

Mrs. Gandhi's Statement

NEW DELHI, Dec. 3 (Reuters).—Following is the text of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's radio speech to the nation tonight:

I speak to you at a moment of grave peril to our country and our people. Some hours ago, soon after 5:30 P.M. on Dec. 3, Pakistan launched a full-scale war against us.

The Pakistan Air Force suddenly struck at our airfields in Amritsar, Pathankot, Srinagar, Avantipur, Utterlai, Jodhpur, Ambala and Agra.

Their ground forces are shelling our defense positions in Sulemankhi, Khemkaran, Poonch and other sectors.

Since last March we have borne the heaviest of burdens and withstood the greatest of pressure and a tremendous effort to urge the world to help in bringing about a peaceful solution, in preventing annihilation of an entire people whose only crime was to vote democratically.

But the world ignored the basic causes and concerned itself only with certain repercussions.

The situation was bound to deteriorate, and the courageous band of freedom fighters have been staking their all in defense of the values for which we also have struggled and which are basic to our way of life.

Today, the war in Bangla Desh has become a war on India, and this imposes upon me, my Government and the

people of India an awesome responsibility. We have no other option but to put our country on a war footing. Our brave officers and jawans are at their posts, mobilized for the defense of the country. Emergency has been declared for the whole of India. Every necessary step is being taken, and we are prepared for any eventualities.

I have no doubt that it is the united will of our people that this wanton and unprovoked aggression of Pakistan should be decisively and finally repelled. In this resolve, the Government is assured of the full and unflinching support of all political parties and every Indian citizen.

We must be prepared for a long period of hardship and sacrifice. We are a peace-loving people, but we know that peace cannot last if we do not guard our freedom, our democracy and our way of life. So today we fight, not merely for territorial integrity, but for the basic ideals which have given strength to this country, and in this alone we can progress to a better future. Aggression must be met and the people of India will meet it with fortitude and determination, with discipline and the utmost unity.

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