

Instructions to genocide

A transcription of the Pakistan army’s radio interactions on March 25

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On the night of March 25, 1971, The Pakistan Army unleashed Operation Searchlight in Dhaka. That was supposed to be the day when the outcome of the talks between Awami League, led by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and the ruling Pakistani regime, led by President Yahya Khan, was to be announced. But what actually happened was that Khan left Dhaka, and the Pakistan Army started their deadly assault. The leader of the main political party in West Pakistan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, remained in Dhaka to witness the start of the proceedings,

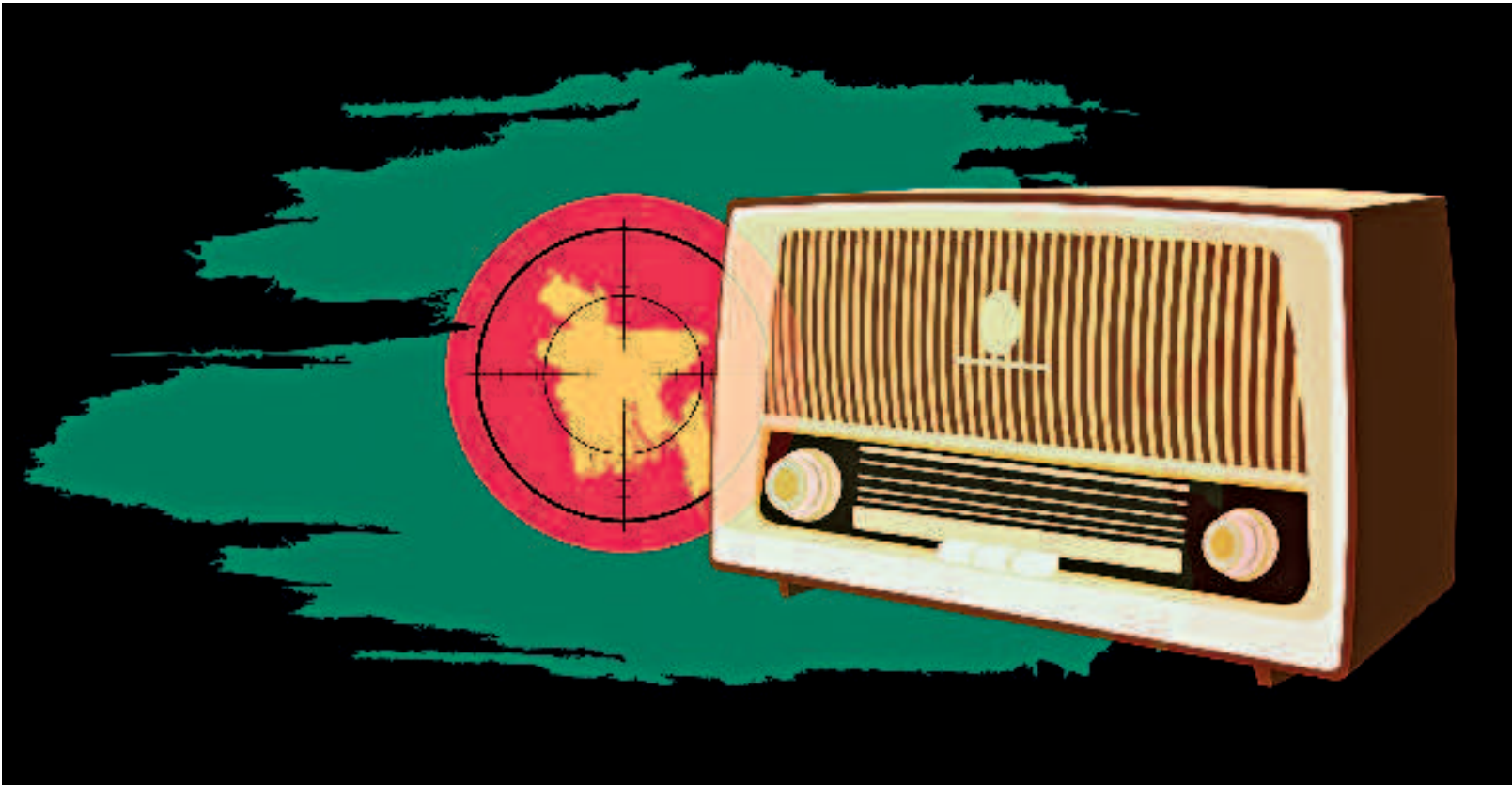
down, and any house which has the Bangladesh flag, the owner will be responsible for the consequences. There will be no black flag, and there will be no Bangladesh flag visible anywhere in the city. And if they are not pulled down then the consequences will be really, really severe. This must be made clear to everyone. Roger so far. Over.
: 77. Roger. Over.
: 77. Secondly it must be announced also about the road blocks. Any person seen putting up road blocks will be shot on the spot, number one; number two, road blocks put up in any locality, people from that locality will be prosecuted and will be responsible, will

half-an-hour...
16 referred to Pilkhana, of the East Pakistan Rifles.
: 99. Hope you are comfortable with your hostages. Over.
: 99. I am thinking as to how to feed them now. Over.
: 99. It will do them no harm if they don't see food for a while. So they can adopt the same policy (referring to the policy of non-cooperation here) that you have been doing for the last so many weeks. Out.
:.....that must be done. Otherwise, you know, it's likely to lead to a lot of complications and implications. Besides, I want especially Dhanmandi

to be searched from house to house. You can take your time, you may select the block, get hold of the people from each house, look at them, select if you find any, anyone, you know that we require, or that is of importance, then you can arrest him, the rest returned to the house. That's all I have to say. If you have anything for me, you may pass it on. Over.
: 26. Send. Over.
: 26. Tell Markhor that we had gone to apprehend Lt. Com. Moazzem (referring to Shaheed Moazzem Hossain); he resisted and in the process he was killed. Lt. Com. Moazzem has been killed. His body is with us (originally said in Urdu). Over.
: 26. Roger. Out.
: 88. Yes. Regarding the announcement of curfew, removal of flags and removal of road blocks, Imam desires that these be organised properly in the native tongue as well as in English and Urdu and should be constantly carried on because a large number of people do not know what are the rules and restrictions. Curfew will carry on till 0700 hours tomorrow morning. Over.
: Hallo 88. There is a location south of the river called Jinjira, I spell, Juliet, India, Juliet, India, Romeo, Alpha, Jinjira. This is just south of the river across from your area. It was reported earlier that arms and ammunition were being stored there. Romeo Sierra unit may have some information were being stored there. Romeo Sierra unit may have some information after their patrolling. You might like to keep an eye on this. Over.
: I am surely going to deal with that. Over. (The Pakistan Army attacked Jinjira in the early morning of April 2,1971. They set fire to a large area and killed many men, women, and

children).
: That's quite well done. What do you think would be the approximate number of casualty of the university, just give me approximate number, in your view, what will be the number killed, or wounded, or captured; just give me a rough figure. Over.
: 88, wait.
: approximately three hundred. Over.
: Well done. Three hundred killed, or anybody wounded, captured? Over.
: 88, I believe only in one thing. It is three hundred killed. Over.
: 88, yes. I agree with you. That's much easier, you know, no, no, nothing asked, nothing done, you just, you don't have to explain anything. Once again, well done. You have a little difficult task now to perform. You can get hold of these RSU elements too and start patrolling the river; and you may do it quite effectively. And of course that other task as I had given it to you, you may start doing that. So all the best till I come Insha'Allah and see you somewhere. I want, of course, you to ensure that no roadblock is put up by anyone. And if anybody does it, best thing for you is, get hold of the people from the same locality, destroy the houses short on either side of the block and if possible you may "reward" them, a reward that is punishment, capital punishment for a few of them and let the others go. That will make sure that the thing is not repeated again. Over.
: 88, Wilco. Over.
: 88, nothing more. Out.

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VISUAL: STAR

It suddenly occurred to me that the army units would be keeping in touch over wireless, and I had a SONY TR-1000 transistor radio. I started searching and immediately found a number of army units talking on the short wave. From what they said, I could get a good picture of what was going on in Dhaka.

and then he left saying, “Pakistan has been saved!”
In 1971, I used to work at the Atomic Energy Center, Dhaka as a physicist, and lived in Khilgaon. On March 25, around midnight, I was awakened by gunfire and loud explosions coming from all directions. I went to the roof to have a look. Dhaka had hardly any tall buildings in 1971, and we could see the Pakistani army’s attack on the Rajarbagh Police Lines. It was a short, unequal fight. Policemen armed with 303 rifles were no match for the army’s heavy weaponry and soon, the shooting stopped and the barracks were set on fire.
It suddenly occurred to me that the army units would be keeping in touch over wireless, and I had a SONY TR-1000 transistor radio. I started searching and immediately found a number of army units talking on the short wave. From what they said, I could get a good picture of what was going on in Dhaka. I connected the radio set to my Grundig TK 24 tape recorder and recorded the wireless communications throughout the night, with gaps in between. The following is a transcript of some of the recording, portions of which were broadcast a few months later on Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra.
: Wait. Out to you, hallo, 77, Imam (code for Commander) listening, send your message. Over.
:77, latest from 88 that he is making progress but there are so many buildings that he has to reduce each one in turn. He has so far suffered no casualties but there is firing against him. He is using everything that he has got. Over.
88 was the callsign from Dhaka University Campus, southern part of the city up to the river. We could not ascertain what 77 stood for.
: Tell him that his Big Brothers (could potentially mean tanks) will also be coming shortly, I hope, so these can be utilised for knocking down the buildings. Now, on the other side I think Liaquat and Iqbal is now quiet; am I correct? Over.
Liaquat was the callsign for the Engineering University male students’ dormitory, and Iqbal referred to the dorm that is now Sgt Zahurul Huq Hall.
: 77 have not heard the completion report but they were much happy about those two. Over.
: That is jolly good. Now let the boys keep on announcing in the streets about the curfew, that is number one. Number two, they will keep on saying that all Bangladesh flags will be brought

be held responsible and the houses left and right, left and right of that block will be demolished. This must be made clear to all and to the people themselves, and this must be announced on the speakers throughout the night till the morning, and also tomorrow morning the whole day. Over.
: From our position in Commissioner’s office (at present Foreign Ministry) we could see a lot of fire in area Purana Paltan. Is it the Head Office (of Awami League), or some other place? Over.
: 99 for 88. What about People’s Daily? Over.
99 was the callsign for the then Commissioner’s Office, which is now the Foreign Office.
: 26 for 99. Blasted, I say again, blasted. Our two men seriously wounded, are being evacuated to CMH (Combined Military Hospital), and two minor injuries. Over.
26 was the callsign located at the then President’s House. Operating in Ramna, campus etc.
: 41. We have a large number of people who have laid a number of road blocks, collected and being used for clearing. Will they be required back to you, or can they be disposed off? Over.
41 referred to west of Dhaka University Campus, Dhanmondi.
: 41. That is good use of labour. Suggest you use them for the present and retain them until we get it cleared from Imam. Then accordingly you can either let them off or we will take them away. Over.
: 41. Roger. Out.
: Send your message. Out.
: 26, message from 77, Inform Markhor (Adjutant) that Imam has said that all the dead bodies must be cleared away before first light; tell this to all concerned (originally said in Urdu). Over.
: 99, subsequently these were reported to you starting from the, from Belal’s boys when they caged the main bird (referring to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman) and subsequently the two telephone exchanges, the Police station at Ramna, People’s daily, the Reserve lines, then the action that is still continuing in area of university, plus the houses in Gulshan, correction, houses in Dhanmandi, the occupants of which had, were not traceable. Over.
:99, we have heard everything from call signs 26 and 88, but what about the other call signs? Over.
: 99, 16 had very little resistance in which they killed four and wounded about ten, after that they were in full control of the position within about

