



By Douglas Clark

"Cry 'Havoc!' and let slip the dogs of war."

William Shakespeare, Julius Caesar III.i

**Day one, Tuesday 2:08AM, White House Oval Office,
Washington, D.C.**

Everyone rose as the President entered the Oval Office.

"Be seated gentlemen," President Frederick Long said. The President was dressed in casual slacks and a sweater. "Who wants to start?"

Helen Gladding, the National Security Advisor, responded immediately, "The best we can tell at this time is that a large commercial jet, probably a Boeing 757 crashed into the Indian Parliament building at

approximately 2:15 pm. The aircraft apparently was an Air India flight that had taken off from Bombay. The plane was off course, no reported emergency. Air traffic control was not able to establish contact before the crash."

"Are you saying it was a hijacking.....a 9/11 type of attack?" The President asked.

"We can't be certain at this time, Mister President, but it can't be ruled out."

"Christ Almighty. If this is a Muslim suicide thing, all hell will come down. How many dead?"

"Not determined yet, but it's bad. We think that a large number of the Indian Parliament perished," Glad-ding responded.

An aide entered the Oval Office and handed a message to the President's Chief of Staff, Samuel Tully.

After reading the message, Tully took a deep, audible breath and said, "Helen was right. Most of the Parliament were killed, or are still missing. But that's not the worst of it. There's someone claiming credit for this as an attack. There are reports on TV now."

Someone turned on the television. A reporter was saying, '.... you can hear the sirens and see the smoke from the Parliament building which is about four blocks from where I am standing. To repeat this breaking news, what we believe to be a Boeing 727, of Air India flight 98 originating out of Bombay, was possibly hijacked and flown deliberately into the Indian Parliament building. Approximately one hour ago, a taped message was delivered to a local New Delhi radio station purportedly from a group calling themselves Allah's Servants. The group claims Islamic religious sovereignty over the disputed Kashmir region, the source of continual armed conflict between India and Pakistan. An un-named Indian police official suggests that casualties will run into

the hundreds of dead and wounded. The Prime Minister was not in the building at the time of the crash and he has declared a national state of emergency.'

Chief of Staff Sam Tully muted the television.

"Who do we have missing right now, Sam?" The President asked, meaning which senior staff were absent from Washington at the moment.

"Secretary Smith and Director Claridge are in Paris. They will be at our embassy within the hour. Under Secretary Fielding is here representing State and Deputy Director of Intelligence Kolinski for the CIA. Clyde will be here any minute. He's prepping his press relations staff for the expected barrage from the media. The Vice President of course is in Japan. He's been contacted and is making his way to the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo."

"Senior military commanders are assembling in the Pentagon Situation Room as we speak, Mister President. Assistant Secretary Williams is also there," Secretary of Defense Jonathan Mueller said.

"Suggestions on where we start?" The President asked.

"I suggest that you personally call Prime Minister Singh, Mister President. Give him assurances about U.S. support. The Indians are going to be hell-bent to leave the reservation and do something in Kashmir. They need to feel our support, but also our weight," Secretary Mueller said.

"And how should we make our weight felt, Mister Secretary? Threaten military action in response to their own 9/11? Sanctions?" Under Secretary of State Carter Fielding said, directing his comments to the Defense Secretary.

The exchange pointed to the fundamental riff between State and Defense, on philosophical, strategic, and even tactical approaches to foreign policy. The Defense

Secretary himself enjoyed unparalleled influence with the White House allowing for encroachment into State's sphere of influence. More broadly, it was this administration's political appointees forming a solid, coordinated, and activist leadership against the career staff of both Defense and State. The generals at the Pentagon were having just as tough a time as the senior staffers at the State Department.

On a personal level, Fielding saw Secretary Mueller as the ideological head of what was known as the 'Lone Star' government amongst its detractors. Most, including the President were either Texans or heavily connected to Texas business. The senior staff in the Administration were chronically insular in their decision making. To Fielding, they were dangerously arrogant and saw world issues in simplistic concepts. They were victims of the 'group-think syndrome', where the collective opinions of like-minded people create fact out of hypothesis.

Fielding had spent the last several years as a senior diplomat negotiating the highest priority situations for the United States. He held dual doctorates in political science and history. He was a career staffer with eighteen years at the State Department. After the last two years under this administration, he was close to resigning.

"We need to plant the idea in the Indian government that any reactionary escalation of military hostilities in Kashmir will be contrary to their interests. And that there are inducements to avoid such adventures. Small carrots, but a large stick," Mueller responded, but directed his comments to the President, not to Fielding.

Fielding and Mueller had tangled on more than one occasion.

"We should advise Singh that we would apply all pressure to Pakistan to crush these terrorist groups in Kashmir. We will halt military aid until there are con-

crete results in that effort. In turn, we will accelerate military sales to India. All of course if India shows restraint," Mueller added.

"Mister Fielding, your advice?" The President said.

"Secretary Mueller's approach will not work. India and Pakistan almost went to war not that long ago over lesser provocations than this. Mister President, their parliament has been destroyed. Prime Minister Singh must respond in some strong manner, or his government, what's left of it, will fall. At this point we may even have an issue of the Indian military pushing its own agenda, similar to the Pakistani situation," Fielding answered.

"Fine, then what do you recommend?" The President asked abruptly.

"Call Prime Minister Singh. Get a feel for what direction he might be pursuing. Offer our direct efforts in seeking to identify and destroying the terrorists that caused this."

"In what form might those direct efforts take, Mister Fielding?" Mueller asked. "You're not suggesting we offer to send military forces into Kashmir are you?"

"Like Afghanistan you mean?" Fielding answered sarcastically. "How do we justify threatening India into not responding in the same manner as the U.S. did?"

"Christ, the problem with you intellectuals is that there are endless viewpoints, endless options, and endless discussions. We need to prevent India and Pakistan from getting out of hand."

"I don't think that you---"

"Gentlemen, enough wrangling," the President interrupted. "What do we do next? Other opinions?"

Chief of Staff Tully said, "I think you should get Prime Minister Singh on the telephone immediately, Sir. Condolences of course, but as Jonathan said, make it known that the U.S. cannot accept any response into

Kashmir that could escalate into war with Pakistan. I would also suggest we get out in front on this thing, Call a news conference here at seven. Make the morning news as people are getting ready for work. Express outrage. Pledge support on the continuing global war on terror. Give assurances to India. Caution against ill-considered military action. Clyde's people can put it together in the next couple of hours."

"Get it in the works, Sam. Get the call into the Prime Minister."

There was continued discussion in the Oval Office for the next twenty minutes until the call went through to Prime Minister Singh. The President put the call on the speaker.

"Prime Minister Singh. The people of the United States wish to express our condolences and grief over this attack on your government. We know only too well the depth of your loss."

"Thank you, Mister President. Terrorism is not new to India. However, this act has reached a new level. At least two-thirds of the members of Parliament were killed or wounded. Our intelligence people know the group that has taken credit. Not only have they taken credit, but they have also advertised the names of the perpetrators. The leader, the pilot of the aircraft was a former Pakistani air force pilot. His name is known to our intelligence people."

"Prime Minister Singh, it is particularly important that the government of India exercise restraint in their response to this attack. The government of the United States will do everything in its power to assist India in this terrible time, and it will use its influence and resources to bring this terrorist group to justice," President Long said.

There was a long pause before Prime Minister Singh answered. "Mister President, if you will forgive me for sounding ungrateful, there is little of substance the United States can offer. Unless you are offering to participate in resolving the long-standing sponsorship of terrorists by Pakistan."

President Long responded, "I realize that the history of the Kashmir region has been difficult for a long time. However, the world cannot afford to have India and Pakistan at war. My intelligence people assure me that there is no government sponsorship of terrorist groups by the government of Pakistan."

"I beg to differ with you, Mister President. My intelligence people have for some time obtained proof of direct financing from Pakistani government agencies, and particularly their military. Known terrorists are harbored in Pakistan. There is direct military training and equipping of Kashmir terrorist groups. This latest attack has the marks of planning that would be beyond what this organization is capable of. It is the same as Syria's sponsorship of Palestinian terrorists."

"Again, Mister Prime Minister, I urge restraint. I understand you have declared a state of emergency and placed your military forces on high alert status. I am told that President Ansar has responded with a similar order to Pakistani forces. This could easily escalate beyond anyone's control."

"What would you have me do, Mister President? If I practice, as you call it, restraint, this government will fall. Perhaps you fail to grasp the reality that the political leadership, both the governing coalition and the opposition's has largely been murdered. If I were to do nothing, in all probability the military would take charge. That aside, Mister President, I am personally committed to see

this attack redressed, and to settle the Kashmir issue with finality."

"Again, Mister Prime Minister, I must warn against military action -"

Singh interrupted the President, "Restraint? Are you suggesting that the United States is threatening India if it exercises its right to defend itself? Can only the United States take military action against its enemies? Must other states of the world seek permission of the United States?"

"Mister Prime Minister, at the least, we urge India to take this before the Security Council. The United States will take the lead in pushing for action."

Even through Singh's precise British accent, one could sense his seething anger. "What would the United States do? Press for sanctions against Pakistan? Not very likely in view of your closeness in support of chasing terrorists important only to the United States. Would the United States use its military forces to destroy terrorists in Kashmir? Not at all likely I should think?"

"Mister President, India will protect its sovereignty with all means at its disposal. The decades of Pakistan's sponsorship of terrorist against the State of India will end from here on out. It will be ended." Prime Minister Singh said.

"That sounds like a declaration of war, Mister Prime Minister."

"You could infer that. I believe there is nothing further to discuss, Mister President." The Indian Prime Minister disconnected.

"That sonofabitch hung up on me. Backward, second-rate country," the President said. "The issue is the nukes. What's the situation there, Helen?"

Helen Gladding was in her early fifties, somewhat matronly in appearance. She tended toward gray suits

and little make-up. The requisite doctorate in political science did not temper her use of strong language. While not as acerbic as the Defense Secretary, she was essentially the opposite gender equivalent. Although from Missouri, she fit into the Texas style nicely.

"The latest information, correct me if I am wrong, Dan, is that India has perhaps as many as twenty devices, probably all between ten and twenty kilotons yields," Gladding said. "Single stage fission only. No second stage thermonuclear devices."

"How big is that?" President Long asked.

"Roughly the same yield range as those dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki."

"And the Pakistanis?"

"We think less number of devices. Probably no more than ten. Might not be as large in yields as the Indians," Gladding answered.

"What do we think the Indians will do?" President Long asked.

There was a long silence before anyone spoke.

Defense Secretary Mueller was the first to voice an opinion. "There's no way to know what the Indians intend. Singh probably doesn't even know yet. He'll assemble his generals and plan some sort of military action. That is reasonably certain. What's more important is that we prevent it from getting out of hand. We can't let these two third world countries let the nuclear genie out of the bottle. If we have to lean on either or both real hard, so be it."

Mueller was warming to the scenario. "I would recommend an immediate ordering of at least two carrier battle groups to move into the northern Arabian Sea off the coast of Pakistan. We have four groups currently in the Middle East. We can move the two groups from the

Persian Gulf and be on station in perhaps forty-eight hours."

"I agree with Jonathan," Helen Gladding said. "We must control this situation. We need time and maybe a large projection of U.S. force will cause the Indians to consider matters more broadly."

"We can take a strong demanding posture that puts a heavy hammer to the Pakistanis, and at the same time make the Indians think about any military action. It puts teeth in your caution to Singh that the world will not tolerate an Indian-Pakistani war," Mueller said.

"I think at the least we can expect a major offensive by the Indians in the Kashmir," Fielding said. "The Pakistanis will of course respond. There will most assuredly be a war. Singh may even declare war on Pakistan very soon. On this I think the U.S. cannot effectively be the unilateral instrument of containing the Indians and Pakistanis. The Chinese will be the key, but we also need the Europeans with us on this. In fact, Mister President, I would recommend you begin calling each of the key heads-of-state, starting with Premier Lei."

"Jesus Christ, Fielding. You'd have us diddling with these interminable diplomatic debates while Rome, or more realistically, Karachi and New Delhi burn. You of all people should understand the use of force. It was your white paper that suggested that extreme *nuclear hammer* approach," Mueller said.

"What are you referring to, Jonathan?" The President asked.

"Mister Fielding authored a State Department white paper several years ago that advocated the use of nuclear retaliatory force on any country that used a nuclear device on another state. Interesting concept, but not diplomatically realistic," Mueller answered.

“Why the change of thinking now on this present problem, Doctor Fielding?” The President asked.

Mueller’s characterization of Fielding’s paper omitted several key elements, which Fielding explained to the President. His plan called for a declaration that the United States holds the fundamental proposition that the use of a nuclear device by any state against another state would be construed as directly threatening the security of the United States. Therefore, the United States would declare that if any state were to use a nuclear weapon, that state would suffer complete annihilation from the United States as a matter of self-defense. In essence, it resurrected the Cold War concept of assured self-destruction as a deterrent to initiating nuclear conflict.

Fielding’s plan called for making the attempt to recruit the principle nuclear powers of the United Kingdom, France, Russia, and China to the treaty. He argued that apart from the British, the other powers would not join in any such treaty, and would condemn the U.S. for such an attempt to coerce the rest of the world. The plan was to cause a heated worldwide debate, that in the end left the United States no alternative but to independently declare its threat.

The result would be increased leverage against countries with nuclear weapons programs, and potentially a real deterrent. If actual retaliation was ever necessary, the argument had already been made. The offending country duly warned. Much of the world might lobby and protest, but the debate would already be history, a policy of long standing by the time it might have to be invoked.

In the end, the previous President did not feel he had the political capital to risk such a bold stroke. Fielding’s paper was much discussed by foreign policy wonks. The Secretary of State never championed the move. The concept was buried.

“Hell of a concept, Doctor. Truly Machiavellian. Makes you out as more of a hawk than even Jonathan here,” the President said. “Why not make a threat now to both the Indians and Pakistanis? What’s the difference if we had done it some time ago?”

The President was more intellectually shallow and unknowledgeable than Fielding had thought. He had no grasp of the fundamental strengths that accrued from a standing policy as opposed to a reactionary response. Nobody else in the previous Administration did either. Like the Dr. Strangelove character in the movie commenting on the Soviet’s doomsday machine: *It loses its meaning if it’s not made public!*