

APPALLING TRAGEDY IN
EAST PAKISTAN

Mr. HARRIS. Mr. President, an appalling tragedy is taking place in East Pakistan about which the world remains ignorant because West Pakistani authorities have cynically expelled foreign journalists. It would appear that only in this way may their soldiers kill in peace.

The New York Times, March 31, cites "unimpeachable independent sources" in New Delhi who claim that the Pakistani soldiers have been dragging political leaders in East Pakistan into the streets where they are summarily shot. There are reports, unconfirmed, that execution squads led by informers are now systematically tracking down and killing East Pakistani intellectual leaders so that the people of that region will forever remain without a voice.

These outrages reportedly are being committed in the name "of God and a united Pakistan."

Some reports may be sensationalized accounts of isolated crimes. Because of the Pakistani Government's policy of excluding the press, we do not know. But the unwillingness of the Pakistani authorities to admit foreign newsmen must cause us to conclude that at least some of the reports are true.

The world must end its silence. At this point only the Indian Government has gone on record in condemnation of current events in Pakistan. But Indian protests can only be marginal in effectiveness and subject to misinterpretation in purpose because of the long hatred between the two countries. It is sad to report that because of the vast human destruction brought about by our involvement in Vietnam, the United States is

also not in a position to take a moral lead.

We do not, however, have to remain inactive. We should pointedly announce that we are halting all military and economic aid to Pakistan for the time being. Meanwhile, we can urge others, particularly countries in Asia, to take the moral lead in such forums as the United Nations.

I urge other Senators to join me in asking the administration to give the situation in Pakistan the highest priority. We cannot sit with our hands folded as a generation of leaders in East Pakistan may be on the way to final destruction.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that an editorial from the New York Times on this subject be printed in the RECORD. I also ask unanimous consent that a letter on this subject which I have sent to the Secretary of State be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the items were ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the New York Times, Mar. 31, 1971]

IN THE NAME OF PAKISTAN

Acting "in the name of God and a united Pakistan," forces of the West Pakistan-dominated military government of President Yahya Khan have dishonored both by their ruthless crackdown on the Bengali majority seeking a large measure of autonomy for their homeland in the country's eastern region.

Any appearance of "unity" achieved by vicious military attacks on unarmed civilians of the kind described by correspondents and diplomats who were in the East Pakistani capital of Dacca when the crackdown began cannot possibly have real meaning or enduring effect. The brutality of the Western troops toward their "Moslem brothers" in the East tends only to confirm the argument of the outright secessionists in Bengal who argue that differences between East and West Pakistan are irreconcilable.

Although this is a domestic dispute, the struggle in Pakistan could have dangerous international consequences, especially if a prolonged period of guerrilla warfare ensues. The least the world community can do at this stage is to call on President Yahya, in the name of humanity and common sense, to stop the bloodshed and restore Sheik Mujibur Rahman to his rightful role as elected leader of his people.

The United States having played a major role in training and equipping Pakistan's armed forces, has a special obligation to withhold all further military aid to the Yahya Government. Economic assistance should be continued only on condition that a major portion be used to help bind up East Pakistan's grievous wounds.

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT
OPERATIONS,
Washington, D.C., April 1, 1971.

HON. WILLIAM P. ROGERS,
Secretary of State,
Department of State,
Washington, D.C.

DEAR MR. SECRETARY: I am alarmed as I am sure you must be about reports of mass executions and indiscriminate slaughter of civilians in East Pakistan.

The New York Times March 31 cites "unimpeachable independent sources" in New Delhi who claim that Pakistani soldiers have been dragging political leaders in East Pakistan into the streets where they are summarily shot. There are reports, unconfirmed, that execution squads led by informers are systematically tracking down and killing East

Pakistani intellectual leaders so that the people of that region will forever remain without a voice.

Because of the Pakistani Government's policy of excluding foreign newsmen from East Pakistan, it is impossible for Members of Congress and the world at large to know with certainty what is happening. But it would seem that if the Pakistani authorities had a better story to tell the world, they would admit foreign journalists who could tell it.

Until it is clear from public accounts that reports of summary executions and indiscriminate warfare against civilians in East Pakistan are inaccurate, I wish to urge that our Government immediately end all military and economic assistance to Pakistan. I do not believe we should allow it to be said that American funds and arms contributed to the destruction of a generation of East Pakistani leaders.

Because of the world's reaction to our involvement in Vietnam, it is not practicable in my opinion for the United States to take the moral lead in condemning Pakistani actions in world forums like the United Nations. But I do believe that we should encourage others to speak out, particularly Asian countries, and agree to support them.

I would appreciate at the earliest opportunity your assessment of the United States policy towards Pakistan in light of current events there.

Sincerely yours,

FRED R. HARRIS,
U.S. Senate.

MMR