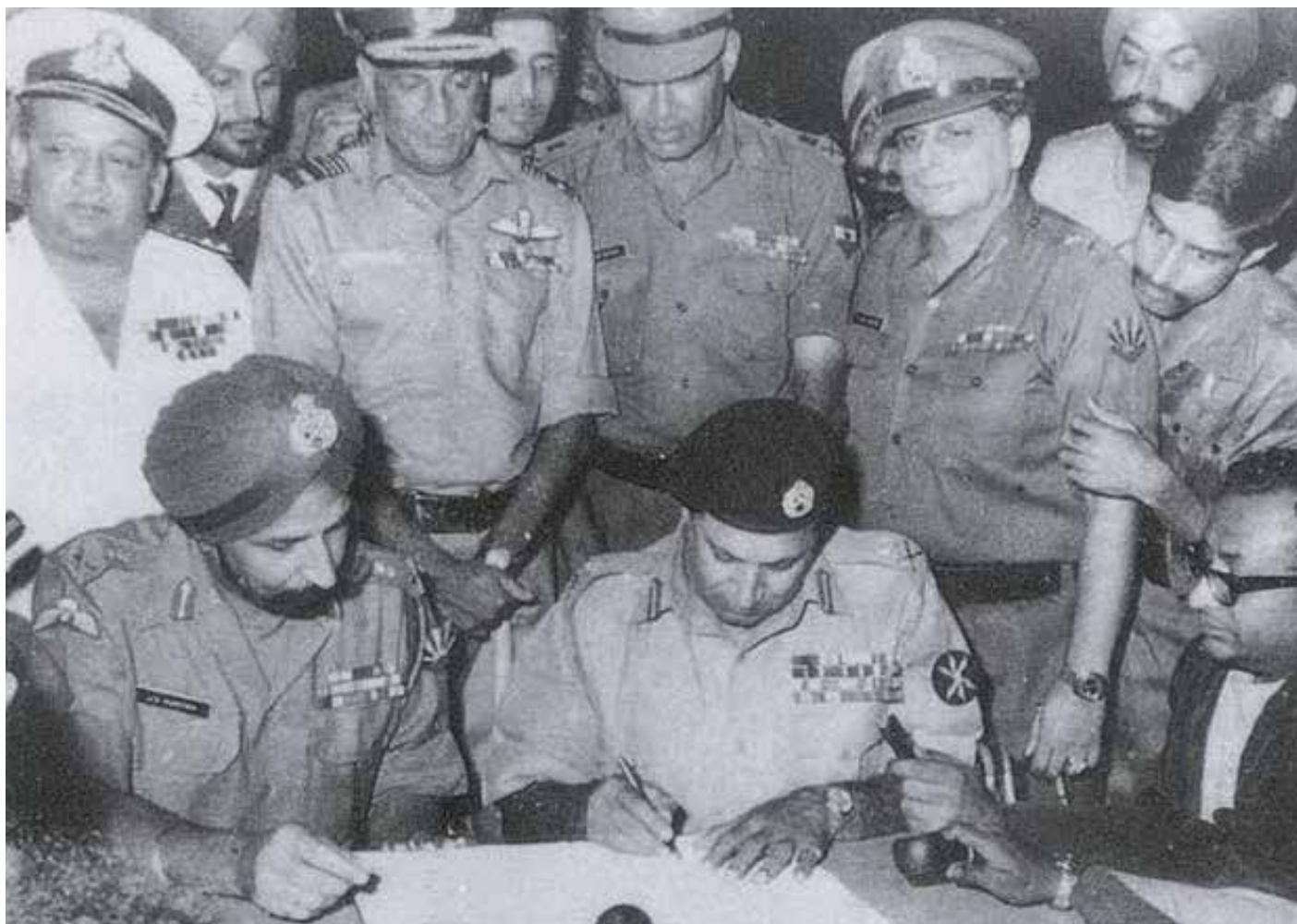


# 1971 Operations: Some Lessons and Other Musings

By Lieutenant General Kamal Davar (Retd)



*Lt Gen Niazi signing the Instrument of Surrender under the gaze of Lt Gen Aurora. Standing immediately behind from L to R: Vice Admiral Krishnan, Air Marshal Dewan, Lt Gen Sagat Singh, Maj Gen JFR Jacob (with Flt Lt Krishnamurthy peering over his shoulder). Veteran newscaster, Surojit Sen of All India Radio, is seen holding a microphone on the right. (Photo: commons.wikimedia)*

## Abstract

On 16 December 1971, with the fall of Dacca, the 1971 war came to an end. One of the shortest wars in history led to the creation of what is now the eighth most populous country in the world, after the largest surrender of troops after World War II to date. This article takes a strategic view of the events leading to, during, and after the war and brings out lessons of that war which should be kept in mind today and in the future.

## Introduction

As India and her Armed Forces celebrate the 50th anniversary of the nation's glorious victory in the 1971

operations against Pakistan which led to the birth of a new nation — Bangladesh — it is also an opportune time to introspect regarding our military preparedness for the impending future. That India, under the indomitable political leadership of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi combined with the uncommon professionalism, matchless valour and dogged determination of its men in uniform and its enlightened military leadership won for India, perhaps, its finest victory ever in its long history, cannot be debated. As India, rightfully and joyously, relives those rare moments, the current challenges confronting the nation and those likely to emerge in the foreseeable future necessitate deliberate analyses for India's security and well-being. It is not always that history displays a