

11. Minutes of Washington Special Actions Group Meeting¹

Washington, March 26, 1971, 3:03–3:32 p.m.

SUBJECT

Pakistan

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-115, WSAG Minutes, Originals, 1971. Top Secret; Nodis. No drafting information appears on the minutes. The meeting was held in the White House Situation Room. A briefer record of the meeting was prepared in OASD/ISA by James Noyes. (Washington National Records Center, OSD Files, FRC 330 76 0197, Box 74, Pakistan 092 (Jan–Jul) 1971)

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PARTICIPATION

Chairman—Henry A. Kissinger

State

Mr. U. Alexis Johnson

Mr. Christopher Van Hollen

Defense

Mr. David Packard

Mr. James H. Noyes

CIA

Mr. Richard Helms

Mr. David Blee

JCS

Lt. Gen. Melvin Zais

Col. Frank W. Rhea

NSC Staff

Col. Richard T. Kennedy

Mr. Harold H. Saunders

Mr. Sam Hoskinson

Mr. Keith Guthrie

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

After reviewing the situation in East Pakistan, the WSAG agreed that the U.S. should continue its policy of non-involvement in the dispute between West and East Pakistan. In particular, the U.S. should avoid being placed in a position where it could be accused of having encouraged the break-up of Pakistan. The WSAG agreed that the U.S. should delay action on any request that might be forthcoming for recognition of an independent East Pakistani regime.

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Mr. Helms: Yes, an agreement appeared near on March 24. The breakdown may have been because of Mujibur Rahman's insistence on the immediate lifting of martial law.

A clandestine radio broadcast has Mujibur Rahman declaring the independence of Bangla Desh. There are 20,000 loyal West Pakistani troops in East Pakistan. There are also 5,000 East Pakistani regulars and 13,000 East Pakistani paramilitary troops, but their loyalty is doubtful. We cannot confirm Indian press reports that a large number of Pakistani troops landed by ship. Six C-130s carrying troops were supposed to be going from Karachi to Dacca today. It will take them a long time, since they have to go via Ceylon.