



The Blood Telegram: Nixon, Kissinger and a Forgotten Genocide

By Gary Jonathan Bass

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New York Times Book of the Year The Blood Telegram is an unprecedented chronicle of a pivotal but little-known chapter of the Cold War. Gary J. Bass shows how Nixon and Kissinger supported Pakistan's military dictatorship as it brutally quashed the results of a historic free election. The Pakistani army launched a crackdown on what was then East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), killing hundreds of thousands of people and sending ten million refugees fleeing to India - one of the worst humanitarian crises of the twentieth century. Driven not just by Cold War realpolitik but by a bitter personal dislike of India and its leader Indira Gandhi, they silenced American officials who dared to speak up, secretly encouraged China to mass troops on the Indian border, and illegally supplied weapons to the Pakistani military - an overlooked scandal that presages Watergate. Drawing on previously unheard White House tapes, recently declassified documents, and extensive interviews with White House staffers and Indian military leaders, The Blood Telegram tells this thrilling story for the first time. Bass makes clear how the United States' embrace of the military dictatorship in Islamabad would mould Asia's destiny for decades, and confronts for the first time Nixon and Kissinger's hidden role in a tragedy that was far bloodier than Bosnia. This is a revelatory, compulsively readable work of politics, personalities, military confrontation, and Cold War brinkmanship.

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Editorial Review

Review

'Gary Bass has provided us with a helpful reminder of Nixon's true character. In *The Blood Telegram*, Bass expertly recounts the stunning indifference of Nixon and - Henry Kissinger to the reports from US diplomats of Pakistani genocide - Vivid, often disquieting detail from Oval Office tapes unearthed by Bass - Bass has performed an essential function.' - *The Guardian* '[A] gripping and well-researched book - Sheds fresh light on a shameful moment in American foreign policy - [with admirable clarity.' - *The Economist* 'A riveting read with direct relevance to many of the most acute foreign-policy debates of today.' - *Financial Times* 'Devastating ... Excellent ... Bass has written an account - learned, riveting, and eviscerating - of the delusions and the deceptions of Nixon and Kissinger. Steeped in the forensic skills of a professional academic historian, he also possesses the imaginative energies of a classical moralist, and he tells the story of the choices and the decisions that led to the slaughter in Bengal ... appropriately as a moral saga ... Indispensable.' - *The New Republic* 'This is a dark and amazing tale [and] an essential - Nixon and Kissinger spent the decades after leaving office burnishing their images as great statesmen. This book goes a long way in showing just how undeserved those reputations are.' - *The New York Times Book Review* '[A] superb book - Bass deploys White House recordings, including several new transcripts, to excellent effect, and - the book contains enough material to make the reader sick - Astonishing - A morally serious book that nevertheless reads like a first-rate novel.' - *The Times Literary Supplement*

About the Author

Gary J. Bass is the author of *Freedom's Battle: The Origins of Humanitarian Intervention* and *Stay the Hand of Vengeance: The Politics of War Crimes Tribunals*. He is a professor of politics and international affairs at Princeton University. A former reporter for *The Economist*, he has written often for the *New York Times*, and has also written for *The New Yorker*, the *Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Boston Globe*, *The New Republic*, *Foreign Affairs*, *Foreign Policy*, *Slate*, and other publications.

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