

Washington Merry-go-round

More from the recently Secret

(Editor's Note: Government officials confirmed this week to a reporter from the New York Times that the FBI is investigating how syndicated columnist Jack Anderson obtained the secret White House papers telling the inside story about Nixon's policies on the India-Pakistan war. The Free Press has been publishing some of these Anderson columns on our front page in recent weeks. They show Nixon's favoritism toward India and the way he is pushing that neutral country into the Soviet sphere of influence, ostensibly so he can gain favor with China and open up that huge country to trade with the U.S.

Below we are publishing more of this material, this time showing that Nixon is also pushing Japan into the Soviet orbit in pursuit of his China policy.

In our opinion, and in that of Mr. Anderson, these papers are of the same quality and importance as the Pentagon Papers about the Vietnam war. However, Jack Anderson is pursuing the courageous policy of informing the public about these disastrous policies while they are still happening despite the government policy of trying to veil their mistakes with a secrecy stamp.

The investigation of Anderson so far has been directed at individuals in the State and Defense Departments and on the National Security Council staff who have had access to the notes quoted by Mr. Anderson.

The quotations published by the columnist, who is syndicated to 700 newspapers, including 100 foreign publications, are not official minutes of the meetings, but rather notes prepared by representatives of the various departments attending.

In a telephone interview with the New York Times, Anderson confirmed that he had been given two complete sets of notes of the meetings of the Washington Special Action Group, a high level strategy committee assembled during crises, that dealt with the India-Pakistan conflict.

Mr. Anderson said he had received scores of other classified documents, including secret intelligence reports and cablegrams, that he intended to publish during the next two weeks. The Free Press will receive these as issued.

"I am trying to force a showdown with the Administration over their classification system," the columnist explained. "Everything Kissinger does, even the toilet paper he uses, is being stamped 'Secret.' That's not in the public interest in a democracy."

Mr. Anderson said neither he nor members of his staff had yet been questioned by Government investigators, but that he had "positive" information that the FBI had already interrogated individuals at the White House and State and Defense Departments in an effort to discover who had provided him with the documents.

One White House official is quoted by the New York Times as saying about Anderson's columns, "We come in every morning just wondering what's going to hit us next. He's got onto something and no one seems to know how to stop him."

As Anderson explained in his column published on the front page of last week's Free Press, the White House papers that he is currently quoting from bear a variety of stamps: "Secret Sensitive," "Eyes Only," "Specat" (Special Category), "Exclusive," "Noform" (No foreign dissemination) and other classifications even more exotic.

"Yet astonishingly, the documents contained almost no information that could possibly jeopardize the national security. On the contrary, the security labels are used to hide the activities — and often the blunders of our leaders.

"We believe the public is entitled to know about these blunders. For the U.S. posture is in shambles on the Indian subcontinent, which is enormously more important than Vietnam"

Mr. Anderson is being thoroughly courageous in publishing these insights into current American policy. If the documents are indeed classified, the persons responsible for their disclosure are subject to prosecution under the Espionage Act and the federal theft statute — the same laws invoked against Daniel Ellsberg and Anthony J. Russo in the Pentagon Papers case.

We are proud to present Mr. Anderson's views in our newspaper because he, following in Drew Pearson's footsteps, is letting us really know about the Washington merry-go-round. If someone had Anderson's courage at the onset of the Vietnam policy and revealed the substance of the Pentagon Papers to the public then, think of the difference that might have been made in American policy. We salute Mr. Anderson, as we salute Dan Ellsberg and Tony Russo.)

White House Papers

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