

Anderson File:

Backstage With the Crisis Managers

WASHINGTON — There has never been much doubt about the sympathies of the Nixon Administration as it watched Pakistan bloodily dismember herself and India move in to help strip the corpse. The Administration was partial to Pakistan. The question, for a year, has been not whether Washington was even-handed but whether it was level-headed.

The most vivid and fascinating, though not necessarily conclusive, evidence bearing on the question poured forth last week in the form of minutes of three White House strategy meetings in early December, in the first days of open conflict between India and Pakistan, and secret cables to and from American diplomatic missions. All this was part of a large but sensitive file that came into the possession of columnist Jack Anderson last month and quickly became known here as the New Anderson Tapes or the Kissinger Connection.

Its dramatic qualities were magnificent:

OFFSTAGE WRATH AND THUNDER — Kissinger: I am getting hell every half-hour from the President that we are not being tough enough on India. . . . The President is under the "illusion" that he is giving instructions.

TENSION-BREAKING WIT AND SARCASM — Kissinger: The President is blaming me, but you people are in the clear.

Sisco: That's ideal!

BRAVE CHALLENGE TO THE FATES — Kissinger: Everyone knows how all this will come out and everyone knows that India will ultimately occupy East Pakistan. We must, therefore, make clear our position, table our resolution . . . [although] the exercise in the U.N. is likely to be an exercise in futility.

HOSTILITY HEDGED BY PRUDENCE — Williams said that the Department of Agriculture indicated that the price of vegetable oil was weakening in the United States; thus cutting off this P.L.-480 commodity to India could have repercussions on the domestic market.

AGGRESSIVE HUMANITARIANISM — Williams referred to the one and a half million Urdu-speaking (Bihari) people in East Pakistan, who could also be held hostage. . . . Kissinger asked whether we should be calling attention to the plight of these people now. . . . Sisco said that this humanitarian issue could be a very attractive one for the General Assembly. . . .

REGRESSIVE HUMANITARIANISM — Kissinger inquired about a possible famine in East Pakistan. . . . whether we will be appealed to to bail out Bangladesh. . . . Johnson added that Bangladesh will be an "international basket case." Kissinger said, however, it will not necessarily be our basket case. . . .


And, in a sequence that Mr. Anderson quoted in his column but failed to distribute with his texts:

PITIFUL HELPLESS GIANTISM — Kissinger: The elimination of the Pak armored and air forces would make the Paks defenseless. It would turn West Pakistan into a client state. . . . Can we allow a U. S. ally to go down completely? Can we allow the Indians to scare us off? . . . Sisco doubted, however, that the Indians had this as their objective. . . . Packard stated that perhaps the only satisfactory outcome would be for us to stand fast, with the expectation that the West Paks could hold their own. . . . Kissinger said that we cannot afford to ease India's state of mind. "The lady" [Mrs. Gandhi] is cold-blooded and tough and will not turn into a Soviet satellite merely because of pique.


The next day, President Nixon ordered a naval task force of eight ships, led by the nuclear aircraft carrier Enterprise and carrying 2,000 Marines, to steam into the Bay of Bengal. The stated purpose was to help evacuate American citizens. The more important purpose, according to Mr. Anderson, was to divert Indian military and intelligence energies. One consequence was that the Russians told the Indians to hurry up with the conquest of Bangladesh and assured them that a Soviet fleet in the Indian Ocean would not allow the Americans to intervene.

Mr. Anderson had dribbled out many of these secrets in his columns since mid-December, charging deception by the Administration and challenging the "secret" label on his file. The minutes that he released were from Pentagon note-takers for the Joint Chiefs of Staff. But he also


Henry Kissinger: In secret, and . . .



I AM GETTING HELL EVERY HALF-HOUR FROM THE PRESIDENT THAT WE ARE NOT BEING TOUGH ENOUGH ON INDIA. HE JUST CALLED ME AGAIN . . . HE WANTS TO TILT IN FAVOR OF PAKISTAN.

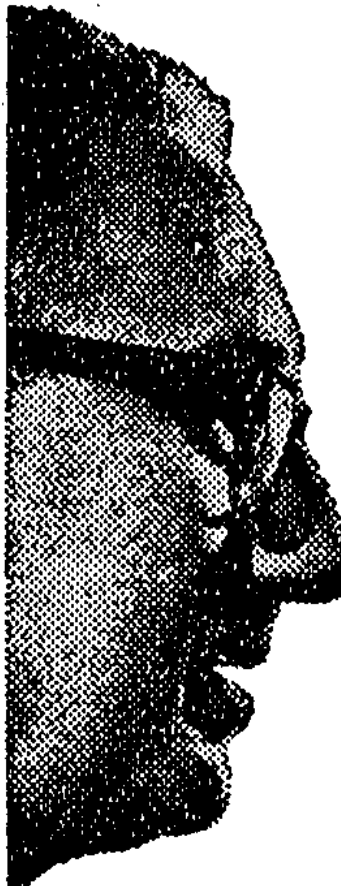


IF ASKED, WE CAN SAY WE ARE REVIEWING OUR WHOLE ECONOMIC PROGRAM AND THAT THE GRANTING OF FRESH AID [TO INDIA] IS BEING SUSPENDED IN VIEW OF CONDITIONS ON THE SUBCONTINENT.

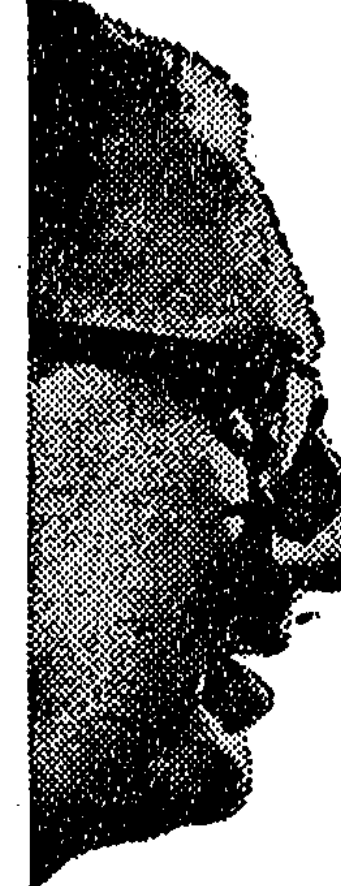


CONCERNING THE QUESTION OF ECONOMIC AID, THE PRESIDENT HAD DIRECTED THAT THE CUTOFF BE DIRECTED AT INDIA ONLY.


. . . to newsmen



HENCEFORTH WE SHOW A CERTAIN COOLNESS TO THE INDIANS; THE INDIAN AMBASSADOR IS NOT TO BE TREATED AT TOO HIGH A LEVEL.



[DO] WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO AUTHORIZE JORDAN OR SAUDI ARABIA TO TRANSFER MILITARY EQUIPMENT TO PAKISTAN? . . . IT IS QUITE OBVIOUS THAT THE PRESIDENT IS NOT INCLINED TO LET THE PAKS BE DEFEATED.



THERE HAVE BEEN SOME COMMENTS THAT THE ADMINISTRATION IS ANTI-INDIAN. THIS IS TOTALLY INACCURATE. INDIA IS A GREAT COUNTRY.

possesses additional quotations from the notes of other departments, plus cables to and from an anguished and resisting Ambassador to India, Kenneth B. Keating, and intelligence reports on Russian efforts and allied attitudes.

The material could have come from Government opponents of the whole policy, who felt that Pakistan deserved at least equal blame for her brutal suppression of Bengali separatists—or that, in any case, the United States had only advertised its helplessness, alienated India at a crucial moment of her history and cleared the way for the Soviet Union to gain an important friend in South Asia and a massive presence in the Indian Ocean. Or it might have come from persons who shared Mr. Anderson's conviction that Washington had foolishly risked a naval clash with the Russians and lied to the country about the depth of its commitment to Pakistan.

Basically, these arguments have turned on what the United States did and why.

The Anderson papers reconfirm that President Nixon and Henry A. Kissinger, his principal adviser and actor on security affairs, were not nearly so exercised about Pakistani suppression of the East Bengalis as about what they saw as Indian aggression against Pakistan. The first was seen as an internal affair, beyond our of-

ficial concern no matter how deplorable, the second as a threat to the balance of power in South Asia and the whole idea of the sanctity of frontiers—an idea that Washington deems essential to world stability, even though it has often bent the concept for its own convenience, to wit: Cuba.

So through the worst of the blood-bath in East Pakistan, Mr. Nixon only quietly urged restraint upon the West Pakistanis, offered some money to relieve the refugee load, warned the Indians not to exploit the opportunity to dismember Pakistan once and for all, and availed himself of Pakistan's assistance in the higher-priority project of improving relations with China.

The Nixon-Kissinger doctrine of power balance appeared to require a rough parity between India and Pakistan and an effort to let China (pro-Pakistan) and the Soviet Union (pro-India) vie for influence in South Asia while the United States patrolled the seas and remained on amicable terms with everyone.

Only after India refused to accept this vision for the subcontinent and obtained pledges of Soviet support against Pakistan and China did the White House increase the pressure on Pakistan to save herself through a political settlement. The White House prayed for time, but the Indians, unimpressed by the progress, attacked. This only exaggerated the sense of

As revealed last week, Presidential national security adviser Henry Kissinger "tilted" strongly toward Pakistan at secret National Security Council sessions on Dec. 3-6. (Depicted in the first five panels above—with apologies to Jules Feiffer.) But when he briefed newsmen on Dec. 7, Mr. Kissinger seemed to take a different tack.

betrayal in Washington and probably exacerbated the President's wrath.

The Anderson papers confirm that the White House feared a larger war aimed at dismembering West Pakistan as well, though leading military and diplomatic analysts were skeptical. They reveal a desperate search for actions to reinforce angry words, by deploying the fleet and secretly toying with the idea of letting Jordan and other countries pass on American planes and equipment to Pakistan.

They show the President and Mr. Kissinger to have been the driving force behind a reluctant bureaucracy, even in the early stages, when the facts on the fighting were still obscure. They suggest that dissenting views were not particularly welcome and tended to be offered only through an occasional question about tactics.

But they do not unscramble the many motives and passions that shape the policy: the traditional affinity here for Pakistan's military rulers (notorious in Mr. Nixon's case) and the traditional dislike of what is seen as Indian sanctimony; the calculation that China promised to be a more

powerful and probably less obstreperous partner in Asia than India; the desire to strengthen (read, balance) China against threats of Soviet encirclement; the commitment to the permanence of national frontiers everywhere; the fear of aggravating separatist tendencies in India herself and of Communist advances into Bangladesh, Burma and other parts of the region; the need to play a role and assert American interests, and the need to honor the President's private promises, threats and sense of outrage.

Whatever its origin, the drama played on last week. The Enterprise and other ships kept up their maneuvers in the Indian Ocean and the Pentagon reasserted its plan to keep contesting that sea against the Soviet Fleet. India extended diplomatic recognition to North Vietnam and the United States protested that this cast doubt on India's fitness to remain chairman of the largely idle International Control Commission for Indochina. The feeling was that India should be even-handed in other people's wars.

—MAX FRANKEL