

Kissinger: The Inside-Outsider

Jeremi Suri

“U ntil I emigrated to America,” Henry Kissinger recounts, “my family and I endured progressive ostracism and discrimination. My father lost the teaching job for which he had worked all his life; the friends of my parents’ youth shunned them. I was forced to attend a segregated school.” “Even when I learned later that America, too, had massive problems,” the former United States secretary of state continues, “I could never forget what an inspiration it had been to the victims of persecution, to my family, and to me during cruel and degrading years. I always remembered the thrill when I first walked the streets of New York City. Seeing a group of boys, I began to cross to the other side to avoid being beaten up. And then I remembered where I was.” For Kissinger and many other twentieth-century immigrants, America was a land of salvation, defined by “its idealism, its humanity, and its embodiment of mankind’s hopes.”¹

These are the kinds of immigrant experiences, Kissinger contends, of which “the intellectual class” today is too dismissive.² He is, no doubt, correct. For all the insightful work on identity produced in the last decade, very

little has been written about how foreign-born citizens of the United States embraced their “Americanness.” Quite the contrary, most scholars have focused on how a narrow framework of nationhood—defined by gender and race hierarchies—was imposed upon new arrivals. Immigrant groups primarily receive attention for their resistance to this cultural and political hegemony and their deconstruction of a common American identity. Contrary to Kissinger’s experiences, we are told that many twentieth-century arrivals to the United States never felt fully American.³

This scholarly analysis leaves little room for the warmhearted feelings expressed by Kissinger and others. In truth, many twentieth-century immigrants to the United States viewed their new place of residence as a promised land—“our best, perhaps our last, hope” in a world of turmoil.⁴ Although Americans often mistreated immigrants, the political ideals and social environment in America offered persecuted minorities from Europe, Asia, Latin America, and Africa a chance to survive and even to prosper. Although the United States was filled with racism, sexism, and other injustices, it also provided opportunities unavailable elsewhere. For a persecuted young German facing the likely prospect of extermination with his family, America was a bright ray of sunshine amidst dark storm clouds—it was, he believed, a “possibility for renewal.” These qualities conferred a “great dignity, even beauty, on the American way of life,” even for someone unfamiliar with the nation’s language or public culture.⁵

At his emotional swearing-in as secretary of state on September 22, 1973, Kissinger emphasized the uniqueness—perhaps even the exceptionalism—of American society: “There is no country in the world where it is conceivable that a man of my origin could be standing here next to the president of the United States.”⁶ Kissinger’s parents, who brought the family to New York in 1938 from Nazi Germany, watched his ascension to the nation’s highest foreign policy office “as in a dream: They had been driven out of their native country; thirteen members of our family had become victims of man’s prejudices. They could hardly believe that thirty-five years later their son should have reached our nation’s highest appointive executive office.”⁷

The American dream of freedom, opportunity, justice, and order was very real for Kissinger. He has, in many ways, lived this dream. “My life,” he admitted, “has depended on so many accidents that I couldn’t control.”⁸ Kissinger was not a self-made man, but a man shaped by circumstances—circumstances he internalized and manipulated out of necessity as much as out of choice. In the years after 1941, he relied on new openings in American society to immigrants of his background, new government support for the education and employment of immigrants, and new patronage from powerful political figures who recognized, often despite their own cultural insularity, that immigrants could make important contributions to policy. Geopolitics after Pearl Harbor gave a new cohort of citizens access to power and privilege, despite their continued social exclusion. Thus did Kissinger become one of the many “inside-outsiders” of the Cold War.⁹

This new policy of embracing immigrants was best exemplified by William Donovan, head of the Office of Strategic Services (precursor to the CIA), when he called upon other branches of government to cultivate the immigrants they traditionally excluded from public service as “specially qualified personnel.” Recent arrivals from Central Europe possessed unparalleled abilities to interpret and infiltrate those societies that were the key battlegrounds in the global struggle against fascism and communism, i.e., critical language skills and cultural familiarity.¹⁰ This position was affirmed by former national security adviser to the Kennedy and Johnson administrations McGeorge Bundy. A man filled with the arrogance and condescension of a proud Boston Brahmin, he praised the “high measure of interpenetration between universities with area programs and the information-gathering agencies of the government”—both of which he encouraged, during his tenure as dean of Harvard’s arts and sciences faculty from 1953 to 1961, to employ “specially qualified” immigrants for the assessment of foreign societies.¹¹

Kissinger was one of the “specially qualified” immigrants that Bundy had in mind. He boasted linguistic skills, cultural knowledge, and political experience in Central Europe—qualities that were invaluable to American policy. “[The] president has asked me to talk with you at your early

convenience about the possibility of joining up down here,” Bundy wrote to Kissinger a week after Kennedy’s inauguration. “The only complication in the situation, from his point of view, is that more than one part of the government may want to get you. He does not want to seem to interfere with any particular department’s needs, but he does want you to know that if you should be interested, he himself would like to explore the notion of your joining the small group which Walt Rostow and I will be putting together for his direct use.” Bundy later added: “We count on having your help, particularly in the general area of weapons and policy and in the special field of thinking about all aspects of the problem of Germany.”¹²

Kissinger’s origins excluded him from the polished, prep-school, Kennedy crowd, but his background made him a “specially qualified” figure whom they hoped to use to their advantage. Thus the foreign policy establishment adopted a condescending attitude toward Kissinger while nonetheless empowering him at the same time. Kissinger recognized this dynamic and exploited it for his own personal advancement. His career highlights the complex interplay between outsiders and insiders, and prejudice and privilege, in the making of foreign policy.

II

Kissinger was born in Fürth, Germany, on May 27, 1923. He spent the first fifteen years of his life in this small town just outside of Nuremberg. Kissinger’s father, Louis, was a respected teacher in the area; his mother, Paula, was the daughter of a prosperous merchant family. Despite these professional achievements, however, the family lived a life separate from that of the mainstream German community in their town of about 70,000. Along with the 2,500 other Jews there, the Kissingers resided in a Jewish ghetto. Their social lives centered around the Jewish community and the

most Orthodox of the synagogues in the area. They also endured escalating intolerance and violence from neighbors and local Nazis alike. When the family fled Germany in August 1938—less than three months before the anti-Jewish riots of *Kristallnacht*—their lives were in mortal danger. Indeed, in the years to come Kissinger’s maternal grandparents and a number of other close relatives would die at the hands of the Nazis. Coming to America, he was all too aware, had saved him, his brother, and his parents.¹³

Kissinger’s first years in the United States were not exceptional. He resided in the Washington Heights section of Manhattan from 1938 to 1942, attended the local high school, and worked a menial job in a brush factory to help support his family. His social life revolved around the Orthodox Jewish community and the larger German-Jewish population that dominated the neighborhood. After completing high school, he attended night school at City College for one year, studying to become an accountant.

But just as the Nazi rise to power forced Kissinger out of Germany, World War II pulled him out of the German-Jewish immigrant community of Washington Heights. Kissinger served admirably in United States Army Counterintelligence, where he acquired extensive experience with local administration, political organization, economic reconstruction, and civil-military relations—all before the age of twenty-five.¹⁴ This experience opened many new doors for him, including acceptance at Harvard. After the war, Kissinger arrived at America’s premier university as a young man with a proven aptitude for complex analysis and practical problem-solving. He was a battle-hardened student driven to prevent a recurrence of the horrors he had personally witnessed. He was also ruthlessly ambitious for the professional success his family had been denied in Germany.

Segregated into crowded university living quarters for Jewish students—a Jewish ghetto at postwar Harvard—Kissinger’s fellow students remember that he was a grave and super-serious individual, a premature curmudgeon. Herbert Englehardt, who lived downstairs from him, recounts that Kissinger was an outcast among his peers, including other immigrant

Jews: “He was deadly serious all the time. He never liked to chase after women. His famous wit and nuance were not in evidence when he was an undergraduate.”¹⁵

As a student, a non-tenured lecturer, and later a professor, Kissinger combined firsthand policy knowledge with intensive academic study, writing extensively about how the United States should mobilize diplomatic and military capabilities for the protection of basic values. In a series of letters that he wrote as an early graduate student, which his mentors conveyed to Paul Nitze, the director of the State Department Policy Planning Staff, Kissinger criticized the “fundamental timidity and at times superficiality of conception” behind American policy. Accordingly, he advocated the mobilization of public opinion in support of the use of force, possibly including nuclear weapons, in order to protect the institutions threatened by communist expansion. To avoid the mistakes associated with appeasement, he argued, the United States needed to combine conspicuous displays of force with a steadfast commitment to a world devoid of extremist ideologies. Commenting on the Korean War after the devastating Chinese attack on American forces north of the thirty-eighth parallel, he wrote:

All the statements about “settlements,” “conferences,” and “negotiations” imply that the present crisis [around the Korean Peninsula] reflects a misunderstanding, or perhaps a grievance of a specific nature, to be resolved by reasonable men in a spirit of compromise. The stark fact of the situation is, however, that Soviet expansionism is directed *against our existence, not against our policies*. Any concession therefore would become merely a springboard for new sallies.¹⁶

At Harvard, Kissinger founded the famous International Seminar, which invited young, politically ambitious individuals from Western Europe and other non-communist states to discuss common intellectual and governance challenges. Through this program, which he directed from 1951 to 1967, Kissinger created a special niche for himself as a figure who nurtured vital links between societies. In fact, he established himself as a bridge between

the intellectual and policy communities, bringing together representatives from both groups in his seminar. Nevertheless, Kissinger continued to confront frequent prejudice from those who did not consider him either a “real” scholar or a “real” practitioner. Yet, in reality, he derived enormous power from his ability to move between these communities, and by the late 1950s Kissinger had become one of the most influential Cold War cosmopolitans.

Cosmopolitanism was a source of intense nationalism for Kissinger. And yet, perhaps ironically, his experience and his understanding of foreign societies confirmed a strong belief in American exceptionalism. As a uniquely wealthy, open, and free society, the United States was far from perfect, but it had a great deal to offer countries that had suffered centuries of war and devastation. Like other cosmopolitans, Kissinger lamented the naïve optimism and superficiality of many Americans. And like other cosmopolitans, Kissinger also recognized that the sources of American naïveté and superficiality were an enduring, and endearing, national strength. Only the United States had the reserves of power, energy, and ambition to build a new future for Europe and other continents amidst the destruction and disillusion of two world wars. Americans expected too much, Kissinger believed, but they had the inner will to make a unique difference. The United States was, according to this logic, the only truly great power left standing after 1945.

Kissinger defined himself as a figure who would build “spiritual links” between peoples and societies, asserting the power and righteousness of the American state in its global battle against extremism. He used his international experiences to highlight the exceptionalism of the American nation in contrast to the violence and hatred characteristic of other societies. He also mobilized his international connections to promote the American dream against its critics at home and abroad. The International Seminar, in Kissinger’s words, built “a spiritual link between a segment of the foreign youth and the United States.”¹⁷

Drawing on his own background as a member of the troubled new generation of citizens across the globe for whom “war has come to be a normal

state,” Kissinger pledged to “create nuclei of understanding of the true values of a democracy and of spiritual resistance to communism.” “A basis for international understanding would thus be created among groups of promising young individuals,” Kissinger predicted. On the American side, he called for the selection of a “committee of inwardly alive, interested United States students”—often recent immigrants, like himself, who would serve as partners and guides for visiting figures to America.¹⁸

With this approach, Kissinger shaped himself into a political and cultural translator between the United States and other societies. He assessed foreign societies for Americans, explained American aims to foreigners, and worked to build consensus around core American beliefs. Translation, in this sense, was about much more than the construction of personal networks. It involved the dissemination of shared policy assumptions, particularly regarding the reconstruction of international order under the tutelage of strong leaders, the spread of American political and economic influence, and the forceful containment of communist expansion. Ultimately, it involved building a set of common principles for effective foreign policy, which, throughout his career, is how Kissinger defined the task of “diplomacy.”¹⁹

International agreements—a central facet of foreign affairs—required, according to Kissinger, both flexibility and ballast. The statesman had to make compromises, but he also had to protect principal moral values. Diplomacy was about cross-cultural exchange, not cultural relativism. For Kissinger, the American state—the greatest contemporary embodiment of Western civilization—was the basis of all diplomacy and the touchstone for all international values. In his view, there could be no human rights, no justice, and no social progress without a powerful American state to support and protect these pursuits. Moreover, according to this outlook, diplomatic agreements could guarantee further advancements in international politics only if they strengthened the American state. Kissinger imbued his adopted country with the spiritual substance that made it both a means and an end for the goals he set out in his foreign policy strategy.

Kissinger was personally and emotionally attached to the American dream, which was, as he saw it, embodied in the United States government. His intense patriotic nationalism—quite common to other recent arrivals at the time—was the foundation on which he built the professional and policy connections that would define his career. It was this devotion that made Kissinger almost incapable of criticizing the American state. His emotional connection to it, born of his immigration, overrode analytical judgment.

Historians have become much too enamored with the assumption that nationalism is “constructed” and “imagined.” Such labels make personal attachment to state and society sound ephemeral and superficial. This clichéd perspective misses the true depth of feeling for the nation state exhibited by individuals like Kissinger. As a refugee saved from almost certain extermination, he was “born again” in the United States. The American government saved him, made him a citizen, and provided him with professional opportunities. It became the fount for the values he would pursue. In truth, it was so foundational that it justified the violation of other values in its defense.

III

Powerful political observers identified Kissinger as a loyal agent of the American government. He had only recently arrived in the United States, but he had received intensive training and indoctrination through the military during World War II. The army, Kissinger frequently commented, “made me feel like an American.” “It was an Americanization process,” he explained, and it was, in fact, where he was naturalized as an American citizen.²⁰ But it was a process that did not end in 1945. Kissinger’s key personal contacts continued to revolve around government figures. His most consistent personal support came from individuals—including his primary mentor at Harvard, Professor William Yandell Elliott—who worked

extensively on government-sponsored projects. For Kissinger, as for many other immigrants at the time, social and professional mobility was largely sponsored by the New Deal and developing Cold War realities.

In a world still pervaded with antisemitism and other forms of intolerance, the American government was the institution that offered the most opportunity, and therefore commanded the most loyalty, from an ambitious Jewish immigrant to the United States. No other entity expended more resources—through the G.I. Bill and the promotion of a “Judeo-Christian” ethic—to create new opportunities for Jewish men, particularly those returning to civilian life from the military. It was the American government that encouraged universities such as Harvard to promote Jewish war veterans; it was the American government that paid for their education and subsidized their access to homeownership; and it was the American government that defined them as part of a common, “white” American race. As Jewish names became increasingly evident in universities and government offices during the second half of the 1950s, traditional demarcations of a “Hebrew” race disappeared.²¹

This is the context in which historians of foreign relations must address the Jewish experience of the twentieth century and its profound influence on American society and government policy during the Cold War. It is remarkable, in fact, how studiously historians have avoided this topic. The personal threats that Kissinger confronted throughout his life—persecution, exile, war, and prejudice—emerged from his identity as a Jew and served to reinforce that identity. The opportunities that allowed Kissinger to achieve professional success—immigration, military service, university access, and contributions to Cold War strategy—did not, despite the challenges he faced, erase his Jewishness. On the contrary, they in many ways *reinforced* it, through a combination of continued exclusion and special access to arenas where powerful mainstream figures believed German Jews had special skills. At Harvard, for example, Kissinger could develop new programs for international study, but socially he remained segregated with other Jews. He never gained access to elite clubs on campus, even as a

renowned professor. He lived the American dream but never escaped the nightmare of antisemitism. As late as 2006, after decades of Jewish integration into mainstream society and the formation of a broad American consensus on partnership with Israel, Kissinger continued to worry about antisemitism in the United States.²²

These concerns were ever-present throughout Kissinger's career. They were reinforced by his intimate involvement with a White House and Congress in which prejudice against Jews remained common, despite the promotion of one as secretary of state. President Richard Nixon, in particular, gave Kissinger unprecedented foreign policy power while simultaneously complaining about his disloyal and degenerate "Jewish" characteristics. Angry with the press because of information leaks from his administration, Nixon invoked fears of a Jewish conspiracy. Referring to Max Frankel, an editor at the *New York Times*, he explained: "Henry is compulsive on Frankel. He's Jewish... Henry—the *New York Times*, see if he talked to Frankel."²³

On occasion, Nixon was more direct about his disdain for Kissinger's Jewish connections. When Kissinger received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1973 for his role in the Vietnam negotiations, a jealous Nixon called with advice about how he should donate the award money. Then, without warning, the president thundered: "I would not put any in for Israel." Taken aback, Kissinger responded: "Absolutely not. That would be out of the question. I never give to Israel." "You should not," Nixon repeated. "No. That is out of the question," Kissinger confirmed. The sting of this dialogue remained with Kissinger more than three decades later, when he published the transcript of the conversation but excluded the material illustrating the president's suspicion about his aide's excessive loyalty to the Jewish state.²⁴

In his relationship with a prejudiced president and a narrow-minded public, Kissinger worked hard to anticipate potential accusations about a worldwide Jewish conspiracy. He was forever in a defensive position on the topic, forever fearful of the suspicion emanating from the Oval Office and other parts of society. Ironically, his attempts to preempt antisemitism

meant that he had to address the issue directly rather than sidestep it as he had in the past. And so, in October 1973, when Kissinger prepared to present a list of appointees to the United States Senate for confirmation, he noticed an overwhelming preponderance of Jewish names:

Kissinger: I've got to reserve one position for a Wasp on this. I know it takes ten in the Jewish religion for a prayer service but I can't have them all on the seventh floor [of the State Department]. One Wasp. Am I entitled to that for Congressional reasons?

Assistant Secretary of State David Abshire: I'm trying. I've just come up with the wrong names.

Kissinger: Well you got me, [Joseph] Sisco, can you imagine the line up on the seventh floor, Kissinger, Sisco, [Helmut] Sonnenfeldt, [Henry] Wallich?

Abshire: You want people to keep a sense of humor.

Kissinger: It's a talented country, but there is a limit. And maybe a Negro...

Abshire: I'm going to the Baptist church to look around.²⁵

As an intellectual, a strategist, and a policymaker, Kissinger consistently worked in the shadow of antisemitism and the violence he witnessed as its popular expression in Germany and other societies. The tolerant, rational, just, and orderly American state was the bright light that promised safety and salvation. It was not the Messiah, but for Kissinger it was the closest thing to it in the contemporary world. For all his later brooding about Spenglerian decline, Kissinger's attachment to America was always an article of faith, a touchstone for self-protection and personal advancement. It was akin to the Holy Land of the Jewish Bible, imperfect but blessed and deserving of special preservation. Kissinger described the United States as a nation that refused "to be bound by history."²⁶ And as a policymaker, he defined himself as a protector of "the stake that all men and women of goodwill had in America's strength and purpose."²⁷

Kissinger's identity as a Jewish immigrant to America matters for more than purely biographical reasons. It helps to explain his policy choices throughout his career. As additional documents about Kissinger's years in

office become available, we can expect an avalanche of studies that will elucidate *what* he did. A number of excellent books have already provided thorough and compelling assessments of his actions and their consequences.²⁸ However, the most difficult, and therefore most avoided, question is why: *Why* did he act as he did, *why* did so many people follow his counsel, and *why* does he draw so much more controversy than other, perhaps equally flawed policymakers? Diplomatic historians are very poor at answering these questions. We describe and assess policy with great empirical detail but rarely probe personal motives.

Yet such motives may be of great influence upon policymakers who, like all individuals, act for complicated personal reasons that include emotion, memory, and prejudice. These influences do not suggest that decision makers are “irrational,” but they do force us to broaden our explanatory framework for understanding the roots of foreign policy decisions.

This is particularly true for Henry Kissinger. No twentieth-century statesman approached foreign policy with a more reasoned, articulate, and informed perspective on international relations. Before he entered office, Kissinger wrote more books, articles, papers, and letters about foreign affairs than almost any of his contemporaries. His energy has not flagged since he left office. Despite his many tactical shifts, he has acted with remarkable consistency throughout his career, embracing a set of core assumptions and beliefs that allowed him to make sense of a complex world. This was, of course, one of his greatest strengths, commented upon by almost everyone who worked with him. Kissinger cultivated a talent for penetrating masses of diverse information and offering what appeared to be simple, coherent, and practical proposals for action. “From the time we first met, I have always been listening to his analyses with the greatest admiration,” commented Ernst Hans Van der Beugel, a former Dutch Foreign Office official and one of Kissinger’s closest friends in Europe from the mid-1950s. “They reach a level that you hardly ever come across. Never, in fact.... He is one of the most brilliant ‘minds’ of our generation. It sparkles with astonishing brilliance.”²⁹

Kissinger's brilliance and the policies he produced hinged on his fear of mass violence and intolerance, and on his faith in the righteousness of the American dream. Throughout his career Kissinger presumed that democracies were weak and prone to extremes of both action and passivity, based on his experiences as a Jew in Weimar Germany. He did not simply opt for a world of order and authority, as many writers have argued. Instead, he looked to political arrangements that could assure the protection of values such as social tolerance and the security of a stable hierarchy of international power—with the United States at the top. This was how Kissinger translated his American dream into a workable global blueprint, and this was how he fought, as a Jew, against what he viewed as the ever-present danger of civilization's descent into another Nazi (or Stalinist) darkness.

Commenting later in life on what he learned during his early years in Weimar Germany of the “fragility of societies and the fragility of achievement,” an emotional Kissinger explained: “[I] saw the collapse of what was a very secure society, because the German Jews were very middle-class, and they were actually more integrated into German life than American Jews on the whole.” For him, the experience of the Holocaust

affected my ideas about global issues importantly, for one thing, you know, it made me impatient with people who thought that all they needed to do was make a profound proclamation that made them feel good. I mean, I had seen evil in the world, and I knew it was there, and I knew that there are some things you have to fight for, and that you can't insist that everything be to some ideal construction you have made.³⁰

Kissinger's experiences as an immigrant and a Jew made him uncomfortable with both the idealism of president Woodrow Wilson and the realism of American diplomat and political scientist George Kennan. As a young man who had witnessed the depths of human brutality, Kissinger recognized the violence and hatred that permanently imperiled democracy, even in an “advanced” society such as Germany. He also understood that brute force alone could not combat threats to the human condition.

Citizens and leaders needed something transcendent to believe in; they needed hope and inspiration. A strong, humane state—with charismatic, enlightened leaders—was the ballast that Kissinger looked to for protection against the obstacles he experienced as an immigrant and a Jew.

This description of Kissinger’s thinking and its origins is not merely interpretive. One can find clear and consistent evidence of it throughout his life. It pervades his policymaking. In all regions of the world, he pursued diplomatic relationships that strengthened the United States through cooperation with strong, often undemocratic regional partners. In all regions of the world, Kissinger’s background as an immigrant and a Jew was a topic of diplomatic discussion and an influence on policy outcomes. The man known as “Super K” was always an immigrant Jewish-American figure of fascination.

Nowhere was this more evident than in the Middle East. In this part of the world, Kissinger’s background threatened to implicate him in the Arab-Israeli conflict and to undermine his efforts to dominate negotiations with all sides. During the 1970s Kissinger confronted these issues head-on when he brilliantly turned his experiences as an immigrant and a Jew into sources of greater regional effectiveness with both Arabs and Israelis. Once again, he derived power from acting as a bridge between societies, making his contested identity a political asset. The scope and content of Kissinger’s influence in the Middle East—and its continuing controversy—reflect his background and how he has translated it into policy leverage. For Henry Kissinger, the personal is political. This is a feature that proved especially useful in navigating diplomacy around the Holy Land.

IV

Kissinger was one of many observers to anticipate another Arab-Israeli war, but he was surprised nonetheless to learn on the morning of October 6, 1973, that Egypt, Syria, and their allies were poised for attack. However, he did not believe that they could defeat Israeli forces on the battlefield. The 1967 Six Day War had made Arab weaknesses abundantly clear. According to Kissinger, Egypt and Syria were “insane” for initiating another war they could not win.³¹

Before the outbreak of hostilities, Israeli leaders shared this underestimation of Arab military capabilities. They discounted the ability of their adversaries to challenge Israel’s proven battlefield superiority and were skeptical regarding the prospect of coordinated and effective action among the various Arab states. Even in the early morning hours of October 6, when Egyptian and Syrian forces made their final preparations for attack, Israeli prime minister Golda Meir ruled out the kind of preemptive military strike employed by her predecessors in the Six Day War. She believed that Israel could repel an Arab attack, and she also recognized the importance of maintaining a defensive position. “If we strike first,” Meir explained to her advisers, “we won’t get help from anybody.” She sought to repulse Arab aggression and, at the same time, gain support from the United States and other countries.³²

The Arab armies fought better than either the Americans or the Israelis expected. During the first day of the war they drove deep into Israeli-held territory on the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights. The attacking Arabs had momentum, and they appeared ready to extend their gains. The Israeli army quickly lost its attitude of invincibility and found itself on its heels, disorganized and uncertain. Surveying his country’s early battlefield losses, Israel’s defense minister, Moshe Dayan, warned that the initial Arab

successes would only mobilize more support from the Arab world. Soon, he feared, his nation of three million Jews would confront eighty million confident and zealous Arab citizens. “This is the war of Israel against the Arabs,” he proclaimed. Dayan worried that Israel would get smothered in a sea of enemies.³³

Nixon and Kissinger were less alarmed by the military situation than their counterparts in Jerusalem. They believed that the Israelis would halt the Egyptian and Syrian advances and eventually launch an effective counterattack. Instead of the details on the ground, the American officials focused on how the United States could transform this crisis into a source of stability and influence in the region. Speaking with the president in the early hours of the war, Kissinger explained that “the primary problem is to get the fighting stopped and then use the opportunity to see whether a settlement could be enforced.”³⁴

In an effort to bring an American-led peace to the region, Kissinger worked through diplomatic channels. Washington initially consulted with Moscow but ultimately proceeded to “take the initiative.” In a flurry of phone calls and meetings, Kissinger opened a series of intensive discussions with Egyptian and Israeli representatives as well as with the Soviet ambassador to the United States, Anatoly Dobrynin. “Your Arab friends were terribly deceitful,” Kissinger scolded Dobrynin. “We are taking this matter extremely seriously. If you will let your colleagues know, we would appreciate it as quickly as possible.”³⁵

The United States initially stalled on aid requested by Israel. Kissinger spoke of allowing the belligerents to beat upon one another “for a day or two, and that will quiet them down.” However, after more desperate requests from Jerusalem, including a personal appeal from Golda Meir to the president, Nixon approved an emergency airlift of military supplies on October 13, 1973. This assistance was also in part a reaction to the evidence of increased Soviet aid to the Arab countries, particularly Syria. Over the course of the next month, the United States transported 11,000 tons of ammunition, electronic equipment, and other material to Israel. While

Kissinger preferred to maintain a low profile for the American-Israeli relationship, the pressures of the war forced a more decisive and obvious expression of Washington's support.³⁶

With the assistance of American supplies, Israel finally gained the upper hand. Forces under the command of General Ariel Sharon broke through Egyptian lines on October 15, and during the following night Israeli units began to cross the Suez Canal into Egypt. Israeli soldiers also successfully pushed through the Arab-held sections of the Golan Heights, entering Syrian territory. After this turn of events, Kissinger reported to the president that "things may be breaking."³⁷

On the retreat, Arab leaders now looked to the United States for a diplomatic solution to the war. Through the course of the conflict, Washington had acquired unique leverage: Israel felt beholden, at least in part, to the United States because of its reliance on American military assistance. The Soviet Union, in contrast, had discredited itself in many capitals through its support for another failed Arab war. Also, the fact that Moscow lacked serious relations with Israel no doubt furthered American interests. "Everyone," Kissinger explained, "knows in the Middle East that if they want a peace they have to go through us." He set out to exploit this position in the last days of the Yom Kippur War.³⁸

V

Kissinger understood the curious way in which conspiracy theories about Jewish influence boosted Arab expectations of, and even respect for him. If Jews ran the world, as many antisemites wrongly presumed, then Kissinger—as the leading American *and* Jewish foreign policy official—appeared to be an all-powerful figure. Prejudice against Jews, ironically, increased Kissinger's ability to bribe, cajole, and threaten.

Preparing for his first trip to the Arab countries of the Middle East in 1973, for example, Kissinger noted Cairo's anxious anticipation of his visit. Speaking with Brent Scowcroft, the deputy special assistant for national security affairs, he asked: "Have you heard about the Egyptians? They have already prepared for my arrival there."

Scowcroft: That's beautiful! They are something else.

Kissinger: In the nutty Arab world I am sort of a mythical figure. The Arabs think I am a magician.

Scowcroft: That's right.³⁹

Egyptian president Anwar Sadat was the figure on whom Kissinger hinged his efforts to bring American-led stability to the Middle East. For Kissinger, Sadat held the potential of generating new diplomatic opportunities. In his memoirs, the former secretary of state recounts the admiration he developed for the Egyptian leader, dating to their first meeting on November 7, 1973—just two weeks after the cessation of Arab-Israeli military hostilities:

Sadat had emerged, dressed in a khaki military tunic, an overcoat slung carelessly over his shoulders.... He was taller, swarthier, and more imposing than I had expected. He exuded vitality and confidence. That son of peasants radiated a natural dignity and aristocratic bearing as out of keeping with his revolutionary history as it was commanding and strangely calming. He affected nonchalance.⁴⁰

Sadat explained to Kissinger how he had planned the October 6, 1973, attack on Israel as an effort to restore Arab dignity and convince the Israelis that they could not dominate the region through force. The Egyptian leader also expressed his frustration with American passivity during the war. Sadat sensibly understood that Arab belligerence and alliance with Moscow only reinforced American support for Israel. Accordingly, he expelled Soviet military personnel from his country in July 1972, hoping that the United States would adopt a mediating role between Israeli and Arab interests.

Instead of antagonizing Washington, he wanted to turn America's influence to his advantage. Sadat pursued a strategy that encouraged American leaders to press concessions on Jerusalem in return for promises that Cairo would promote peace and pro-American sentiment in the region. "Egypt leads the Arab world," Sadat told Nixon and Kissinger. "We started promoting better relations with the United States. The United States has all the cards in its hands and Israel should heed the United States."⁴¹

In the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War, the Egyptian leader correctly surmised that his efforts to enhance his power through cooperation with the United States corresponded with Kissinger's pursuit of a world order built around strong and stable regional figures. Washington did not seek to dominate the Middle East directly, nor did it want to build up Israel as a fortress nation, isolated from its Arab neighbors. The 1973 war made it clear to Kissinger that the Middle East needed a series of powerful states—Jewish and Arab, oil-rich and desert-poor—roughly balanced in military capabilities. The leaders of these states would recognize that victory in war was not conceivable, and they would seek cooperative relations instead. In accordance with his longstanding thoughts on how the United States should manage the "gray areas" of the Cold War, Kissinger sought to use American strength to ensure a military balance in the region and to stabilize Arab-Jewish relations. This is what the president meant when he explained to members of Congress, "If your goal is peace in the Middle East and the survival of Israel, we have to have some stake with Israeli neighbors." The United States pushed for what Kissinger called "a diplomatic revolution" in the region, predicated upon "a triumph for the moderates."⁴²

Sadat was exactly the kind of Arab "moderate" Kissinger needed. He ruled a powerful and influential state in the region and rejected extremist calls for socialist or religious proselytism. Instead, he desired a working partnership with the United States. Most significantly, Sadat sought to build an enduring structure of relations in the Middle East that supported Egyptian interests, but also accommodated the needs of Israel and the United States. His desire was to move beyond conflict.

The Egyptian president fit Kissinger's definition of a transcendent leader. Referring to him in his memoirs, Kissinger proclaimed: "The great man has a vision of the future that enables him to put obstacles in perspective." Echoing his assessment of his own position as an "inside-outsider" in American society, Kissinger explained: "Sadat bore with fortitude the loneliness inseparable from moving the world from familiar categories toward where it has never been." In place of religious intolerance and sectarian strife, Sadat and Kissinger sought to enforce diplomatic "normality"—including collegial state-to-state relations and political cooperation among diverse groups. Kissinger believed this was "the best chance to transcend frozen attitudes that the Middle East had known since the creation of the State of Israel."⁴³

Sadat described Kissinger as "the real face of the United States, the one I had always wanted to see." He and the American secretary of state became, in Sadat's words, "friends," and the two had "no difficulty in understanding one another." Both men sought to assure Egyptian strength as a bulwark against Arab extremism and Soviet meddling. They envisioned a stable Middle East dominated by roughly balanced regional powers in Cairo and Jerusalem that cooperated to restrain belligerent forces and work with the United States. "I want us to make progress; to make a complete peace," Sadat told Nixon's successor in the White House, Gerald Ford. "And I want the United States to achieve it, not the Soviet Union."⁴⁴

Kissinger represented the "real face of the United States," according to Sadat, because he appreciated power and he was Jewish. The Egyptian leader assumed that Kissinger's position as the most prominent international Jewish diplomat gave him unique leverage over Israel. Sadat pledged that he would manage the other Arab leaders, and in return he expected the United States to "put pressure" on Israel. Egyptian foreign minister Ismail Fahmy brushed aside Kissinger's protestations about Israeli intransigence, exclaiming that Prime Minister Rabin "is your boy."⁴⁵ The secretary of state did not deny this asserted link between himself and the Israeli prime minister, and responded, "I need a few months to work on him."⁴⁶

Sadat expected Kissinger to make Israel accept territorial transfers to Egypt “pill by pill.” He did not merely anticipate that Washington would use its military and economic might to influence Israeli policy; he also believed that the secretary of state could exert unique personal influence. On the one hand, Kissinger was an outsider to the region who could mediate between warring parties, while on the other hand, he was a Jewish insider who could move Israel from within. These “inside-outsider” qualities made Kissinger particularly valuable for a leader such as Sadat.⁴⁷

Kissinger’s “shuttle diplomacy” between Cairo, Jerusalem, and other capitals followed the model of the transatlantic networking he developed through the International Seminar. He established himself as the closest and most effective link between various leaders and was able to turn their various prejudices to his advantage. Most significantly, he made himself indispensable to political negotiations. Kissinger needed Sadat to maintain a “moderate” Middle East where American influence could be maximized, and Sadat needed Kissinger as his effective go-between with Israel. The Jewish secretary of state combined personal politics, skillful diplomacy, and a coherent, grand strategy to produce stability in the Middle East. He made himself into not just a “mystical figure,” but also a bridge between warring societies. Kissinger retains this unique position in the twenty-first century. No other person outside government wields comparable influence both in the Arab states and in Israel. No other person outside government is so connected to the sources of power in multiple societies, yet so suspected for his multiple loyalties.

However, Kissinger could not control Israeli leaders or the opinions of the American Jewish community. Sadat overrated him, as he overrated the unity and power of Jews in general. In fact, Kissinger frequently complained about the opposition he confronted from Israeli and American Jews. “They are,” he told Brent Scowcroft, “as obnoxious as the Vietnamese.” In another conversation, Kissinger joked: “I’m going to be the first Jew accused of antisemitism.”⁴⁸

Israeli and American Jews were concerned that Kissinger was over-compensating for his background by making excessive concessions to the Arabs. He was, they feared, trading Israel's security for his own international influence. Menachem Begin, the leader of Israel's Likud party and future prime minister, reminded Kissinger: "You are a Jew. You are not the first [Jew] who has reached a high position in one's country of residence. Remember the past. There were such Jews, who out of a complex feared non-Jews would charge them with acting for their people, and therefore did the opposite." Begin further warned that "Dr. Kissinger should be careful about such a distortion in his seemingly objective thinking."⁴⁹

American Jews had similar concerns. Rabbi Daniel J. Silver of Cleveland accused Kissinger of trying too hard to show the Arabs that "being a Jew doesn't count." Gershon Jacobson, a Jewish literary figure from New York, explained that "Kissinger was determined to gain the confidence of the Arabs as a Jew, and to do so at the expense of Israel." Norman Podhoretz, the editor of *Commentary* magazine, told Kissinger that Israeli and American Jews feared he was an appeaser, a "Chamberlain" seeking to conciliate enemies bent on destroying the Jewish people.⁵⁰

Fame and celebrity made Kissinger an international giant, but for those who felt closest to him in background, he remained all too human. He disappointed those who expected the most of him and appeared disloyal to those who demanded a champion for their group. Most of all, he refused to focus his energies on ethnic and religious claims as an issue separate from American interests in a stable Middle East. As Yitzhak Rabin remembered, Kissinger enraged those who wanted a Jewish representative in office rather than an American secretary of state. He defined his Jewishness through the American state, not through Israel.⁵¹

This was a major handicap for Kissinger, particularly when he negotiated with Israeli leaders, but it also had its advantages. Kissinger was a Jew, who had experienced the worst forms of antisemitism. None of his Jewish detractors ever forgot that. As much as they might criticize him for not doing enough on behalf of Jews, he was still one of them. He was still part of

their family. This did not produce agreement on policy, but it did create a foundation for basic trust and empathy. Non-Jewish secretaries of state did not benefit from the same special bond with Israel.

Harvard economist and dean Henry Rosovsky, who participated in some of Kissinger's meetings with American Jewish leaders after the Yom Kippur War, recalls the "comfort" and "mutual respect" that permeated these discussions. Despite the anxieties that Rosovsky voiced regarding insufficient United States support for Israel in December 1973, "this was an all-Jewish meeting, with a shared concern and commitment to Israel." Rosovsky remembers that he and others who talked with the first Jewish secretary of state knew "Kissinger would not be a person to betray Israel."⁵²

Rabbi Alexander Schindler, speaking on behalf of many American Jewish organizations, made the same point. He and other Jewish leaders paid tribute to Kissinger "because we sense in his depths a commitment to Israel and the Jewish people. He may have been objective, but he was never detached."⁵³

Kissinger appealed precisely to this sentiment. He asked his fellow Jews "to understand what we're trying to do" and "avoid slogans." Warning that "Israel is in great danger" if it remains isolated and surrounded by belligerent enemies, he called for help in pursuing territorial compromises, particularly in the Sinai Peninsula, which would reduce conflict throughout the region. "With some wisdom in the Jewish community, and among friends of Israel, maybe we can manage it.... Certainly this government will never participate in anything that we believe involves any risk of its destruction."⁵⁴

When negotiating directly with Israeli leaders, Kissinger similarly drew on a presumed bond. Meeting with Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin one month after Nixon's resignation and during a particularly difficult moment in Middle East peace efforts, Kissinger explained: "We read often of disagreements. One, there are no disagreements. Two, if there are, they're family disagreements. We are working for a common strategy, one element of which is a strong Israel." Kissinger reminded the Israeli leader of their close personal relationship before 1973, when Rabin was ambassador to the United

States: “We worked together for five years in an atmosphere of trust and confidence.”⁵⁵

Rabin reciprocated these sentiments, despite his evident anxiety about Kissinger’s calls for Israeli concessions to the Arab states: “We believe very much in Israel that there is friendship between our two countries. I have had the experience of this friendship, especially with you, and all our intentions are to continue this—to have the basis to speak frankly, but the basis is a common interest and a common understanding.” As a result of Kissinger’s prodding, Rabin agreed to push forward with further negotiations for territorial withdrawals from Egyptian-claimed lands as well as discussions with Jordan and Syria. Kissinger, in turn, pledged to enhance American support for Israel through an expanding list of military supplies and billions of dollars in foreign aid. Kissinger and Rabin trusted one another “to find a constructive solution” for mutual concerns.⁵⁶

Even though public controversy in both Israel and the United States intensified during Kissinger’s time in office, relations between the leaders of the two countries grew closer. Yigal Allon, Israel’s deputy prime minister and a former participant in Kissinger’s International Seminar at Harvard, confirmed this point: “I trusted him to the extent that I could trust the foreign minister of any other country. I trusted his friendship, but not always his judgment. I never doubted I was talking to a friend of Israel. He was loyal to Israel in his way.”⁵⁷

By the time Kissinger left office, in January 1977, he had successfully redrawn the map of the Middle East. Following a war that threatened to unleash years of armed conflict between the Arab states and Israel, with possible superpower intervention, he created a framework for peace among some of the most powerful governments in the region, particularly those in Cairo and Jerusalem. He negotiated intensively for armed disengagement near their border, the return of territory occupied by Israel on the Sinai Peninsula, and a commitment to basic cooperation between the states. He utilized the full arsenal of American pressure, pleading, and bribery to achieve this end. Most significantly, Kissinger made the United States a

mediator trusted by Egypt and Israel, the one government both Arabs and Jews could look to for assurance.

Kissinger's Middle East policy was a natural extension of the strategy he applied to other parts of the world. The regimes in Egypt and Israel provided local authority, which was supported and indirectly managed by the United States from afar. Peace in the region was not about justice or democracy. It focused on state-centered stability. Basic freedoms, in Kissinger's view, derived from strong and enlightened leadership rather than popular consensus. This was a vision for the region that self-consciously approximated Metternich's or Bismarck's Europe much more than the religious prophecies of the Bible or the Koran. It was the well-considered worldview of a German Jew seeking to protect cherished values—and his heritage—from political extremes.

Speaking “from the heart” to the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations in January 1977, Kissinger explained how his work for the American state and his Jewish background came together:

I thought it was important for the future of Israel and for the future of the Jewish people, that the actions that the United States government took were not seen to be the result of a special, personal relationship; that the support we gave Israel reflected not my personal preferences alone but the basic national interests of the United States, transcending the accident of who might be in office at any particular period. I have never forgotten that thirteen members of my family died in concentration camps, nor could I ever fail to remember what it was like to live in Nazi Germany as a member of a persecuted minority. I believe, however, that the relationship of Israel to the United States transcends these personal considerations. I do not believe that it is compatible with the moral conscience of mankind to permit Israel to suffer in the Middle East a ghetto existence that has been suffered by Jews in many individual countries throughout their history. The support for a free and democratic Israel in the Middle East is a moral necessity of our period to be pursued by every administration, and with a claim to the support of all freedom-loving people all over the world.⁵⁸

Kissinger closed his remarks by invoking his own continued Jewish faith and his attachment to Israel: “Throughout their history, Jews have been saying to themselves: ‘Next year in Jerusalem.’ I would like to think that sometime soon *we* can say this in its deepest sense—in an Israel that is secure, that is accepted, that is at peace.”⁵⁹

VI

In many ways, Kissinger’s vision became a reality. On the eve of September 11, 2001, Israel and Egypt remained at peace. Kissinger’s map of the Middle East endured twenty-five years of low-intensity Arab-Israeli fighting, in addition to other conflicts in the region. The United States served as a mediator between the sides and a sponsor of “moderate” regimes. It was the dominant external power in the region, a fact it had proven by leading an international coalition of forces, including Arab states, to turn back Saddam Hussein’s invasion of Iraq’s oil-rich neighbor Kuwait. Although an Islamic revolution in Iran had expelled American influence from that country and humiliated Americans through a prolonged hostage crisis, it had not altered the region’s borders or sparked a renewed Arab-Israeli war. Moreover, it assured American access to inexpensive oil.

However, this geopolitical stability in the Middle East masked much deeper domestic disturbances. Kissinger’s strategy had the effect of reinforcing dictatorship and discontent. His policies draw attention to the United States as a visible sponsor of oppressors such as Sadat, his successor Hosni Mubarak, the shah of Iran, King Faisal of Saudi Arabia, and Saddam Hussein. These men cooperated with Washington while they brutalized their own populations. Kissinger’s policies did not address the anger, resentment, and desire for political change voiced by citizens living in Arab societies.⁶⁰

The United States built peace in the Middle East on the backs of iron-fisted Arab and Israeli leaders.

Kissinger understood the nature of this policy and its democratic shortcomings. Such a flagrant disregard for democratic principles was not unique to his endeavors in the Middle East. His entire career was based on the presumption that in a cruel and violent world, powerful leaders—and not democratic politics—offered the best protection for life and liberty. For Kissinger, statesmanship required tolerating brutality as a bulwark against further suffering. Transcendent leaders needed the courage to make tough choices among lesser evils. This is how he interpreted recent history. During the 1940s the United States and Great Britain fought one of history's most destructive wars to rescue Europe from Nazi tyranny. After Germany's surrender, the West had to deploy the most deadly of weapons to insure the survival of civilization in the face of communist expansion. In the Middle East, Kissinger believed that the United States had to follow a similar logic. Washington would work closely with unsavory regimes to prevent the region from immolating itself in a fire of mass hatred.

Increased democracy in countries like Egypt and Saudi Arabia would only heighten the chances of war, according to Kissinger. Antisemitism and other hatreds had popular appeal, and violence was a simple and attractive option for angry citizens. Was it not better to work with figures like Sadat, who ruled as dictators but also used their power to repress popular calls for war? Was it not better to acquiesce in Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza than to allow those lands to become a base for renewed attacks on the Jewish state? The United States sought to build sustainable political stability in the region before it could pursue far-reaching reform. The Middle East, like other areas of the world, needed reliable and rational local authorities. Only after these authorities asserted themselves, with American support, could Washington “let history take its course.”⁶¹

VII

Kissinger's experiences as a German-Jewish immigrant to the United States, and his emotional attachment to a particular vision of the American dream, did not solely determine his policies toward the Middle East or other regions of the world. Ethnicity and identity are not independent variables that explain, in and of themselves, foreign policy outcomes. They are not static sources of meaning either. Kissinger's perception of his place in American society underwent changes from his time in the army, through his years at Harvard, until his last days in the White House. At each stage of his career, he adapted to various pressures and incentives—world war, openings in higher education, and policymaking in the shadow of Vietnam. Most significantly, his assessments of threats and opportunities changed in reaction to different perceptions of violence, antisemitism, and popular opinion. Kissinger's personal identity, like his policies, was quite malleable for a wide range of circumstances.

That said, his background and experiences exerted a consistent influence throughout his career. As an immigrant, Kissinger always viewed the American state as a source of salvation: It had saved his family and made his professional advancement possible. He thus hinged all of his activities on the goal of strengthening the American state, protecting it from enemies (internal and external), and enhancing its image in the eyes of others. He defined the American state as the foundation for all values, even to the point of justifying the flagrant violation of basic principles in its defense. Kissinger's attachment to *raison d'état* was deeper than considerations of realpolitik alone; it reflected an immigrant's emotional connection to his newfound home.

Kissinger's experiences as a Jew in a world filled with antisemitism made him a permanent "outsider," even as he acquired access to foreign policy "insiders." For all his fame and loyalty to the American state, Kissinger confronted social prejudice against Jews at every stage in his career—often from

the very people who empowered him. His personal insecurity and sycophancy to powerful figures reflected his continual fear of exclusion. As a man who had witnessed the depths of human cruelty, Kissinger was never at ease in his professional or social position in American society. He always feared that he was surrounded by enemies. He always feared that he could lose everything.

Across the globe, Kissinger's personal insecurity translated into a search for strong state leaders and a diversion from traditional democratic ideals and economic aims. Kissinger did not seek to make the world "safe for democracy." Instead, he sought to create stability based upon trust and cooperation between strong leaders while ensuring continuous mediation by the American government. To him, the establishment and preservation of order and justice were not organic developments, but rather policy choices made by political elites that required active enforcement prior to being accepted by the general public. The pursuit of political goals through more democratic means was, intellectually and emotionally, too dangerous for a man who had experienced violence and hatred directed toward immigrants, Jews, and other "outsiders." The vulnerable, including Kissinger, needed powerful leaders and strong states to protect their access to the American dream.

Not all immigrants of Kissinger's background shared his worldview, of course. Although similar experiences often produce divergent perceptions, historians must recognize that certain personal experiences are formative for policymakers in their aspirations and activities. For Kissinger, his background as a German-Jewish immigrant remained important because they were continually invoked by the powerful men with whom he worked—including Nixon, Sadat, and Rabin. He had to react to the ever-present nightmare of his personal past as he negotiated a Middle East settlement. Kissinger was a child of World War II, the Holocaust, and the hopes of postwar American society. He was a policymaker who carried these perceptions into the Vietnam War, Middle East diplomacy, and the current war in Iraq.

*Jeremi Suri is a professor of history at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and director of its European Union Center of Excellence. He is the author of the recent book *Henry Kissinger and the American Century* (Belknap, 2007).*

Notes

1. Henry Kissinger, *White House Years* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1979), pp. 228-229.
2. Author's interview with Henry Kissinger, October 26, 2005.
3. For some of the best recent work on the history of American immigration, see Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton, 2003); Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton, 2002); Donna R. Gabaccia, "Is Everywhere Nowhere? Nomads, Nations, and the Immigrant Paradigm of United States History," *Journal of American History* 86:3 (December 1999), pp. 1115-1134.
4. Henry A. Kissinger to Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., September 8, 1961, Box WH-13, Folder: Kissinger, Henry 4/19/61-12/2/61, Arthur Schlesinger Jr. Papers, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library, Boston, Mass. [hereafter JFKL].
5. Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994), p. 833.
6. Henry Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1982), p. 432. For Kissinger's display of emotion at the swearing-in ceremony, see David Binder, "Kissinger Sworn, Praised by Nixon," *New York Times*, September 23, 1973, p. 11.
7. Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, p. 431.
8. Quotation from Louise Bobrow's videotaped oral history interview with Henry Kissinger, January 11, 2001, Museum of Jewish Heritage, New York.
9. These are all topics discussed at length in my book, *Henry Kissinger and the American Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap, 2007).
10. Quotation in Guy Stern, "The Jewish Exiles in the Service of U.S. Intelligence: The Post-War Years," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 40 (1995), p. 52.
11. McGeorge Bundy, "The Battlefields of Power and the Searchlights of the Academy," in E.A.J. Johnson, ed., *The Dimensions of Diplomacy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1964), p. 3.
12. McGeorge Bundy to Henry Kissinger, January 28, 1961; Bundy to Kissinger, February 18, 1961, Folder: Staff Memoranda, Henry Kissinger 5/61, Box 320, National Security Files, JFKL.
13. For more on Kissinger's early years in Fürth and their formative influence upon him, see Suri, *Henry Kissinger and the American Century*, ch. 1.
14. See Suri, *Henry Kissinger and the American Century*, ch. 2.
15. Quoted in Walter Isaacson, *Kissinger: A Biography* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), p. 61.

16. Henry Kissinger to William Elliott, December 12, 1950, Folder: Memos-U.S. Strategy-Kissinger, Henry, 1951, Box 27, Papers of William Y. Elliott, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford, Calif. [hereafter Elliott Papers].

17. Kissinger to Elliott, fall 1950, Folder: International Seminar, Harvard, 1951-1959, Box 2, Elliott Papers.

18. Kissinger to Elliott, fall 1950, Folder: International Seminar, Harvard, 1951-1959, Box 2, Elliott Papers.

19. See "Recommended Position: U.S.-U.S.S.R.," prepared by Kissinger for Nelson Rockefeller's briefing book, May 15, 1968, Folder 8, Box 5, Series 35, Record Group 15, Nelson A. Rockefeller Papers, Gubernatorial, Rockefeller Archive Center, Pocantico Hills, New York; Henry Kissinger, "The Policymaker and the Intellectual," *The Reporter*, March 5, 1959, pp. 30-35.

20. These quotations come from Walter Isaacson's 1988 interviews with Henry Kissinger. See Isaacson, *Kissinger*, pp. 40, 56-57.

21. On the creation of a "Judeo-Christian" ethic in the United States, see David A. Hollinger, *Science, Jews, and Secular Culture: Studies in Mid-Twentieth-Century American Intellectual History* (Princeton: Princeton, 1996), pp. 17-41; Mark Silk, "Notes on the Judeo-Christian Tradition in America," *American Quarterly* 36:1 (Spring 1984), pp. 65-85; Deborah Dash Moore, "Jewish GIs and the Creation of the Judeo-Christian Tradition," *Religion and American Culture* 8:1 (Winter 1998), pp. 31-53.

22. Author's interview with Kissinger, September 12, 2006.

23. Transcript of the audio recording from Nixon's meeting with Charles Colson, January 1, 1973. Quoted in Stanley I. Kutler, ed., *Abuse of Power: The New Nixon Tapes* (New York: Free Press, 1997), p. 191. Max Frankel was a German-Jewish immigrant to the United States, who, like Kissinger, spent his late teenage years in the Washington Heights section of New York City. See Max Frankel, *The Times of My Life, and My Life with the Times* (New York: Random House, 1999).

24. Transcript of Kissinger's telephone conversation with Nixon, October 16, 1973, available through the United States Department of State's Freedom of Information Act website, <http://foia.state.gov/SearchColls/CollsSearch.asp> [hereafter State FOIA]. For Kissinger's incomplete, published version of this transcript, see Henry Kissinger, *Crisis: The Anatomy of Two Major Foreign Policy Crises* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2003), p. 268.

25. Transcript of Kissinger's telephone conversation with David Abshire, October 3, 1973, State FOIA. In this conversation, Kissinger is mistaken in his assumption that Joseph Sisco was Jewish. Sisco was the child of non-Jewish Italian immigrants. See his obituary in the *Washington Post*, November 24, 2004, p. B07.

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26. Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, p. 833.
27. Kissinger, *White House Years*, pp. 228-229.
28. See Robert Schulzinger, *Henry Kissinger: Doctor of Diplomacy* (New York: Columbia, 1989); Jussi Hanhimäki, *The Flawed Architect: Henry Kissinger and American Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford, 2004); Margaret Macmillan, *Nixon in China: The Week that Changed the World* (Toronto: Viking Canada, 2006); Robert Dallek, *Nixon and Kissinger: Partners in Power* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007).
29. Ernst Hans Van der Beugel oral history, chapter 7, Archive Location 2.21.183.08, Inventory 60-65, National Archive, the Netherlands. I would like to thank Floris Kunert for helping me to use the Van der Beugel materials. I also thank Danielle Kleijwegt for her translation of the Van der Beugel oral history.
30. Quotations from Bobrow's interview with Kissinger.
31. Transcript of Kissinger's telephone conversation with White House Chief of Staff Alexander Haig, October 6, 1973, 8:35 A.M.; transcript of Kissinger's telephone conversation with Richard Nixon, October 7, 1973, 2:07 P.M., State FOIA. See also "Indications of Arab Intentions to Initiate Hostilities" (circa summer 1973), Folder: Rabin/Kissinger (Dinitz) 1973, January-July [2 of 3], Box 135, Henry Kissinger Office Files, NSC Files, Nixon Presidential Materials Project, National Archives, College Park, Md. [hereafter Nixon Papers].
32. Abraham Rabinovich, *The Yom Kippur War: The Epic Encounter that Transformed the Middle East* (New York: Schocken, 2004), pp. 65-100, quotation on p. 89. See also Avi Shlaim, *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000), pp. 318-320.
33. Dayan quoted in Rabinovich, *Yom Kippur War*, p. 219.
34. Transcript of Kissinger's telephone conversation with Nixon, October 6, 1973, 9:25 A.M., State FOIA.
35. Transcript of Kissinger's telephone conversation with Nixon, October 6, 1973, 9:25 A.M., State FOIA; transcript of Kissinger's telephone conversation with Anatoly Dobrynin, October 6, 1973, State FOIA.
36. Transcript of Kissinger's telephone conversation with Haig, October 6, 1973, 12:45 P.M., State FOIA.
37. Transcript of Kissinger's telephone conversation with Nixon, October 16, 1973, State FOIA.
38. Memorandum of conversation between Kissinger, James Schlesinger, William Colby, Admiral Thomas Moorer, Brent Scowcroft, October 19, 1973, Digital National Security Archive Document Database [hereafter NSA], <http://nsarchive.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.library.wisc.edu>.
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39. Transcript of Kissinger's telephone conversation with Brent Scowcroft, October 18, 1973, State FOIA.

40. Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, p. 636.

41. Memorandum of conversation between Anwar Sadat, Hosni Mubarak, Ismail Fahmy, Richard Nixon, Henry Kissinger, Joseph Sisco, June 1, 1975, NSA.

42. Memorandum of conversation between Kissinger, Nixon, Scowcroft, and bipartisan Congressional delegation, May 31, 1974, NSA. For Kissinger's analysis of the "gray areas," see Kissinger, "Military Policy and Defense of the 'Gray Areas,'" *Foreign Affairs* 33 (April 1955), pp. 416-428.

43. Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, pp. 638, 647.

44. Anwar el-Sadat, *In Search of Identity: An Autobiography* (New York: Harper and Row, 1978), p. 291; Memorandum of conversation between Sadat, Mubarak, Fahmy, Ford, Kissinger, Sisco, June 1, 1975, NSA.

45. Memorandum of conversation between Sadat, Mubarak, Fahmy, Ford, Kissinger, Sisco, June 1, 1975, NSA; Memorandum of conversation between Sadat, Fahmy, Kissinger, Eilts, Rodman, May 30, 1974, NSA.

46. Memorandum of conversation between Sadat, Fahmy, Kissinger, Eilts, Rodman, May 30, 1974, NSA.

47. Memorandum of conversation between Sadat, Fahmy, Kissinger, Eilts, Rodman, May 30, 1974, NSA; Sadat, *In Search of Identity*, p. 291. A former United States diplomat in the Middle East argues that the leaders of Saudi Arabia similarly believed that Kissinger had powerful personal leverage over Israel. See Edward R.F. Sheehan, *The Arabs, Israelis, and Kissinger: A Secret History of American Diplomacy in the Middle East* (New York: Reader's Digest, 1976), p. 75.

48. Transcript of Kissinger's telephone conversation with Scowcroft, October 18, 1973, 10:45 P.M.; transcript of Kissinger's telephone conversation with Mr. Jameson, November 2, 1973, State FOIA.

49. Menachem Begin's November 15, 1973, speech in the Israeli Knesset, quoted in the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*, November 16, 1973, p. 5 [Hebrew]. After the Yom Kippur War, vituperative criticisms of Kissinger saturated the Israeli press. See *Haaretz*, November 2, 1973, pp. 7-8; November 6, 1973, p. 4; November 7, 1973, p. 6; November 22, 1973, p. 5; December 6, 1973, p. 7 [Hebrew]. Also see *Maariv*, October 29, 1973, p. 2; November 2, 1973, p. 13; November 16, 1973, p. 17 [Hebrew]. Also see *Yediot Aharonot*, November 2, 1973, p. 8; November 8, 1973, p. 24 [Hebrew]. A group of right-wing Israeli extremists allegedly hired one or more foreign hit men to assassinate Kissinger. See "Bare Plot to Kill Kissinger," *Chicago Tribune*, January 14, 1977, p. 1. I want to thank my research assistant, Dr. Gil Ribak, for helping to find and translate these materials.

50. Quotations from Ralph Blumenfeld and the staff and editors of the New York Post, *Henry Kissinger: The Private and Public Story* (New York: Signet, 1974), p. 254; memorandum of conversation between Kissinger and American Jewish intellectuals, December 6, 1973, NSA.

51. Yitzhak Rabin with the assistance of Eitan Haber, *Yitzhak Rabin Converses with Leaders and Heads of State* (Givatayim: Revivim, 1984), pp. 37-38 [Hebrew].

52. Author's interview with Henry Rosovsky, July 7, 2006.

53. Rabbi Alexander Schindler's remarks at the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, Hotel Pierre, New York City, January 11, 1977, quoted in the *Washington Post*, January 12, 1977, p. A16.

54. Memorandum of conversation between Kissinger and American Jewish intellectuals, December 6, 1973, NSA.

55. Memorandum of conversation between Rabin, Kissinger, et al., September 11, 1974, NSA. Between 1969 and 1973 Kissinger met frequently with Rabin in Washington, D.C. The two men had an intense, frank, and trusting relationship. See the accounts of their meetings in Boxes 134-135, Henry Kissinger Office Files, NSC Files, Nixon Papers.

56. Memorandum of conversation between Rabin, Kissinger, et al., September 11, 1974. Between 1973 and 1974 United States annual assistance to Israel increased from \$492 million to \$2.6 billion. See the Congressional Research Service Report, "Israel: U.S. Foreign Assistance," updated April 26, 2005, available at www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/IB85066.pdf.

57. Yigal Allon, quoted in Richard Valeriani, *Travels with Henry* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1979), p. 208.

58. Kissinger's address to the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, January 11, 1977, quoted in *Department of State Bulletin 76* (January 31, 1977), p. 90.

59. *Department of State Bulletin 76*, p. 90. Emphasis added.

60. The same applies to the Palestinian territories. Indeed, Washington became an indirect financier for new Israeli settlements on land claimed by Palestinians.

61. Author's interview with Kissinger, October 26, 2005.