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THE SITUATION IN PAKISTAN

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INTELLIGENCE REPORT
OFFICE OF INTELLIGENCE RESEARCH

THE SITUATION IN PAKISTAN

The Pakistan Radio reports:

Pakistan buried her Prime Minister today while a stunned nation grieved. Sobbing, sorrowing thousands lined a route heavily guarded by troops as Liaquat's body was brought from his home to a hallowed cemetery to be placed beside that of the man he succeeded as the nation's chief, the revered Mohammed Ali Jinnah. As the body was borne through the streets on a flower-decked artillery caisson, Pakistani officials announced for the first time that they had identified Liaquat's slayer as an Afghanistan national. It is estimated that between 600,000 and 700,000 persons attended Liaquat's funeral.

No disorders have been reported in Pakistan. The nation of 80,000,000 remains quiet and officials appear to have the situation well in hand.

In India there have been expressions of profound and sincere regret at Liaquat's passing, both on the part of Indian officialdom and the Indian press.

Khwaja Nazimuddin, Governor-General of Pakistan, was appointed interim Prime Minister. From East Bengal, Nazimuddin renounced his British Knighthood in 1946 but accepted appointment as Governor-General two years later from King George VI.

Pakistan officials have declared that Liaquat's assassin, Syed Akhtar, was an Afghan national belonging to the Gadran tribe of Khosh province, in southern Afghanistan. They state that he had been living in Abbottabad for some time, and had pretended to be in business. His name was reportedly registered in the provincial police records as a foreign national.

Comment - It would appear that both in India and Pakistan there is clear realization of the potentially explosive dangers of the current situation and a real determination on the part of responsible officials in both countries to do everything possible to avoid even the smallest incident which would touch off the latent mass emotionalism. Indian officials, both at home and in foreign diplomatic posts, have with marked alacrity, assiduousness and apparent sincerity, hastened to extend their condolences and sympathies to their Pakistan counterparts. Indian newspapers have been prompt and unqualified in their expressions of regret.

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In Pakistan, after an initial indication that the assassin was a member of the Khaksar's, a fanatical right-wing religious sect, advocating holy war against India over Kashmir, the announcement twenty-four hours later that the slayer had been identified as an Afghan national, may well be a deliberate government move to shift the focus of public attention and indignation from India, Kashmir and holy war, to Afghanistan and "Pushtoonistan". High Pakistan officials at the center very likely feel that the venting of public outrage and indignation against a smaller and weaker fellow-Muslim nation, can have value as a mass thermostat release and perhaps little serious permanent effect, whereas public outcry against India at this time might well do irreparable damage. India appears to be just as concerned to preserve the peace. In Bombay, for example, very promptly truckloads of heavily armed police began intensive patrols for fear that false reports might set off Moslem-Hindu rioting. False reports that a Moslem assassinated Gandhi set off murderous attacks against Bombay's 400,000 Moslems in 1948. At the present time it appears likely that Liaquat's assassination will not be allowed to further worsen relations between India and Pakistan and may indeed mark the beginning of a partial rapprochement. Indian officials must necessarily have been shaken by Liaquat's sudden and tragic demise and the shock of their realization of how close to disaster Indo-Pakistan relations had come, will strengthen the determination in India to avoid war. The continuing stability in Pakistan and the prompt appointment of a new premier lends support to the belief that the assassination may have shocked both sides into a firm determination to settle peacefully.

As the principal government officer in Pakistan, Nazimuddin's appointment to the Prime Ministership was not illogical. That he has assumed the post permanently is not clear at this time. He may have taken over to insure stability and provide time for the Muslim League machinery to cast up a new national leader. However, since Nazimuddin is a Bengali and represents a formidable Bengali wing in the Central Government, it is possible that the pressures of this group may be sufficient to enable Nazimuddin to retain the post.

Nazimuddin gained ascendancy in Muslim League politics in East Bengal by 1947. This brought him to the post of Governor General upon the death of Jinnah in 1948 when it was felt that an East Bengali should be given the post in deference to the need for increasing the allegiance of the Bengalis to the bifurcated state of Pakistan. However, his long record in the Muslim League and his ability to stand up in East Bengal competition has given him a substantial political footing of his own.

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This foundation is rooted in Bengal, however, and West Pakistanis have tended somewhat to belittle his leadership capacities and his physical stature -- which is both short and rotound. Educated at Aligarh and Cambridge in England, Nazimuddin is the son of a Nawab and husband of a woman whose father was also a large landowner.

His supporters have cited his honesty and integrity in office and his sincere endeavor to carry out pledges. The British approved of these virtues and Nazimuddin reciprocated with a tolerant attitude toward the British. He is considered a man of limited vision, lacking international mindedness. His views of the United States are unformed but generally felt to respond to the pressures of his aides.

Nazimuddin's critics attacked his Bengal administration on the grounds that he extended patronage conspicuously to his relatives. His opponents alleged that he shared in the profits of his brother, Shahabuddin, who was Minister of Commerce, Labor, and Industry in the 1943-1945 Nazimuddin cabinet of Bengal. It was believed that these allegations were untrue but it was also acknowledged that he relied heavily on patronage for his influence.

A 1945 estimate of his political ability cited him as "one of the most colorless figures in Bengal politics...amiable to the point of weakness." He was regarded as Jinnah's deputy in Bengal but in 1945, was not considered an ardent advocate of Pakistan.

Although he went out of office in 1945, Nazimuddin was able to make a strong recovery and recaptured the Prime Ministership of Bengal in 1947. He had served as Indian Delegate to a Food conference in the U.S. in 1946, represented India in the last session of the League of Nations in 1946, and also served as a member of the Pakistan Constituent Assembly in 1947. He was a conspicuous compromiser and managed to escape much of the hostility engendered toward his colleagues during the critical days of the Bengal famine. Observers did not regard him as a capable administrator but he has shown a capacity to act as an effective balance-wheel between contesting cabinet factions, a useful accomplishment for any head of the government in Pakistan.

There have been rumors in recent months that the late Liaquat Ali Khan did not approve of the pressures and/or ambitions of the cabinet alliance of the East Bengal brothers, Nazimuddin and Shahabuddin. Some conjecture existed to the effect that one or the other would be relieved. It is believed, however, that Nazimuddin's frequent nation-wide tours have had some salutary effect in enhancing his national prestige. As chief of state, he will bring skill as a coordinator but is generally estimated to lack the drive and imagination to be a policy-creator. His policies will in all likelihood be dictated by the prevailing views of the Muslim League hierarchy.

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It is believed that Nazimuddin's appointment as Prime Minister will be welcomed by India since he is regarded as a moderate. While Nazimuddin does not have the strength which Liaquat had and will be less able to resist pressures, he is nevertheless regarded as basically pro-Western and may be expected to continue Liaquat's policy of favoring the West although he will doubtless be even more constrained and limited in this respect by domestic anti-Western pressures than was Liaquat.

It has been announced in London that the King has appointed Ghulam Mohammed as Pakistan's new Governor-General. Very definitely pro-Western, Ghulam Mohammed had been Finance Minister in Liaquat's cabinet. He is a controversial figure and only on his ability does there appear to be a measure of agreement. Most of those who know him and work with him describe him as one of the ablest men in the government of Pakistan. His past service in undivided India with the Tata interests adds weight to this impression. Because of his conservative financial views Ghulam Mohammed is generally respected by the business community. He is extremely well informed on methods and procedures of banking and business. He has visited the United States several times in connection with the affairs of the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank. He has been the prime mover in the formation of a permanent organization of Islamic countries which would provide economic and political cooperation among its members. In this connection, Ghulam Mohammed made the inaugural address at the Pakistan sponsored International Islamic Economic Conference, which convened in Karachi in November 1949. He has asked for the support of the U.S. in the establishment of an Economic Commission for the Middle East under the auspices of the U.N., similar to the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East. At the second Islamic conference at Teheran which was attended by representatives of eleven nations, Ghulam Mohammed was elected president for the next three years. Ghulam Mohammed has repeatedly invited investment of foreign capital in Pakistan, always adding, of course "providing there are no political strings attached". His health has recently been poor; he is said to be suffering from hypertension and earlier in the year reportedly suffered a stroke. His elevation to Governor-General will undoubtedly heighten his already large influence in the cabinet and will tend to counter-balance by a vigorous pro-Western outlook, any compromising tendency in the other direction which may be expressed by Nazimuddin from time to time under domestic political pressure.

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