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TERROR AND BRUTALITY IN BANGLA DESH

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U.S. Senators Speak





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Following is the text of a statement made on April 1, 1971, by Senator Edward M. Kennedy in the U. S. Senate:

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 problems in East Pakistan. But as Chairman of the Judiciary Sub-Committee 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 interest 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 killings? 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 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.

Following is the text of a telegram sent to U.S. Secretary of State Rogers on May 6, 1971, by U.S. Senators MONDALE, MUSKIE, HUMPHREY, BAYH, MCGOVERN, HARRIS, HUGHES, PROXMIRE, EAGLETON (all Democrats), and CASE (Republican):

Tens of millions face starvation in East Pakistan without emergency efforts to restore full supply and distribution of food imports.

We urge you to instruct U.S. Representative at Pakistan Consortium Talks to refuse further foreign exchange assistance, and ask other Donors to refuse likewise, unless Government of Pakistan

(1) Mounts immediate emergency relief effort in East commensurate with potential need, and

(2) Grants I.C.R.C. observers entry to East to plan coordinated international food distribution and medical relief efforts with Pakistani authorities.

We recognize these are extraordinary actions, but feel they are compelled by horrible prospects of millions starving in East Pakistan while governments have means to prevent it.

Following is the text of Senator Mondale's speech in the U. S. Senate (May 6, 1971):

The people of East Pakistan — already ravaged by cyclone and civil war — are now threatened by a new disaster of incredible magnitude.

Only the most urgent action by the United States and other Governments can save millions from dying of starvation.

The evidence of gathering tragedy was summarized in a letter printed by *The New York Times*, May 2.

Over 35 million Bengalis depend on imported food to maintain a precarious balance between life and death.

Food imports have been interrupted since February. Internal distribution has stopped.

History has given us the clearest warning of tragedy. In 1943, when the food shortage in the area was one-third what it is now, a similar break-down of food shipments meant the death of over a million people.

Famine will not wait on publicity or bureaucratic inertia. A massive relief effort must be mounted now to revive the distribution system and reach the needy before meager food reserves are gone.

By the time we see the pictures of starving children, it will be too late to save them.

Yet, in the face of this horror, the United States Government has stood by in unconscionable negligence.

We have made a vague, general offer of help, but failed to press the Government of Pakistan in any way to undertake the necessary relief effort.

We were silent when International Red Cross Observers — whose impartial humanitarian mission is recognized by world community — were recently denied entry into East Pakistan.

The Department of State's "Pakistan Working Group", created when the civil war broke out, has been disbanded now that the fighting has subsided. Apparently the danger of millions starving was not deemed an occasion for a "special effort" by this Government.

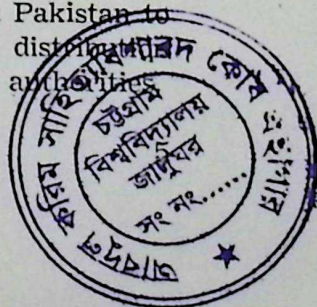
But something can be done.

The Consortium of Governments giving economic aid to Pakistan are now in the process of meeting. They are being asked for considerable financial aid to bail Pakistan out of an acute foreign exchange crisis.

Joined by a bi-partisan group of senators, I have today wired Secretary Rogers to make clear that the U.S. will not meet that request, and will ask other donors to refuse likewise, unless

(1) The Pakistani authorities undertake an emergency relief effort equal to the crisis in East Pakistan, and

(2) Representatives of the International Red Cross are granted prompt entry to East Pakistan to plan a coordinated international food distribution and medical relief effort with Pakistani authorities.



I would hope the Secretary would also make clear the readiness of the U.S. Government to make available a generous share of emergency food aid and vehicles for distribution, including helicopters and transport aircraft, to be loaned to Pakistani relief authorities or the International Red Cross.

Unbelievably, we seem to be on the verge of another Biafra — another combination of rationalized inaction and moral insensitivity which could cost millions of lives.

If America's claim to moral and humane values means anything, if the Government of Pakistan deserves to be recognized as the responsible authority in East Pakistan, the only course for both Governments is the strongest humanitarian action now — before we watch the burial of another generation of babies.

Following is the full text of Senator Saxbe's speech in the U.S. Senate (May 11, 1971):

Mr. President, On April 29, I had printed in the Congressional record a letter, dated April 17, from Dr. John E. Rohde of Hudson, Ohio. Dr. Rohde was stationed in East Pakistan as a physician under the U.S. Aid Programme. He is one of the several hundred Americans evacuated from East Pakistan soon after civil war started in last March.

In the letter, Dr. Rohde gives an eyewitness account of the terror and killing by the West Pakistan army upon the unarmed civil population of the city of Dacca in East Bengal. Dr. Rohde and his wife walked through the University of Dacca area only 4 days after military action started. They reported seeing the student dormitories of Dacca University shelled by army tanks and artillery. They saw evidence of the slaughter of young inmates of those dormitories. They saw the breaches in walls of those dormitories where tanks had broken through. They saw mass graves in which dead students were heaped together outside the halls where they had studied. Dr. Rohde sums up what he saw in the following words:

"It is clear that the law of the jungle prevails in East Pakistan where the mass killing of unarmed civilians, the systematic elimination of the intelligentsia and the annihilation of the Hindu population is in progress."

It appears to me from Dr. Rohde's account and the accounts of other eyewitnesses that systematic and brutal killings on a scale unprecedented in recent times have been committed in East Bengal. And it is a matter of profound sorrow to me, as I believe it should be to Senators, that this brutality in large part has come with the arms provided to Pakistan by our country.

Dr. Rohde urges in his letter of April 17:

"The U.S. must not continue to condone the military action with official silence."

He recognizes, he says, the inability of our Government to "oppose actively or intervene in this desperate oppression of the Bengalis", but he urges that I and my distinguished and honoured colleagues in this House "seek and support condemnation by Congress and the President of the U.S. of the inhuman treatment being accorded to these 75 million people of East Pakistan".

I am a co-sponsor of Senate Concurrent Resolution 21, urging the suspension of our military assistance to Pakistan until the conflict is resolved. But, as I have read and re-read Dr. Rohde's account of the happenings in East Bengal, I have felt, increasingly, the force of his appeal that we here do something to help bring to an end the inhuman treatment to which the people of East Bengal have been subjected. We have a responsibility, an obligation, to do something. We cannot condone this military action through our silence.

Foreign policy and foreign relations are difficult and complex matters, and those who bear the responsibility for their formulation and conduct in any country or government are capable of error. There is hardly an

example of a flawless or all-successful foreign policy. Our foreign policy makers in the post-World War II era deserve credit for many things. But they also made mistakes, and some of the worst were made in Asia. Our policy toward Pakistan has been a serious mistake.

Here is why:

First, the decision in 1954 to arm Pakistan created an internal imbalance of forces in that country which resulted in the military *coup d'etat* of 1958. Democracy has worked well enough in neighbouring India, and but for this tipping of the scales in favour of the military in Pakistan, it might well have worked in that country too.

Then, this dominance of the military led to the virtual subjugation and exploitation of East Pakistan, comprising 75 million people, by West Pakistan with a population of about 50 million. That is what lies at the root of the conflict between the people of the East and rulers and the military of West Pakistan. This conflict may be another Vietnam, only much larger in size and spelling, perhaps, far greater dangers to Asia and the world.

Third, that policy alienated and antagonized, at least temporarily, a country which has all along been inclined to be among our well-meaning friends. India stands for humanist values, for liberty and freedom, and for democracy — goals and values which we ourselves cherish most. This policy led us into an alignment with Pakistan against India, a country which, despite its present economic problems and other weaknesses, is a force to reckon

within Asian affairs, and a potential great power on the world stage.

But, let me confine myself to Pakistan. What did all our arms and economic aid accomplish in Pakistan? Almost 100 per cent of the arms aid and something like 70 per cent of our economic assistance was invested in West Pakistan, where only a minority of the Pakistanis live. Traditionally, more than half of Pakistan's export earnings come from East Bengal's jute and other agricultural products. And yet the lion's share of foreign imports financed by these earnings, as well as foreign aid, went to West Pakistan, with East Bengal getting no more than 20 or 30 per cent.

As a result, while West Pakistan made some progress, East Bengal only grew poorer since its independence as part of Pakistan in 1947. This was rendered possible by the fact that the people of East Pakistan had no share in the country's management, which has been carried on arbitrarily by an unrepresentative military regime drawn from the West and supported with our military and economic assistance.

Small wonder, then, that after the first-ever election to be held on the basis of universal franchise last year, the elected leaders of East Bengal led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman demanded a large measure of autonomy, not separation or independence but autonomy, more especially autonomy in the management of East Pakistan's economic, commercial and financial affairs.

I should remind my colleagues that during the negotiations preceding the military blitz of March 25, the demand of the East Bengalis was not independence, but autonomy or self-rule in domestic matters, such as police

and para-military forces, trade and commerce, taxation and economic investment, and the like. Behind the smokescreen of these negotiations, the strength of the largely Punjabi West Pakistan army was increased, and its full force was unleashed on unarmed Bengalis in a manner and on a scale which Dr. Rohde and many other eye-witnesses have described as a veritable bloodbath, mass slaughter and genocide.

I should like to have printed in the Congressional record some dispatches on the subject on East Bengal.

* * * *

I know that the Pakistan Government's present line of defence is that what is happening in East Bengal is Pakistan's internal matter. What distresses me the more is that our own Government should choose to deploy the same line of argument in its response to questions from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. As the *New York Times* said in its editorial of April 21 — and if there is no objection, I should like to have the editorial reprinted in the Congressional record:

"It is a dangerously short-sighted policy to insist that the military slaughter of democratic leaders and repression of the majority in East Pakistan is strictly an internal matter."

Arms and ammunition supplied by us on a grant basis or concessional purchases are being used by one side in this conflict. Our economic assistance enables the Government of Pakistan to divert its own resources to the purchase of more arms to carry on this war. I believe, emissaries from West Pakistan are right now to ask for more arms and more economic aid. And yet

they tell us that what is happening in East Bengal is an internal matter upon which we should not express our views.

In the circumstances, it appears to me that it is not enough for the Senate to demand suspension of military aid to Pakistan until this conflict is resolved. Under the existing arrangements, the majority of the people of Pakistan will continue to be deprived of the benefits of our economic assistance. Therefore, until such time as this conflict is resolved to the satisfaction of the elected leaders of East Bengal, our economic aid to Pakistan must be suspended. I strongly urge this because, while this conflict lasts, any economic aid we give to Pakistan will be used by West Pakistan authorities only to suppress the majority in East Bengal.

I am not advocating interference in Pakistan's internal affairs. I am advocating our disengagement from this conflict. Through the use of our arms and our economic assistance in this conflict, the Government of Pakistan has involved us in it as a partisan against the more populous part of Pakistan. We need to disengage ourselves from this conflict completely by stopping all military and economic assistance to Pakistan. We can consider resumption of assistance when circumstances reassure us that our assistance will reach where it is most needed.

The Government of Pakistan, after expelling foreign correspondents on the eve of military action in East Pakistan, has invited half a dozen of journalists for a conducted tour of East Pakistan under a pall of heavy censorship. One of the privileged correspondents,

Mr. Malcolm W. Brown, reported, in the *New York Times* of May 7:

"From a helicopter flying over the Eastern region of East Pakistan, vast destruction could be seen in towns and villages.... A visit here is a visit to a city of desolation... apart from handful of people at the market place who carefully saluted passing army jeeps, the city was virtually deserted."

He goes on:

"At intervals, along streets lined with ramshackle houses, bodies have been buried in shallow graves and covered with piles of red bricks. Bodies covered with bricks are found even on the approaches of houses which themselves are unoccupied and closed".

This is not the story of a minor internal matter of law and order. What these press despatches indicate is a terrible massacre. It is a proper matter of international interest and world condemnation. Let the Senate condemn it, and let the Senate ask the administration to raise the matter in appropriate international forums, such as the Economic and Social Council, with a view to seeking redress of the grave violations of human rights involved.

If we condone the happenings in East Pakistan in silence, this tragedy will only be compounded. Refugees are streaming out of East Pakistan, and the Indian Government has announced that it is already host to some 2 million East Bengalis who fled. In East Bengal itself, with the disruption of normal life and communications there, is the threat of famine; there also

is the threat of the spread of cholera and typhoid and other epidemics.

Such calamities are no respectors of national boundaries and international frontiers. I do not see how the present Government of Pakistan is going to be able to deal with those threats, with its resources depleted to bankruptcy by a war it cannot afford, and the majority of its population already alienated.

It is necessary that the pressure of international opinion be brought to bear upon that Government to create conditions in East Bengal in which the necessary relief can be provided to millions of people who have only known denial, exploitation and repression, and now, for no fault of theirs, face the threat of decimation by famine and epidemic.

I ask unanimous consent that the items to which I have referred be printed in the record.

Following is the text of a statement made on May 11, 1971, by Senator Edward M. Kennedy:

I appreciate very much the opportunity to be here this afternoon — because, as Chairman of the Judiciary Sub-committee on Refugees, I share your deep concern for the victims of natural disaster and civil war in East Pakistan. I am hopeful these hearings will contribute toward a better understanding of the undeniable problems which exist in relieving this basically humanitarian problem. And I am also hopeful that the hearings will underscore the urgent need to further encourage the initiatives underway to meet the needs of the Bengali people.

Official reports from our government and elsewhere express very serious concern about the condition of the people in East Pakistan. These reports say that within a month the condition of the people will become "acute". The precarious situation which exists today will evolve into a nightmare of death for millions — unless immediate and concerted efforts are made to meet the needs of the people involved.

Although reports from East Pakistan suggest that violence has subsided considerably, reports also indicate that feelings are tense between the people and the army of the central government. In fact, official reports to our government suggest that the great bulk of the population is alienated, perhaps forever. Regretably, this can only complicate, and perhaps delay, the organizing of a meaningful relief program, and the solving of

those political problems which generated the recent violence.

Moreover, reports also indicate that the army effectively controls only the cities and towns, and that throughout most of the countryside, government administration and services do not exist. The transportation and distribution of available foodstocks and medical supplies are at a standstill — even in the area struck by the cyclone last fall, where conservative estimates say a million persons have been solely dependent for their survival on effective relief operations. Food reserves — not confiscated by the army — are very low.

The tragedy, finally, has now spilled over into India, which so far has found it necessary to give asylum to nearly 2,000,000 refugees — of whom at least 526,000 are in camps. The recent daily influx into India has reportedly been some 50,000. The State Department informs me that the influx will continue at a high level, "at least until the beginning of the monsoon in a few weeks, when both military operations and travel will become more difficult." The continuing heavy influx of refugees into India is a stark reminder of how bad conditions have become in East Pakistan.

Over the last month, I have repeatedly communicated my concern in these matters to officials in the Department of State and elsewhere, in an effort to encourage and support reasonable initiatives by our government and the international community to help meet the urgent political and humanitarian problems in East Pakistan. I have strongly believed these initiatives should be taken through the United Nations.

On the humanitarian problems, at least, some progress is being made,

On the Indian side of the border, and at the invitation of the Indian government, representatives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) are currently assuming relief needs and developing a plan of international action. According to a communication I received from the Department of State this morning, our government has "authorised up to \$2.5 million in food and other assistance as our initial contribution to the international relief effort." While the UNHCR effort is being organized, the U.S. is providing emergency food assistance for 217,000 refugees in West Bengal. The food assistance is being distributed by CARE, Catholic Relief Services, and Church World Service | Lutheran World Federation.

Far less progress in meeting relief needs is being made in East Pakistan. Initiating an adequate relief program is undoubtedly being hampered for a number of good reasons — but, on the basis of talks I have had, the primary cause may very well be a simple lack of candor in recognising the vast dimension of human need brought on by the conflict. Let us not quibble over how we label the situation. Whether we call it a minor disturbance, a disaster, or an emergency — the threat of mass starvation puts a heavy obligation on the government of Pakistan and the international community.

In the name of neutrality, some in our government say we must not be involved in East Pakistan today. But we are involved. Our weapons have been involved in the violence. Our aid has contributed to East Pakistan's development for more than a decade. And today, our government, at the highest levels, is involved in discussions for even more aid. So we are involved. The only question is what this involvement will be. At

this point it must be humanitarian — aid that will heal and rehabilitate, not further divide and destroy.

In this connection, I strongly urge that our government leave no stone unturned — especially this week when high level representatives of the Pakistani government are present in Washington — in supporting current efforts by the United Nations to organize a relief program within East Pakistan. Since the last week in April, representatives of UNICEF, the U.N. Development Program, and the World Food Program have travelled to Dacca to ascertain relief and logistical needs.

Moreover, representatives of the Pakistani government have assured me of their government's willingness to accept humanitarian aid and personnel through U.N. channels and private voluntary organizations. Thus, there is nothing but inertia to prevent a meaningful relief effort.

Solving the political and humanitarian crisis in East Pakistan is, first of all, Pakistan's task. But in this effort, there is scope enough for all the energy and charity that the emergency of the civil war has called forth, among Americans and peoples throughout the world.

And so today, as an individual concerned about the dignity and preservation of the ultimate resources on our planet, I appeal to the leaders of Pakistan, to the leaders of other countries, and to our own government, to support immediately a mercy mission and airlift into areas of need. And, hopefully, the appeal of the Indian government for assistance to meet refugee needs within her borders, will also receive the sympathetic response by all concerned.

We are conditioned in this world we have created to accept suffering and injustice — especially in our time when violent conflict and oppression are active in so many areas. But the newer world we seek will not evolve if we ignore these challenges to leadership, and take comfortable refuge in the mundane patterns and attitudes of the past.

In the case of East Pakistan — in the effort to help a people caught in the clutches of natural disaster and the passion of conflict — I cannot believe that governments stand paralyzed in the face of great tragedy. The situation must not be ignored. At stake are human lives — innocent lives — Pakistani lives — thousands, even millions of lives — whose destruction will burden the conscience of all mankind unless something is done to save them.



Following is the speech of Senator Church made on May 18, 1971, in the U.S. Senate:

Mr. President, I speak today in support of Senate Concurrent Resolution 21. What has taken place in East Pakistan since the night of March 25, 1971, when a bloodletting of untold proportions began, is hard to comprehend. We know that the Pakistan army, equipped mostly with American arms and led by U.S. trained officers, let loose a massive burst of violence on fellow Muslims. After the first week of the civil strife, the normally calm French newspaper, *Le Monde*, headlined events in Pakistan as "The week of the Bloodbath." "The *Chicago Sun-Times*, after running a series of eyewitness descriptions, labelled the affair, "The Pakistan Pogrom". And Lt. Gen. Tikka Khan, the present martial law administrator of East Pakistan, admitted on May 6 that there had been "quite a lot of massacre" during the current conflict.

On-the-spot accounts reaching Washington on a continuing basis from Americans, Europeans, and sub-continentials have confirmed the charge that killings have been widespread and sadistic. Such an account came from Peggy Durdin in the *New York Times*. After an extensive stay in East Pakistan, she wrote on May 2 of the wholesale slaughter that had taken place in Dacca and other urban centers following the breakdown of talks between Pakistan President Yahya Khan and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the duly elected leader of the Awami League. This Bengali political party had just won an

overwhelming mandate: One hundred and sixty-seven out of a possible 169 seats assigned to East Pakistan in the 313-seat National Assembly, on a platform advocating greater political autonomy for the East. Mrs. Durdin observed that:

"The freedom the Bengalis were determined to achieve and the concessions the vested interests of the West and Pakistan's military dictator-president were prepared to give finally culminated in one of the bloodiest slaughters of modern times, as Pakistan's armed forces moved with total ruthlessness to reassert Islamabad's authority."

As more and more facts are collected and analyzed, there is evidence to suggest not only that mass killings took place, but also that Bengali leadership groups may have been selected out by the central government for annihilations. Thousands of Bengali civilians — professors, elected leaders, businessmen, lawyers, engineers, politicians, civil servants, doctors, workers, students, farmers, women, children — together with many of the men who made up the East Pakistan Rifles and the Pakistan Border Security Forces, plus local policemen, are said to have been exterminated.

Reports T.J.S. George in the *Far Eastern Economic Review*:

"Should East Pakistan be handed over to local political parties tomorrow, there simply will not be many leaders or intellectuals of the Awami League brand to take over responsibility. In one murderous week the army wrought a vacuum which it will take a generation or more to fill."

I ask unanimous consent that these and other accounts describing the Pakistan civil war be printed at this point in the Record.

* * *

Mr. President, how can we change the present course?

The lessons learned here are obvious, or should be. First, we should admit that to take a truly "neutral position" in the civil conflict, we must stop favouring West Pakistan over the East with military weapons and economic aid. This process can begin by altering our arms arrangement as the Case-Mondale resolution proposes. We should stop pretending that Pakistan must be treated as an "ally" because of its SEATO and CENTO membership; Pakistan's participation over the last 10 years has been no more than ritualistic. The fact of the matter is that, diplomatically, Pakistan has clasped hands with Peking. The Chinese currently are providing Islamabad with millions of dollars of arms, including AK-47 automatic rifles and Mig-17 aircraft, and have promised \$ 20 million in grant aid.

Second, we should reject the Pakistani military government's contention that the slaughter of elected leaders and repression of the majority of its population in the East is not a proper matter of concern for the international community. Close to 3 million refugees are now in India. As the killing or threat of violence continues, there will be more. Victims of the fighting still in East Pakistan, plus refugees, need care; the food crisis worsens; disease and epidemics spread, even across borders into India. International action is essential in rehabilitating and reconstructing the devastated area of

Bengal, one of the most densely populated regions of the world.

* * *

Then too, the Pakistan Government, in constantly blaming India for its troubles, has internationalised the issue, thus aggravating the danger of spreading the war. A *New York Times* editorial on April 21 stated this danger well:

"There is ample evidence to justify a strong plea by the world community for an immediate end to the bloodshed and for the admission of international relief agencies into East Pakistan."

The Pakistani Government itself has made this conflict an international issue by attempting to place the blame for Bengali resistance on neighbouring India. If deep-rooted — and now profoundly aggravated — Bengali grievances are allowed to fester, mounting tensions between India and Pakistan could explode into a war that might quickly involve one or more of the major powers. The United Nations Security Council and its member states have not only the right but the responsibility to do all that is in their power to try to forestall such a development.

A particularly heavy burden of responsibility falls on the United States Government since Washington's arms provide the principal muscle of West Pakistan's military power and American economic aid will become increasingly crucial for the Pakistani Government's survival. Washington has the leverage to support democratic and peaceful development in Pakistan. Continued blind backing for the military regime in Islamabad can



only lead to disaster for this country's substantial interests on the Indian sub-continent.

Third, our military assistance program has exacerbated troublesome situations before. The pages of recent history are full of the well-known role American arms have played in fueling existing tensions between Greece and Turkey, Jordan and Israel, Honduras and El Salvador, Iran and Iraq, India and Pakistan, France and Algeria, Portugal and its African colonies, to mention a few. "Guns provided others", editorialised the *Baltimore Sun*, "will in all probability be discharged, but not necessarily discharged against the target of your prescriptions." This is the reason Congress needs to alter drastically the export of American arms in the future. Certainly the Pakistan example is a flagrant case in point. I plan to offer such legislation later this year, in the hope that the United States will end its addiction to arsenal diplomacy, and stop pressing armaments on other nations through grants.

