

Mrs. D. C. Dunham
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July 14, 1971

Mr. Richard M. Nixon
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President,

Your wife wrote a most gracious and appropriate letter in answer to a letter of mine concerning East Pakistan. I am sorry to disturb you as well, but I and many others are in such perplexity over the policy of the government as we read it in the press that we continue to fear our country is acting out of ignorance. We are getting reports now of personal friends in East Pakistan who have died recently and you can imagine how torn and helpless we feel. We know that the American policy of continued aid is stated in the name of keeping communications open and "leverage", and we assume that our policy involves world peace, but for all who are well acquainted with the past history of the sub-continent this policy shows little change from those which helped to bring on the present situation.

My husband among others has spoken to senators and congressmen, various departments of the United Nations, the National Council of Churches, the International Commission of Jurists, some heads of

industry, and almost all the organizations and private persons we could think of who would have a personal influence on our government. In every instance we have had sympathy in our plea to help fetter the West Pakistan pressures on East Pakistan. The senators and congressmen whom we have reached have been amazed at the information we furnished and were open to education, but there are too few of us and too little time to educate everyone.

Unless you can read the papers every day and unless you have actually lived in East Pakistan over a period of months (better years) you can not be expected to understand the complex relationships which exist between the multiple races, religions, social stratifications and their respective needs, the tremendous over-population, the fickleness of nature, and all the chronic and often insoluble ills to which that country is heir. Even those West Pakistanis whom we met who were educated, intelligent and in positions of responsibility did not seem to quite understand the causes behind the daily disasters and scenes of distress which any visitor witnesses in East Pakistan the moment he arrives. (Ask Mrs. Locke who cared enough to see the old city in Dacca with us.) Now we know from Americans returning from West Pakistan that citizens there are not aware of what is happening in the Eastern wing. I wonder how you who are so busy with Vietnam, the Middle East, and our domestic problems can be aware of a remote corner of the world which has only just appeared on the map for most Americans.

The present situation in East Pakistan is such

a clear case of progressive misguidance over a period of many years, misuse of foreign aid, and now of genocide, that the recent report from the World Bank team comes as no surprise. Some day, in the same way, the world will know what a culturally sophisticated and innocent people we have allowed to suffer. (The population of East Pakistan is fast equalling that of West Pakistan by elimination.) I can not understand what kind of world peace we can help maintain at the sacrifice of principles, innocent lives, and one of the world's greatest cultures. It is hard to think of myself as an American by faith alone in this matter. I need some convincing word that those who are making our decisions are factually informed about the past history, geography, and social organization of both wings in Pakistan. If I had some assurance that our government is not acting ignorantly of these factors I could express more faith.

There was a time when Americans could have helped with an economic and political, even cultural rapprochement between the Western and Eastern wings, but then we were truly inexperienced and uninformed. Are we no better now, or is there hope that there is more to our foreign policy than what meets the press?

Please thank your wife for her letter. It helped to bring the White House closer. I am writing now with no expectation of such a time consuming and thoughtful answer as hers. I am happy to make one more effort in alerting our country concerning the seeming ignorance of a country where we resided many years and I hope you accept an expression of concern for our country as well as for the Pakistanis we are losing.

Sincerely yours,

Mary Frances Dunham