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## Floor Statement on Relief to Pakistan

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## RELIEF TO PAKISTAN

Mr. MUSKIE. Mr. President, East Pakistan may be on the verge of a famine of shocking proportions unless this country acts immediately to help get international relief operations underway.

These are the facts:

East Pakistan cannot, under the best of circumstances, grow enough food to feed its people. It is dependent on food imports. Those imports have been cut off since the beginning of hostilities there late in March. It is reported that 200,000 tons of wheat sent by the United States have not been unloaded or distributed since the major port of Chittagong was closed down by aerial bombardment and work stoppages. Food stockpiles, never large, are dwindling day by day. Even when and if the food shipments are unloaded, there is no guarantee that they will be moved to the areas which need them most. As a result of the civil disturbances there, rail and road facilities have been seriously disrupted.

In 1943, when the food import requirements of the region were less massive than they are now, a famine occurred in

which more than 1 million Bengalis perished when the Japanese invasion of Burma put off food shipments. The requirement for food from outside the region is now almost three times what it was then. Some observers estimate that 10 to 30 million may starve to death should famine conditions develop there now as a result of barriers to food imports. In addition, medical and other public health service has been radically disrupted by the Pakistan Army campaign in the area.

The cyclones of last year left tragic misery and loss of human life in its wake. The survivors of this natural calamity must now try to survive a manmade disaster.

Last month, representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross flew to Karachi to request the Pakistani authorities to permit them to enter East Pakistan to conduct a survey of the relief requirements there. They were turned away.

I have therefore joined other Senators, both Democratic and Republican, in urging Secretary of State Rogers to instruct the American Representative at the Pakistan Consortium talks in Paris to refuse further foreign exchange assistance and to ask other donors to do likewise unless the Government of Pakistan first mounts an immediate emergency relief effort in the East commensurate with potential needs and second, grants the International Committee of the Red Cross observers entry to East Pakistan to plan coordinated international food distribution and medical relief efforts with Pakistani authorities.

We are not suggesting that narrow political pressures be applied to the Pakistani Government. On the contrary, we are urging only that American economic assistance, in all its forms, serve what must always be its essential purpose: helping to preserve and enhance life itself.

The time for deliberation and assessment by the administration is past. The people of East Pakistan are not planting the crops they will need in the months to come. They are not able to. America and other concerned nations must take concerted efforts and apply all appropriate pressures to deal with famine and starvation there. We can do no less if we are to continue to stand for the humanitarian principles we have always espoused. In this area where political crisis has raised the specter of further deprivation and want, business as usual is not an adequate response. Let us act now, before the savage statistics of death and hunger