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Yahya Seeks Meeting With East Pakistanis

By Lee Lescaze

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NEW DELHI, Nov. 11—Pakistan's President Yahya Khan has privately expressed willingness to meet leaders of East Pakistan's outlawed Awami League party to discuss a political solution of the civil war, according to reliable sources.

His statement has been conveyed to East Pakistani leaders at their Calcutta headquarters, but several major points remain to be clarified before any talks can begin, the sources report.

Despite Yahya's willingness to open a dialogue, he has made it clear that not all members of the East Pakistani Bangla Desh government in exile would be acceptable to him as representatives at talks between the two sides.

The Indian government is also determined to exercise right of approval on any emissary chosen by the East Pakistani leaders, despite public Indian assertion that Bangla Desh officials operate free of Indian control. India keeps close watch on the exile government and would presuma-

bly want to monitor any contacts between the rebels and Pakistan's military government.

Another unresolved question is the role of Awami League head Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who is being tried in West Pakistan for treason. His subordinates in the Awami

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League, who now lead the exile government in his absence, are reportedly reluctant to open talks with Yahya without Mujibur's consent.

However, Yahya has given no indication that the Sheikh could participate in any talks unless he is first acquitted by the military court. Nor has Yahya agreed that Mujibur could be consulted in prison by any Bangla Desh representative.

Nevertheless, the establishment of communication between Yahya and rebel leaders is the first evidence of any

progress toward a political solution of the almost eight-month-old civil war.

The United States reportedly was instrumental in helping communication begin between the two sides. India, the United States, the Soviet Union and other nations have long urged that avenues toward a political solution be explored to stop the bloodshed in East Pakistan and to reduce the threat that Pakistan's civil war will lead to a full-scale India-Pakistan war.

Indian officials have publicly welcomed American or any other third-party efforts to establish contact between the Pakistani factions. How-

ever, Yahya's privately expressed receptivity to talks has apparently aroused Indian and Bangla Desh suspicions of American intention.

Indian newspapers have recently carried stories charging that CIA agents are seeking to split the Bangla Desh leadership with the aim of arranging a compromise solution short of independence for East Pakistan.

Mistrust of the United States stems from America's continued good relations with Pakistan and President Nixon's refusal to condemn Yahya's government for its actions in East Pakistan, which have driven 9.6 million refugees across the border into India.

No 'Surrender'

Some Indian officials therefore believe that Washington's primary objective is to bail Yahya out of his present trouble with the least possible cost to the Pakistan regime. They stress that any talks must not involve "a surrender" to the West Pakistan government by Bangla Desh.

D. P. Dhar, the chairman of India's policy planning commission and the principal Indian strategist on East Pakistan, is critical of American attempts to help resolve the crisis.

"The remedies which have been casually suggested by the United States administration do not have any relationship to the realities of the situation," he said in a recent interview.

The suspicion of U.S. intentions here puts into question whether any further American intermediary role will be possible. On Oct. 28, the ruling Working Committee of the Awami League restricted contacts with Americans by instructing elected members of the National Assembly not to

The same Working Committee meeting reiterated that it would accept nothing short of independence.

No Solution in Union

Most Indian officials also argue that no political solution can be found which would leave East Pakistan within a united Pakistan.

If that is the only position which Awami League members and their Indian patrons would bring to a bargaining table, there would be no basis for discussions with Yahya Khan, who launched his military occupation of East Pakistan to preserve the unity of Pakistan's two wings.

The longer the war goes on, well-informed observers believe, the less chance there will be of either side moderating its position and the greater the chances of an In-

dian-Pakistan war become.

"I don't see much hope for talks reaching any real solution even now," one western source said. "Too many people have been killed and the bitterness on all sides is too great."

Pakistan, India Trade

Charges Over Clashes

Associated Press

A Pakistani military source claimed yesterday that 74 Indian soldiers had been killed and 150 wounded Wednesday in an attack with tanks and artillery into the Belonia bluge of East Pakistan.

An Indian government spokesman denied the charge, saying: "Our information is that there is a fight in the area between freedom fighters and Pakistani troops. It has nothing to do with Indian army battalions."