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Seymour Hersh in his book on Kissinger "The Price of Power: Kissinger in the Nixon White House" makes startling revelations

Nixon in '70 ordered Pentagon to 'destroy Fedayeen' and in 1971 to support Pakistan even if it meant war with Soviets

EXCLUSIVE TO THE MUSLIM

From MARK A. BRUZONSKY

WASHINGTON, D.C., June 3: The release of Seymour Hersh's startling journalistic tour de force about the manoeuvring of Henry Kissinger in the Nixon White House is beginning to cause a ripple of headlines in this country.

Eleven days before the book's release in this country both 'the New York Times' and 'the Washington Post' today carried major stories about the book and its many revelations about the Kissinger-Nixon era in American foreign policy.

Interest in Kissinger here remains extraordinarily high—which



Richard Nixon



Henry Kissinger

explains why a major publishing house was willing to invest hundreds of thousands of dollars to allow prize-winning investigative reporter Hersh to spend three years digging into the Kissinger saga of power and deceit.

Titled 'The Price of Power: Kissinger in the Nixon White House,' Hersh's 699-page volume is meticulously documented. It is the result of over 1,000 painstaking interviews and countless hours of intense

research. During the past year, two cover stories in the Atlantic magazine were devoted to early publication of parts of this highly unusual book. The Book-of-the-Month Club has designated the book an alternate selection even prior to its publication. And first printing in hard-cover is scheduled for 100,000. Very few books are accorded such treatment.

In short, Hersh's massive expose is a rare documentary about the inner workings of the American political system as it formulates and executes American foreign policy—which so often is hostage to domestic politics, misinformation about world affairs, and personal lust for power and glory.

There were numerous moments during their first years in power when Nixon and Kissinger turned aside nearly all consideration other than what seem in Hersh's retrospective to be narrow personal or political motives. Kissinger's undermining of Secretary of State Roger's Mid-East plan and his "tilt" toward Pakistan during the 1971 East Pakistan crisis are prime examples.

But probably the harshest revelation in relation to American Mid-East policy in Hersh's investigation is the Nixon-Kissinger decision, probably taken on Sept. 8, 1970, to use planes from the American Sixth Fleet to "destroy" the Palestinian Fedayeen.

It was on Sept. 6 that the PFLP hijacked a Swiss and two American passenger planes and took them to an airport 30 miles from Amman, Jordan. Three days later a British airliner was seized. Threatening to destroy the planes and kill the over 500 passengers unless all PLO members held in Swiss, German, British and Israeli jails were freed, the situation was the centre of world attention.

As Hersh reports, "The hijackings did more than jangle nerves in Washington. Nixon, deciding that the time had come to destroy in the Fedayeen, ordered American Navy planes from the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean to bomb the guerillas' hideaways. The strike was meant to be a purely punitive warning blow. Nixon's goal was not to save the American hostages, but to demonstrate America's willingness to challenge the PLO and to aid its ally, King Hussein."

In attempting to ascertain Kissinger's exact role in this unprecedented decision to use American aircraft to attack Palestinian targets, Hersh writes, "There is no evidence that Kissinger raised any objections

to the order, which the President himself verbally gave to Laird (then Secretary of Defence). But Laird did. 'We had bad weather for 48 hours,' Laird recalled years later, with a grin. 'The Secretary of Defence can always find a reason not to do something. There's always bad weather.'"

When asked what the President hoped to accomplish with the bombings, Laird told Hersh, "He probably wanted to show the Russians that, by God, they couldn't tell what he might do." Though Laird was reluctant to discuss the incident in full detail Hersh did find out that in a conversation with a former government official. Soon after the Nixon order Laird had expressed "shock at the presidential order and at Kissinger's role in urging its execution."

"As the official remembers the conversation," Hersh continues, "Laird said, 'conducting an air operation would have been forced to move quickly to prevent the White House from going around his office to that of Admiral Moorer (then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff), who would have been only too willing to do what the President and Kissinger wanted.'"

"Laird telephoned Moorer and said," According to Hersh's carefully reconstructed account, "Tom, I've gotten this order... we're just going to have terrible weather out there for the next 48 hours.' Laird managed to stall for days, although Kissinger telephoned to find out why it was not carried out. The White House seemed to accept the explanation of 'bad weather,' and eventually rescinded the order. Nixon had changed his mind."

Though neither Nixon nor Kissinger ever revealed the order to bomb the Fedayeen in their own memoirs, Hersh did discover that Kissinger once described the incident to at least one of his senior associates, depicting it solely as an example of Nixon's irrationality and not mentioning his own role in encouraging the President.

Laird has continued to refuse to give further details about the incident, smilingly joking that "if I'm going to be insubordinate on a direct order, I'm not going to tell anybody about it."

What would have happened to the 500 plus hostages had planes from the Sixth Fleet attacked Palestinian bases is of course unknown. After the attack order was rescinded the U.S. continued to refuse to negotiate with the Fedayeen. Instead steps were taken to threaten a military rescue operation. A carrier task force in the Mediterranean was ordered to deploy off the coast of Lebanon and some army units in Europe were placed on "semi-alert."

plans were leaked to the American Press from the Pentagon that

American paratroopers might be airlifted into the Middle East. Are these plans might have caused the Palestinians to take the decision to destroy the aircraft on the ground on Sept. 12 while shifting the hostages to a hideaway.

Hersh goes on in this chapter on the Jordanian crisis to detail how the Palestinian-Jordanian clash headed toward a possible Super-Power confrontation and how the U.S.—acting on intelligence information supplied by Israel's Mosad, continued to threaten direct American intervention.

The author of this unique and probably unprecedented investigation of American foreign policy making as it really occurred, Seymour Hersh, first came to national prominence more than a decade ago when as a New York Times reporter exposed the My Lai Massacre in which American troops slaughtered hundreds of Vietnamese civilians. He is the only four-time winner of the George Polk Award for his reporting on international affairs. Widely respected for his integrity and journalistic determination to seek out the truth, Hersh has provided insights into both Henry Kissinger and the system of American foreign policy-making rarely before achieved.

EAST PAKISTAN CRISIS

In his 20-page chapter on "the India-Pakistan War" Hersh insists that support for Pakistan was determined almost solely on cold war terms. "For Nixon and Kissinger, there was no issue," Hersh concludes "Yahya Khan held the key to Nixon's re-election: their conduit to the Chinese would not be challenged."

Even when 20 Americans assigned to the consulate in Dacca cabled the State Department in a highly unusual mass formal dissent from official policy, neither Kissinger nor Nixon reconsidered. "Our government has failed to denounce the suppression of democracy," the cable from Dacca read. "Our government has failed to denounce atrocities... while at the same time bending over backwards to placate the (West Pakistan) government... Privately, Americans have expressed disgust. We, as professional public servants, express our dissent with current policy and fervently hope that our true and lasting interest can be defined and our policies redirected in order to salvage our nation's position as a moral leader of the free world."

The response of the White House was to transfer out of Dacca the

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