



Classification: SECRET  
 Department of State  
 TELEGRAM

053712

INDICATE:  
☐ COLLECT  
☐ CHARGE TO

6473

53712

DISTRIBUTION

ACTION: AmEmbassy COLOMBO  
 AmEmbassy KAEUL  
 AmEmbassy KATHMANDU  
 AmEmbassy RANGOON  
 AmEmbassy BANEKOK  
 AmEmbassy TEHRAN  
 AmEmbassy ROME  
 AmEmbassy MANILA  
 USINT KHARTOUM

STATE

1. Following message summarizes recent developments in East Pakistan:  
 The situation in East Pakistan deteriorated sharply the night of March 25-26 after President Yahya broke off negotiations with Mujibur Rahman and flew back to ~~Islamabad~~ Islamabad. A series of stringent martial law regulations were promulgated in East Pakistan, including a ban on all political activities and the imposition of a 24-hour curfew, and troops moved rapidly and ruthlessly, including the use of tanks, to take control of Dacca. In a nationwide broadcast on March 26, Yahya branded Mujib a traitor, prohibited political activity in both wings and proscribed the Awami League.
2. Meanwhile those Awami League leaders who were able to escape went underground and a clandestine radio began to broadcast resistance messages. One of the first of these was a declaration of the QUOTE sovereign and independent People's Republic of Bangla Desh UNQUOTE,

9

DRAFTED BY: *HBS*  
 NEA:HBSchaffer

DRAFTING DATE: 3/31/71  
 TEL. EXT. 23172

APPROVED BY: *WFS*  
 PAF - William F. Spengler

CLEARANCES:

S/S-O: Sean Holly

FORM DS-322  
 4-68

ACTION: Page 2

made in the name of Mujib. The Martial Law Administration, however claims to have arrested Mujib and his leading lieutenants the night of March 25-26, and their failure to surface publicly thus far lends credence to this claim. On March 27 the clandestine radio announced the formation of a revolutionary army and a provisional government under the leadership of a QUOTE Major Zia Khan UNQUOTE.

3. There continue to be conflicting reports on the actual situation in East Pakistan although the city of Dacca remains relatively quiet. With strict press censorship and the expulsion of foreign newsmen from East Pakistan hard news is difficult to come by. Eyewitness reports of the killing by the Pak Army of large numbers of Bengali students, intellectuals, police, Awami League leaders, slum dwellers and members of the Hindu minority continue to trickle in. They have been already/given prominence in the American press. Further reports may be expected as foreigners leave East Pakistan.

4. Claims regarding the situation ~~by~~ put forward by martial law and Bengali sources differ widely, although even Radio Pakistan has now reported that QUOTE miscreants UNQUOTE have been active in Chittagong

ACTION: Page 3

and Khulna. A Japanese wire service reported that Chittagong was the scene of civilian-military ~~clashes~~ QUOTE conflagrations UNQUOTE Monday night, citing radio contact with Japanese ships anchored in the harbor as its source. Indian wire services continue to report widespread fighting in many places, as well as the arrival of aircraft and tanks from the West wing.

4. Europeans, mostly dependents of Yugoslav technicians evacuated from Dacca March 31, have said that the Pakistani Army appears to be firmly in control of the city and that some shops were opening. A Yugoslav foreign office official accompanying the group said the situation in Dacca has improved but is not yet normal. He also reports the Yugoslav Consul General has been unable to establish telephone contact with technicians in the ports of Chittigong and ~~Chalna~~ Chalna.

END

ROGERS