

HENRY KISSINGER



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ROBERT D. SCHULZINGER

# HENRY KISSINGER

Doctor of Diplomacy



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*For my wife, Marie, and for Leonard Dinnerstein  
In appreciation of their support*



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## PREFACE

Enough time has elapsed since Henry Kissinger directed American foreign policy for Presidents Richard M. Nixon and Gerald R. Ford to offer fresh perspectives. Some of the issues with which he had to deal, such as detente with the Soviet Union, relations with China, and war and peace in the Middle East, to name a few, remain key topics of discussion in the highest echelons of the American government.

*Henry Kissinger* goes beyond earlier accounts of Kissinger's foreign policy and is based, to a considerable extent, upon sources unavailable to previous scholars of American diplomacy in the early 1970s. Although Kissinger's own papers at the Library of Congress and some of his more significant files as National Security Adviser or Secretary of State are still beyond the reach of those who explore the issues which we associate with the man, many new insights may be gained by examining the papers of Presidents Nixon and Ford, which did open in the 1980s.

The manuscript has also benefited from some material declassified under the Mandatory Review system at the Presidential Libraries or Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests. Anyone who has used such documents knows that obtaining them is a frustrating process with unpredictable results. In the case of research for this book, my Mandatory Review requests produced more material from the Ford Library than from the Nixon Presidential Materials Project of the National Archives. FOIA documents for this subject, requested by other scholars, appeared in the *Declassified Documents Reference Service*. Inquiries made in the Carter administration produced useful records regarding the 1969–70 bombing of Cambodia and the 1970–73 ef-

forts to destabilize the government of Salvador Allende in Chile. The Reagan administration, however, was less forthcoming in producing recent foreign policy and national security data.

Congressional documents have also complemented the manuscript sources for this study. The special circumstances of the time—the collapse of the cold war consensus, growing congressional opposition to the war in Vietnam, and lawmakers' disgust with Watergate—focused legislative attention on the foreign policy issues of the era. A revolution in presidential/congressional relations over foreign policy produced a far richer vein of congressional hearings, studies, reports, and debates than was the case for most other periods of post-World War II foreign affairs.

*Henry Kissinger* also utilizes the voluminous journalistic accounts and memoir literature of the time, which dwarf most other treatments of recent United States foreign policy. The public's appetite for stories of Kissinger's exploits seemed nearly limitless in the 1970s, and reporters and their editors were happy to serve all that readers could swallow. I once took a ruler to the pages of the *Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature* to compare the attention the popular press devoted to Kissinger to that which they accorded his predecessors as National Security Adviser or Secretary of State. Coverage of Kissinger, the most celebrated diplomat of the post World War II era, exceeded that of all earlier occupants of the offices he held by sizable or even enormous margins. As Secretary of State, he received 2.5 times the publicity of John Foster Dulles, his nearest competitor, 4 times that of Dean Acheson, 7.2 times that of Christian Herter, 11.7 times more than Dean Rusk, and 15 times as much as William Rogers. While National Security Adviser, Kissinger attracted more attention than Rogers did as Secretary of State—3.5 times the amount. The disparity with previous National Security Advisers was equally telling. Popular journals ran 10.8 times as many stories about him as they did about McGeorge Bundy and 8.5 times as many as they did about Walt Whitman Rostow.

Just as significant were the sorts of journals which wrote about him. Of course he was a staple of the coverage of, say, *U.S. News and World Report*, *The Nation* or *The New Republic*, but so were Acheson or Dulles. Stories about Kissinger, though, also regularly appeared in the most unlikely places. *The Ladies' Home Journal*, *Vogue*, or *Harper's Bazaar*, for example, all featured articles about him. They had all but ignored the Security Advisers or Secretaries of State who had served earlier Presidents.

To be sure, unlike many who had occupied high foreign policy positions in the government before him, Kissinger courted the press and encouraged the attention he received. Moreover, he was also discussed in the flood of journalistic analysis and executive branch memoirs that resulted from the constitutional crises caused by the illegal entry on June 17, 1972, into the Democratic National Committee headquarters at the Watergate complex, and President Nixon's attempts to cover up the affair.

Not to be overlooked either, and much more informative than one might assume at first glance, are Kissinger's own *White House Years* (1979) and *Years of Upheaval* (1982). They are far longer and more detailed than those of other National Security Advisers or Secretaries of State. They are also personal, selective, and sometimes defensive.

*White House Years*, *Years of Upheaval*, and other memoirs are important sources for *Henry Kissinger*, but I have treated them as what they are, reminiscences. As such, they are most useful for summoning the participants' later recollection of how they felt or thought, rather than what they did or said. When quoting conversations recorded in memoirs, I have noted that these are recollections. Customarily, I have used contemporary documents, where available, to establish the precise words and deeds of men and women at the time.

Many institutions and individuals have helped me since I began this project. The Council on Foreign Relations supported early research for this book with a Foreign Affairs/National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship in 1981–1982. The Council on Research and Creative Work at the University of Colorado provided a Faculty Fellowship and several grants-in-aid to help the research from 1981 to 1988. The Committee on University Scholarly Publications of the University of Colorado helped defray the cost of reproducing photographs and cartoons.

Yale University invited me to serve as Cardozo Visiting Professor of History in the spring of 1987. At that time I offered a seminar on The Age of Kissinger where I tried out many of the ideas of this book on a spirited and intelligent group of fifteen undergraduates. I am particularly grateful to one, Marcel Bryar, for his insights into the process of arms control.

The staffs of the Nixon Presidential Materials Project of the National Archives and the Gerald R. Ford Library helped me find many of the documents which inform this book.

Several friends and colleagues deserve thanks for criticizing drafts

of the manuscript: Bruce Kuklick, Robert Pois, Leo Ribuffo, Michael Schaller, Gaddis Smith, and Howard Smokler.

I also thank my father, Maurice Schulzinger, who read drafts with the eye of an interested nonacademic.

Kate Wittenberg, the history editor at Columbia University Press, has earned my appreciation for her infectious enthusiasm for this work which made completing it a pleasure.

My greatest debts are to the two people to whom the book is dedicated. Leonard Dinnerstein encouraged me to start it, offered invaluable suggestions for sources, criticized the manuscript, and pressed me to finish. Without his help, much of what is best in these pages would not be here. My wife, Marie, simply makes everything I do better.

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## INTRODUCTION

# Henry Kissinger's Record

Henry Kissinger dominated American foreign policy during the most crucial period after the beginning of the Cold War. Along with Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford he presided over the end of direct global military intervention and the emergence of the Soviet Union as an equal to the United States. He commenced détente with the Soviets, a new relationship with China, and brought the United States into the Middle East as the major player.

Throughout it all Kissinger achieved celebrity unlike that accorded any previous American diplomat. The Gallup Poll listed him as the most admired man in America in 1972 and 1973. He won a Nobel Peace Prize in 1973. Egyptians called him "the magician" for arranging a disengagement of Arab and Israeli forces after the 1973 Mideast war. By that time, even his clothes made an impression; twice he made the best-dressed list. His shuttle diplomacy twice won him an award as "professional traveler of the year." Popular magazines were fascinated with him and his work. The *Ladies' Home Journal* commissioned actress Gina Lollobrigida to prepare a photo essay on him, and it reprinted portions of a book by a French journalist who developed a crush on him. Journalists followed him and women companions before 1974 and him and his wife after his marriage in March of that year. Nancy Maginnes Kissinger became a celebrity in her own right, dispensing advice on marriage, clothes, and foreign policy. There even was a story about his dog. Not surprisingly, cartoonists loved him: In their drawings he flew in a cape—Super K; he held the globe in his hand; he lifted it overhead; he held it on his shoulders; he tamed lions; he charmed diplomats; he snarled at congress-

men; he flattered presidents; he was likened to Gulliver tied to the ground by Liliputians. After leaving office he made an impact on literature too, appearing as a character in novels, stories, plays, and even an opera.<sup>1</sup>

And yet. Much of this enthusiasm for Kissinger and his diplomacy faded by the end of the Ford administration. Kissinger became an issue in the election campaign of 1976 with both Ronald Reagan, the Republican challenger to President Ford, and Jimmy Carter, the Democratic candidate, assailing Kissinger's conduct of American foreign policy. Fifty percent of the public polled in 1976 had a favorable impression of him, down substantially from the eighty percent who approved in 1973.<sup>2</sup> The debacle of Vietnam took its toll, as did the inability to fulfill the early promise of détente with the Soviets. By the end of the Ford administration, the United States had not completed a Mideast settlement. The new relationship with China appeared stalled. Nor did Kissinger completely escape the aftermath of the Watergate scandal. Reports that he authorized wiretaps on the telephones of subordinates and journalists dogged him for years. By the end of the Ford administration he became almost forlorn, wondering aloud whether American democracy could sustain a "realistic" foreign policy and concerned that his countrymen could not tolerate equality with the Soviet Union.<sup>3</sup>

"Miracle worker or stunt man?" was the title of an assessment of Kissinger's record in early 1977.<sup>4</sup> That question has pursued him ever since. His reputation in the years after leaving power has fluctuated wildly, depending on the point of view of writers and politicians. His own two volumes of memoirs of the Nixon administration, *White House Years* (1979) and *Years of Upheaval* (1982), were the most extensive and illuminating of those of any American diplomat, and they went far to remind readers why he captured the public imagination in the early seventies. Yet one year after the second volume appeared, journalist Seymour Hersh published a scathing indictment of Kissinger's performance as Nixon's National Security Adviser.<sup>5</sup> Hersh focused on personal failings, claiming that Kissinger's insecurities and ego led him to abuse subordinates, deceive equals, and fawn over superiors.

Memoirs of other participants in the politics of the Nixon years painted different pictures of Kissinger. President Nixon himself drew Kissinger as less the initiator of a new foreign policy than a servant of a President who himself wanted détente with the Soviets and a new relationship with China.<sup>6</sup> Presidential speechwriter William Safire, once a target of wiretaps, also diminished Kissinger's accom-

plishments in comparison with Nixon's. Veterans of Watergate like H. R. Haldeman and John Ehrlichman weighed in with their own accounts of Kissinger as a shameless self-promoter.<sup>7</sup>

Diplomats of the time also provided their reminiscences. Raymond Garthoff, part of the negotiating team for the SALT agreements, wrote extensively on détente with the Soviet Union in a massive 1,000-page book.<sup>8</sup> He argued that Kissinger helped undermine the eventual appeal of détente by sloppy diplomatic work. He paid insufficient attention to details in the beginning of the relationship and let himself get sucked into anti-Soviet hysteria at the end. Garthoff's boss at the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, Gerard Smith, wrote his own memoir, *Doubletalk*, in which he too concluded that Kissinger was excessively concerned with the political ramifications of diplomacy at the expense of real, long-term progress.<sup>9</sup> U. Alexis Johnson, the political undersecretary of the Department of State for many of the Nixon years and a professional foreign service officer, expressed the resentments of many of his colleagues when he accused Kissinger of ignoring the advice of professionals.<sup>10</sup>

But Kissinger had his defenders among his colleagues. While Kissinger was still in office Marvin and Bernard Kalb published *Kissinger*, a highly laudatory biography. Kissinger's onetime subordinate William Hyland, who later became editor of *Foreign Affairs*, published *Mortal Rivals*, a history of U.S.–Soviet relations from Nixon to Reagan, in which he praised Kissinger for having conducted relations between the two powers better than anyone who came after.<sup>11</sup> Other onetime subordinates who went on to high positions in subsequent administrations, like Winston Lord who became ambassador to China, or Lawrence Eagleburger who became Undersecretary of State, continued to praise Kissinger.

Kissinger's political rivals also moderated some of their earlier hostility. Ronald Reagan, after becoming President, discovered previously hidden virtues in Kissinger. He appointed him to head a special Bipartisan Commission on United States policy toward Central America in 1983.<sup>12</sup> Kissinger had not stressed western hemisphere problems while in office, but President Reagan believed that he carried such weight with the public that his views on any foreign policy subject would form a favorable impression. Later, when the Reagan administration moved toward strategic and intermediate missile control, they once more called upon Kissinger's expertise. Reagan also consulted Kissinger as he prepared for summit conferences with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. Again, the onetime critic of Kissin-

ger's détente came to believe that his experience in dealing with the Soviets had proven invaluable.

Where does this absorption with a onetime obscure Harvard professor of government and international relations originate? Is it, as he and numerous defenders asserted, because of his remarkable record of achievement? Did he create a "structure of peace," as he claimed? Did he base United States foreign relations on a firm foundation of "maturity," and on an accurate assessment of the extent and limits of Washington's power? Did he marry the European diplomat's worldliness to American optimism and idealism in a mostly successful effort to convince foreign policy experts and sensible members of the elite public that the United States had to play its appointed role as a great power? Does his appeal rest on the resumption of relations with the People's Republic of China after twenty-three years, the movement toward capping the arms race and détente with the Soviet Union, successfully disengaging the combatants in the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, and extricating the United States from Vietnam? Do his American supporters keep up their praise because of the honors heaped upon the former Secretary by Europeans with longer memories than Americans of how foreign policy should be conducted?<sup>13</sup>

Yes, in many, but not all, ways. Some of his achievements were real, especially in opening relations with China, pursuing détente with the Soviet Union and recognizing the relative decline of American power. Notable as these accomplishments were, they paled when set against his carefully contrived image as a genius of international relations. When the Egyptians designated him "the magician" they meant to praise, not tease, him. At the height of his renown in 1973 American supporters also seriously thought that his diplomacy approached the miraculous. Such hero worship had its inevitable costs. By the end of his tenure in office, the magic was gone and Kissinger seemed more illusionist than miracle worker. The praise heaped on him earlier rang hollow. His diplomacy seemed conventional, not innovative; the gap between his promise and his actual achievements provoked a natural disillusionment.

Kissinger was an ordinary diplomat in the sense that he stressed commonplace themes developed by foreign affairs professionals in the years following World War II. His very conventionality was a source of strength in propelling him to the top. His career represented the culmination of the influence of academic expertise on foreign affairs. His scholarly work of the 1950s and 1960s neatly summarized the realist tradition dominant in American universities after 1945. Kis-



singer was a masterful popularizer of themes developed by a corps of thinkers who advocated thoughtful United States participation in world affairs. As National Security Adviser and Secretary of State, Kissinger tried to balance the competing demands of theory and the practical necessities of daily foreign policy. Kissinger spoke of realist theory to provide academic justifications for policies tailored to political needs. This was an irresistible combination for scholars interested in the real world.<sup>14</sup>

Kissinger seizes the imagination because he engineered the most significant turning point in United States foreign policy since the beginning of the cold war. Just as Dean Acheson designed the structure of United States foreign policy in the early cold war, Kissinger created a framework for post-Vietnam diplomacy. Moreover, he became enmeshed in a changing environment for foreign policy officials. It was Kissinger's great opportunity as well as his personal misfortune to come to power as the twenty-year-old consensus over American foreign policy collapsed in the calamity of the Vietnam war.<sup>15</sup> As members of the foreign policy elite no longer shared a common urge to contain the Soviet Union, Kissinger advanced other goals for the United States. He succeeded for a while with some—*détente* with the Soviet Union, better relations with China, a cease-fire in the Middle East, for example—but he failed to foster a new consensus.

Congress became quarrelsome as members questioned the authority of the executive to direct foreign affairs. Kissinger discovered that he did not have the field to himself when he claimed special foreign affairs wisdom. This intrusion by outsiders on what had become the domain of the executive led Kissinger to some of his most celebrated manipulations of public opinion.<sup>16</sup> Many of Kissinger's justifications to favored journalists for his conduct tried to reduce support for competitors, for example, other White House staff members, Secretary of State William Rogers, Senator Henry Jackson, presidential candidate George McGovern.

A clear picture of Kissinger's foreign policy must be focused through the prism of his relations with Presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford and their staffs. The advisory role is crucial for understanding the modern American government. Presidents and advisers needed one another. Nixon relied on Kissinger to provide legitimacy with foreign affairs experts, while Kissinger, in turn, used his connections to the presidents to assert his political acumen and toughness. Kissinger's relationship with Ford was unique in United States diplomatic history. An unelected president, untrained in foreign affairs,

took instruction from a man near the height of his authority. The Secretary of State provided Ford with instant acceptance among the foreign affairs community. Ironically, however, Kissinger's very prominence became his undoing in 1975–76. Threatening to overshadow a new president seeking election in his own right, the adviser became a liability.<sup>17</sup>

Other factors also account for continued interest in Kissinger. Detractors focused on mistakes, duplicity, immorality, self-promotion, and maybe even crimes. Upon his departure from office in January 1977 the *New York Times*' liberal columnist, Anthony Lewis, found "it all very puzzling" that "the National Press Club produces a belly dancer for him and gives standing applause for his views on world peace. Harlem Globetrotters make him an honorary member. Senators pay tribute to his wisdom." For Lewis "secrecy and deceit were levers of his power." His "secret is showmanship. Henry Kissinger is our P. T. Barnum." For critics his career stood as a moral caution, a measure of "the price of power," as Hersh put it.<sup>18</sup>

Critics charged that Kissinger's accomplishments as National Security Adviser and Secretary of State were illusory, inflated far beyond reality by a press, that, Lewis wrote, Kissinger "played as Dr. Miracle plays the violin."<sup>19</sup> Detractors noted that the war in Vietnam lingered far longer than anyone expected in 1968 and that the settlement reached in Paris from October 1972 to January 1973 could have been obtained years earlier with far less loss of life. In the Middle East, they complained that Kissinger's remoteness from the issue combined with his systematic undermining of the position of Secretary of State William P. Rogers contributed to the outbreak of war in 1973. Only thereafter did he play a public part in resolving the tension between Israel and its neighbors. By that time the problems had become even more intractable. His 1973 and 1974 shuttling between Israel, Egypt, and Syria, according to this view, only arrested further deterioration in a desperate situation. Further east, in Iran, he continued the flawed policy of heavily arming the forces of Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlevi. Within two years of Kissinger's departure from the State Department, the Shah's government lay in ruins, taking with it United States influence in a strategic area. A combination of personal pique and misapplied geopolitical ruminations led the United States toward a senseless "tilt" toward Pakistan during the December 1971 war between Pakistan and India over the independence of Bangladesh (the eastern province of Moslem Pakistan). Even his opening to China has been roughly treated by the critics. Hersh,

whose detestation of Kissinger surpassed his contempt for Richard Nixon, denigrated the Security Adviser's role in reversing the futile policy of isolating China. Instead he credited Nixon for taking the lead in adopting ideas about China that had percolated through the foreign affairs establishment over the previous decade.

Detractors pointed to Kissinger's personal flaws. Adversaries indicted Kissinger as the compleat courtier who flattered Nixon to his face while vilifying him behind his back. A stern taskmaster to subordinates, Kissinger was accused by Hersh of lacking the one quality that makes a difficult boss bearable to his staff—loyalty to employees. He was charged with playing one off against another, keeping the majority in the dark, speaking against them to other officials, and encouraging the FBI to tap their telephones and watch their activities. Other White House staff members in the Nixon and Ford administrations often believed that he promoted himself at the expense of the President. Kissinger's role in the resignation of Richard Nixon provides additional examples of deviousness and skirting the law.<sup>20</sup>

Questions of illegality arose regarding Kissinger's role in the secret 1969 bombing of Cambodia, the 1970 invasion of that country, and the Christmas bombing of North Vietnam in 1972. His actions toward the elected Socialist government of Salvador Allende in Chile also provoked charges that he violated minimal standards of law and decency. Adversaries complain that he helped the Central Intelligence Agency "destabilize" Allende's government after it failed in illegally blocking his election.<sup>21</sup>

Many of these criticisms highlight inexcusable shortcomings. Some diplomatic breakthroughs that appeared promising at the time—the Vietnam negotiations, détente with the Soviet Union, and even the Middle East Shuttle—dimmed or even collapsed by 1976. The "structure of peace," so heavily promoted in 1972, lay shattered by 1976.<sup>22</sup> He ignored economic and social developments abroad until very late in the Ford administration; by then he could do little about them. He also made things harder for himself and his foreign policy by his personal failings. His personal relations with staff members of equal rank were poor, and he was a tyrannical boss. As a bureaucratic warrior, he won short-term, tactical battles; but eventually he lost, in need of the help of the very people he had bested earlier. This bureaucratic conflict badly affected foreign policy. He tried to do too much, all by himself, which came back to haunt him when he needed allies. On a larger canvas, his indifference to legal requirements undermined self-respect at home and United States prestige abroad. His

resentment of congressional participation in foreign policy made the quest for a consistent, legal and popularly based foreign policy all the harder.

Yet Kissinger's real diplomatic achievements have not been surpassed. Secretary of State George P. Shultz, commenting in the midst of public uproar on the Reagan administration's sale of arms to Iran, noted, "there's only one Henry Kissinger. They broke the mold after they made him." Anthony Lewis, one of his sharpest adversaries while he was in power, acknowledged in 1984 that "for all the inhumanity on his record, he dealt wisely with the Russians."<sup>23</sup> Kissinger understood as few American National Security Advisers or Secretaries of State have, the extent and limits of American power.

For all of the complaints about his indifference to human rights abroad, he avoided some interventions. Détente placed U.S.–Soviet relations on a firmer footing, even if it was oversold. The opening to China may have been long in coming, but Kissinger made the most of his opportunities. It stands as one of the major diplomatic reversals in modern history. In the years since Kissinger's visit to Beijing, the United States and China have become partners. Even Ronald Reagan, an opponent of the opening to China, went there as President, confirming the strength of the new relationship. Kissinger's shuttle diplomacy in the Mideast set in motion the process that culminated in 1977–79 in the Camp David agreements and the Egyptian–Israeli accord, the only peace treaty signed between Israel and an Arab state to date. Kissinger succeeded, at least for part of his tenure, as few had before and none since, in persuading Americans to acknowledge the nature of their interests in world politics.

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## ONE

# The Adviser

Little in Henry Kissinger's career before January 1969 quite prepared him or the world for the meteoric trail he blazed across the sky. Born on May 27, 1923, in Fürth, Germany to a Jewish school teacher, Louis Kissinger, and his wife Paula Stern Kissinger, Henry's childhood and youth were rocked by the Nazis' rise to power. In 1933 the authorities, in one of their first acts, fired Jewish teachers from the public schools; so Louis found work in a Jewish vocational school. Three years later he lost that job too. Under the Nuremberg laws of 1935, Jewish children were expelled from public schools, so Henry entered a Jewish school in 1936. In August 1938, the family fled Germany, first for London but soon settling in New York City's Washington Heights on the northwest corner of Manhattan. There Henry entered George Washington High School in September. He did well academically, graduating in 1941. He then attended City College of New York until February 1943 when he was drafted into the U.S. Army.<sup>1</sup>

To this point he had followed a path not unlike that of other bright children of Jewish refugees from Hitler. Some friends from the time describe him as a shy loner, occasionally distrustful of others. This may or may not have derived from having to flee his homeland in such a threatening atmosphere. Many adolescents growing up in outward security are shy and anxious. Perhaps adding to his discomfort was his noticeable German accent, which, of course, he never lost. Yet there were other refugee children on Washington Heights then, so German-inflected English, by itself, probably did not call undue attention to a student. His brother Walter, younger by one year, did easily pick up an American sound. Walter later liked to joke "I listen"

when asked to explain why he lost his German accent while his famous brother had not.<sup>2</sup> Yet it is safe to say that memories of the Nazi nightmare never left Henry. He developed a taste for order, an awareness of people's capacity for cruelty, and a need to protect himself.

By all accounts, Kissinger bloomed during his years in the Army. Tested and found to have superior intelligence, he quickly became known for his skill at lecturing troops on the reasons for the war. There his German accent probably helped his listeners believe that he knew what he was talking about when he spoke of European events. Later, as both professor and official, his accent often proved an asset, lending European gravity to his statements, whether they deserved them or not. His wartime lectures brought him to the attention of Fritz Kraemer, another German refugee in the U.S. Army whose duties included teaching soldiers the Allies' war aims. Kraemer became Kissinger's first patron.

First, Kraemer helped his protégé enter army intelligence. There Kissinger worked with the occupation authorities restoring order to the town of Krefeld in North Rhine-Westphalia. Kraemer proudly recalled, "I could only marvel at the way this twenty-one-year-old did the job." Kissinger stayed in Germany for two years after the end of the war, first in the army and then as a civilian employee, working as a Nazi hunter and as a lecturer to officers. The teaching he did went well, setting a pattern for his later academic career. He easily addressed older men who outranked him, and he developed a flair for discussing current events with participants.<sup>3</sup> Action and application, not analysis or profound thought, characterized his work then as an academic and in power.

Kraemer also helped Kissinger select Harvard over CCNY when he was ready to return to college in 1947. "A gentleman does not go to a local New York school," Kraemer told his protégé, who entered Harvard as a sophomore in 1947. There he met his next patron, William Y. Elliott, a professor of government with ties to Washington. In 1950 the twenty-seven-year-old Kissinger, now married to the former Anne Fleischer and living off campus, presented Elliott with a 377-page senior thesis entitled "The Meaning of History: Reflections of Spengler, Toynbee, and Kant."<sup>4</sup>

Over the years Kissinger's friends chuckled over the audacity of a twenty-seven-year-old senior summarizing humanity's activities in 377 pages. His friend John Stoessinger recalled the "interest and envy" he and other graduate students felt toward Kissinger and the rarity of his *summa cum laude*.<sup>5</sup> Perhaps, but other Harvard undergraduate

theses were notable for their grandeur of scale combined with their conventionality of interpretation. Who but a twenty-seven or an eighty year-old would have nerve to assimilate everything that has happened in a single piece?

Kissinger did not publish his youthful observations, but scholars took note once he became a public figure. His longtime friend Stephen Graubard praised this "spirited" work that "challenged any number of academic orthodoxies."<sup>6</sup> Another, younger scholar, Peter Dickson, noted the germ of great ideas on international relations here. "Kissinger's political philosophy," grounded in a reading of Immanuel Kant, "constitutes a major break with the rationale of all postwar policy, which rested on the notion of America as a redeemed nation, as the guarantor of freedom and democracy."<sup>7</sup>

Kissinger remained at Harvard for graduate study under Elliott's sponsorship. In 1951 he became executive director of the Harvard International Seminar, which brought to the university young foreign nationals "who are on the verge of reaching positions of leadership in their own countries."<sup>8</sup> Here he shepherded several future foreign statesmen through six weeks of summer sessions, establishing valuable contacts.

He also worked on a dissertation on the concert of Europe following the Congress of Vienna of 1815. His work reflected the growing appeal of "realism" as a mode of studying international relations. Reflecting the influence of notable realists like Hans J. Morgenthau or George F. Kennan, Kissinger chided Americans for their moralistic approach to foreign affairs. His doctoral dissertation on the aftermath of the Congress of Vienna appeared to favorable reviews in 1956 as *A World Restored: Metternich, Castlereagh, and the Concert of Europe*. In it he established a reputation as one of the foremost students of realism. *A World Restored* was not really a history of the Congress of Vienna—British diplomat Harold Nicolson had provided an excellent survey in 1946. Rather, Kissinger's book was a paean to the achievements of a conservative diplomat, Austria's Klemens von Metternich.

Kissinger praised Metternich as a "scientist of politics." He became "Prime Minister of Europe," by "coolly and unemotionally arranging his combination in an age increasingly conducting policy by 'causes.'"<sup>9</sup> The Austrian foreign minister acknowledged that the multinational Hapsburg empire might be at a disadvantage in the struggle with the nationalist forces unleashed by the French Revolution. In the long run, the age of dynasties may have passed, but Metternich was determined to make sure that conservative regimes managed the

changes for their own benefits. Kissinger admired the way in which Metternich created a system of alliances that managed to last for half a century or, by some reckonings, fully one hundred years. The Concert of Europe he managed was quite different from the reactionary Holy Alliance pursued by Czar Alexander I. The Russian autocrat wanted to end all change, which Metternich considered impossible. He preferred to lead conservative states into a series of accommodations with revolutionaries, draw their fangs, and preserve the domination of old regimes.

After completing his Ph.D. Kissinger and his mentor Elliott had expected that Harvard would offer him an appointment as an assistant professor. No tenure track job was forthcoming, however, so Kissinger had to decide between an academic career (he had offers from both the University of Chicago and the University of Pennsylvania) and moving into the foreign policy world. Hamilton Fish Armstrong, editor of *Foreign Affairs* published by the Council on Foreign Relations, had looked into Kissinger as a possible managing editor in 1954. That fell through, but Kissinger had made a strong impression. Now, in 1955 the New York-based Council on Foreign Relations employed Kissinger as rapporteur, or recording secretary, on a study group investigating the implications of Secretary of State John Foster Dulles' 1954 call for a strategy of "massive retaliatory power" against the Soviet Union. The prospect of Washington using its atomic weapons at the slightest provocation sent tremors through the foreign policy establishment. Accordingly, the Council on Foreign Relations asked Gordon H. Dean, once the chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, to head a panel on the proper use of nuclear weapons. The study group did not know quite what to do with this intractable subject, and the chairman told the assistant "Good luck, Dr. Kissinger. If you can make anything out of the efforts of this panel we will be eternally grateful."<sup>10</sup>

Two years of discussions in a study group helped produce *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy*. Kissinger's job was to summarize the debates and weave conflicting points of view into a coherent discussion of American nuclear strategy. The book insisted that apocalyptic talk about nuclear weapons making foreign policy obsolete was out of order. Dulles had erred in promising massive retaliation—a largely empty threat. Only American policymakers took it seriously, and by doing so they stopped thinking clearly about the implications of nuclear weapons. Better to accept the uncertainty of what might happen if the United States were compelled to rely on conventional weapons than to embark on a futile effort to end all threats.<sup>11</sup>



The core of *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy* was not about the atomic bomb, but a plea for the contribution of serene and imperturbable experts to direct foreign policy. Kissinger, like other realists, berated Americans for their naive hope that all international issues could be quickly resolved by an exercise of American goodwill. He lamented that the United States lacked a "strategy," so Americans were always shocked by what happened in the world. Unless they could be persuaded to settle down for the long haul, they would constantly be shocked by alterations in the world around them. "The basic requirement," he wrote, "is a doctrine which will enable us to act purposefully in the face of the challenges that confront us. Its task will be to prevent us from being continually surprised."<sup>12</sup>

*Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy* did well in every respect. Some 17,000 copies were sold in the first year. Anchor-Doubleday brought out an abridged paperback edition in 1958, cutting most of the tedious descriptions of weapons systems in Europe and retaining the strictures against American naivete in foreign affairs. Gordon Dean offered a foreword in which he acknowledged the heaviness of the professor's prose. Some reviewers stressed the same point. Edward Teller, the legendary "father of the H-bomb" and just beginning his career as a military strategist, took Kissinger to task for the dullness of his prose and his airy dismissal of the massive use of nuclear weapons. Still, Teller could say, "everyone on this side of the Iron Curtain who will study *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy* will learn of a better way to contribute to the safety of the free world."<sup>13</sup>

Kissinger's career flourished after the success of *Nuclear Weapons*. He returned to Harvard as associate director of the Center for European Studies. He became the most frequent academic contributor to *Foreign Affairs*. Armstrong, the editor, printed ten pieces by Kissinger on strategy, the organization of American foreign policy, conventional weapons, and relations with European allies. Throughout, he concentrated on the incapacity of Americans to think strategically. His fellow citizens persisted in the erroneous beliefs that foreign policy issues could be completely resolved, that "peace" was a final state of well-being, rather than a dynamic, virtually endless process, and that the United States could someday achieve the goal of perfect security. All of these delusions distracted the public from a true appreciation of the role of experts to manage America's foreign relations.<sup>14</sup>

Another, even more important, patron emerged at this time, as Kissinger met Nelson Rockefeller. David Rockefeller had served with Kissinger on the nuclear weapons study group and Nelson first met him at an arms control conference in Quantico, Virginia, in late 1955.

In the spring of 1956 Nelson Rockefeller approached Kissinger to coordinate a Special Studies Project sponsored by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund. Editing a series of proposals that set the foundations of Nelson Rockefeller's 1960 campaign for the Republican presidential nomination, Kissinger became further enmeshed in the network of influential figures in the foreign policy establishment.<sup>15</sup>

When John F. Kennedy won the White House in the election of 1960, it seemed that realist national security managers had triumphed. Kissinger played a small role in the campaign. Even while working for Nelson Rockefeller, a Republican, Kissinger promised advice "on a personal basis" to the Democratic Advisory Committee on Foreign Policy.<sup>16</sup>

After the election, the President chose as his National Security Adviser McGeorge Bundy, dean of arts and sciences at Harvard, an eastern establishment Republican and son of Henry L. Stimson's chief aide, Harvey Hollister Bundy. For a time in 1961 and 1962 Kissinger could be found in Washington as a consultant to Bundy and the rest of the NSC staff on the development of long-term strategy. But the relationship never flourished. Kissinger objected to the administration's handling of the Berlin crisis of June-July 1961. He opposed the call-up of reserves, because it "gives a psychological advantage to the Soviets. If they relax pressure for a while or if they build up the crisis very slowly, there will be a clamor to release the reserves." He advocated patience in an administration committed to action. "My view is that at this stage the major emphasis should be on measures which can be sustained for a long time." Six months later the State Department complained to Bundy that Kissinger was stepping on their toes. On a visit to Israel, the Harvard professor told the press that "recent Russian arms deliveries to the UAR have provoked a crisis in the Middle East." Such talk by a private citizen, albeit a consultant to the NSC, made the Department's work harder. By mutual agreement, Bundy let Kissinger's consultantship lapse in February 1962.<sup>17</sup>

Back in Cambridge Kissinger engaged in the most sustained intellectual work of his career. In it he retailed the conventional wisdom of international relations. He returned to the question of nuclear strategy in *The Necessity for Choice* (1961), published by Harvard's Center for International Affairs. Here the adversary remained massive retaliation, as Kissinger advocated the current strategy of "flexible response" favored by the Kennedy administration. He noted that the deficiencies of massive retaliation required that the United States express the willingness to use every weapon in its arsenal.<sup>18</sup> Some-

times the military might respond to supposed Soviet threats with local armed forces, as it had during the Korean War. At other times the United States might play only a subsidiary role, send advisers and trainers to help local governments suppress their domestic leftist insurrections. At the time of writing *The Necessity for Choice* such an experiment had been in progress for three years in Indochina. Finally, Americans had to be prepared to use nuclear weapons on battlefields and for limited objectives. Without this possible threat looming over the Soviets, Kremlin planners would never acknowledge that the United States might use its huge arsenal of strategic weapons.

So far Kissinger expressed common beliefs that the United States somehow had to demonstrate leadership in world politics. Unfortunately, traditional American partners in Europe proved unwilling to follow. The middle 1960s saw a succession of shocks: Washington consulted little with its allies during the Cuban missile crisis of 1962; it scuttled the joint Anglo-American Skybolt missile project in December 1962; the Multilateral Force, to be made up of ships from all NATO navies was sunk by inadequate consultation with European governments in 1965. Finally, in 1966 Charles de Gaulle stunned Washington with the announcement that France was withdrawing from the military arms of NATO.

Faced with such dramatic shifts in the alliance the Council on Foreign Relations, for the most part made up of Atlantic firsters, commissioned Harlan van B. Cleveland, formerly ambassador to NATO, to chair a major research enterprise on the relationship between the allies and Washington. The Ford Foundation came through with \$1.1 million to fund this gathering of academics and officials. Eventually ten volumes appeared, with Kissinger joining several other well-known realist professors in writing individual studies.

Kissinger's own contribution to the Atlantic Policy Studies was *The Troubled Partnership* (1966), a book that elaborated the themes expressed over the previous generation. He explained privately that "what I am trying to say . . . is that the technical issues of nuclear control seems to me less important than encouraging responsible attitudes on both sides of the Atlantic."<sup>19</sup> Later, in power, he continued to battle bureaucratic rivals who favored what he termed "technical solutions" over his own seldom-defined "responsible attitudes." In the book, he chided Americans for their preemptory style, their refusal to consult with their allies, and their arch dismissal of the "obstinacy of one man"—the critique of contemporary international relations offered by French President de Gaulle.

Customary American opinion in the Kennedy and Johnson admin-

istrations dismissed de Gaulle as an embittered old man, resisting the relentless tide of history with his outworn appeals to French nationalism and European pride. For Americans the future lay in "integration"—a path blocked by French resistance to British membership in the Common Market—and less, not more, nationalism. In the long run, these Americans observed, de Gaulle would be considered nothing more than a quaint reminder of the burned-out flame of the nation-state.

Kissinger encouraged Americans to pay closer attention to what de Gaulle and other Europeans had been saying over the past decade. If the United States were somehow able to treat its allies as partners, Europeans might actually develop a sense of responsibility for world politics. Unfortunately, he wrote, "the United States . . . has fallen into the trap of dealing with its allies, except Great Britain, almost psychotherapeutically. It has tended to confuse periodic briefings and reassurance with consultation."<sup>20</sup>

Kissinger's life changed once more in 1964. His marriage of seventeen years unraveled and he moved out on his own. With the end of the Kennedy administration he was welcome once more in Washington, briefing the Johnson administration on his travels and views. Whenever he met a foreign leader or an American ambassador, he fired off a report to the National Security Adviser, the Secretary of Defense, or the President. Once he reported that President de Gaulle was likely to be "more obstinate" in opposing American efforts toward European integration. The French leader believed, Kissinger reported, "that the major problem was to keep Germany under control. [He] found it very important to remain the most attractive country for the Soviet Union to deal with." France wanted to "anticipate [and therefore blunt] United States bilateral attempts at détente."<sup>21</sup>

He became a skilled infighter, courtier, and gossip. While happy to consult for the White House, Kissinger could be catty about his contacts in the government. He reported to former Secretary of State Dean Acheson on "the boredom of present-day Washington. There are too many clever tacticians and too few reflective people." Kissinger also knew how to flatter. He went on to say to the former Secretary of State that "one sees no young Dean Achesons anywhere and I wonder whether we are still capable of producing them. What will happen to our clever young men when they are still clever young men at the age of 70?" Name dropping helped too. He once told Acheson that "while in Paris a few weeks ago, I spoke with a man who had an appointment with De Gaulle right after you. He told me that De Gaulle

said, '*Voilà, un homme!*' . . . It is, of course, no surprise to your admirers."<sup>22</sup>

All the while, Europeans began shaking their heads in disbelief, amazement, and eventual disgust at the waste of United States resources in Vietnam after 1965. At first most NATO countries, with the exception of France, had been supportive of, or at least acquiescent in, America's Vietnam policy. Then, in 1966, as the end seemed nowhere in sight, a subtle shift took place among the West Germans and British. When Kissinger spoke with German Chancellor Ludwig Erhard in early 1966, the German leader urged the resumption of bombing of the North "lest America appear weak and indecisive." Yet in the next breath the German leader expressed serious misgivings that "American involvement in Asia would reduce its interest in Europe." Erhard encouraged Kissinger to tell Defense Secretary Robert McNamara that it was "out of the question for Germany to send uniformed personnel to Vietnam." The British Labour government of Harold Wilson strove to support the Americans, but found that its 1966 and 1967 efforts to mediate the war through the government of Poland met with continuous rejection by Washington.<sup>23</sup>

As for France, it often seemed to Americans that Paris could not forgive the United States for having taken over the "mission civilatrice" from France after the unraveling of the Geneva accords of 1954. De Gaulle also faulted American conduct in the war. In December 1966 he visited Southeast Asia and told a cheering throng in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, that the United States had waged "Unjust war, immoral war."<sup>24</sup> Official Washington shrugged. To Secretary of State Dean Rusk, the French president simply vented the frustrations of a generation of French statesmen, angry at seeing their own imperial dreams fade in the bright light of the American empire.

For realist writers like Kissinger, European complaints carried more weight. Kissinger warned about French animosity toward United States policy in Vietnam. "France was far from neutral," he told the White House. "Most senior officials in the French foreign office would welcome American embarrassment with a kind of *schadenfreude*."<sup>25</sup> What good was defeating the Communists in Vietnam, if the NATO alliance dissolved? How could the United States intimidate the Soviets in Europe or the rest of the world if the American leaders could think only of Vietnam? Something had to be done to stop this tail wagging the dog.

Kissinger traveled twice to Vietnam in 1965 and 1967 as part of government-sponsored tours designed to generate support for the war

among influential academics.<sup>26</sup> In 1965 Kissinger went to Vietnam for the Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board. He promised the National Security Adviser "to be at your disposal if you wish to discuss my impressions." While there two Catholic priests shared with him "some of the most interesting [observations] that I have had in Vietnam." One informed him that "no Vietnamese thought anything of betraying even his seemingly closest friend and did not seem to hold a grudge against those who had betrayed him. . . . [The Vietnamese] love intrigue and are professional opportunists." Later Kissinger spoke with a psychiatrist who told him that "Vietnamese seem incapable of drawing independent conclusions. . . . The reason seems to be that their whole society is oriented toward the Confucian principles of submission and acceptance of authority."<sup>27</sup>

While Kissinger was in Saigon the *Washington Post* reported that he thought the South Vietnamese government was unpopular and could not win. The Johnson administration disassociated itself from the professor, and even suggested that the President had not known of Kissinger's trip in advance. Privately Bill Moyers, Johnson's assistant, mollified the envoy. Explaining that he recognized the "anguish an unwarranted press account can cause a fellow human being," Moyers assured Kissinger that he had fled from him in "the interest of American policy." If he had not known before, Kissinger learned how officials manipulated the press and how little they thought of reporters—two lessons he applied in his own public career.<sup>28</sup>

The Harvard professor undertook secret negotiations to end the war between August and October 1967. Two French acquaintances, Raymond Aubrac and Herbert Marcovich, acted as intermediaries between Kissinger and North Vietnam's Mai Van Bo. In an operation code-named PENNSYLVANIA, Kissinger relayed word from the Johnson administration that the United States would stop the bombing if the North promised not to take "military advantage" of the halt. Kissinger explained that the phrase meant that the United States expected the North to refrain from "any increase in the movement of men and supplies to the South." Hanoi refused this gambit, objecting to American increases in the bombing while these talks went forward. Kissinger replied that the North's attitude was "baffling." If we bomb near Hanoi we are accused of bringing pressure. If we voluntarily . . . impose restraint in our actions . . . we are accused of an ultimatum."<sup>29</sup>

Kissinger also reported to Nelson Rockefeller that the war was going badly.<sup>30</sup> The objective for the United States was to conclude it quickly

while containing Communist gains. Throughout 1967 Kissinger offered Rockefeller suggestions on how to use the Vietnam issue in the 1968 presidential election. During the primaries, the New York governor would portray Richard Nixon as an unredeemable hawk. Once Rockefeller had secured the nomination, he would characterize President Johnson as an ineffectual bumbler, unable either to win the war or leave it.

The campaign did not follow this blueprint. Johnson stunned the nation on March 31 with his announcements that "I will not seek, nor will I accept the nomination," the end to some of the bombing of the north, and the opening of peace talks in Paris. Kissinger went to the French capital to study the negotiations that summer. By then Rockefeller had lost to Nixon, and Kissinger recalls having abandoned his immediate plans for a government advisory job. He contemplated a return to the semi-academic, semipolitical role he had followed previously in his work for the Council on Foreign Relations.

Back in Cambridge in the fall of 1968 he submitted his views on what was going on at Paris to Hamilton Fish Armstrong, editor at *Foreign Affairs*. Armstrong, a consummate Europeanist, had grown increasingly worried about what was happening to the United States in Vietnam. As he wrote in the summer 1968 *Foreign Affairs*, Americans cannot "ignore how much the Vietnam War is isolating us from other nations." He concluded that the United States could not prevail in Vietnam, because Americans had "failed to understand the people and society we were setting out to help." Intended to project American power abroad, Vietnam had instead become a debacle, not intimidating the Soviets while wrecking relations with the nation's European allies.<sup>31</sup>

Accordingly, Armstrong was happy to print Kissinger's own recommendations for ending the war. The professor thought that the fighting was more likely to peter out than end formally. The United States would not volunteer to exit Vietnam without assurances from the North that it would depart also. Hanoi was unlikely to offer such a pledge without pressure from its allies in the Soviet Union or China. The key to ending the war therefore lay in the hands of the two great Communist powers. A war on the periphery of the basic arena of the cold war could only be resolved if the principals in the East-West struggle made headway in reducing their own tensions. Once more he faulted Americans for a "diplomatic style marked by rigidity in advance of formal negotiations and excessive reliance on tactical considerations once negotiations start."<sup>32</sup>

Kissinger's proposals resembled Richard Nixon's. A year earlier candidate Nixon had answered Armstrong's call for his review of American policy in Asia. In "Asia After Vietnam," Nixon paid close attention to the recently completed eight volume Council on Foreign Relations survey of *The United States and China in World Affairs*. Scholars and officials had pledged flexibility in dealing with China since the old attempts at isolating Beijing had clearly failed. It was Washington that had been isolated from its allies. China's behavior had not altered and the Nationalists on Taiwan had not been encouraging. As Robert Blum put it in *The United States and China in World Affairs*, Americans had the uncomfortable feeling of "supporting as the government of China a regime with no foreseeable prospects of extending its authority beyond Taiwan and the nearby islands."<sup>33</sup> A "two China" policy of recognizing both the Communists and Nationalists seemed like the best way out of the morass. Sooner or later the United Nations was likely to seat the Beijing government, so the best the United States could hope for would be to retain some sort of recognition for Taiwan. If the U.N. accepted two Chinas, then the rest of the world would too.

Nixon elaborated these themes in "Asia After Vietnam," which appeared in the fall 1967 issue of *Foreign Affairs*. He suggested that over the long term the United States would have to come to terms with Beijing, once the irritant of Indochina were removed. Like other foreign policy experts, Nixon acknowledged the disorienting effects of American involvement. Designed to send a message to potential adversaries, the war had sown dissension among friends. The aim, therefore was to quit the battlefield without having been forced to leave. He lamented that the legacy of Vietnam "will be a deep reluctance on the part of the United States to become involved once again in similar interventions on a similar basis." Greater realism toward China was called for.<sup>34</sup>

Foreign policy experts worried as much about domestic dissent over the war in Vietnam as they did about the complaints from other nations. Since the late forties a broad consensus had arisen over fundamentals of foreign policy. While, of course, the two parties had bickered over which was better able to wage the cold war, both acknowledged the apparent need to confront the Soviet Union with a huge military and to enlarge the power of the President to direct foreign policy. Now that consensus had eroded. As moderate a figure as Senator J. William Fulbright, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, had broken with the prevailing assumptions in 1965 after