



# How Kissinger Became Involved

**Joseph Alsop**

**J**ACK ANDERSON'S publication of a number of White House documents was a brilliant journalistic coup. But in the outcome, the publication of these fragments of the story has led to almost universal, really gross misrepresentation of the true White House role in the war between India and Pakistan.

To begin with, the White House had no effective role until very late, indeed until much too late in the day. Under the peculiar arrangements now prevailing in the government, the Middle Eastern Division of the State Department is not subject to the same close supervision that the White House exercises in all other policy-areas. And India and Pakistan belong to the Middle Eastern Division.

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**V**ERY EARLY in the story President Nixon was warned that the problem was very serious indeed. He was then urged to handle the problem himself, but he decided against doing so.

Thus, Secretary of State William Rogers, and, the department's Middle Eastern Division, headed by Assistant Secretary Joseph Sisco were in effective control of the matter for many crucial months.

What then happened was that the going got so rough that the President took personal command. This in turn brought the President's foreign policy adviser, Dr. Henry Kissinger, continuously into the center of the scene, as shown in the Anderson Papers.

Emphatically not shown in the Anderson Papers, however, are the main motives for the President's handling of the crisis. When Indira Gandhi came to Wash-

ington, to begin with, she said quite enough to reveal that she already hankered for the actual dismemberment of all of Pakistan, notably including West Pakistan.

This strong hint by Mrs. Gandhi was not all the White House had in hand, however. It can be stated on positive authority that the U.S. government had "conclusive proof" of India's intention to crush the main body of the Pakistani army, in West Pakistan. This would have automatically led to West Pakistan's dismemberment — the result Mrs. Gandhi really desired.

On December 9, with Indian troops already moving up, Kissinger was directed by the President to ask the Indian Ambassador, L. K. Jha, for assurances that India did not mean to follow up the conquest of East Pakistan by a major offensive in West Pakistan. On December 12, Jha officially replied that his government could offer no such assurances.

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**I**N THE MEANWHILE, however, the President had personally intervened, on the very highest level and in the strongest terms, with Mrs. Gandhi's patrons and protectors in the Kremlin.

As the President himself rather plainly indicated in his special interview with Time, the Deputy Foreign Minister, Vasily V. Kuznetsov, was hurriedly, therefore, sent to New Delhi on December 12. His mission was in fact to tell Mrs. Gandhi not to attack West Pakistan after all. This was the real cause of Mrs. Gandhi's declaration of a general ceasefire on December 16.