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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
3 March 1971

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

PAKISTAN

(Situation as of 1200 EST)

1. Radio Pakistan announced today that President Yahya Khan has called a meeting of leaders of parliamentary parties to be held in Dacca on 10 March--one week after the constituent assembly was to have convened. The radio quoted Yahya as saying that he saw "no reason" why the postponed assembly should not be able to meet within "a couple of weeks" after his meeting with the party leaders.

2. Dacca and much of East Pakistan are tied up for the second straight day by a general strike, called to protest the postponement of the constituent assembly. East Pakistani leader, Mujibur Rahman, now has called for daily "hartals," general strikes, from 0600 to 1400 through 6 March.

3. The security situation in East Pakistan appears to be deteriorating. Considerable violence occurred yesterday in Dacca and well into the night despite a 1900 to 0700 curfew imposed by the government. Reported deaths of a few Bengalis and injuries to several score others, as a result of clashes with security forces yesterday, reportedly are reflected in an uglier mood among the demonstrators in Dacca today. An increasing number of barricades have appeared in the streets of the city. Most of the violence, particularly arson, appears aimed at property of West Pakistanis.

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4. On 2 March, Z. A. Bhutto, leader of West Pakistan's largest political party, held a press conference in which he commented on the constitutional crisis. His remarks were conciliatory in that he offered to go anywhere, anytime to resolve their differences, but he made no concessions on his previous position that was rejected by the East Pakistani leader. Bhutto, for instance, continues to demand that the central government control foreign trade and aid. Bhutto concluded with an assertion that he did not believe the crisis had "gone beyond the point of no return" and that agreement was still possible.

5. Much attention continues to be focused on Mujib and he, in turn, could soon be endangered by being outmaneuvered for leadership in East Pakistan by more militant Bengali nationalists. Yesterday, in speaking to reporters, he demanded an immediate end to martial law and the removal of "obstacles to the exercise by the peoples' representatives of the power that is rightfully theirs." He also called for discipline and restraint in observing the strikes. Mujib's position on the future of East Pakistan is expected to become clear at the rally he is scheduled to address on 7 March. Even before then, however, his attitude toward the continuation of a unified Pakistan may be signaled in whatever response he makes to Yahya's call for the meeting on 10 March.

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