

32

POL 23-9 PAK



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PAGE 01 ISLAMA 02954 311556Z

44
ACTION: NEA-15

INFO: OCT-01 EUR-20 RSR-01 SSO-00 NSCE-00 CCO-00 CIAE-00
 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-08 L-04 NSAE-00 NSC-10 P-03
 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-20 USIA-12 AID-28 O-03 OPR-02 OC-08
 AGR-20 EA-15 SR-01 ORM-03 SCA-01 E-15 /199 W
 046522

IS/amab/2954
3-31-71

PI R 311245Z MAR 71
 FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7675
 INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
 AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
 AMCONSUL DACCA
 AMEMBASSY KABUL
 AMCONSUL KARACHI
 AMCONSUL LAHORE
 AMEMBASSY LONDON
 AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ ISLAMABAD 2954

SUBJ: REACTION TO EAST PAKI EVENTS

1. ACTIONS BY PAK MILITARY, BEGINNING WITH NIGHT MARCH 25-26, TO CLAMP FULL CONTROL OVER EAST PAKISTAN PRESENTS USG WITH SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS FOR BOTH SHORT AND LONGER TERMS. WE HAVE BEEN AND ARE NOW DEALING WITH SOME OF THE IMMEDIATE OPERATIONAL PROBLEMS, SUCH AS EVACUATION PLANNING, SECURITY OF OUR COMMUNICATIONS WITH DACCA, AND THE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S HANDLING OF PRESS QUESTIONS. WE ARE STUDYING AND WILL BE SENDING RECOMMENDATIONS SEPARATELY ON CURRENT ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE ISSUES SUCH AS THE SPECIAL PL-480 LOAN FOR POST-CYCLONE RELIEF AND THE PENDING FY-1971 PROGRAM LOAN. LONGER-TERM ISSUES SUCH AS THE FUTURE OF OUR POLITICAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE GOP, OUR STANCE TOWARD EAST PAKISTAN, AND OUR VARIOUS OPERATIONAL PROGRAMS HERE WILL ALSO HAVE TO BE REVIEWED. PURPOSE OF THIS MESSAGE IS TO PROVIDE SOME PRELIMINARY REACTIONS.

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45

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1



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PAGE 02: ISLAMA 02954 311556Z

2. MOTIVATIONS BEHIND CURRENT MILITARY ACTIONS IN EAST PAKISTAN CAN BE TRACED TO EVENTS AT LEAST AS FAR BACK AS THE CREATION OF PAKISTAN IN 1947. HISTORY OF DIVERSITY IN INTERESTS AND SOCIAL PATTERNS BETWEEN EAST AND WEST WINGS IS WELL KNOWN. SO TOO IS UNEQUAL SHARE BETWEEN EAST AND WEST WINGS AS REGARDS DIVISION OF AVAILABLE RESOURCES AND RELATED EAST PAK GRIEVANCES AGAINST WEST PAK DOMINATION. THERE WAS VERY CONSIDERABLE JUSTIFICATION FOR EFFORTS BY EAST PAKISTANIS TO SEEK GREATER SHARE OF THIS PIE COMMENSURATE WITH THEIR HAVING MAJORITY OF COUNTRY'S POPULATION. PRINCIPLE OF A BETTER DEAL FOR EAST WING HAD WON INCREASING ACCEPTANCE IN WEST PAKISTAN, EVEN AMONG HARDLINERS (SUCH AS MILITARY LEADERSHIP) FOR WHOM "INTEGRITY" OF PAKISTAN WAS THE SUMMUM BONUM. THIS WAS REFLECTED IN YAHYA'S PROTRACTED EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE ACCEPTABLE POLITICAL BASIS FOR TRANSFER OF POWER.

3. IT HAS BEEN THIS EMBASSY'S CONSISTENT OPINION THAT YAHYA WAS SINCERE IN HIS EFFORTS TO BRING ABOUT A POLITICAL SOLUTION UNDER A SYSTEM RECOGNIZING THE POPULATION MAJORITY OF EAST PAKISTAN. HE NEVER LEFT ANY DOUBT, HOWEVER, THAT THE SYSTEM WOULD HAVE TO BE CONSISTENT WITH THE CONCEPT OF ONE PAKISTAN RATHER THAN TWO (OR MORE). IT WILL BE DISPUTED WHETHER YAHYA AND THE MILITARY CAME DOWN TO FINAL STAGES OF THE POLITICAL PARLEYS IN DACCA IN MARCH WITH TRUE DESIRE TO WORK OUT DIFFERENCES, OR WHETHER THEY WERE MERELY STALLING FOR TIME WHILE BRINGING IN MILITARY REINFORCEMENTS. THE TRUTH MAY BE MIXTURE OF THE TWO. WE BELIEVE THAT YAHYA CONTINUED TO PREFER A POLITICAL SOLUTION ACCEPTABLE TO ALL THE MAJOR PARTIES; ON THE OTHER HAND, IT WAS DOUBTLESS CONSIDERED AT LEAST PRUDENT TO BEEF UP THE MILITARY PRESENCE IN EAST WING AS CONTINGENCY MEASURE.

4. YAHYA'S USE OF MILITARY FORCE IN EAST PAKISTAN ON MARCH 25-26 - PRECISELY TWO YEARS AFTER HE REPLACED AYUB AS PRESIDENT - CAME AFTER A PERIOD OF SEVERAL WEEKS DURING WHICH MUJIB AND HIS AWAMI LEAGUE HAD IN EFFECT BEEN RULING EAST PAKISTAN THROUGH A PARALLEL GOVERNMENT. THE ORDERS PROMULGATED AND ENFORCED BY THE AL AMOUNTED TO A REBELLION AGAINST THE ESTABLISHED GOVERNMENT. THE DESTRUCTION OF PAK FLAGS AND THEIR REPLACEMENT BY BENGALA BEST STANDARDS, AND IMPEDIMENTS PLACED IN THE WAY OF GOP CIVIL AND MILITARY

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25

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PAGE 03 ISLAMA 02954 311556Z

ACTIVITIES IN EAST PAKISTAN, COULD HAVE BEEN DESCRIBED AS ACTS OF INSURRECTION.

5. WE CAN HOLD NO BRIEF FOR WHAT SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN THE BRUTAL, RUTHLESS AND EXCESSIVE USE OF FORCE BY PAK MILITARY NOT ONLY IN PUTTING DOWN LIMITED RESISTANCE BUT IN SEEKING OUT AND DESTROYING PRESUMED OPPONENTS IN EAST PAKISTAN. INCIDENTS INVOLVING WANTON MILITARY FORCE WHICH CONGEN DACCA AND OTHERS HAVE REPORTED AROUSE OUR INDIGNATION AND WE CAN APPRECIATE THE SENSE OF HORROR FELT BY WITNESSES AT THE SCENE. SINCE WE ARE NOT ONLY HUMAN BEINGS BUT ALSO GOVERNMENT SERVANTS, HOWEVER, RIGHTEOUS INDIGNATION IS NOT OF ITSELF AN ADEQUATE BASIS FOR OUR REACTION TO THE EVENTS NOW OCCURRING IN EAST PAKISTAN. THE CONSTITUTED GOVERNMENT IS USING FORCE AGAINST CITIZENS ACCUSED OF FLOUTING ITS AUTHORITY. THE STRUGGLE IS BETWEEN PAKISTANI AND PAKISTANI. (FORTUNATELY, NO AMERICANS HAVE BEEN INJURED AND NO AMERICAN PREMISES HAVE BEEN DAMAGED, TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, NOR DO WE HAVE REASON TO COMPLAIN, SO FAR AS WE ARE AWARE, OF INADEQUATE PROTECTION FOR OUR PEOPLE AND PROPERTY.)

6. AT EARLIER STAGES IN THE PRESENT CRISIS, BUT BEFORE MARCH 25-26, USG DECIDED IT SHOULD NOT INTERVENE IN EFFORT TO INFLUENCE GOP DECISION-MAKING OR ACTIONS IN MATTER DEEMED TO BE ESSENTIALLY OF INTERNAL NATURE. CRISIS HAS CHANGED COURSE AND HEIGHTENED SINCE THEN, BUT PROBLEMS REMAIN ESSENTIALLY INTERNAL TO PAKISTAN.

7. IN THIS EMBASSY'S VIEW, DEPLORABLE AS CURRENT EVENTS IN EAST PAKISTAN MAY BE, IT IS UNDESIRABLE THAT THEY BE RAISED TO LEVEL OF CONTENTIOUS INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL ISSUE. (SO FAR AS WE KNOW, ONLY INDIA HAS SOUGHT TO MOVE CURRENT PAK PROBLEM INTO INTERNATIONAL ARENA.) VARIOUS GOVERNMENTS INCLUDING OUR OWN WILL HAVE TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF NEW FACTS PRESENTED BY NEW EVENTS HERE IN DEALING WITH PAKISTAN, AS ALLUDED TO IN PARA ONE ABOVE. WHILE WE ARE NOT PREPARED AT THIS MOMENT TO MAKE SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING OUR PROGRAMS HERE, WE BELIEVE FIRMLY THAT WE SHOULD KEEP OUR OPTIONS OPEN SO AS TO BE ABLE TO PROMOTE OUR INTERESTS AS EVENTS CONTINUE TO UNFOLD.

8. THE ABOVE PHILOSOPHY HAS GUIDED US IN OUR SUGGESTIONS:

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PAGE 04 ISLAMA 02954 311556Z

RE CAUTION IN HANDLING PRESS QUERIES (ISLAMABAD 2793) AND
IN MY OWN GUIDANCE TO AMERICAN EMPLOYEES IN PAKISTAN ON
EXERCISING RESTRAINT IN COMMENTING ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS
HERE (ISLAMABAD 2813 AND 2814). GP-3.
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