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**UNDERSTANDING BANGABANDHU'S FOREIGN POLICY:  
PRINCIPLES, PRIORITIES AND DIPLOMATIC STRATEGIES**

**Md. Shariful Islam**



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PRINCIPLES, PRIORITIES AND DIPLOMATIC STRATEGIES**

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**ABSTRACT**

How can one theorize the foreign policy of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman from the perspective of International Relations? What are the principles and priorities that dominated Bangabandhu's foreign policy formulations and executions? And what kinds of diplomatic strategies did Bangabandhu employ to execute the foreign policy principles and priorities? This paper investigates these questions. Thus, investigating Bangabandhu's foreign policy and diplomatic practices are two major focuses of this paper. It argues that theorizing Bangabandhu's foreign policy becomes crucial as better theorizing translates into better practices. The paper shows that Bangabandhu pursued an 'enlightened approach' to foreign policy that was not confined to the interest of Bangladesh but the interest of the developing world, the interest of the humanity at large. This paper also contends that against the context of contemporary foreign policy practices of the states based on narrowly defined national interest, the foreign policy and diplomatic practices of Bangabandhu bear strong relevance for a better and peaceful world and to the study of International Relations.

**Keywords:** Bangabandhu, cooperation, economic diplomacy, migration diplomacy, multilateralism, enlightened foreign policy.

## ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDA	International Development Association
ILO	International Labour Organization
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organisation
IPU	International Parliamentary Union
IOR	Indian Ocean Region
IR	International Relations
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organisation
UNROD	United Nations Relief Operation in Dacca
UNROB	United Nations Special Relief Office in Bangladesh
UAE	United Arab Emirates
WHO	World Health Organization



## Chapter 1

### Introduction

To understand Bangladesh and its foreign policy, one needs to understand the founding father of Bangladesh, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and his foreign policy practices. Thus this paper attempts to theorize Bangabandhu's foreign policy from international relations perspective. It also examines the diplomatic choices that Bangabandhu made to execute his foreign policy principles and priorities. In fact, Bangladesh emerged as an independent nation-state in the comity of nations under the leadership of Bangabandhu. Thus, it is said that the other name of Bangladesh is Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib.<sup>1</sup> In a webinar, Syed Anwar Hossain remarked that in the post-independence period, "the name of the country [Bangladesh] was unknown but the father of the nation was so much known across the world. Sheikh Mujib was known more than his country".<sup>2</sup> In fact, Bangladesh achieved recognition from the international community within the shortest possible of time due to the active recognition diplomacy of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. In addition, Bangabandhu reconstructed war-torn Bangladesh employing his active economic diplomacy focusing on foreign aid, food aid, trade and economic cooperation. Bangladesh achieved a place in the comity of nations due to his active foreign policy and thus effective diplomatic initiatives. Non-alignment was the key facet of Bangabandhu's foreign policy. For instance, he laid down the principle of Bangladesh foreign policy dictum, i.e. 'Friendship to all and malice towards none'.

In fact, foreign policy was born with the emergence of states. It is also argued that diplomatic practices existed even in ancient times for the establishment of relations and cooperation. States needed to conduct and maintain their foreign relations with other states due to different compulsions. Thus, to maintain foreign relations with other states and promote and protect the national interest in the international arena, foreign policies were formulated and executed. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, laid down the peace-centric foreign policy of Bangladesh to uplift the country from acute poverty, hunger, and war-torn situation. In fact, the picture of a war-ravaged country might not be unknown to anyone. On the one hand, ruined houses were needed to be built, roads were needed to be repaired, food production, offices, administrative functions of the state were needed to be restarted. On the other hand, there were severe problems of poverty, hunger, famine and illiteracy. Against this backdrop, the foreign policy of Bangladesh was formulated based on friendship, cooperation, non-alignment and peaceful co-existence. Thus, the foreign policy of Bangladesh emanated from the Article 25 (Promotion of international peace, security and solidarity) of the Bangladesh Constitution.

<sup>1</sup> Atiur Rahman, *Bangladesh's Other Name is Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib*, Dhaka: Sahitto Prakash, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> Syed Anwar Hossain mentioned this in a webinar on "Foreign Policy Visions of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman: Celebration of the Birth Centenary of the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman", organized by the Subir and Malini Chowdhury Center for Bangladesh Studies at University of California, Berkeley, partnered with the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the United Nations and UNESCO, 1 March 2021, available at <https://chowdhurycenter.berkeley.edu/foreign-policy-visions-sheikh-mujibur-rahman>, accessed on 12 July 2021.



Rounaq Jahan writes, "It is unfortunate that even after 48 years of our independence and 43 years after his assassination there is no well-researched comprehensive biography of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman".<sup>3</sup> The case is also true in the context of Bangabandhu's foreign policy and diplomatic practices. In the words of Bangladesh's current Foreign Minister, AK Abdul Momen, "once there was an attempt to basically eliminate the name of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman from all the history books of Bangladesh".<sup>4</sup> This is also reflected in the case of research on Bangabandhu's foreign policy and international relations, which remained under-researched. Syed Anwar Hossain, in his book, *Bangabandhur Porrastro Niti Bangladesh, Dokkhin Asia O Samtrotik Bisshw (Foreign Policy of Bangabandhu, South Asia, and the Contemporary World)*, included 14 chapters concerning South Asia, and contemporary issues of international politics. However, the first chapter deals with Bangabandhu's foreign policy, where the author very briefly discusses the diplomacy of recognition, loan and aid diplomacy, relations with the socialist and capitalist countries, Islamic countries and with international organizations.<sup>5</sup> There are few limitations of this scholarship. First, it is very brief in nature which needs to be expanded. Second, Bangabandhu's diplomatic emphasis on economic diplomacy, migration diplomacy, repatriation diplomacy, UN diplomacy is absent, which merits further investigations. Third, in terms of sources of data, the chapter is based on mainly secondary sources, where there is ample scope to bring new perspectives and insights from primary sources of data, i.e newspaper reports, UN documents, Bangabandhu's speeches. Finally, the chapter is in Bengali language which deals mainly with the Bangladeshi readers. Thus, there is no alternative to a well-researched scholarship in the English language to reach out the international community.

There are some literature<sup>6</sup> available on Bangladesh foreign policy and politics in general, where a section on Bangladesh foreign policy under the Bangabandhu regime is discussed briefly, mostly focusing on Bangladesh's relations with India, USA, China, and Soviet Union. The issue of water dispute, Farakka issue, is primarily dominated in the discussion of the Bangabandhu regime. In April 1972, Pran Chopra published an article in *India Quarterly*, titled "Bangla Desh In Search of A Role", where the author primarily discussed Bangabandhu's domestic challenges arising from the ultra-leftist and rightist forces in the foreign policy preferences primarily with India.<sup>7</sup> With a view to reflecting on the forty years and later forty-five years of Bangladesh's

<sup>3</sup> Rounaq Jahan, "The Political Philosophy of Bangabandhu", *Dhaka Tribune*, 10 June 2019, available at <https://www.dhakatribune.com/opinion/op-ed/2019/06/10/the-political-philosophy-of-bangabandhu>, accessed on 12 July 2021.

<sup>4</sup> Abdul Momen made this comment in a webinar on "Foreign Policy Visions of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman: Celebration of the Birth Centenary of the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman", op. cit.

<sup>5</sup> Syed Anwar Hossain, *Bangabandhur Porrastro Niti Bangladesh, Dokkhin Asia O Samtrotik Bisshw (Foreign Policy of Bangabandhu, South Asia, and the Contemporary World)*, Dhaka: Agamee Prakashani, 2018, Second Imprint.

<sup>6</sup> Abul Kalam (ed.), *Bangladesh: Internal Dynamics and External Linkages*, Dhaka: UPL, 1996; Kirti Singh Chauhan, *Foreign Policy of Bangladesh*, New Delhi: Kaveri Books, 2012; Muhammad Shamsul Huq, *Bangladesh in International Politics: The Dilemmas of the Weak State*, Dhaka: UPL, 1993; Muzaffer Ahmed and Abul Kalam (eds.), *Bangladesh Foreign Relations: Changes and Directions*, Dhaka: UPL, 1989; Rounaq Jahan, "Bangladesh in 1972: Nation Building in a New State", *Asian Survey*, Vol. 13, No. 2, 1973, pp. 199-210; Rounaq Jahan, "Bangladesh in 1973: Management of Factional Politics", *Asian Survey*, Vol. 14, No. 2, A Survey of Asia in 1973: Part II, February 1974, pp. 125-135; S. R. Chakravarty (ed.), *Foreign Policy of Bangladesh*, New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications, 1994; Talukder Maniruzzaman, "Bangladesh in 1974: Economic Crisis and Political Polarization", *Asian Survey*, Vol. 15, No. 2, 1975, pp. 117-128; Talukder Maniruzzaman, "Bangladesh in 1975: The Fall of the Mujib Regime and Its Aftermath", *Asian Survey*, Vol. 16, No. 2, 1976, pp. 119-129.

<sup>7</sup> Pran Chopra, "Bangla Desh in Search of a Role", *India Quarterly*, Vol. 28, No. 2, 1972, pp. 119-125.



foreign policy, Imtiaz Ahmed, refers to diplomacy of recognition and economic diplomacy under Bangabandhu.<sup>8</sup> Though Ahmed explained the recognition diplomacy of Bangabandhu briefly, he did not examine the economic diplomacy of Bangabandhu, which merits further investigations. Ahmed also argues that economic diplomacy in Bangladesh started at the second phase with the ending of diplomacy for recognition in 1974 and Pakistan's recognition to Bangladesh. He further contends that "Following the changeover of the government in 1975 the thrust on economic diplomacy...gained further momentum".<sup>9</sup> Against this backdrop, this paper also investigates Bangabandhu's economic diplomacy between 1972 and 1975.

In October 1972 Issue of *International Relations* journal, Zillur R. Khan published an article titled, Bangladesh and multi-polar politics in Asia, where the author explained the impact of multi-polar politics on the Indo-Bangladesh-Pakistan tri-polarity by analyzing polar-relationships before, during and after the Bangladesh-Pakistan-India conflict in 1971 leaving ample scope for the study of Bangabandhu's foreign policy.<sup>10</sup> Zaglul Haider tried to undertake a comparative study on Bangladesh foreign policy under Mujib and Zia regime, where the author focuses on Bangladesh's relations with India, Pakistan, China, USA, Soviet Union, and the Muslim world.<sup>11</sup> In 1987, Moudud Ahmed published a book titled *Bangladesh: Era of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman* where only Bangladesh's relationship with India is discussed.<sup>12</sup> Yet, no studies have sought to systematically investigate Bangabandhu's foreign policy principles, priorities and diplomatic practices comprehensively. Therefore, this paper explains foreign policy and diplomatic practices of Bangabandhu. It is also worthy to note that this study uses "very rare and historical data"<sup>13</sup> that is absent in the existing literature.

Concerning the significance of the paper, one can ask: why should one care about foreign policy in general and Bangabandhu's foreign policy in particular? In this context, Mike Sheehan and Helen Brocklehurst contends that "It was said a few years ago that if the human race is wiped out in the next 50 years it will not be because of disease or an asteroid hitting the earth, but because of foreign policy and international relations"<sup>14</sup> which implies the importance of foreign policy and international relations for the pursuit of a better world. However, it is argued that foreign policy is relevant for two main purposes.<sup>15</sup> First, the agenda of world politics is linked with foreign policy and the renewed interest in foreign policy per se. Second, the academic dialogue between the literature of foreign policy and International Relations (IR) also matters. This paper merits serious attention for two specific reasons. First, in the mainstream foreign policy

<sup>8</sup> Imtiaz Ahmed, "Bangladesh Foreign Policy: Constraints, Compulsions and Choices", *BIISS Journal*, Vol. 32, No. 3, 2011, pp. 207-218; "Bangladesh Foreign Policy: The Last 45 Years", in Takashi Inoguchi (ed.), *The Sage Handbook of Asian Foreign Policy*, Vol. 2, London, California, New Delhi, Singapore: Sage, 2020, pp. 838-853.

<sup>9</sup> Imtiaz Ahmed, "Bangladesh Foreign Policy: Constraints, Compulsions and Choices", *ibid*, p. 210.

<sup>10</sup> Zillur R. Khan, "Bangladesh and Multi-polar Politics in Asia", *International Relations*, Vol. 4, No. 5, 1972, pp. 494-509.

<sup>11</sup> Zaglul Haider, *The Changing Pattern of Bangladesh Foreign Policy: A Comparative Study of the Mujib and Zia Regimes*, Dhaka: UPL, 2006.

<sup>12</sup> Moudud Ahmed, *Bangladesh: Era of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman*, Dhaka: UPL, 2017, Sixth Impression.

<sup>13</sup> This is also emphasized by the anonymous reviewer.

<sup>14</sup> Mike Sheehan and Helen Brocklehurst, "Why International Relations is the Key to All Our Futures", *The Independent*, 6 October 2011, available at <https://www.independent.co.uk/student/magazines/why-international-relations-key-all-our-futures-409792.html>, accessed on 7 November 2020.

<sup>15</sup> Steve Smith, A. Hadfield, and T. Dunne, "Introduction", in S. Smith, A. Hadfield and T. Dunne (eds.), *Foreign Policy: Theories, Actors, Cases*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016, pp. 1-10.

scholarship, South Asian foreign policy studies are marginal which has been experiencing a systematic neglect. And in South Asian foreign policy studies, studying Bangladesh foreign policy has been neglected for decades both by mainstream and South Asian IR scholars. Except some opinion-pieces, there is no scholarship available on the conceptualization of Bangabandhu's foreign policy and diplomatic practices and its relevance to the study of IR.<sup>16</sup> Thus, this paper fills the existing knowledge gap. Finally, from the policy perspective, the insights of Bangabandhu's foreign policy would enlighten the contemporary political leaders of Bangladesh and beyond concerning the philosophy and foundation of Bangladesh's foreign policy. Bangabandhu's foreign policy would also be a guide for the foreign policy establishments of Bangladesh.

The paper is divided into six chapters, including introduction and conclusion. The first chapter has briefly discussed the background and rationale of the paper. The second chapter focuses on the foreign policy conceptualization and understanding Bangabandhu from cognitive and psychological approaches to foreign policy. The third chapter explains the principles of Bangabandhu's foreign policy, while the fourth chapter discusses his foreign policy priorities. The fifth chapter explains the diplomatic strategies employed by Bangabandhu to execute the foreign policy principles and priorities. The final chapter focuses on the concluding remarks, the contemporary relevance of Bangabandhu's foreign policy from policy and theoretical perspectives.

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<sup>16</sup> There are few opinion pieces on Bangabandhu's foreign policy available. For instance, Atiur Rahman, "Friendship to All, Malice to None", *The Daily Sun*, 25 May 2021; A. K. M. A. Rahman, "Bangabandhu's Foreign Policy and the World", *The Daily Sun*, 9 August 2017; Bashir Ahmed, "Bangabandhu's Foreign Policy: An Example of Peace and Harmony", *The Financial Express*, 21 December 2020; Md. Shariful Islam, "Bangabandhu and International Relations", *Daily Asian Age*, 16 August 2018; Syed Anwar Hossain, "Architect of Formative Phase of Bangladesh Foreign Policy", *The Business Standard*, 17 March 2020; Syed Badrul Ahsan, "The Diplomat in Bangabandhu", *Dhaka Tribune*, 30 September 2020; Tariq Karim, "Bangabandhu: The Architect of Bangladesh's Foreign Policy", *The Daily Star*, 7 September 2020.



## Chapter 2

### Conceptual Analysis

Before explaining Bangabandhu's foreign policy and diplomatic practices in the next sections, it becomes necessary to define foreign policy, understand Bangabandhu from foreign policy approach and define the term diplomacy. Thus, this section focuses on these issues.

#### 2.1 Theorizing Foreign Policy

The term 'foreign' is derived from the Latin word 'foris', which means 'outside'. And policy means certain courses of actions taken for the purpose of attaining certain goals or objectives. And hence, simply, foreign policy is a policy that is employed by the states to promote and protect their national interest in the international arena. In fact, a state's overall national policy is divided into domestic and foreign policy. On the one hand, a state formulates its domestic policy to run the state smoothly. On the other hand, a state formulates and executes its foreign policy to maintain its international relations with the external world with a view to promoting its interests, norms, and values. However, there are close links between the domestic and foreign policies of a state as Otto von Bismarck popularly said that foreign policy is nothing but the extension of domestic politics. And a newly independent state's foreign policy is primarily determined by its domestic realities and external compulsions. In the context of newly independent war-torn Bangladesh, domestic realities, i.e. achieving international recognition, socio-economic challenges, repatriation issue, unemployment problems, demographic context, regional and global context, played a crucial role to formulate Bangabandhu's foreign policy.

In the scholarly literature of International Relations or Foreign Policy Analysis, there is no single definition of foreign policy. Jean-Frédéric Morin and Jonathan Paquin, for instance, in their book titled *Foreign Policy Analysis: A Toolbox* maintains that "there is no consensual definition of what a foreign policy actually is".<sup>17</sup> Thus, they maintain that "what is considered to be a foreign policy today may not have been so yesterday and may not be tomorrow. As a result, every definition remains more or less dependent on its context".<sup>18</sup> However, some<sup>19</sup> IR scholars view foreign policy as an "analytic concept" that transcends particular historical periods, which "is always distinct and different from other forms of policy".<sup>20</sup> As an analytical concept, foreign policy studies the content of foreign policy, the pursued policy and the processes that led to that policy.<sup>21</sup> It is argued that "Broadly interpreted, foreign policy is about the fundamental issue of how organized groups, at least in part strangers to each other, interrelate".<sup>22</sup> Hill further adds that foreign policy is "the sum of official external relations conducted by an independent actor (usually a state) in international relations".<sup>23</sup> Morin and Paquin define foreign policy as "a set of

<sup>17</sup> Jean-Frédéric Morin and Jonathan Paquin, *Foreign Policy Analysis A Toolbox*, Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, p. 2

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. pp. 2-3

<sup>19</sup> C. Hill, *The Changing Politics of Foreign Policy*. Houndmills: Palgrave, 2003.

<sup>20</sup> Halvard Leira, "The Emergence of Foreign Policy", *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 63, 2019, p. 187.

<sup>21</sup> V. Hudson, "The History and Evolution of Foreign Policy Analysis", in S. Smith, A. Hadfield and T. Dunne (eds.), *Foreign Policy: Theories, Actors, Cases*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016, pp.13-14.

<sup>22</sup> Hill, 2003, op. cit., p. xvii.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p. 3.

actions or rules governing the actions of an independent political authority deployed in the international environment”.<sup>24</sup>

In contrast, after a careful historicization, Halvard Leira (2019) views foreign policy as a “practice concept”.<sup>25</sup> According to Leira, “Foreign policy as a twenty-first century practice concept is associated, for instance, with institutions such as ministries of foreign affairs and embassies, as well as ideas such as national interests, rational utility-maximization, and bureaucratic politics”.<sup>26</sup> Leira further notes that:

If foreign policy as a practical concept emerged at a specific time, for specific reasons, and has changed meaning over time, it cannot be taken for granted that foreign policy has meant the same thing in different places. Different languages have different ways of articulating foreign policy, each potentially with its own developmental trajectories.<sup>27</sup>

In the context of Bangabandhu’s foreign policy, ‘practice’ dimension is employed. After the emergence as a sovereign independent state, Bangladesh adopted an independent foreign policy. This paper argues that the foreign policy of Bangabandhu is contextual. The socio-economic realities of Bangladesh, his [Bangabandhu’s] cognitive and psychological dimensions, and the nature of regional and international politics during his time played crucial role in the formulation of Bangabandhu’s foreign policy orientations. However, the practice of economic diplomacy was the key diplomatic toll in executing Bangladesh’s foreign policy objectives under Sheikh Mujibur Rahman regime (1972-1975). As it is argued that economic diplomacy is at the root of a state’s foreign policy formulation and execution.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, Cooper, in his study comes into conclusion that a state’s trade policy is foreign policy.<sup>29</sup>

Bangabandhu’s foreign policy was not only focused on the welfare and well-being of the people of Bangladesh but also for the promotion of overall human welfare which can be defined as ‘enlightened approach’ to foreign policy. ‘Enlightened approach’ to foreign policy focuses not only the interest of a particular country but also the countries of the world based on shared prosperity and development and the humanity at large. In a world, marked by growing competition for power and influence, for selfish and narrow interest, Bangabandhu’s foreign policy approach was concerned about the well-being of the humanity at large. In his foreign policy orientations and deliberations, Bangabandhu emphasized on the pressing global issues, i.e. global poverty and hunger, unjust international economic system and its negative consequences on the developing world, arms race among the major powers and its impacts on the global aid and development, international peace and security. For instance, at the meeting of the Commonwealth Heads of Government in Ottawa on 3 August 1973, Bangabandhu contended that “enlightened approach” to foreign policy becomes essential in “eliminating sources of tension and conflict”.<sup>30</sup> This approach to foreign policy argues that in the absence of tension and

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<sup>24</sup> Morin and Paquin, *Foreign Policy Analysis: A Toolbox*, op. cit., p. 3

<sup>25</sup> Leira, 2019, op. cit.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p. 187.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p. 188.

<sup>28</sup> C. Chatterjee, *Economic Diplomacy and Foreign Policy-making*, Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020.

<sup>29</sup> Cooper, 1972-73, op. cit.

<sup>30</sup> Trivedi, 1999a, p. 385



conflict, states can concentrate on a peace and development centric foreign policy approach focusing on the well-being of the people across nations.

## 2.2 Understanding Bangabandhu through Cognitive and Psychological Approaches to Foreign Policy

Fisher Howe contends that “Most issues in foreign affairs can only be resolved by intuitive judgments based on knowledge and experience”.<sup>31</sup> Here the role of knowledge and experience of the leaders become essential in foreign policy making. Thus, one can argue that Bangabandhu’s ideas, knowledge and experience played a crucial role in Bangladesh’s foreign policy making. Consequently, to understand Bangabandhu’s foreign policy, it becomes necessary to understand Bangabandhu first, the role of his leadership, personality, and charisma. The existing literature suggests that the role of leaders in foreign policy has been extensively studied in the foreign policy studies<sup>32</sup> and several approaches have been developed to explain that. In 1963, James N. Rosenau published a book, titled *National Leadership and Foreign Policy* where he argued, “The contents and effectiveness of a foreign policy...can be explained in terms of various types of actors and various forms of behavior” which can be identified in the category of cognitive and psychological approaches to foreign policy.<sup>33</sup> And in the cognitive and psychological approaches to foreign policy, the role of the individual, particularly the leader, his/her belief, perceptions, personality, personal charisma, ideas in the formulation and execution of his/her country’s foreign policy is discussed. Margaret G. Hermann argues that four types of personal characteristics of a political leader, i.e. beliefs, motives, decision style, and interpersonal style, influence the foreign policy decision-making of a country.<sup>34</sup> Indeed, leaders play a crucial role in the (subjective) interpretation of domestic and international factors that determine a state’s foreign policy-making. It is argued that in foreign policy analysis, leaders’ “subjective understandings filter the influence of all other international and domestic, institutional and

<sup>31</sup> Fisher Howe, “Policy-Planning in the New Diplomacy”, *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 380, Issue 1, 1968, p. 39

<sup>32</sup> Andrea K. Grove, *Political Leadership in Foreign Policy: Manipulating Support Across Borders*, New York and Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007; Harvey Starr, “The Kissinger Years: Studying Individuals and Foreign Policy”, *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 24, No. 4, 1980, pp. 465-496; James N. Rosenau, *National Leadership and Foreign Policy: A Case Study in the Mobilization of Public Support*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1963; Juliet Kaarbo, “Prime Minister Leadership Styles in Foreign Policy Decision-Making: A Framework for Research”, *Political Psychology*, Vol. 18, No. 3, 1997, pp. 553-581; Margaret G. Hermann and Joe D. Hagan, “International Decision Making: Leadership Matters”, *Foreign Policy*, No. 110, Special Edition: Frontiers of Knowledge, 1998, pp. 124-137; Margaret G. Hermann, “Explaining Foreign Policy Behavior Using the Personal Characteristics of Political Leaders”, in Walter Carlsnaes and Stefano Guzzini (eds.), *Foreign Policy Analysis*, Vol.1, London: Sage Publications Ltd., 2011, pp. 299-330; Stephen Benedict Dyson, “Personality and Foreign Policy: Tony Blair’s Iraq Decisions”, *Foreign Policy Analysis*, Vol. 2, No. 3, 2006, pp. 289-306; Stephen Benedict Dyson and Thomas Preston, “Individual Characteristics of Political Leaders and the Use of Analogy in Foreign Policy Decision Making”, *Political Psychology*, Vol. 27, No. 2, 2006, pp. 265-288; Stephen Benedict Dyson, “Cognitive Style and Foreign Policy: Margaret Thatcher’s Black-and-White Thinking”, *International Political Science Review*, Vol. 30, No. 1, 2009, pp. 33-48.

<sup>33</sup> James N. Rosenau, *National Leadership and Foreign Policy: A Case Study in the Mobilization of Public Support*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1963, p. 3.

<sup>34</sup> Margaret G. Hermann, “Explaining Foreign Policy Behavior Using the Personal Characteristics of Political Leaders”, in Walter Carlsnaes and Stefano Guzzini (eds.), *Foreign Policy Analysis*, Vol. 1, London: Sage Publications Ltd., 2011, pp. 299-330.

societal factors”.<sup>35</sup> Both in democratic and authoritarian states, leaders have “incredible potential to impact foreign policy”.<sup>36</sup> Similarly, Margaret G. Hermann and Joe D. Hagan argue, “state leaders play a pivotal role in balancing international imperatives with those arising from or embedded in domestic politics”.<sup>37</sup> A. K. M. A. Rahman writes that “The success of foreign policies can not only be earned by framing powerful foreign policies but it needs a powerful leadership”.<sup>38</sup> Bangabandhu’s leadership played a critical role in defining the foreign policy principles and choices of Bangladesh. Among the major attributes, it is argued that the personality, style, and belief system of the leaders’; leaders’ psyches, leaders’ cognitive biases, motivations and perceptions, and leaders’ images of other countries play a crucial role in shaping a country’s foreign policy.<sup>39</sup>

With regard to the role of personality, once Henry Kissinger remarked, “As a professor, I tended to think of history as run by impersonal forces. But when you see it in practice, you see the difference personalities make”.<sup>40</sup> However, Daniel L. Byman and Kenneth M. Pollack observe that:

Most political scientists, when pressed, will admit to the importance of personal idiosyncrasies and human error in determining the course of international relations. Most will further concede that because they do not attempt to explain the roles of either human error or personality in international relations, they cannot explain all of the variance in the affairs of nations.<sup>41</sup>

It is worthy to note that the personal charisma and characteristics of Bangabandhu, his leadership style and personality, his perceptions and belief system to the world influenced the foreign policy formulation and execution of Bangladesh. However, one can ask how did Bangabandhu himself view/perceive the definition of a leader and leadership? In the words of Bangabandhu,

True leadership comes through a process. A man can’t be a leader by an accident, by one day. It must come through a process, a struggle. He must prove himself that he must be above personal interest. He must be prepared to sacrifice his life for the cause of the humanity, and for the cause of people. He must have a principle, and he must have an ideology. If a leader has those qualities, he is a leader.<sup>42</sup>

The history tells that Bangabandhu became a leader through a process, long struggles, sufferings, and fights for freedom, for the emancipation of the people of East Pakistan. In the words of Abdul Momen,

<sup>35</sup> M. Darwich, and J. Kararbo, “IR in the Middle East: Foreign Policy Analysis in Theoretical Approaches”, *International Relations*, Vol. 34, No. 2, 2020, p. 227.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, p. 234.

<sup>37</sup> M. G. Hermann, and J. D. Hagan, “International Decision Making: Leadership Matters”, *Foreign Policy*, Vol. 110, 124-137, 1998, p.126.

<sup>38</sup> A. K. M. A. Rahman, “Bangabandhu’s Foreign Policy and the World”, *The Daily Sun*, 9 August 2017, available at <https://www.daily-sun.com/post/246666/Bangabandhu%E2%80%99s-ForeignPolicy-and-the-World>, accessed on 12 September 2019.

<sup>39</sup> M. Darwich, and J. Kararbo, op. cit., p. 234.

<sup>40</sup> Cited in Daniel L. Byman and Kenneth M. Pollack, “Let Us Now Praise Great Men: Bringing the Statesman Back In”, *International Security*, Vol. 25, No. 4, 2001, p. 108.

<sup>41</sup> Daniel L. Byman and Kenneth M. Pollack, op. cit., p. 108.

<sup>42</sup> Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman’s interview with David Frost, available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gHxL6hhY4fc>, accessed on 30 May 2021.



He [Bangabandhu] was a freedom fighter who fought for the independence of Indian sub-continent and then Pakistan and India was created and....India and Bangladesh, I mean Pakistan were two wings separated by almost a thousand miles but since 1948 all the aspirations and expectations of the Bangalees was ignored, and the people's voice was ignored. So, Bangabandhu started his movement. Even in 1952, when we were fighting for language, the majority people of Pakistan on those days was Bengali speaking, almost 56 per cent, around three to four percent was Urdu speaking but Pakistan wanted to make Urdu as the state language. And there was one man who stood against it because on those days, to speak against in front of...Muhamamd Ali Zinnah was impossible. But it was this young man, you know, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who stood up and said no. He created an organization known as Bangladesh East Pakistan *Chattrao* [Students] League. He also created Pakistan Awami Muslim League which is currently the Awami League. So, whenever he started a movement, he always incorporated others into it. I normally call him as a great communicator because he used to translate ideas and vision among the group. Even when he was in jail, he used to meet this group, the freedom I mean the language lovers and he used to give them instruction.<sup>43</sup>

Bangabandhu was imprisoned by the West Pakistanis several times—in 1948, in 1949<sup>44</sup>, in 1954, in 1958, in 1962, in 1966<sup>45</sup>, and in 1971. He experienced the harsh realities of West Pakistan's exploitation and torture. Rounaq Jahan writes, "To understand his political philosophy we should always keep in mind that Bangabandhu spent most of his life as a political player outside state power. He struggled against colonial and undemocratic state power, first against the British and later against the Pakistan state to establish the economic, political, and cultural rights of the Bengalees."<sup>46</sup> Jahan further observes that:

His [Bangabandhu's] political discourse, is that of a leader fighting authoritarian state power, not that of a leader who was using state power to govern a country. One of the remarkable features of his political life was his transformation from an ordinary rank and file worker of a political party to an unparalleled leader of millions of people. Bangabandhu possessed outstanding organizational capacity; at the same time he was a great orator. Generally we do not find such a combination of qualities in one leader.<sup>47</sup>

Similarly, Syed Anwar Hossain, Bangabandhu Chair Professor at the Bangladesh University of Professionals, in a webinar, contends that "his [Bangabandhu's] diplomatic philosophy was articulated more strongly when he said that we have to stand on our feet. And by the time, he was assassinated, I think, Bangladesh was certainly on his feet".<sup>48</sup> Thus, his life experience, along with his ideology, strong personality, shaped him to think and work for the greater cause of humanity, peace, and cooperation and thus for the emancipation of his [Bangladesh] people. Atiur Rahman, Bangabandhu Chair Professor at Dhaka University, writes that "Bangabandhu's strong personality and patriotism helped us [Bangladesh] overcome many diplomatic challenges that cropped up in the early days of our nationhood".<sup>49</sup> By nature, Bangabandhu was a peace-

<sup>43</sup> Webinar on "Foreign Policy Visions of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman: Celebration of the Birth Centenary of the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman", op. cit.

<sup>44</sup> From 1949, Banbabandhu was in jail up to 1952.

<sup>45</sup> From 1966, Bangabandhu was in jail for about three years.

<sup>46</sup> Rounaq Jahan, op. cit.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Webinar on "Foreign Policy Visions of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman: Celebration of the Birth Centenary of the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman", op. cit.

<sup>49</sup> Atiur Rahman, "Friendship to All, Malice to None", *The Daily Sun*, 25 May 2021, available at <https://www.daily-sun.com/post/554527/%E2%80%98Friendship-to-all-malice-to-none%E2%80%99>, accessed on 26 May 2021.

loving person. Notably, he attended the first Asian and Pacific Peace Conference held in Peking in 1952 and the World Peace Council Conference held in Stockholm in 1956, which signifies his passion and commitment to the cause of peace. For instance, on his return from London to Dhaka via New Delhi, at New Delhi Palam airport, Bangabandhu pronounced that "I go back not with any hatred in my heart, for peace, progress and prosperity".<sup>50</sup>

In May 1973, under Bangabandhu's leadership, Bangladesh hosted a world peace conference. In his inaugural address as the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Bangabandhu noted that,

Let me mention here that world peace has been one of the fundamental principles of my philosophy of life. I have always been with the oppressed, the exploited, the peace-loving and freedom-loving people in any part of the world. We want peace to reign in every part of the globe. We want to consolidate.<sup>51</sup>

Bangabandhu emphasized on the promotion of peace and peaceful international relations in a number of regional and global platforms which is also reflected in Bangladesh's foreign policy formulation and execution.

Bangabandhu had an impressive personal charisma. For instance, a Western delegate at the 1973 Commonwealth Conference noted that the "wide smile and the piercing but soft look" of Bangabandhu unaccountably attracted people.<sup>52</sup> The *Bangladesh Observer*<sup>53</sup> also noted that "the world press corps and the leaders flocked round the Bangabandhu alike and listened to him with all raptness. His personal charisma was responsible for his being the point of attraction". His personal charisma also conquered the mind and heart of the world leaders. Fakhruddin Ahmed, in his memoirs, noted that in September 1973 Non-Aligned Summit in Algiers, Bangabandhu "emerged as a Third World leader".<sup>54</sup> Abdul Gaffar Choudhury accompanied Bangabandhu in that Summit in Algiers. In an interview with Atiur Rahman, Abdul Gaffar Choudhury noted that:

There was a burst of exuberance as soon as Bangabandhu entered into the conference venue. Leaders started coming to him to get introduced. The Prime Minister of India, Mrs. Indira Gandhi started introducing him to everyone. We found the Cuban leader, Fidel Castro, to come first among all the world leaders. He cordially embraced Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. He also addressed Bangabandhu as 'Comrade Mujib'. Within a very short period, a great intimacy developed between these two leaders. In this conference, Castro remarked that "I have not seen the Himalayas. But I have seen Sheikh Mujib. In personality and courage, this man is the Himalayas. I have thus had the experience of witnessing the Himalayas".<sup>55</sup>

Syed Anwar Hossain, in a webinar, notes that during that (Non-aligned) Summit, Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi who was an anti-Bangladesh in the 1971 Liberation War, had a 35 minutes meeting with Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. After the meeting, both the leaders faced the journalists and "Muammar Gaddafi raised both of his hands in prayer for Bangladesh's well-

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<sup>50</sup> Rabindranath Trivedi, *International Relations of Bangladesh and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman [A Compilation of Documents, Messages, and Speeches]* 1971-1973, Vol. I, Dhaka: Parama, 1999a, p.57.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, p. 336.

<sup>52</sup> "Bangabandhu's Tour Opens New Era: Bangladesh Now Better Understood", *The Bangladesh Observer*, 15 August 1973.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Fakhruddin Ahmed, *Critical Times: Memoirs of a South Asian Diplomat*, Dhaka: UPL, 1994.

<sup>55</sup> Cited in Atiur Rahman, op. cit.



being. So, that was something like a chemistry which actually melted the ice between Bangladesh and Libya. And the chemistry was provided by nobody else other than Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman". And after that *Al Ahram*, an Arabic daily published from Cairo wrote in its editorial, "the Prime Minister of Bangladesh has conquered almost half of Africa along with the Arab states in a big battle without firing a single shot".<sup>56</sup>

Being impressed by the personal charisma of Bangabandhu, the *Newsweek* defined him as the "Poet of Politics" who could "attract a crowd of a million people to his rallies and hold them spellbound".<sup>57</sup> Regarding Bangabandhu's charisma in resolving issues with his counterparts, Tariq Karim, who was a director in Bangladesh Foreign Ministry during Bangabandhu's time, writes that,

I also had the rare privilege of being a member of Bangabandhu's official delegation to Egypt, Iraq, UAE and Kuwait and witnessed first-hand how his mesmeric charisma and personality almost miraculously resolved seemingly intractable problems at arriving at a joint position on issues that had seemed insurmountable at senior officials' level till only the day before he met his counterpart.<sup>58</sup>

During Bangabandhu's six-day visit to Yugoslavia, Marshal Tito, one of the leaders of non-aligned movement in the world, "went out of traditionalism to greet Bangabandhu to underscore highly that he esteemed Bangabandhu's leadership".<sup>59</sup> In the Philippines, President Marcos described Bangabandhu as a "monumental personality".<sup>60</sup> The Japanese press described Bangabandhu as an "outstanding freedom fighter" and "creator of a great nation" and compared Bangabandhu with the "builder of modern Japan".<sup>61</sup>

Bangabandhu also had a strong personality. For instance, at the Biennial Council session of Bangladesh Awami League on 18 January 1974, Bangabandhu firmly stated, "We want aid to ensure our development; but [we] cannot barter self-respect for the sake of aid. The people of Bangladesh cannot accept aid under...conditions. [W]e will not sell our self-respect to anyone and seek aid".<sup>62</sup> In the public address, he further added, "A nation of beggars has no honour. We cannot build up the country by begging from abroad".<sup>63</sup> Therefore, he suggested, "We cannot improve our economic condition without hard labour. We have 75 million people living in 54,000 square miles of territory. We must increase production within the country".<sup>64</sup> Similarly,

<sup>56</sup> Syed Anwar Hossain mentioned this in a webinar on "Foreign Policy Visions of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman: Celebration of the Birth Centenary of the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman", op. cit.

<sup>57</sup> *Newsweek*, 5 April 1971; cited in A. K. Abdul Momen, "Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib and Bangladesh" in Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury (ed.), *Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib, Bangladesh & Frankfurt Book Fair*, Dhaka: National Implementation Committee for the Celebration of the Birth Centenary of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, 2020, p. 39.

<sup>58</sup> Tariq Karim, 7 September 2020.

<sup>59</sup> *The Bangladesh Observer*, 15 August 1973.

<sup>60</sup> Rabindranath Trivedi, *International Relations of Bangladesh and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman [A Compilation of Documents, Messages, and Speeches] 1974-1975*, Vol. 2. Dhaka: Parama, 1999b, p. 386.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, p. 385.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, p. 55; See also, "Aid with Strings will not be Accepted", *The Bangladesh Observer*, 15 January 1972.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, p. 57.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, p. 57.



Bangabandhu strongly emphasized, “we shall not bow down to any pressure nor shall we become agents of any power”.<sup>65</sup>

Thus, Bangabandhu also focused on the ‘self-help’ policy in restructuring the Bangladesh economy<sup>66</sup> not only looking at the aid which was appreciated by the United Nations Secretary General.<sup>67</sup> He also focused on the honour and prestige issue of the country and thus argued for doing hard work to change the situation of the country. Bangabandhu was confident about the strength of Bangladesh and its people. For Bangabandhu, “We are not a small country. Bangladesh is not a tiny country. Population-wise Bangladesh ranks as the 8<sup>th</sup> biggest country of the world. This should not be forgotten”.<sup>68</sup> Though some scholars<sup>69</sup> view Bangladesh as a small, weak and poor state, Bangabandhu never viewed Bangladesh as a weak or small state which is reflected in his bold foreign policy deliberations in the international arena.

Additionally, while addressing a public rally in New Delhi on 10 January 1972, Bangabandhu emphasized the ideals of secularism, democracy, freedom of man and peace in the world that also influenced shaping Bangabandhu’s broader world views. One needs to mention another example of how Bangabandhu was adhered to his ideals. When Saudi Arabia asked to remove secularist status and make Bangladesh an “Islamic Republic” in return of according recognition to Bangladesh, Bangabandhu firmly rejected the proposal as he strongly believed in the principle of secularism for the betterment of all. This is how his strong personality reflected in the realm of Bangladesh foreign policy formulations and executions. And it will not be wrong to argue that due to his charisma and strong personality, very soon Bangabandhu emerged as the leader of the Third World, which is reflected in the Fourth Summit Conference of Non-aligned Countries at Algiers on 8 September 1973, in the August 1973 Commonwealth Conference, Ottawa; and in the United Nations General Assembly in September 1974.

The paper argues that Bangabandhu was the architect of Bangladesh’s peace-centric foreign policy. His ideals, personality, leadership role, and worldviews influenced Bangladesh’s foreign policy formulations and executions; that’s why understanding Bangabandhu becomes necessary. The paper contends that Bangabandhu represents a glaring example of how individuals/leaders matter in the foreign policy formulations and executions.

### 2.3 Understanding Diplomacy

The study of diplomacy has long been neglected in the discipline of International Relations<sup>70</sup> though the importance of diplomacy in international relations is undeniable. Against this backdrop, Paul Sharp argues that more International Relations scholars and students need to pay

<sup>65</sup> “We shall not Become Satellite of any Big Power: Bangabandhu”, *The Bangladesh Observer*, 17 December 1972.

<sup>66</sup> “Sheikh Mujib Calls for Self-reliance: Start Reconstruction”, *The Bangladesh Observer*, 25 January, 1972.

<sup>67</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, “Secretary-General again Appeals to Governments for Aid to Bangladesh”, Press Release SG/C/281 IHA/160, 5 January 1972.

<sup>68</sup> Rabinranath Trivedi, 1999b, op. cit., p. 55.

<sup>69</sup> For example, see, Anwar Hossain, 2018, op. cit., p. 11; Muhammad Shamsul Huq, op. cit.

<sup>70</sup> Brian C. Rathbun, “The Value and Values of Diplomacy”, in Brian C. Rathbun (ed.), *Diplomacy’s Value: Creating Security in 1920s Europe and the Contemporary Middle East*, New York: Cornell University Press, 2014, pp. 1-21; Paul Sharp, “For Diplomacy: Representation and the Study of International Relations”, *International Studies Review*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1999, pp. 33-57; Stuart Murray, Paul Sharp, Geoffrey Wiseman, David Crikemans and Jan Melissen, “The Present and Future of Diplomacy and Diplomatic Studies”, *International Studies Review*, Vol. 13, No. 4, 2011, pp. 709-728.

considerable attention to the study of diplomacy.<sup>71</sup> Costas Constantinou notes that etymologically, the word diplomacy is derived from the Greek verb, *diploun*, which means ‘to double’, and from the Greek noun *diploma*, which means an official document written on double leaves joined together and folded.<sup>72</sup> Hedley Bull lists diplomacy as one of the five central institutions of IR along with balance of power, war, law, and Great power concert. Martin Wight identifies diplomacy as “the master-institution of IR”.<sup>73</sup> Adam Watson focuses on diplomacy as a practice. Watson defines diplomacy as “the process of dialogue and negotiation by which states in a system conduct their relations and pursue their purposes by means short of war”.<sup>74</sup>

In practice, diplomacy is seen as a means or tool to resolve conflicts, to foster cooperation, to manage and deepen relations. Yolanda Kemp Spies defines diplomacy as “a peaceful and continuous process of communication that involves international relations among states or other collectivities, on the basis of intermediation, reciprocity and formal representation”.<sup>75</sup> Another scholar, Smith Simpson defines diplomacy as “the process by which foreign policies are converted from rhetoric to realities, from pronouncements of principles to the everyday promotion of the national interest”.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>71</sup> Paul Sharp, 1999, op. cit.

<sup>72</sup> Cited in Costas Jonsson, “Theorizing Diplomacy”, in B.J.C. McKercher (ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Diplomacy and Statecraft*, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2012, pp. 15-28.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, p. 19.

<sup>74</sup> Adam Watson, *Diplomacy: The Dialogue between States*. London: Routledge, 2005, p. 1

<sup>75</sup> Yolanda Kemp Spies, *Global South Perspectives on Diplomacy*, Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019, p.1

<sup>76</sup> Smith Simpson, “The Nature and Dimensions of Diplomacy”, *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 380, No. 1, 1968, p. 136.



## Chapter 3

### Foreign Policy Principles

The word “principle” “implies something that has a kind of absolute quality, something compelling, something inescapable”.<sup>77</sup> Every state formulates and maintains certain principles in the conduct of its foreign relations. Bangladesh is not an exception. There were twin principles of Bangabandhu’s foreign policy, i.e. peaceful co-existence and friendship for all.<sup>78</sup> To execute these twin principles, Bangabandhu employed a non-aligned foreign policy.<sup>79</sup> In the words of Bangabandhu, “We firmly believe in the policy of friendship to all and malice towards none, the policy of peaceful co-existence. We are, therefore, following a positive non-aligned foreign policy by keeping ourselves aloof from the military power blocs”.<sup>80</sup> In his September 1974 speech at the United Nations, Bangabandhu reiterated that “Bangladesh, from its very inception, has adopted a non-aligned foreign policy based upon the principles of peaceful coexistence and of friendship towards all”.<sup>81</sup> He further added that “Bangladesh will continue to strive for good neighbourly relations with all of its neighbours on the basis of the principles of peaceful co-existence, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, and non-interference in one another’s internal affairs”.<sup>82</sup>

Non-alignment means “non-participation in military pacts with great powers, a response to the cold war and a product of the nationalism of the newly-independent nations, one of the many means to secure the national interests of the non-aligned states”.<sup>83</sup> In the maiden visit of Bangladesh Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad in India from 5 to 9 January 1972, a Joint Communiqué was issued where Bangladesh’s commitment to non-aligned foreign policy was emphasized.<sup>84</sup> In his March 1972 Moscow visit, Bangabandhu clarified that “non-alignment that we have in mind does not mean an inactive or passive policy. We propose to play a positive role in the comity of nations for the promotion of world peace and security”.<sup>85</sup> Thus, the promotion of international peace and solidarity has been enshrined in the Constitution of Bangladesh as one of the fundamental principles of state policy under Bangabandhu. It is worthy to note that Bangladesh emerged when Cold War was going on between the United States and the Soviet Union. In the Cold War period, the whole world was divided into two blocs, the American bloc and the Soviet bloc. In that context, the Third World countries were the centre of gravity for competition, rivalry and for the establishment of spheres of influence between the United States

<sup>77</sup> Dexter Perkins, “Fundamental Principles of American Foreign Policy”, *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 218, 1941, p. 9.

<sup>78</sup> “Our Foreign Policy is based on Peaceful Co-existence”, *The Bangladesh Times*, 20 June 1975.

<sup>79</sup> “Bangladesh will Develop Neutral Foreign Policy”, *The Bangladesh Observer*, 25 January 1972.

<sup>80</sup> Rabindranath Trivedi, 1999a, op. cit., p. 336.

<sup>81</sup> United Nations General Assembly Twenty-Ninth Session, “Address by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Prime Minister of Bangladesh”, 2243 Plenary Meeting, 25 September 1974, p. 159, available at <https://undocs.org/pdf?symbol=en/A/PV.2243>, accessed on 14 July 2021.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid, p. 161

<sup>83</sup> Perala Ratnam, “Non-alignment in the Seventies”, *India Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 3, 1970, p. 261

<sup>84</sup> Rabindranath Trivedi, 1999a, op. cit., p. 52

<sup>85</sup> Ibid, p. 104.



and the Soviet Union.<sup>86</sup> Against such a backdrop, it was prudent to formulate a non-aligned foreign policy as a war-torn Bangladesh needed cooperation both from the Eastern and Western countries, from both capitalist and socialist countries, from the international organizations, including the United Nations. And thus the friendship and cooperation with all countries was the foreign policy motto of Bangladesh under Bangabandhu. Bangabandhu wanted to make Bangladesh “The Switzerland of the East”, which signifies his non-aligned foreign policy. Bangladesh’s joining in the Non-aligned Nations Club, the Commonwealth, and the Islamic Summit Conference strengthened Bangladesh’s position on non-aligned foreign policy. This policy helped Bangabandhu and Bangladesh to address the existing socio-economic challenges of the country through developing good relations with all.

During visiting Bangladesh from 1 January to 4 January 1974, New Zealand Prime Minister Norman Kirk appreciated Bangabandhu’s statesmanship and orientations towards addressing the problems in the subcontinent. Bangabandhu explained the rationale of following non-aligned foreign policy of Bangladesh and its suitability to hold the interest of the country to Kirk.<sup>87</sup> Bangabandhu believed that “Bangladesh cannot afford to entangle itself in the rivalries of super-power politics”.<sup>88</sup> Thus, he strongly felt the urgency of non-aligned foreign policy. In the 1973 Commonwealth conference, Bangabandhu reaffirmed that “We believe that non-alignment has been a positive force and can materially contribute towards reduction of tension and building an environment of peace in the world”.<sup>89</sup>

The foreign policy principles of Bangabandhu helped Bangladesh to achieve Bangladesh’s recognition from states around the world and building cooperative partnerships. The current Foreign Minister of Bangladesh, AK Abdul Momen, claims that “With a foreign policy dictum of ‘friendship to all and malice towards none’, Bangabandhu made his mark amongst the international community within a very short span of time through promoting humanism, fellow feeling, empathy and compassion for the maintenance of international peace and security”.<sup>90</sup> Momen further contends that Bangabandhu’s foreign policy principle is “simple but so significant. Still we feel the importance of this policy”.<sup>91</sup> Momen compares Bangabandhu’s policy to “magic” which helped Bangladesh win all the elections in the United Nations between 2009 and 2015. Notably, Bangladesh won 52 elections at different levels of the UN during this period.<sup>92</sup> It is also argued that “Based on the basic elements of his [Bangabandhu’s] foreign policies- ‘friendship with all, malice to none’ and ‘friendly co-existence’, the present Bangladesh under Sheikh Hasina regime has established such stronger relationship with the world community”.<sup>93</sup> One can argue that Bangladesh under Sheikh Hasina (2009-present) currently enjoy good relations with all countries in the world due to the practice of Bangabandhu’s foreign policy principles. The paper argues that if the world followed such a peace-centric foreign policy of Bangabandhu, the world would be a better place to live in.

<sup>86</sup> See, John H. Badgley, “The American Territorial Presence in Asia”, *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 390, No. 1, 1970, pp. 38-47; Phillips Talbot, “The American Posture Toward India and Pakistan”, *ibid*, pp. 87-97; W. Howard Wriggins, “The Presence in Southern Asia of Outside Powers”, *ibid*, pp. 48-62.

<sup>87</sup> “Bangladesh-New Zealand Joint Statement. Bangladesh and New Zealand Agreed to Make Indian Ocean Region as a Zone of Peace” [In Bangla], *The Daily Janapad*, 4 January 1974.

<sup>88</sup> “Our Foreign Policy Based on Peaceful Coexistence”, *The Bangladesh Times*, 20 June 1975.

<sup>89</sup> Rabinranath Trivedi, 1999a, *op. cit.*, p.384

<sup>90</sup> The Government of Bangladesh, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Statement for Kind Use by the Hon’ble Foreign Minister during the Reception on the Eve of the Birth Centenary of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman”, 16 March 2020, available at <https://mofa.gov.bd/site/page/d42900f7-508d-4778-9ca0-d631a12bad02>, accessed on 21 April 2020.

<sup>91</sup> “Bangabandhu’s Foreign Policy Still Works like Magic: Momen”, *bdnews24.com*, 17 March 2019, available at <https://bdnews24.com/bangladesh/2019/03/17/bangabandhus-foreign-policy-still-works-like-magic-momen>, accessed on 12 September 2019.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>93</sup> A. K. M. A. Rahman, “Bangabandhu’s Foreign Policy and the World”, *op. cit.*



## Chapter 4

### Foreign Policy Priorities

On 8 January 1972, Bangabandhu, in his maiden press conference in London after Bangladesh's independence, noted that "I reassert that the existence of the People's Republic of Bangladesh is an unchallengeable reality and that our future relations with any other state must be based on this fundamental reality".<sup>94</sup> In a webinar, Ambassador Rabab Fatima contends that Bangabandhu embraced the post-independence challenges of Bangladesh and devoted himself "in fulfilling the aspirations of his people. He [Bangabandhu] dreamt of building a *Sonar Bangla*, a land where all will have a life free from want and hunger. To fulfil his dream, the international community's support was critically important. From that realization in mind, Bangabandhu prioritized his foreign policy visions".<sup>95</sup> According to the Bangladesh foreign ministry, after the emergence of Bangladesh, the country's foreign policy was mainly concentrated in five different cities, New

Delhi, Kolkata, Washington DC, New York and London. Their main focus was: (a) to build international public opinion in favour of the cause of Bangladesh and ensure international assistance to our people who had taken shelter across the border, (b) to isolate the Pakistani regime by projecting the atrocities and crimes against humanity which they were committing in Bangladesh with a view to cutting off all foreign economic and military assistance to the Yahya regime, and (c) to create the necessary condition so that the friendly countries who were supporting the cause of Bangladesh could take a more firm and decisive action to expedite the independence of Bangladesh and to advance recognition of Bangladesh as an independent and sovereign state.<sup>96</sup> However, from an ontological point of view, this paper contends that political recognition, socio-economic emancipation, resolving unresolved issues with Pakistan, regionalism and multilateralism were key foreign policy priorities of Bangladesh foreign policy under Bangabandhu.

#### 4.1 Pursuit of International Recognition

Diplomatic recognition matters for a newly independent country or a newly formed government.<sup>97</sup> In order to get legitimacy as a sovereign independent state from the international community, receiving recognition from the independent states is the first condition. James Ker-Lindsay contends that "Recognition can refer to a number of different processes in international relations, such as the recognition of states or the recognition of governments. [S]tate recognition...is the practice by which sovereign states choose formally to acknowledge and accept one another as equal entities within the international system".<sup>98</sup> Another scholar Paul Corcoran maintains that "Recognition between sovereign states is a formal acknowledgement

<sup>94</sup> Rabindranath Trivedi, 1999a, op. cit., p.48

<sup>95</sup> Webinar on "Foreign Policy Visions of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman: Celebration of the Birth Centenary of the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman", op. cit.

<sup>96</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bangladesh, "The Diplomatic Front of Bangladesh Liberation War 1971", 2017, from <https://mofa.portal.gov.bd/site/page/3164add5-f0b4-432e-99e3-342057675660>, accessed on 5 February 2019.

<sup>97</sup> Nadav G. Shelef and Yael Zeira, "Recognition Matters!: UN State Status and Attitudes toward Territorial Compromise", *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 61, No. 3, 2017, pp. 537-563.

<sup>98</sup> James Ker-Lindsay, "Engagement without Recognition: The Limits of Diplomatic Interaction with Contested States", *International Affairs*, Vol. 91, No. 2, 2015, p.267.



that one state accepts the actual (not necessarily the 'legitimate') existence of another sovereign power. This formal recognition enables the 'treating' between sovereigns, actuating the narratives of statecraft and Realpolitik (the pursuit of necessitous interests) among and between nations".<sup>99</sup> Corcoran also notes that the refusal of recognition often leads to "strife, violence and eventually the grim formality of war".<sup>100</sup>

After the emergence of Bangladesh as a sovereign nation-state, the country faced severe socio-economic challenges, i.e. poverty, hunger, malnutrition, famine, illiteracy. To address the challenges and to rebuild the nation, it was essential to receive foreign aid, food aid, forging trade and economic cooperation with other states. For that purpose also, it was essential to receive recognition first from the other states and achieve membership from other international organizations as bilateral recognition brings political, military and economic benefits.<sup>101</sup> International recognition to a state ends with admission into the United Nations.

## 4.2 Socio-economic Emancipation

Socio-economic emancipation was another key priority of Bangabandhu's foreign policy. It becomes necessary to provide some historical backdrop here concerning the socio-economic realities of Bangladesh. It is ironic that the British exploited East Pakistan (present Bangladesh) for 200 years while West Pakistan (present Pakistan) exploited East Pakistan as its colony for 25 years.<sup>102</sup> Against this backdrop, one can ask, where did Bangladesh stand after 1971? Bangabandhu said, "Twenty-five years of exploitation have drained us of everything. There is devastation all around. To run a country of 75 million without money and without foreign exchange and to rebuild everything..." was a daunting task for anyone.<sup>103</sup> The United Nations study also noted that "When the new Government [in Bangladesh] was established it had virtually no foreign exchange reserves, no overseas credit facilities, no foreign cash aid and wholly inadequate domestic financial resources. There was an acute shortage of liquidity owing to the destruction and looting of banknotes combines with capital flight to West Pakistan".<sup>104</sup>

Though East Pakistan was the key source of foreign exchange earner for Pakistan, foreign exchange was used for the industrial development of West Pakistan. Notably, 80 per cent of foreign imports connected with industrialization was utilized in West Pakistan. Thus, East Pakistan was severely discriminated with regard to the allocation of foreign exchanges.<sup>105</sup> It is noted that "there was a steady outflow of East Bengal resources to West Pakistan, making East Bengal even poorer than it was at the time of the emergence of Pakistan".<sup>106</sup> The resource of East Pakistan was used to serve the interests and needs of the people of West Pakistan. Singh noted that "in the income and production of the country, East Pakistan did never get its due share".<sup>107</sup> It is also noted that "the central government-controlled imports and exports in such a way that East Bengal was forced to buy commodities from West Pakistan at high prices".<sup>108</sup> On the contrary, the West Pakistani business community never paid a fair price to the East Pakistani jute farmers.

<sup>99</sup> Paul Corcoran, "Political Recognition and Aesthetic Judgement", *Theoria: A Journal of Social and Political Theory*, No. 115, 2008, pp. 65-66.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid, p. 66

<sup>101</sup> Nadav G. Shelef, op. cit.

<sup>102</sup> A. Kalam (ed.), *Bangladesh: Internal Dynamics and External Linkages*, Dhaka: UPL, 1996.; K. Singh, *India and Bangladesh*. Delhi: Anmol Publications, 1987; "Bangabandhu's Interview with the Newsweek", *The Daily Janapad*, 13 October 1974.

<sup>103</sup> Rabindranath Trivedi, 1999b, p. 55.

<sup>104</sup> Ambassador Erna Sailer's Report on the Mission of High-Level United Nations Consultants to Bangladesh, March-April 1972, Vol. 1, p.6.

<sup>105</sup> K. Singh, op. cit., p.6

<sup>106</sup> K. Singh, op. cit., p.8

<sup>107</sup> K. Singh, op. cit., p.6

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.



There were decade's long inherent grievances among the East Pakistan people against West Pakistan due to its political, economic, cultural, social, and structural exploitation over East Pakistan, which led to the independence movement/Liberation War in Bangladesh led by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. During the nine-month-long Liberation War, the Pakistan armies killed three million people in Bangladesh, including children, women, intellectuals, peasants, workers, and students. At least 25 to 30 per cent of houses were burnt and looted, food godowns were destroyed. They had totally destroyed Bangladesh, i.e., its economy, infrastructure, intellectual backbone, everything. Regarding the socio-economic challenges, A.K. M. Atiqur Rahman, a former Ambassador & Secretary, writes that "Bangabandhu got a Bangladesh with burnt houses, destroyed roads. The central bank was empty".<sup>109</sup> Consequently, in the post-war period, Bangladesh faced an acute shortage of essential commodities and supplies, communication system was totally disrupted. Thus, socio-economic emancipation was another key focus of Bangabandhu's foreign policy.

### 4.3 Repatriation Issue

Resolving unresolved issues with Pakistan, i.e. repatriation issue, also became a key concern for Bangladesh foreign policy under Bangabandhu. Nearly 300, 000 Bangalees were removed from their employment and were detained in a concentration camp in Pakistan. In addition, despite over 95 states' recognition to Bangladesh, Pakistan aggressively included a provision in their Constitution asserting a territorial claim to the 'whole of Bangladesh'. Pakistan did not show positive gesture in implementing the scheme of "simultaneous repatriation of all Bangalees in Pakistan, all Pakistanis in Bangladesh and all 92,000 prisoners of war and civilian internees, minus only 195 prisoners of war against whom there was evidence of having committed the most heinous crimes".<sup>110</sup>

### 4.4 Regional Cooperation

Bangabandhu emphasized on regional orientation and aspirations in his foreign policy formulations. He perceived that the normal, peaceful and improved relations between South Asian countries are essential for the socio-economic development of the region. Thus, Bangabandhu employed a dynamic and constructive foreign policy focusing on the wellbeing of the people in South Asia.<sup>111</sup> Bangabandhu strongly believed that improved bilateral relations based on mutual trust, non-interference in other state's affairs, reciprocity would be beneficial to everyone. During his conversations with New Zealand Prime Minister Norman Kirk, Bangabandhu emphasized that his government is interested to see improved relations between South Asian and Southeast Asian states which might be beneficial to all of them.<sup>112</sup> Therefore, maintaining close understanding and cooperation with the neighbouring countries was one of the critical objectives of Bangladesh foreign policy under the Bangabandhu regime. Rabindranath Trivedi contends that the origin of the South Asian Regional Cooperation (SAARC) needs to be date back to Bangabandhu's speech during his India visit on 6 February 1972 where he unambiguously spoke for the necessity of regional cooperation.<sup>113</sup> In the words of Bangabandhu:

<sup>109</sup> A.K. M. Atiqur Rahman, op. cit.

<sup>110</sup> Rabindranath Trivedi, 1999a, op. cit. p. 384.

<sup>111</sup> "Bangladesh-New Zealand Joint Statement. Bangladesh and New Zealand Agreed to Make Indian Ocean Region as a Zone of Peace", *The Daily Janapad*, 4 January 1974 [In Bangla].

<sup>112</sup> *The Daily Janapad*, 4 January 1974.

<sup>113</sup> Rabindranath Trivedi, 1999a, op. cit., p. xxxviii. Also see, "Create an Area of Peace in South Asia: Mujib", *The Bangladesh Observer*, 7 February 1972.



It is my earnest hope that there will at least be peace and stability in the sub-continent. Let there be an end, once for all, to the sterile policy of confrontation between neighbours. Let us not fritter away our national resources but use them to lift the standard of living of our people. As for us, we will not be found wanting to co-operate with all concerned for creating an area of peace in South Asia where we could live side by side as good neighbours and pursue constructive policies for the benefit of our peoples. History will not forgive us if we fail in this challenging task. In a world torn by distrust and friction, achievement of peace and stability in this region can be a model of others. I have no doubt in my mind that together we will make a valuable contribution to the promotion of world peace.<sup>114</sup>

Similarly, in a webinar, Syed Anwar Hossain also supported the claim that Bangabandhu conceived the idea of a regional body for South Asia. In the words of Hossain, "SAARC is the first regional body in a conflict prone zone of South Asia and Bangabandhu actually had conceived the idea on an association of a regional body like that".<sup>115</sup> Therefore, Bangabandhu realized the importance of regionalism and regional cooperation which is reflected in his foreign policy deliberations.

Bangabandhu also focussed regional cooperation from continental to maritime dimension. During his time, the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) was marked by sheer competition of spheres of influence among the major powers, including the USA, USSR, China and UK.<sup>116</sup> Therefore, instead of great power competitions over spheres of influence in the Indian Ocean region, Bangabandhu emphasized on making the region as a zone of peace and cooperation. Bangabandhu believed that the IOR, free from competition, would be imperative for establishing Asian and world peace and cooperation.<sup>117</sup> For instance, when the Prime Minister of New Zealand, Norman Kirk, visited Bangladesh from 1 January to 4 January 1974, both Bangladesh and New Zealand agreed to make IOR as a 'Zone of Peace'.<sup>118</sup> Similarly, at the Commonwealth Conference on 3 August 1973, Bangabandhu emphasized that "the aspiration to establish ... the Indian Ocean as Zones of Peace is widely shared by the people of the region".<sup>119</sup> Additionally, at the Fourth Summit Conference of Non-aligned Countries, Algiers, on 8 September 1973, Bangabandhu urged the member countries to declare IOR as a "Zone of Peace" and thus making concerted efforts in order to create necessary conditions to translate such scheme into reality.<sup>120</sup>

Bangabandhu's urge of declaring the IOR as a "Zone of Peace" bears strong relevance for twenty-first century. As it is observed that instead of "Zone of peace", IOR has become a theatre of great power rivalry and competition. William L. Dowdy and Russell B. Trood contends that "the Indian Ocean and its littoral and island states do indeed constitute an emerging geostrategic region in global politics, that both indigenous and external actors - especially the superpowers - are increasingly making policy on the basis of such a perception".<sup>121</sup> Harsh V. Pant contends that to "protect and enhance" its interests in the IOR, China is "engendering a classic security dilemma" between China and India.<sup>122</sup> It is also worthy of mentioning the development of

<sup>114</sup> Rabindranath Trivedi, 1999a, op. cit., pp. 81-82.

<sup>115</sup> Webinar on "Foreign Policy Visions of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman: Celebration of the Birth Centenary of the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman", op. cit.

<sup>116</sup> D. P. Das, "Soviet Union, China and the Indian Ocean", *China Report*, Vol. 9, No.1, 1973, pp. 9-20; D.P. Das, "India and the Indian Ocean: A Study of Past and Future Strategy", *China Report*, Vol. 10, No. 1-2, 1974, pp. 55-64; J.P. Jain, "The Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace: An Appraisal of China's Attitude", *China Report*, Vol. 10, No. 3, 1974, pp. 3-9.

<sup>117</sup> *The Daily Janapad*, op. cit.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>119</sup> Trivedi, 1999a, p.384.

<sup>120</sup> Trivedi, 1999a, p.400.

<sup>121</sup> William L. Dowdy and Russell B. Trood, "The Indian Ocean: An Emerging Geostrategic Region", *International Journal*, Vol. 38, No. 3, 1983, p. 432-33.

<sup>122</sup> Harsh V. Pant, "Sino-Indian Maritime Ambitions Collide in the Indian Ocean", *Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 2014, p. 187.



Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) among the United States, Japan, Australia and India allegedly “to counter China”<sup>123</sup>, to respond “ever-increasing Chinese assertiveness”.<sup>124</sup> This has resulted classical security dilemma between China and Quad members. Consequently, understanding and practices of security have largely been dominated by military security ignoring human security challenges in the Indian Ocean Region. Thus, Bangabandhu’s focus on making Indian Ocean Region as a zone of peace has strong relevance in contemporary time.

#### 4.5 Multilateralism

John Gerard Ruggie, in his edited volume, *Multilateralism Matters: The Theory and Praxis of an Institutional Form*, contends that “the term multilateral is an adjective that modifies the noun institution. What distinguishes the multilateral form from others is that it coordinates behavior among three or more states on the basis of generalized principles of conduct”.<sup>125</sup> Robert O. Keohane defines multilateral institutions as those based on “a persistent and connected set of rules, formal and informal, that prescribe behavioral roles, constrain activity and shape expectations”.<sup>126</sup> Another scholar, Akiko Fukushima contends that “multilateralism is a more demanding form of cooperation than that of unilateralism or bilateralism”.<sup>127</sup> Multilateralism has long been a dominant form of research in the foreign policy choices of the states.<sup>128</sup>

Multilateralism, focusing on the role of international organizations was one of the critical priorities underpinning Bangabandhu’s foreign policy. In this regard, Ambassador Rabab Fatima, Ambassador & Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations, New York, contends that “As my country’s representative to the United Nations, what makes me immensely proud is that Bangabandhu realized the power of multilateralism back in 1974. He pronounced clearly his faith in the UN as a centre of people’s future, hope and aspirations”.<sup>129</sup> The post-WWII independent states got a pluralist international system which offered the new states a favourable environment. For instance, the United Nations system gave the developing countries a

<sup>123</sup> David Wainer, “Biden wants the Quad to counter China, But Unity will be a Test”, *Bloomberg Businessweek*, 25 March 2021, available at <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-03-25/biden-leans-into-quad-nations-alliance-to-confront-china>, accessed on 24 May 2021; Zhao Yusha, “Quad Alliance Countering China Doomed to Fail Due to Member’s ‘all-for-self’ Attitudes”, *Global Times*, 8 March 2021, available at <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202103/1217756.shtml>, accessed on 24 May 2021.

<sup>124</sup> Frederick Kliem, “Why Quasi-Alliances Will Persist in the Indo-Pacific? The Fall and Rise of the Quad”, *Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs*, Vol. 7, No. 3, 2020, pp. 271-304.

<sup>125</sup> John Gerard Ruggie, “Multilateralism: The Anatomy of an Institution” in John Gerard Ruggie (ed.), *Multilateralism Matters: The Theory and Praxis of an Institutional Form*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1993, p.14

<sup>126</sup> Robert O. Keohane, “Multilateralism: An Agenda for Research”, *International Journal*, Vol. XIV, No. 4. 1990, p. 732.

<sup>127</sup> Akiko Fukushima, *Japanese Foreign Policy: The Emerging Logic of Multilateralism*, Houndmills, London: Macmillan Press Ltd. 1999, p.11

<sup>128</sup> Akiko Fukushima, *Japanese Foreign Policy: The Emerging Logic of Multilateralism*, Houndmills, London: Macmillan Press Ltd. 1999; Donna Lee, Ian Taylor and Paul D. Williams (eds.), *The New Multilateralism in South African Diplomacy*, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006; Jochen Prantl, (ed.), *Effective Multilateralism: Through the Looking Glass of East Asia*, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013; Yuan Feng, *China and Multilateralism: From Estrangement to Competition*, Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2021.

<sup>129</sup> Ambassador Rabab Fatima made this comment in a webinar on “Foreign Policy Visions of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman: Celebration of the Birth Centenary of the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman”, op. cit.



forum to raise their voice to protect their common interest. Even the specialized UN organs extended support to the struggling governments. Bangabandhu emphasized on the multilateral system, a rules-based international order focusing on the UN system in the conduct of Bangladesh's foreign relations even before receiving the UN membership. Within one year of its independence, Bangladesh became member of almost all international organizations including the UN special organs. Indeed, at the UN General Assembly, Bangabandhu spoke about the necessity of building a just international economic order against the backdrop of great economic upheavals. He also advocated the role of international organizations in resolving global problems. For instance, at the 1973 Commonwealth conference, Bangabandhu argued that "The Commonwealth must remain a forum through which opinion may be mobilized and action may be concerted against racial discrimination and violation of human rights".<sup>130</sup>

Indeed, Bangabandhu strongly shared the aspirations of the developing world and therefore raised his voice against the unjust/unfair trade practices and aid with conditionality. For instance, on 7 August 1973, at the meeting of the Commonwealth heads of governments on Trade, Tariff, and Monetary Affairs, Bangabandhu emphasized on Commonwealth's role in the creation of a healthier international economic environment where the interest of the developing countries will be protected. In the global forums, Bangabandhu also advocated for the creation of a rules-based international (economic) order based on economic justice. Additionally, at the meeting of the Commonwealth heads of governments in Ottawa on 3 August 1973, Bangabandhu asked the developed countries to change the (trade) policies that "worsen the terms of trade of the developing countries, restrict their access to the markets of developed countries, deplete their foreign exchange reserves and impose intolerable debt burdens on them".<sup>131</sup> In fact, during Bangabandhu's time, high tariffs, deteriorating terms of trade and other barriers hindered Third World exports to the West.<sup>132</sup>

Bangabandhu further advocated for a new international environment where "confrontation and conflict may be replaced by mutual accommodation and cooperation".<sup>133</sup> While addressing the UN General Assembly on 25 September 1974, Bangabandhu emphasized that the Bengali nation fully commits itself to the building of a world order in which aspiration of all men for peace and justice will be realized.<sup>134</sup>

It is worthy to note that in his UN speech on 25 September 1974, Bangabandhu argued for the necessity of the United Nations for a better and peaceful world. In the words of Bangabandhu,

In a world that is marked by strife and human misery, the United Nations remains the focus on Man's hope for the future. Despite many difficulties and obstacles places in its way, the United Nations, during more than a quarter century of existence, has significantly contributed towards human progress in the political, economic, social, and cultural fields. There are few countries in the world that have a better realization than Bangladesh of the concrete achievements and the potential for good of this organization.<sup>135</sup>

<sup>130</sup> Rabindranath Trivedi, 1999a, op. cit., p. 385.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid, pp. 382-83.

<sup>132</sup> Lev Stepanov, "One Percent: The Problem of Economic Aid", *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 386, No. 1, 1969, pp. 41-53.

<sup>133</sup> Rabindranath Trivedi, 1999a, op. cit., p. 384.

<sup>134</sup> Rabindranath Trivedi, 1999b, op. cit., p. 229.

<sup>135</sup> Shamim Hamid, op. cit., p. 72.



In his speech, Bangabandhu also asked for strengthening the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator to face the challenges from the natural calamities that millions of people in the most-vulnerable countries to climate change face.<sup>136</sup> In fact, Bangabandhu's emphasis on multilateralism in conducting Bangladesh's international relations has strong relevance in the present world system which is primarily dominated by power politics. Indeed, in the establishment of an order based on peace and cooperation replacing the old order based on confrontation and conflict, the role of multilateralism become necessary.

#### 4.6 Supporting the Just Cause

Supporting oppressed people throughout the world was also a priority of Bangabandhu's foreign policy. On 30 May 1973, in his personal notebook, which is published later as *Unfinished Memoirs*, Bangabandhu noted that "As a man, what concerns mankind, concerns me".<sup>137</sup> This implies that Bangabandhu was not only a leader of the people of Bangladesh but also of mankind which made him a universal peace-maker. Bangabandhu said, "let it be clear to all that be it Africa, Latin America, or the Arab lands, wherever there are victims of imperialism, the people of Bangladesh are with these downtrodden and unhappy people. We are with them and shall remain with them. There will be no change in our policy".<sup>138</sup> Similarly, in his speech at the United Nations, Bangabandhu reiterated that "Bangladesh, from its very inception, should stand firmly by the side of the oppressed people of the world".<sup>139</sup> Indeed, this was reflected in the conduct of his international relations. Here it is important to note that Bangabandhu was touched by the sufferings and the needs of the people of Nicaragua following the catastrophic earthquake which struck the city of Managua in December 1972. Consequently, in the post-war time, though Bangladesh was struggling with its own reconstruction challenges, the country made a token contribution of US\$10, 000 to the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator's Fund.<sup>140</sup>

During his March 1973 Moscow visit, Bangabandhu, in his speech, mentioned, "We [Bangladesh] believe that the Middle East problem must be resolved in accordance with the charter of the United Nations through peaceful means, and my government will support all measures towards this end".<sup>141</sup> In his speech, Bangabandhu also urged the world community, including the Soviet Union, to end the tragedy of the Vietnamese people. According to him, "Peace can be achieved only if all foreign forces are withdrawn leaving the people of Vietnam to decide their own destiny. On our part, we shall support all initiatives for peace not only in Southeast Asia but all over the world".<sup>142</sup>

In an interview with the UAE Radio and Television, Bangabandhu strongly expressed Bangladesh's support to the just cause of the Palestinians.<sup>143</sup> In the interview, Bangabandhu also

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, *Unfinished Memoirs*, Dhaka: UPL, 2014.

<sup>138</sup> Rabindranath Trivedi, 1999b, op. cit., p. 55.

<sup>139</sup> United Nations General Assembly Twenty-Ninth Session, "Address by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Prime Minister of Bangladesh", 2243 Plenary Meeting, 25 September 1974, p. 159. Available at <https://undocs.org/pdf?symbol=en/A/PV.2243>, accessed on 14 July 2021.

<sup>140</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "Bangladesh Contributes to Special Fund for Nicaragua", Press Release ND/53, 4 April 1973.

<sup>141</sup> Rabindranath Trivedi, 1999a, op. cit., p. 104.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> "Bangladesh will be with the Arabs: Bangabandhu" [In Bangla], *The Daily Janapad*, 21 December 1974.

noted Bangladesh's commitment to supporting the just cause of the people of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. According to Bangabandhu, Bangladesh will always be with the exploited people in the cause of human liberty and human freedom as the country also received freedom fighting with the colonial power, Pakistan, and sacrificing three million lives.<sup>144</sup>

Additionally, in the international arena, Bangabandhu actively and constructively promoted the just cause of the Arab people, including the Palestinian people. For instance, on 3 August 1973 at the meeting of the Commonwealth Heads of governments in Ottawa, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, as the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, drew the world's attention that "the continued occupation of Arab territories and the denial of the legitimate rights of the people of Palestine urgently demand a just solution".<sup>145</sup> Yasir Arafat, the then chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization, sent an acknowledgement message that the people of Palestine are grateful to Bangabandhu and the people of Bangladesh for their supports.<sup>146</sup>

On 30 September 1973, Bangladesh formally recognized Guinea-Bissau as an independent nation-state. Notably, Bangladesh is the first country in the subcontinent who recognized Guinea-Bissau. Bangabandhu declared many times at home and abroad about Bangladesh's unconditional support to the people of the world who are fighting for freedom/independence against imperialism, colonialism, anti-colonialism.<sup>147</sup> One can argue that by recognizing Cambodia, Guinea-Bissau, or other Afro-Asian countries who were fighting for freedom, Bangladesh's stand in the support of the freedom fighters globally strengthened. Bangladesh also recognized South Vietnam who even voted against Bangladesh's membership in International Development Association on 13 June 1972 which signifies Bangabandhu's commitment to just cause across nations and regions. In his international relations, Bangabandhu was determined to oppose racialism, apartheid, colonialism, and neo-colonialism in all its forms.<sup>148</sup> For instance, one can note that during Senegal President's May 1974 visit, both Bangladesh and Senegal agreed to support the anti-imperial, anti-colonial, anti-racist fights in Africa. Both sides also agreed to support the Palestinian people's just cause and oppose Israeli's illegal settlement. Both sides emphasized on the non-alignment policy to strengthen their bilateral relations.

#### 4.7 Advocating International Peace and Security

In the first Constitution of Bangladesh, which was adopted and enacted on 4 November 1972, Article 25 (Promotion of international peace, security and solidarity) deals with the foreign policy of Bangladesh directly, which is related to international peace and security. Article 25 (a) of the Constitution speaks for the "renunciation of the use of force in international relations and for general and complete disarmament".<sup>149</sup> Since the promotion of international peace and security was one of the fundamental principles of state policy, one can argue that the issue of international peace and security was prioritized in the foreign policy agendas of Bangladesh under Bangabandhu. Thus, this section focuses on international peace and security.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> Rabindranath Trivedi, 1999a, op. cit., p. 385.

<sup>146</sup> "Arafat Thanked Bangabandhu" [In Bangla], *The Daily Janapad*, 23 November 1974.

<sup>147</sup> "Bangladesh Recognizes Guinea-Bissau" [In Bangla], *The Daily Sangbad*, 31 September 1973.

<sup>148</sup> "Our Foreign Policy Based on Peaceful co-existence", *The Bangladesh Times*, 20 June 1975.

<sup>149</sup> The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 1972, available at <http://bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/act-367/section-24573.html>, accessed on 14 July 2021.



#### 4.7.1 International Peace

During Bangabandhu's time, since violence and insecurity confronted the world,<sup>150</sup> promoting international peace and security remained vital focuses in his foreign policy priorities. Bangabandhu was an advocate of peace from the core of heart which was reflected in the conduct of Bangladesh's foreign relations. Indeed, Bangabandhu viewed peace as "an essential pre-requisite for progress".<sup>151</sup> At the meeting of the Commonwealth heads of governments in Ottawa on 3 August 1973, Bangabandhu contended, "I believe that both the developed and the developing countries have an overriding common interest in survival and peace. Can we not concert our efforts to contribute towards creating an environment of peace in the world".<sup>152</sup> Bangabandhu clarified Bangladesh's firm position for the establishment of durable peace in the sub-continent, in Asia and the world.<sup>153</sup> In the conference, Bangabandhu also noted Bangladesh's practice of peaceful foreign policy. He reaffirmed, "Our [Bangladesh's] commitment to peace is, therefore, total".<sup>154</sup> One can cite few more examples of Bangladesh's commitment to peace-centric foreign policy under Bangabandhu regime.

During a conversation with the Senegal President in May 1974, Bangabandhu explained Bangladesh's peace-centric foreign policy and its role in the normalization of relations in the Indian subcontinent and beyond which was highly appreciated by the Senegal President. Bangladesh Foreign Minister Kamal Hossain, in his June 1974 Iran visit expressed Bangladesh's strong commitment to the friendship, regional and global peace.<sup>155</sup>

At the twenty-ninth regular session of the United Nations General Assembly, New York on 25 September 1974, Bangabandhu told the world, "the Bangalee people...have aspired to live in peace and friendship with all the nations of the world".<sup>156</sup> He also reaffirmed, "I know that the souls of our martyrs join us in pledging that the Bangalee nation fully commits itself to the building of a world order in which the aspiration of all men for peace and justice will be realized".<sup>157</sup> In front of the world leaders, Bangabandhu boldly reiterated, "Peace is an imperative for the survival of mankind. It represents the deepest aspirations of men and women throughout the world".<sup>158</sup> Additionally, at the United Nations Forum, Bangladesh Foreign Minister Kamal Hossain reaffirmed, "we reiterate our total commitment to peace not only in our sub-continent but in our region and in the world".<sup>159</sup>

Similarly, during his November 1974 Egypt visit, Bangabandhu emphasized that Bangladesh is committed to the sub-continental and world peace and strongly oppose colonialism and

<sup>150</sup> Joseph S. Clark, "Asia and the Prospects for World Order", *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 390, No. 1, 1970, pp. 27-37.

<sup>151</sup> Rabindranath Trivedi, 1999b, op. cit., p. 279.

<sup>152</sup> Rabindranath Trivedi, 1999a, op. cit., p. 383.

<sup>153</sup> "Bangladesh will be with the Arabs: Bangabandhu", *The Daily Janapad*, 21 December 1974. [In Bangla].

<sup>154</sup> Rabindranath Trivedi, 1999a, op. cit., p. 383.

<sup>155</sup> "Bangladesh is Interested in the Formation of Asian Common Market", [In Bangla], *The Daily Janapad*, 4 June 1974.

<sup>156</sup> United Nations General Assembly Twenty-Ninth Session, "Address by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Prime Minister of Bangladesh", op. cit, p.159. Also see, Rabindranath Trivedi, 1999b, op. cit., p. 229.

<sup>157</sup> United Nations General Assembly Twenty-Ninth Session, *ibid*.

<sup>158</sup> Shamim Hamid, *Bangladesh and the United Nations: Common Principles, Shared Values*, Dhaka: UPL, 2011, p.71

<sup>159</sup> Rabindranath Trivedi, 1999b, op. cit., p.228.



economic exploitation.<sup>160</sup> Bangabandhu further emphasized that Bangladesh strongly believes in peaceful settlement of disputes. Bangladesh also desires permanent peace in the subcontinent and beyond.<sup>161</sup> In his lecture in honour of the Australian Prime Minister's visit to Bangladesh in January 1975, Bangabandhu reaffirmed, "Bangladesh has been working patiently to promote durable peace in the sub-continent. [W]e have taken a number of major initiatives to reduce tension in the area".<sup>162</sup> As a reflection of Bangabandhu's commitment to peace, in the Constitution of Bangladesh, peaceful settlement of disputes follows the UN charter. Bangabandhu also raised voice in the global forums "in support of the imperative need for peace and cooperation in the world".<sup>163</sup> In different forums, Bangabandhu called for declaring both Southeast Asia and South Asia as a "Zone of Peace" for the betterment of all as mentioned in earlier section. In this regard, *the Bangladesh Observer*, in its editorial wrote, "Bangladesh's unqualified support to the efforts at turning the whole of South-East Asia into a zone of peace".<sup>164</sup>

In his international relations, Bangabandhu also focussed on the peaceful settlement of disputes. It is also worthy to note that Bangabandhu emphasized on the role of dialogue in resolving the unresolved issues between states which has strong relevance for the pursuit of international peace and security. In the Commonwealth conference in 1973, he strongly claimed, "all outstanding issues could be resolved if the parties concerned would sit together on the basis of sovereign equality".<sup>165</sup> He was successful in signing Land Boundary Agreement with India in 1974 through dialogues to resolve the land boundary issues. In addition, in order to resolve maritime boundary demarcation and water sharing issues with India, Bangabandhu also emphasized on the role of dialogue and diplomacy.

#### 4.7.2 International Security

Bangabandhu was also concerned in the pursuit of international security in general and human security in particular. Conventionally, security is understood as state's security or national security defined in terms of military power. In this backdrop, Richard H. Ullman rightly puts, "We are, of course, accustomed to thinking of national security in terms of military threats arising from beyond the borders of one's own country".<sup>166</sup> During the Cold War period, security was traditionally perceived as state security defined as territorial protection from external aggression. It has been related more to nation-states than to people. On the other hand, in its 1994 UNDP Report, "human security" is defined from mainly two aspects. According to the report, "It means, first, safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression. And second, it means protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life—whether in homes, in jobs or in communities".<sup>167</sup> Consequently, seven major areas have been

<sup>160</sup> "Egypt-Bangladesh Joint Cooperation Committee is formed" [In Bangla], *The Daily Janapad*, 12 November 1974.

<sup>161</sup> "Bangladesh-Egypt relations will be strengthened: Bangabandhu at State's Dinner Party", *The Daily Janapad* [In Bangla], 6 November 1974.

<sup>162</sup> Rabindranath Trivedi, 1999b, op. cit., pp. 279-80.

<sup>163</sup> Rabindranath Trivedi, 1999a, op. cit., p. 385

<sup>164</sup> "Peace and Friendship", *The Bangladesh Observer Editorial*, 15 August 1975.

<sup>165</sup> Rabindranath Trivedi, 1999a, op. cit., p.383

<sup>166</sup> R. Ullman, "Redefining security", *International Security*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 1983, p. 133.

<sup>167</sup> UNDP, *Human development report 1994*, New York: Oxford University Press, p. 23.

identified in the domain of Human Security: Economic security, Food security, Health security, Environmental security, Personal security, Community security, Political security.

Though the idea of human security came up in 1994 with the publication of *Human Development Report 1994: New Dimensions of Human Security*, by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Bangabandhu employed this idea back in 1972 taking human/people/individual as the referent object of security instead of state or military security.<sup>168</sup> Indeed, Bangabandhu believed in human security over military security. While addressing the public at Suhrawardy Uddyan (Race Course), Dhaka on 10 January 1972, Bangabandhu noted, "Not as a leader but as your brother, let me tell my countrymen that freedom will remain incomplete if we fail to provide food and shelter to our people and employment to the youth of Bangladesh".<sup>169</sup> Thus, he asked for the mobilization of the strength and power of the people in Bangladesh in order to liberate themselves from poverty, hunger, illiteracy, and disease. According to Bangabandhu, the real enemy that has already declared war against us [the people of Bangladesh] is want, poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, unemployment, and corruption. Consequently, he prioritized human security over military security which is reflected in his foreign policy deliberations.

On 1 March 1972, at the Banquet given in his honour by Soviet Prime Minister Alexei Kosygin, Bangabandhu advocated the cause of human insecurities faced by the poor people in the developing countries. According to Bangabandhu,

...together with the problem of world peace and security, I wish to refer to the problem of the developing nations and their struggle against poverty, disease and ignorance. Few people seem to realize the magnitude of the problem and its urgency. The future of mankind still depends on how the world community responds to this massive problem affecting the vast mass of humanity in Asia, Africa and Latin America.<sup>170</sup>

In his speech, Bangabandhu also sought the Soviet Union's help in mobilizing resources using both bilateral and multilateral means, through the agency of the United Nations in the fight against global poverty, disease and ignorance. Additionally, in different international forums, he spoke about the necessity of human security. For instance, on 23 May 1973, at the Asian Peace Conference held in Dacca, Bangabandhu noted that,

Unfortunately, the world is witnessing today a dangerous situation arising out of the mad race for armaments by some of the aggressive big powers. This has rendered meaningless their pious declarations of economic assistance to the developing nations. Many nations, big or small, have now been entangled in this arms race. The military budgets of such countries are getting bigger and bigger. We want the money now being spent in this arms race to be diverted to promoting the

<sup>168</sup> The existing literature suggests that Richard H. Ullman in his *International Security* article in 1983 while Jessica Tuchman Mathews in her article in *Foreign Affairs* in 1989 critiqued the conventional notion of security, i.e. military/state security and called for the redefinition of security focusing on the individual as the referent object of security that was talked about by Bangabandhu back in 1972. See, Jessica Tuchman Mathews, "Redefining Security", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 68, No. 2, 1989, pp. 162-177; Richard H. Ullman, op. cit.

<sup>169</sup> Rabindranath Trivedi, 1999a, op. cit., p. 62

<sup>170</sup> Ibid, p. 104



welfare of the poor people of the world. This will make it easier to wipe out the curse of poverty from the face of the earth.<sup>171</sup>

In addition, at the meeting of the Commonwealth heads of governments in Ottawa on 3 August 1973, Bangabandhu contended, "The arms race remains a threat to mankind. Inherent in it is not only the threat of total destruction, but also a colossal wastage of the earth's resources. Can we not do something to divert these resources so that they may contribute to alleviating human sufferings and advancing human welfare?"<sup>172</sup> Similarly, in his speech to the United Nations on 25 September 1974, Bangabandhu claimed that the world should not go for nuclearization and armaments. Instead the resources that will be spent on the armaments purpose can be used for food, health, nutrition, education purposes for the people of the world. Additionally, in the interview with the UAE Radio and Television, Bangabandhu also expressed opinion against the armaments. He argued that instead of investing on armaments, that money can be spent on the welfare of the people of the developing countries.<sup>173</sup>

Instead of investing in the armaments purpose, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman argued for investing in human development. Thus, for Bangabandhu, "We [Bangladesh] do not believe in arms race. We seek the friendship of all nations in order to promote the welfare of the oppressed and exploited people everywhere".<sup>174</sup> Since state's resource is limited, when investment on armaments increases, other sectors including economic security, food security, or health security become neglected.<sup>175</sup> Thus, the security needs of the majority of the people in the world remain unaddressed.

When military security is seen as the ultimate security from a state's/national security perspective and a state's power is defined from the military capability only, then the arms race continues. Against such a backdrop, Bangabandhu argued for the redefinition of power in the conduct of states' international relations. According to Bangabandhu, power does not come from the barrel of the gun but rather stems from the people.<sup>176</sup> Thus, Bangabandhu promoted human security issues in the global arena, which bears strong rationale for a peaceful, prosperous world based on human welfare and prosperity. Similarly, Bangabandhu sought a just world order based on justice, especially economic justice that could also be imperative for ensuring the human security of the people in the world.

<sup>171</sup> Rabindranath Trivedi, 1999a, op. cit., p. 336

<sup>172</sup> Ibid, p. 383

<sup>173</sup> "Bangladesh will be with the Arabs: Bangabandhu [In Bangla], *The Daily Janapad*, 21 December 1974.

<sup>174</sup> Rabindranath Trivedi, 1999a, op. cit., p. 336.

<sup>175</sup> Eugene B. Nadler, "Some Economic Disadvantages of the Arms Race", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 7, No. 3, pp. 503-508, 1963; Economic and Social Consequences of the Armaments Race and its Extremely Harmful Effects on World Peace and Security, Report of the UN Secretary-General (excerpts), *Bulletin of Peace Proposals*, Vol. 8, No. 4, 1977, pp. 371-381.

<sup>176</sup> Cited in R. Jahan, "Bangladesh in 1972: Nation Building in a New State", *Asian Survey*, Vol.13, No.2, 1973, pp.199-210.



## Chapter 5

### Key Diplomatic Efforts and Measures

In order to execute the foreign policy priorities, Bangabandhu employed certain diplomatic strategies, i.e., diplomacy of recognition, economic diplomacy, UN diplomacy. This section focusses on the diplomatic efforts and measures taken by the Mujib regime between 1972 and 1975.

#### 5.1 Diplomacy of Recognition

Bangabandhu pursued active recognition diplomacy. At the very first press conference in London on 8 January 1972, Bangabandhu drew attention to the international community concerning granting recognition and establishing diplomatic relations with Bangladesh. He declared, "I now appeal to all states to extend recognition to the People's Republic of Bangladesh, to enter into diplomatic relations with us and to support our immediate admission to the United Nations".<sup>177</sup> After returning Bangladesh from London, during addressing the public at Suhrawardy Uddyan (Race Course) on 10 January 1972, Bangabandhu reasserted, "I appeal to all free countries of the world to recognize Bangladesh without any delay and help her in becoming a member of the UNO".<sup>178</sup> On 14 January 1972, in a statement to the press, Bangabandhu reiterated that "I, therefore, expect states all over the world, especially those who have had to struggle for their independence, to extend recognition to the People's Republic of Bangladesh and to support its membership in the United Nations".<sup>179</sup>

On 9 January 1972, a joint communiqué was issued in New Delhi at the conclusion of Bangladesh Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad's visit to India. In the communiqué, Bangladesh's recognition from the international community was also emphasized. Thus, it was expected that Bangladesh, a sovereign, independent state, "will be readily acknowledged and recognized by the international community. Only those who wish to introduce an element of instability in the region, and imperil world peace, would persist in ignoring this reality".<sup>180</sup> Consequently, by the end of January 1972, 19 states recognized Bangladesh. In the latter days, Bangabandhu tried to gain recognition from around the world within a shortest possible time and rebuild war-torn Bangladesh with the help of those countries. As a result, by 8 December 1972, 96 states accorded recognition to Bangladesh as a sovereign nation-state, including Soviet Union, Australia, Germany (both East and West), United Kingdom, Japan, USA (See, Appendix 1). Thus one can argue that recognition diplomacy dominated the foreign policy discourse of Bangladesh under Bangabandhu at the very early phase of his regime.

It is also worth noting that with regard to gaining Bangladesh's recognition, the Pakistan government was spreading propaganda against Bangladesh so that Middle Eastern and other Muslim countries do not recognize Bangladesh.<sup>181</sup> Even Pakistan announced that it would cut its diplomatic relations who will recognize Bangladesh. Later, when UK, France, Germany and Japan accorded recognition to Bangladesh, Pakistan abandoned its policy. China, along with other Muslim countries, took time to accord recognition who had good relations with Pakistan. Notably, considering the strategic and geopolitical interest, China extended its full support to Pakistan during the 1971 Bangladesh-Pakistan War.<sup>182</sup> One also needs to mention that China was

<sup>177</sup> Rabindranath Trivedi, 1999a, op. cit., p. 47

<sup>178</sup> Ibid, p. 65

<sup>179</sup> Ibid, p. 68.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid, p. 50

<sup>181</sup> "Iraq's Recognition to Bangladesh" [In Bangla], *The Daily Azad*, 9 July 1972.

<sup>182</sup> J. N. Mahanty, "China and the Emergence of Bangladesh: Role of Great Power Global Perceptions", *India Quarterly*, Vol. 39, No. 2, 1983, pp. 137-158.



the only country who voted against Soviet Union's resolution at the United Nations Security Council on 6 December 1971 which called for a political settlement in East Bengal. China also voted against Bangladesh's membership in the special UN bodies, i.e., United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (19 October 1972), Universal Postal Union (7 February 1973), International Telecommunication Union (6 April 1973). China was the only country who voted against Bangladesh during its membership bidding in the Economic Commission for Asia and Far East (17 April 1973).

Bangladesh also pursued strong recognition diplomacy bilaterally and multilaterally to attain Bangladesh's entry in international organizations including the United Nations and its special bodies. Thus, without facing any direct opposition, Bangladesh received membership from the World Health Organization (WHO) on 19 May 1972, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) on 13 June 1972, International Development Association (IDA) on 13 June 1972, International Labour Organization (ILO) on 22 June 1972, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on 21 July 1972, General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade on 20 November 1972, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) on 11 December 1972, International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) on 24 January 1973. Without direct opposition, Bangladesh also received membership from other international organizations, including Commonwealth on 18 April 1972, Colombo Plan on 6 November 1972. It is worth noting that though Bangladesh applied for the Asian Development Bank (ADB) membership on 5 August 1972, the country received it on 14 November 1972, which required active recognition diplomacy from Bangladesh. Only Iran voted against Bangladesh during her International Parliamentary Union (IPU) membership on 20 September 1972. With regard to membership with other international organizations, Bangladesh thanked Malaysia for co-sponsoring the resolution of the UN General Assembly session for Bangladesh's admission to the United Nations. Malaysia also actively supported the Preparatory Committee's Meeting of the Non-aligned Countries in Kabul, which unanimously recommended Bangladesh's membership to the Non-aligned Group of Nations. Malaysia also supported Bangladesh's membership in other international organizations. This has been possible only because of Bangladesh's active diplomacy under Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

### 5.1.1 Recognition from the Superpowers: USA and USSR

On 6 December 1971, when USSR sponsored a resolution at the UN Security Council calling for a political settlement in East Bengal, United States abstained from voting, which signaled a soft corner to the Bangladesh issue. Though the USA tilted towards Pakistan<sup>183</sup> and deployed Seventh Fleet in the Bay of Bengal at the height of the 1971 Liberation War of Bangladesh; within four months of Bangladesh's independence, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman successfully established formal relations with the USA on 4 April 1972. During Bangabandhu's first address to the public on 10 January 1972 at Suhrawardy Uddyan (Race Course), Dhaka, he acknowledged his gratitude to the people of America for supporting the Liberation War of

<sup>183</sup> B Ramesh Babu, "Disinterest to Gunboats and After: Nixon's Low Profile South Asia Policy", *China Report*, Vol. 8, No. 1-2, 1972, pp. 30-35.



Bangladesh. Atiur Rahman writes, “the people, civil society and legislators of the US were strongly behind the cause of Bangladesh”.<sup>184</sup>

After getting American recognition, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, as the Prime Minister of Bangladesh issued a statement where it was stated, “I hope this will open up a new chapter in the development of friendly cooperation and understanding between the United States and Bangladesh for the mutual benefit of our two peoples”.<sup>185</sup> At the time of the admission of Bangladesh in the United Nations, Bangabandhu had a special meeting with US President Richard Nixon. At the invitation of the Government of Bangladesh, on 30 and 31 October 1974, Henry Kissinger, the United States Secretary of State, visited Bangladesh. This was the first visit by an American Secretary of State to Bangladesh. Different issues of mutual concerns, the progress and prospects of Bangladesh-USA relations were discussed in detail during Kissinger’s visit to Bangladesh.

### **5.1.2 USSR**

The Soviet Union played a vital role in the emergence of Bangladesh as a sovereign nation-state. For instance, on 5 December 1971, the United States sponsored a resolution in the UN calling for a cease-fire in East Pakistan. China supported the USA sponsored resolution. The Soviet Union applied its veto power against the resolution. Similarly, on 6 December 1971, the Soviet Union sponsored a resolution for the political settlement in East Bengal, where China applied its veto power against the resolution. The United States abstained from voting, as mentioned earlier. On 25 January 1972, Soviet Union accorded recognition to Bangladesh. Bangladesh’s relations with the former Soviet Union was excellent during the Bangabandhu regime (1972-75). In the foreign policy preferences of Bangabandhu, Soviet Union was one of the top priorities. And to elevate the bilateral ties, Bangabandhu played a visionary role. For example, Bangabandhu paid an official visit to Moscow in March 1972, which was a milestone in promoting Bangladesh-Soviet Union relations.

After the USA and USSR, one needs to look at how Bangabandhu executed his recognition diplomacy with the Middle Eastern and other Muslim countries who had good relations with Pakistan.

### **5.1.3. Middle East**

In his foreign policy orientations, Bangabandhu did not confine to traditional partners, i.e. India, Soviet Union. Instead, he diversified the foreign policy choices of Bangladesh. Bangabandhu realized that to meet the domestic demands of crude oil and to ensure a labour market for Bangladesh’s unemployed persons, there is no alternative to develop relations with the oil-rich Middle Eastern countries. During his visit to Moscow in March 1972, Bangabandhu emphasized, “we have long-standing historical and cultural associations” with Middle East.<sup>186</sup> According to

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<sup>184</sup> Atiur Rahman, “Friendship to All, Malice to None”, *The Daily Sun*, 25 2021. Available at <https://www.daily-sun.com/post/554527/%E2%80%98Friendship-to-all-malice-to-none%E2%80%99>, accessed on 26 May 2021.

<sup>185</sup> Rabindranath Trivedi, 1999a, op. cit., p. 158.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid, p. 104.

Bangabandhu, “the government and the people of Bangladesh attach particular importance to the strengthening of the close, friendly fraternal relations with all the Arab countries”.<sup>187</sup>

It is worthy to note that on 8 July 1972, Iraq became the first Middle East and 78<sup>th</sup> country to recognize Bangladesh as an independent nation-state. The recognition was conveyed in a cable to the Bangladesh Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad by the Iraqi Foreign Minister Murtada Adithi. Iraq government also expressed interest to develop relations with Bangladesh. One notable development was that in October 1973 War, Bangabandhu supported the Arab countries’ stand with the Israeli war and sent Bangladeshi doctors to help the Arabs. This helped to gain Bangladesh’s recognition from some of the Arab countries. For instance, on 14 September 1973, Egypt and Syria accorded recognition to Bangladesh while Jordan on 22 October 1973, Kuwait on 4 November 1973, Yemen on 6 November 1973. Qatar also recognized on 4 March 1974.

Consequently, the leaders of the Arab countries put pressure on Pakistan to recognize Bangladesh on the occasion of Islamic Summit. Similarly, Arab countries also asked Bangladesh to attend the 1974 Islamic Summit at Lahore and exchange mutual recognition. This resulted in mutual recognition between Bangladesh and Pakistan, as mentioned earlier. However, in November 1974, Bangabandhu visited Egypt and Kuwait on 4 to 13 November to deepen Bangladesh’s bilateral ties with these two oil-rich countries. Bangabandhu noted with satisfaction, “the relations between Egypt and Bangladesh have developed steadily over the years and I am confident that the fraternal bonds of friendship and cooperation between our two countries and peoples will continue to grow from strength to strength”.<sup>188</sup> In his Kuwait visit from 10 to 13 November 1974, Bangladesh and Kuwait discussed various bilateral and international issues. A Joint Communiqué was published where it is noted with satisfaction “the steady development of their bilateral relations and asserted their intention to promote and develop ways of cooperation between their countries in all fields”.<sup>189</sup> *The Daily Janapad*, in its editorial argued that Bangabandhu’s visit to Egypt and Kuwait not only strengthened Bangladesh’s relations with them but also with the whole Arab world.<sup>190</sup>

While Saudi Arabia gave a condition that Bangladesh needs to change its constitution, i.e. removing secularism and declaring Bangladesh the Islamic Republic to attain Saudi Arabia’s recognition, Bangabandhu firmly but politely rejected the proposal and continued his attempts to develop the bilateral ties.<sup>191</sup>

### 5.1.4 Bangladesh-Africa

Bangabandhu also tried to reach African countries. In July 1973, Algeria, Tunisia, and Mauritania recognized Bangladesh. Because of their recognition, the number of countries that recognized Bangladesh crossed a hundred. Because of the recognition of these three countries to Bangladesh, on one hand, Bangladesh’s position in the world arena as a sovereign state strengthened. On the other hand, Bangladesh’s relations with the African countries deepened.<sup>192</sup>

<sup>187</sup> Rabindranath Trivedi, 1999a, op. cit., p. 242.

<sup>188</sup> Rabindranath Trivedi, 1999b, op. cit., p. 243.

<sup>189</sup> *The Bangladesh Times*, 14 November 1974, Cited in Trivedi, 1999b, p.251

<sup>190</sup> “Bangladesh-Arab ties” [In Bangla], *The Daily Janapad Editorial*, 12 November 1974.

<sup>191</sup> Tariq Karim, op. cit., 7 September 2020.

<sup>192</sup> “North Africa is also with Bangladesh”, *The Daily Sangbad Editorial* [In Bangla], 18 July 1973.



In March 1974, Algerian President Bumedin visited Bangladesh. After Egypt President Anwar Sadat's visit, Bumedin was the first Arab head of state to visit Bangladesh. After Bangladesh's independence, Algeria was one of the countries to the forefront that recognized Bangladesh realizing the context and situations of the country. After recognition, within a short span of time, commercial and friendly relations developed between them.<sup>193</sup> In fact, Bangabandhu was able to develop warm relations with the major powers and international organizations. Consequently, within a year of independence, 96 states recognized Bangladesh as a sovereign nation-state and the country became member of different international organizations as mentioned earlier.

## 5.2 Economic Diplomacy

Economic and political emancipation was the key behind the Liberation Movement of Bangladesh. Therefore, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman emphasized economic diplomacy to overcome the socio-economic challenges of war-ravaged Bangladesh. In a conversation with the Australian Foreign Minister on 28 May 1972, Bangladesh Foreign Minister noted that "furthering trade and economic interest of Bangladesh" is one of the critical priorities of Bangabandhu's foreign policy.<sup>194</sup>

According to the Government of India, by 7 March 1972, 9.7 million refugees had returned to Bangladesh, which added new challenges. Many returnees faced "a serious threat of food shortage" as planting the new rice crop was not possible as in many cases there were "no seeds, no tools and little or no cash resources".<sup>195</sup> In addition, the crop failures of 1972 made the situation worse. The Cambridge Professor, Austin Robinson, noted that,

The whole Asian world, like Bangladesh, has suffered from the crop failures of 1972. India has near-famine conditions in several states and has no foodgrains to spare. The normal rice exporters, Thailand and Burma, have far less than usual available for export. The normal importers, such as Indonesia, are seeking to buy abnormal amounts. Rice is virtually unobtainable except for cash, and Bangladesh is short of cash.<sup>196</sup>

Against such a backdrop, Bangladesh faced severe challenges in feeding 7.5 million people. In addition, many had lost their livelihoods. Employment opportunities were very few. In the post-war period, industrial activity was slowed down due to the "shortage of almost all raw materials and components" which needed to be imported (Appendix 2). This had "led to considerable labour unrest over the closing down of factories".<sup>197</sup> The movement of the previously imported goods was also not possible due to the disruption of the transport system. The number of rootless people increased significantly, which also constituted "a serious threat to social and political stability".<sup>198</sup> Bangladesh also faced inflation, floods, and therefore a famine-like situation in the

<sup>193</sup> "Welcome, President Bumedin" [In Bangla], *The Daily Janapad Editorial*, 8 March 1974.

<sup>194</sup> Rabindranath Trivedi, 1999a, op. cit., p. 167.

<sup>195</sup> *Ambassador Erna Sailer's Report on the Mission of High-Level United Nations Consultants to Bangladesh*, March-April 1972, Vol. 1, p. 5.

<sup>196</sup> Austin Robinson, *Economic Prospects of Bangladesh*, London: Overseas Development Institute Ltd. 1973, p. 10.

<sup>197</sup> *Ambassador Erna Sailer's Report on the Mission of High-Level United Nations Consultants to Bangladesh*, March-April 1972, Vol. 1, p. 6.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid*, p. 5.

post-war period, which worsened the food security situation in the country (Table 5.1). Thus, UN Secretary-General's special representative in Dacca, Francis Lacoste observed,

I need hardly add that...having been daily exposed for almost a year to the spectacle of the dire poverty and almost unbearable hardships to which such a very large proportion of the population of Bangladesh is subjected, [I] deeply sympathize with the people, and with those of their leaders who sincerely strive to improve their lot.<sup>199</sup>

**Table 5.1: Foodgrain stock position in LSDs of the food department by districts (Tons)<sup>200</sup>**

District	Capacity of LSDs <sup>201</sup>	Average monthly offtake	Monthly requirement	Stock on October 1971	Stock on March 7, 1972	No. of days stock sufficient
Chittagong	20, 800	2,069	2, 987	5,180	8,200	119
Chittagong H.T.	7,900	452	941	1,620	901	60
Comilla	31, 004	5, 450	7,328	15,400	2,986	16
Noakhali	22,500	6,622	8,279	11,800	4,180	19
Barisal	25, 424	10,598	11,941	6,000	6,685	19
Patuakhali	17,100	9,619	10, 568	3,100	3,879	12
Sylhet	21,450	7,624	8,268	7,800	3,848	15
Mymensingh	42, 181	9,695	11, 945	7,800	2,949	9
Tangail	10,148	5,962	6,243	4,700	2,160	11
Dacca	34, 675	5,153	7,825	2,600	3,919	23
Khulna	21, 201	8,977	10,065	3,000	1,641	5
Kushtia	13,096	4,001	4,407	7,200	5,621	42
Jessore	20,613	4, 519	5,737	4,800	1,355	9
Faridpur	29,500	7,314	8,557	4,600	4,919	20
Rajshahi	26,577	7,316	8,724	9,800	4161	17
Pabna	19,062	9,500	10,808	3,800	2,327	7
Rangpur	38,846	10,269	11,917	3,700	4,728	14
Bogra	19,373	2,808	3,512	6,100	3,758	40
Dinajpur	36,000	2,867	5,160	6,600	6,770	72
Total	457,450	120,815	145,214	115,600	73,987	10

Table 5.1 shows that on average, on 7 March 1972, food stock was sufficient only for ten days. In such a situation, the first concern for Bangabandhu was ensuring the availability of food stock in the country. Nevertheless, one needs to understand why the situation became worse in the case of food security. Indeed, the 1971 War affected Bangladesh's agricultural economy in three significant ways. First, there was a drastic reduction in the production of rice, jute, and tea. Second, the production potential (bullocks, fishing boats and handlooms) in many areas, particularly border Thanas were damaged. Third, transport facilities, spare parts, workshops, and

<sup>199</sup> "Political Report to the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the Problems of the Indian Sub-Continent as these Specifically Affect Bangladesh", 31 December 1973, p. 8.

<sup>200</sup> Food Department, Cited in Ambassador Erna Sailer's Report on the Mission of High-Level United Nations Consultants to Bangladesh, March-April 1972, Volume II, Table 5.

<sup>201</sup> Including rented storage.



buildings of the Government agricultural administration were severely destroyed.<sup>202</sup> For instance, jute which accounted for over 85 per cent of the foreign exchange earnings of Bangladesh, was severely affected due to war. In 1970, jute production was estimated at 6.8 million bales which reduced to 4.2 million bales in 1971 (Table 5.2). Only 1.7 million acres were harvested as against 2.5 million acres in 1969 and 2.3 million in 1970.

**Table 5.2 Raw Jute Position (thousands of bales)<sup>203</sup>**

	1969/70	1970/71	1971/72	1972/73
Production	73,910	68,010	42,000	65,000
Exports	35,080	21,980	29,060 <sup>204</sup>	30,000

According to the Food Department, Government of Bangladesh, between July 1972 and June 1973, Bangladesh needed to import 1, 973, 000 tons of foodgrain (rice and wheat) to meet the shortage of food.<sup>205</sup> According to a study of the United Nations, in 1972-73, the government of Bangladesh required US\$290 million for food imports while US\$648.0 million for power, industry, housing, community water supplies, technical assistance, and private sector trade and industry (those sectors were not covered by the UN Mission in Dhaka).<sup>206</sup>

The transport sector was also severely affected by war. Austin Robinson, Emeritus Professor of Economics at the University of Cambridge, in his study argued, "The chief war damage had been done to the transport system. When the war ended some 287 railway bridges and culverts were damaged and the communication lines disrupted, and about as many road bridges needed repairs or replacement".<sup>207</sup> Indeed, the whole network system was disrupted. Seaport operation was curtailed due to mines, wrecks and several sunken ships (Appendix 3-4). The total damage to the transport sector was estimated at US\$81.4 million. Thus, it was recommended that the immediate requirements (until mid-1972) were the import of goods and related technical assistance valued at about US\$26.3 million while for the fiscal year, 1972-73, Bangladesh required US\$82.60 million in the transport sector, including rehabilitation work (Appendix 5).<sup>208</sup>

The health sector, education and social welfare were also affected due to war. Even in the pre-war period in East Pakistan, health services were rudimentary, with few trained personnel and minimal facilities. Only 100 doctors were public health-oriented, while there were only 300 nurses and 100 midwives. The health sector in East Pakistan was neglected due to exploitation by the West Pakistan. The 1971 war exacerbated the situation. The physical facilities at small health units such as sub-divisional hospitals, rural health centres, maternity and

<sup>202</sup> Ambassador Erna Sailer's Report on the Mission of High-Level United Nations Consultants to Bangladesh, March-April 1972, Vol. II, p.6

<sup>203</sup> Ibid, Table 7.

<sup>204</sup> Including about 2 million unregistered bales of unregistered export to India.

<sup>205</sup> Food Department (Bangladesh), cited in Ambassador Erna Sailer's Report on the Mission of High-Level United Nations Consultants to Bangladesh, March-April 1972, Vol. II, Table 7/p.4.

<sup>206</sup> Ambassador Erna Sailer's Report on the Mission of High-Level United Nations Consultants to Bangladesh, March-April 1972, Vol. I, p.11-12

<sup>207</sup> Austin Robinson, op. cit., p. I.

<sup>208</sup> Ambassador Erna Sailer's Report on the Mission of High-Level United Nations Consultants to Bangladesh, March-April 1972, Vol. II, pp. 20-21.

child welfare centres were substantially damaged and there was significant loss of equipment, drugs and medicines. The specialized mass programmes in smallpox eradication, malaria eradication, cholera control, mass ECG vaccination suffered severe setbacks in 1971. Vehicles were destroyed which affected health services severely. Regarding education sector, extensive damages were done to school buildings in the immediate border areas. It is worthy to mention that according to one estimate, the government of Bangladesh needed to rehabilitate 400,000 orphans, 150,000 dependent women, and 5,000 disabled persons. The Mujib government required massive international assistance to reconstruct/repair these sectors (See, Appendix 6 for health sector assistance requirement; Appendix 7 for education sector estimated requirements).

Against the above backdrop, economic cooperation in the form of trade, loan, grant, food aid, and other commodity aid was essential for Bangladesh which was achieved by executing economic diplomacy. Here, it is important to clarify the term economic diplomacy. Indeed, promoting a country's economic interest through trade and investment remains the key focus of pursuing a state's economic diplomacy. Kishan S. Rana, in his book *21st Century Diplomacy*, notes, "economic diplomacy began to emerge as a major component of external relations, in some ways overshadowing political diplomacy; export promotion and foreign direct investment (FDI) mobilization became the priority activities of the diplomatic system".<sup>209</sup> Thus in achieving a state's foreign policy goals, including economic interest, economic diplomacy remains an effective tool for decades.<sup>210</sup>

Even prior to returning to Bangladesh, on 8 January 1972, at a press conference in London, Bangabandhu emphasized on the existing realities of Bangladesh to the conduct of its foreign relations/ international relations. He said, "I reassert that the existence of the People's Republic of Bangladesh is an unchallengeable reality and that our future relations with any other state must be based on this fundamental reality".<sup>211</sup> Additionally, on 10 January 1972, Bangabandhu noted, "Bangladesh will continue to exist as an independent state in the history. In the name of humanity, I appeal to the people of the world to come forward to help my needy people".<sup>212</sup>

<sup>209</sup> Kishan S. Rana, *21st Century Diplomacy A Practitioner's Guide*, London, New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group., 2011, p. 13-14.

<sup>210</sup> See, Alan P. Dobson, "Economic Diplomacy at the Atlantic Conference", *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 2, 1984, pp. 143-163; Alan P. Dobson, "A Mess of Pottage for Your Economic Birthright? The 1941-42 Wheat Negotiations and Anglo-American Economic Diplomacy", *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 28, No. 3, 1985, pp. 739-750; Charles Chatterjee, *Economic Diplomacy and Foreign Policy-making*, Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020; Degang Sun & Yahia H. Zoubir, "China's Economic Diplomacy towards the Arab Countries: Challenges Ahead?", *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol. 24, No. 95, pp. 903-921, 2015; M. Muller, "South Africa's Economic Diplomacy: Constructing a Better World for All?", *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, Vol. 13, No. 1, 1-30, 2002; Mina Yakopa and Peter A. G. van Bergeijk, "Economic Diplomacy, Trade and Developing Countries", *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society*, Vol. 4, 2011, 253-267; Saadia M. Pekkanen, Mireya Solís and Saori N. Katada, "Trading Gains for Control: International Trade Forums and Japanese Economic Diplomacy", *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 51, No. 4, 2007, pp. 945-970; Stephen Woolcock, *European Union Economic Diplomacy: The Role of the EU in External Economic Relations*, Surrey, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2012; Syeda Sharmin Absar, "Economic Diplomacy for Bangladesh: A Prescription for Less Developed Countries in the World Trade Organization Era", *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 3, pp. 349-357, 2003.

<sup>211</sup> Rabindranath Trivedi, 1999a, op. cit., p. 48.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid, p. 62.



Addressing the socio-economic challenges was the prime reason for such an appeal which was also reflected in his foreign policy formulations. Indeed, Bangabandhu was able to increase the number of friendly countries that were interested in supporting Bangladesh.

On 14 January 1972, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, issued a statement to the press in Dacca (present Dhaka) where his economic diplomacy is clearly reflected. According to the statement,

...the economy is in a shattered state. The most urgent task is that of reconstructing the economy. The economy must be restored. Mobilization of resources from home and abroad must immediately be undertaken. We urgently need assistance from abroad to supplement our own resources for this purpose. I appeal to all states, to the freedom-loving people of the world and to international humanitarian organizations to come to our assistance generously in all spheres, including assistance in maintaining supply of essential commodities which are urgently required.<sup>213</sup>

In an interview with David Frost, Bangabandhu sought international cooperation. In the words of Bangabandhu, "I always pray that the world should come forward to help my people. I always expect that they should come forward for the sake of humanity and my unfortunate people of Bangladesh. I expect that everybody will come forward to help my hungry millions."<sup>214</sup> In fact, it will not be wrong to claim that Bangabandhu pursued an active foreign policy focusing on the socio-economic needs of the people of Bangladesh. And economic diplomacy (focusing on aid, trade, and economic cooperation) was the tool to secure the country's economic interest. Therefore, Bangabandhu tried to reach every country in the world to address Bangladesh's existing socio-economic realities, i.e., shattered/war-ravaged economy, broken infrastructure, shortages of food and other commodity supply, poverty, hunger, illiteracy, famine. Consequently, countries from Asia, Europe, North America, Africa, Middle East and Oceania expanded their cooperative hand to Bangladesh (Table 5.3-5.4) due to the firm and active economic diplomacy pursued by Bangabandhu.

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<sup>213</sup> Ibid, p. 67.

<sup>214</sup> Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's interview with David Frost, available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gHxL6hhY4fc>, accessed on 30 May 2021.

<sup>215</sup> Ambassador Erna Sailer's Report on the Mission of High-Level United Nations Consultants to Bangladesh, March-April 1972, Vol. 1, Appendix 4, pp. i-ii.

**Table 5.3 Bilateral Commitments from Foreign Governments<sup>215</sup>**

Country	Amount Committed (in US\$ millions)	Food Quantity & type, and value	Non-food description and values
Australia	5.5 (Grant)	8,000 tons wheat (US\$0.6 million)	
Canada	45.5 (Grant)	Rapeseed (US\$5 million) Wheat 15/20	Railways parts (track, sleepers etc.) (US\$7 million) Tubewell components (US\$ 5million) Restoration of power grid (US\$2million) Industrial spares and commodities (US\$ 6 million)
Denmark	3.5 (Grant)		
France	0.55 (Grant)		100 Renault trucks with one or more mechanics (US\$0.55 million)
German Democratic Republic			10 tons of medicine and other relief supplies
India	156.6	650, 000 tons wheat (US\$82.5 million) 100, 000 tons rice 500 tons salt, Edible oil & oil seeds 150, 000 tons of jute and paddy seed	Commodities: 25, 000 bales raw cotton; 1,000 bales cotton yarn; 40, 000 tons urea; 50, 000 tons cement; 20, 000 tons coal; unspecified amount crude oil, diesel oil, drugs; and soda ash Industrial and agricultural requirements (US\$ 25.4 million) Bridging and ferries, including repair of Hardinge and Meghna Railway bridges (US\$13.9 million)
Italy	0.1		
Sweden	7.3 (grant)		Corrugated Iron Sheets, Paper and pulp, rayer fiber, 250 H.P. diesel ferry engines (US\$7.3 million)
Switzerland	2.0 (Loan)		
UAR	1.0 (Grant)		
UK	12.3 (Loan)		For imports of capital goods (US\$3.5 million) Dyes and chemicals, jute and textile machinery, building material and furnishings, books, laboratory and teaching equipment, hospital and medical equipment, films and photo equipment, train lighting and signalling equipment and other commodities and capital goods (US\$8.8 million)
USSR	51.6 (estimate)	45, 000 tons rice 5,000 tons edible oil	Salvage ships, 10 trawlers with training crews and cold storage facilities, 50 locomotives, 4 helicopters, 3 1000-ton coasters, unspecified number of aircraft. Also construction of electrical power station at Ghorashal, an electrical equipment and plants and radio stations, unspecified reconstruction and development of merchant marine, sea fisheries and railways (US\$45 million)



**Table 5.4: Supply of Foodgrain to Bangladesh During 1973<sup>216</sup>**

Wheat	Tons
USA	429,747
Canada	201,706
France	15,000
EEC	174,387
Australia	12,401
Fed. Rep. of Germany	37,646
USSR	201,454
Government of Bangladesh commercial purchase	1,001,381
Total wheat to date	2,073,722
<b>Rice</b>	
Japan	47,425
Government of Bangladesh commercial purchase	111,189
Total rice to date	158, 614
Total foodgrains arrived to date	2, 232, 336

Tables 5.3 and 5.4 show that countries around the world came forward from Australia to the USA, with the help of 7.5 million people of Bangladesh. And this was only possible because of active recognition and the economic diplomacy of Bangabandhu. However, in 1973, the monsoon rains were considerably below average, causing drought and a severe shortfall in the rice harvest. In addition, the increase in oil price in 1973 and in 1974 triggered inflation, which impacted Bangladesh's balance of trade severely. On the one hand, the prices of fertilizer, foodgrain, cement, and other raw materials increased tremendously, which impacted Bangladesh's imports. On the other hand, the price and volume of jute exports, which was Bangladesh's principal export sector, remained stagnant. Additionally, Bangladesh was "hit by floods on an unprecedented scale in August 1974, with the consequent loss of an additional 700, 000 to 800,000 tons of rice in an already critical and desperate situation".<sup>217</sup> These factors made the food security situation in Bangladesh worse, which led to starvation. In an interview, Bangabandhu claimed that "everybody expected that few millions of people will die because of starvation, after the floods, after the inflation. We have tried to get collect food from all over the world".<sup>218</sup>

Consequently, due to inflation, floods, and stagnant price of jute products, in 1974-75, Bangladesh faced a huge gap in the balance of payments. For instance, Bangladesh's merchandise exports were worth US\$410 million while merchandizing imports were worth US\$ 1468 million (including about US\$510 million for 2. 3 million tons of foodgrain) which created a huge trade balance of US\$ -1068 million. Considering other accounts (net), the trade balance increased to US\$1070 million.<sup>219</sup> In this context, Bangabandhu sought cooperation from the international community to avoid further mass starvation. Hence, in August 1974, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, asked Victor Umbricht, Personal Representative of the Secretary-General for assistance to Bangladesh to visit the

<sup>216</sup> Ambassador Francis Lacoste, Annex.

<sup>217</sup> Victor Umbricht, *First Report on Aid to Bangladesh*, 12 November 1974, p. 1.

<sup>218</sup> Available at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UO7e\\_QuWnpU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UO7e_QuWnpU), accessed on 30 May 2021.

<sup>219</sup> Victor Umbricht, op. cit., p. 3.

country and “review the desperate situation with the Government”.<sup>220</sup> Umbricht responded positively and thus paid a visit to Bangladesh and reported to the UN Secretary-General about “an extremely dangerous emergency situation” in Bangladesh. The Secretary-General then asked Umbricht to assist in mobilizing aid and coordinating assistance from within the United Nations system. Another development was that at the request of the Bangladesh Government, the World Bank called a meeting with the donor countries and aid organizations in Paris on 24-25 October 1974.

It is also worthwhile noting that on 28 September 1974, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, together with his Foreign Minister, had a special meeting with the UN Secretary-General and his senior staff members. Bangabandhu explained the “desperate” situations that Bangladesh was facing and asked the United Nations Secretary-General to do something for the people of Bangladesh. The UN Secretary-General ensured him to do whatever he can to mobilize aid to Bangladesh. Consequently, on 28 September 1974, the UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim wrote to Robert S. McNamara, the President of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Washington D.C. that “I am convinced that immediate assistance to Bangladesh will be required in order to reduce the risk of disastrous developments in the months ahead.”<sup>221</sup> In his letter, the Secretary-General appreciated the Bank’s “plan to call meeting of the donor countries as a Consortium of aid to Bangladesh,...in order to examine the short-term and long-term assistance measures for Bangladesh”.<sup>222</sup> For the Paris aid meeting, the Secretary-General asked the IBRD President to receive Victor Umbricht on his behalf.

In the Paris aid meeting, twenty countries and six international organizations participated who responded positively. Notably, six delegates from Bangladesh participated in the meeting. Apart from the conventional aid group countries, three OPEC countries, i.e., Iran, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates, participated in the meeting who informed them that they would extend cooperation at bilateral level. At the Paris aid meeting, it was agreed that the lion’s share of the balance gap of US\$1070 million will be shared by the donor countries and organizations (Table 5.5). The remaining US\$215 million needs to be filled by the Bangladesh government.

**Table 5.5: Addressing financing gap US\$1070 million in the Paris Aid Meeting<sup>223</sup>**

Financed by	Balance gap US\$1070 million
Disbursements from aid committed prior to 1 July, 1974 (from a total of US\$857) million:	US\$340 million
Disbursements from aid sources committed between 1 July - 10 October, 1974 (from a total of US\$365 million):	US\$285 million
Remaining financing gap	US\$415 million
Disbursements from tentative pledges at the October meeting in Paris (Total: US\$500 million)	US\$200 million
Balance still to be covered	US\$215 million
Bangladesh needs to fill the remaining	US\$215 million

<sup>220</sup> Victor Umbricht, op. cit., 12 November 1974, p. 2.

<sup>221</sup> Kurt Waldheim, UN Secretary-General’s Letter to Robert S. McNamara, the President of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 28 September 1974.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid.

<sup>223</sup> Victor Umbricht, op. cit., p. 4.



In 1974, except Japan and Australia, primarily European and North American countries continued their aid programmes to Bangladesh (Appendix 8). However, Bangabandhu's economic diplomacy was not confined only to aid but also trade, investment and loans from the international organizations. During Bangabandhu's time, Bangladesh was able to establish trade relations with Asian, European, North American, African, Latin American, and with Middle Eastern countries (Table 5.6). In his speech at the banquet given in honour of the Honourable E.G. Whitlam, Prime Minister of Australia, at Dacca on 19 January 1975, Bangabandhu reiterated that

...we are conscious that, in the long run, our future depends on our own efforts. For this purpose, my government is mobilizing all our human and material resources. Self-sufficiency in food, control of population growth, industrial development, health and education of the people—are all getting the highest priority. We also attach high priority to the development of trade and bilateral economic cooperation.<sup>224</sup>

Thus, in the bilateral interactions at the highest level, Bangabandhu also pursued economic diplomacy. It is also worthy to note that in August 1973, at the Conference of Envoys in Europe, Bangabandhu asked the Bangladesh envoys in Europe to intensify their efforts for expansion of trade and economic relations, particularly the promotion of exports.<sup>225</sup> This is how Bangabandhu emphasized on economic diplomacy focusing on the promotion of trade and investment. In different international forums also, Bangabandhu emphasized on restructuring the global economic order, removing the tariff and non-tariff barriers for the developing world which will be discussed in the next sections. In this section, few examples will be imperative, particularly in the context of trade and investment to understand Bangabandhu's economic diplomacy in order to address the socio-economic challenges.

### 5.2.1 South Asia

One needs to look at economic diplomacy between Bangladesh and India in the areas of economic cooperation, trade and commerce, and aid perspective as after independence, India soon emerged as a key economic partner. During Bangladesh Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad's January 1972 New Delhi visit, detailed discussions on economic cooperation were held. In the discussion, both Bangladesh and India agreed to the importance of restoring trade and economic cooperation between them. Consequently, on 28 March 1972, Bangladesh and India signed a Trade Agreement bearing 11 articles. According to the Agreement, both sides expressed interest to strengthen "economic relations between the two countries on the basis of equality and mutual benefit". In the Agreement, people were identified as the "beneficiaries" of close economic cooperation. State-to-State basis trade was identified as the organizing trade between Bangladesh and India as far as possible. According to the Article 1 of the Agreement, "The two Government recognizing the need and requirements of each other in the context of their developing economies undertake to explore all possibilities for expansion and promotion of trade between the two countries on the basis of mutual advantage". Notably, border trade was allowed within a sixteen-kilometre belt of the border between West Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram on the one hand and Bangladesh on the other. According to Article V of the Agreement, in order to promote Bangladesh-India trade and commerce, the mutual arrangements

<sup>224</sup> Rabindranath Trivedi, 1999b, op. cit., p. 279.

<sup>225</sup> "Intensify efforts to widen trade: Mujib asks Envoys", *The Bangladesh Observer*, 13 August 1973.



on the use of waterways, railways, and roadways will be made. For Nachiketa, "With the signing of the trade treaty between India and Bangladesh, much of the uncertainty surrounding the nature of trade relations between the two countries has been removed".<sup>226</sup> Indeed, it was India and the United Kingdom who came forward first and provided foreign exchange resources to the Government of Bangladesh.<sup>227</sup> India became one of the single most significant trading partners of Bangladesh under the Bangabandhu regime. Between 1972 and 1974, Bangladesh exported US\$52.07 million worth products while imported US\$363.2 million worth products which created huge trade imbalance. However, considering Bangladesh's limited products of exports, a trade imbalance is expected. However, from the ultra-leftist forces in the country, Bangabandhu was facing challenges with regard to foreign policy preferences with India.<sup>228</sup>

Bangabandhu also developed Bangladesh's relations with Bhutan, Nepal, and Afghanistan. At the invitation of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh, a Ministerial delegation headed by the Minister-in-Charge of Foreign Affairs of Bhutan paid an official visit to Bangladesh from 15 April to 20 April 1972. The Foreign Minister was accompanied by the Secretary of the Ministry of Finance. A Joint Communiqué was issued where a strong desire to develop trade relations was expressed between Bangladesh and Bhutan. Similarly, Bangladesh Foreign Minister visited Nepal from 13 June to 16 June 1972 to develop relations. As the outcome of the visit, a Joint Communiqué was issued. According to Article 11 of the Joint Communiqué, "The two Ministers expressed the keen desire of their Governments to develop mutual trade and they agreed to conclude a trade agreement between the two countries at the earliest possible date. They felt that the opening of the overland trade route to each other's territory will facilitate the growth of their trade".<sup>229</sup> It is also worth noting that to improve trade relations, Bangladesh signed trade Agreement with Afghanistan in July 1974 to promote bilateral trade and economic cooperation.<sup>230</sup>

### 5.2.2 East and South-east Asia

In the words of Bangabandhu, "Since the emergence of Bangladesh as a sovereign, independent state, we have taken various initiatives to revive our natural links with East Asia".<sup>231</sup> Bangabandhu paid a six-day official visit to Japan from 18<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> October, 1973 to elevate Bangladesh's political and economic ties with Japan. Notably, within three months of Bangladesh's independence, the President of Japan, Hayakawa, visited Bangladesh to see for himself the conditions of the people of Bangladesh. Bangabandhu realized that to promote economic diplomacy, first you need to deepen political ties. In his visit to Japan, he reiterated that "We attach great importance to understanding Japan and its great people and to the strengthening of mutually beneficial relations between our two countries".<sup>232</sup> Bangabandhu also noted that "Since liberation, you [the people of Japan] have collectively continued your noble efforts to promote the cause of Bangladesh thereby making a valuable contribution to the feeling

<sup>226</sup> Nachiketa, "India-Bangladesh Trade Treaty", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 7, No. 15, 1972, p. 746.

<sup>227</sup> Ambassador Erna Sailer's Report on the Mission of High-Level United Nations Consultants to Bangladesh, March-April 1972, Vol. 1, p. 7.

<sup>228</sup> Pran Chopra, "Bangla Desh in Search of a Role", *India Quarterly*, Vol. 28, No. 2, 1972, pp. 119-125.

<sup>229</sup> Rabindranath Trivedi, 1999a, op. cit., p. 174.

<sup>230</sup> "Bangladesh and Afghanistan Signed Trade Agreement" [In Bangla], *The Daily Janapad*, 1 July 1974.

<sup>231</sup> Rabindranath Trivedi, 1999a, op. cit., p. 432.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid, p. 424.



of understanding and friendship that characterizes the relations between our two countries".<sup>233</sup> In another lecture delivered at the Japanese Press Club in Tokyo on 23 October, Bangabandhu looked Bangladesh-Japan relations from a historical point of view. He noted, "historically, the Bangalee people have maintained close relations with the peoples of East Asia. The patterns of trade and cultural exchanges through the centuries show that this was the natural orientation of the area which is now Bangladesh".<sup>234</sup> Bangabandhu explained the problems Bangladesh was facing in the rehabilitation and economic development sector.

Bangabandhu also sought Japanese investments. On 19 October, at the Dinner given by his honour by the Federation of Economic Organizations, the Japan Foreign Trade Council and the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Tokyo, Bangabandhu emphasized that "My government welcomes and attaches great importance to joint venture projects that provide us with opportunities for development of new skills, help promote our exports, create large-scale employment opportunities and above all bring about a technological transformation of our economy".<sup>235</sup> Bangabandhu also sought Japanese assistance in the construction of a bridge over the River of Jamuna. He also invited Japanese cooperation and investments "in the optimum utilization of larger reserves of our natural gas through production of fertilizers and petrochemicals, in the exploration of oil and gas in our off-shore area".<sup>236</sup>

As an outcome of the visit, Japan-Bangladesh Joint Communiqué was issued. According to the Article 10 of the Joint Communiqué, Japan promised to contribute one million US dollars to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to assist the repatriation programme. In the article 13, it was noted that "in view of the actual economic situation of Bangladesh, the Government of Japan would extend a commodity loan amounting to nine billion yen on the softest terms that Japan has ever accorded to any developing country".<sup>237</sup> Japan also agreed to consider supplying foreign rice to Bangladesh on a grant basis and extend cooperation in the agriculture sector and send an economic delegation to Bangladesh to examine the economic possibilities between the two countries. Notably, between 1972 and 1974, Bangladesh exported US\$ 30.45 million worth products to Japan while imported US\$207.98 million worth products which made Japan one of the key trading partners of Bangladesh under Bangabandhu regime. Fakhruddin Ahmed, a former diplomat during Bangabandhu's time, in his memoirs, contends, "the solid-foundation of Japan-Bangladesh Economic Cooperation as we see today was established during Prime Minister Sheikh Mujib's visit to Japan in October 1973".<sup>238</sup>

In its foreign policy, Bangabandhu did not confine to traditional partners. Instead he expanded the foreign policy of Bangladesh to unconventional partners, including North Korea. For instance, in February 1974, Bangladesh signed a trade agreement with North Korea for two years. According to the agreement, Bangladesh will import cement, chemicals, raw materials, and machines from North Korea and will export all possible items.<sup>239</sup>

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<sup>233</sup> Ibid, p. 423.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid, p. 431.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid, p. 430.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid, p. 430.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid, p. 437.

<sup>238</sup> Fakhruddin Ahmed, op. cit., p. 98.

<sup>239</sup> *The Daily Janapad*, "Bangladesh-North Korea Signed Trade Agreement" [In Bangla], 1 March 1974.

Under Bangabandhu regime, Bangladesh also developed close relations with Malaysia, Indonesia, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, Singapore, the Philippines and Thailand. In his visit to Singapore, Bangladesh Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad noted that Bangladesh attaches importance to the "development of close relations with all its neighbours of Southeast Asia".<sup>240</sup> At the invitation of the government of Singapore, Bangladesh Foreign Minister paid an official visit to Singapore from 6 to 8 June 1972. According to Article 5 of the Joint Communiqué, "The two Foreign Ministers...agreed to encourage cooperation between the two countries in economic, commercial and technical fields for mutual benefit".<sup>241</sup> Singapore emerged as an important trading partner of Bangladesh during the Bangabandhu regime.

Malaysia was the first Muslim country recognized Bangladesh on 25 February 1972. From 12 March to 14 March 1972, a Malaysian Ministerial delegation, including the Minister of Finance, visited Bangladesh to develop bilateral ties. In the Joint Statement, it was mentioned that "Bangladesh would welcome the development of close bilateral relations with Malaysia particularly in the fields of trade, culture education and technical cooperation."<sup>242</sup> Similarly, at the invitation of the Malaysian government, the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh visited Malaysia from 2 to 6 June 1972. According to Article 8 of the Joint Communiqué, "It was agreed that Malaysia and Bangladesh would cooperate in future in the fields of Jute trade and rubber technology. The two sides also emphasized the desirability of expanding the volume of trade between the two neighbouring countries. Exchange of trade and business delegations will be encouraged to achieve this objective".<sup>243</sup>

At the invitation of the Government of the Republic of Indonesia, Bangladesh Foreign Minister paid an official visit from 19 to 22 July 1972, aiming at establishing closer and stronger relations with Indonesia in various fields. According to the Joint Communiqué, it was emphasized that "The feasibility of a meaningful cooperation between the two countries in the fields of economy and trade was discussed in detail. It was agreed that exchanges of trade, business and technical delegations would be encouraged in order to achieve the objective".<sup>244</sup>

Bangladesh Foreign Minister also visited the Union of Burma from 21 May to 25 May 1972 to foster bilateral relations. The Foreign Minister of Bangladesh was called on Burma's Minister for Trade and held extensive discussions on the expansion of trade between Bangladesh and Burma. Bangladesh exported US\$4.40 million worth products in 1972, US\$5.43 million in 1973 and US\$8.78 million worth products in 1974. Bangladesh also imported US\$8.09 million worth of products in 1972, US\$ 11.10 million in 1973 and US\$17.08 million worth of products in 1974 (Table 5.6).

<sup>240</sup> Rabindranath Trivedi, 1999a, op. cit., p. 168.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid, p. 169.

<sup>242</sup> Ibid, p. 119.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid, p. 171.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid, p. 186.



### 5.2.3 North America

Under the Bangabandhu regime, the United States was the largest single trading partner of Bangladesh in terms of exports and imports. For instance, between 1972 and 1974, Bangladesh exported US\$181.17 million worth of products to the United States market while imported US\$ 552.31 million worth of products. This is why Bangabandhu realized the importance of developing relations with the superpowers, including the United States despite its opposition in the 1971 Liberation War of Bangladesh. Indeed, economic diplomacy inspired Bangabandhu to deepen Bangladesh's relations with the United States, despite criticisms from some corners of the country. The United States remains the single largest export destination for Bangladesh since Bangabandhu's time. Hence, Bangabandhu's visionary foreign policies paid off for the country.

In September 1972, an agreement was signed between the Chief Engineer of Bangladesh roads and highway and a representative of Luis Barzers Inc, an American engineering company, to build six bridges over Dhaka-Aricha and Dhaka-Mymensingh road. According to the agreement, USA promised US\$1,40,00000 aid for the construction of those bridges which were supposed to be completed by June 1974.<sup>245</sup> The aid for those six bridges was deducted from the American rehabilitation fund for Bangladesh. Notably, at the beginning of 1972, USA allotted US\$11,50,00000 for rehabilitation purpose in Bangladesh. *The Daily Azad* reported that by September 1972, the USA provided US\$28,70,00000 aid not only for the construction of the bridges but also for rural health, education, and power development purposes.<sup>246</sup>

In May 1974, Bangladesh and the USA signed a non-payable US\$10,00000 technical cooperation agreement.<sup>247</sup> It was reported that the American government approved US\$40, 00000 for the flood-affected people in Bangladesh in the purpose of housing and agriculture.<sup>248</sup> It is worthy to note that the American people, some US congressmen came forward with the help of flood-affected people in Bangladesh.<sup>249</sup> On 19 September 1974, Bangladesh signed a loan agreement with the United States of US\$2,50,00000 to import agricultural products i.e. fertilizer, insecticide medicines.<sup>250</sup> M. Saiduzzaman, the secretary of the Bangladesh Planning Ministry, who signed the agreement on behalf of Bangladesh, noted that the agreement would extend Bangladesh's economic cooperation with the United States.<sup>251</sup> According to the US Embassy, Dhaka, as of 30 June 1975, the United States provided US\$82,40,00000 aid for several projects in Bangladesh.<sup>252</sup> Among these, US\$7,54,00000 was a loan.

It is also worthy to note that on 1 October 1974, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had a meeting with the US President Gerald R. Ford at the Oval Office, White House, where he pursued strong economic diplomacy in order to safeguard Bangladesh's economic interest.<sup>253</sup> On

<sup>245</sup> "Agreement Signed with American Company to Complete the Construction of the Bridges" [In Bangla], *The Daily Azad*, 19 September 1972.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid.

<sup>247</sup> "Bangladesh and USA Signed Technical Cooperation Agreement" [In Bangla], *The Daily Janapad*, 25 May 1974.

<sup>248</sup> "40, 00000 American help for the flood-affected people" [In Bangla], *The Daily Janapad*, 18 August 1974.

<sup>249</sup> "Protect Bangladesh from famine: Two American senator asks" [In Bangla], *The Daily Janapad*, 20 August 1974; "Help Bangladesh: McGovern appeals" [In Bangla], *The Daily Janapad*, 4 September 1974.

<sup>250</sup> "Bangladesh-USA signed US\$ 2, 50, 00000 loan agreement" [In Bangla], *The Daily Janapad*, 20 September 1974.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid.

<sup>252</sup> "USA Provided US\$ 82, 40, 00000 Aid till June 30", *The Daily Ittefaq*, 23 July 1975.

<sup>253</sup> The White House, Washington, Memorandum of Conversation, available at <https://www.fordlibrarymuseum.gov/library/document/0314/1552812.pdf>, accessed on 10 July 2021.

17 January 1975, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation of the USA government and the Ministry of Industry of Bangladesh government signed an investment agreement so that the American business community can invest in Bangladesh.<sup>254</sup>

Another North American country, Canada, extended its generous supports in the form of aid and trade in the post-War reconstruction process of Bangladesh. On 18 July 1974, Bangladesh and Canada signed an agreement. And according to the agreement, Canada will provide US\$50,10,000 in the development of the power sector in Bangladesh.<sup>255</sup> On 7 November 1974, another agreement was signed between the government of Bangladesh and Canada. According to the agreement, Canada will provide US\$4,50,000 in the re-establishment of the Syedpur diesel power station.<sup>256</sup> In fact, the planning of the Syedpur diesel power station was undertaken with the help of Canada.

Canada also bought few products from Bangladesh. For instance, in 1973 and 1974, Bangladesh exported US\$11.12 million worth of products to Canada and imported US\$127.65 million worth of products from Canada. Thus, the development of trade relations between Bangladesh and North America was also a defining feature in the discourse of Bangabandhu's foreign policy.

#### 5.2.4 Europe

Bangladesh attached great importance to close relations with the European countries under the Bangabandhu regime. In a lecture, Bangladesh's Foreign Minister noted, "We also propose to foster closer relations with these [West and Japan] particularly Britain, France, other West European countries, so that we can share, for our economic betterment, the skills and knowledge that they have acquired in solving problems of hunger, disease and shelter".<sup>257</sup> Indeed, the European countries generously extended their cooperation in the reconstruction process of Bangladesh. And soon after independence, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands and the United Kingdom emerged as major trading partners of Bangladesh (Table 5.6). EEC became the most significant single export destination of Bangladesh between 1972 and 1974. In total, Bangladesh exported US\$206.73 million worth of products while imported US\$363.24 million worth of products between 1972 and 1974.

#### 5.2.5 Arab Countries

It is also worthy to note that in the reconstruction process of Bangladesh, Arab countries extended their helping hand since Bangabandhu was successful in reaching out to those countries as well. Thus, even prior to establishing formal diplomatic relations, many Arab countries helped Bangladesh address the socio-economic challenges. For instance, Egypt extended its economic support to Bangladesh from the very beginning of 1972 even before formally recognizing Bangladesh. To promote Bangladesh's economic diplomacy, Bangabandhu paid a number of state visits around the world. In addition, Bangabandhu also sent his Foreign Minister to secure Bangladesh's economic interest.

<sup>254</sup> "Agreement Signed to Facilitate American Private Investment in Bangladesh" [In Bangla], *The Daily Janapad*, 18 January 1975.

<sup>255</sup> "Canada will Provide US\$ 50, 10, 000", *The Daily Janapad*, 19 July 1974.

<sup>256</sup> "Agreement Signed with Canada of US\$ 4, 50, 000", *The Daily Janapad*, 8 November 1974.

<sup>257</sup> Rabindranath Trivedi, 1999a, op. cit., p. 193.



### 5.2.6 Kuwait

In March 1974, Bangabandhu sent his Foreign Minister Kamal Hossain to Kuwait to establish relations at the diplomatic level. Consequently, at the end of the two-day visit, in the Joint Statement, it is mentioned that Kuwait will establish its relations with Bangladesh at the diplomatic level. Both sides agreed to promote cultural, scientific and economic cooperation. The Emir of Kuwait accepted the invitation of Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to visit Bangladesh.<sup>258</sup> Kuwait extended supports in the reconstruction process of Bangladesh. The country not only helped the flood affected people of Bangladesh but also deposited 60,00000 dinar (Kuwait currency) to the Bangladesh Bank for one year.<sup>259</sup> Kuwait is the first country who deposited money to Bangladesh Bank.<sup>260</sup> Bangabandhu visited Kuwait in November 1974 in order to develop bilateral ties. Consequently, on 14 November 1974, a Joint Statement was published from Bangladesh and Kuwait where a firm commitment is manifested to deepen Bangladesh-Kuwait cooperation in the areas of agriculture, industry, and floods control. Additionally, in January 1975, a four member's delegation from Kuwait visited Bangladesh. And after eleven days of discussions, the delegation informed that Kuwait would provide US\$2 crore 90 Lakh as a loan for 25 years with a grace period. However, the money needs to be used in the development of the energy sector and flood control and irrigation system.<sup>261</sup> Notably, Bangladesh became the second non-Arab country to receive the loan, which also underscores the importance that Kuwait attached to Bangladesh under the Bangabandhu regime. The delegation also informed that Kuwait is interested in helping Bangladesh in the technical and economic sector.

### 5.2.7 UAE

In August 1974, United Arab Emirates (UAE) representative in the United Nations informed the Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN) that the country would contribute US\$50,00000 to the UN fund to help Bangladeshi flood-affected people.<sup>262</sup> In December 1974, Bangabandhu paid a three-day official visit to UAE to strengthen the bilateral ties focusing on economic cooperation. Regarding the success of the visit, Bangabandhu claimed that UAE would provide US\$50,000,000 as a loan to Bangladesh with 2 per cent interest rate for 40 years with a grace period of 10 years.<sup>263</sup> In addition, to address the crisis due to floods, UAE will provide US\$20,000,000 as aid to buy raw materials and necessary machinery. Bangabandhu added that Bangladesh and the United Arab Emirates signed an agreement where it is mentioned that UAE will help Bangladesh to establish a fertilizer factory, a cement factory and a limestone factory. Both sides also agreed to establish a Joint Commission. The Joint Commission will be responsible for the assessment of the bilateral issues. UAE also gifted two dredgers to Bangabandhu.<sup>264</sup>

<sup>258</sup> "Bangladesh-Kuwait will Establish Relations at Diplomatic Level", *The Daily Janapad*, 14 March 1974.

<sup>259</sup> "Bangladesh-Arab Ties" [In Bangla], *The Daily Janapad Editorial*, 12 November 1974.

<sup>260</sup> "Kuwait has Deposited BDT 16 crore to Bangladesh Bank" [In Bangla], *The Daily Janapad*, 24 October 1974.

<sup>261</sup> "Kuwait is Providing US\$2, 90, 00000 as Loan" [In Bangla], *The Daily Janapad*, 8 February 1975.

<sup>262</sup> "United Arab Emirates has Contributed US\$ 50, 00000" [In Bangla], *The Daily Janapad*, 29 August 1974.

<sup>263</sup> United Arab Emirates will Provide US\$50,000,000 Loan: Bangabandhu at Dhaka Airport" [In Bangla], *The Daily Janapad*, 21 December 1974.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid.

### 5.2.8 Egypt

In November 1974, Bangabandhu visited Egypt and Kuwait to deepen Bangladesh's relations, particularly to promote Bangladesh's economic interest with these two important countries. In showing respect, Egypt's President Anwar Sadat hosted a dinner party where Bangabandhu, in his speech, acknowledged Egypt's supports for the Bangladeshi people. Bangabandhu also highlighted the growing partnership between Egypt and Bangladesh.<sup>265</sup> In addition, a joint statement was issued after the visit. In the joint statement, deepening economic and cultural cooperation between Egypt and Bangladesh was emphasized. Consequently, both sides agreed to form a joint economic and cultural committee that will identify issues, challenges and possibilities in Bangladesh-Egypt relations.<sup>266</sup> According to the Joint Statement, Anwar Sadat promised Egypt's supports to the interests of Bangladesh and Bangladesh's policies in the subcontinent.

### 5.2.9 Iraq & Iran

Bangabandhu sent his Foreign Minister to Iraq in August 1972 intending to strengthen the bonds of friendship and cooperation between Bangladesh and Iraq. And Iraq became a trading partner of Bangladesh in 1972. Notably, Bangladesh exported US\$3.40 million worth of products in Iraq in 1972 while US\$2.08 million worth of products in 1973 and US\$2.32 million worth of products in 1974. Similarly, Bangladesh imported from Iraq more than the amount of export. A general trade agreement was signed between Bangladesh and Iraq on 18 February 1974. Bangabandhu's October 1974 visit to Iraq was imperative in deepening Bangladesh-Iraq economic ties.

Similarly, in 1973, Bangladesh exported US\$ 1.86 million worth of products to Iran. In June 1974, Kamal Hossain, the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh, paid a five-day official visit to Iran to promote Bangladesh's relations with the country. In his visit, Hossain emphasized that Bangladesh is interested in the formation of an Asian Common Market.<sup>267</sup> Bangladesh and Iran signed a trade agreement in January 1975. According to the Agreement, Iran will sell 3, 00000 tons crude oil to Bangladesh at a rate of less than US\$11 per barrel. According to the Agreement, the price of the crude oil will be paid after six months.<sup>268</sup>

### 5.2.10 Saudi Arabia and Qatar

The Saudi Arabia government provided US\$1 crore to the UN fund to maintain the relief activities to help the 1974 flood-affected people in Bangladesh.<sup>269</sup> Qatar provided US\$1,500,000 as flood aid to the Bangladesh government to help the flood-affected people.<sup>270</sup>

In fact, developing Bangladesh's relations with the Middle Eastern countries was essential for two specific reasons. First, Bangladesh needed economic cooperation from the Arab countries to

<sup>265</sup> "Bangladesh-Egypt Relations will be Strengthened: Bangabandhu at State's Dinner Party" [In Bangla], *The Daily Janapad*, 6 November 1974.

<sup>266</sup> "Egypt-Bangladesh Joint Cooperation Committee is Formed" [In Bangla], *The Daily Janapad*, 12 November 1974.

<sup>267</sup> "Bangladesh is Interested in the Formation of Asian Common Market" [In Bangla], *The Daily Janapad*, 4 June 1974.

<sup>268</sup> "10, 00000 tons Crude Oil will Arrive from Iran and Abu Dhabi", [In Bangla], *The Daily Janapad*, 22 January 1975.

<sup>269</sup> "United Arab Emirates has Contributed US\$ 50, 00000" [In Bangla], *The Daily Janapad*, 29 August 1974.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid.



address the socio-economic challenges. Second, given a large number of unemployed people in the country, Bangladesh required to utilize the vast labour market in the Arab world (discussed in the migration diplomacy section). Thus, sustained efforts were made by the Mujib regime to develop and cultivate ties with the Middle Eastern countries. And one can argue that economic diplomacy was the key focus in forging Bangladesh's relations with the Middle Eastern countries.

### **5.2.11 Africa**

Bangabandhu also reached out to African countries. In May 1974, the President of Senegal paid a four-day official visit to Bangladesh. Notably, Senegal is the first African country, who recognized Bangladesh as a sovereign nation-state. One of the key outcomes of the visit was the signing of a trade agreement between these two countries. In addition, it was also decided that a Jute factory will be established in Dakar at joint-venture. According to the trade agreement, both sides agreed to establish a joint commission to investigate how to boost Bangladesh-Senegal bilateral trade. The commission will meet once a year. At the end of the signing of the trade agreement, Senegal's Foreign Minister noted that his country's trade agreement with Bangladesh is as essential as cultural ties. The Foreign Minister also informed that Senegal is interested in importing jute and jute-made products, tea and other products from Bangladesh while exporting fertilizer, cement to Bangladesh.<sup>271</sup> Some African countries, including Papua New Guinea and Western Samoa, emerged as trading partners of Bangladesh under the Bangabandhu regime.

### **5.2.12 Economic Diplomacy with Australia and New Zealand**

In February 1972, the Australian Prime Minister, William McMahon, announced that Australia needs to support the newly independent state, Bangladesh. Consequently, McMahon announced that Australia would provide US\$4,000,000 as aid in the projects of resettlement, regular aid, training of the experts and food programme. Notably, Australia provided US\$2,000,000 an aid earlier for the reconstruction purpose of Bangladesh. McMahon identified Bangladesh as one of the most populous and poor countries in the world.<sup>272</sup> At the invitation of the government of Bangladesh, the Australian Foreign Minister Nigel Bowen paid a goodwill visit from 28 May to 29 May 1972. The Australian Foreign Minister brought a message from the government and the people of Australia of continuing friendship with Bangladesh and its people. Reportedly, in 1971-72, Australia provided US\$3,200,000 aid which increased to US\$6,800,000 in 1972-73, and US\$15,800,000 in 1973-74.<sup>273</sup> In addition, in 1972-73, the Australian government provided two Fokker Friendship Aircrafts to Bangladesh Airways and 190 Landrover cars to the Bangladesh government. "Australia has also indicated to the Bangladesh Government its intention of providing not less than 54,000 metric tons of wheat to Bangladesh in the financial year beginning 1st July, 1973".<sup>274</sup> In the post-Liberation War of Bangladesh, Australia also supported different projects related with medical science, telecommunications, radio-broadcasting, and in geological research. Australia also supported in the development of agriculture sector, in the establishment of bread-making factory, in the modernization of

<sup>271</sup> "Bangladesh-Senegal Signed Trade Agreement", *The Daily Janapad*, 28 May 1974.

<sup>272</sup> "Australia will Provide US\$ 40, 00000 More" [In Bangla], *The Daily Ganabangla*, 1 March 1972.

<sup>273</sup> "Australian Prime Minister Visits Bangladesh" [In Bangla], *The Daily Janapad*, 19 January 1975.

<sup>274</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "Australia, New Zealand, United States and EEC Respond to Appeal by Secretary-General on Food Grants for Bangladesh", Press Release IHA/171, 23 March 1973.

Bangladesh Radio telecast during the Bangabandhu regime. In August 1974, Australia sent milk powder, biscuits, and medicines to help the flood-affected people of Bangladesh. Australia also increased the volume of its food aid from 67,000 tons of wheat to 77,000 tons. In October and November 1974, this food aid reached Chittagong.<sup>275</sup>

As mentioned earlier, the Australian Prime Minister visited Bangladesh in January 1975. In honour of the Prime Minister, during his lecture, Bangabandhu noted, "I am glad that our relations with Australia have steadily improved over the last three years. You, Mr. Prime Minister, have set an example by abolishing all import duties on our jute goods. By taking this constructive and helpful step, you have demonstrated by your action, and not simply in words, that your government is sincerely trying to promote economic progress and self-reliance in the developing countries".<sup>276</sup> Moreover, at the beginning of 1975, the Australian government decided to provide 400 tons of milk powder, 2000 tons C. I. seat, 100 tons copper iron, 300 tons cement, and other necessary products.

In June 1973, New Zealand contributed NZ\$100,000 to the Government of Bangladesh to purchase foodgrain. New Zealand also contributed US\$66,360 to the United Nations Relief Operations in Bangladesh for food and transport for Bangladesh.<sup>277</sup> When New Zealand Prime Minister visited to Bangladesh in January 1974, Bangabandhu tried to convince him to deepen economic and technical cooperation between the two countries. Both Prime Ministers agreed to promote bilateral trade. New Zealand also assured Bangladesh to help in the execution of five year plan of Bangladesh especially in the development of the country's agriculture sector.

**Table 5.6: Bangladesh's Trade Scenario<sup>278</sup> (1972-1974)**

Country/ Region	Export (US\$ million)			Import (US\$ million)		
	1972	1973	1974	1972	1973	1974
Total	259.30	357.80	346.90	549.30	874.90	1096.00
United States	38.60	74.66	67.91	151.47	140.14	260.70
Canada		4.89	6.23		59.67	67.98
Japan	5.60	11.14	13.71	49.04	76.74	82.20
Austria		.03	.04		2.45	.39
Belgium		15.09	9.50		6.60	10.66
Denmark		.59	.69		6.86	6.84
France		12.8	14.29		16.15	16.64
Germany	10.67	15.95	10.57	19.36	73.43	77.31
Italy		16.90	14.19		9.30	6.53
Netherlands		6.80	5.79		18.56	14.29
Norway		.19	.14		.64	8.40
Sweden	.55	.92	.88	5.54	4.93	14.26

<sup>275</sup> "Australian Prime Minister visits Bangladesh", op. cit.

<sup>276</sup> Rabindranath Trivedi, 1999a, op. cit., p. 279.

<sup>277</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "New Zealand Contributes \$66,360 for Assistance in Food and Transport for Government of Bangladesh", Press Release SG/C/318 IHA/181, 27 June 1973.

<sup>278</sup> International Monetary Fund and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, *Direction of Trade Annual 1971-74*, IMF and IBRD, Washington DC, p. 84.



Switzerland	-	2.26	.97		4.18	6.76
United Kingdom		37.08	32.94		49.17	29.65
Finland		.47	.58		.07	.64
Iceland	.02	.03	.02			-
Ireland		.98	1.84		.28	1.61
Malta			.09			
Spain	6.17	2.83	4.96	.02	3.6	5.45
Yugoslavia	2.03	3.81	7.21	.54	7.02	7.68
Australia	3.52	10.13	16.08	6.18	11.47	98.90
New Zealand	1.82	1.50	1.54	.30	1.69	.83
Iran		1.86				
Iraq	3.40	2.08	2.32			
Argentina	6.25	7.41	9.99	.73	50.85	8.85
Brazil		4.47	.10		8.98	2.59
Guyana			.15			
Lebanon		.26	.52			
Burma	4.40	5.43 Y	8.78 Z	8.09	11.10 Y	17.08Z
China	1.89	.55	.76	.04	.33	.55
Hongkong		.49	.41		11.60	22.40
India	1.86	20.75	29.48 Y	94.11	191.78	77.31 Y
Malaysia		.15	.12		3.34	3.19
Pakistan			.49			2.34
Philippines				.99	1.98	5.28
Singapore	1.80	2.52	2.14 Y	7.60	17.69	28.09Y
Thailand		.05	.10 Y	10.70	7.11	4.05 Y
Papua New Guinea	.13	.06	.12Z			
Western Samoa	.01					
Other Africa	.55	1.39	8.01	1.70		4.82
EEC	10.67	106.25	89.81	19.36	180.35	163.53

### 5.2.13 Economic Diplomacy through International Organizations

Bangabandhu also used international forums to promote Bangladesh's economic interest. At the 1973 Commonwealth conference, for instance, Bangabandhu pointed out,

So far as Bangladesh is concerned, we would urge that, as one of the least developed countries, it should secure special concessions through negotiations with EEC, both in respect of concessions granted to Commonwealth countries as well as the liberalization of the generalized scheme of preference. Bangladesh has suffered a significant setback in her external trading relations. The established trading links which existed prior to liberation were disrupted, with the result that Bangladesh has to find new sources of supply for her imports and new markets for her exports and the flow of imports. While on our part we have been sparing no effort to reconstruct our war-ravaged economy, the sudden loss of preferential access to the UK market would seriously aggravate our present economic difficulties, as this would involve a further dislocation in our trading relations. In view of these special circumstances it is hoped that it will be appreciated that

Bangladesh needs time to adjust both the composition and the geographical distribution of her external trade.<sup>279</sup>

This is how Bangabandhu raised Bangladesh's concerns and (economic) interest in the world arena through international forums. It is also worthy to note that in the 1973 Commonwealth conference, Bangabandhu asked the developed countries to remove non-tariff barriers such as internal levies and taxes, specifications and standards which create impediments in promoting trade from the developing countries to the developed one. He also emphasized on trade liberalization and the promotion of regional economic cooperation for the benefit of the developing countries' economic interest. Thus, economic diplomacy dominated in the discourse of Bangladesh's foreign relations under Bangabandhu.

In November 1972, the International Development Association, an affiliate of the World Bank, approved US\$50 million in the reconstruction of critical sectors of Bangladesh economy, including the agricultural, industrial, transport and telecommunications sectors.<sup>280</sup> The credit was interest-free and for a term of 50 years. The loan included a service charge of 3/4 of 1 per cent to meet IDA's administrative costs. It was the first credit approved by the IDA since Bangladesh joined World Bank and IDA in June 1972.

In February 1973, the Australian Freedom-from-Hunger Campaign donated AU\$230,000 (US\$325,825) to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) for rural water supply projects in Tangail, Dhaka in order to set up 5000 shallow tubewells and hand pumps.<sup>281</sup> Notably, 200 people were able to collect safe drinking water from each tubewell.

On 30 May 1973, Bangladesh signed an agreement with the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) and World Health Organization (WHO) for \$16.7 million water supply programme in Bangladesh.<sup>282</sup> The UNICEF representative at the signing, Victor Beerman, noted that a large part of the \$10.5 million UNICEF contribution came from Denmark, the Federal Republic of Germany, Norway, Sweden and the United States, as well as from private groups in Belgium, Federal Republic of Germany, the United Kingdom, Finland and Australia.<sup>283</sup> Under this project, 160,000 shallow tubewells were newly setup or rehabilitated to supply clean drinking water to the rural people of Bangladesh.

In June 1973, the International Development Association approved US\$ 21 million credit for education programmes in Bangladesh.<sup>284</sup> Indeed, an educated, skilled workforce was essential for Bangladesh's agriculture and industrial development along with other service sectors. According to the press release, the purpose of the credit was "to finance an education project comprising the construction and provision of furniture and equipment for the expansion of Bangladesh's only Agricultural University at Mymensingh and for 13 technical institutes located in important

<sup>279</sup> Rabindranath Trivedi, 1999a, op. cit., p. 388.

<sup>280</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "IDA Approves \$50 million Credit to Bangladesh for Reconstruction Programme", Press Release IB/2946, 27 November 1972.

<sup>281</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "Australian Freedom-from-Hunger Campaign Donates \$483921 to UNICEF for Water Projects in India and Bangladesh", Press Release ICEF/1150, 2 March 1973.

<sup>282</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "UNICEF and WHO Sign Agreements for \$16.7 million Water Supply Programme in Bangladesh", Press Release ICEF/1180 H/2288, 30 May 1973.

<sup>283</sup> Ibid.

<sup>284</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "IDA Approves \$ 21 million Credit for Education in Bangladesh", Press Release IB/3092, 13 June 1973.



towns. The project also included overseas fellowships for teaching staff of the Agricultural University and equipment and technical assistance to upgrade the Technical Teacher Training College in Dacca".<sup>285</sup> The credit was for a term of 50 years with a grace period of 10 years. The credit was interest-free except a service charge of 3/4 of 1 per cent per annum to cover IDA's administrative expenses.

After independence, Bangabandhu adopted a development strategy emphasizing increasing food production. And agriculture was the key to Bangladesh's growth and development though it was severely devastated by the 9 months of prolonged war. Thus, Bangabandhu tried to reach out to friendly countries and international organizations to implement those development strategies.

In March 1973, the International Development Association, World Bank granted a credit of US\$23.35 million for the development of water projects in two major cities in Bangladesh, i.e. Dacca and Chittagong. According to the press release, "When completed in 1975, the Dacca and Chittagong water supply projects will provide continuous on-premise water supply to 70 per cent of the population of the two cities."<sup>286</sup>

In July 1973, Bangladesh received US\$7.5 million credit from the International Development Association (IDA), of the World Bank in the development of the agriculture sector, particularly to set up the seeds industry.<sup>287</sup> The credit was used in establishing a modern seeds industry, initially capable of producing about 12,000 tons of high-yielding rice and wheat seeds a year.

In July 1973, the International Development Association (IDA) also approved two loans. First, a US\$25 million credit for a US\$40.4 million highway projects in Bangladesh.<sup>288</sup> Second, a US\$4 million project to conduct the feasibility studies and other investigations required for preparing projects for financing by the Bank Group or by other sources of assistance particularly in the areas of agriculture and water resources.<sup>289</sup> Both the credits were for a term of 50 years with a grace period of 10 years. Though the loan was interest-free, it included a service charge of 3/4 of 1 per cent per annum to cover IDA's administrative expenses.

### 5.3 Migration Diplomacy

Given the war-ravaged economy and the increasing number of unemployed persons (both skilled and semi-skilled) in Bangladesh, the Mujib government took different initiatives to popularize manpower export. According to the government statistics, the number of unemployed persons in Bangladesh was recorded 78,00,000 in July 1974. Consequently, the Bangabandhu regime tried to explore manpower export possibilities in the African and oil-rich Middle Eastern countries through employing migration diplomacy. For instance, it was reported that in May 1974, a delegation from Uganda interviewed 3000 applicants in Dhaka. Among the applicants include

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<sup>285</sup> Ibid.

<sup>286</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "IDA Grants \$23.35 million in credit for water project in Bangladesh", Press Release IB/3022, 30 March 1973.

<sup>287</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "Bangladesh Receives \$ 7.5 million IDA Credit to Set up Seeds Industry", Press Release IB/3130, 3 July 1973

<sup>288</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "IDA Approves \$ 25 million credit to Bangladesh for Highways", Press Release IB/3128, 3 July 1973.

<sup>289</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "IDA Approves \$4 million Credit to Bangladesh for Technical Assistance", Press Release IB/3132, 3 July 1973.

679 doctors, 786 experienced teachers. The rest were engineers, graduate teachers, and lawyers. At the first stage, Uganda sent an appointment letter for 78 applicants.<sup>290</sup> Moreover, in July 1974, it was reported that at the government level, Bangladesh opened a manpower recruitment centre in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.<sup>291</sup> It is also worthwhile noting that during the official visit of Sir Alec Douglas-Home, M.P., Principal Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in Bangladesh, Bangladesh Foreign Minister requested the British government to adopt liberal policies on the question of entry of Bangladeshi nationals to the United Kingdom.

#### 5.4 Resolving Issues with Pakistan through Multilateral Diplomacy

Resolving issues with Pakistan, i.e. repatriation issue and a just division of the assets also became key concerns for Bangladesh foreign policy under Bangabandhu. To resolve the repatriation issue with Pakistan, Bangabandhu employed multilateral diplomacy. Bangabandhu wrote several times to the United Nations Secretary General, the Secretary General of the Islamic Secretariat, and the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross concerning the plight of Bangalees stranded in Pakistan and a successful repatriation to Bangladesh. On 10 February 1972, Bangabandhu sent a telegram to Tenku Abdur Rahman, Secretary-General of the Islamic Secretariat, Cairo drawing his attention concerning the plight of the Bangalees stranded in Pakistan and sought his cooperation in the repatriation process. Indeed, Tenku Abdur Rahman appealed to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to make personal efforts "to stop atrocities against Biharis and non-Bengali Muslims".<sup>292</sup> In a reply, Bangabandhu wrote to him that "life and property of non-Bengali populations here [in Bangladesh] is secure, in spite of many provocations over the past nine months".<sup>293</sup> In the letter, Bangabandhu also noted Bangladesh's cooperation during UN Secretary General's visit to Mirpur, Dhaka where the Biharis and non-Bengali Muslims live. Bangabandhu also questioned the role of the Secretary-General of the Islamic Secretariat against Bangalees stranded in Pakistan and their deteriorating situation. In his letter to Tenku Rahman, Bangabandhu noted that "Bengali residents in Pakistan are living in a state of terror and are being subjected to harassments and personal indignities. It is a matter of regret that you have not felt it necessary to say anything about the position of Bengalis in Pakistan".<sup>294</sup>

On 22 February 1972, Bangabandhu sent a message to the UN Secretary-General regarding the stranded Bengalis in Pakistan and their growing insecurities there and sought his help in the repatriation process. Bangabandhu wrote to the UN Secretary-General that, "I appeal to you to use your good offices urgently with the authorities in Pakistan to alleviate their [stranded Bangalees in Pakistan] plight. I also request you to send your Special Representative to Pakistan for this purpose. As you may be aware, on my part, I have made all possible arrangements to assure the security of non-Bengalees living in Bangladesh".<sup>295</sup> On 14 October 1972, Bangabandhu once again sent a telegram to Dr. Kurt Waldheim, the Secretary-General of the United Nations concerning the stranded Bangalees in Pakistan and their rapidly deteriorating

<sup>290</sup> "Manpower Recruitment Centre is Opening", *The Daily Janapad*, 24 July 1974.

<sup>291</sup> Ibid.

<sup>292</sup> Rabindranath Trivedi, 1999a, op. cit., p. 90.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid, p. 90-91.

<sup>295</sup> Ibid, p. 97.



condition. Bangabandhu wrote to the UN Secretary General that, "I wish to convey to Your Excellency the grave concern of the government and the people of Bangladesh about the precarious condition of the Bangalees stranded in Pakistan and request Your Excellency to use your good offices for securing the expeditious repatriation of the Bangalees and saving them from persecution".<sup>296</sup> In the letter, Bangabandhu also requested to send "a representative to enquire into the conditions of the Bangalees living in Pakistan".<sup>297</sup> Bangabandhu assured the UN Secretary-General about the security and safety and the "equitable treatment" of the non-Bangalee origin living in Bangladesh. Additionally, he also noted that international humanitarian agencies have all times had access to these persons.

In September 1972, Bangabandhu met with the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Geneva and told the President about the plights of Bangalees stranded in Pakistan in detail and sought ICRC's help in the repatriation process. Again, on 14 October 1972, Bangabandhu wrote to the ICRC's President Marcel Naville that, "...the International Committee of Red Cross, who has been taking an active interest in regard to the persons of non-Bangalee origin living in Bangladesh and owing allegiance to Pakistan, is well placed to play an equally significant humanitarian role in securing safety and well-being of the Bangalees stranded in Pakistan".<sup>298</sup> Bangabandhu also urged the ICRC "urgently take up the matter with the authorities in Rawalpindi with a view to preventing the persecution of the Bangalees and arranging their speedy repatriation to Bangladesh".<sup>299</sup>

Indeed, Pakistan's behaviour made the Bangladesh authority worried about the fate of Bangalees stranded in Pakistan who were sent to the "concentration camps". In a political report sent to the UN Secretary-General by the UN representative in Dacca, it was mentioned that Bangladesh was "constantly wary of Pakistan's own initiatives, afraid of being outwitted, ridiculed and defrauded by the Pakistani government in general, and by President, then Prime Minister, Bhutto, in particular".<sup>300</sup> Against such a backdrop, as already mentioned, Bangabandhu wrote many times to the UN Secretary-General with regard to addressing the issue of Bangalees stranded in Pakistan. As a result of those initiatives taken by Bangabandhu, Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Geneva, Switzerland, visited Pakistan on 26-27 May 1973 and Bangladesh on 28-29 May 1973.<sup>301</sup> Aga Khan also had a discussion with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh regarding the repatriation issue. Thus, the tripartite agreement between Bangladesh, India and Pakistan on 28 August 1973 concerning the repatriation issue was warmly welcomed by the UN Secretary-General. In fact, the Secretariat of the United Nations played an important role in the negotiation process of the

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<sup>296</sup> Ibid. p. 213.

<sup>297</sup> Ibid.

<sup>298</sup> Ibid. p. 214.

<sup>299</sup> Ibid. p. 215.

<sup>300</sup> "Political Report to the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the Problems of the Indian Sub-Continent as these Specifically Affect Bangladesh", 31 December 1973, p.2

<sup>301</sup> Report of Sadruddin Aga Khan, "Mission to Pakistan and Bangladesh", The High Commissioner of Refugees, 26-29 May 1973.

agreement.<sup>302</sup> It is worthy to note that the Secretary-General issued the following statement after signing the agreement in Delhi.

I warmly welcome the agreement which has been signed in Delhi. These problems have been of great concern to the United Nations during the past years and have been discussed in detail during my trip to the sub-continent early this year. I have then, and on many other occasions, expressed the thought that the mainly humanitarian consequences of the recent events should be tackled first. I hope that this very welcome development will lead to further steps in settling pending problems in the subcontinent.<sup>303</sup>

As Bangabandhu wrote several times to facilitate the repatriation process, stranded Bangalees in Pakistan, the UN Secretary-General asked the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to look into the matter. The United Nations system helped in the repatriation process of people between Bangladesh and Pakistan in accordance with the Delhi Agreement of 28 August 1973. For instance, on 13 July 1973, the UNHCR, with the help of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), announced the movement of 452 Bengalis from Pakistan to Bangladesh on four flights (from Karachi to Dacca) chartered by the High Commissioner on 11, 12 and 13 July.<sup>304</sup> The UNHCR resumed its repatriation operation in August 1973. Special flights were arranged to repatriate stranded Bangalees in Pakistan and Pakistanis in Nepal. As of 29 August 1973, a total of 5,000 Bengalis are being moved from Pakistan to Bangladesh, and 5,000 Pakistanis are being flown from Nepal to Pakistan.<sup>305</sup> Notably, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees paid another visit in Bangladesh on 7 and 8 November 1973 and Pakistan on 9 and 10 November 1973 "to gain a first-hand view of the repatriation operation which is being co-ordinated by UNHCR at the request of the Secretary-General".<sup>306</sup> In fact, the Delhi agreement "produced the repatriation of more than one hundred thousand people: about 70,000 Bangalees, and 30,000 'West Pakistanis' and 'Biharis'".<sup>307</sup> However, it was later reported that as of 1 April 1974, 120,225 people from Pakistan moved to Bangladesh while 68,549 people moved from Bangladesh to Pakistan. In the repatriation process, 25 countries, including Rwanda, contributed to the expense of airlift management (Appendix 9). Bangabandhu also employed multilateral diplomacy concerning the just division of the assets between Pakistan and Bangladesh. At the UN General Assembly, Bangabandhu sought international cooperation to resolve the issue. In the words of Bangabandhu, "The just division of the assets of former Pakistan is the other problem which awaits urgent solution. We expect that, in the overriding

<sup>302</sup> "Political Report to the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the Problems of the Indian Sub-Continent as these Specifically Affect Bangladesh", 31 December 1973, p.3

<sup>303</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "Text of Statement by Secretary-General on Agreement Signed in New Delhi", Press Release, SG/SM/1878, 30 August 1973.

<sup>304</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "UNHCR Announces Transfer of Bengalis from Pakistan to Bangladesh", Press Release REF/686, 13 July 1973.

<sup>305</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Resumes Repatriation of Refugees in Sub-continent", Press Release REF/688 IHA/191, 29 August 1973.

<sup>306</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to Visit Indian Subcontinent", Press Release REF/699, 6 November 1973.

<sup>307</sup> "Political Report to the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the Problems of the Indian Sub-Continent as these Specifically Affect Bangladesh", 31 December 1973, p. 2.



interest of the welfare of the peoples of the subcontinent, Pakistan will reciprocate by coming forward to solve these outstanding problems".<sup>308</sup>

This is how Bangabandhu employed multilateral diplomacy through international institutions to ensure safety and security and finally to facilitate the repatriation of the stranded Bangalees from Pakistan to Bangladesh on the one hand and the issue of division of assets on the other. Thus, this paper argues that resolving stranded Bangalees and the division of assets issue with Pakistan was one of the key priorities of Bangabandhu's foreign policy.

## 5.5 UN Diplomacy

It took almost three years for Bangladesh to enter into the United Nations as a sovereign nation-state. Thus, at the beginning phases of Bangabandhu's foreign policy, UN diplomacy was revolved around attaining UN recognition. Thus, Bangladesh pursued an active UN recognition diplomacy as mentioned earlier and tried to convince major powers, including China, not to apply veto power regarding Bangladesh's admission to the United Nations. Consequently, on 25 September 1974 Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, as the Prime Minister of Bangladesh addressed the United Nations General Assembly. Since then, UN remains as the cornerstone in Bangladesh's foreign policy. Bangabandhu realized that Bangladesh cannot go a long way without partnering with the UN and other international organizations. Thus, the world witnessed Bangabandhu's firm adherence to the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter and the covenants and agreements governing international relations. In fact, the UN charter is reflected in the constitution-making of Bangladesh.

With regard to Bangladesh's relations with the United Nations during the Bangabandhu regime, one needs to mention that even prior to the formal admission, the United Nations extended its valuable assistance in the rehabilitation and reconstruction programme of Bangladesh.

On 21 December 1971 the Security Council adopted resolution 307 (1971), in which the Council, among other things,

"4. Calls for international assistance in the relief of suffering and the rehabilitation of refugees and their return in safety and dignity to their homes and for full co-operation with the Secretary-General to that effect;

5. Authorizes the Secretary-General to appoint if necessary a special representative to lend his good offices for the solution of humanitarian problems".<sup>309</sup>

On 23 December 1971, the Secretary-General decided to appoint Mr. Vittorio Winspeare Guicciardi, Under-Secretary-General and Director General of the United Nations Offices at Geneva, as his Special Representative. From 27 December 1971 to 12 January 1972, Winspeare

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<sup>308</sup> United Nations General Assembly Twenty-Ninth Session, "Address by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Prime Minister of Bangladesh", *op. cit.*

<sup>309</sup> United Nations Security Council, "Report of the Secretary-General on the good offices mission of his Special Representative for humanitarian problems under Security Council resolution 307 (1971)", S/10512, 17 January 1972.

undertook his first visit to New Delhi, Dacca and Islamabad to observe the situations on the ground. In February 1972, Winspeare paid a second visit in the subcontinent.<sup>310</sup>

In June 1971, the United Nations Relief Operation in Dacca (UNROD) was set up "to help in planning, organizing and conducting humanitarian relief activities".<sup>311</sup> In December, both the General Assembly (by Resolution No. 2790 XXVI, of 6 December 1971) and the Security Council (Resolution 307 (1971), of 21 December 1971) authorized the continuation of United Nations Relief Operations. Paul-Marc Henry was in charge of the operation from 24 August 1971 until 29 February 1972. On 29 February 1972, Paul-Marc Henry wrote to the UN Secretary-General that, "the UN has now received a public expression of thanks by the Prime Minister and President of the new Republic of Bangladesh".<sup>312</sup> Indeed, Bangabandhu realized that with limited resources, the vast scale of humanitarian challenges in the post-war Bangladesh cannot be addressed without the help of the United Nations system and thus he extended all kinds of supports to the UN system. So, Bangabandhu never forgot to acknowledge the contributions/assistance of the United Nations. For instance, in his 25 September 1974 UN speech, Bangabandhu noted that "we are grateful to the United Nations for the efforts in mobilizing assistance in aid of the victims of the current catastrophic floods in Bangladesh".<sup>313</sup>

In March 1972, Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim appointed Sir Robert Jackson to take over-all charge of the United Nations relief operation in Dacca.<sup>314</sup> On 1 April 1973, UNROD was succeeded by the United Nations Special Relief Office in Bangladesh (UNROB). UNROB was established because the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, requested the UN Secretary-General for the continuation of UNROD's activities by a letter dated on 14 October 1972.<sup>315</sup> Consequently, the United Nations continued its Relief Operation in Bangladesh (UNRO), which was the largest of its kind ever carried out by the United Nations. In addition to food and shelter, the assistance programmes have provided medicines, vehicles and expert technical personnel.

In January 1972, senior officers from the United Nations visited Dhaka to observe the situations on the ground. After the visit, it was estimated that to meet relief requirements in 1972, approximately US\$630 million would be needed.<sup>316</sup> The United Nations also felt the necessity for an in-depth study of the detailed sectors in post-war Bangladesh. Consequently, in his report of 15 February 1972 to the General Assembly and the Security Council (document A/8662-S/10539), the Secretary-General announced his decision to send a high-level expert team to study the real needs of the people of Bangladesh in order to channel assistance to Bangladesh "in the

<sup>310</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "Secretary-General's Special Representative for Humanitarian Problems to Visit New Delhi, Dacca, Islamabad", Press Release SG/SM/1634/Rev.1 IHA/103/Rev.1 REF/657/Rev.1, 9 February 1972.

<sup>311</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "Note to Correspondents", Note No. 3819, 25 July 1973.

<sup>312</sup> Paul-Marc Henry, Assistant Secretary-General of UNROD wrote to the UN Secretary-General, 29 February 1972.

<sup>313</sup> Rabindranath Trivedi, 1999b, op. cit., p. 235.

<sup>314</sup> Office of Public Information, United Nations, New York, "Secretary-General Appoints Sir Robert Jackson to Take Over- All Charge of United Nations Relief Operation in Dacca", Press Release SG/A/112 IHA/111, 23 March 1972.

<sup>315</sup> Ambassador Francis Lacoste, Report on the Activities of UNROB, 1 April-31 December 1973, p. 1.

<sup>316</sup> Ambassador Erna Sailer's Report on the Mission of High-Level United Nations Consultants to Bangladesh, Vol. 1, March-April 1972, p. 1.



most effective manner". Thus, on 28 February 1972, the Secretary-General announced the appointment of the members of the high-level group of consultants (seventeen experts were made available from seven UN agencies), (See, Appendix 10).<sup>317</sup> Six major sectors, i.e., transport, telecommunications, agriculture, monetary/fiscal, education, and health, were identified (Appendix 10). On 3 March 1972, the Mission assembled Dhaka. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman received the Mission and extended all kinds of cooperation to the Mission which was acknowledged in the Mission's final Report.

On 14 April 1972, the *Report of the High Level Consultants' Mission to Bangladesh* was submitted to the United Nations Secretary-General. However, observing the serious crisis on the ground the head of the Mission, Ambassador Sailer sent a cable to the UN Secretary-General urging taking immediate steps. Sailer wrote,

My colleagues on High Level Consultative Mission have expressed great concern about supply shortages [in] certain critical areas. They advise me that these should be corrected as soon as possible in order [to] avoid serious food shortages and further damage to economy. [I] feel it my duty to report these recommendations covering the most critical needs to you without awaiting submission of our complete report [in] mid-April. Total amount involved is large (approximately US Dollars 100 million on which one half is for food items), but situation is very serious. Mission members report critical and deteriorating food situation throughout Bangladesh. Prospects for forthcoming rice harvest [is] poor due to shortage of seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, draught animals and fuel for irrigation pumps. Foodgrain stocks in local depots enough for only two or three weeks of normal offtake and totally inadequate for feeding returning, displaced persons and other vulnerable groups particularly children. Rice prices alarmingly high and still rising. Existing food aid commitments from India, UNROD and other sources cannot meet recommended 200, 000 tons minimum monthly requirement. In addition to shipments under existing pledges about 470, 000 tons of grain should be shipped before end of June to avoid depletion of stocks to dangerous levels. 5,000 tons of edible oil also required over and above supplied expected from India, USA, and WFP. Total cost [would be] approximately dollars 50.0 million. Dollars 18.3 million are required immediately for following inputs before beginning of main rice crop season in June when rains will make field transport and distribution difficult....<sup>318</sup>

In the letter, the Ambassador also mentioned about the requirements for the transport sector, telecommunications sector, small industries sector, and health sector. The UN Secretary-General had taken specific actions in response to that cable. The Secretary-General wrote to Ambassador Sailer that "I believe that the work which you and your Mission have achieved will bear very important fruit in the future and will give the United Nations a firm foundation on which to base its future efforts to assist Bangladesh".<sup>319</sup> In the letter, the Secretary-General also emphasized that "the outcome of this combined effort will assist the United Nations and the Governments which are contributing to the relief operations in Bangladesh to channel assistance to that country in the most effective manner".<sup>320</sup> It is worthy to note that the Mission's report was divided into two volumes. The first volume provided a general review of the overall situation with certain recommendations for action "required for the successful implementation of the rehabilitation

<sup>317</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "Composition of Consultants' Group to Dacca Area Announced", Press Release SG/A/111 IHA/107, 28 February 1972.

<sup>318</sup> Ambassador Sailer's Cable to UN Secretary-General, United Nations, Dacca, UNROD 500.

<sup>319</sup> UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim's Letter to Ambassador Erna Sailer, 20 April 1972.

<sup>320</sup> Ibid.

effort".<sup>321</sup> The second volume was about sectoral analysis, particularly on principle economic sectors (i.e. food grains, agriculture, transport, telecommunications, industry and power, economic, financial, and trade matters, health and social welfare, and education), "with detailed recommendations for the provision of equipment, commodities and technical assistance".<sup>322</sup> The head of the Mission, Ambassador Sailer, in her letter to the UN Secretary-General noted that "The resources available to Bangladesh are quite inadequate to meet these demands".<sup>323</sup> And all the expert members agreed that Bangladesh was facing a "unique situation". In the first volume, in the section of "The Aftermath of the War", it was noted that

Economic activity has declined in all sectors, development has been reversed, there have been massive movements of population and overall, the economic situation is worse than at any time in the past history of the country. The ten months of [war] and disruption between March 1971 and January 1972 have brought additional physical, social and political difficulties, and have given to long-standing problems of chronic poverty, an additional dimension in immediate human suffering. Having emerged from the war, Bangladesh now faces the daunting prospect of further serious hardship. The only assets that that can be mustered speedily are the patriotic feelings of the people and the help of the world outside.<sup>324</sup>

Additionally, the Secretary-General acknowledged that "the Mission is of the opinion that Bangladesh will have a continuing need of foreign assistance for several years to come".<sup>325</sup> Indeed, the study was imperative for Bangladesh to send the actual pictures on the ground to the international community so that they can extend their effective cooperation. In this context, Ambassador Sailer concluded her letter to the Secretary-General by noting that "I hope also that the Mission's report may strengthen your endeavours to arouse the conscience of the world community to come to the aid of Bangladesh".<sup>326</sup> Indeed, the Report made a humane call to the international community in extending their cooperation to the people of Bangladesh.

On 5 January 1972, the United Nations Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim publicly appealed to the international community for aid (i.e. food grain, transport, cash) to Bangladesh in order to "preserve lives".<sup>327</sup> While appreciating the "self-help" policy of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman government, the Secretary General urged the Governments to come forward with the help of the people of Bangladesh. In the press release, it was emphasized,

If widespread malnutrition, and almost certainly starvation, are to be avoided in 1973, 1,700,000 tons of food grains will need to be provided by Governments interested in assisting Bangladesh, and also a further \$5 million will have to be contributed in cash so that the United Nations Relief Operation in Dacca (UNROD) can continue to provide certain inland water transport services.<sup>328</sup>

<sup>321</sup> Erna Sailer's Letter to the UN Secretary-General, 14 April 1972.

<sup>322</sup> Ibid.

<sup>323</sup> Ibid.

<sup>324</sup> Ambassador Erna Sailer's Report on the Mission of High-Level United Nations Consultants to Bangladesh, March-April 1972, Vol. 1, p. 4.

<sup>325</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information "Secretary-General Announces Completion of Special Report on Bangladesh by High Level Group of Consultants", Press Release IHA/119, 14 April 1972.

<sup>326</sup> Erna Sailer's Letter to the UN Secretary-General, 14 April 1972.

<sup>327</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "Secretary General again Appeals to Governments for Aid to Bangladesh", Press Release SG/C/281 IHA/160, 5 January 1972.

<sup>328</sup> Ibid.



Against this appeal, as of 2 February 1972, the following countries pledged their contributions to UNROD operation in Bangladesh (Table 5.7).

**Table 5.7: Voluntary contributions by Governments to UNROD (Pledges as of 2 February 1972)<sup>329</sup>**

Country	Cash (\$)	Kind (\$)	Total (\$)
Austria	35, 000		35, 000
Australia	200, 000	950, 748	1, 150, 743
Belgium	858, 927	-	858, 927
Canada	495, 050	7, 000, 000	7, 495, 050
Chile	3,000	-	3,000
Denmark	273, 729	-	273, 729
France	452, 899	-	452, 899
Germany (Fed. Rep.)	4, 518, 072	3, 000, 000	7, 518, 072
Holy See	5, 000	-	5,000
Japan	-	1, 000, 000	1, 000, 000
Netherlands	2, 228, 916	3, 068, 000	5, 296, 916
New Zealand	-	13, 500	13, 500
Norway	548, 000	-	548, 000
Sweden	1, 500, 000	-	1, 500, 000
Switzerland	-	467, 062	467, 062
United Kingdom	2, 484, 500	2, 420, 000	4, 904, 000
United States	5, 000, 000	59, 139, 000	64, 139, 000
Totals	18, 604, 093	77, 058, 310	95, 659, 903

On 2 February 1972, the United Kingdom announced a contribution of £500,000 (US\$1.275 million) to the United Nations Relief Operation in Dacca (UNROD). In the press release, it was also noted that “During the past six months, the United Kingdom Government has made available US\$4.8 million to the United Nations for relief in the Dacca area”.<sup>330</sup>

On 15 February 1972, the UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim launched his appeal for aid and relief to Bangladesh, titled “Never before in human history”. The Secretary-General urged the international community that “has international assistance been needed so urgently and in such great amounts”.<sup>331</sup> Additionally, on 25 February, the Secretary-General made another appeal to the Governments of all States Members of the United Nations and members of the specialized agencies for further contributions in support of the United Nations relief operation in Dacca (UNROD). In the appeal, the Secretary-General noted that,

I have the honour to refer to the appeal for further voluntary contributions in support of the United Nations relief operation in Dacca, which I addressed to Governments as well as

<sup>329</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, Press Release SG/C/229/Rev.1 IHA/102/Rev.1, 2 February 1972.

<sup>330</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, “United Kingdom Announces Contribution to Relief Operation in Dacca”, Press Release SG/C/229/Rev.1 IHA/102/Rev.1, 2 February 1972.

<sup>331</sup> Thomas W. Oliver, *The United Nations in Bangladesh*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1978, p. xiii.

intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and private sources in my report of 15 February 1972 to the General Assembly and the Security Council (A/8662-S/10539). As indicated in that report, additional assistance in excess of \$565,000,000 will be required for the remainder of 1972 to meet but the most immediate needs of the affected area so as to avert the threat of large scale misery and hunger, and it is hoped that the international community will provide as great a part as possible of the total requirements, both through the United Nations and through other channels. The report also points out that substantial additional voluntary contributions, in cash and in kind, will be urgently required if the United Nations is to continue its humanitarian activities<sup>332</sup>.

In response to this appeal, international community responded positively. On 25 February 1972, the Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations wrote a letter to the United Nations General-Secretary regarding a contribution to the United Nations Relief Operation in Dacca (UNROD). It was written that the government of Italy "is considering the possibility to give a contribution in the frame of UNROD programme" and also "has decided to give to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Geneva a contribution of Italian liras 14 million for assistance to the Bangla Desh populations".<sup>333</sup>

On 25 February 1972, the United States also responded to the appeal of the UN Secretary-General. The Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations, George Bush wrote a letter to the UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim that the government of the United States will make available the following:

- Bulk wheat in the amount of 100,000 tons, and bagged rice in the amount of 75,000 tons; with a combined value of US\$23.5 million;
- An amount of US\$300,000 in cash as a first contribution to the operating costs of UNROD.
- A US\$3.65 million contribution to the creation of emergency shelter for the displaced population.<sup>334</sup>

Additionally, on 22 March, the Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations, George Bush wrote another letter to the UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim that "Pursuant to your appeal of February 15, 1972, the US Government has authorized a grant of US\$35 million for the UN relief program in Bangladesh".<sup>335</sup> However, according to letter, the United States requested the UN Secretary-General to spend the fund for some specific purposes, i.e.,

- US\$15 million to help cover urgent transport and internal logistical requirements, including provision of cargo handling equipment, chartering inland waterway vessels, repair or reconstruction of logistical facilities and charter of aircraft.

<sup>332</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "Secretary-General Appeals for Contributions for Relief in Dacca Area", Press Release SG/M/1642 IHA/106, 28 February 1972.

<sup>333</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "Text of Letter to Secretary-General from Italy on Contribution to United Nations Relief Operation in Dacca", Press Release SG/C/233 IHA/108 REF/659, 2 March 1972.

<sup>334</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "Text of Letter from United States to Secretary-General on Contribution to Relief Programme in Dacca Area", Press Release SG/C/237 IHA/114, 29 March 1972.

<sup>335</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "Text of Letter from United States to Secretary-General on Contribution to Relief Programme in Dacca Area", Press Release SG/C/237 IHA/114, 29 March 1972.



- US\$15 million to finance relief import requirements, including trucks, agricultural inputs, pumps and parts, roofing and other construction materials.
- US\$4 million for imported materials and local costs connected with rehabilitation, furnishing, and supplying of schools, hospitals and health centers.
- US\$1 million for UNROD administrative costs.<sup>336</sup>

On 29 February 1972, Kaj Sundberg, the Charge d'Affaires of the Permanent Mission of Sweden to the United Nations wrote to the UN Secretary-General that "I have the honour to inform you that the Swedish Government has decided to make a contribution of Swedish kronor 22,500,000 in cash and in kind to the United Nations Relief Operation, Dacca (UNROD)".<sup>337</sup>

On 8 March 1972, Otto Borch, the Permanent Representative of Denmark to the United Nations wrote a letter to the UN Secretary-General regarding a contribution of 25,000,000 Danish kroner (approximately 3,510,000 dollars) to the United Nations Relief Operation in Dacca (UNROD) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).<sup>338</sup>

On 27 March 1972, the Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations Yvon Beaulne, sent a letter to the UN Secretary-General concerning a contribution of US\$5 million to United Nations relief operations in India and the Dacca area. Among these, US\$3 million was allocated for United Nations Relief Operation in Bangladesh.<sup>339</sup> Notably, on 21 April 1972, Canada handed over two cheques to the UN Secretary General totalling US\$3 million for relief operations within the United Nations system in Bangladesh.<sup>340</sup>

On 28 March, Ireland sent a letter to the UN Secretary General informing that the Irish Parliament has approved a further contribution in the sum of £100,000 to be allocated as £35000 to United Nations Relief Operation in Dacca, £35,000 to United Nations Children's Fund, £15,000 to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in India, £15,000 to the Irish Red Cross for the International Red Cross effort in Bangladesh.<sup>341</sup>

On 29 March 1972, the UNICEF issued a press release where Henry R. Labouisse, the Executive Director of the UNICEF outlined a US\$20 million programme for the Dacca area in 1972 which was described as "the largest in UNICEF's history".<sup>342</sup> According to the Executive Director, the rough breakdown of the programme as: US\$2 million for child feeding programme; US\$4.5 million for health services; US\$6 million for clean water supply; US\$5 million for education;

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<sup>336</sup> Ibid.

<sup>337</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "Text of Letter to Secretary-General from Sweden on Contribution to United Nations Relief Operation in Dacca", Press Release SG/C/234 IHA/109, 2 March 1972.

<sup>338</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "Text of Letter to Secretary-General from Denmark on Contribution to United Nations Relief Operation in Dacca", Press Release SG/C/235 IHA/110 REF/660, 14 March 1972.

<sup>339</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "Text of Letter to Secretary-General from Canada on Contribution to Relief Operations in India and Dacca Area", Press Release SG/C/236 IHA/112 REF/661, 28 March 1972.

<sup>340</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "Text of Letter from Canada to Secretary-General on Contribution to Bangladesh Relief Operations", Press Release SG/C/242 IHA/120, 21 April 1972.

<sup>341</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "Text of Letter from Ireland to Secretary-General on Further Contribution to United Nations Relief Operation in Dacca", Press Release SG/C/239 IHA/116, 3 April 1972.

<sup>342</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "New Developments in UNICEF Programme in Dacca Area", Press Release ICEF/1106 IHA/113, 29 March 1972.

and US\$2.5 million for transport assistance.<sup>343</sup> It is worthy to note that the donation came mainly from the non-governmental organizations, i.e. Apple Record Company of New York (sales of 'Bangladesh Record Album') contributed US\$1,200,000; UNICEF National Committee of Australia, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Switzerland (with the Swiss Committee as largest contributor with US\$312,500) contributed US\$386,700; Oxford Famine Relief (OXFAM), United Kingdom contributed US\$375,600; Save the Children Fund, Sweden contributed US\$312,000; Caritas, Federal Republic of Germany contributed US\$76,000; and Council of Organizations for Service Overseas (CORSO), New Zealand contributed US\$30,000.<sup>344</sup> The press release also noted that "the largest ever single shipment of high-protein food mixtures-17,283 metric- tons of CSM (corn-soya-milk mixture), WSB (wheat-soya blend), and bulgar", the SPITFIRE arrived and unloaded in Chittagong harbour after its arrival from the United States. Notably, the SPITFIRE carried 645,055 bags of CSM, 55,981 bags of WSB, and 59,962 bags of bulgar.<sup>345</sup>

On 3 April 1972, the United States contributed US\$31 million for the United Nations relief operation in Dacca (UNROD).<sup>346</sup> With this contribution, total contribution from the United States amounted about US\$100 million and some 500,000 tons of food, a part of which was underway as of 3 April 1972.<sup>347</sup>

On 17 April 1972 the government of Japan informed the Secretary-General that Japan has decided to make available to the United Nations an amount of cash equivalent to \$US8 million as its additional contribution to UNROD.<sup>348</sup> In his April 5 letter to Japan, the Secretary-General mentioned that the additional Japanese contribution might be employed, including in the repairs of the Ghorasal fertilizer plant, procurement of transport equipment, and the possibility of defraying the cost of transporting relief supplies.

On 17 April 1972, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom wrote the UN Secretary-General that,

During our talk last Monday you suggested we might be able to help overcome the shortage of marine transport in Bangladesh by providing 12 sea trucks. I am glad to tell you that we can meet this requirement and the British High Commission in Dacca will inform the Bangladesh Government and your relief organization that we shall be supplying them as soon as possible. The manufacturers hope to provide the first sea truck by 27 April and we shall fly it out at the earliest opportunity. Thereafter the makers hope to produce two a week and we shall likewise send these by air as they become available.<sup>349</sup>

<sup>343</sup> Ibid.

<sup>344</sup> Ibid.

<sup>345</sup> Ibid.

<sup>346</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "United States Representative Presents \$ 31 million cheque for United Nations Relief Operations in Dacca Area", Press Release, SG/C/240 IHA/117, 3 April 1972.

<sup>347</sup> Ibid.

<sup>348</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "Japan Announces \$ 8 million contribution for relief in Dacca area", Press Release SG/C/243 IHA/122, 1 May 1972.

<sup>349</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "Text of Letter to Secretary-General from United Kingdom on Relief Operations in Bangladesh", Press Release SG/SM/1682 IHA/121, 24 April 1972.



On 12 May 1972, the Switzerland promised a grant of US\$750,000 to the United Nations launched its Relief Operation in Dacca Area (UNROD).<sup>350</sup> In May 1972, the Canadian International Development Agency donated US\$85, 800 to the UNICEF Bangladesh programme. According to the press release, "The US\$30 million programme for Bangladesh — the largest such undertaking in UNICEF's history"<sup>351</sup> is an effort by the United Nations and coordinated by the United Nations relief operation in Dacca (UNROD). In the child feeding, transport, clean water supply, mother and child health and aid to education programmes in post-war Bangladesh, the role of UNICEF is highly admiring. However, the UNICEF cautioned that "Bangladesh relief is still in the emergency phase — with an extra urgency added by the race to stockpile supplies around the country before the deluge of monsoon rains makes transport impossible in vast areas."<sup>352</sup>

On 31 May 1972, the UN Secretary-General, Kurt Waldheim made another appeal for further contributions from the international community to meet the relief requirements of Bangladesh. In response, the government of the Federal Republic of Germany promised an additional grant of 15 million Deutschmarks (approximately US\$4.7 million). Of this amount 4.8 million Deutschmarks will be readily available specified relief programmes of UNROD and UNICEF, and the remaining will be used for financing bilateral relief programmes and relief programmes carried out by the German charitable organizations. Notably, with this additional grant, German contributed approximately US\$16.6 million for meeting the relief requirements of Bangladesh.<sup>353</sup>

Against UN Secretary General's appeals for further contributions to the United Nations Relief Operation in Bangladesh (UNROB), in March 1973, the Belgian government contributed a grant of three million Belgian francs to the United Nations Relief Operations in Bangladesh (UNROB) for the financing of equipment and spare parts for the Dacca Airport.<sup>354</sup>

In March 1973, Australia, New Zealand, Australia and EEC responded positively to the Secretary General's appeal. New Zealand promised to contribute NZ\$100, 000 (US\$155, 062) in cash to the government of Bangladesh directly for purchasing food grains, while the country would also contribute NZ\$50,000 (\$67,531) to the United Nations Fund to help pay for food distribution. The United States promised US\$2,500,000 to UN Fund for foreign exchange costs related to general relief purposes while the EEC promised 175, 000 tons of food grains.<sup>355</sup> On 22 June 1973, the United States of America further pledged to contribute US\$1 million to Bangladesh relief operations. With this pledge of \$1 million, the United States contribution to UNROB reached at US\$3.5 million or more than one third of required total.<sup>356</sup>

<sup>350</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "Text of Letter to Secretary-General from Switzerland on Contribution to Bangladesh Relief", Press Release SG/C/245 IHA/123, 17 May 1972.

<sup>351</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "Canadians donate to UNICEF Bangladesh Programme", Press Release IHA/124 ICEF/1132, 23 May 1972.

<sup>352</sup> Ibid.

<sup>353</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "Text of Letter to Secretary-General from Federal Republic of Germany Regarding Aid to Bangladesh", Press Release SG/SM/1725 IHA/132, 12 July 1972.

<sup>354</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "Belgium Contributes to Relief Operations in Bangladesh", Press Release SG/C/292 IHA/172, 5 April 1973.

<sup>355</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "Australia, New Zealand, United States and EEC Respond to Appeal by Secretary-General on Food Grants for Bangladesh", Press Release IHA/171, 23 March 1973.

<sup>356</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "United States Announces Further Pledge of \$1 million to Bangladesh Relief Operation", Press Release SG/C/317 IHA/178, 22 June 1973.

In June 1973, Sweden announced to additionally contribute in the amount of 500,000 Swedish Krone (approximately US\$115, 000).<sup>357</sup> In July 1973, it was announced that United Kingdom will contribute US\$500,000 to the UN relief operations in Bangladesh particularly in the lightering operations.<sup>358</sup> In August 1973, the UN Secretary-General received two contributions (US\$769,230, and Df 1.2 million) from Netherlands for the relief operations in Bangladesh.<sup>359</sup> In August 1973, Finland also contributed US\$ 274, 000 to the United Nations Children's Fund for education purposes in Bangladesh.<sup>360</sup>

In the first week of September 1973, the UN Secretary-General received US\$ 117, 924.52 as contribution from Sweden to the UNROB which would be used for the transportation of foodgrains to Bangladesh.<sup>361</sup> On 19 October 1973, the permanent representative of Yugoslavia to the United Nations wrote to the UN Secretary-General that his government has decided to contribute US\$65,000 to the United Nations Relief Operation in Bangladesh.<sup>362</sup> On 11 December 1973, the UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim reported that "The United Nations Relief Operation in Bangladesh (UNROB)— the largest of its kind ever undertaken by the United Nations — will complete its work by the end of this [1973] year, as planned. The response of the international community, totalling some US\$1,324,000,000 (and including over US\$ 100,000,000 from Voluntary Agencies alone) has been most impressive".<sup>363</sup> Thus, the United Nations came forward very positively to address the socio-economic challenges in the post-War Bangladesh. And this was possible only because of the strong emphasis on Bangabandhu's UN diplomacy. It is also worthy of mentioning about the contributions from the United Nations system in Bangladesh.

<sup>357</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "Sweden Announces Additional Contribution to Bangladesh Relief Operation", Press Release SG/C/326 IHA/186, 16 July 1973.

<sup>358</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "United Kingdom to Contribute Another \$500, 000 to United Nations Relief Operation in Bangladesh", Press Release SG/C/321 IHA/184, 5 July 1973.

<sup>359</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "Statement by Secretary-General thanking Netherlands for Contribution to Bangladesh Relief", Press Release SG/C/333 IHA/190, 21 August 1973.

<sup>360</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "Finland contributes US\$274, 000 to UNICEF for Education in Bangladesh", Press Release ICEF/1190, 28 August 1973.

<sup>361</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "Statement by Secretary-General thanking Sweden for Contribution to Bangladesh Relief", Press Release SG/C/339 IHA/192, 4 September 1973.

<sup>362</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "Yugoslavia Decides to Contribute \$ 65, 000 to Bangladesh Relief Operation", Press Release SG/C/346 IHA/199, 23 October 1973.

<sup>363</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "Note Verbal of the Secretary-General", NV/351, 11 December 1973.

<sup>364</sup> Victor Umbricht, "First Report on Aid to Bangladesh", 12 November 1974, p. 6.



**Table 5.8 : Contributions or aid pledges by the United Nations System (between July and October 1974)<sup>364</sup>**

Name of the organ	Amount in US\$	Purpose
UNDRO	US\$15, 000	WHO/Drugs
UNEO	US\$12, 000, 000	US\$7 million for freight costs, EEC wheat and oil US\$5 million for diverted rice ship
UN/UNROB	US\$1,500,000	Freight costs of milk and vegetables
UNICEF	US\$513,000	Miscellaneous relief supplies
WFP	US\$2,571,000	Freight cost of 3, 000 tons of wheat and 200 tons of oil
Total	US\$16,699,500	

### ***5.5.1 Salvage and Clearance Operation of Chalna (Mongla) Port through UN Help***

After independence, Bangladesh's two main ports of Chittagong and Chalna were closed because of sunken vessels (Appendix 3-4). Therefore, on 8 September 1972, Bangladesh formally requested the United Nations for the clearance of sunken vessels from the approach channel to Chalna Port, the second largest port of Bangladesh. Notably, the sunken vessels had obstructed navigation since the end of the war in December 1971. Thus, its reopening was essential to ensure the smooth flow of food grains into the country and the exports of tea and jute to the international market. The United Nations responded positively. Indeed, "The United Nations considered that the salvage and clearance work involved was of a relief nature and the United Nations could respond to the request with the utmost urgency within the available financial resources of the United Nations Relief Operations in Dacca (UNROD)".<sup>365</sup> Hence, within a matter of days, the United Nations dispatched Captain U.F. Searle, Jr., a salvage expert of international reputation to Bangladesh. After a careful inspection of all sunken ships in Chalna port and after discussing with the government of Bangladesh, Searle submitted a report with recommendation to UNROD. Consequently, on 19 September 1972, the UN invited some of the major maritime salvage firms in the world to bid the contract. Twenty-two firms from 15 countries were solicited while responses were obtained from six firms. Finally, an US\$8 million contract was awarded to a consortium of international salvage firms headed by Smit Tak International Salvage Co. Ltd., of Rotterdam, Holland, and included the Fukada Salvage Company of Japan and Ulrich Harms GmbH and Co. of the Federal Republic of Germany, and Michael J. Batty and Associates Ltd. of Singapore.

To lift the wrecks, two of the world's biggest floating cranes were employed, Taklift One, owned by the Smit-Tak International Salvage Company of Rotterdam, and Nippon-Go, owned by the Fukada Salvage Company of Tokyo. On 26 October 1972, the planning began while in November they started working on the project. According to the UN Press Release,

<sup>366</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "Secretary General Announces Completion of United Nations Salvage Operation of Port of Chalna, Bangladesh", Press Release SG/1776, 7 December 1973.

One of the wrecks was refloated. Because of silting, the remaining five vessels had to be broken up under water and lifted section by section. Working in almost total darkness in the swift-flowing, muddy Pussur River, divers placed small explosive charges on the sunken wrecks to sever them into pieces which were afterwards lifted and landed in a scrap area ashore. One diver from Yugoslavia lost his life in this dangerous work.<sup>366</sup>

Thus, foreign citizen also sacrificed his life in the reconstruction process of Bangladesh. Indeed, the people of Bangladesh are deeply indebted to them who successfully completed such

dangerous work. The salvage task was completed on 9 May 1973 a week ahead of schedule, at a cost saving of several hundred thousand dollars.<sup>367</sup> According to the United Nations, the US\$8 million port clearance operation "was the largest of its kind since the Suez Canal clearance in 1957 carried out by the United Nations".<sup>368</sup> Finally, in December 1973, the UN Secretary-General announced the completion of its salvage and clearance operations of Chalna.<sup>369</sup>

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<sup>365</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "Secretary-General Announces Award of Contract for Clearance of Sunken Vessels from Chalna Port, Bangladesh", Press Release SG/1770 IHA/150, 24 October 1972.

<sup>367</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "Note to Correspondents", Note No. 3819, 25 July 1973.

<sup>368</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "Secretary-General Announces Completion of United Nations Clearance Operation of Port Chalna, Bangladesh's Second Largest Port", Press Release SG/1772, 16 May 1973.

<sup>369</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "Secretary General Announces Completion of United Nations Salvage Operation of Port of Chalna, Bangladesh", Press Release SG/1776, 7 December 1973.



**Chapter 6****Conclusion**

This paper provides a broad overview of Bangabandhu's foreign policy priorities and the diplomatic initiatives and measures undertaken by him. Indeed, Bangabandhu's outstanding leadership, foresight, personality, courage, confidence, charisma and humanity played a leading role in the formulation of Bangladesh's humane foreign policy based on the well-being of all, which is known as "enlightened approach to foreign policy". The paper argues that peace, peaceful co-existence, cooperation, friendship, mutual trust, equal sovereignty, peaceful settlement of disputes, non-alignment are the key defining parameters of Bangabandhu's foreign policy which has strong relevance for the study of Bangladesh's contemporary foreign policy and international relations. Indeed, Bangabandhu's firm adherence to the policy of peace, progress and non-alignment in the conduct of Bangladesh's foreign relations helped the country to achieve honour and prestige in the comity of nations.

The paper argues that Bangabandhu's foreign policy always corresponded to the needs of the people of Bangladesh and the world. Thus, his foreign policy was motivated mainly by domestic socio-economic realities and external needs, issues and challenges. Indeed, Bangabandhu tried to construct Bangladesh's identity in the international arena as a peace-loving country that believes in cooperation, peaceful-coexistence and harmony. Thus, he firmly supported any sincere effort to promote the cause of world peace, disarmament and human welfare. In recognition of his contributions to the cause of world peace, the crusaders of world peace honoured Bangabandhu with the Joliot Curie Peace Medal. Under Bangabandhu regime, Bangladesh was a voice for the marginal, neglected section of society in the world system, a strong advocate of multilateralism. Bangabandhu's key role for preferential treatment of trade for the developing countries is acknowledged by the world leaders. He was a strong promoter of international trade and thus spoke for addressing the problems in it including eliminating non-tariff barriers, and creating a level playing field for all in the international economic system which bears strong relevance even today.

Another key defining feature of Bangabandhu's foreign policy is that, during his time, Bangladesh never participated in any power politics whether at regional or international level. Instead, regional and international cooperation based on rules and norms was the guiding principles of Bangladesh foreign policy under Bangabandhu. This is what the current Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina, the daughter of Bangabandhu, follows in the conduct of Bangladesh foreign policy. Thus, we see that Bangladesh enjoys good relations with all. This paper argues that the current foreign policy pattern in Bangladesh is the continuation of the legacies of Bangabandhu's foreign policy focusing on peace, economic cooperation, non-alignment, regional and global cooperation, and multilateralism.

The foreign policy dictum developed by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is strongly followed by Sheikh Hasina. For instance, while the major powers in the region and beyond closed their doors to the Rohingya refugees, Bangladesh opened the door for them. As a result, more than 1.1 million Rohingyas received shelter in Bangladesh. Bangladesh, with limited resources is providing food, shelter, medicare and other services to this huge number of Rohingya refugees since 2017. To resolve the crisis, Bangladesh strongly believes in peaceful resolution through mutual understanding and dialogue and diplomacy as emphasized by Bangabandhu in resolving disputes.

The paper also discussed the diplomatic strategies that Bangabandhu employed to execute his foreign policy principles and priorities. After the birth of Bangladesh, the topmost priority for Bangladesh was gaining political recognition from the international community. Therefore, after the independence of Bangladesh, recognition diplomacy was the predominant tool in the conduct of Bangladesh's foreign relations under Bangabandhu. Imtiaz Ahmed contends that the ending of the first phase, i.e., diplomacy of recognition ended in 1974 which "paved the way for a new phase referred to as the economic diplomacy" which received momentum with the change of government in 1975.<sup>370</sup> This paper challenges this notion and thus argues that though recognition diplomacy received top-most priority in the foreign policy formulations of Bangladesh under Bangabandhu, economic diplomacy also practiced and prioritized since the emergence of Bangladesh to re-build the country's economy and to meet the socio-economic needs of the people. And economic diplomacy gained momentum since 1972 but not in 1975 which is clearly reflected in Bangabandhu's very first press conference in London on 8 January 1972. Indeed, the foreign policy of Bangladesh was revolved around promoting Bangladesh's economic interest in the international arena.

Therefore, Bangabandhu tried to reach every corner of the world from Uganda to New Zealand to explore economic possibilities for Bangladesh. Bangabandhu tried to create employment opportunities through migration diplomacy in the oil-rich Middle Eastern countries. Today, Middle East is the most important source for Bangladesh's remittances, which becomes essential for the continued socio-economic development of the country. And economic diplomacy is one of the key preferences for Bangladesh foreign policy under the current Sheikh Hasina regime (2009-present). At Bangladeshi envoys conference, held in July 2019 at London, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina, has asked Bangladeshi envoys based in European countries to pursue economic diplomacy as topmost priority to sustain the ongoing development in Bangladesh. And due to the practice and priority of economic diplomacy in the conduct of Bangladesh's foreign relations since 2009, Bangladesh is a rising economic power today<sup>371</sup> which implies the strong relevance of Bangabandhu's emphasis on economic diplomacy as a key tool of executing the foreign policy objectives of the country.

<sup>370</sup> Imtiaz Ahmed, op. cit., 2011, p. 210.

<sup>371</sup> Shariful Islam, "Bangladesh: The Rising Economic Power", *Modern Diplomacy*, 18 October 2020, available at <https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2020/10/18/bangladesh-the-rising-economic-power/>, accessed on 15 July 2021.



The paper also shows that Bangabandhu started the foundation of UN diplomacy and emphasized on UN diplomacy in his diplomatic practices. In fact, as the paper argues, since then, the United Nations remained one of the key focuses of Bangladesh's foreign policy and diplomatic practices. Today, Bangladesh's contribution to UN peacekeeping is acknowledged by the international community. Therefore, it can be argued that UN diplomacy took Bangladesh in a new height in the comity of nations which dates back to Bangabandhu.

The paper also has academic contributions. In fact, scholarship on foreign policy is dominated by the leaders of the developed countries while the foreign policy of a Third World country or its leader is hardly studied. When we teach and study foreign policy from a leader's perspective, we talk about the foreign policy of Churchill, Nixon, or Stalin. We hardly teach and study the foreign policy of Bangabandhu. But the paper claims that studying Bangabandhu's foreign policy (from a non-western perspective) becomes important for four specific reasons.

First, war and military security remained the dominant focus for the study of International Relations for decades, both in theory and practice. And every country thinks of others as a fear competitor which creates a threat perception. And thus every country takes preparation against others. State's competition for power, position and prestige create a security dilemma. Therefore, the world spends more money on armaments than on anything else though there is lots of pressing global issues like global poverty and hunger, health challenges, malnutrition etc. Bangabandhu emphasized economic freedom, human security instead of military security that merits serious attention in the study of International Relations. He also identified poverty, disease as the real enemy instead of inter-state war or external aggression as a real threat what is studied and taught in the traditional security studies. In fact, the COVID-19 global pandemic has shown the world that even the highly militarily equipped states are vulnerable to a single virus which implies the necessity of investing on health security. In this case, if the world would follow Bangabandhu's peace-centric foreign policy principle i.e. 'Friendship to all and malice towards none', the world would be more peaceful and stable. There would be no inter-state war if every country promotes friendship and cooperation. And friendship and cooperation lessen distrust and probability of war. Then, the billions of dollars that are spent on the armaments purpose could be spent on the purposes of human welfare and well-being. Instead of military security, if the world would take human security as the key security priority like Bangabandhu, the world would be a better place for tens of thousands of hungry, malnourished people. So, how International Relations is taught and studied globally and particularly in Bangladesh, needs to be interrogated.

Second, liberalism is one of the dominant theories which is taught and studied in IR as developed by Western scholars. But Bangabandhu also emphasized on cooperation, inter-dependence, friendship, and the role of international institutions in his foreign policy and international relations which are the key tenets of Liberalism theory of International Relations. Unfortunately, Bangabandhu's ideas are hardly studied in Bangladesh or beyond. Even International Relations as a discipline hardly talks about Non-western IR, IR from below, IR for the marginal which needs to be investigated. In addition, in his foreign policy and diplomatic practices, Bangabandhu emphasized on identity creation of Bangladesh in the international system which can be analyzed through the lense of Constructivism theory of International Relations as identity making is one of the key tenets of Constructivism theory. Thus, this paper argues that the ideas

of Bangabandhu in the realm of foreign policy and international relations need to be studied in the discipline of International Relations.

Third, Bangabandhu was the champion of peace, regional and international cooperation. The conventional wisdom is that the idea of SAARC was conceived by Ziaur Rahman. But it was Bangabandhu who conceived the idea back in February 1972, as the paper shows. Thus, when regionalism in South Asia is studied, the contribution of Bangabandhu is hardly talked about which needs to be problematized. The contribution of Bangabandhu in the regionalism process in South Asia needs to be studied.

Finally, Bangabandhu introduced an 'enlightened approach' in his foreign policy and international relations with a view to establishing durable peace in the world. He strongly believed that non-aligned foreign policy is the precondition for building an environment of peace, prosperity, stability and security in the world. Thus, he practised an "enlightened approach" to foreign policy, which is one of the key contributions of this paper. If the countries of the world follow such 'enlightened approach' to foreign policy, the world certainly would be a better place to live in. Thus, in the study of foreign policy and international relations, Bangabandhu's enlightened approach to foreign policy needs to be studied. This paper also strongly suggests that a course on *Bangabandhu and International Relations* needs to be introduced in the course curricula of IR.<sup>372</sup>

This paper concludes by highlighting the original contributions. The paper has theorized Bangabandhu's foreign policy, explained his practice of foreign policy priorities, economic diplomacy, migration diplomacy and multilateral diplomacy which were under-researched from the perspective of International Relations. International Relations as a discipline has embraced "practice turn" recently.<sup>373</sup> Thus, this paper strongly asserts that Bangabandhu's practice of foreign policy and diplomacy strengthens the "practice turn" of International Relations.

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<sup>372</sup> Dhaka University, Jahangirnagar University, Chittagong University, Rajshahi University, Bangabandhu University of Science and Technology, Bangladesh University of Professionals (BUP) have established International Relations as a separate discipline. Besides, one of the leading private Universities in Bangladesh, Independent University Bangladesh (IUB), Dhaka introduced IR teaching in 2017, in the name of Global and Governance Studies. Among them, only the Department of International Relations at Bangabandhu University of Science and Technology, Gopalganj offers a core course on Bangabandhu and International Relations at undergraduate level.

<sup>373</sup> Patrick Thaddeus Jackson, "Symposium: The Practice Turn in International Relations", 2017. Harvard Dataverse, V1, available at <https://dataverse.harvard.edu/file.xhtml?persistentId=doi:10.7910/DVN/NXX3JJ/ALHSSA&version=1.1>, accessed on 4 September 2021.



# Appendix 1: Countries which accorded recognition to Bangladesh during Bangabandhu Regime<sup>374</sup>

Sl. No.	Name of Country	Date	Sl. No.	Name of Country	Date
1	Bhutan <sup>375</sup>	6 December 1971	63	Liberia	26 April 1972
2	India	6 December 1971	64	Costa Rica	2 May 1972
3	East Germany	11 January 1972	65	Venezuela	2 May 1972
4	Mongolia	11 January 1972	66	Colombia	2 May 1972
5	Bulgaria	12 January 1972	67	Mexico	11 May 1972
6	Poland	12 January 1972	68	Spain	12 May 1972
7	Burma	13 January 1972	69	South Korea	12 May 1972
8	Nepal	16 January 1972	70	El Salvador	12 May 1972
9	Barbados	20 January 1972	71	Brazil	15 May 1972
10	Yugoslavia	22 January 1972	72	Argentina	25 May 1972
11	Tonga	24 January 1972	73	Haiti	26 May 1972
12	USSR	25 January 1972	74	Chile	1 June 1972
13	Czechoslovakia	25 January 1972	75	Equador	6 June 1972
14	Cyprus	26 January 1972	76	Zambia	21 June 1972
15	Hungary	31 January 1972	77	Romania	28 June 1972
16	Australia	31 January 1972	78	Iraq	8 July 1972
17	New Zealand	31 January 1972	79	Tanzania	12 July 1972
18	Cambodia Khmer Republic	31 January 1972	80	Dominican Republic	19 July 1972
19	Fiji	31 January 1972	81	Malta	21 July 1972
20	Senegal	1 February 1972	82	Guatemala	24 July 1972
21	Denmark	4 February 1972	83	Yemen	31 July 1972
22	Finland	4 February 1972	84	Peru	1 August 1972
23	Sweden	4 February 1972	85	Bolivia	2 August 1972
24	Norway	4 February 1972	86	Uganda	16 August 1972
25	West Germany	4 February 1972	87	Uruguay	24 August 1972
26	United Kingdom	4 February 1972	88	Panama	24 August 1972
27	Iceland	4 February 1972	89	Upper Volta	19 September 1972
28	Israel	4 February 1972	90	Paraguay	21 September 1972
29	Austria	8 February 1972	91	Vatican	25 September 1972
30	Western Samoa	8 February 1972	92	Honduras	19 October 1972
31	Cuba	9 February 1972	93	Nicaragua	1 November 1972
32	Japan	10 February 1972	94	Ethiopia	10 November 1972
33	Ireland	11 February 1972	95	North Vietnam	25 November 1972
34	Netherlands	11 February 1972	96	Ghana	8 December 1972
35	Luxemburg	11 February 1972	97	Afghanistan	18 February 1973
36	Belgium	11 February 1972	98	Lebanon	28 March 1973
37	Italy	12 February 1972	99	Morocco	13 July 1973

<sup>374</sup> Trivedi, 1999a, pp.471-474. Serial number 1 and 2 are taken from The Daily Star, "Bhutan was first to recognise Bangladesh", 9 December 2014, available at <https://www.thedailystar.net/bhutan-was-first-to-recognise-bangladesh-54336>, accessed on May 27, 2021; The Hindu, "Bhutan, not India first recognized Bangladesh", 9 December 2014, available at <https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/south-asia/bhutan-not-india-first-recognized-bangladesh/article6677033.ece>, accessed on May 27, 2021.

<sup>375</sup> There is a debate that who first accorded recognition to Bangladesh, India or Bhutan. According to the Bangladesh Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bhutan first recognized Bangladesh.

38	Canada	14 February 1972	100	Algeria	16 July 1973
39	France	14 February 1972	101	Tunisia	16 July 1973
40	Singapore	16 February 1972	102	Mauritania	16 July 1973
41	Thailand	16 February 1972	103	South Vietnam	31 July 1973
42	Central African Republic	16 February 1972	104	Ivory Coast	24 August 1973
43	Mauritius	20 February 1972	105	Zaire	8 September 1973
44	Philippines	24 February 1972	106	Egypt	14 September 1973
45	Malaysia	25 February 1972	107	Syria	14 September 1973
46	Indonesia	25 February 1972	108	Sudan	24 September 1973
47	Malawi	29 February 1972	109	Niger	24 September 1973
48	Gambia	2 March 1972	110	Guinea	28 September 1973
49	Ceylon	4 March 1972	111	Cameroon	6 October 1973
50	Swaziland	10 March 1972	112	Dahomey	16 October 1973
51	Greece	11 March 1972	113	Jordan	22 October 1973
52	Switzerland	13 March 1972	114	Kuwait	4 November 1973
53	Lesotho	21 March 1972	115	Yemen	6 November 1973
54	Botsawana	23 March 1972	116	North Korea	16 December 1973
55	Jamaica	25 March 1972	117	Pakistan	22 February 1974
56	Guyana	28 March 1972	118	Iran	22 February 1974
57	USA	4 April 1972	119	Turkey	22 February 1974
58	Gabon	6 April 1972	120	Nigeria	28 February 1974
59	Maldives	12 April 1972	121	Qatar	4 March 1974
60	Malagasy	14 April 1972	122	Saudi Arabia	16 August 1975
61	Sierra Leone	21 April 1972	123	China	31 August 1975
62	Laos	25 April 1972			



**Appendix 2: Import Requirements of Raw Materials (Half Yearly) of Industrial Units Under the Directorate of Commerce and Industries, Government of Bangladesh, January 1972 (Figures are at the pre-devaluation rate)<sup>376</sup>**

Serial No.	Item	Half yearly requirement in Rs.
1	Aluminium Foil (Paper backed)	21,56,665.00
2	Aluminium Foil	3,79,163.00
3	Aluminium Powder	15,462.00
4	Agricultural implements	95,000.00
5	Asbestos	33,462.00
6	Activated carbon/Activated charcoal	2,13,336.00
7	Adhesive Tape	2,20,000.00
8	Antimony	4,000.00
9	Antimonial lead	4,35,300.00
10	Agar Wood	1,00,000.00
11	Aluminium Ingots/sheets/circle and other manufactures	79,43,072.00
12	Abrasives, Polishing compound and polishing cloth	8,550.00
13	Blown Oxidized Asphalt	2,63,337.00
14	Bentonite	13,950.00
15	Bleaching powder	2,23,810.00
16	Binding Cloth	5,000.00
17	Binding Material	20,573.00
18	Bronze Powder	16,87,000.00
19	Barytes	52,047.00
20	Butter Colour and Essence	1,080.00
21	Boiled Linseed oil/stand oil	2,55,977.00
22	Blue Match Paper	4,47,200.00
23	Board all sorts	44,77,761.00
24	Brass Ingot/sheet/Manufactures	19,12,570.00
25	B.P.Sheet	16,29,950.00
26	Buffalo Horns	60,000.00
27	Brass strip/Wire/Bronze Wire	27,48,050.00
28	Ball Bearing	5,56,233.00
29	Bed Spring	1,98,000.00
30	Blue Tacks, Iron Panel Pins	1,32,000.00
31	Biscuit Materials. FVC Biscuits	41,580.00
32	Caustic Soda	19,33,610.00
33	Cigarette Paper	16,50,230.00
34	Chemicals required for manufacturing safety matches	7,36,625.00
35	Coconut Oil	152,38,444.00
36	Crude Soyabean Oil	113,69,000.00
37	China Clay/Ball clay	9,76,820.00
38	Creosote oil	5,71,469.00

<sup>376</sup> Ambassador Erna Sailer's Report on the Mission of High-Level United Nations Consultants to Bangladesh, March-April 1972, Vol. II, Sectoral Report-VI-Industry and Power, Table I.

39	Celluloid sheets	7,04,125.00
40	Cap seals/crown corks	2,56,944.00
41	Cellulose lacquers for pencils	40,126.00
42	Copper coated iron wire	12,000.00
43	Canvas	3,500.00
44	Colours (Oil and Water) including colouring and decorating materials	2,70,536.00
45	Cement-white and colour	1,33,950.00
46	Carbonizing tissue paper	2,56,750.00
47	Chemicals all sorts	349,27,086.00
48	Clips, nibs and brass sheets	7,39,360.00
49	Corks	3,00,000.00
50	Carbon black	2,92,988.00
51	Cedar wood	75,229.00
52	Copra	12,04,000.00
53	Cellophane paper	3,88,810.00
54	Canes and rattans	1,67,512.00
55	Conch shell	2,50,000.00
56	Chalk all sorts	2,13,810.00
57	Copper ingot/sheet/other manufactures	53,76,175.00
58	Components, parts and accessories	73,84,420.00
59	Ceramic frits, Ceramic colours	12,540.00
60	Dyes and colours	221,45,393.00
61	Drugs and medicines (raw materials excipients and others)	102,01,100.00
62	Essence for Beverage	4,87,164.00
63	Electroplating polishes composition and salts	4,17,314.00
64	Electrical steel sheet	8,86,100.00
65	Essential oils and essences	47,44,540.00
66	Food colours	7,20,710.00
67	Fuller's earth/Bleaching earth	3,82,510.00
68	Feldspar	7,19,714.00
69	Filter aid	1,53,720.00
70	Felts and wires	13,28,250.00
71	Formica	1,32,000.00
72	Fire bricks, fire clay and graphites	12,62,000.00
73	Glacine paper	17,00,000.00
74	Glue gum resin	34,59,728.00
75	Glass Stone Beads	90,000.00
76	Glass bottles, neutral glass tubes ampoules and vials	59,62,034.00
77	G. I. Wire	39,31,050.00
78	G.P. Sheets	78,14,600.00
79	Glass for watch and clock	17,000.00
80	Gas in cylinders	75,000.00
81	Gum pots with rubber caps	5,250.00
82	German silver sheet/tubes	29,350.00
83	Hoop Iron (bailing hoops)	82,500.00



84	Homeopathic ingredients	1,00,000.00
85	Hard boards	1,00,000.00
86	Hooks, chains, clasps of copper	3,42,850.00
87	Hinges, rivets, screws and pads	1,80,500.00
88	Hair belting yarn	2,90,000.00
89	Iron powder	6,000.00
90	Iron and steel scraps	12,31,420.00
91	Iron and steel wire	59,325.00
92	Iron steel sheet	41,080.00
93	Ivory (manufactured)	1,000.00
94	Insecticides, pesticides, weedicides and agricultural chemicals	8,25,000.00
95	Investment powder	11,325.00
96	Liquid gold	57,150.00
97	Lithophone	2,60,236.00
98	Lead ingot	4,15,360.00
99	Lamps sheet, tubing and rods	1,46,750.00
100	Match glue	3,26,250.00
101	Miscellaneous packing materials for pharmaceutical (allopathic) ind.	9,16,500.00
102	Mercury	1,46,700.00
103	Methanol	5,00,000.00
104	Minerals (bauxite, gelsonite)	4,24,170.00
105	Melamine impregnated sheets and melamine barrier paper	4,42,500.00
106	Milk powder	12,43,567.00
107	Medicinal Herbs and crude drugs	8,00,000.00
108	Metal spangles	22,650.00
109	Movement parts for watch and clock	3,50,360.00
110	M. S. Sheet	120,23,200.00
111	M.S. Strips	39,13,200.00
112	M.S. Pipes and tubes	5,73,500.00
113	M. S. Billets	955,75,000.00
114	M. S. Wire, Wire Rods all sorts	76,28,200.00
115	M.S. Plates	55,20,976.00
116	M.S. Structural	13,90,190.00
117	Menthol	2, 78,461.00
118	Nylon Bristles, Monofilament	2,51,700.00
119	Napthalene Crystals	99,000.00
120	Nylon Twine	40,19,510.00
121	Nail Wire	41,21,250.00
122	Nickel Anode	60,490.00
123	Nuts, Bolts and Screws	6,27,000.00
124	Photographic Bullers	3,435.00
125	Photographic Films	1,35,200.00
126	Photographic Materials	8,00,000.00
127	Pigments and Dry Colours	39,31,284.00
128	Polishes and Composition	4,99,018.00
129	Pitch and Tar	36,08, 781.00
130	Polishing Stone	8,620.00

131	Polishing Cloth	60,000.00
132	Painters' materials	3,90,354.00
133	Paints, Lacquers and Varnishes	2,81,525.00
134	Plywood	24,500.00
135	Plastic/Vinyl Sheets and Laminates	3,34,550.00
136	Plaster of Paris	3,750.00
137	PVC Resin	6,65,240.00
138	Paraffin Wax and Liquid Paraffin	6,96,010.00
139	Petroleum Jelly	8,15,420.00
140	Paper all sorts	65,14,773.00
141	Printing Ink	11,43,500.00
142	Printers accessories	34,250.00
143	Quartz	1,90,500.00
144	Resin	6,32,333.00
145	Raw Rubber	35,91,221.00
146	Raw films	71,640.00
147	Roller Composition	1,00,000.00
148	Rough Blanks	2,73,600.00
149	Rubber Thread	1,65,000.00
150	Rubber moulding compounds	11,325.00
151	Spices all sorts	12,30,000.00
152	Sulphur	35,91,454.00
153	Sprayers	74,100.00
154	Solvents	2,04,625.00
155	Stamping Foils	14,540.00
156	Sand Paper	70,154.00
157	Sheet and Plate Glass	23,42,535.00
158	Soda Ash	26,48,249.00
159	Synthetic Rubber	16,36,645.00
160	Starch	4,55,750.00
161	Sizing materials	18,34,000.00
162	Stitching Wire	41,100.00
163	Stellon tooth making powder	2,250.00
164	Special steel including high speed alloy	21,71,316.00
165	Stainless steel	23,125.00
166	Studio bulbs and cables	5,000.00
167	Synthetic abrasive grains	1,75,560.00
168	Slate stone	2,45,750.00
169	Tallow	225,90,000.00
170	Tin plates	146,18,541.00
171	Tin ingots	6,63,234.00
172	Tea for blending	4,83,250.00
173	Thinners	6,019.00
174	Transfer stamps	57,150.00
175	Typewriter ribbon cloth	1,02,000.00
176	Thermoplastic moulding compound including plastic sheets and rods/PVC compound	123,33,705.00
177	Talc powder	2,02,050.00
178	Timber	35,53,300.00



179	Tools and workshop equipment	3,91,749.00
180	Umbrella cloth	227,95,000.00
181	Umbrella fittings	98,10,000.00
182	Unwrought plastic sheets and tubes	44,550.00
183	Vitamin A & D (for vegetable ghee)	25,760.00
184	Venylene guide tape and guide cloth	20,000.00
185	Vegetable and synthetic tanning substances	7,78,900.00
186	Viscose packing and wrapping	40,000.00
187	Vitrified and resin binder	20,900.00
188	Wax all sorts including paraffin wax and stearing	18,18,356.00
189	Wire rope, iron chain and anchor	2,26,600.00
190	White metal and gun metal	2,16,000.00
191	Welding electrode	24,560.00
192	Wire all sorts special type (enamelled copper wire, nichrome wire etc.)	5,31, 530. 00
193	Wood pulp (for urea formaldehyde moulding compound industry only)	2,99,154.00
194	Wood screw and bolts	6,67,500.00
195	Zari thread	5,75,000.00
196	Zinc callot/can	13,48,600.00
197	Zinc ingot	9,65,000.00
198	Pig Iron	51,98,000.00
199	Misc. other items not covered in the list	5,95,355.00
200 <sup>377</sup>	Cigarette tobacco: 270.00 lakh lbs.	6,00,00,000.00
201	Raw cotton: 2,10,000 bales	14,70,00,000.00
		700/- per bale
202	Cotton yarn: 60,000 bales	9,00,00,000.00
	20s-40s	1500/- per bale
203	Cotton yarn: 6,000 bales	1,50,00,000.00
	60s and above	2500/- per bale
204	Machinery, mill works and accessories and parts	2,00,00,000.00
Total		80,40, 66,541.00

<sup>377</sup> Items from 200 to 204 were previously imported from West Pakistan and now required to be imported from other countries.

### Appendix 3: List of Wrecks due to Hostilities in the Port of Chittagong<sup>378</sup>

Serial No.	Name of Vessel	Owners	Description of vessel	Remarks
1	Teetics-C	-	-	Wreck visible
2	Naval Gunboat	Pakistan Navy	Small boat about 100 T.	Submerged totally
3	M.V. Ramgati	Bangladesh Shipping Corporation	LOT with cargo capacity of 200 T.	Damaged but salvageable
4	Unknown small boat	Pakistan Navy	-	-
5	M. V. Sonartari	M/S Navigation Co., Pakistan	600 dwt loaded with rice	Total wreck. Presently limiting length of incoming ships to 500 feet length overall.
6	M.T. Avics	Esso Oil Co.	1,000 T. oil tanker	Total wreck
7	Esso Ark	Esso Oil Co.	1,000 T. oil tanker	Burnt
8	M. V. Mahatabjaved II	M/S Burma Eastern Ltd. (Pakistan Tankers Ltd.) Pakistan	1,000 T. oil tanker	Opposite Silo Jetty
9	Unknown small boat	-	-	-
10	S. S. Surma	National Shipping Corporation (Pakistan)	Cargo ship	Also blocking River Mooring No.1
11	M.T. Rashid	Chittagong Port Trust	Motor Tug	-
12	S. S. Anis Baksh	Pakistan	Cargo Ship	Floating wreck
13	S. S. Karanphuli	Pakistan	Cargo Ship	Floating wreck
14	S.S. Al-Abbas	Pakistan	Cargo Ship	Floating wreck
15	M.V. Dulal	Pakistan	800 ton Tanker	

<sup>378</sup> Ambassador Erna Sailer's Report on the Mission of High-Level United Nations Consultants to Bangladesh, March-April 1972, Vol. II, Sectoral Report IV-Transportation, Appendix 2.



**Appendix 4: List of Sunken/Damaged Vessels in Chalna Anchorage<sup>379</sup>**

Serial No.	Name of Vessel	Description	Condition of Vessel	Name of Owners
1	Chrysovalandou	Sunk & visible. Sitting on bottom upright.	Sunk by mine explosion. Cargo 7000 tons rice	Greek
2	Ondoreoa	Sunk & visible. Sitting on bottom upright.	Sunk by air raid cargo 18424 B/S Jute.	Spain
3	Mustali	Sunk. Sitting on bottom tilted on eastboard side.	Sunk by air raid cargo 788 B/S gunnies, 2576 tons gen.	Pakistan
4	Saptadinga	Capsized and sunk,. Lying atar board aide hull visible.	Sunk by mine explosion	Bangladesh
5	Barge Liaquate	Not visible	Sunk by mine explosion. Cargo Jute B/S	Bangladesh
6	Mastrosteidos	Capsized and sunk. Lying across the channel port aide. Bull visible in low water.	Sunk by mine explosion and aid raid. Cargo 1826 tons fertilizer	British
7	Makran	Capsized and sunk. Lying on port aide and visible.	Damaged by air raid and prolonged fire. 1200 Tons General Cargo	Pakistan
8	Gun Boat Tufail	Not visible	Sunk by mine explosion. Reported disintegrated by force of explosion.	Port Directorate, Khulna.
9	Mozen	Capsized and sunk. Hull visible on low water	Damaged by air raid.	Port Directorate, Khulna.
10	Nordpole	Sunk. Sitting on bottom badly tilted on atarboard aide. Super structure and hull visible.	Damaged by aid raid at MB No. 3. Shifted to present location in 2 <sup>nd</sup> week of January 1972. Cargo or rice burnt out	Danish
11	Ocean Enterprise	Sitting on bottom on her atern. Water in No. 3, 4, & 5 holds hull and superstructure fully visible	Damaged by air raid at MB No. 6. Shifted to present location in 2 <sup>nd</sup> week of January 1972. Empty.	Pakistan.

<sup>379</sup> Ambassador Erna Sailer's Report on the Mission of High-Level United Nations Consultants to Bangladesh, March-April 1972, Volume II, Sectoral Report IV-Transportation, Appendix 3.

**Appendix 5: Transport sector's capital/development expenditures, including rehabilitation work in 1972-73 (Millions of US\$)<sup>380</sup>**

Areas	Total	Foreign Exchange
a. Chittagong Port Trust Continuation of current projects for the rehabilitation (from cyclone effects), extension and improvements of port facilities	3.25	1.70
b. Chalna Port Trust Purchase of one tug, one pilot vessel, one buoy tender, two dispatch launches, navigation aids, and continuation of current projects regarding deep-water berths and land-based storage facilities	6.61	5.00
c. Inland Water Transport Authority Rehabilitation of jetties, pontoons, buildings, repairs to vessels and land transport, etc.	0.71	0.24
d. Inland Water Fleet Purchase of additional oil tankers and one barge, first lot of cargo vessels, tugs, and passenger vessels	12.53	12.53
e. Bangladesh Railway Reconstruction or repair of bridges, tracks, telecommunications, signals, stations, workshops, rolling stock and ferries, and continuation of current projects for supply of rails, bridge materials and rolling stock	29.60	16.10
f. Roads and Highways Directorate Reconstruction of bridges, procurement of ferries and ferry materials, improvement of roads and continuation of high priority projects	30.00	12.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>82.60</b>	<b>47.57</b>

<sup>380</sup> Ambassador Erna Sailer's Report on the Mission of High-Level United Nations Consultants to Bangladesh, March-April 1972, Vol. II, pp.21-22.



Appendix 6: Health sector assistance requirements (April 1972-June 1973)<sup>381</sup>

Serial No.	Category	Months	Cost in US\$
1	Upgrading of medical colleges (original estimate Rs 5 million each)		500,000
2	Upgrading of sadar and subdivisional hospitals (total 48 hospitals)		480,000
3	School health units		100,000
4	Medical supply depots (transport)		42,000
5	Training of health workers		200,000
6	Malaria Eradication (transport 60 vehicles)		180,000
7	Smallpox eradication (transport 20 vehicles)		60,000
8	Cholera control (transport and equipment)		30,000
9	Tuberculosis control (equipment and transport)		139,000
10	Leprosy control (transport)		11,000
11	Institute of Public Health (transport and equipment, cash grant) Rs 120,000		
12	Family Planning		590,000
13	Technical assistance (experts)		380,000
14	Technical Assistance (fellowships)		100,000
Total			US\$2,812,000

<sup>381</sup> Ambassador Erna Sailer's Report on the Mission of High-Level United Nations Consultants to Bangladesh, March-April 1972, Volume II, Sectoral Report VIII-Health and Social Welfare, Table I.

**Appendix 7: Estimated requirements for education sector<sup>382</sup>**

Serial No.	Sectors	Estimated cost US\$
1	Primary education For repair/reconstruction of buildings provision of materials such as cement, steel rods, structural timber, roofing materials; for operation of schools, teaching aids and equipment; for replacement of furniture, provision of timber for local production	928,700
2	Secondary education  Same as above plus an allocation of paper for local printing of text books.	2,028,850
3	Primary Teachers training Institutes  Same as for primary education  Replacement of transport lost or destroyed	52,000  61 , 750
4	Rehabilitation of students  Provision of stationery sets of 1.5 million primary and secondary school children.	1 ,970,000
Total		\$5, 041, 340

<sup>382</sup> Ambassador Erna Sailer's Report on the Mission of High-Level United Nations Consultants to Bangladesh, March-April 1972, Vol. II, Sectoral Report IX-A-Education, p. 3.



# Appendix 8: Aid scenario in 1974-75 (million dollars) (As at 11 December 1974)<sup>383</sup>

A=Pipeline, 1 July 1974; B=New commitment, 1 July 1974- 30 June 1975; C=Expected disbursement, 1 July 1974-30 June 1975.

Actor	Food	Non-project	Project	Cash	Total
Australia	15.5 (B) 15.5 (C)	3.1 (B) 3.1 (C)	2.0 (A) 4.6 (B) 1.3 (C)	-	2.0 (A) 23.2 (B) 19.9 (C)
Belgium	0.6 (B) 0.6 (C)	2.6 (B) 0.7 (C)	1.3 (A) 1.2 (B)	-	1.3 (A) 4.4 (B) 1.3 (C)
Canada	50.0 (B) 50.0 (C)	3.0 (A) 5.0 (B) 8.0 (C)	19.0 (A) 8.0 (B) 9.1 (C)	1.2	22 (A) 63 (B) 68.3 (C)
Denmark	1.0 (B) 1.0 (C)	0.7 (A) 2.0 (B) 2.7 (C)	1.4(A) 8.2(B) 2.7(C)	-	9.6(A) 17.6(B) 11.2(C)
Finland	-	3.4 (B)	-	-	3.4 (B) 3.4 (C)
France		5.7 (A)	10.1 (A)		15.8 (A)
Germany	9.5 (B) 9.5 (C)	34.0 (B) 18.9 (C)	8.6 (A) 13.4 10.5 (C)	-	8.6 (A) 56.9 39.0 (C)
Japan	9.5(B) 9.5(C)	30.0 (A) 44.0 (B) 38.7 (C)	1.3 (B) 1.3 (C)		30.0 (A) 54.8 (B) 49.5 (C)
Netherlands	3.7 (A) 3.7 (C)	6.6 (A) 2.2 (B) 3.7 (C)	16.9 (A) 6.5 (B) 6.6 (C)		27.2 (A) 8.8 (B) 14.0 (C)
New Zealand	0.2 (A) 0.7 (B) 0.7 (C)	0.2 (A) 0.2 (C)	0.6 (A) 2.1 (B) 1.6 (C)		0.9 (A) 2.8 (B) 2.5 (C)
Norway	0.5 (B) 0.5 (C)	24.7 (A) 4.1 (B) 11.0 (C)	9.9 (A) 6.8 (B) 0.1 (C)		34.6 (A) 11.4 (B) 11.6 (C)
Sweden	2.0 (A) 4.0 (B) 6.0 (C)	8.2 (A) 16.3 (B) 19.8 (C)	1.6 (A) 2.5 (B) 1.3 (C)		11.8 (A) 22.8 (B) 27.1 (C)
Switzerland			6.8 (B) 0.7 (C)		6.8 (B) 0.7 (C)
UK	4.8 (A) 1.6 (B) 6.4 (C)	14.9 (A) 44.3 (B) 26.8 (C)	1.2 (C)		22.0 (A) 45.9 (B) 36.9 (C)
USA	14.8 (A) 53.5 (B)	53.7 (A) 37.2 (B)	61.3 (A) 35.5 (B)		129.8 (A) 126.2 (B)

<sup>383</sup> Victor Umbricht, "Second Report on Aid to Bangladesh", 13 December 1974, p. 3.

	68.3 (C)	85.9 (C)	61.5 (C)		215.7 (C)
UNDP			6.0 (A) 12.5(B)		6.0 (A) 12.5(B)
ADB			83.3 (A) 10.3 (C)		83.3 (A) 10.3 (C)
IDA					191.0 (A) 150.0 (B) 118.7 (C)
EEC	40.4 (A) 25.0 (B) 65.4 (C)				40.4 (A) 25.0 (B) 65.4 (C)
IMF				62.5 <sup>384</sup>	62.5 (B) 62.5 (C)

#### Appendix 9: Airlift Contributions<sup>385</sup>

Country	Cash \$	Kind \$
Australia	500,000	
Botswana	5,006	
Canada	1,000,000	
Denmark	700,000	
Fed. Rep. Germany	179, 856	
Finland	181,818	
German Dem. Rep.		175, 000
Holy See	30,000	
Iraq	9,953	
Japan	1,000,000	
Liechtenstein	3,236	
Luxembourg	13,269	
Netherlands	400, 000	
New Zealand	200, 000	
Norway	555,000	
Philippines	5,000	
Rwanda	1,000	
Sierra Leone	23,000	
Sweden	720,000	
Switzerland	15,625	
Turkey	10,000	
Uganda	2,898	
United Kingdom		1,629,268
USA	4,150,000	
USSR		445,000
Total	9,705,661	2,249,000

<sup>384</sup> Included additional US\$14 million oil facility allocation.

<sup>385</sup> V. Dayal, UKHCR Regional Representative's Letter/Cable to Anton Prohaska, Executive Office of the Secretary-General, "South Asian Airlift", 4 April 1974.



# Appendix 10: Composition of Consultants' Group to Dacca Area<sup>386</sup>

Sector	Team
Transport	A.J. Carmichael, Chief, Ports Division, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) A. Lewis, Railways Consultant, IBRD H. Kaden, Roads Specialist, IBRD K.M. Gyi, Ports Specialist, IBRD
Telecommunications	C.R. Dickinson, Deputy Chief, Telecommunications Division, IBRD B. Johnsson, Telecommunications Specialist, IBRD
Agriculture	R. Picciollo, Chief, Special Projects Office, IBRD S.V. Allison, Staff Member, Special Projects Office, IBRD U Phu, Agricultural Consultant, IBRD G. de Brichambaut, Agricultural Specialist, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)/IBRD Cooperative Programme
Monetary/fiscal	T. Thin, Deputy Director, Asia Division, International Monetary Fund. (IMF) M. Salgarde, Assistant Director, Asia Division, IMF W. Hughes, Division Chief, IMF
Education	W. Miller, Deputy Chief, Planning Education, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
Health	Dr. D. Savic, Health Adviser, World Health Organization (WHO)
UNICEF	T. Davies, Special Representative (in Dacca) to Executive Director of United Nations Children's Fund
Rapporteur	N. Eichhorn, Desk Officer, Far East Division, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

<sup>386</sup> United Nations, Office of Public Information, "Composition of Consultants' Group to Dacca Area Announced", Press Release, SG/A/111 IHA/107, 28 February 1972.

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 The Security of Small States  
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 Bangladesh and SAARC: Issues, Perspectives and Outlook  
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 Chandabaji Versus Entrepreneurship: Youth Force in Bangladesh  
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