

## **Henry Kissinger: Realism, Domestic Politics, and the Struggle Against Exceptionalism in American Foreign Policy**

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*Henry Kissinger was the single most controversial diplomat of the 20th century. This article explores Kissinger's approach to the philosophy of realism in international affairs, his role in Vietnam policy making, and his most recent engagement in the debate over the Iraq War. It argues that Kissinger's realism, although philosophically consistent and having roots within his own life's experience, was always tempered by his desire to exercise influence within the American political system. Once in office under Richard Nixon and then Gerald Ford, Kissinger came to recognise how significantly domestic politics shaped American foreign policy. His involvement in the Vietnam War demonstrates this, and one lesson he took from that conflict was the hope that Americans could be persuaded to move away from their convictions about American exceptionalism and recognise the limits of American power.*

Henry Kissinger was, perhaps, the single most famous and controversial American diplomat of the twentieth century. His life spanned an era of history beginning with the isolationism of Depression-era America, the land to which his German–Jewish family emigrated, through the Second World War in which Kissinger served with distinction, and subsequently the Cold War, during which he rose to prominence. On assuming his position as national security advisor in 1969 and, subsequently, secretary of state in 1973, Kissinger became, along with President Richard Nixon, the directors of American foreign policy during a critical era of transition in world politics. The two men combined to change the configuration of post-war international politics with the opening of China and *détente* with the Soviet Union, whilst at the same time employing a harsh and often ruthless policy toward revolution and disorder in the “third world.” Kissinger even survived the Watergate scandal that ended Nixon’s presidency, emerging with even more power and influence during the Gerald Ford Administration. Although officially out of public office since 1977, Kissinger remained an

extraordinarily influential private figure—publishing his memoirs, writing newspaper and magazine columns, running a multi-million dollar consulting firm, appearing frequently on television, and advising ambitious politicians of all ideological shadings on international politics. For many ordinary Americans, the very name Kissinger remains synonymous with foreign policy, whilst to others it is an adjective which describes such a policy based on realistic—critics would say cynical and amoral—calculations of the national interest.

Kissinger almost certainly is, as Thomas Blanton of the National Security Archive has stated, “the most documented American official of the 20<sup>th</sup> century,” whose memoirs alone constitute almost 4000 pages covering his eight years in office. The thousands of hours of Nixon tapes, coupled with Kissinger’s own meticulous record of his every conversation, contribute to this claim. A *Google* search on Henry Kissinger picks up 8.3 million hits, with numerous websites focused on his achievements and misdeeds, with the latter now the dominant theme.<sup>1</sup> Kissinger’s personality, career, and character rarely allow for any middle ground in interpretation. In his speech appointing Kissinger to head the panel investigating America’s preparedness before the 11 September attacks, President George W. Bush called Kissinger one of America’s “most accomplished and respected public servants” and made reference to the numerous honours he has received. Such praise for Kissinger is hardly uncommon. Secretary of State George Shultz once remarked “there’s only one Henry Kissinger. They broke the mould after they made him.” Critics agree with Shultz but for very different reasons. The documentary movie, “The Trials of Henry Kissinger,” produced by the British Broadcasting Company, strongly implicates Kissinger as a “war criminal” for policies he conducted and approved in Vietnam, Chile, and East Timor. In that spirit, and reacting to some of the laudatory reviews that the Kissinger appointment to the 9/11 commission received, *New York Times* columnist Maureen Dowd remarked that Bush “was not held back by the revulsion that many in his generation have for Mr. Kissinger’s power-drunk promotion of bloody American adventures abroad.” Kissinger’s rapid resignation from the position to avoid the disclosure of the clients of his consulting firm only re-enforced the sentiments of many that he was a diplomat obsessed with secrecy and duplicity.<sup>2</sup>

Jussi Hanhimäki, whose study of Kissinger, *The Flawed Architect*, is still the fullest scholarly treatment of his subject’s diplomacy, has characterised the duelling narratives of Kissinger’s life as the dichotomy between “Dr. Kissinger”—the prince of realpolitik who put his remarkable insights to the service of a nation in deep trouble—and ‘Mr. Henry’—the power-hungry, bureaucratic schemer bent on self-aggrandizement.”<sup>3</sup> This contrast has been present in the literature about Kissinger from his time in office, although in recent years, the darker portrait has been more dominant. However, in the early 1970s it would be no exaggeration to say that Kissinger

was a truly global celebrity, perhaps the best-known person on the planet. Dr. Kissinger's life was a heroic narrative of the refugee from Nazi Germany, the Harvard intellectual, the first foreign-born and Jewish Secretary of State, the most-admired man in America in the early 1970s, "Super-K" on the cover of *Newsweek*, and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize. His role in the opening to China, *détente* with the Soviet Union, the Paris Peace Agreements ending the Vietnam War, and shuttle diplomacy in the Middle East made him a larger-than-life figure during this period and led to his continuing role as a commentator and critic of American foreign policy ever since. The story circulated widely of the attractive woman at a cocktail party who approached Kissinger and said, "I want to thank you, Dr. Kissinger, for saving the world." "You're welcome," was Kissinger's reply. *Time* magazine wrote of him that Kissinger has "more impact than any other person in the world. Quite possibly, he has become the world's indispensable man."<sup>4</sup> Even after he left office, he became a ubiquitous "talking head" on American television, a staple of commentary in every foreign policy crisis from the Iranian hostages through the Iraq War. He has even branched out beyond foreign policy. During the 2006 World Cup tournament, he even appeared as on the *Charlie Rose* show on public television for a long discussion about world soccer and the chances for the American team.

In contrast there is "Mr. Henry," a man accused of being war criminal, who belongs in the dock at the Hague Tribunal for his many acts against humanity. Christopher Hitchens's impassioned *The Trial of Henry Kissinger* and subsequent documentary painted Kissinger in the darkest of terms, holding him responsible for the bombing of Cambodia, the overthrow of Salvador Allende in Chile, and the genocide in East Timor.<sup>5</sup> Many, if not all of these charges, were already on the public record even during Kissinger's years in office. It was investigative reporter Seymour Hersh who amplified these in *The Price of Power*—a book Kissinger's academic colleague-but-critic, Stanley Hoffman called the "Kissinger anti-memoirs." Hersh scathingly wrote of Kissinger's and Nixon's blindness toward the "human costs of their actions . . . the dead and maimed in Vietnam and Cambodia—as in Chile, Bangladesh, Biafra, and the Middle East."<sup>6</sup> Before that, William Shawcross indicted Kissinger for the secret bombing of Cambodia, including the charge that it was a direct cause of the subsequent Khmer Rouge genocide.<sup>7</sup> There is fierceness in the moral condemnation of Kissinger, particularly strong amongst the generation of baby boomers, which might be said to equal in intensity the celebration of his virtues that Kissinger enjoyed whilst he was in office. He is, without doubt, the only long-retired American official who can still attract a political demonstration with any public appearance.<sup>8</sup> When it was revealed that he had advised President George W. Bush on the Iraq War, Molly Ivins, the liberal newspaper columnist, wrote: "The Old War Criminal is back. I try not to hold grudges, but I must admit I have never lost one ounce of rancour toward Henry Kissinger, that cynical, slithery, self-absorbed

pathological liar. He has all the loyalty and principle of Charles Talleyrand, whom Napoleon described as ‘a piece of dung in a silk stocking.’”<sup>9</sup>

This case is not one of the truth simply resting somewhere in the middle of these two contrasting narratives, and to a certain extent both extremes in this debate exaggerate Kissinger’s personal role in either the achievements or, as the critics would put it, the crimes during his time in office. As Hanhimäki rightly—if somewhat indelicately—notes, if Kissinger can be categorised as a war criminal, “most American foreign policy makers during the Cold war would fit that category.”<sup>10</sup> The managers of the American superpower, both today and during the Cold War era, often faced genuine dilemmas between greater and lesser evils in making foreign policy decisions. It may well be that the era that Kissinger served, one of relative decline in American power and standing, made these dilemmas even more acute and painful. In any event, any analysis of Kissinger that ignores the context and structures within which he acted would be seriously misleading and simply bad history.

This article comes out of a planned biography whose aim is to reintroduce Kissinger to the American people and to an international audience. Obviously, there are many people, mostly now fifty and over, who well remember Kissinger. But for a younger generation of Americans, he is not very well known or understood. I discovered this rather abruptly the day after the first presidential debate of 2008 between Barack Obama and John McCain. I asked my students about the references to Kissinger during the debate, but none of them had any idea why the two men were arguing over what this diplomat from long ago had recommended in regard to the Iranian nuclear program.<sup>11</sup> My biography will be written for them, with the attempt to explain who Kissinger was, what he thought, what he did, and with what results. It is also a commentary on a transitional era within the Cold War, a painful and politically polarised time in the United States which bears an intriguing, if superficial, resemblance to today. Three crucial elements under-pin Kissinger’s role in American foreign policy: his approach to realism, his involvement in Vietnam policy-making, and, finally, his more recent engagement in the debate over Iraq. By necessity many issues are treated in a truncated fashion, but most of these will be more fully explored in the larger manuscript.

In November 1968, when Richard Nixon asked Henry Kissinger to become his Assistant for National Security Affairs, “the triumph of the realist analysis of American foreign policy seemed at hand.”<sup>12</sup> Certainly at this point in his career, Kissinger was strongly identified with promoting a realist critique of American foreign policy and was perceived as well within the school of thought identified with both his fellow German Jewish refugee scholar, Hans Morgenthau, and the American father of containment, George Kennan.<sup>13</sup> In terms of the central assumptions of realist critique, realists operated from the assumption that the international system within which

America operated was anarchic; and that America, as a state like any other—something that was already difficult for Americans to accept—must arrive at its relations with other states based on its own national interest. That national interest was, of course, its survival, but also its relative power and dominance within the anarchic international system. Relations between states would be determined by comparative levels of power, primarily military power. In the Cold War era, realists saw virtue in seeking a balance of power between the United States and the Soviet Union that would serve to restrain the behaviour of both states and create stability—or as Kissinger liked to put it, an equilibrium within the international system. Realists assumed that human nature was inherently competitive and self-centred, and that states strove for both power and security in competition with other states. They regarded America's Wilsonian crusade for democracy, as well as its 1930s isolationism, as equally misguided and argued for a foreign policy that emphasised reacting to states in terms of their foreign policy behaviour, not their domestic systems. American foreign policy should be designed to protect America's national interests, which they defined far more narrowly than most American leaders—Kennan emphasised only the protection of the Western Hemisphere, Western Europe, and Japan. To other realists, like Morgenthau, that meant terminating the “losing enterprise” of America's war in Vietnam, a war based on the universal application of military containment and a failure to assess “communist governments in Asia in terms of not of communist doctrine but of their relation to the interests and power of the United States.”<sup>14</sup>

Assumptions about Kissinger as a realist stemmed both from his personal background and scholarly activities. Born in the small town of Fuerth, Bavaria in May 1923, Kissinger grew up in an orthodox Jewish family, experiencing the collapse of the Weimar Republic and the rise of Hitler's Nazi party. After he gained fame, he frequently dismissed the impact of Nazi persecution on his thinking and personality. He told one interviewer that whilst “it is fashionable now to explain everything psychoanalytically . . . the political persecutions of my childhood are not what control my life.” In the last volume of his memoirs, he made reference to a famous Goethe quotation that had been applied to him and wrote that “some commentators” had explained his foreign policy preference, “for order over justice,” from his “experience of having grown up in Nazi Germany.” Kissinger dismissed such speculation, arguing that his family played a greater role in shaping his ideas, and that the “Germany of my youth had a great deal of order and very little justice; it was not the sort of place likely to inspire devotion to order in the abstract.”<sup>15</sup>

However, it strains the imagination not to see some impact of Nazi persecution on Kissinger's thinking.<sup>16</sup> In small ways Kissinger acknowledged this issue. He frequently mentioned one experience on coming to America was that he no longer had to cross the street in fear that a Nazi youth gang

would attack him.<sup>17</sup> His biographer, Walter Isaacson, argues that the Nazi experience could have produced either one of two approaches to foreign policy: “an idealistic, moralistic approach dedicated to protecting human rights, or a realist, *realpolitik* approach that sought to preserve order through balances of power and a willingness to use force as a tool of diplomacy.”<sup>18</sup> As over-simplified as this formulation is, Kissinger’s contemporary letters give some evidence of his attraction to the perspective of realists about human nature and, perhaps by implication, the ideas of *realpolitik*. When he returned to Germany as part of the American Army of occupation in 1945, he met a school friend who had survived the concentration camps. In writing to his relatives in the United States, Kissinger revealed his own hardened perspective:

Concentration camps were not only mills of death. They were also testing grounds. . . . The intellectuals, the idealists, the men of high morals had no chance. . . . Having once made up one’s mind to survive, it was a necessity to follow through with a singleness of purpose . . . [which] broached no stopping in front of accepted sets of values, it had to disregard ordinary standards of morality. One could only survive through lies, tricks, and by somehow acquiring food to fill one’s belly. The weak, the old had no chance. . . . (Survivors) have seen man from the most evil side, who can blame them for being suspicious.<sup>19</sup>

However, it was Kissinger’s scholarship and writings that seemed to confirm the realist label. His doctoral dissertation and book, *A World Restored*, applauded the attempt by Klemens von Metternich and Lord Castlereigh to restore a balance of power to post-Napoleonic Europe. As Smith notes, “the conservative bias of the book, its assumption that a study of the attempt to hold back ideology by shrewd balance-of-power manipulations had continued relevance and its treatment of domestic politics as a mundane inhibition on international creativity all struck familiar realist chords.”<sup>20</sup> Kissinger’s foray into the nuclear debate also had a realist colour. Although he would later repudiate some of its arguments, his best-seller, *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy*, accepted the possibility of limited nuclear war and criticised the inflexibility of the Eisenhower policy of “massive retaliation.” Kissinger’s embrace of Charles de Gaulle’s defiance of the United States in his book, *The Troubled Partnership*, with his criticism of American ideas about nuclear-sharing and promoting European integration, also seemed to confirm his realist credentials. His extended praise of Bismarck as a great statesman, whose “new order was tailored to a genius who proposed to restrain the contending forces both domestic and foreign, by manipulating their antagonisms,” also seemed to endorse *realpolitik*—though Kissinger’s uneasiness about the legacy of the German statesman was often overlooked in commentaries.<sup>21</sup>

It would be foolish to argue that Kissinger's background and scholarship did not provide him with, what he once famously explained, was the "intellectual capital" that he consumed whilst in office. But it is also important to point out another strand in Kissinger's thought from these years, a strand related both to his own personal ambitions and perhaps his recognition that all scholarly theories must face a test in the ugly world of actual policymaking. Bismarck's famous comparison between the making of sausages and diplomacy comes to mind. Kissinger's role as a policy critic during the 1950s, especially his attachment to the politically ambitious Nelson Rockefeller, sometimes led him toward conclusions that reflected the influence of the passions of domestic partisan politics, something an older Kissinger might disdain. In his correspondence with Rockefeller during the 1950s, Kissinger is a surprisingly energetic Cold Warrior, constantly criticising what he regarded as the *status quo* orientation of Eisenhower and Dulles. In Kissinger's repeated emphasis on the psychological and moral dimensions of the Cold War, there is something almost approaching, and even paralleling, the later neo-conservative criticism of his own *détente* policies. Reacting to the Suez and Hungarian crises of late 1956, he told Rockefeller: "We seem obsessed with risks, they seem conscious of opportunities."<sup>22</sup> He told former Ambassador Adolf Berle: "There is something pedantic and petty about the notion so generally advanced today that somehow it is our task to moderate the revolution in Eastern Europe and that the Soviets are in such difficulties that we shall inherit the world without any effort on our part. . . . All of this seems to indicate a moral weakness rather than an analytical one on the part of the free world . . . what really seems to be lacking in us is a sense of mission."<sup>23</sup>

Although Kissinger's youthful flirtation with Wilsonianism had faded by the 1960s, his interest in being close to power and having access to decision-making may have replaced it in tempering his realism. On Vietnam, where realists like Morgenthau and Kennan were early critics, Kissinger wrote McGeorge Bundy in March 1965 to offer his support, a position which Bundy recognised made Kissinger a "lonely" figure amongst his Harvard colleagues.<sup>24</sup> But it also opened lines to the Johnson Administration, and over the next two years Kissinger twice travelled to Vietnam, offering reports on his findings and writing a pro-Administration article for *Look* magazine. At the same time, he came to the conclusion that the war could not be won militarily and actively used his European contacts in an attempt to open up secret negotiations with Hanoi.

Kissinger's behaviour in the 1968 election campaign remains a source of controversy. William Bundy is convinced Kissinger's passing of information about the Paris Peace talks to Nixon cost Hubert Humphrey the election. But the reason Kissinger was even in the position to have such information is that he had become, as near as possible, the consensus choice of both Republicans and Democrats to hold a high foreign policy

position. Hubert Humphrey later said he would have appointed Kissinger *his* national security adviser, and whilst this is unlikely, it does reflect Kissinger's prominence.<sup>25</sup> Along with his intellectual sympathies with realism and grand strategic vision, Kissinger brought his intense ambition for power and a willingness to adjust his ideas to the perceived realities of domestic politics.

Some argue that a foreign policy intellectual like Kissinger, given to a realist approach to America's national interest, should have favoured immediate withdrawal from Vietnam in January 1969.<sup>26</sup> The war seemed militarily unwinnable, the United States had lost international support, it undermined other foreign policy opportunities, and the clear majority of Americans believed that the war had been a mistake. Kissinger wrote, shortly before he was appointed by Nixon, that the United States could not win the war "within a period or with force levels politically acceptable to the American people."<sup>27</sup> However, he refused to support a programme of immediate withdrawal. Morgenthau had posed the question: "Does not a great power gain prestige by mustering the wisdom and courage necessary to liquidate a losing enterprise?" Kissinger sympathised in part with Morgenthau's understanding of the war, but thought such an approach was politically unacceptable. His words show both the international and domestic political reality he and Nixon perceived: "By 1969 the over half-million American forces, the 70,000 allied forces, and the 31,000 who had died there had settled the issue of whether the outcome was important for us and those who depended on us."<sup>28</sup> For Kissinger, the international credibility of the United States was on the line. "What is involved now is confidence in American promises. However fashionable it is to ridicule terms 'credibility' or 'prestige,' they are not empty phrases; other nations can gear their actions to ours only if they can count on our steadiness."<sup>29</sup> More recently, in an opinion column comparing the dilemma that he and Nixon faced in Vietnam with Iraq, he quoted Nixon as saying: "Shall we leave Vietnam in a way that—by our own actions—consciously turns the country over to the communists? Or shall we leave in a way that gives the South Vietnamese a reasonable choice to survive as a free people?"<sup>30</sup>

It would be impossible in a short article to recapture the full scope of Nixon and Kissinger's approach to the Vietnam War. Instead, the focus will be on some specific instances of Kissinger's role in the deliberations, especially the application of his realist thinking to Vietnam decision making. What is most apparent is Kissinger's adaptation of his strategic conceptions to the necessities of domestic politics, an adaptation that stretched Kissinger's already flexible notion of realism to the breaking point. It is almost conventional wisdom that during the 1968 presidential campaign, Nixon told campaign audiences said that he had a "secret plan" to end the Vietnam War and that, in fact, he lied. Although arguing that Nixon ever told the truth may seem a Herculean challenge, there is considerable evidence that he did have a working model in mind for ending the conflict. Even as critical

a writer as Seymour Hersh notes that “Nixon’s secret policy had its roots in the Eisenhower era.”<sup>31</sup> In a fashion similar to Eisenhower’s success in ending the Korean War, Nixon hoped that a combination of superpower diplomacy with the Russians, along with threats of more forceful military action against North Vietnam, would yield—within six months to a year—an “honourable peace” that afforded South Vietnam a “reasonable” chance for survival, perhaps guaranteed by a residual American military force like the one that had remained in South Korea. Nixon also understood that even though many Americans in 1953 had regarded the end to the Korean War as a “defeat,” such an outcome had freed Eisenhower to devote his attention to more important foreign policy issues like organising NATO and quieting the McCarthy furore over domestic communism. For Nixon, given the relative decline in American power and the domestic crisis of the 1960s, seeking to mend fences with de Gaulle, starting an era of negotiations with the Soviet Union, and even, perhaps, making an opening to China, a Korean-like result in South Vietnam would be the best the United States could achieve.

Kissinger was strongly sympathetic to this approach, in part because it would end the war quickly and allow for the redefinition of American foreign policy, which he favoured. As he wrote in *Agenda for the Nation*, a 1968 book designed to position its authors for service in the next administration, “the central task of American foreign policy is to analyse anew the current international environment and to develop some concepts which will enable us to contribute to the emergence of a stable order.”<sup>32</sup> Within days of taking office, Kissinger conveyed the message to Soviet officials, first through intermediaries and then directly through his “backchannel” to Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin, that the United States was “determined to end the war in Vietnam one way or another,” and that Soviet assistance in ending the war would yield progress on other issues like the strategic arms negotiations and the Middle East.<sup>33</sup> This message, which encapsulated the “linkage” strategy of the Administration, acquired added meaning in Kissinger’s eyes by some type of military measure. To press the North Vietnamese toward an agreement, Nixon authorised the secret bombing of North Vietnamese bases in Cambodia. Kissinger was a strong advocate of “Operation Menu,” arguing that it would dispel Hanoi’s sense of presidential “weakness.” Not surprisingly, he believed that such a step should be linked with an offer of private negotiations, and that the combination of force and diplomacy would “serve as a signal to the Soviets of the Administration’s determination to end the war.” He added, in a reference to possible further threats and even to Nixon’s “Madman” theory: “It would be a signal that things may get out of hand.”<sup>34</sup>

Although Kissinger’s well-known statement that “I can’t believe a fourth-rate country like North Vietnam doesn’t have a breaking point” is an over-simplification of his thinking, it is clear that during the first year of the Nixon Administration, he was the most consistently “hawkish” adviser to

the President—whilst often seeking to be portrayed in the press as a dove.<sup>35</sup> But he also recognised that Nixon faced severe domestic restraints. In his memorandum on the Cambodian bombing, he listed as the major argument against action that “Domestic critics of the Vietnam war could seize on this to renew attacks on war and pressure for quick U.S. withdrawal.”<sup>36</sup> However, even more damaging from Kissinger’s perspective, was the success of Defence Secretary Melvin Laird in convincing Nixon to move ahead with Vietnamisation and a continuous plan for United States troop withdrawals. The first withdrawal was announced at Nixon’s Midway summit conference in June 1969 with South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu, and it became linked with the “Nixon Doctrine” of encouraging other nations to provide the military manpower for their defence, with the United States withdrawing from such a forward role. Kissinger understood the political reasons for the withdrawals, but he argued that it worked against the strategy of the Administration. In a prescient memorandum that has achieved certain notoriety for its later surfacing in the Iraq debate, Kissinger argued:

Withdrawal of US troops will become like salted peanuts to the American public: The more US troops come home, the more will be demanded. This could eventually result, in effect, in demands for unilateral withdrawal—perhaps within a year. The more troops are withdrawn, the more Hanoi will be encouraged.<sup>37</sup>

Kissinger’s great hope was for a negotiated settlement, but he believed that the combination of domestic pressure and Hanoi’s determination to wait for more American withdrawals gave the United States no leverage in the peace talks.

Kissinger’s recognition of the growing domestic political pressures toward withdrawal led him to become an advocate of “Operation Duck Hook,” a planned American military assault on North Vietnam if Hanoi did not agree to a quick settlement. Nixon had Kissinger convey the warning to Dobrynin, telling the Soviet ambassador that the “President had decided to make one more direct approach on the highest level before drawing the conclusion that the war could only be ended by unilateral means.”<sup>38</sup> Dobrynin insisted on the limits of the Soviet Union’s influence with Hanoi, especially as the Soviets were in the midst of what was, at this time, an active border war with the Chinese. Their competition with China for influence within the communist world further limited what they were willing to advise Hanoi. These cautions did not deter Nixon and Kissinger. On 15 July 1969, the United States delivered a letter to Hanoi through a French intermediary that appealed for an honourable settlement, but warned that without a breakthrough, Nixon would have recourse to “measures of greater consequence and force.” Nixon and Kissinger planned the operation to begin 1 November 1969, the first anniversary of the bombing halt. However, in early October,

when it became clear from the planned moratorium protest marches that domestic opposition to the war was growing, and both Secretary of State William Rogers and Laird decided to oppose the operation, Nixon pulled the plug. After cancelling "Duck Hook," with Kissinger's help, Nixon initiated a secret nuclear alert, which he hoped might worry the Russians enough about the possibility of action against North Vietnam that they might help with Hanoi.<sup>39</sup> But this bluff had no effect, and by the end of 1969, Kissinger found himself lamenting that the Administration was stuck with pursuing a Vietnamisation strategy that made a negotiated settlement unlikely and that would test the patience of American public opinion.

For the next eighteen months, Nixon's Administration fought to buy time for its Vietnam policy, attempting to keep the Vietnamisation on track and continue its withdrawal of American forces, the one aspect of its policy that enjoyed substantial public support. Nixon mobilised public support with his call to the "Silent Majority" in November 1969, playing on the public's relatively greater dislike of the anti-war demonstrators than the war itself. Even the invasions of Cambodia in April 1970 and Laos in February 1971 were justified in terms of defending Vietnamisation and withdrawal, although Nixon's television defence of the Cambodian operation, with its grand themes of leading the "forces of freedom" and not acting as "a pitiful helpless giant" made the speech, in Kissinger's own words, "apocalyptic in its claims, excessive in its pretensions."<sup>40</sup> In the aftermath of the public uproar over Cambodia, congressional efforts to impose a withdrawal deadline such as the Cooper-Church and McGovern-Hatfield amendments became a far more serious threat to the Administration's policy, as well as requiring considerable White House effort to defeat. For his part, Kissinger undertook secret negotiations with the North Vietnamese in Paris in early 1970, only to see them suspended after the Cambodian incursion. They resumed later in the year, and despite the pessimistic analysis he had written in 1969, Kissinger continually thought he saw progress. The United States made substantial concessions to the North Vietnamese, including a proposal for a ceasefire in place, a tacit recognition that North Vietnamese troops would remain in the South after a settlement. When even these concessions led to no progress, Nixon became more hostile to these negotiations, convinced the North Vietnamese were simply waiting for complete American withdrawal before they attacked. As Kissinger later admitted in retrospect, he was astonished "by my own extraordinarily sanguine reporting. . . . Aware of Nixon's scepticism, I fell into the trap of many negotiators of becoming an advocate of my own negotiation."<sup>41</sup> Kissinger also continually reassured the president after every major speech on Vietnam that he was "saving the country" and the speech was "magnificent" and the "best that he had ever given."<sup>42</sup> Nixon often responded to Kissinger's praise with angry comments about his disloyal Cabinet and feckless congressional supporters. But he had an unending appetite for Kissinger's praise, especially in the weeks after the

disastrous November 1970 midterm elections, when Nixon faced the real prospect of being a one-term President.

The true turning point for the Nixon Administration came in July 1971, with Kissinger's secret trip to China. The opening to China accomplished the twin objectives of shaking the international system as well as reversing the downward trend in Nixon's political standing at home. During the trip Kissinger sought Chinese premier Chou en-Lai's assistance with achieving a settlement in Vietnam, making it clear that it was in China's interest that the United States achieve an honourable end to the war and remain a powerful partner against the Soviet Union. Kissinger also put forward what has become known as the "decent interval" approach to ending the war. He told Chou: "What we require is a transition period between the military withdrawal and the political evolution. Not so that we can re-enter, but so that we can let the people of Vietnam and of other parts of Indochina determine their own fate."<sup>43</sup> This approach would continue to be Kissinger's message to the Chinese leaders over the next year, even as he insisted that the United States would not take any direct measures to remove the Thieu government from control in Saigon.

American television commentators called the revelation of Kissinger's trip "the most dramatic development in international affairs since the Hitler–Stalin pact," and it had an immediate impact on Nixon's political standing at home.<sup>44</sup> Nixon leaped over the prospective Democratic candidate Senator Edmund Muskie in the polls for the first time in more than a year. The announcement in October that Nixon would also travel to the Soviet Union for a summit, hastened at least in part by the fears of Russian leaders of the new Sino–American relationship, further elevated Nixon's standing. At the end of 1971, the pollster Louis Harris commented that the Administration's foreign policy "could be Richard Nixon's secret weapon—if he does not wait too long to liquidate U.S. involvement in Vietnam."<sup>45</sup>

Harris's warning was the one of the few discouraging notes on the overall celebration of the Nixon–Kissinger foreign policy. Nixon's "man of peace" campaign slogan now seemed to drown out the continuing conflict in Vietnam. "Triangular diplomacy," as the new set of relationships with the Soviet Union and China was called, seemed to epitomise a realist approach to foreign policy, and Kissinger received a disproportionate share of the credit, much to Nixon's annoyance. But even the popular acclaim for this approach did not drown out what Kennan might have called traditional American "legalism and moralism." When Nixon and Kissinger sought to "tilt" toward Pakistan during its war with India in late 1971, largely for reasons of *realpolitik* to protect the opening to China and oppose an ally of the Soviet Union, they found that American public sympathy for India's cause, expressed in Congress and the media, created a temporary backlash that almost cost Kissinger his position. *Time* magazine echoed other media outlets in calling the policy "both unreasonable and unwise," and attacked the

support for a “brutal and non-democratic regime” against the “world’s most populous democracy.”<sup>46</sup> Commentators sharply criticised Kissinger’s role in the crisis, especially his devotion to secrecy and his lack of accountability to Congress.<sup>47</sup> Kissinger’s emotional reaction to the criticism and his conviction that he was the victim of a calculated campaign by the foreign policy bureaucracy led Nixon to suggest to his aide, John Erlichmann, that he advise Kissinger to get psychiatric care.<sup>48</sup>

However, South Asia was of little significance to American public opinion. Vietnam remained, as the polls showed, the real test of the Nixon–Kissinger foreign policy. The impending summits with the Soviet Union and China created the anomaly of the United States talking to the two giants of world communism whilst still engaged in a war with one of their small allies. In January 1972, Nixon decided to reveal the fact that Kissinger had been engaged in secret diplomacy with the North Vietnamese and make it clear that the only real sticking point in the negotiations centred on America’s refusal to overthrow Thieu’s government. He also made clear that the United States would continue its troop withdrawals, leading to both the complete withdrawal of combat forces and the end of conscription in 1972. Despite public acknowledgment of the talks, the continuing withdrawals, and the impasse over Thieu, Kissinger was hopeful that the combination of Soviet and Chinese pressure might lead to the North Vietnamese to an agreement. Nixon remained sceptical, something vindicated by the North Vietnamese military offensive beginning in March 1972. This action was, as Nixon’s chief of staff H.R. Haldeman called it, “the attack we’ve been concerned about and waiting for.”<sup>49</sup>

In their different reactions to the Easter Offensive, Nixon and Kissinger showcase the problems of pursuing a realist foreign policy in the American system. Kissinger recognised the need to respond to the offensive, but he feared putting the summit with the Soviet Union, and the SALT I agreement, in jeopardy. The geopolitical game with the Soviets, and the possibility of reducing the nuclear threat, was far more significant to him than the endgame in Vietnam. Kissinger even resisted following Nixon’s explicit instructions during a secret trip to Moscow in late April, when the president wanted him to emphasise continually to the Soviets the importance he attached to a Vietnam settlement.<sup>50</sup> For his part, Nixon firmly believed that he could not politically survive the military defeat of his Vietnam policy. His Republican political base would not tolerate him drinking vodka with Russian leaders in Moscow whilst an American ally was overwhelmed. In conversations with Kissinger leading to the decision to renew the bombing of North Vietnam and mine Haiphong harbour, Nixon responded to Kissinger’s prediction that the summit would be cancelled: “I cannot be in Moscow at a time when the North Vietnamese are rampaging through the streets of Hue or for that matter through the streets of Kontum.”<sup>51</sup> When he decided on the “Linebacker I” bombing strategy, Nixon was convinced,

as he told Haldeman, that “it’s a basic decision to go all out to win the war now, under, of course, different circumstances than Johnson was faced with, because we’ve got all our troops out. We’ve made the peace overtures and we’ve made the China trip and laid a lot of other groundwork that should make it possible for us to do this.”<sup>52</sup> Nixon still thought the Russians would continue the summit, but he calculated that American voters would punish defeat in Vietnam more severely than they would celebrate a nuclear arms agreement. Nixon, the long time poker player, gambled that his luck would hold.

And it did. Nixon and Kissinger were able to travel to Moscow and sign the SALT Agreement, with the Soviets graciously hosting them despite the continuing American bombing of their Vietnamese ally. The two men had to endure a long harangue by Soviet leaders that Kissinger believed was largely a “charade” to enable the Russians to produce a transcript for the North Vietnamese.<sup>53</sup> But Kissinger also took the occasion to underline a version of the decent interval with the Soviets as well, telling Gromyko: “If North Vietnam were wise . . . it would make an agreement now and not haggle over every detail, because one year after the agreement there would be a new condition, a new reality. . . . We are prepared to leave so that a communist victory is not excluded, though not guaranteed.”<sup>54</sup> Nixon and Kissinger continued to speculate about the decent interval, with Nixon occasionally musing that “I look at the tide of history out there, South Vietnam is probably not going to survive anyway.”<sup>55</sup> Yet even here, enough ambiguity existed in his musings about the future to make it difficult to be certain whether he completely shared Kissinger’s view of the insignificance of South Vietnam.

Ironically, as Hanhimäki has argued, American appeals to both the Chinese and Soviets for help in ending the war probably intensified the competition for influence in Hanoi between the two communist giants. This led to increases in aid from both countries to North Vietnam. But it also led each to encourage Hanoi to settle the war. This factor, along with North Vietnam’s reading of the American political scene—by September, Nixon had a more than thirty point lead over the Democratic nominee, George McGovern—finally led the North Vietnamese to modify their demand that Thieu be replaced before a settlement. Serious negotiations finally commenced, with Kissinger travelling frequently to Paris. Agreement in hand, Kissinger finally came back on 12 October, telling Nixon: “Well you’ve got three for three, Mr. President,” referring as well to the China and Soviet summits.<sup>56</sup> Two weeks later, he would tell a national news conference that, “Peace is at hand.”

However, nothing ever proved easy with Vietnam, and Kissinger’s agreement soon unravelled as Thieu rejected many of its provisions, including the continued presence of North Vietnamese soldiers in the South. Thieu’s demand for numerous changes in the agreement produced a new

deadlock in Paris, with Kissinger cursing both of the Vietnamese sides as “tawdry, filthy shits.” He angrily told Commerce Secretary Pete Peterson that he wanted to “turn the Vietnamese loose on each other in the hope that the maximum will kill each other off.”<sup>57</sup> At one point in his arguments with Thieu, Kissinger the realist complained that “for four years we have mortgaged our whole foreign policy to the defence of one country.”<sup>58</sup> In cooler moments, he told his great patron, Rockefeller, that he thought the South Vietnamese position was particularly damaging since it ruined whatever good will existed with the North Vietnamese; and “Long term good will is needed to implement this goddamned thing.”<sup>59</sup> Against Kissinger’s advice, Nixon was reluctant to pressure Thieu to accept the agreement before the election, as he was far ahead enough in the polls not to need that extra boost.<sup>60</sup> After Nixon won his landslide victory, Kissinger returned to Paris to try to settle the matters and incorporate Thieu’s proposed changes. He found the North Vietnamese “more ludicrous and insolent” in their talks, renegeing now on their willingness to accept Thieu’s continuation in power. Nixon ordered Kissinger to break off the talks and return, and told Haldeman that he blamed the failure on Kissinger: “That damn ‘peace is at hand’! The North Vietnamese have sized him up; they know he has either to get a deal or lose face. That’s why they’ve shifted to a harder position.”<sup>61</sup> The breakdown in negotiations led Nixon to decide to undertake one of the more controversial measures of the war, “Linebacker II,” otherwise known as the Christmas bombing of North Vietnam. Although the bombing met with significant international protests and a domestic outcry, it led the North Vietnamese to agree to resume talks on 30 December.<sup>62</sup> Nixon was also under pressure, as the Democratic-controlled Congress would certainly vote to cut off funding for the war when it returned in early January.

Kissinger succeeded in finalising an agreement in January, not much different from what he had negotiated in October. Nixon now was willing to put extraordinary pressure on Thieu to accept what the South Vietnamese leader called his “suicide.” Nixon sent a number of secret letters to assure Thieu that the United States would stand behind the agreement, retaliating as it had in the Christmas bombing against any outright violations by the North Vietnamese. Nixon also threatened Thieu that his failure to agree would find the United States making its own arrangement with the North Vietnamese for the return of its POWs, with the result that Thieu would be cut off from any American assistance. Thieu conceded, although Vice President Ky labelled the agreement a “sell-out.”<sup>63</sup>

The Paris Peace Agreement did not end the Vietnam War. Both Nixon and Kissinger were well aware that what they signed was at best a temporary truce, allowing the United States to leave Vietnam, get its POWs back, and then watch as the war continued between the two Vietnams. Kissinger variously speculated about how long the agreement might last, telling Erlichmann that if they were lucky, the South Vietnamese might

hold out for eighteen months.<sup>64</sup> He was only off by about six months, as Saigon fell to North Vietnamese troops in April 1975. Of course Watergate, Nixon's resignation, and the refusal of Congress to appropriate any additional funding for South Vietnam contributed to this outcome. But Kissinger probably expected some type of eventual communisation of South Vietnam in the best of circumstances, even if he hoped that, because of the Administration's achievements in triangular diplomacy and détente, such a collapsing domino would not seriously affect the balance of power and international equilibrium that had been created.

Any discussion of Kissinger's role as an adviser to President George W. Bush about the Iraq war is highly speculative and rests on very few sources. The controversy exploded into the public eye in late 2006 with the publication of Bob Woodward's *State of Denial*. Woodward asserted that "Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger had a powerful, largely invisible influence on the foreign policy of the Bush Administration."<sup>65</sup> Both Vice President Dick Cheney and Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld, who had worked with Kissinger during the Ford Administration, told Woodward that they had arranged meetings between Kissinger and Bush, and that in Cheney's words, Bush was a "big fan" of Kissinger. Bush, who generally discounted outside advisers, "found his discussions with Kissinger important."<sup>66</sup> Woodward went on to note that Kissinger enjoyed a standing invitation to call on the president whenever he was in Washington.

The revelation that Kissinger was involved in Iraq war discussions caused immediate and predictable outrage from the antiwar leaders, who saw confirmation of their view that Iraq was another Vietnam. Woodward encouraged this association, noting that Vietnam "was a stone around [Kissinger's] neck and the prism through which he saw the world." Woodward then over-simplified Kissinger's concept of realism as being the same as Cheney's: "International relations were a matter of military and economic power. Diplomatic power derived from threatening to and then actually using that power. In its rawest form, using the military sent a useful message to the world: it is dangerous to be an enemy of the United States."<sup>67</sup> Kissinger also emerged in Woodward's book as encouraging Bush's determination to stay the course in Iraq, especially when Kissinger published an op-ed in the *Washington Post* in August 2005 arguing that: "Victory over the insurgency is the only meaningful exit strategy." Woodward further charged that Kissinger had shared with Bush his "salted peanuts" memorandum from the Vietnam War, arguing that the president had to avoid partial troop withdrawals which might create "momentum for an exit that was less than victory."<sup>68</sup>

Woodward's account of Kissinger's views does not stray far from what Kissinger published and said, although the content of his advice to the president, as well as the measure of influence he has, are far less certain. Unlike his former deputy and fellow realist, Brent Scowcroft, whose

strong opposition to the war on realist grounds had attracted considerable attention,<sup>69</sup> Kissinger supported the Iraq War, arguing that the United States “cannot tolerate weapons of mass destruction being assembled in the middle of that region by a country with a sustained record of hostility toward the United States, and in violation of a whole series of U.N. resolutions.”<sup>70</sup> At the same time, Kissinger was sceptical of a policy of regime change and, as even Woodward notes, highly sceptical of the plan to encourage democratisation in Iraq. He expressed considerable scepticism that the internal cleavages in Iraq between Kurds, Sunnis, and Shiites could be overcome in an effective national army. He pressed hard for the creation of some type of “international framework for Iraq’s future,” and this continued to be an important theme in his approach. Almost a year before the Baker-Hamilton report urged negotiations with Iran and Syria, Kissinger called for the creation of “a political contact group including key European allies, India [because of its Muslim population], Pakistan, Turkey, and some neighbours of Iraq should be convoked.”<sup>71</sup> Kissinger did not specify Iran and Syria in that article, but later called for their inclusion. Not long after the November 2006 congressional elections, Kissinger again made headlines by answering a British interviewer’s question as to whether he thought military victory was possible. In a classic Kissinger formulation, he said: “If you mean by ‘military victory’ an Iraqi government that can be established and whose writ runs across the whole country, that gets the civil war under control and sectarian violence under control in a time period that the political processes of the democracies will support, I don’t believe that’s possible.”<sup>72</sup> In an op-ed published on 31 May 2007, Kissinger amplified his concern that the Iraq War would be lost because of American domestic politics. Although he supported Bush’s “surge” of troops, and opposed a timetable to withdraw from Iraq, Kissinger argued that the Administration’s plan “must not test the endurance of the American public to a point where the outcome can no longer be sustained by our political processes.” In language surprisingly stern for Kissinger, he said that “President Bush owes it to his successor to make as much progress toward this goal [of a political settlement] as possible; not to hand the problem over but to reduce it to manageable proportions. What we need is a rebuilding of bipartisanship in both this presidency and the next.”<sup>73</sup> Kissinger, the foreign policy realist, emphasised the centrality of American domestic politics for achieving some type of success out of Iraq.

In highlighting the problems faced by America’s most famous realist in applying his ideas to policy in two controversial wars, the point has not been to highlight Kissinger’s inconsistencies, personal ambitions, or even contradictions. Many of these are apparent in any public figure, although his example may be more striking. In both cases, Kissinger’s enthusiasm for negotiations as central to a solution, as well as a willingness to use military force to strengthen a diplomatic position, come through in his

advocacy. Whether he was looking for a “decent interval” in Iraq as some critics suggested is less apparent.<sup>74</sup> Kissinger forcefully argued that whatever one’s position on the original decision to go to war, leaving behind “a failed state and chaos, the consequences will be disastrous for the region and America’s position in the world.”<sup>75</sup> He accommodated himself to domestic politics and warned Bush not to make the same mistake that he and Nixon did in Vietnam in underestimating the need for a domestic consensus.

To some extent, Kissinger reacted similarly in 1975, not long after the fall of Saigon. In Summer 1975, he embarked on an extensive speaking tour within the United States, giving a set of addresses on foreign policy that have come to be known as the “heartland speeches.” Hanhimaki too quickly dismisses the ideas and themes of these speeches as “unapologetic realpolitik” which only paid “lip service to American ideals.”<sup>76</sup> In fact, they demonstrate Kissinger’s understanding that a realist-oriented foreign policy that could avoid future Vietnams would only be possible if the American people’s understanding of foreign policy changed. Implicit in his words was an undermining of the powerful sense of American exceptionalism. Kissinger insisted in the speeches that: “Today we find that—like most other nations in history—we can neither escape from the world nor dominate it. Today we must conduct diplomacy with subtlety, flexibility, manoeuvre, and imagination in the pursuit of our interests. We must be thoughtful in defining our interests. We must prepare against the worst contingency and not only plan for the best. We must pursue limited objectives and many objectives simultaneously.”

Realist though he was, Kissinger accepted that Americans would define their interests in a moral fashion, yet he urged them to recognise some constraints. “This nation must be true to its own beliefs, or it will lose its bearings in the world. But at the same time it must survive in a world of sovereign nations and competing wills.” Kissinger felt that the United States could not be indifferent to issues of democracy and human rights, but that there were different ways of pursuing these. “But truth compels a recognition of our limits. The question is whether we promote human rights more effectively by counsel and friendly relations where this serves our interest or by confrontational propaganda and discriminatory legislation.” In encouraging a more complex and differentiated understanding of foreign policy and America’s interests, Kissinger was careful not to dismiss all elements of traditional Wilsonian thinking. Nonetheless, he maintained that,

For Americans, then, the question is not whether our values should affect our foreign policy but how. The issue is whether we have the courage to face complexity and the inner conviction to deal with ambiguity, whether we look behind easy slogans and recognize that great goals can only be reached by patience and in imperfect stages.<sup>77</sup>

There is great irony in these speeches, and especially the final two years of Kissinger's time in office. During that time Kissinger came under heavy attack from both the right and the left wings of the American political spectrum for not advocating American ideals, whether in support of human rights in Latin America or the cause of dissidents in the Soviet Union.<sup>78</sup> Kissinger, a scholar who considered himself a grand strategist in the European tradition, discovered that American foreign policy was fundamentally shaped and conditioned by domestic politics and the political culture of American exceptionalism. His attempt to move beyond these conditions and change them met with deep resistance and undermined the support for the foreign policy which he advocated. To his credit, Kissinger never gave up his attempt to convince the American people that a different approach to foreign policy, one moving beyond American exceptionalism and toward an understanding of the inherent limits of power and the tragedy involved in making choices in foreign policy, was the only appropriate way for a superpower to behave. But his own ascendancy, the phenomenal career of an immigrant and Jew to the heights of power, seemed as much a testament to American exceptionalism as a critique of it. And Kissinger's willingness to advise presidents to use American power abundantly, from bombing in Vietnam, mediating in the Middle East, and playing off the Soviet Union and China, hardly seemed a call for its limitation. The professor's lesson seemed contradicted by his own career and behaviour, and it was not a lesson his students, the American people and their representatives, cared to hear—except, as it developed, in moments of national adversity, economic stress, and political crisis. Then it was quickly forgotten once the worst elements of these were over.

Henry Kissinger, the first all-star celebrity diplomat, whose fame and importance were themselves symbols of how significant American power remained in the world of the 1970s, ended up preaching the limits of American power and the need for Americans to accept a world that would not automatically bend to America's ideological dreams.

## NOTES

It was an honour to be invited to submit an essay to this collection as a tribute to Saki Dockrill, a long time friend and collaborator who is sorely missed. I had the honour of knowing her for more than twenty years, and she was a wonderful historian, colleague, and friend.

1. One should add that there is a rock band named Kissinger which adds to the totals!

2. Jussi M. Hanhimäki, *The Flawed Architect* (New York, 2004), 479–83.

3. Jussi M. Hanhimäki, "Dr. Kissinger or Mr. Henry? Kissingerology thirty years and counting," *Diplomatic History*, 27 November 2003), 637. This formulation was also used by Bruce Mazlish, *Kissinger: The European Mind in American Policy* (New York, 1976), p. 6. Curiously, Hanhimäki fails to note that Kissinger himself used the title "Mr. Henry" when he was an occupation official in post-war Germany, so as to emphasise his American nationality and not draw attention to his Jewish background.

4. *Time* (1 April, 1974), p. 13.

5. Christopher Hitchens, *The Trial of Henry Kissinger* (London, 2001).

6. Seymour Hersh, *The Price of Power* (New York, 1983), p. 640.

7. William Shawcross, *Sideshow: Kissinger, Nixon, and the Destruction of Cambodia* (New York, 1979).
8. Hanhimäki, *Flawed Architect*, p. 481.
9. Molly Ivins, "Where There's War, There's Kissinger," *Star News* (6 October 2006).
10. Hahnimäki, *Flawed Architect*, p. 491.
11. Mario Del Pero noted the same event, but drew different conclusions. Del Pero, *The Eccentric Realist: Henry Kissinger and the Shaping of American Foreign Policy* (Ithaca, NY, 2010), pp. 1–2.
12. Michael Joseph Smith, *Realist Thought from Weber to Kissinger* (Baton Rouge, LA, 1986), p. 192.
13. The argument of this essay is not far from that of the recently published, Del Pero, *Eccentric Realist*, which captures many of the contradictions within Kissinger's realism as well as its relationship with American domestic politics and exceptionalism.
14. Hans J. Morgenthau, "We Are Deluding Ourselves in Vietnam," *New York Times Magazine* (18 April 1965).
15. Henry Kissinger, *Years of Renewal*, (New York, 1999), p. 1078.
16. This is the argument of Jeremi Suri, *Henry Kissinger and the American Century* (Cambridge, MA, 2007). Suri's book offers an exceptionally insightful look at the influence of Kissinger's background as a German Jew on his subsequent political beliefs.
17. Marvin Kalb and Bernard Kalb, *Kissinger* (Boston, 1974), p. 31.
18. Walter Isaacson, *Kissinger* (New York, 1992), p. 31.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 52–53.
20. Smith, *Realist Thought*, pp. 202–03.
21. Henry Kissinger, "The White Revolutionary: Reflections on Bismarck," *Daedalus*, (Summer 1968), p. 888.
22. Kissinger to Rockefeller, 21 November 1956, Special Studies Project, Folder 596, Box 54, [Rockefeller Archives Center, Sleepy Hollow, New York].
23. Kissinger to Adolf Berle, 19 December 1956, Special Studies Project, Box 1, folder 3.
24. Bundy to Kissinger, 12 April 1965, National Security File, Box 15 [Lyndon B. Johnson Library, Austin, Texas].
25. Kalb and Kalb, *Kissinger*, p. 19.
26. This is the thrust of Robert Dallek, *Nixon and Kissinger: Partners in Power* (New York, 2007), p. 129.
27. H. Kissinger, "The Vietnam Negotiations," *Foreign Affairs*, 48 (January 1969), p. 215.
28. H. Kissinger, *The White House Years*, (Boston, MA, 1979), p. 235.
29. Kissinger, "Vietnam," p. 216.
30. Henry Kissinger, "The Lessons of Vietnam," *Los Angeles Times* (31 May 2007).
31. Hersh, *Price of Power*, p. 51.
32. Henry Kissinger, "The Central Issues of American Foreign Policy," in Kermit Gordon, ed., *Agenda for the Nation* (Washington, DC, 1968), p. 610.
33. Telcon, Kissinger and Ellsworth, 27 January 1969, NPMS [Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, United States National Archives, College Park, Maryland].
34. Memorandum, Kissinger to Nixon, 16 March 1969, NSC [National Security Council Files United States National Archives, College Park, Maryland] Box 89; also in *Foreign Relations of the United States* (hereinafter *FRUS*), 1969–1976, Volume VI, Document 40: <http://history.state.gov/historical-documents>
35. Telcom, Kissinger and Peter Flanigan, 10 June 1969, Kissinger Telcons, NPMS.
36. Memorandum, Kissinger to Nixon, 16 March 1969.
37. Memorandum, Kissinger to Nixon, "Our Present Course in Vietnam," 10 September 1969, *FRUS 1969–1976*, Document 117.
38. Memorandum, Kissinger to Nixon on conversation with Dobrynin, 15 April 1969, *FRUS 1969–1976*, VI, Document 60.
39. William Burr and Jeffrey Kimball, "New Evidence on the Secret Nuclear Alert of October 1969: The Henry A. Kissinger Telcons," *SHAFR Newsletter* (March 2003), pp. 3–7.
40. Kissinger, *White House Years*, p. 504.
41. *Ibid.*, pp. 446–47.
42. Telcons, Kissinger to Nixon, 7 April 1970, NPMS.
43. Memorandum of conversation, 10 July 1971, *FRUS 1969–1976*, Vol. 17, Document 140.

44. ABC News, Howard K. Smith, Evening News Broadcast, 16 July 1971, Vanderbilt Television News Archive [Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee].
45. Robert Mason, *Richard Nixon and the Quest for a New Majority* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2004), p. 137.
46. Hahnimaki, *Flawed Architect*, p. 182.
47. Harry Reasoner, ABC News Commentary, 18 January 1972, Vanderbilt TV Archive. Almost exactly one year later, Reasoner would nominate Kissinger for the Nobel Peace Prize.
48. Dallek, *Nixon and Kissinger*, p. 352.
49. H.R. Haldeman, *The Haldeman Diaries: Inside the Nixon White House* (New York, 1994), p. 528.
50. Jussi Hanhimäki, "Selling the 'Decent Interval': Kissinger, Triangular Diplomacy, and the End of the Vietnam War, 1971–1973," *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 14(2003), pp. 172–73.
51. Conversation, 5 May 1972, Nixon White House Tape Recordings, NPMS.
52. *Haldeman Diaries*, p. 553.
53. Kissinger, *White House Years*, p. 1227.
54. Hanhimäki, "Decent Interval," pp. 175–76.
55. Nixon tapes, 3 August 1972, Conversation 760–6, NPMS.
56. *Haldemann Diaries*, p. 627.
57. Kissinger Telcom, 25 October 1972, Box 16, NPMS.
58. Isaacson, *Kissinger*, p. 488.
59. Kissinger Telcom, 25 October 1972, Box 16, NPMS.
60. It may be that Nixon was reluctant to pressure Thieu, whose refusal to join the talks in 1968 may have contributed to Nixon's first electoral victory.
61. Dallek, *Nixon and Kissinger*, p. 443.
62. Isaacson, *Kissinger*, p. 471.
63. Dallek, *Nixon and Kissinger*, p. 453.
64. Isaacson, *Kissinger*, p. 486.
65. Bob Woodward, *State of Denial* (New York, 2006), p. 406.
66. *Ibid.*, p. 407.
67. *Ibid.*, pp. 406–07.
68. *Ibid.*, p. 408.
69. Brent Scowcroft, "Don't Attack Saddam," *Wall Street Journal* (15 August 2002).
70. Kissinger interview, CNN Transcript (6 March 2003).
71. Henry Kissinger, "Moving Toward a Responsible Exit Strategy in Iraq," *Washington Post* (11 December 2005).
72. Kissinger interview, BBC News (19 November 2006).
73. Kissinger, "Lessons of Vietnam."
74. Rosa Brooks, "How Republicans Win if we Lose in Iraq," *Los Angeles Time* (12 January 2007).
75. Henry Kissinger, "Moving Toward a Responsible Exit Strategy," *Washington Post* (11 December 2005).
76. Hanhimäki, *Flawed Architect*, p. 435.
77. Henry Kissinger, "The Moral Foundations of Foreign Policy," Speech, 15 July 1975, in *idem.*, *American Foreign Policy*, pp. 195–213. This is emphasised in John Lewis Gaddis, "Rescuing Choice From Circumstance: The Statecraft of Henry Kissinger," in Gordon A. Craig and Francis L. Loewenheim, eds., *The Diplomats 1939–1979* (Princeton, NJ, 1998), pp. 564–92.
78. ABC News report (5 December 1975). This report also noted that Kissinger was now undoubtedly "more popular abroad than he is at home."