Finding Balance between Unity and Diversity: A major Challenge to Democracy, Governance and National Unity

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The greatest challenge to Democracy, Governance and National Unity in Pakistan is, perhaps, the failure to meet the challenges of internal Diversity and craft a viable balance between Unity and Diversity. In essence, it is a tug-of-war between centripetalism and centrifugalism, i.e., between the forces pulling towards and away from the centre - in other words, between federalism and provincialism/regionalism. And regionalism flourishes and gets fragmented into sub-regionalisms by ethnic and linguistic diversities in all the four provinces, makes the task of finding a balance between Unity and Diversity all the more difficult.

The inherent tension between diversity and unity is not something peculiar or particular to Pakistan, though. Indeed, it has indeed posed a traumatic problem to several federal polities in the world in recent decades, ending up in smoke and disarray. The Soviet Union ended up in disintegration in 1991, washing its hand off its dissident border states and getting itself shrunk to the FIS. Czechoslovakia got bifurcated and ended up in two states.
Former Yugoslavia descended into an orgy of a long drawn-out civil war between three claimants and majoritarian identities in their respective regions, ending up finally in three states, according to the Dayton Accord, in 1995. The residue Serbian Republic was subsequently confronted with the Albanian-oriented Kosovan problem in its Western region, with Kosovo declaring its independence unilaterally but with UN blessings, two years ago. The Caucasian problem haunts the Soviet Union like an unending nightmare for the past sixteen years, with even Moscow being within the stretch of the Caucasian rebels’ outreach, even to this day. India has, in large part, addressed the diversity by crafting 31 states and Union Territories out of the original eight provinces and the conglomeration of some 500 odd princely states and principalities in 1947, but still the ongoing anarchic Maoist movement and the separatist splinter groups in Assom claim large swathes of territories which are virtually beyond New Delhi’s writ.

Not to speak of federal polities, even the so-called unitary states have not been altogether bereft of this tension. Cyprus presents a classical example of a 20% (Turkish) minority (in Northern Cyprus) holding itself against the Cypriot majority and crystallizing the Green Line between the two combatant components for the past thirty-seven years, and that with no viable solution in sight, despite continuous UN and international efforts. Spain is rocked off and on by a separatist Basque movement.

Although the unity-diversity tension is a global phenomena, nibbling at, if not eroding, a large number of polities all over the world, Pakistan should have been more interested and more concerned in resolving the challenge of this tension, and the fallout of the outworking of diversity – especially for the reasons given below. Especially because Pakistan herself is organically linked to the end-result of the phenomena of deep diversity, not only when she was born in 1947 but also when she was dramatically dismembered in 1971. The present paper first
attempts a delineation of these two historical events in order to put into sharp focus how disastrously consequential is the dismal failure to recognize and accommodate diversity and the dire need to balance Unity with Diversity. And this in the fond hope that though late in the day we could still try to learn from history since those who do not heed or learn from history are bound to repeat the mistakes of the past, as George Santayana has said. Later, it attempts to focus attention briefly on the issues/problems which, by eroding the efforts towards finding a balance between Unity and Diversity, pose challenges to Democracy, Governance and/or National Unity.

II. United India

As noted above, Pakistan is the end-product of the phenomena of deep diversity in colonial India during the last six decades of British Raj. It became a fait accompli, if only because of the monumental failure of the dominant Congress leadership to meet the challenges of Diversity during the freedom movement. For some thirteen years beginning in 1927, the acerbic issue on the constitutional plane was Muslim federalism vs Congress “unitarianism” or a highly centralized state. The Nehru Report (1928), which presented the Congress’ blueprint for the future Indian dispensation argued for an almost unitary state, which was ingeniously flaunted as a federal one - a federal one but only in name. The Muslim leaders presented several formulae to get a viable and workable federation for the entire subcontinent established on the ground, but to no avail. In particular mention may be made of the schemes put forward by Muhammad Iqbal and Mohammad Ali Jinnah.

In adumbrating a consolidated North Western Indian Muslim state in his Allahabad (1930) address, Iqbal, as he put it, was seeking to overcome or nullify the diversity in India’s body politic represented by the Muslim penchant to retain their distinct identity and individuality in the subcontinent. In a bid to offer a democratic solution, he sought to salvage “the life of Islam as a
cultural force in the country”, the major thrust and source of diversity, by “its centralization in a specified territory”. He felt that “this centralization of the most living portion of the Muslims of India . . . will eventually solve the problem of India”, arguing that “without the fullest cultural autonomy, and communalism in its better aspect as culture, it will be difficult to create a harmonious nation”. That is, the Islamic diversity should be afforded full opportunities for development along its own lines without being thwarted or checkmated by the majoritarian culture and ethos in the rest of the subcontinent. Thus Iqbal stood for an inclusive salad plate matrix as against the Congress’ assimilative melting pot approach, which shunned recognition and accommodation of non-Congress and non-Hindu identities. But this Iqbal’s viable panacea for meeting the monumental challenge of Muslim diversity and creating a “harmonious” and integrated Indian nation, with unity at the top and diversity at the bottom of India’s politico-cultural pyramid in pre-partition colonial India, was rejected out of hand on outrageously flimsy grounds.

Likewise, in his February 7, 1935 address, Jinnah had asserted that “the combination of all these various elements” – [viz.,] religion, culture, race, language, arts, music, and so forth – “makes the minority a separate entity in the State, and . . . [that] separate entity as an entity wants safeguards”. Since the Muslims were distributed unevenly in the subcontinent, yielding to two demographically dominant Muslim regions in the northwest and the northeast, Jinnah suggested a territorial solution within an Indian federation. This he did in his Delhi Muslim Proposals of 1927 and his Fourteen Points of 1929. Therein he had demanded proportional representation and substance of power to Muslims in the Punjab and Bengal, separation of Sindh, and reforms in the NWFP and Balochistan. And the outright rejection of these proposals designed to meet the challenges of Muslim diversity, while meeting the dictates of balance on the Unity-Diversity continuum, at the Congress-sponsored All Parties National
Convention (1928), at Calcutta, was by far the most serious setback to efforts at crafting a balance on that continuum [5].

This was followed by Congress’ assertions to equate India with the Congress alone and the denial of any group, party or entity outside the Congress, which alone and by itself claimed to represent Indian nationalism. This, in essence, tantamounted to disclaiming, disowning and disdaining any alternative or competing stream in the Indian freedom movement. The climax was reached in 1937, when the Congress sought to implement its concept of equating India with it to the exclusion of all others. It established one-party governments in the Hindu majority provinces, thus offering only the Hobson’s choice of absorption into the Congress or political wilderness. This meant an assimilative melting pot solution with a vengeance, controverting the political realities on the ground. What made it so shattering was that it was in sharp contrast to the Muslim majority provinces which had all opted for coalition governments under the 1935 Act. [6] No wonder, all this had finally led Jinnah and the Muslim League to raise the antenna a little higher three years later, to demand outright partition in 1940. Still, they were agreeable to, and accepted the Cabinet Mission Plan (1946) which adroitly addressed Muslim majoritarian claims in the northwest and northeast by providing for compulsory grouping and a limited centre. But Congress’ thoughtless nibbling at these provisions led Jinnah to rescind his earlier decision, and reaffirm his quest for a sovereign Pakistan. Thus, Pakistan came into being out of a welter of conflicting circumstances and bizarre developments spawned by the non-recognition and non-accommodation of diversity in India’s body politic.

III. United Pakistan

Normally speaking, the Pakistani rulers should have learnt a lesson from the denouement spawned by this failure of Congress leadership to meet the challenge of diversity in undivided India. But they did not. In consequence, they failed to craft a viable
The East Pakistani electorate had finally spoken, and that for the time being brought the rulers in Karachi to some sense. Thus, a compromise came to be affected during the next two years, and the major East Pakistani demands accepted. The 1956 constitution, which was agreed upon or countersigned by all the East Pakistani parties, represented a high water mark of aggregative and integrative effort, and represented a shift from an immobilist regime into a crisis liquidation one. Meantime, the accommodation of popular East Pakistani regional elites such as Fazlul Haq and Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy in the power structure at the Centre gave a sense of participation to the Eastern relevant political strata in the central decision-making process during 1955 and 1958. Especially during Suhrawardy’s regime during 1956-57 when political power, though not economic resources, seemed to be more or less equitably shared.[7] And if democracy and democratic principles and practices had been upheld during the subsequent years, the possibility of finding a genuine and more viable federal structure could have as well succeeded, and the democratic process could have met the
challenges of Eastern diversity, resulting in a balance between Unity and Diversity.

But even that would have been only so far as the East was concerned. Since the East-West tussle was chiefly perceived as a Bengal-Punjab tussle, little heed was paid to intra-wing diversity in West Pakistan itself. The imposition of One Unit on October 14, 1955 and the East-West parity formula incorporated in the various constitutional formulae and retained in the 1956 constitution, which was designed to strengthen Punjab against Bengal’s demographic clout, had only papered the East-West cleavages, but for the time being. But since the One Unit had been imposed through manoeuvrings and machinations and without the willing consent and consensus of West Pakistan’s three smaller provinces, it tended to fuel discontent and disillusionment. Worse still, the residue persisted even after the disbandment of One Unit on July 01, 1970. Indeed, it seems to have aggravated several fold over the decades, chiefly due to the gross violation of democratic norms during the Bhutto era (1971-77) and the total decimation of the democratic process during the Zia years (1977-88).

That apart, even the East-West balance between Unity and Diversity came to be totally nullified later, if only because of the October 7, 1958 coup. The imposition of Martial Law, abandonment of the constitution, the dissolution of assemblies and parties, the banning of political activities, the suspension of fundamental rights, and the establishment of a highly centralized state under the Martial Law (1958-62) regime frittered away the residual goodwill between the two wings generated during 1955-58. The subsequent 1962 constitution was, in effect, designed to institutionalize Ayub’s personal hegemony while softening the Martial Law regulations, the intention being to convert the Martial Law “into a document which will form the basis for running the country”, to quote President Ayub Khan himself.[8] And as Wayne Wilcox avers, coherence and political discipline were thus achieved – “but by narrowing popular
participation in government at the cost of popular support and control over administration’. [9] Thus, what the 1962 constitution envisaged at best was only ‘a form of federation with the Provinces enjoying such autonomy as is consistent with the unity and interest of Pakistan as a whole’. [10]

One major outcome of the Ayub decade’s political developments was the downgrading and dispowerment of political elites, both in the East and the West, who had dominated the political landscape for the previous eleven years. This, buttressed by the draconian EBDO laws, disqualifying outstanding hitherto national leaders from doing politics, denuded them of commanding national stature, standing and clout. Under the Basic Democracy system (1960), local issues and regional politics gained ascendancy, and most parties got morphed off into more or less regional parties, albeit laying claim to a national status and retaining a nominal veneer of national orientation. [11]

The rest of the “decade of development” story need not detain us here for long. Briefly stated, during the Ayub regime (1958-69), Pakistan was by no means a federal state, but a unitary one, with a highly centralized structure. And an unitary state is an antithesis to the very concept, physical structure and taxonomy of Pakistan. The problem with the Ayub regime was that, as Wilcox says, ‘no government has less adequately reflected Bengali political demands, nor more fully reflected Bengali economic demands, than the regime of Ayub Khan’. [12] Yet, for now, to the durable factors such as geography, culture and language, the transient explosive factor of a 30% inter-wing economic disparity was added, if only to finally disenchant the East from the West. A 30% disparity could not be wiped out overnight, although Ayub had made its liquidation a constitutional obligation. To cap it all, East Pakistan had as well complained of gross discrimination in resource allocation over the years. In any case, the grievances, whether perceived or real, culminated in the demand for the “six point charter for survival”, which the Awami League, now headed by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, officially presented at the Opposition
Conference on Tashkent in Lahore, in February 1966.[13] What followed during the next five years is recent history and rather well known. Thus a continuing failure to meet the challenges of the Eastern wing’s diversity over the years had resulted in the dismemberment of Pakistan and the hoisting of Bangladesh on the world’s map.

That event represented a major watershed in Pakistan’s existential career. She became the first country since World War II to become dismembered by internal revolt backed by external intervention, even aggression by India with the tacit support of the Soviet Union whose Defence Minister stayed put in New Delhi till the fall of Dhaka on December 16, 1971.[14] Equally important, Pakistan had been disowned and abandoned by the demographically dominant Eastern wing in an emotional fit of sheer rage, revenge and euphoria, although it could as well have laid claim to Pakistan’s nomenclature, legacy, assets and international linkages, standing and clout. The secessionite eastern wings abandonment of Pakistan nomenclature was fortunate for the residue West Pakistan, though. It could legally and legitimately lay claim to be the successor to all this and much more, especially the nomenclature.

IV. Bhutto’s Role and Contribution

Equally fortuitous, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto came to the helm of affairs in post- Bangladesh Pakistan at this moment of truth, on December 20, 1971. And this traumatic hour, he proved to be man of the moment. Bold, energetic, pragmatic and visionary, he was a born leader, endowed with great qualities of head and heart. Patiently, indeed very patiently and methodically, he sought to pick up the pieces and tried to build up a “New Pakistan”, piece by piece, brick by brick. While he lost no time in initiating some direly-needed and long overdue internal reforms, especially the abolition of the iniquitous Sardari system in Balochistan, he negotiated at length the repatriation of the 92,000 POWs incarcerated in India, took a series of measures including the
convoking of the Simla Conference to ensure the withdrawal of Indian forces from the occupied areas in West Pakistan, to normalize relations with New Delhi, block Bangladesh’s entry into the UN till a rapprochement was reached between Islamabad and Dhaka, prepare Pakistanis psychologically to recognize Bangladesh as a political reality, and, in the meantime, gather strength internationally to sustain and support Pakistan in her stance on extremely complex issues in her long drawn-out tug-of-war with India during 1972-74.

And all the while, he was engaged in morale-boosting, facilitating and inducing Pakistanis to shed their slough of defeat and despondency, rise above the day-to-day rough and tumble to acquire a new pride, dream a new destiny and craft a new future, and in the process become active, vibrant, almost euphoric. The crafting of a new constitution by consensus in 1973 seemed to ensure the strengthening and streamlining of the existent polity with a democratic structure, appurtenances and ethos. And all this was the handiwork of one man – Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. That’s why I regard Bhutto as the man of the hour at that moment – the man who saved (West) Pakistan in that traumatic hour. But for him, with Wali Khan, Ghaus Bux Bizenjo and G. M. Syed sniping all the time from their ambushes ensconced in the three smaller provinces and the success of Bangladesh revolt serving as an incentive and inspiration, the still nebulous campaign for four Pakistan in the West would surely have gathered force and momentum, with none in a position to forecast the denouement. It’s high time that Bhutto’s singular contribution in saving (residue) Pakistan be recognized, and that the myth of his being in part responsible for the dismemberment of Pakistan be laid to rest.

Despite all these achievements, Bhutto could not avoid coming to a sticky end. That, in the ultimate analysis, should be put to his own penchant for an animus dominandi role. [15] But this, which calls for a separate study, is beyond the scope of the present paper.
Of course, Bhutto did take a series of measures and established institutions to strengthen the forces of unity and commonalities among citizens and groups, yet he failed to address the problems of diversity, especially in the NAP-JUI strongholds of NWFP and Balochistan, and to balance diversity with unity. No doubt, his stress was on Pakistani identity but unless the inherent tension between unity and diversity is addressed, that identity fails to develop muscles and sinews to become an impregnable political reality. A good many commonalities in the Pakistan federal polity that exist today were initiated or strengthened during the Bhutto era and his over all stress was on unity and federalism. His crafting of the 1973 constitution by consensus was his most significant contribution in that direction. So was his deliberate choice to give his State Banquet address in Urdu in Dhaka on June 30, 1974 during his official visit to Bangladesh.[16] In so doing, he was reaffirming the Pakistani symbolism represented by Urdu.

V. Commonalities

The thrust towards a federal polity

Today, forty years down the road, Pakistan is home to a string of commonalities and a host of diversities, all sorts of them. Briefly stated, the commonalities are as follows:

1973 constitution

An agreed constitution which has stood the test during the past 38 years, despite political upheavals, military takeovers, inter and intra provincial discordance and dissidence, and low-intensity rebellions. Especially after the 18th amendment, which provides for devolution of power to the provinces and more equitable opportunities to the various provincial units.
NFC Award

The 2009 NFC Award which provides for considerable fiscal autonomy to the provincial units. The extant share of Rs. 550 billion has been raised to a total of Rs. 1,250 billion of financial resource (57.5% of the national pool) by the end of the fifth year of the Award’s announcement. The inclusion of other factors, besides population, has been finally recognized as the basis for allocations to various units. All this obviously makes the Award more equitable, and leaves room for further consensus.

National language/ Link language

Although Urdu is recognized as the National Language, a lingua franca represented by English for the elite, business and entrepreneur classes has been in vogue. In tandem, Urdu has served as the link language for the masses, and has been immensely popularized by, especially, the electronic media. If and when all the languages are designated as national languages, as demanded especially the Sindhi nationalists, we would still need a link language for the masses across the regions – just as Hindi serves in India, although it is dominant only in two states: Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Equally important: Urdu’s claim and clout are buttressed by its ubiquity and universality: it is understood and spoken throughout Pakistan. And despite his tilt towards Sindhi in the language controversy (1972), Bhutto had repeatedly affirmed Urdu as “the national language” and “a common denominator”.

National & Regional Parties

The emergence of two major, though dynastically oriented, political parties – the PPP and the PML – on a national level which have alternated ruling Pakistan since 1988, besides strong sub-national parties within the constituent units (as in Belgium and Switzerland) – parties such as the MQM, ANP, JUI, BNP, JWP and other Baloch parties. PPP’s condescension to tolerate the PML-N government in the Punjab, although without abandoning its machinations and manoeuvres to rock the PML-N boat since Salman Taseer’s appointment as Governor in April
2008, is yet a vast improvement over the 1971-77 and 1988-99 approach when a split mandate in any province was seldom tolerated.

Likewise, MQM’s endeavour to shed its linguistic and urban Sindh origins, getting itself transformed incrementally into a Muttahida Qaumi Movement avatar and inducting itself into the mainstream politics, though generally unappreciated and misconstrued, is still a positive development. So is its sponsoring non-Urdu speaking candidates against Urdu speaking ones in some dominant Mohajir constituencies. So also its featuring a string of Pakistan flags at its recent rallies, affirming its Pakistani roots, besides its party loyalties and affiliation. Since the PPPs rise to power in the 1970s party flags have increasingly replaced Pakistan flags at public rallies, with other parties following suit – so that in recent years seldom does the Pakistan flag feature in most political rallies. The most basic, all inclusive identity has been sought to be shed in favour of a narrow particularist affiliation, and that, by no means, is something that’s positive from the national viewpoint.

It the PPP and the PML (N) and the ANP are downright dynastic, the MQM is severely monolithic and the “Quaid” oriented (and dominated). In the result, all four of them are bereft of internal democracy and that is bound to de-limit the chances for the eventual rise of a full fledged democratic order in Pakistan.

Representation of various groups at the centre and in administration

Although Punjab constitutes the largest province with about 56% population, the Pakistan polity has conceded more or less equal opportunities for parties from various provinces to stake their claim for power at the federal level. Otherwise, an originally Sindh based party like the PPP would not have ruled five times, totalling some 13 ½ out of 18 years of civilian rule since 1971. In tandem all the major nationalities except for the Baloch have occupied the presidential office since them. The rotation between
the various provinces, though not by design, has also occurred at the apex in the judiciary.

The polity provides a mechanism to guarantee various groups a place in the national decision making bodies. And this by the representation of most, if not all, groups and/or territories in the federal cabinets, and a separation and exclusivity of powers to own sources of revenue for the constituent units as per the 2009 NFC Award (as in Switzerland). The provincial quota in the services ensures representation of backward or less developed areas in the services. So does the rural-urban quota system in Sindh.

At another level, women have been accorded 33% representation in the national and provincial assemblies, and a fair representation in the central and provincial cabinets.

Minorities’ participation

Despite the occasional inequities perpetrated on, especially, the Christian minority, the minorities have been more or less normally accommodated at various levels and in the electoral system. They have also been accommodated in the federal and Sindh cabinets. For the present, their seats are reserved, but they are nominated by the political parties as in the case of women’s quota of seats. However, it’s high time that the minorities’ demand for double voting and direct elections are conceded. At another level, they have been assigned four seats in the Senate, one each for every province, and 5% quota in the Services. They have also had some sort of equitable representation, though not by design, in the judiciary cadre with some of them being illustrious and high profiled – such as Justices Cornelius, Dorab Patel and Bhagwandas.

These, in essence, are the positive indicators towards finding a right mix and balance between Unity and Diversity. For now, a look at the other side of the picture.
VI. Diversity: The thrust against a viable federal polity.

As indicated earlier, the problem of how to balance Diversity with Unity plagues all federal polities, and Pakistan is no exception to it. The inherent tension between Diversity and Unity does affect federal governance in a large measure, and since federalism cannot flourish without full fledged democracy there is an organic relationship between federalism and democracy. After all, a democratic polity alone can accommodate diversity via the conduct of public policy including ongoing claims for rectification of past wrongs. Successful management of differences call for a democratic culture, an equitable share in power, decision making and resources, and development of backward areas and communities on a preferential basis. The major areas of diversity that need be addressed on a priority basis are as follows:

Balochistan

Especially its demand for full jurisdiction over powers relevant to its ethnic survival, economic upliftment and nation building projects, and control over its resources.

Karachi

This megapolis is virtually a mini Pakistan, home to all ethnic and religious groups, but it periodically descends into an orgy of violence, death and destruction, chiefly due to “ethnic” clashes, fuelled by political ambitions and stakes. The Pakhtuns, having strengthened their demographic clout (about 25%) and organized under the ANP, are for the past few years engaged in a turf war with the urban Sindh-based MQM, probably with the PPP’s covert blessings, in a sustained attempt to dent the MQM’s hold over Pakistan’s financial hub. In terms of target killing and insecurity, 2011 has proved to be worst year in Karachi’s annals, with over 1,700 dead.[17]

Executive-Judicial confrontation

The on-going Executive-Judicial tussle since 2009 must be called off, here and now. The emergent judicialism of politics is
not an unmixed bag. It bids fair to cause a profound shift in power from the elected and accountable institutions, and hence poses a threat to the survival and consolidation of parliamentary democracy.

Ethnic federalism and fault lines

In essence, Pakistan represents a multi-ethnic federation, with the various ethnic entities being largely territory based. The constituent units, though generally set up for administrative reasons and convenience, are more or less along ethnic and/or linguistic lines, despite a lingua franca and a link language (as in Russia, India, Nigeria and Ethiopia). Also, as in India, Belgium and Ethiopia, Pakistan makes visible the territorial distribution of ethnic groups with some fault lines - such as in Balochistan, southern Punjab (the Seraiki belt) and to a lesser extent in Karachi and Hyderabad in Sindh, and Hazara in Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa. Hence the demand for more provinces. Generally speaking, more provinces lessen intra provincial grievances and hostility and facilitate greater integration since they extend greater opportunities to the various regions to develop along their own lines and become self sufficient and self reliant, instead of making the major component in the larger province a whipping boy for all their local ailments and failures.

That granted, the Seraiki belt in the Punjab alone makes a viable proposition, but new provinces in the other provinces are problematical. These should be entertained, if at all, for administrative and not emotional, reasons. In any case, making them an election issue should be scrupulously avoided.

VII. Conclusion

Finally to sum up our discussion, other than long standing tensions, there is a need, at once imperative and immediate, to recognize differences and to respect them while promoting unity, trust and solidarity among citizens and groups. In essence, this means that there is scant need to assimilate or get assimilated into other
cultures but to respect them for what they are. Although the endeavour to balance Diversity with Unity is a continuous process, there is a dire need to develop multiple identities. Whatever be one’s racial, ethnic, linguistic and religious identity, everyone inhabiting Pakistan is first and foremost a Pakistani, and his Pakistani identity comes first. Remember, what Adlai Stevenson, the Democratic candidate in the US 1952 presidential elections said early in November 1952, while conceding victory to Gen. Eisenhower: ‘that which unites us as Americans is greater than that which divides us into parties’. In other words, that which unites us as Pakistanis is greater than which divides us into a motley crowd of separate identities, whether racial, ethnic, linguistic or religious.

But unless these sub-identities are accommodated and integrated into the larger national matrix, by sorting out their demands and grievances, Pakistan cannot find or work out a balance between Unity and Diversity. And without such a balance, Democracy, Governance and National Unity will continue to be hostage to the challenges posed by the ever intruding internal Diversity.

Notes and References


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Pakistan [Bangladesh] (Lahore: Progressive Publishers, 1981). For internal evidence, see the report by the Indian CIA, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW): Asok Raina, Inside RAW (New Delhi: Vikas, 1980). It acknowledges RAW’s involvement in the ‘Agartala conspiracy’ (middle 1960s) to separate East from West Pakistan; it claims establishing ‘RAW sanctuaries all along the Indo-East Pakistan border’ and training and guiding the ‘Mukti Bahini’ (the Bengali freedom fighters). In private conversation, Mujib had reportedly acknowledged his active involvement in the ‘Agartala conspiracy’, at the Round Table Conference in Rawalpindi, in March 1969.

