

Sy. I. Muzafar Ali Shah  
P.O. Hashid Wagan  
Distt Larkana.

# QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**PRESIDENT ZULFIKAR ALI BHUTTO'S INTERVIEW  
WITH MR. RICHARD LINDLEY OF  
INDEPENDENT TELEVISION NEWS LONDON**

APRIL 25, 1972

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*Question: Mr. Bhutto talking to the Press the other night you said "India must trust us." Now why should Mrs. Gandhi trust a man like yourself who so often preached a thousand years' war against India?*

*President: But finally it will have to boil down to a question of trust, whether it is me or anyone else, and today I happen to be the elected President of Pakistan and she'll have to meet with an elected leader. And I represent the wishes and feelings of the people of Pakistan. The whole world knows that Indo-Pakistan problems have persisted for 25 years, since we became independent and there will have to be mutual trust and confidence. On our part we are prepared to give that trust and India will also have to take the same position if they want a final settlement. Between a lawyer and a client there is a judiciary relationship. Between nations, once trust is broken, really trust had to be repaired whether it is India, Pakistan, France, Germany or any other antagonist. If you really want to bury the hatchet, then we will have to trust one another.*

*Question: But it's true, isn't it, that you have been an apostle of confrontation with India. How are you really going to persuade Mrs. Gandhi that you've changed your spots?*

*President:* No, I haven't persuaded Mrs. Gandhi. The events and circumstances persuaded her as well as us, and I do not apologise for my policy of confrontation. It was the right policy at that time when I was in Government—when I was Foreign Minister. Circumstances were such. In 1962 Kashmir was within our grasp—we could have merely walked in and at that time national interests required a policy of confrontation, but Azad Kashmir did not pursue it. And right up to 1965 we could have settled the problems militarily as today India has indeed settled it militarily. Has she not? By taking East Pakistan by military force she has brought about a situation where now the Indian emissary who has come to Pakistan is talking the language of flowers, and, naturally, in the position of a victor. In spring time especially, why not throw a bouquet of flowers on the defeated; so the point is that when the situation called for a policy of confrontation, I pursued it. Now there is the present situation on account of a number of factors, and the fault of previous Governments and leaders—they were not leaders, they were usurpers—they bungled up everything and they have given me pieces, fragmented pieces, small pieces, and I have to put them together. So I have to take an approach which is commensurate with the realities.

*Question:* You talk about Mr. Dhar, India's emissary here, that in his preliminary negotiations, using flowery language, tossing a bouquet towards you, do you think at all, as some of the people I spoke to here do, that in the long term India is determined on the end of Pakistan as an independent nation?

*President:* That has been India's past record for the last 25 years, but I would not like to say that now because I would like to trust India, as much as India should take the risk of trusting us, I'd like to take the risk of trusting Indian leaders. And perhaps it would be a long time before they have really swallowed and devoured and digested East Pakistan. So let us hope that we can have a generation of peace.

*Question:* Obviously your first priority must be to get your prisoners of war home again; you said that, you made that very plain. But how are you going to persuade Mrs. Gandhi that once they are home again, they are not going to push you towards confrontation once more—perhaps even to a war of revenge?

*President:* No, I don't think that anyone can push me around in a hurry, and especially our prisoners of war. They're not an articulate political force as such. They might fan out. They don't need to fan out. There are enough people who are jingoistic, as it is but we can settle the sentiments if we make progress and I don't want Pakistan to get the title of a revanchist state.

*Question:* You did right after the war, as soon as you took office, you did talk rather in terms of avenging the humiliation, you don't really think that pressures here in Pakistan will push you towards a confrontation again?

*President:* Not revenge in that sense—not revenge in the sense of going to war again. Revenge in the sense of normal rehabilitation and to let the world know that we are not inherently a people whom you can lose and have lost, that we are equals in the sub-continent even in our reduced state. We have to show to the world and show to India by economic development, by making grand new experiments in administration, in making a democracy work and in a host of other ways to show that we are still equals in the sub-continent.

*Question:* *Mrs. Gandhi seems to want to use her strong bargaining position to make the new cease-fire line in Kashmir an international frontier. How is this something that could ever be acceptable to the people of Pakistan, let alone the people of Azad Kashmir?*

*President:* But the people of Kashmir come first because it is their future and their faith which is involved. If the people of Kashmir have given up the notion that they don't have the stamina and grit to achieve their rights, the whole world put together cannot help them to achieve their rights. Primarily, they have to be in the forefront and we have been in the forefront for 25 years. Perhaps that's why the problem had not been resolved till now. We cannot abandon a right which belongs to them. As I said to you the other night, we have not conferred it, we cannot take it back. And I think it is really shooting the gun to go straight to Kashmir. There are so many fundamental matters to be tackled and resolved, and if India has taken that position for 25 years let us go step by step and then finally come up with the top of the ladder called Kashmir. Why should India now reverse that historical position propounded by no less a person than Pandit Nehru, the father of the present Prime Minister. I know, I have heard that the present Prime Minister says that her father was a saint and not a politician, but she does great injustice to her father. He was an outstanding politician. Perhaps, with all due respect, a greater politician than the present incumbent.

*Question:* *How do you think you are going to get on with Mrs. Gandhi?*

*President:* I hope to get on well and I have respect for her. I never liked it when Yahya called her "that woman." She is an elected leader of a big country. We respect a leader of people. We would give her all the respect and all the consideration that is due to a leader of the country and a successful Prime Minister. So, we will meet her with reverence and respect but, of course, with a sense of equality because although East Pakistan has been severed away from Pakistan, we still believe in the concept of sovereign equality of states. And we're not a mosquito on the map of the subcontinent. Still we're 60,000,000 people and with a good history, with a good account of ourselves. And I have lifted the morale of the people again not by fanning hatred—I have not done that—but by going in the direction of reform and revolution.

So I'm looking forward to our encounter, to our meeting, and I hope it will be a productive dialogue.

*Question: You don't think you are placing too much weight on this face-to-face encounter you want, your temperaments are surely very different?*

*President: Yes, but this is also necessary. We must have this face-to-face encounter and as I told you the other night it is not that we don't respect the bureaucracy—so and so's have their role to play—but our past experience has shown that they don't break the Gordian knot.*

*Question: It is necessary to meet face to face*

*President: Very necessary.*

*Question: You have taken a pretty strong line on these war crimes trials that Sheikh Mujib proposes to hold in Dacca. You said it is a matter of principle to you and if they're held they will muck everything up. Does that really mean that if anybody is tried for war crimes in Dacca it is going to be a bit impossible to come to any settlement here on the subcontinent?*

*President: Well, I think objectively speaking things will become extremely difficult and I don't think I have used any strong words or made any strong statement. A person in a weak position cannot make strong statements and strong statements have to be followed up. You become the prisoner of your own words. I'm not in a position today to make strong statements. I don't think I've made a strong statement. I think I've not closed the windows for political settlement, political compromise but if the trials are held it would arouse the worst of feelings and it would make my task almost impossible.*

*Question: Clearly, as well as wanting to be sure that you are genuine in your search for peace, Mrs. Gandhi is going to want to assure herself that you are going to remain President of Pakistan, if it is not a rude question, just how secure is your position*

*President: Well, my position as President of Pakistan does not depend on Mrs. Gandhi's goodwill, as much as my presence in the political scene did not depend on anyone's goodwill, because you know there was a time quite a number of the great powers and the super-duper powers were determined to see that I didn't get back into the political arena or the political corridors of power of Pakistan. And I think without disrespect to any other leader of Asia, Africa and Latin America. I am sort of an exception who has resisted and overcome the object of the great powers to come back into the political arena. So my being the President of Pakistan, in my opinion, is not dependent on Mrs. Gandhi or any of the great power. It is dependent on the man in the street, the man in the rags.*

*Question: Some of your opponents, of course, would say that your support is as regional as Sheikh Mujib's support was in East Pakistan.*

*President: If Pakistan has become entirely regional, I don't think that is correct. My party is strong in all the provinces. They talk about the majority of other parties in the two smaller provinces but really they have a majority of one or one and a half and they keep on talking about their majority but we're quite strong everywhere and, in any case, we represent over 80 per cent of the people in terms of a parliamentary majority. In terms of the people's majority, I think we are stronger and I'm quite happy and content and grateful to the people throughout Pakistan for their support.*

*Question: There are suggestions, of course, that with all the powers you have under your new interim Constitution you are something of a dictator—not in the sense that your predecessors were but nevertheless you are all-powerful?*

*President: No, once you have constitutional rule you can't take that position because I think the same could be said for President de Gaulle, the same could be said for the Prime Minister of Britain, the same could be said for the President of the United States of America, the same could be said for the Prime Minister of India, not only the present one but even her predecessors. So the question is that when constitutionally, when the people give you a certain quantum of power, that is not the abusive power, that's not wrong power. Wrong power comes when you destroy the people's rights and the people's confidence so that the point is in your country to call it stability and good government. Now why don't you want to call it good government in India and Pakistan.*

*Question: People are very ready, when they come upon you and write about you, they call you brilliant and versatile and able and they don't seem so ready to think of you as reliable, steady and dependable. Have you any comment on that?*

*President: The people you've met must be the most undependable people that inhabit the earth because they have never stood the people. I am talking about the politicians if you have met them. They have been unscrupulous, they have profited by the absence of scruples and when they find a person who is dedicated to principles but he is flexible—you know the Indians say that India won the war, say that I am a man of contradictions. It is an ironical thing for the Indians to say that. But what is the subcontinent but contradictions and if I am a product of subcontinent's realities, it is not a reflection on me, it is a reflection on the realities of the subcontinent.*

*Question: So you see yourself as pragmatic rather than devious?*

*President: But pragmatic with idealism and with set principles.*

*Question: As these preliminary talks with India get under way here, what earthly reason is there why any peace settlement that emerges should be any more lasting than those that have gone with the war?*

*President:* Well, fundamental realities have changed and we are in a qualitatively new situation.

*Question: You don't feel that there is any more reason why they should succeed than that?*

*President:* That is a very big reason.

*Question: It's only a matter of time you've made claim before you recognise Bangla Desh. What sort of country is what remains of Pakistan going to be?*

*President:* Pakistan still maintains its ideological complexion because the Lahore Resolution of 1940 talked of two states, of two Muslim states. That was later on amended to make one state and the British left one state. So you can argue till the cows come home whether it was one or two states, but now we are one state and we can up that part of the argument—and why not—to reinforce our ideological basis. I don't see anything immoral in that although the Indians have said that the two-nation theory has collapsed. How has the two-nation theory collapsed, by the emergence of three nations, two-nation theory would have collapsed if there had emerged one nation, because India says there is one nation—we said there were two. If at that time we had said there are three, the Indians would have said, "my God, that is out of the question we might consider two, we can't consider three." So the two-nation theory does not collapse by the creation of a third nation. It would have collapsed if they'd all become one nation. Now if India thinks that it has collapsed so in order to reabsorb both East Pakistan and West Pakistan, that is another matter. But that is not the reality today. So we have an ideological basis and we will also place emphasis on territorial propriety.

*Question: You were talking about a non-activist, low-profile foreign policy. But what sort of role do you see for Pakistan to play on the subcontinent. What kind of country is it going to be in relation to others here?*

*President:* Well, our foreign muscle will be judged by our internal muscle and for the time being I am concentrating on really creating the internal muscle. We have great potential. I think my country can become a kind of West Germany of Europe in Asia and once I unleash all the force, we bring back our man-power into play in development projects, electrification, rural health centres. I have great faith in the people of Pakistan

and I am banking everything on their strength, on their resurgence, on their resuscitation, and you will see, if I get these four years or five years, which is my constitutional right, I am determined to change the face of Pakistan, make it really into a part of Asia that the moment you enter Pakistan you would say, 'my God, we have entered a country which is really pulsating, vibrant and active and vigorous.'

*Question: Will you have to change the nature of the people?*

*President:* That is inevitable. I think they are ready for it. They have been given the right direction.

*Question: Are they ready for peace?*

*President:* They are ready for peace but they are ready to vindicate their honour and that can be vindicated without going to arms, without going to war. Germany has vindicated her honour without going to war.

*Question: And so will you?*

*President:* I have got to do that.

*Mr. Lindley:* Mr. President, thank you very much.

Syed Muzafar Ali Shah

P. O. Kashid Wagan

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