

# The Anderson Papers

By TOM WICKER

The remarkable series of documentary excerpts now being published by the columnist Jack Anderson is a public service of the first order. Since the authenticity of these documents has not been denied by an obviously discomfited White House, they provide a valuable glimpse into the making of policy—in this case, a policy that to many Americans seems disastrous.

More than that, the Anderson papers suggest the extent to which the Government can, and does, mislead the public in the pursuit of what the President and his advisers may decide is the national interest. They show again the abundant use of security classification to keep the public in ignorance. And they demonstrate that publication is one of the few remaining checks on the foreign policy powers of the imperial Presidency.

The papers make one thing perfectly clear—that President Nixon, with the aid of Dr. Henry Kissinger, set out deliberately to put the United States into a position of support for Pakistan at whatever cost. "We are not trying to be even-handed," said Dr. Kissinger to high Administration officials.

That might have been a proper course for a nation opposing, say, Hitler's expansionism. In the complex situation on the Indian subcontinent, Pakistan's obvious weakness—if nothing else—made self-defeating a policy of all-out opposition to India. That the brutal excesses of Pakistani repression of the Bengalis was overlooked, to the point where all aid to India was to be suspended while clandestine means of arming the Paks were sought, is simply repugnant to the American conscience—or ought to be.

Besides, nobody in Washington bothered to make clear to the public that Washington was not being "even-handed." Thus its condemnation of India sounded more like a considered, fair analysis than a deliberate, purposeful policy; and that is the kind of swampy ground in which credibility gaps are dug.

That is even more true of the instance documented by Mr. Anderson in which Dr. Kissinger and others sought to transfer to Pakistan arms already delivered to Jordan—while maintaining the public posture that arms were not being supplied to either participant in the war! That is entirely worthy of the men who brought you "re-enforced protective reaction."

So was the public pretense that an American carrier task force in the Bay of Bengal was there to evacuate threatened Americans, if it is true (as alleged in the Anderson papers) that its

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actual mission was to divert Indian ships and planes and thus to weaken the Indian drive against East Pakistan.

Nor do the various stories now being advanced to explain these and other Administration actions seem to hold much water. If, for instance, the task force actually was there to stop India from overrunning West Pakistan, too, as Administration leaks now suggest, nothing in India's actual behavior toward West Pakistan seems to have warranted such action; nor is it likely that one carrier task force could have been so effective a deterrent; and, in any case, the American people still were being misled about the deployment of their forces.

And if, as other articles have suggested, Mr. Nixon's intent really was to solidify an American alignment with China, also a supporter of Pakistan, against the Soviet Union, the curious results are that Soviet power on the subcontinent is vastly extended, as a result, and American influence in India is at lowest ebb. If we now are closer to China than we were, what suggestion was there in their acrimonious history that Peking and Moscow were likely to be soon reconciled? In order to gain face in China, did we really need to lose our shirts in India?

Thus, behind the facade of secrecy and security which shields so much of the Government's purposes and activities in the world, a policy that was dubious at best was shaped to Mr. Nixon's personal dictates, and presented to the public as something other than what it was. But the valuable documents Mr. Anderson has been publishing must have been supplied to him by someone with access to them who believed either that that manner of making policy, or the policy itself, or both, ought to be exposed to the American people.

How else could that be done, except by publication? And if it is to be maintained, as the Nixon Administration did in the Pentagon Papers case, that stamping "Top Secret" on the Government's memos and minutes makes them immune to publication and superior to the First Amendment, then security classification becomes an all-encompassing means of concealing whatever the Government wants to conceal.

It took years for someone to challenge that arrogant privilege, in the case of the Vietnam war; but it has happened much more quickly in the India-Pakistan case. Maybe the Government is now finding its own officials less willing to let deception and ineptitude be shrouded in "security."