

THE NEW YORK TIMES, MONDAY, JANUARY 10, 1972

# Tilt: The Machine Stops

By ANTHONY LEWIS

LONDON, Jan. 9—The fascination of Jack Anderson's papers lies less in their substance than in the decisional process they disclose. President Nixon's bias in the India-Pakistan crisis had hardly been a secret. But no outsider heretofore has had such an authentic glimpse of the way this President's foreign policy is made and carried out.

The flavor is of some ancient Oriental court. Deep in the inner recesses of the palace the unapproachable potentate draws up his edicts. A grand vizier emerges periodically and proclaims them to the other courtiers. If anyone asks a question, the grand vizier warns him to be less curious or he may lose his head.

What is so striking about these records of top-level meetings is that, evidently, only one of the participants has access to the President. Again and again, Henry Kissinger invokes the spirit of the absent God to shape or terminate a discussion.

"The President is blaming me . . ." "Wait until I talk with the President . . ." "He has just called me again"—the phrases come from Kissinger one after another. Most memorable of all was that brief but dispositive sentence: "He wants to tilt in favor of Pakistan."

Professor Zbigniew Brzezinski of Columbia University, the foreign affairs scholar, was asked while visiting England what he thought was significant in the Anderson papers. They had left him with two main impressions, he said: President Nixon's remoteness from the decision-making process, and the importance of his personal biases in policy.

"Only one official is the link between the deliberative process and the President," Brzezinski said. It appears, therefore, that the President "makes the decisions outside the deliberative process."

The Anderson papers do not tell us what may have been said at earlier conferences of the President, Kissinger and perhaps others. But the implication is certainly there, as Brzezinski says, that Mr. Nixon does not hear

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dissenting voices because they have no access to him.

Certainly no hint of dissent was tolerated in the meetings of which we have transcripts. Kissinger curtly rejected even the prudential suggestion that American policy be presented in a way that made its tilt less flagrant.

Presidential isolation is a subject of which we heard much in the Johnson years. The danger is obvious. We all know, ourselves, how far our thoughts may stray from reality if we brood on a problem without the corrective of outside advice and discussion.

For a President, correction lies in some degree of openness to the machinery of government outside the White House—and to unofficial comment. If those channels are closed, policy is more likely to reflect personal bias. And so there is a link between Brzezinski's twin conclusions:

that Richard Nixon is a remote President, even less reachable than Lyndon Johnson, and that personal relations play a greater role in his foreign policy than in that of any other President since World War II.

The India-Pakistan affair happens to illustrate the possible costs of such a closely held decisional process. One is that the American position will stray so far from reality that it will lose persuasiveness in the world. That was really why the American Ambassador in New Delhi, Kenneth Keating, cabled Secretary of State Rogers last month in protest at the official justifications being given for American policy.

Mr. Keating is a realist and a loyal Republican who certainly did not want to argue with his President. His motive in speaking up was evidently a simple concern that the Administration was injuring itself in telling Baron Munchausen tales about American policy; as the Anderson paraphrase of his cable put it, U.S. credibility was suffering.

But an even more serious concern is raised by the Keating cable and the whole record of American policy in the India-Pakistan affair: the possibility that the Administration began to believe its own misrepresentations of the situation. That is always a risk of isolation.

One reason for favoring Pakistan over the months of crisis in 1971 was undoubtedly a desire on the part of the President and Kissinger to keep a united Pakistan in being as a balance to Indian power in the subcontinent. The unreality, the self-deception, lay in the notion that Yahya Khan was the means toward the end.

Yahya was a stupid and brutal man whose rigidity destroyed Pakistan. It was only Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger who kept him afloat. Without their blind support the necessary political changes in Pakistan—the ones occurring now—might have come much sooner, perhaps even on time to avoid war. That is the price that may have to be paid for a cloistered, self-feeding policy mechanism in the White House.