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Floor Statement on East Pakistan

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Senate

EAST PAKISTAN

Mr. MUSKIE. Mr. President, I have been reading with growing concern and apprehension the daily press reports on the tragic events now taking place in East Pakistan. This is the second major loss of life in recent months in that unhappy region. While the picture is not absolutely clear, I believe that there is enough information on the dimensions of the tragedy to make it clear that concerned Americans should speak out.

The relation between our economic aid and the recent political and military developments in Pakistan is a matter of concern to me. Last week, in this connection, I joined the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. MONDAL), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. BROOKS), and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. HARVILL) in sending a letter to the Secretary of State. In that letter we requested a clarification of the extent of American involvement, direct and indirect, in the civil strife and bloodshed in Pakistan. We are now awaiting a reply.

I also support the resolution regarding U.S. military assistance to Pakistan proposed by the distinguished senior Senator from New Jersey (Mr. CASE).

The U.S. Government has been the principal supplier of arms to Pakistan since the middle of the 1950's. There are reports that American-supplied planes, tanks, weapons, and other materials are being used by the central government forces in both the cities and the countryside of East Pakistan.

Mr. President, the time has arrived for America unequivocally and immediately to cancel any plan which would supply weapons of destruction to the Government of Pakistan under these circumstances—weapons which can only further exacerbate the tensions and bloodshed. There should be an immediate suspension of all military assistance to the Pakistani Government. The "one-time exception" to our 1965 embargo on the sale of lethal end items to India and Pakistan, agreed to in October 1970, proposed the supply of armored personnel carriers, Starfire jets, and B-57 bombers. These deliveries should not be carried out.

We have a responsibility to do all we can to reduce tensions and conflict in the world. As we seek to disengage ourselves from the conflicts of Indochina, can we allow our military support to be used to magnify tensions in South Asia?

I say we should not. I urge support of the Case resolution and I am proud to join in cosponsoring it.