

White House Denies 'Credibility Gap' During India-Pakistan War

By **BERNARD GWERTZMAN**
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WASHINGTON, Jan. 9—The Nixon Administration, concerned over charges that it lied to the American public during the India-Pakistan war, denied today that any "credibility gap" existed and charged some media with libeling Henry A. Kissinger, President Nixon's adviser on national security affairs.

Herbert G. Klein, the White House communications director, said in an interview on the Columbia Broadcasting System program "Face the Nation" that charges that "imply a variance in public policy" were unfounded.

These charges — printed in some news media and expressed by Senator Edmund S. Muskie of Maine, the Democratic presidential hopeful — have stemmed from revelations about secret White House strategy sessions made public last week by Jack Anderson, the syndicated columnist.

Mr. Anderson wrote in his column today that the Administration had not told the truth about its policy toward India and Pakistan.

"If presidential adviser Henry Kissinger had not lied to the press in his December background briefing on the Asia war, there would have been no story for us to write," Mr. Anderson declared. "The documents would simply have confirmed what the public had already been told.

"Instead, the White House chose to mislead the public flagrantly. Kissinger said the Administration was not anti-India, a misrepresentation that must have been obvious to both



Paul Conklin

Herbert G. Klein

India, Pakistan and the allies of both. The secret papers prove that the Administration was militantly anti-India."

Mr. Anderson was referring to an hour-long briefing for the press held by Mr. Kissinger on Dec. 7 to explain the Administration's then apparent pro-Pakistan policy, underscored by its actions in the United Nations Security Council to obtain a vote forcing India to end her attack on East Pakistan. The move was thwarted by the Soviet veto.

Mr. Kissinger said at the briefing that there had been some comments that the Administration was anti-Indian. "This is totally inaccurate," he declared.

He went on to list actions taken by the United States in support of India, adding:

"Therefore, when we have differed with India, as we have in recent weeks, we do so with great sadness and with great disappointment."

On the fighting in East Pakistan, Mr. Kissinger said:

"This country, which in many respects has had a love affair with India, can only, with enormous pain, accept the fact that only military action was taken in our view without adequate cause, and if we express this opinion in the United Nations, we do not do so because we want to support one particular point of view on the subcontinent."

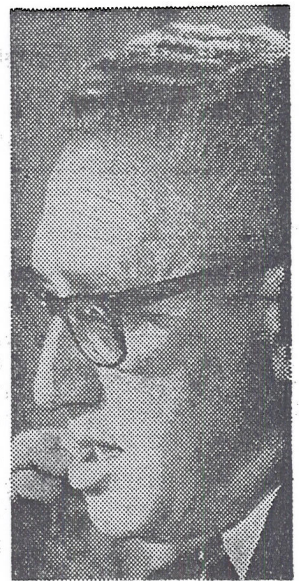
In the secret records of the White House sessions released by Mr. Anderson, Mr. Kissinger is often quoted as pressing the other officials to take actions designed to show United States anger with Indian policy — to "tilt" American policy toward Pakistan.

Mr. Klein said that the secret papers referred to meetings that took place "at the time the Indians were going forward." Heavy fighting broke out on Dec. 3, and the meetings were held on Dec. 3, 4, and 6.

"I've read a number of interpretations of the papers which imply that there is a variance in public policy," Mr. Klein said. "I have also read what I consider to be libels against Dr. Henry Kissinger, accusing him of lying. I think anyone who looks carefully at these papers will know first of all, that he was explaining the policy, and I would say it was the same publicly as privately."

"Secondly, I'd like to say that I think that it's time that we have more recognition of the fact that Dr. Kissinger is one of the outstanding people we have in this Government who renders a great public service, and if the press really felt that he was distorting things, they wouldn't use him as the principal source of trying to get additional information on any major policy."

A reading of the public record — as well as news reports from early December — would tend to support Mr. Klein's contention that the Administration was consistent in opposing



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Henry A. Kissinger

India.

Mr. Kissinger's "anti-Indian" remarks, in context, were interpreted at the time to mean that while the Administration was not prejudiced against India, it nevertheless opposed what it regarded as her unjustified attack on Pakistan.

Mr. Klein said that he did not think what he called the "libeling" of Mr. Kissinger was deliberate. "I just say that I think the people are getting the wrong impression," he said.

On another television program, the National Broadcasting Company's "Meet the Press," Kurt Waldheim, the new United Nations Secretary General, said that he disagreed with a view attributed to Mr. Kissinger that because of the failure of the United Nations to act on the India-Pakistan war it would have no credibility in the Middle East crisis. But he did not go into details.