

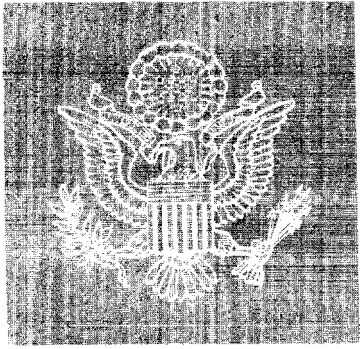
CIA - William Langer

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Intelligence Brief

Office of Intelligence Research

No. 1000.861 Date: October 16, 1951

1. THE ASSASSINATION OF THE PRIME MINISTER OF PAKISTAN

The Prime Minister of Pakistan, Liaquat Ali Khan, was assassinated at Rawalpindi on October 15. He was not only Prime Minister but also Defense Minister and head of the Muslim League, the dominant political party of Pakistan. First reports from Pakistan indicate that Liaquat's assassin was a member of the Khaksars, a fanatical, right-wing, extremist religious sect of the Muslim religion. This group has been active in the Punjab, and has expressed its dissatisfaction with "Liaquat's policy of moderation" toward India. The sect is led by a man named Allama Mashriqi and it favors "Jehad," or holy war, against India on the Kashmir issue. Mashriqi was in Germany in the 1930's, met Hitler and was greatly influenced by him. Upon his return to the Punjab in 1935 he established the Khaksars, as a uniformed para-military organization.

Comment: A man of Western habits, tempered by the realization that concessions to Muslim orthodoxy were a constant political necessity, Liaquat had been a powerful force for moderation in all phases of Pakistan's domestic and international affairs. He favored collaboration with the West, advocated firm security measures against internal communist activity and resisted Soviet diplomatic pressures on Pakistan. His economic attitudes were characterized by conciliation toward urban commercial interests, the powerful landlords who exert great influence in the Muslim League, the mounting pressures created by refugees, and leftist forces interested in immediate social and economic reforms.

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His death removes an able leader of national stature able to keep this complex chess-board of pressures in check. He was a major stabilizing force in Pakistan's politics, was extremely skillful in checking personal rivalries and political factionalism among his subordinates in the interest of achieving a working team and maintaining national and party morale.

It seems likely that the Prime Ministership will be awarded only on a temporary basis until all the facets of Muslim League machinery can be brought into play to decide on a new leader of party and state, or to confirm the temporary selection on a more permanent basis. The two most likely candidates appear to be Sir Zafrullah Khan, the Foreign Minister and Ghulam Mohammed, the Finance Minister. Neither of these two men command any organized political machinery but they are both men of ability who command general respect. Since Ghulam Mohammed, however, is not well and since immediate problems are mainly in the field of external affairs, it would appear that Zafrullah Khan is the more likely man for the post.