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Reports From U.S. Diplomats

Pakistan Famine Peril

Washington

United States officials in East Pakistan have reported the "specter of famine" hangs over the embattled land and have expressed dismay with State Department denials of these conditions, according to reports made public yesterday.

The reports, released by Senator Edward M. Kennedy (Dem-Mass.), were sent to Secretary of State William P. Rogers by U. S. Embassy officials in Islamabad and consular officials in Dacca.

One confidential message, sent from the U. S. consul in Dacca on July 6, stated in part: "Specter of famine hangs over East Pakistan and prospects for averting widespread hunger, suffering and perhaps starvation not repeat not good."

On July 15, the embassy messaged: "We are concerned ... that department stating publicly that there no evidence in field reports which would bear out predictions of coming famine in East Pakistan."

"Perhaps spokesman not apprised on most recent field reports ... which indicate

famine real possibility."

The embassy message said the State Department denials were interfering with mission attempts to get the Pakistani government to "face up to dealing with" possible famine which, according to the Dacca report, "will probably prevail in much of East Pakistan over the coming year."

Commenting on the disclosure, made by Kennedy at a hearing of the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Refugees, informed Senate sources said there was growing belief in Congress that the Nixon administration is playing down the tragic consequences in East Pakistan sequences in East Pakistan — as well as continuing arms shipments to President Yahya Khan — out of deference to Yahya.

The Pakistan president has been widely reported as playing a key role in getting presidential adviser Henry Kissinger into China on July 9.

According to one source, Chairman J. William Fulbright asked Assistant Secretary of State Joseph Sisco at an executive session of his

Senate Foreign Relations Committee last Monday whether Washington's refusal to stop arms shipments to Pakistan was the price the U.S. must pay for "Pakistan's complicity" in Kissinger's visit.

Sisco, according to this source, replied: "I don't know. I wasn't a part of it."

Another Senate source, commenting on the State Department reports, said, "There is no doubt the administration has been soft-pedaling East Pakistan because of Yahya's contribution."

Kennedy told the chief government witness at the three-hour hearing, Undersecretary of State John Irwin, that the field reports "substantiated our own belief of impending starvation" in East Pakistan.

Two Kennedy aides are planning to travel to India next week to investigate conditions of the more than seven million East Pakistan refugees now there, it was learned. The aides will also attempt to enter East Pakistan.

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