Odds: The United States and India, 1947–1964* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000).

Department.<sup>43</sup> These amounted to (a) ‘Business as usual’ (Kissinger’s first option), (b) ‘Sanctions against West Pak[istani]s’ (Blood’s and Keating’s option), and (c) ‘Maintaining options in both East and West’, with the clear preference for (c).<sup>44</sup>

This convergence towards a middle ground does not mean that US foreign policy did not overall ‘tilt’ towards a solution favourable of the *status quo ante* and, therefore, Pakistan. After all, Nixon and Kissinger secured the continuation of (limited) military and economic aid and prevented public condemnation of Pakistan as the aggressor, whereas the dissenters demanded exactly that. But it underlines that US foreign policy towards the East Pakistan crisis was characterised by a substantial degree of hesitation and compromises and, at least covertly, was much less clear cut in its support of the Yahya regime than has been claimed.

The United Nations, although considered by many contemporaries as the natural international authority to address and resolve the crisis, was even more explicit than the US government in its insistence on non-interference. Following the debacle of large-scale UN intervention in the Congo Crisis in the early 1960s, the organisation had retreated from an increasingly interventionist and pro-active approach to peacekeeping and nation-building under Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld to a safer policy of minimal political involvement that sought to protect the UN’s reputation for impartiality and secure its financial and political viability.<sup>45</sup> Consequently, on 30 March 1971, responding to Indian calls that the UN take ‘urgent action’, Secretary-General U Thant noted that ‘I am never neutral on humanitarian issues’.<sup>46</sup> He was quick to add, however, that he was unable to act. Faced with two ‘insuperable obstacles’ (‘walls’ in the draft) – non-interference in internal affairs and ‘lack of authoritative information’ – U Thant asserted that ‘my authority is limited to what is granted to me by the consent of Member Governments’. Until August 1971, he continued to avoid any public statement that transgressed the strictly humanitarian field.

As in the case of US policy, in the initial phase of the UN’s reaction to the crisis, the tension between allegations of human rights violations and the norm of non-interference translated into private expressions of concern to the leaders of India and Pakistan. On 21 April 1971, Constantin A. Stavropoulos, legal counsel of the UN, confirmed the overriding dominance of Article 2(7) of the UN Charter, prohibiting ‘the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state’.<sup>47</sup> Even so, Stavropoulos added that ‘there has undoubtedly been a development in recent years where it has been accepted that offers of humanitarian assistance in cases of internal armed conflict does [sic] not come within the prohibition of Article 2, paragraph 7’.<sup>48</sup> Consequently, Stavropoulos argued, ‘it is difficult for the Secretary-General, as the leading official of the world community, to remain entirely

<sup>43</sup>Memorandum From the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs’ (Kissinger) to President Nixon, April 28, 1971, in Louis J. Smith, ed., *Foreign Relations of the United States: Volume XI: South Asia Crisis, 1971* (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 2005), doc. 36, p. 98.

<sup>44</sup>Farland, US Ambassador to Pakistan, to Rogers, ‘US Posture Toward Pakistan’, April 13, 1971, RG59, Entry 1613, box 2531, NARA. On the preference for option c), see Sisco to the Acting Secretary, April 15, 1971, LOT, box 20, NARA.

<sup>45</sup>On the role of the United Nations in the Congo Crisis see Alanna O’Malley, *The Diplomacy of Decolonisation: America, Britain and the United Nations During the Congo Crisis 1960–64* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018).

<sup>46</sup>Samar Sen to U Thant, March 29, 1971, and U Thant to Sen, March 30, 1971 (also for the following), S-0863-0001-01, UN Archives.

<sup>47</sup>UN Charter, Article 2(7), <https://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/un-charter-full-text/>, accessed 13 July 2022.

<sup>48</sup>C.A. Stavropoulos to U Thant, April 21, 1971, S-0863-0001-02, UN Archives, also for the following quotations.

silent'. At the least, U Thant should send 'a personal and confidential letter to the President of Pakistan offering humanitarian assistance' with the aim of 'lessening the human suffering caused by the present conflict'. The following day, U Thant offered UN humanitarian assistance to the government of Pakistan, emphasising that this offer was not tied to any political conditions.<sup>49</sup>

Until the late spring of 1971, the international reaction to the East Pakistan crisis resembled the politically empty moral outrage stirred up by the Biafra crisis a few years earlier. As Lasse Heerten has demonstrated, in the Biafran case, Britain and other outside powers were ultimately successful in framing the crisis as a non-political humanitarian disaster that required compassion and aid, but no foreign intervention to protect the Igbos from persecution or support them in their quest for self-determination.<sup>50</sup> A similar mechanism could initially be observed in the East Pakistan crisis, with foreign governments, but also the UN and international charities, hollowing out the political content of the conflict, placing emphasis on humanitarian aid and avoiding political connotations.<sup>51</sup>

In contrast to Biafra, the pressure to address the actual political cause of the crisis – the clash between the Pakistani military's unrelenting demand for national unity with the vehement calls for autonomy and democratic reform in the East – rose sharply in the following months, as millions more East Bengali civilians sought refuge in India while stories about the atrocities of the Pakistani military continued unabated and gained wider publicity. Moreover, from July 1971, the Indian stance became more belligerent, at least in its covert form.

### Covert intervention: defining and controlling the crisis

Notwithstanding repeated assurances by Pakistani politicians and diplomats that '[t]he situation in East Pakistan is returning to normal', the crisis deepened in April and May 1971.<sup>52</sup> While the army had been relatively successful in establishing control over Dhaka, the conflict shifted to the border zones. Buttressed by the Indian Border Security Force (BSF), the Mukti Bahini, East Bengali paramilitary units, began launching incursions into East Pakistani territory, seeking to pin down the Pakistani military to the vast swathes of the border. According to the military advisor to the British High Commission in New Delhi, the following pattern had emerged by early June: in those areas where the Mukti Bahini operated, the Pakistani army retaliated with punitive raids and indiscriminate violence against the entire local population, thus further fuelling the stream of refugees.<sup>53</sup> Meanwhile, persecutions of Hindus and alleged sympathisers of the Awami League, as well as arbitrary arrests and looting, continued across East Pakistan, although

<sup>49</sup>See U Thant to President Yahya (draft letter), April 22, 1971, *ibid*.

<sup>50</sup>See Lasse Heerten, 'The Distopia of Postcolonial Catastrophe: Self-Determination, the Biafran War of Secession, and the 1970s Human Rights Moment', in *The Breakthrough: Human Rights in the 1970s*, ed. Jan Eckel and Samuel Moyn (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 15–32; and Lasse Heerten, *The Biafran War and Postcolonial Humanitarianism: Spectacles of Suffering* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

<sup>51</sup>For a study on the role of humanitarian organisations in both the Biafra and East Pakistan crises, see most recently O'Sullivan, *NGO Moment*.

<sup>52</sup>Note Verbale by A. Shahi, UN Representative of Pakistan, to U Thant, April 7, 1971, S-0279-0016-13, UN Archives.

<sup>53</sup>See the report by the Major-General Defence and Military Adviser to the British High Commissioner in India, June 2, 1971, DO 133/203, TNA.

the violence was now more often handed out by ‘local bully boys’ and ‘Muslim fanatics’ rather than regular army units.<sup>54</sup>

From June 1971, global public pressure on governments and the international community to act rose sharply as the ‘genocide’ in East Pakistan made headlines in major newspapers.<sup>55</sup> On 4 June, the *New Statesman* argued that ‘[a]ny country now offering aid to Yahya Khan and his relentless henchmen will not be able to escape the charge that it is financing genocide’.<sup>56</sup> The following week, in an article entitled ‘Genocide’ that stretched over three pages, Pakistani journalist and war correspondent Anthony Mascarenhas reported in detail the massacres, forced removal, looting and genocidal violence that he had witnessed first-hand in East Pakistan before escaping to England.<sup>57</sup> The article caused a stir in Western politics. Only two days after its publication, on 15 June, British Labour MP John Stonehouse tabled a motion in the House of Commons condemning the ‘genocide’ in East Pakistan.<sup>58</sup> The motion, signed by 210 of 630 members of parliament, challenged Pakistan’s sovereignty due to the regime’s ill treatment of its own population and, in fact, came close to a ‘responsibility to protect’ *avant la lettre*.<sup>59</sup> It claimed that by violating the Genocide Convention and refusing ‘to accept the democratic will of the people’, the government of Pakistan ‘has forfeited all rights to rule East Bengal’.<sup>60</sup> It went on to demand that the United Kingdom recognise the ‘provisional Government of Bangla Desh’ and that the UN Security Council consider the matter ‘both as a threat to international peace and as a contravention of the Genocide Convention’, as well as called for order to be restored ‘under United Nations supervision’.

Although the growing public pressure and deterioration of the East Pakistan crisis had a measurable effect on some governments’ public stances, it did not significantly alter the international political climate that oscillated between indifference and the emphasis on non-intervention. Some states, including the United Kingdom, France, the Netherlands, New Zealand and the Soviet Union, came to express sympathy for the East Bengali population and condemn the violence meted out against them by the Pakistani military. Yet at most, they vaguely referred to the need for a political solution and did not raise the matter in the UN General Assembly or the Security Council. While political advisers and foreign policymakers held internal discussions as to whether the Genocide Convention was applicable or whether the United Nations could raise the matter under Chapter VII, these options were quickly and easily dismissed as impractical or ruled out without further discussion.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>R.W. Baxter to Byatt and Sutherland, July 8, 1971, FCO 37/889, TNA; A.J. Collins to Halliley, ‘The Conduct of the Army in East Pakistan’, July 27, 1971, FCO 37/890, TNA.

<sup>55</sup>See Moses, ‘War Crimes/Genocide Trials’, 263–6; Raghavan, 1971, ch. 6.

<sup>56</sup>Editorial (unauthored), ‘Corpses in The Sun’, *New Statesman*, June 4, 1971, 1–2.

<sup>57</sup>Anthony Mascarenhas, ‘Genocide’, *The Sunday Times*, June 13, 1971, 12–14.

<sup>58</sup>See Angela Debnath, ‘British Perceptions of the East Pakistan Crisis 1971: “Hideous Atrocities on Both Sides”’, *Journal of Genocide Research* 13, no. 4 (2011): 421–50, here 436.

<sup>59</sup>On the responsibility to protect see e.g. Alex J. Bellamy, *Responsibility to Protect: The Global Effort to End Mass Atrocities* (Cambridge: Polity, 2009); and Anne Orford, *International Authority and the Responsibility to Protect* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

<sup>60</sup>House of Commons debate, June 17, 1971, volume 819, column 651–2, available at: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/1971-06-17/debates/e8e5f1c5-973f-4b5b-b234-6c224efdad07/BusinessOfTheHouse#contribution-75c6097f-f4c5-433b-8cac-07e98df13668> accessed 13 July 2022, also for the following quotation.

<sup>61</sup>See K.G. MacInnes to Byatt, ‘Pakistan: The Genocide Convention’, June 17, 1971, FCO 37/889, TNA; R. Martin, UN (Political) Department to Byatt, ‘UN observer mission on the India/Pakistan border’, June 29, 1971, FCO 37/917, TNA.



The absence of an effective international response prompted the Indian government to intensify its covert support of the Mukti Bahini. As early as 3 April 1971, Indira Gandhi met with Tajuddin Ahmad, the self-designated prime minister of Bangladesh who had escaped to India on 30 March.<sup>62</sup> From mid-April, the BSF began organising military training and pro-Indian propaganda in the refugee camps. On 14 April, R.N. Kao, the chief of the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW), India's external intelligence agency, informed Haksar that Tajuddin had returned from a visit to refugee camps and had agreed to the military training of refugees by the Indian army 'in selected camps in our areas'.<sup>63</sup> One week later, the British High Commission in New Delhi reported that 'Border Security Force personnel spoke freely about their intention of setting up camps on Indian territory to give military training to East Bengalis'.<sup>64</sup> By May 1971, training efforts were well underway, with the aim of setting up a guerrilla force of up to 50,000 men by September.<sup>65</sup>

The aim of this clandestine support for the Bangladesh rebels was not, however, to prepare the ground for a fully fledged Indian invasion, as Singh has argued.<sup>66</sup> Instead, the Indian government sought to increase international pressure and embroil the Pakistani military in a drawn-out guerrilla war to provoke its collapse from within. Both Indian diplomatic efforts and covert support of the rebels aimed at *avoiding* overt military intervention, which in the eyes of Haksar and Gandhi would have risked undermining Indian international standing as well as bear the risks of military escalation.<sup>67</sup> At the same time, stepping up covert support of the Mukti Bahini relieved the Indian administration of the charges of inaction by large parts of the press and the political opposition.<sup>68</sup>

Yet the covert nature of these efforts, as well as the tensions between the Indian authorities and their East Bengali partners, limited the effectiveness of the guerrilla campaign. To credibly maintain India's public stance of non-interference in Pakistan's internal affairs, Indian authorities were at pains to limit the delivery of arms and avoid direct involvement of their military in cross-border incursions. As a result, East Bengali military leaders complained that their troops were willing to fight but had no shoes and no soap: 'We were assured that the "Friends" [the Indian army] promised to look after the basic necessities of our men, but the bare truth is that our men never get what they require'.<sup>69</sup> The limited and 'irregular' military supplies provided by the Indians meant that

boys trained in guerilla [sic] warfare are sent deep into the occupied zone in groups of 5 to 10 with one or two handgrenades and one or two conventional and obsolete weapons. In such circumstances, most of them cannot but fall helpless prey to the enemy.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>62</sup>See Raghavan, 1971, 61; Singh, *Power and Diplomacy*, 277.

<sup>63</sup>R.N. Kao to Haksar, April 14, 1971, Haksar Papers, 227, III. Instalment, II. Subject Files, NMML.

<sup>64</sup>British High Commission, New Delhi (unsigned telegram) to the FCO, 22 April 1971, DO 133/202, TNA.

<sup>65</sup>Major-General, Defence and Military Adviser to the British High Commissioner in India to Ministry of Defence, London, May 12, 1971, DO 133/202, TNA.

<sup>66</sup>See Singh, *Power and Diplomacy*, 284, 301.

<sup>67</sup>This preference for covert intervention to avoid military escalation and reputational damage is in line with the key findings of theoretical studies. See Carson, *Secret Wars*, 3, 10. On Gandhi's rejection of early military intervention see also Raghavan, 1971, 67–70.

<sup>68</sup>This is supported by Carson's theory of covert intervention, see Carson, *Secret Wars*, 21–2.

<sup>69</sup>Mizanur Rahman Choudhury, Secretary-General, Bangladesh Awami League, 'To The Acting President, Government of Bangladesh', July 3, 1971, document quoted in Govind Narain to Gandhi, July 13, 1971, Haksar Papers, 169, III. Instalment, II. Subject Files, NMML.

<sup>70</sup>*Ibid.*



By November, Indian military planners had concluded that a successful offensive in East Pakistan would require massive and open Indian involvement.

In the face of mounting public pressure and with no solution to the conflict in sight, US policy towards East Pakistan also turned to covert attempts to resolve the crisis, albeit with the opposite aim of stabilising the situation in East Pakistan to prevent an Indo-Pakistani war. While White House leaders did not cut off military and economic aid entirely, they reduced its scope through administrative measures.<sup>71</sup> And while US diplomats and politicians continued to refrain from public condemnations of the Yahya regime's actions, they privately advised their Pakistani allies to work towards a political settlement. In an informal conversation, for instance, Under Secretary of State Sisco pressed the Pakistani ambassador to the United States, Agha Hilaly, about the violence in East Pakistan, whereupon the latter confessed that 'West Pak[istani] troops had behaved like "little Napoleons" in East Pakistan and reports re[garding] military repression [were] partially true'.<sup>72</sup>

In addition to economic and diplomatic pressure, US diplomats in Kolkata and New Delhi quietly began establishing contacts with exiled Awami League members and representatives of the provisional Bangladesh government. The purpose of these contacts was to gauge the chances of a political compromise between the Yahya regime and the Awami League. Between August and November 1971, the Americans held multiple informal meetings with Awami League representative Qazi Zahirul Qaiyum, Bangladesh 'foreign secretary' Mahboob Alam and Abdul Fateh, former Pakistani ambassador to Iran who had defected to the Bangladesh movement in July.<sup>73</sup> By the end of August, US ambassador to Pakistan, Joseph S. Farland, cabled to Washington that Yahya had agreed to 'quiet' contacts with Awami League members. There was now a 'glimmer of light amidst the encircling gloom' and the hope for a 'vindication of US policy vis-a-vis Pakistan'.<sup>74</sup> By late November, the talks indeed appeared to have made some headway, when Yahya indicated his willingness to give 'careful consideration' to the idea of holding talks with an Awami League representative appointed by Mujibur Rahman.<sup>75</sup>

Ultimately, however, these efforts were thwarted by Indian support of the rebels and overtaken by realities on the ground. As was the case with Indian support of the Mukti Bahini, moreover, the secret nature of the US diplomatic openings severely limited their effectiveness.<sup>76</sup> Consequently, the efforts to create a channel of communication between Yahya and the Awami League leaders never went beyond informal talks, and it is difficult to imagine that they could have bridged the divide between the military regime on the one hand, and the Awami League and Bangladesh representatives on the other.

Running up against the 'insuperable wall' of non-interference while facing strong pressure to act, the United Nations, too, came to resort to a strategy of covert

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<sup>71</sup>See Rogers to the US embassies in New Delhi and Islamabad, June 26, 1971, RG59, SNF, Entry 1613, box 2535, NARA. Despite the reduction of military and economic aid, however, Kissinger sought ways to ensure that the 'pipeline' would not entirely dry up, see Samuel M. Hoskinson, 'Memorandum of Conversation' between Kissinger and Major General Inam-ul Haq on September 13, 1971, *ibid*.

<sup>72</sup>Minutes of a meeting between Sisco and Hilaly, June 16, 1971, RG59, SNF, Entry 1613, box 2358, NARA.

<sup>73</sup>See the minutes of meetings in RG59, SNF, Entry 1613, box 2533, NARA.

<sup>74</sup>Farland to Rogers, 'Contacts with Bangla Desh Reps - Pres. Yahya's Reaction', August 24, 1971, *ibid*.

<sup>75</sup>Irwin to White House, 'India-Pakistan Working Group Situation Report No. 8 of 0900 Hours EST, 27 November 1971', November 27, 1971, RG59, SNF, Entry 1613, box 2363, NARA.

<sup>76</sup>See Farland to Rogers, 'US Posture toward Pakistan - Review and Comments', June 11, 1971, RG59, SNF, Entry 1613, box 2535, NARA.

intervention in East Pakistan. With tacit approval and support by the United States and Britain, policy planners and local officials of the UN humanitarian mission in East Pakistan, to which Pakistan had agreed in mid-May 1971, sought to expand the mission gradually, to the point where it would effectively function as a peacekeeping operation.<sup>77</sup> In an internal discussion of the humanitarian relief mission that the UN had launched in early June, the UN high commissioner for refugees, Sadruddin Aga Khan, outlined this approach of politicising the humanitarian mission from below:

The UN ... must be felt as a presence and must not appear to be an acquiescence in or approval of actions by the Pakistan Government and military authorities which prevented the restoration of confidence. The Pakistan authorities must understand that while the United Nations was in East Pakistan to help them, the Pakistanis must help by ensuring proper behaviour by the government and army representatives.<sup>78</sup>

Seeking to expand the UN's humanitarian mission in East Pakistan in this manner, UNHCR representatives aimed to establish an 'effective UN presence' on both sides of the border that would facilitate the repatriation of the refugees and, hence, a political solution of the conflict.<sup>79</sup> Bolder proposals foresaw large 'neutral zone collecting centers' for up to two million refugees as well as demilitarised corridors around these camps to take charge of the entire process of the resettlement and rehabilitation of East Pakistani refugees.<sup>80</sup> UNHCR may even, as Sadruddin's comment demonstrates, monitor the conduct of the Pakistani army. At the same time, Sadruddin, who had the ambition to transform UNHCR into a major UN agency and become the next UN secretary-general, complained about India's refusal to allow UN observers on its side of the border. On 24 June 1971, Sadruddin outlined his plan for a solution to the crisis in a conversation with US secretary of state William Rogers and assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs Joseph Sisco. While Yahya 'should withdraw [the] army', India ought to allow UN observers to monitor and organise the repatriation of the refugees. Moreover, India should not insist on a political solution as a precondition for the return of the refugees.<sup>81</sup> Taken together, these calls for a more robust UN presence in the region effectively envisaged a peacekeeping mission with the covert political aim of preventing an Indo-Pakistani war, restoring order and economic stability in East Pakistan, and returning to the *status quo ante*.

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<sup>77</sup>On US support see NEA/INC, 'Confidential Background Paper: US Policy in South Asia', 2 September 1971, RG59, LOT, box 20, NARA. On UK support see Alec Douglas-Home to the UK Mission at the UN, New York, August 4, 1971, FCO 37/917, TNA. On the background of the UN humanitarian mission in East Pakistan see UN Press release, IHA/20, July 15, 1971, S-0229-0003-03, UN Archives, and the correspondence in S-0863-0001-02, UN Archives. See also the detailed and useful account by Oliver, *The United Nations in Bangladesh*.

<sup>78</sup>Summary Record of Meeting with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees held in Room 3858 on June 23, 1971, S-1072-0004-11, UN Archives.

<sup>79</sup>Guyer and Urquhart to Sadruddin, July 7, 1971, S-0279-0018-02, UN Archives. On Sadruddin and the role of UNHCR in the East Pakistan crisis see Loescher, *Perilous Path*, ch. 6; David Myard, 'Sadruddin Aga Khan and the 1971 East Pakistani Crisis: Refugees and Mediation in Light of the Records of the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees', *The Graduate Institute Geneva: Global Migration Research Paper 1* (2010). For a critical appraisal of UNHCR's development as a bureaucracy, see Barnett and Finnemore, *Rules for the World*, ch. 4.

<sup>80</sup>These were the suggestions by Glen Haydon, who had been recently appointed by President Nixon to a six-member presidential advisory panel on South Asian relief and who now offered his service to the UN. See Haydon to Guyer, 'Suggestions for U.N. Relief & Refugee Operations in East Pakistan and India', September 17, 1971, S-1072-0004-10, UN Archives.

<sup>81</sup>Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in India', June 26, 1971, in Smith, *FRUS XI*, doc. 79, pp. 199–202, here p. 201.

UN representatives in situ confirmed this tacit political ambition of what was officially a mission of humanitarian aid. On 16 July 1971, Bahgat A. El-Tawil, UN representative for humanitarian assistance to East Pakistan, cabled to UN headquarters from Dhaka that while the UN mission faced numerous obstacles, ‘human life, human rights, international peace and the future of the Unations [United Nations] are all at stake in this operation. No sacrifice is too high. No effort should be spared’.<sup>82</sup> Three days earlier, Ismat Kittani, U Thant’s assistant for inter-agency affairs, had implored the secretary-general to invoke Article 99 of the UN Charter to alert the Security Council of the threat to peace that the crisis posed to South Asia. The political and humanitarian aspects of the crisis could not be separated, Kittani argued, and ‘[s]hort of some effective UN action and presence the situation might well move towards an explosion that no-one really seems to want’.<sup>83</sup>

But even without pursuing these ambitious aims, the presence of UN relief workers alone quickly assumed a political dimension, as it immediately brought UN personnel in conflict with both the Mukti Bahini and the Pakistani military authorities. The former opposed UN efforts as a covert attempt to stabilise the military regime, but they were also aware of the need to maintain good relations with the international community and the local population that benefitted from UN aid.<sup>84</sup> The results were sporadic bomb attacks and other minor acts of sabotage against UN convoys.<sup>85</sup> The Pakistani military authorities, in turn, feared that the UN operation could end up feeding the rebels, and they were particularly wary of political interference and what they perceived as the ‘[a]ttempt by [the] U.N. to force observers into Pakistan under [the] guise of relief specialists’.<sup>86</sup> The Pakistani authorities also sought to use the UN presence to fend off Indian-sponsored incursions of guerrilla fighters into East Pakistani territory. In one meeting between UN representatives and local Pakistani administrators, Chief Secretary Muzaffer Hussain requested that the UN take action to ‘restrict training camps on our borders, restrict operation of radio broadcasting stations from Indian territory which is making threats on our people and training forces who will be let loose on the masses here’.<sup>87</sup> Overall, the UN humanitarian mission in East Pakistan had limited and contradictory effects on the crisis and was insufficient to encourage the refugees to return or restore order and stability in East Pakistan.

## The drift to war

The archival record suggests that until about mid-November 1971, all the key actors involved in the East Pakistan crisis, including the Indian government and the Mukti Bahini, sought to avoid an open Indo-Pakistani war.<sup>88</sup> Even so, the inconclusive attempts

<sup>82</sup>El-Tawil to Kittani and Tripp, part 2 of 2, July 16, 1971, S-0279-0017-05, UN Archives.

<sup>83</sup>Kittani to U Thant, July 13, 1971, S-0279-0017-05, UN Archives.

<sup>84</sup>See Paul Marc-Henry’s ‘UNEPRO Proposed Plan of Action for November–December 1971’, October 22, 1971, S-0863-0001-02, UN Archives, and Keating to Rogers, ‘Second Meeting with Bangla Desh Rep[resentative]s’, August 14, 1971, Section 2, RG59, SNF, Entry 1613, box 2533, NARA.

<sup>85</sup>See e.g. Charles Mace (Geneva) to HICOMREF New York, August 16, 1971, S-1072-0005-07, UN Archives.

<sup>86</sup>‘Highlights’, September 2–10, 1971, no author [Paul-Marc Henry], no date [September 1971], S-0229-0003-04, UN Archives.

<sup>87</sup>Minutes of a ‘Working meeting’, Dhaka, September 7, 1971, *ibid*.

<sup>88</sup>In July 1971, Bangladesh leaders informed Jayaprakash Narayan that ‘[t]hey were not in favour of any direct intervention on the part of India, nor any confrontation between the Indian Army and the Pakistan Army’, see Narayan to Gandhi, July 15, 1971, Jayaprakash Narayan Papers, 235, III. Instalment, III. Subject Files, NMML.

of the Pakistani military, the Mukti Bahini and the outside powers to resolve the crisis brought the situation to a point where war became the most preferable, or rather least bad, option for Indian, Bangladeshi and Pakistani leaders.

On the ground, the drift to war resulted from the mutually reinforcing dynamic of the Indian-sponsored border incursions by Mukti Bahini irregulars that were met by punitive raids from the Pakistani military causing further local inhabitants to seek refuge in India, and thus filling the camps and the ranks of the rebel force. Another mechanism of escalation arose from the insufficient nature of covert Indian support of the Mukti Bahini. From October 1971, in view of the limited success of guerrilla activity, the Indian military authorities began sending mixed groups of Border Security Force (BSF) and Mukti Bahini fighters into East Pakistani territory, accompanied by sporadic Indian shelling of Pakistani positions.<sup>89</sup> As members of the BSF were at times captured by Pakistani troops, the Indians were forced to send 'periodical extrication operations' across the border. When on 24 November the Indian army began crossing the border regularly with heavy weaponry 'in "self-defence"', the conflict was brought close to open war.<sup>90</sup>

The local drift to war was fuelled or indeed made possible by a curious diplomatic double-deadlock of the Cold War international system. After it had become apparent that there was no chance for any effective international effort to stop the military repression by the Yahya regime in East Pakistan, the Indians focused their diplomatic efforts on neutralising Chinese and US support of Pakistan by securing Soviet support in case of war, which they obtained by the end of October 1971.<sup>91</sup> US and Chinese support for Pakistan and Soviet support for India meant that the Security Council was paralysed: it was neither able to exert pressure on Pakistan to withdraw its military, nor was it able to establish an effective peacekeeping mission along the Indo-East Pakistani border to prevent war. When the conflict finally reached the Security Council on 4 December, the Soviet veto effectively prevented the passing of any resolution that would have put a brake on the all-out Indian offensive.<sup>92</sup>

A key factor that brought the conflict to the brink of war was the combined effect of the diverse covert strategies of foreign intervention cancelling each other out. UN and US efforts, to begin with, were from the start hampered by their failure to secure Indian support. While US attempts to establish a secret channel of communication between Yahya and the Bangladesh representatives never moved past informal talks, UN efforts to resolve the crisis by way of peacekeeping cloaked as humanitarian aid yielded at best contradictory results. Without a massive UN presence on both sides of the border and strong pressure on Pakistani military authorities and Bangladesh leaders to restore order and agree to talks, which would have required Indian backing and possibly overt Security Council action, there was no realistic chance for a substantial return of the refugees and thus a peaceful resolution of the crisis.

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<sup>89</sup>Military Memorandum to Sutherland, November 25, 1971, DO 133/212, TNA, also for the following quotations.

<sup>90</sup>Raghavan, 1971, 205, argues that by the time the Pakistani army launched their airstrikes on 3 December, the Indian army had effectively already started the war.

<sup>91</sup>See *ibid.*, chs. 5 and 9, esp. 225–6.

<sup>92</sup>For a discussion of the Security Council deliberations on the Indo-Pakistani war, see Wheeler, *Saving Strangers*, ch. 2 and Bass, 'The Indian Way'.

Indian covert efforts, too, failed as their support of the Mukti Bahini ultimately proved to be insufficient to provoke the collapse of the Pakistani military – yet the Indian strategy was successful in its broader aim of maintaining control over the crisis and its resolution. Indeed, the Indian refusal to accept UN observers on their side of the border was an important element in the military escalation of the conflict that has largely been overlooked by scholars.<sup>93</sup> In the Indian view, having UN observers would not just have exposed and likely ended Indian support of the Mukti Bahini, but it would also have re-defined the East Pakistan crisis as a threat to peace and security in South Asia and thus wrested control over the conflict and its solution away from India. Framed in this way, the solution of the crisis would have required international efforts to stabilise the economy and restore law and order in East Pakistan to entice the refugees to return. As we have seen, this was indeed the aim of the myriad covert efforts by US diplomats and UNHCR. The Indians rightly feared that this approach, despite its allegedly ‘purely humanitarian’ character, would have effectively resulted in the salvation of the Yahya regime. Worse still, in their view, it may have created a permanent state of tension and instability along India’s eastern border akin to the situation in Kashmir.<sup>94</sup> The experience of the UN’s failure to break the deadlock over Kashmir following India’s referral of the matter to the UN Security Council on 1 January 1949 was still fresh in the minds of Indian policymakers. In February 1950, frustrated with fruitless UN efforts to arrange a plebiscite, Sir Girija Bajpai, then first secretary-general in the Indian Ministry of External Affairs, had told UN official Erik Colban that he did not think India would ever again submit ‘any other Indo-Pakistan dispute to the Security Council’.<sup>95</sup> In late November 1971, therefore, considering diplomatic and covert efforts to have failed and faced with the frightening prospect of a second Kashmir, the Gandhi administration began preparing for war.

Another crucial but understudied factor in the outbreak of war is the Pakistani military regime. While the relevant Pakistani archives remain closed to researchers, documents from international archives allow us to reconstruct at least the basic tenets of the strategy and policy considerations of the Yahya administration. The available records indicate that Pakistani leaders aimed at securing US and UN Security Council support for a peacekeeping mission that would have deterred or indeed prevented India from launching a military attack and clandestinely training and supporting the Mukti Bahini. Such outside intervention, they hoped, would allow their military to decisively defeat the guerrilla fighters and transfer power to a West Pakistan-friendly civilian administration with possibly some degree of participation by a purged Awami League.<sup>96</sup> It thus appears that instead of working towards reconciliation and a workable political settlement, the Yahya regime continued to focus its energies on

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<sup>93</sup>India’s opposition to UN observers is mentioned only in passing by Raghavan, 1971, 154, 229, 231, 242; Bass, ‘The Indian Way’, 242, 254; and Singh, *Power and Diplomacy*, 307–8.

<sup>94</sup>Keating to Rogers, November 25, 1971, RG59, SNF, Entry 1613, box 2363, NARA.

<sup>95</sup>Erik Colban to UN Secretary-General Trygve Lie, February 9, 1950, S-0005-0002-05, UN Archives. On the role of the UN in the Kashmir conflict see Christopher Snedden, ‘Would a Plebiscite Have Resolved the Kashmir Dispute?’, *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 28, no. 1 (2005): 64–86 and Rakesh Ankit, ‘Britain and Kashmir, 1948: “The Arena of the UN”’, *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 24, no. 2 (2013): 273–90.

<sup>96</sup>This is Sadruddin’s convincing assessment of the Pakistani strategy. See Irwin to US Embassy to Pakistan, November 23, 1971, summarising a meeting between Sadruddin and Sisco on the same day, RG59, SNF, Entry 1613, box 2363, NARA.

defeating the ‘miscreants’ of the Mukti Bahini and using US and UN involvement as a shield against potential Indian attack.

This impression of a hardening of attitudes among the Pakistani leadership towards the end of the crisis is corroborated by the last-minute efforts of the regime. On 29 November, Yahya officially requested the UN to place observers on the East Pakistani side of the border to monitor and deter Indian military incursions.<sup>97</sup> At the same time, Pakistani military leaders considered starting, and shortly later carried out, a limited military attack in the West to provoke an Indian offensive and, as they erroneously hoped, Security Council action.<sup>98</sup> The other option Pakistani leaders apparently considered is eerily reminiscent of the German legend of the ‘stab in the back’ at the close of the First World War. According to Farland, some government members were thinking about transferring power to a civilian administration to shift the blame for the expected break-up of the country.<sup>99</sup> It is therefore indeed doubtful whether stronger public and economic pressure would have induced the Pakistani government to stop the repression and allow for a peaceful transition to some sort of autonomy for the country’s eastern wing.<sup>100</sup>

Pakistan’s ill-advised and poorly planned air strikes on northwest India on 3 December gave the Indian army a formidable pretext for their planned intervention.<sup>101</sup> Meanwhile, the double-deadlock that paralysed the international system provided the cover for an all-out offensive that would result in military defeat of Pakistan, the break-up of the country, and the creation of an India-friendly Bangladesh under the leadership of Mujibur Rahman and the Awami League.

## Conclusion

On 7 July 1971, discussing the East Pakistan crisis with Indian foreign minister Swaran Singh and his staff in New Delhi, Henry Kissinger noted that compared to the binary approach of the 1950s, US Cold War strategy had ‘now become more sophisticated’.<sup>102</sup> As it turned out, the East Pakistan crisis would surpass the capacity of Kissinger’s upgraded Cold War international framework. Between 25 March and 4 December 1971, neither the Great Powers nor the United Nations were able to prevent one of the largest humanitarian emergencies of the Cold War era to spiral out of control into an Indo-Pakistani war that may well have degenerated into a major Cold War military confrontation.<sup>103</sup>

Below the surface of international inaction and ‘morally callous’ realpolitik, the East Pakistan crisis functioned as a nine-month laboratory for Cold War

<sup>97</sup>See Yahya to U Thant, November 29, 1971, S-0863-0001-02, UN Archives.

<sup>98</sup>See, for example, the memo by the British Far East Current Intelligence Group of the Joint Intelligence Committee, ‘India/Pakistan: Likely Course of Events and Consequences of War’, GEN 67(71) 1, November 11, 1971, Cabinet Office Files, 130/542, TNA.

<sup>99</sup>Farland to Rogers, November 23, 1971, RG59, SNF, Entry 1613, box 2533, NARA.

<sup>100</sup>For a sceptical view of outside influence on the Yahya regime, see Harold H. Saunders, ‘What Really Happened in Bangladesh: Washington, Islamabad, and the Genocide in East Pakistan’, *Foreign Affairs* 93, no. 4 (2014): 36–42.

<sup>101</sup>On the historical background, see Raghavan, 1971, 232–4; Nawaz, *Crossed Swords*, 282.

<sup>102</sup>Harold H. Saunders, ‘Memorandum of Conversation’, July 12, 1971, RG59, SNF, Entry 1613, box 2369, NARA. For the almost identical Indian account of Kissinger’s statement see the minutes by Rukmini Menon dated July 13, 1971, NAI, WII/121/54/71-I.

<sup>103</sup>See Clary, ‘Tilting at Windmills’.



humanitarian politics.<sup>104</sup> During this time, national governments, the United Nations, humanitarian organisations and individual activists explored and navigated the tight space between the growing humanitarian and internationalist rhetoric on the one hand, and state sovereignty and Cold War alliances on the other. What was at stake was no less than the place of human rights in international conflict management, the role of humanitarian activism and NGOs, and the future of the United Nations – as a politically or at least morally meaningful Cold War actor or an organisation delivering humanitarian palliatives and stripped of any political function.

The absence of any effective form of international conflict management in the face of a massive humanitarian and political crisis forced the key external actors to pursue strategies of covert intervention: India began training and supporting the Mukti Bahini rebel force and UN administrators considered establishing a peacekeeping mission under the cloak of humanitarian aid, while US diplomats worked to establish contacts between Bangladeshi leaders and President Yahya of Pakistan. These clandestine forms of interference were not only too limited to have a decisive impact, they also cancelled each other out, further exacerbating the crisis and contributing to the drift to war. It was only the double-deadlock of the Cold War system, however, that enabled a fully fledged Indian military intervention – no international intervention to stop the repression of the Yahya regime, but also no intervention to stop an all-out Indian offensive.

Apart from its open challenge to the moral foundations and political effectiveness of the Cold War system, the East Pakistan crisis had detrimental effects on other levels, too. For Pakistan, it meant a missed chance for democratic change, however slim this may have been. For the UN, it meant further damage to the organisation's reputation and its further retreat from the political field, although the crisis had the important side-effect of transforming UNHCR into a major global humanitarian organisation. In Western states, notably in the United States, existing rifts between governments and their publics deepened.

From the vantage point of historical hindsight, one might argue that the East Pakistan crisis and the de facto Indian humanitarian intervention exposed the contradictions and limitations of the Cold War order and thus contributed to creating the ideological and political space for the humanitarian interventionism of the immediate post-Cold War era and more recent concepts such as the 'responsibility to protect'. In the short run, however, the realities of the Cold War meant that human rights after East Pakistan took a non-political turn. The conflicting dynamics of overt inaction and covert interference that characterised the East Pakistan crisis anticipated the ascendancy of a 'narrow' human rights concept stripped bare of its political and interventionist connotation from the mid-1970s.<sup>105</sup> The handling of the crisis also reveals that political and interventionist approaches to human rights did not disappear. Instead, they were driven underground and treated as an exception, further deepening the divide between

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<sup>104</sup>Anthony C.E. Quainton, Political Officer for India in the State Department, to Grant E. Mouser, American Embassy New Delhi, December 29, 1971, RG 59, SNF, Entry 1613, box 2369, NARA.

<sup>105</sup>See Keys, *Reclaiming American Virtue*, 5; Heerten, *The Biafran War*, 9; A. Dirk Moses, Marco Duranti and Roland Burke, 'Introduction: Human Rights, Empire and After', in *Decolonisation, Self-Determination, and the Rise of Global Human Rights*, ed. A. D. Moses, Marco Duranti and Roland Burke (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 1–32, here 6.



international law and norms, on the one hand, and bottom-up initiatives to move past the Cold War framework, on the other.

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