

Officialdom in Action

Anderson's Revelations Provide Glimpse Of How Leaders React Under Stress

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WASHINGTON, Jan. 5—The country has now caught up with the movies and received some real-life Anderson tapes, or at least minutes, and they offer a fascinating glimpse of government—a faithful account of how high-ranking officials talk to one another under stress. But to be read fairly and profitably, these revelations also need more News Analysis explanation and information, only some of which is available so far.

These are not the equivalent of the massive Pentagon papers on Vietnam. In one sense, they are even more vivid: they record the crisis managers in action, barely one month after the fact, in the early days of the India-Pakistan war. In every other sense, however, they are only fragmentary: they deal with tactical discussions during a few days, without relation to the larger calculations of American interests, in South Asia and elsewhere.

The Anderson minutes do not offer conclusive proof of any major deception. The Nixon Administration's sympathy for Pakistan and anger over what is called Indian "aggression" were obvious at the time. But they do reveal that the White House secretly toyed with the idea of giving more positive military help to Pakistan than it acknowledged.

Interpretation Questioned

And the further disclosure today of Ambassador Kenneth B. Keating's complaint about the Administration's public statements suggests that the judgments of the White House may have rested on a debatable reading of prewar diplomatic events.

Indeed, the new disclosures once again point up the failure of the Administration to reveal all the reasons for the President's anger at the Indians, for his willingness at every turn to give the Pakistanis the benefit of every doubt and for his readiness to side conspicuously with Pakistan and China, thus balancing the Soviet Union's position in India and the Indian Ocean.

The papers also suggest a remarkable degree of frustration and anger by the President and his principal security adviser, Henry A. Kissinger, over the presumed unwillingness of the bureaucracy to follow their instructions and adopt their view of the war. And they demonstrate some of the methods — from threats to jokes — that Mr. Kissinger uses to enforce the Presidential will.

The leak of these papers to Jack Anderson, particularly so soon after the Pentagon papers, obviously troubles the White House and many other high Government officials. The hunt for the culprit is less energetic than might be imagined, apparently because the consequences are thought to be more of an embarrassment than a compromise of diplomatic or military secrets.

of official discussions and record-keeping.

It is widely believed here, even by many reporters who delight in printing secrets, that orderly administration and fair dealings with the public as well as with other nations require a certain amount of confidentiality in Government offices. This view reflects the conviction that sound decisions depend upon energetic and free debate and often upon brutal judgments about the motives, strengths and weaknesses of individuals, groups and governments.

But secrecy is also widely employed here to mislead the public, to hide errors of judgment or calculations of personal or political profit. It has therefore become customary for reporters to try to penetrate official confidences and to receive and print as much information as they can get, from sources both sympathetic and disgruntled.

Often the reporters do not learn enough to explain events fully. Sometimes they learn more than the Government deems to be in the national interest. The Government's most effective defense against leaks from inside is an information policy of candor that satisfies public curiosity about an event and leaves officials immune to charges of duplicity or deception.

Unusually Large Audience

The audience for Mr. Anderson's disclosures was unusually large here today, clearly because the Nixon Administration's policies and conduct in South Asia over the last 10 months are not yet widely understood.

The White House minutes confirm there was a general fear that India might seek to dismember West Pakistan after she severed East Pakistan from the West. The basis for that fear has not been publicly demonstrated, and it was not discussed at the compromised meetings.

The minutes portray an unseen President driving his assistants into words and deeds that would punish India. But they reveal nothing about Mr. Nixon's apparent personal affinity for the Pakistani leaders and dislike of high Indian officials. Nor do they shed any light on the intensity of the effort the White House says it made to find a peaceful solution.

One of Mr. Anderson's recent columns about the war—but not the documents he has released—portrayed the President as confident that the Indians would not allow themselves to become wholly dependent on the Russians and that the risks of offending them were therefore less than critics believed.

But there has been no official explanation to this effect, nor any accounting of why the United States was willing to diminish its own influence in India and in the new state proclaimed by the Bengali secessionists because of its pro-Pakistani exertions and assertions that could not alter the course of the war.

But a breach of confidence If these issues were debated about discussions at such a high level may result in serious remains secret. The tone of the side effects. It could encourage meetings now divulged suggest that Mr. Kissinger, as so to cut off even more officials often before, may simply have from policy deliberations, thus been enunciating policy as proudly denying them both influence vately determined by the President and understanding. It could dent, with no back-talk wanted, also further inhibit the candor and hardly any offered.

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