

henry kissinger vietnam war

henry kissinger vietnam war represents a critical chapter in American diplomatic history, highlighting the complex interplay between foreign policy, military strategy, and international relations during one of the most turbulent conflicts of the 20th century. As National Security Advisor and later Secretary of State under Presidents Nixon and Ford, Kissinger played a pivotal role in shaping U.S. strategy in Southeast Asia. His involvement encompassed secret negotiations, peace talks, and controversial decisions that had lasting implications for Vietnam, the United States, and global diplomacy. This article explores Kissinger's influence on the Vietnam War, examining his strategies, key events, and the broader consequences of his policies. Understanding the role of henry kissinger vietnam war is essential to comprehending the evolution of American foreign policy during this era and the contentious legacy that followed. The following sections will provide an overview of Kissinger's background, his negotiation tactics, and the outcomes of his diplomatic efforts.

- Background and Rise of Henry Kissinger
- Kissinger's Role in Vietnam War Strategy
- Secret Negotiations and Peace Talks
- Controversies and Criticisms
- Legacy and Impact on U.S. Foreign Policy

Background and Rise of Henry Kissinger

Henry Kissinger's ascent to prominence in American politics set the stage for his influential role during the Vietnam War. Born in Germany and emigrating to the United States as a refugee, Kissinger's academic prowess and expertise in international relations quickly earned him recognition. His tenure at Harvard University included significant work on nuclear strategy and diplomacy, which caught the attention of policymakers during the Cold War era. By the late 1960s, Kissinger was serving as National Security Advisor under President Richard Nixon, positioning him at the center of U.S. decision-making during the Vietnam conflict.

Academic and Early Career

Kissinger's academic background in political science and international relations laid the foundation for his approach to diplomacy. His writings on realpolitik and balance of power were influential in shaping U.S. Cold War strategy. Before joining the Nixon administration, Kissinger served as a consultant and advisor on foreign policy, emphasizing pragmatic and strategic considerations in global affairs.

Appointment to National Security Advisor

In 1969, Kissinger's appointment as National Security Advisor marked the beginning of his direct involvement in Vietnam War policymaking. His dual role as Secretary of State from 1973 further consolidated his influence, allowing him to coordinate military and diplomatic efforts aimed at ending the conflict.

Kissinger's Role in Vietnam War Strategy

Henry Kissinger's strategic approach to the Vietnam War combined diplomatic negotiation with military pressure. His objective was to achieve "peace with honor," a phrase that underscored the desire to withdraw U.S. forces without appearing to concede defeat. Kissinger worked closely with military commanders and political leaders to balance battlefield tactics with diplomatic initiatives, often advocating for covert operations alongside formal negotiations.

Vietnamization Policy

The Vietnamization strategy sought to reduce American troop involvement by transferring combat responsibilities to South Vietnamese forces. Kissinger supported this policy as a means to gradually disengage U.S. forces while maintaining South Vietnam's capacity to resist communist expansion. This approach aimed to stabilize the region without abandoning American allies.

Military and Diplomatic Coordination

Kissinger coordinated closely with the Pentagon to synchronize military actions with diplomatic efforts. This included supporting intensified bombing campaigns in North Vietnam and neighboring countries to pressure the communist leadership during peace talks. The dual approach was designed to strengthen the U.S. negotiating position while limiting American casualties.

Secret Negotiations and Peace Talks

A defining feature of Henry Kissinger's Vietnam War involvement was his role in secret negotiations aimed at ending hostilities. These clandestine discussions with North Vietnamese officials were pivotal in shaping the eventual ceasefire agreements and withdrawal terms. Kissinger's negotiation tactics combined secrecy, leverage, and incremental concessions to achieve diplomatic breakthroughs.

Paris Peace Talks

Kissinger engaged in prolonged negotiations in Paris with North Vietnamese representatives, balancing demands and concessions to reach a viable peace settlement. These talks were marked by periods of stalemate and progress, reflecting the complexity of the conflict and the divergent interests of the parties involved.

Secret Meetings with Le Duc Tho

One of the most notable elements of Kissinger's diplomacy was his secret meetings with North Vietnamese negotiator Le Duc Tho. These confidential encounters allowed both sides to explore solutions without public pressure or media scrutiny, facilitating breakthroughs that were otherwise difficult to achieve in formal settings.

Controversies and Criticisms

Henry Kissinger's tenure during the Vietnam War was not without controversy. His strategies and decisions have been subject to extensive criticism, both contemporaneously and by later historians. The ethical and humanitarian implications of his policies continue to provoke debate, particularly regarding the use of military force and the consequences for civilian populations.

Bombing Campaigns and Civilian Impact

Kissinger's support for extensive bombing operations in North Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos has been criticized for causing significant civilian casualties and destabilizing the region. These campaigns, intended to coerce the enemy into negotiations, raised questions about proportionality and adherence to international law.

Allegations of Secret Agreements

Critics have alleged that Kissinger engaged in secret agreements that prolonged the conflict or undermined democratic processes in Vietnam. These accusations highlight the opaque nature of his diplomacy and the challenges of balancing secrecy with accountability.

Legacy and Impact on U.S. Foreign Policy

The legacy of Henry Kissinger's Vietnam War involvement extends beyond the immediate outcomes of the conflict. His approach to diplomacy and realpolitik influenced subsequent U.S. foreign policy decisions and shaped the conduct of international relations during the Cold War and beyond. Kissinger's tenure exemplifies the complexities of managing war, peace, and global power dynamics in a rapidly changing world.

Influence on Cold War Diplomacy

Kissinger's strategies during the Vietnam War informed broader Cold War policies, including détente with the Soviet Union and opening relations with China. His emphasis on pragmatic negotiation and power balancing became hallmarks of American diplomacy in the 1970s.

Enduring Debates on Ethics and Strategy

The debate over Kissinger's role in Vietnam continues to shape discussions about the ethical responsibilities of policymakers in wartime. His legacy prompts ongoing examination of the balance between strategic interests and humanitarian considerations in U.S. foreign policy.

1. Academic and political expertise positioned Kissinger for leadership during the Vietnam War.
2. His strategy combined military pressure with diplomatic negotiations to end U.S. involvement.
3. Secret talks and peace negotiations were central to his approach.
4. Controversies regarding bombing campaigns and secret deals marked his tenure.
5. Kissinger's legacy influenced subsequent Cold War diplomacy and ethical debates.

Frequently Asked Questions

What role did Henry Kissinger play in the Vietnam War?

Henry Kissinger served as National Security Advisor and later Secretary of State under Presidents Nixon and Ford, playing a key role in negotiating the Paris Peace Accords that aimed to end U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War.

How did Henry Kissinger contribute to the Paris Peace Accords?

Kissinger was a principal negotiator in the Paris Peace Accords, engaging in secret talks with North Vietnamese representatives which led to the 1973 agreement intended to establish peace and allow for the withdrawal of American troops from Vietnam.

What controversy surrounds Henry Kissinger's actions during the Vietnam War?

Kissinger has been criticized for his involvement in secret bombings of Cambodia and Laos, support for authoritarian regimes, and prolonging the war through diplomatic maneuvers, raising ethical and legal questions about his role.

Did Henry Kissinger receive a Nobel Peace Prize related to the Vietnam War?

Yes, Henry Kissinger was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1973, jointly with Le Duc Tho of North Vietnam, for their efforts in negotiating a ceasefire during the Vietnam War, although the award was controversial as fighting continued.

How did Henry Kissinger's policies affect U.S. strategy in Vietnam?

Kissinger advocated for Vietnamization, aiming to shift combat roles to South Vietnamese forces while gradually withdrawing U.S. troops, and supported secret military operations to pressure North Vietnam.

What was Henry Kissinger's involvement in the secret bombing campaigns during the Vietnam War?

Kissinger authorized and oversaw secret bombing campaigns in Cambodia and Laos intended to disrupt North Vietnamese supply lines, which remained classified for years and led to significant civilian casualties.

How did Henry Kissinger's diplomatic approach influence the end of the Vietnam War?

His diplomatic approach focused on negotiation and power balancing, using back-channel talks and realpolitik to reach an agreement that allowed U.S. withdrawal but ultimately left South Vietnam vulnerable.

What criticisms have historians made about Henry Kissinger's role in the Vietnam War?

Historians have criticized Kissinger for prolonging the conflict, engaging in morally questionable tactics like secret bombings, and prioritizing geopolitical strategy over human costs.

How did Henry Kissinger manage relations with North Vietnam during the war?

Kissinger engaged in secret negotiations with North Vietnamese officials, balancing diplomacy with military pressure to extract terms favorable to the U.S. in the peace talks.

What impact did Henry Kissinger's Vietnam War policies have on his legacy?

Kissinger's Vietnam War policies have left a complex legacy marked by diplomatic achievements and deep controversies, influencing how he is viewed in terms of ethics, international relations, and Cold War history.

Additional Resources

1. *"The Trial of Henry Kissinger"* by Christopher Hitchens

This provocative book delves into the controversial actions of Henry Kissinger during the Vietnam War and other global conflicts. Hitchens meticulously examines Kissinger's policies and decisions,

arguing that they amounted to war crimes. The book blends investigative journalism with moral critique, challenging readers to reconsider Kissinger's legacy.

2. *"Kissinger: A Biography" by Walter Isaacson*

Walter Isaacson provides a comprehensive portrait of Henry Kissinger, exploring his rise to power and his role in shaping U.S. foreign policy during the Vietnam War. The biography offers insights into Kissinger's strategic thinking, diplomatic maneuvers, and complex personality. It balances criticism and admiration, making it a nuanced study of a controversial figure.

3. *"The Vietnam War: An Intimate History" by Geoffrey C. Ward and Ken Burns*

While not exclusively about Kissinger, this book provides crucial context for his involvement in the Vietnam War. Drawing from extensive interviews and archival materials, it presents a detailed narrative of the conflict's political and military dimensions. Kissinger's diplomacy is examined as part of the broader efforts to end the war.

4. *"Henry Kissinger and the American Century" by Jeremi Suri*

Jeremi Suri explores Kissinger's influence on American foreign policy during the Cold War, with significant attention to the Vietnam War era. The book analyzes how Kissinger's realpolitik shaped U.S. strategy and international relations. It also discusses the long-term consequences of his decisions on global politics.

5. *"The Best and the Brightest" by David Halberstam*

This classic work investigates the group of U.S. policymakers, including Kissinger's predecessors, who engineered the Vietnam War. Although Kissinger is not the central figure, the book sets the stage for understanding the environment in which he operated. It highlights the intelligence failures and misjudgments that preceded Kissinger's tenure.

6. *"Ending the Vietnam War: A History of America's Involvement in and Extrication from the Vietnam War" by Henry Kissinger*

Written by Kissinger himself, this memoir details his role in negotiating the Paris Peace Accords and ending U.S. involvement in Vietnam. It offers firsthand insight into the diplomatic challenges and strategic considerations during the war's final years. The book is essential for understanding Kissinger's perspective on the conflict.

7. *"The Pentagon Papers" (Excerpted sections on Kissinger's role)*

The Pentagon Papers reveal classified information about U.S. decision-making during the Vietnam War, including Kissinger's involvement. This collection exposes the discrepancies between public statements and private actions by policymakers. It is a critical source for understanding the complexities and controversies surrounding Kissinger's conduct.

8. *"Kissinger on Kissinger: Reflections on Diplomacy, Grand Strategy, and Leadership" edited by Walter Isaacson*

This compilation features Kissinger's own writings and interviews, shedding light on his thoughts about the Vietnam War and his diplomatic philosophy. It provides readers with a direct window into his reasoning and approach to international crises. The book is valuable for those interested in Kissinger's self-assessment and legacy.

9. *"Sideshow: Kissinger, Nixon, and the Destruction of Cambodia" by William Shawcross*

Shawcross examines the secret bombing campaigns and policies that Kissinger helped orchestrate in Cambodia during the Vietnam War. The book details the devastating impact of these actions on the region and critiques Kissinger's moral and strategic choices. It is an important work for

understanding the wider consequences of Kissinger's Vietnam War policies.

Henry Kissinger Vietnam War

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henry kissinger vietnam war: *Ending the Vietnam War* Henry Kissinger, 2003-02-11 Now, for the first time, Kissinger gives us in a single volume an in-depth, inside view of the Vietnam War, personally collected, annotated, revised, and updated from his bestselling memoirs and his book *Diplomacy*. Many other authors have written about what they thought happened—or thought should have happened—in Vietnam, but it was Henry Kissinger who was there at the epicenter, involved in every decision from the long, frustrating negotiations with the North Vietnamese delegation to America's eventual extrication from the war. Here, Kissinger writes with firm, precise knowledge, supported by meticulous documentation that includes his own memoranda to and replies from President Nixon. He tells about the tragedy of Cambodia, the collateral negotiations with the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China, the disagreements within the Nixon and Ford administrations, the details of all negotiations in which he was involved, the domestic unrest and protest in the States, and the day-to-day military to diplomatic realities of the war as it reached the White House. As compelling and exciting as Barbara Tuchman's *The Guns of August*, *Ending the Vietnam War* also reveals insights about the bigger-than-life personalities—Johnson, Nixon, de Gaulle, Ho Chi Minh, Brezhnev—who were caught up in a war that forever changed international relations. This is history on a grand scale, and a book of overwhelming importance to the public record.

henry kissinger vietnam war: *Kissinger's Betrayal: How America Lost the Vietnam War* Stephen B. Young, 2023-05-23 Kissinger's Betrayal is arguably the most important single source

published in decades for understanding why America went to war in Vietnam, why doing so was important, and what went wrong and ultimately led to a Communist victory.--Prof. Robert F. Turner, SJD, former president of the U.S. Institute of Peace, author of *Vietnamese Communism: Its Origins and Development*, and co-founder of the Center for National Security Law at the University of Virginia What really happened in Vietnam? For five decades, conventional wisdom about the Vietnam War has been that it was lost because it never could have been won. South Vietnam was doomed to defeat. The American effort was a foreign intrusion forever incapable of winning the hearts and minds of the South Vietnamese people. But what if South Vietnam was defeated not because of its own shortcomings but because it was betrayed by a secret deal made behind its back? Deeply researched and compellingly argued, Kissinger's *Betrayal* uses once-secret files of the American ambassador to South Vietnam and long-overlooked documents from official government archives--including the foreign ministry of the Soviet Union--to reveal for the first time how Henry Kissinger personally and secretly schemed to irrevocably compromise South Vietnam's chances for survival. Without informing his president, other American leaders, or US allies in South Vietnam, Kissinger unilaterally made a horrendous--and ultimately completely unnecessary--diplomatic concession that allowed Communist North Vietnam to leave its army inside South Vietnam and then freely resume its war of invasion and conquest at a time of its own choosing. In an unprecedented account, historian and global executive director of the Caux Round Table for Moral Capitalism Stephen B. Young provides new insight into both genuine Vietnamese Nationalism and the French colonialism that marginalized and decentered the right of the Vietnamese people to live freely in an independent country of their own choosing. Kissinger's *Betrayal* reveals a fresh and more truthful history of the Vietnam War that restores dignity to America as well as the people of Vietnam.

henry kissinger vietnam war: No Peace, No Honor Larry Berman, 2001-09-23 In this shocking exposé on the betrayal of South Vietnam, premier historian Larry Berman uses never-before-seen North Vietnamese documents to create a sweeping indictment against President Nixon and Henry Kissinger. On April 30, 1975, when U.S. helicopters pulled the last soldiers out of Saigon, the question lingered: Had American and Vietnamese lives been lost in vain? When the city fell shortly thereafter, the answer was clearly yes. The Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam—signed by Henry Kissinger in 1973, and hailed as peace with honor by President Nixon—was a travesty. In *No Peace, No Honor*, Larry Berman reveals the long-hidden truth in secret documents concerning U.S. negotiations that Kissinger had sealed—negotiations that led to his sharing the Nobel Peace Prize. Based on newly declassified information and a complete North Vietnamese transcription of the talks, Berman offers the real story for the first time, proving that there is only one word for Nixon and Kissinger's actions toward the United States' former ally, and the tens of thousands of soldiers who fought and died: betrayal.

henry kissinger vietnam war: America at the Brink of Empire Lawrence W. Serewicz, 2007-01-01 Addressing issues of continuing if not heightened relevance to contemporary debate, *America at the Brink of Empire* explores the foreign policy leadership of Dean Rusk and Henry Kissinger regarding the extent of the United States' mission to insure a stable world order. Lawrence W. Serewicz argues that in the Vietnam conflict the United States experienced an identity crisis—a near Machiavellian moment, to use the concept of J. G. A. Pocock—whereby America came close to assuming an imperial role, stretching the country to the limits of its identity as a republic. Serewicz offers a revealing look at the parts played by Rusk and Kissinger—and President Lyndon Johnson—in bringing the nation to the brink of empire in the years 1963-75. As a true believer in liberal internationalism, Rusk set the stage by defining the war in Vietnam as a threat to the world order based on the United Nations security system created after World War II. Johnson kept an open-ended commitment in Vietnam without a clear goal in sight even as he pursued the ambitious domestic reforms of the Great Society. In refusing to choose between either an imperial mission or a true republican position for the nation, he brought it perilously close to becoming an empire, ultimately failing to achieve his goals either at home or abroad. Kissinger corrected for Johnson's overreach, implementing a pragmatic realism based upon the principle that the United States is an

ordinary country-a republic, not an empire-within the international community and therefore must balance its commitments with its resources. In concluding, Serewicz reflects on the continuing relevance of the Machiavellian moment for the United States by observing the differences and similarities between the presidencies of Johnson and George W. Bush. *America at the Brink of Empire* illuminates the far-reaching consequences of Rusk's and Kissinger's widely divergent foreign policy philosophies and outlines the tension that a statesman must reconcile between a republican government and the maintenance of a stable world order.

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henry kissinger vietnam war: *The War After the War* Johannes Kadura, 2016-02 In *The War after the War*, Johannes Kadura offers a fresh interpretation of American strategy in the wake of the cease-fire that began in Vietnam on January 28, 1973. The U.S. exit from Vietnam continues to be important in discussions of present-day U.S. foreign policy, so it is crucial that it be interpreted correctly. In challenging the prevailing version of the history of the events, Kadura provides interesting correctives to the different accounts, including the ones of the key actors themselves, President Richard Nixon and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger foremost among them. In so doing, Kadura aims to forge a synthesis between orthodox and revisionist interpretations of this important period. Kadura finds that the strategy employed by Nixon and Kissinger centered on the concepts of equilibrium strategy and insurance policy. That approach allowed them to follow a twofold strategy of making a major effort to uphold South Vietnam while at the same time maintaining a fallback strategy of downplaying the overall significance of Vietnam. Whether they won or lost on their primary bet to secure South Vietnam, Nixon and Kissinger expected to come through the crisis in a viable strategic position.

henry kissinger vietnam war: Years of Upheaval Henry Kissinger, 2011-09-01 In *Years of Upheaval*, Henry Kissinger recalls the turbulent years of the second administration of Richard Nixon, which began in January 1973. Two momentous events and their consequences dominate this account: the Watergate scandal, and the 1973 October war in the Middle East. The book opens at the Western White House in August 1973, when Dr. Kissinger is told by the president during a poolside conversation that he is to become Secretary of State. The memories that follow are a rich compendium of his experiences in the months before and after the appointment: including an eerie trip to Hanoi shortly after the Vietnam cease-fire; efforts to settle the war in Cambodia; the tempestuous Year of Europe; two Nixon-Brezhnev summits and the controversy over détente. Dr. Kissinger's dramatic, day-by-day account of how the Middle East war was transformed into the beginning of peacemaking shapes the climactic chapters of the book, in counterpoint to the worsening crisis at home, which culminated with Nixon's resignation. His frank portrait of Nixon's last days in the White House is perhaps the most perceptive to date.

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henry kissinger vietnam war: Crisis Henry Kissinger, 2003-08-26 By drawing upon previously unpublished transcripts of his telephone conversations during the Yom Kippur War (1973) and the last days of the Vietnam War (1975), Henry Kissinger reveals what goes on behind the scenes at the highest levels in a diplomatic crisis. The two major foreign policy crises in this book, one successfully negotiated, one that ended tragically, were unique in that they moved so fast that much of the work on them had to be handled by telephone. The longer of the two sections deals in detail with the Yom Kippur War and is full of revelations, as well as great relevancy: In Kissinger's

conversations with Golda Meir, Israeli Prime Minister; Simcha Dinitz, Israeli ambassador to the U.S.; Mohamed el-Zayyat, the Egyptian Foreign Minister; Anatoly Dobrynin, the Soviet Ambassador to the U.S.; Kurt Waldheim, the Secretary General of the U.N.; and a host of others, as well as with President Nixon, many of the main elements of the current problems in the Middle East can be seen. The section on the end of the Vietnam War is a tragic drama, as Kissinger tries to help his president and a divided nation through the final moments of a lost war. It is full of astonishing material, such as Kissinger's trying to secure the evacuation of a Marine company which, at the very last minute, is discovered to still be in Saigon as the city is about to fall, and his exchanges with Ambassador Martin in Saigon, who is reluctant to leave his embassy. This is a book that presents perhaps the best record of the inner workings of diplomacy at the superheated pace and tension of real crisis.

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henry kissinger vietnam war: *Nixon's Nuclear Specter* William Burr, Jeffrey P. Kimball, 2015-06-15 In their initial effort to end the Vietnam War, Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger attempted to lever concessions from Hanoi at the negotiating table with military force and coercive diplomacy. They were not seeking military victory, which they did not believe was feasible. Instead, they backed up their diplomacy toward North Vietnam and the Soviet Union with the Madman Theory of threatening excessive force, which included the specter of nuclear force. They began with verbal threats then bombed North Vietnamese and Viet Cong base areas in Cambodia, signaling that there was more to come. As the bombing expanded, they launched a previously unknown mining ruse against Haiphong, stepped-up their warnings to Hanoi and Moscow, and initiated planning for a massive shock-and-awe military operation referred to within the White House inner circle as DUCK HOOK. Beyond the mining of North Vietnamese ports and selective bombing in and around Hanoi, the initial DUCK HOOK concept included proposals for "tactical" nuclear strikes against logistics targets and U.S. and South Vietnamese ground incursions into the North. In early October 1969, however, Nixon aborted planning for the long-contemplated operation. He had been influenced by Hanoi's defiance in the face of his dire threats and concerned about U.S. public reaction, antiwar protests, and internal administration dissent. In place of DUCK HOOK, Nixon and Kissinger

launched a secret global nuclear alert in hopes that it would lend credibility to their prior warnings and perhaps even persuade Moscow to put pressure on Hanoi. It was to be a “special reminder” of how far President Nixon might go. The risky gambit failed to move the Soviets, but it marked a turning point in the administration's strategy for exiting Vietnam. Nixon and Kissinger became increasingly resigned to a “long-route” policy of providing Saigon with a “decent chance” of survival for a “decent interval” after a negotiated settlement and U.S. forces left Indochina. Burr and Kimball draw upon extensive research in participant interviews and declassified documents to unravel this intricate story of the October 1969 nuclear alert. They place it in the context of nuclear threat making and coercive diplomacy since 1945, the culture of the Bomb, intra-governmental dissent, domestic political pressures, the international “nuclear taboo,” and Vietnamese and Soviet actions and policies. It is a history that holds important lessons for the present and future about the risks and uncertainties of nuclear threat making.

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henry kissinger vietnam war: The Flawed Architect Jussi M. Hanhimaki, 2004-09-09 Henry Kissinger dominated American foreign relations like no other figure in recent history. He negotiated an end to American involvement in the Vietnam War, opened relations with Communist China, and orchestrated détente with the Soviet Union. Yet he is also the man behind the secret bombing of Cambodia and policies leading to the overthrow of Chile's President Salvador Allende. Which is more accurate, the picture of Kissinger the skilled diplomat or Kissinger the war criminal? In *The Flawed Architect*, the first major reassessment of Kissinger in over a decade, historian Jussi Hanhimaki paints a subtle, carefully composed portrait of America's most famous and infamous statesman. Drawing on extensive research from newly declassified files, the author follows Kissinger from his beginnings in the Nixon administration up to the current controversy fed by Christopher Hitchens over whether Kissinger is a war criminal. Hanhimaki guides the reader through White House power struggles and debates behind the Cambodia and Laos invasions, the search for a strategy in Vietnam, the breakthrough with China, and the unfolding of Soviet-American detente. Here, too, are many other international crises of the period--the Indo-Pakistani War, the Yom Kippur War, the Angolan civil war--all set against the backdrop of Watergate. Along the way, Hanhimaki sheds light on Kissinger's personal flaws--he was obsessed with secrecy and bureaucratic infighting in an administration that self-destructed in its abuse of power--as well as his great strengths as a diplomat. We see Kissinger negotiating, threatening and joking with virtually all of the key foreign leaders of the 1970s, from Mao to Brezhnev and Anwar Sadat to Golda Meir. This well researched account brings to life the complex nature of American foreign policymaking during the Kissinger years. It will be the standard work on Kissinger for years to come.

henry kissinger vietnam war: Nixon and Kissinger Robert Dallek, 2007-04-24 With the publication of his magisterial biography of John F. Kennedy, *An Unfinished Life*, Robert Dallek cemented his reputation as one of the greatest historians of our time. Now, in this epic joint biography, he offers a provocative, groundbreaking portrait of a pair of outsize leaders whose unlikely partnership dominated the world stage and changed the course of history. More than thirty years after working side-by-side in the White House, Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger remain two of the most compelling, contradictory, and powerful men in America in the second half of the

twentieth century. While their personalities could hardly have seemed more different, they were drawn together by the same magnetic force. Both were largely self-made men, brimming with ambition, driven by their own inner demons, and often ruthless in pursuit of their goals. At the height of their power, the collaboration and rivalry between them led to a sweeping series of policies that would leave a defining mark on the Nixon presidency. Tapping into a wealth of recently declassified archives, Robert Dallek uncovers fascinating details about Nixon and Kissinger's tumultuous personal relationship and the extent to which they struggled to outdo each other in the reach for achievements in foreign affairs. Dallek also brilliantly analyzes their dealings with power brokers at home and abroad—including the nightmare of Vietnam, the unprecedented opening to China, détente with the Soviet Union, the Yom Kippur War in the Middle East, the disastrous overthrow of Allende in Chile, and growing tensions between India and Pakistan—while recognizing how both men were continually plotting to distract the American public's attention from the growing scandal of Watergate. With unprecedented detail, Dallek reveals Nixon's erratic behavior during Watergate and the extent to which Kissinger was complicit in trying to help Nixon use national security to prevent his impeachment or resignation. Illuminating, authoritative, revelatory, and utterly engrossing, *Nixon and Kissinger* provides a startling new picture of the immense power and sway these two men held in changing world history.

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