

Keating Responds Bluntly To Indian Criticism of U.S.

AUG 27 1971

NYTimes

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Special to The New York Times

NEW DELHI, Aug. 26—Ambassador Kenneth B. Keating, apparently angered over what he considers Indian press distortions of American policy in the East Pakistan crisis, has begun to speak out bluntly in an attempt to stem the anti-American tide here.

The forum the Ambassador has chosen is his regular column in a United States Information Service publication, *The American Reporter*, a tabloid-sized newspaper that is distributed every two weeks to almost half a million readers, including nearly all of India's leadership class.

In the issue just out, Mr. Keating replied to "distortions" that have served "to twist the record" and added:

"I cannot help but wonder about the motives of people who seek to spread these untruths."

This is the closest the Ambassador has come to publicly accusing officials in the Indian Foreign Ministry of nurturing misstatements in the press about American policy. In his previous column, two weeks ago, Mr. Keating also addressed himself to "written and spoken misinformation," but said it had "come from people acting in good faith." This time, he dropped all suggestions of good faith.

Arms Aid Is Issue

At the heart of the controversy is the Nixon Administration's decision to continue some arms shipments to Pakistan despite a previously announced embargo and despite Pakistan's five-month-old military action against the Bengali independence movement in East Pakistan. This American aid to Pakistan—whose leaders have been threatening war against India over New Delhi's assistance to the Bengalis—has dropped relations between India and the United States to an all-time low.

Press accounts here have embellished the known arms aid with unconfirmed reports of American instructors giving counter insurgency training to Pakistani officers, of Pakistani troops being carried to East Pakistan aboard American grain ships, and of American military equipment being transferred from Vietnam to Pakistan. These charges have all been denied by Washington.

Many Indian opinion-makers have been prepared to believe anything heinous about United States policy ever since the June disclosure about the arms shipments. That disclosure, in *The New York Times*, came just as the Indian Foreign Minister, Swaran Singh, returned from Washington where, according to authoritative sources,

he had been assured by Secretary of State William P. Rogers that all arms aid to Pakistan had been halted.

The Indian distrust of Washington has been reinforced at the daily press briefings of the Foreign Ministry, where the ministry spokesman has not questioned the reports of expanding clandestine United States military aid to Pakistan—leaving the impression that they could very well be true.

Keating Remained Silent

Until now, Ambassador Keating had remained silent about the mounting anti-American sentiment, though he was evidently hurt by it because of his own pro-India feelings. By speaking out, the 71-year-old New York Republican—a former United States Senator and a Nixon appointee—has put himself in a position of defending a policy about which he is chagrined.

It is an open secret that he privately and strongly opposed the Nixon Administration view that a nonpunitive approach will give the United States some influence over Pakistan—arguing that this was unrealistic and would cost Washington heavily in influence and goodwill in India, a more important, more stable and more democratic country.

In his column two weeks ago, after noting President Nixon's view "that it would be counterproductive to engage in public pressure on Pakistan," Mr. Keating wrote:

"We believe that we can be most effective by using our influence in a quiet, constructive manner. Noisy statements might serve as a popular palliative, but it is debatable whether they can substitute for constructive policy."

'Our Goals Are Compatible'

In his latest column, in a reference to the nearly eight million Bengali refugees estimated to have fled into India, the Ambassador writes: "Our goals are

compatible. We want to see a just political solution—one that will allow the refugees to return to their homes with security and in confidence."

It is too early to tell whether Mr. Keating will have any success in his attempt to correct the "false judgment that the U.S. is in some way hostile to India," or whether—because of his defense of the Nixon policy—it might instead stir more resentment against the United States.

But Mr. Keating writes:

"When these unhappy days end, I am convinced that those who have leaped to instant judgment today may acknowledge in the future that the United States acted sensibly and maturely in a delicate and potentially explosive situation."