

Dacca Watching the War and Waiting

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Special to The New York Times

DACCA, Pakistan, Dec. 4 (Delayed)—The city is lightless at 8:30 P.M. Nothing moves. A 5:30 curfew sent people from the streets. Curtains are pulled, candles burn shaded from windows. There are few sounds. A dog howls now and then, a jeep or truck slips by, lights out.

The clouds have dimmed the moonlight, the stars are faint. The crows, after a day of soaring overhead among Indian and Pakistani warplanes, have ceased their noisy vigil. The capital of East Pakistan is listening and waiting.

At 8:32 Dacca hears three booms in the distance. A siren wails. No sounds of

jets. Another deeper-tone siren.

Now at 8:37 P.M. the whoosh of a jet can be heard. It is high and far away. There is more than one, none firing so far.

Families of United Nations workers, contractors, relief-agency people — Americans, Britons, Australians and others—have crammed into the Intercontinental Hotel

with hastily packed suitcases, waiting to be evacuated. They have been told a United Nations aircraft—an American C-130 Hercules—is coming from Bangkok to take them out. Children are confused; some whine. The hotel's hall lights are on but room and ground-floor lights have been blacked out and the windows taped.

The Scottish chef has prepared another buffet for dinner: chicken and lamb curries, rice, cucumbers, fish, cold plates; no beer or Coke left. The waiter said the hoarding began this afternoon. Diners eat by candlelight, talking of rumors and whether things will get

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worse or better. Most seem to think worse.

About 50 journalists are in the hotel punching their typewriters by candlelight and collecting scraps of information. Photographers and film crews and writers trouble over getting their films and articles out. There is constant tuning of radios in search of outside news.

The hotel filled in the afternoon. Besides evacuees, Pakistan International Airlines workers from the airport piled in, three and four to a room. Nine of their co-workers were killed in the Indian Air Force raids on the airport today. They said the raids started at about 3 A.M. and ended for the day by midafternoon.

"Of course, they have got

to break for tea," someone said.

Now it's 9:14 P.M. and there is another dull boom far away, another siren.

The Government information official said at 7:30 P.M. that 31 Indian planes were shot down in both wings of Pakistan today, but no one really believes it. Thirteen were downed in East Pakistan, he said; reporters saw four downed over Dacca during the day and three others smoking from hits by anti-aircraft fire.

Pilots Claimed Captured

Pakistani Air Force sources claim the capture of nine Indian pilots, including a wing commander. They also say an Indian SU-7, a Soviet-built fighter, was forced to land intact at the airstrip.

Two Pakistani F-86 fighters were downed, they said, one

hit by Pakistani ground fire while chasing an Indian MIG-21. "It was quite unfortunate, but at least the Indians did not get it," they added.

The raids provided a spectacular show for thousands of Dacca residents. Tiny children dressed in rags scurried out for better views of the Indian MIG's on a strafing and rocketing run passing by on their way to the airport, which is a mile from the middle of town.

People watched from the tops of buildings, ducking sometimes when anti-aircraft shells popped too close. Hotel residents climbed on the roof, where color-television cameras recorded ballet-like dog-fights and raids on the airport.

One film crew worked in bathing suits, saying they might as well get a suntan. Others had room service deliver cold drinks and lunch. As a MIG shot over tailed by two Sabres and then flew in low over the airport, a cameraman turned to a uniformed waiter to say: "Oh waiter, waiter. Make that a double order—fruit cocktail and iced tea with lime" (there is no lemon in East Pakistan).

At 12:30 P.M. newsmen were taken to the airport by military officers to see a downed Indian MIG. They arrived just in time to be strafed by MIG's that destroyed two of three small single-engine United Nations aircraft.

Several television cameramen lay on their backs, filming the Indian planes through a blaze of anti-aircraft fire

as they made four passes. One was hit, burst into flames and crashed nearby.

The planes—MIG's, Gnats and SU-7's—fired rockets and strafed but did not bomb, according to a Government official. Their targets were the aircraft and hangars. They did not raid the military cantonment nearby or damage the airstrip. There was speculation that they might want to save the strip for an invasion later on.

Officials said the only other town hit by Indian aircraft was Chittagong, the targets there reportedly being fuel storage tanks and a refinery. The planes were said to also be hitting Pakistani positions along the border in advance of Indian troops.

Puffs of White Smoke

The sky was filled with puffs of white smoke from bursts of ground fire during the airport raid. Gunners were jubilant when they hit an Indian aircraft. From their uncamouflaged bunkers around the airstrip they could be heard shouting Moslem phrases in Arabic.

Fewer people were on the downtown streets than usual during the day but hundreds could be seen. Newspapers appeared by midmorning and were being hawked on corners. A few beggars were out. Most shops remained closed but some tea stalls were open and men were sitting in them and chatting.

A huge mushroom-shaped cloud that filled the southern sky most of the day, was

thought to be from a burning fuel-storage depot at Narayanjanj, about 10 miles south of Dacca. A Government official said it was a jute-process-

ing plant that had been set afire by guerrillas.

It is 10:02 P.M. and it is quiet again. No air raids yet tonight. A dog is yelping.