

COMMENTS BY SENATOR KENNEDY
ON SITUATION IN EAST PAKISTAN

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, reports from East Pakistan tell of a heavy toll being paid by the civilian population as a result of the current conflict. It is a story of indiscriminate killing, the execution of dissident political leaders and students, and thousands of civilians suffering and dying every hour of the day. It is a story of dislocation and loss of home. It is a story of little food and water. And coming in the aftermath of tragedy by natural disaster, the current violence and near total disruption of government services in East Pakistan is compounding an already difficult situation. It threatens near famine for millions—and the spread of epidemics and disease.

I do not speak today to blame or condemn, or to offer any magic solution for meeting the political and humanitarian

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problems in East Pakistan. But as chairman of the Judiciary Subcommittee on Refugees, I do wish to express a deep personal concern over the plight of the people in East Pakistan, which seems to be just another link in a chain of war-ravaged populations stretching around the world in recent years.

Inevitably, the situation of civilians in East Pakistan is taking second place to the political issues at stake—and to the interests of those who have much to lose, or to gain, by the outcome of the battle. But the people of Dacca, of Chittagong, and of the villages and towns throughout the area also have interests. For many, apparently, it is mere survival.

The situation in East Pakistan should be particularly distressing to Americans; for it is our military hardware—our guns and tanks and aircraft—which is contributing much to the suffering. And this is being done, apparently, in violation of negotiated agreements on the use of American military aid to the central Pakistan Government.

Mr. President, I fully appreciate the immense difficulties in the East Pakistan issue. It is a complex matter for diplomats and humanitarians alike. But should not our Government condemn the killing? Should we not be more concerned about the fate of millions of civilians who are caught in the crunch of this conflict? Should we not offer our good services to stop the violence—or at least encourage and support others in such an effort?

It is to be hoped that our Government will give some evidence to reflect a growing concern among many Americans over recent developments in East Pakistan.

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