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ACTION: NEA-11

INFO: OCT-01 EUR-14 IO-11 PM-06 H-02 NSC-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00
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*Islamabad 10043
10-4-71*

PIR: 041230Z OCT 71
FM: AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO: SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 886
INFO: AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMCONSUL DACCA
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMCONSUL KARACHI
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
AMCONSUL LAHORE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL MADRAS
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
USUN: NEW YORK 602
USMISSION: GENEVA

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ SECTION 1 OF 2 ISLAMABAD 10043

SUBJ: PAKISTAN INTERNAL SITUATION - SEPTEMBER

- 1. INTRODUCTION: THERE FOLLOWS ASSESSMENT OF INTERNAL POLITICAL SITUATION BASED ON REPORTS FROM CONGENS DACCA, KARACHI AND LAHORE AND CONSULATE PESHAWAR. TEXTS OF REPORTS FROM CONGENS TRANSMITTED TO DEPARTMENT BY AIRGRAM.
- 2. SUMMARY: GOP'S REACTIVE MEASURES DIRECTED AT REDUCING SECESSIONIST PRESSURES IN EAST PAKISTAN HAVE FAILED TO HALT ANARCHY IN COUNTRYSIDE, TO UNDERCUT SUPPORT TO MUKTI BAHINI (BM) OR TO RESTORE EAST PAKISTAN GOVERNMENT TO ITS PRE-MARCH LEVEL OF MUDDLING-THROUGH INCOMPETENCY. SUCH POSITIVE

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ACTIONS OF GOP AS APPOINTMENT OF CIVIL ADMINISTRATION AND TRANSFER OF SYMBOL OF WEST PAK REPRESSION, GEN. TIKKA KHAN, HAVE BEEN UNDERMINED BY CONTINUED COLLECTIVE REPRISALS BY PAK ARMY AGAINST POPULATION AND BY NON-CONVINCING GOVERNMENTAL PERFORMANCE ON SOME STEPS SUCH AS GENERAL AMNESTY PROCLAMATION. MUKTI BAHINI GRADUALLY INCREASING SCALE OF ACTIVITY WITH FURTHER INTENSIFICATION EXPECTED IN FEW MONTHS. SECURITY CONTINUES TO DETERIORATE IN RURAL AREAS ALTHOUGH DACCA CITY RELATIVELY UNDISTURBED DURING MONTH.

3. YAHYA MOVED AHEAD ON TRANSFER OF POWER BY SCHEDULING BY-ELECTIONS IN EAST IN DECEMBER AND JANUARY AND ASSUMPTION IS ASSEMBLIES WILL BE CALLED SHORTLY AFTER ELECTIONS, WITH CONSTITUTION BEING ISSUED IN INTERIM PERIOD. REGIME'S STRATEGY TO BUILD COUNTERWEIGHT TO PEOPLE'S PARTY THROUGH MERGED MUSLIM LEAGUE FACTIONS HAS APPARENTLY COLLAPSED IN WEST PAKISTAN ALTHOUGH MERGER STILL REMAINS VERY POSSIBLE IN EAST. PRE-ELECTION SCRAMBLE HAS BEGUN IN DACCA ALTHOUGH IT UNCLEAR AT THIS POINT WHAT EXTENT GOP WILL PERMIT FREE ELECTIONS OR DEGREE TO WHICH MUKTI BAHINI WILL DISRUPT ELECTION PROCESS. END SUMMARY

4. IN EAST PAKISTAN, MILITARY CONFLICT CONTINUED IN NOW RELATIVELY ESTABLISHED PATTERN, BUT WITHOUT ANY CLEAR DIRECTION. IN COUNTRYSIDE, MB HAS SUCCEEDED IN SNARLING GROUND TRANSPORT TO LARGE EXTENT AND HAS CONDUCTED SOPHISTICATED AND COSTLY ATTACKS ON OCEAN-GOING SHIPPING AT BOTH EAST PAKISTANI PORTS. TERRORIST ACTIVITIES INCLUDED UNSUCCESSFUL ASSASSINATION ATTEMPTS ON ONE EAST PAKI MINISTER AND ON SON OF EAST PAKI CONVENTION MUSLIM LEAGUE LEADER.

5. CONGEN DACCA REPORTS THAT MB CONTINUES INITIATE NUMEROUS ACTIONS IN THOSE DISTRICTS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED (DACCA, NOAKHALI, COMILLA, FARIDPUR, MYMENSINGH-SYLHET DISTRICT UNKNOWN) WITH INTENSIFICATION OF ACTIVITY IN DACCA RURAL AREAS. CONGEN ALSO REPORTS THAT FIGHTING OCCURRED IN JESSORE AND DINAJPUR WHILE

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CERTAIN AREAS OF KHULNA AND RANGPURI ARE UNDER MB CONTROL. LOWER-LEVEL MB ACTIONS HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN SOUTHEAST DISTRICTS OF CHITTAGONG, BARISALI AND PATUAKHALI. ON OTHER HAND, DACCA CITY RELATIVELY FREE FROM INCIDENTS DURING MONTH.

6. DESPITE ORDERS FROM MLA CHIEF NIAZI, BURNING OF VILLAGES AND BAZAARS BY PAK MILITARY AS REPRISALS FOR MB ACTIVITY STILL TAKING PLACE. THESE RETALIATORY ACTIONS ARE APPARENTLY INDISCRIMINATE. DACCA STATES THAT CONGEN RECEIVING SCATTERED REPORTS, MAINLY

FROM MYMENSINGH, THAT ARMY PURSUES PERSECUTION OF HINDUS. GOP CLAIMS TO HAVE INTERCEPTED SEVERAL SIZEABLE GROUPS OF MB NEAR BORDER AREAS AND INFLICTED HEAVY LOSSES. ALONG BORDER, FREQUENT SHELLINGS ARE REPORTED BY GOP.

7. ALTHOUGH WE ANTICIPATE FURTHER STEP-UP IN MB ACTIVITY IN EAST PAKISTAN, WE WOULD EXPECT LARGE SCALE MB "OFFENSIVE" RUMORED FOR OCTOBER WHEN MB RECRUITS IN INDIAN TRAINING CAMPS EXPECTED TO BE "UNLEASHED" TO PERHAPS SLIP INTO NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER WHEN MONSOON FLOOD WATERS HAVE RECEDED. DRY SEASON ALSO WILL PROVIDE GREATER MOBILITY TO PAK ARMY. MLA IN WEST FULLY COGNIZANT PROBABLE INTENSIFICATION MB ACTIVITY IN NEXT FEW MONTHS AS TRAINING IN INDIAN CAMPS COMPLETED, BUT WE HAVE SEEN NO SIGNS OF LARGE SCALE BUILDUP OF EXISTING FORCES IN EAST TO MEET THIS THREAT. PAK MILITARY FORCES IN WEST TIED DOWN IN FORWARD POSITIONS IN FACE PRESENT INDO-PAK TENSIONS.

8. CONGEN DACCA OBSERVES THAT SOME EVIDENCE EMERGED ON TWO KEY ASPECTS OF PRESENT INSURGENCY: WHETHER POPULATION WILL CONTINUE SUPPORT MB DESPITE DIFFICULTIES AND REPRISALS AND WHETHER MB WILL HAVE ABILITY TO DEVELOP ORGANIZATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE.

9. DACCA HAS IMPRESSION THAT URBAN BOURGEOISIE (ORIGIN OF MUCH OF AWAMI LEAGUE LEADERSHIP) BEGINNING SHOW SIGNS OF WEARINESS AND DESIRE FOR END TO

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PRESENT UNCERTAINTIES ALTHOUGH THEIR HATRED FOR WEST
PAKISTAN UNABATED. HOWEVER, IN COUNTRYSIDE, PEASANTS
WILLINGLY SHARE THEIR LIMITED FOOD AND SHELTER TO
EVER-INCREASING MB FORCES. DACCA CONCLUDES MUKTI
BAHINI SUSTAINING GENERAL POPULAR SUPPORT.

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P R 041230Z OCT 71
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 887
INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMCONSUL DACCA
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMCONSUL KARACHI
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
AMCONSUL LAHORE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL MADRAS
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
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10. ON SECOND QUESTION, THERE APPEARS TO BE CIVIL BANGLA DESH STRUCTURE PARALLEL TO MUKTI BAHINI IN AREAS OF FARIDPUR DISTRICT. (REPORTS HAVE ALSO BEEN RECEIVED OF MAOIST CIVIL ORGANIZATION IN THOSE AREAS OF NOAKHALI WHERE PRO-PEKING TOAHA COMMUNIST GROUPS ACTIVE.) IT IS PROBABLE THAT SIMILAR BD GOVERNMENTAL APPARATUSES HAVE BEEN INSTALLED IN OTHER ISOLATED AREAS WHERE PAK ARMY HAS NEITHER TROOP RESOURCES NOR STRATEGIC INTEREST TO OCCUPY. (BD/MBI ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND DIFFICULTIES IN INDIA HAVE BEEN REPORTED IN DETAIL BY CONGEN, CALCUTTA.)

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11. ON CIVIL SIDE, CONGEN REPORTS THAT GOP APPOINTMENT CIVILIAN GOVERNOR WITH MULTI-PARTY CABINET, PROCLAMATION OF GENERAL AMNESTY, ANNOUNCEMENT OF BY-ELECTIONS AND YAHYA'S AGREEMENT TO SUBMIT CONSTITUTION TO AMENDMENT PROCESS HAVE NOT CURED MALAISE OF GOEP OFFICIALDOM, HALTED ABUSES BY ARMY AND POLICE, OR MOLLIFIED DISAFFECTED EAST PAK POPULATION. WITH MINOR EXCEPTIONS, GOEP HAS YET TO REACH PRE-MARCH LEVELS OF NORMAL ADMINISTRATIVE INCOMPETENCY. BENGALIS SKEPTICAL OVER AMNESTY AS ARRESTS CONTINUE AND FEW PERSONS OF KNOWN PROMINENCE HAVE BEEN RELEASED. MALIK AND UNIMPRESSIVE CABINET GENERALLY BELIEVED TO BE SUBSERVIENT TO EAST PAK MLA. PROSPECTS FOR POLITICAL ROLE THROUGH BY-ELECTIONS, HAS, HOWEVER, GALVANIZED THOSE POLITICIANS DEFEATED IN 1970 ELECTIONS. (SEE SUCCEEDING PARAS).

12. PERHAPS CLOSEST ANALOGY TO SITUATION PREVAILING WITHIN EAST PAKISTAN AFTER SIX MONTHS OF UNREST IS THAT ALSO EXISTING IN WEST BENGAL. SHORT RUN INDICATORS POINT TO INCREASING DETERIORATION IN SECURITY AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITY.

13. IN WEST PAKISTAN, SUPPORT FOR REGIME REMAINS ALMOST UNIVERSAL ACCORDING TO CONGENS KARACHI AND LAHORE. USUAL TENSIONS AND DISCONTENTS IN RURAL SIND AND BALUCHISTAN AND URBAN PUNJAB REMAIN BUT THEY HAVE NOT ESCALATED. CONCERNS OVER POSSIBLE WAR WITH INDIA MARKEDLY INCREASED IN LAHORE WHILE IN KARACHI PREVAILING FATALISTIC VIEW OVER LAST SEVERAL MONTHS THAT INDO-PAK WAR INEVITABLE UNAFFECTED BY ANY ATTITUDINAL SHIFTS.

14. STEPS BY REGIME CITED PREVIOUSLY RELATING TO EASTPAKISTAN, PARTIAL LIFTING CENSORSHIP, YAHYA VISIT TO IRAN, DE-LINKING RUPEE FROM STERLING, ETC., CONTINUING TREND OF AUGUST GAVE GOP IMAGE OF ASSERTIVENESS AND ENHANCED YAHYA'S PERSONAL REPUTATION OF STRENGTH COMBINED WITH TOLERANCE.

15. ON NATIONAL BASIS, REGIME'S GRAND STRATEGY OF

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RESURRECTING UNIFIED MUSLIM LEAGUE (ML) AS COUNTER-BALANCE TO BHUTTO PEOPLE'S PARTY (PPP) HAS FOUNDERED ON THOSE TRADITIONAL AND DESTRUCTIVE PAKISTANI POLITICAL CHARACTERISTICS - AMBITION AND PERSONAL ANIMOSITIES. MOMENTUM APPEARS TO HAVE SUBSIDED IN MERGER EFFORTS IN WEST PAKISTAN.

16. REGIME HAS, NONETHELESS, OTHER WEAPONS REMAINING IN ITS ARSENAL TO USE ON BHUTTO. MODIFICATION POLITICAL PARTIES ACT TO PERMIT CHANGE IN PARTY AFFILIATIONS TOGETHER WITH GOVERNMENTAL PRESSURE COULD LEAD TO DEFECTIONS FROM BHUTTO'S CAMP OF CONSERVATIVE ELEMENTS. AND ABOVE ALL, GAME IS YET TO BE PLAYED OUT IN EAST PAKISTAN BOTH IN BY-ELECTIONS AND ULTIMATE POLITICAL ALIGNMENT THOSE 88 CLEARED MEMBERS - ELECTED TO ASSEMBLY WHO CHOOSE TO PARTICIPATE. PRESUMPTION IS THAT ASSEMBLIES WILL BE CONVENED IN JANUARY. HOWEVER, FURTHER SLIPPAGE IN GOP'S SCHEDULE AND IN ABOVE COMMONLY HELD PRESUMPTION ALWAYS REMAINS POSSIBILITY IF REGIME BELIEVES RESUMPTION PARLIAMENTARY PROCESS AGAINST ITS INTERESTS. ALTHOUGH BHUTTO, WHO HAS MOST TO LOSE WOULD THREATEN SHOULD THIS OCCUR, INDIAN "BOGEY" ARGUMENT WOULD PROBABLY KEEP HIM OFF STREETS.

17. ML MERGER TALK CONTINUES IN EAST. PAKISTAN MUSLIM LEAGUE LEADER QAIYUM SCHEDULED TO VISIT DACCA TO PUSH MERGER UNDER HIS LEADERSHIP - WHICH HE FAILED TO DO IN WEST. "UNITED FRONT" TO INCLUDE OTHER PARTIES, SUCH AS PAKISTAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP), CANNOT BE RULED OUT IF GOP PRESSES HARD ENOUGH. HOWEVER, AS IN WEST, PERSONAL ENMITIES RUN DEEP IN EAST AND WE BELIEVE IT WILL BE VERY DIFFICULT, IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE, FOR GOP TO PUT TOGETHER ELECTION COALITION UNITING MOST RIGHTIST PARTIES. PDP AND JAMAAT MAY BELIEVE THAT THEY WOULD MAKE DECENT SHOWING IN RELATIVELY FAIR ELECTIONS AND THEREFORE WOULD NOT DESIRE GIVING DISCREDITED MUSLIM LEAGUE FACTIONS AND NIZAM SHARE OF POWER AS RESULT OF PRE-ELECTION UNDERSTANDINGS. IN ANY CASE, AT PRESENT, PDP AND JAMAAT HAVE ANNOUNCED ALONG WITH PPP THAT THEY WILL CONTEST ELECTIONS.

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18. FROM BHUTTO'S PUBLIC COMMENTS, HIS AIDES' PRIVATE CLAIMS THAT PPP GUARANTEED 35 EAST PAK SEATS BY YAHYA, AND REPORTS FROM DACCA, IT APPEARS THAT BHUTTO HAS YAHYA'S ASSURANCE THAT, AT MINIMUM, MLA WILL NOT FREEZE OUT PPP IN BY-ELECTIONS. FORMER NATIONAL AWAMI PARTY (BHASHANI) LEADER MASHUR RAHMAN IS REPORTEDLY PREPARED TO TURN OVER REMNANTS OF ONCE-POWERFUL NAP(L) STRUCTURE IN EAST TO PPP. THERE ARE ALSO REPORTS THAT AWAMI LEAGUE CLEARED MNA'S PREPARED TO NEGOTIATE AS BLOC WITH PPP. HOWEVER, AS INDICATED EARLIER WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE TO SUGGEST THAT MLA HAS ABANDONED HOPES OF CUTTING BHUTTO DOWN TO SIZE.

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