

The most important

LIFE
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In Nixon's hideaway in the Executive Office Building, across the street from the White House, Henry

Henry Kissinger sits at the round table in the corner of his blue-and-gold office. His back is to the window, and beyond the window the White House lawn is just touched by the winter sun. With the lone exception of Richard Nixon, who is 50 paces down the hall and already deep into the morning's routine, Kissinger is the most talked about, most analyzed and most important man in Washington. There is not a No. 2 man in history

by **HUGH SIDEY**

who has ever wielded such power, with such authority.

He has devoured his dietary portion of scrambled eggs, crunched through half an English muffin and now is pouring black coffee. He has read hastily through the cover stories on him in both *TIME* and *Newsweek*. After a few caustic comments about how journalists think the National Security Council works, he grins and says, "I asked [White House speechwriter] Bill Safire if he thought I could survive two cover stories in a single week. Safire said, 'No, Henry, but what a way to go.'"

No. 2 man in history



Kissinger confers with his boss. At right, in black tie and a broad smile, he heads for a Press Club dinner

Henry is not going. Now, suddenly, he seems to drop a curtain between this office and such notions as public image. He leans forward, his brow furrowed. His eyes are wide, even gentle. His physical presence is again unassuming. He is the professor, sure enough of himself and the knowledge he brings, but nevertheless aware of how much he does not yet know and of how uncertain are the affairs of men.

"I'm concerned about American civilization," he says, his hands fumbling with each other, his voice slow. "We live in a

world in which some countries pursue ruthless policies. . . . We are in a period which someday may be compared to one of the religious ages, when whole values change. . . . We are a warm-hearted people, concerning ourselves with a lot that is superficial, not willing to believe that we can make irrevocable errors, not willing to trust the judgment of the leaders until all the facts are in and it is usually too late, absorbed in bureaucratic infighting and indulging in various forms of debilitating nostalgia."

In his classroom phraseology, he has just given the reason for

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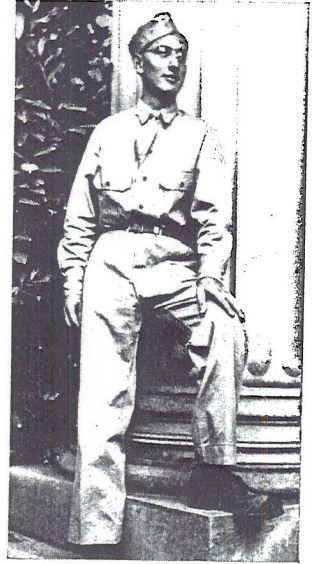


Today Paula and Louis Kissinger keep a picture of their famous son on a sideboard in their Manhattan apartment. The family came here in 1938.



As an 8-year-old in Fürth, Germany, Heinz Kissinger preferred soccer to schoolbooks. His scholarship later improved, but he is still a football fan.

Having changed his name to Henry after his family fled to America, in 1943 Kissinger entered the U.S. army and served in counterintelligence.



A member of the Harvard faculty and already an expert on foreign affairs, Kissinger worked as adviser to Nelson Rockefeller from 1956 to 1958.



He grew up with 'a sense of things failing'

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being where he is. Richard Nixon, gut-bucket Middle American, and Henry Kissinger, Harvard intellectual, share doubts about the future. They also share something else—the belief that their particular talents are the right ones for these times, to arrest the national decay and help revitalize the American spirit.

Kissinger looks uneasily at the lighted buttons on his huge phone console, the fever chart of the White House. "The historian in me says it can't be done. The political man in me says it is possible. This is an elemental country, capable of tremendous effort when moved." Optimism is clearly ascendant this morning with Henry Kissinger—and most mornings. Part of it comes from the sheer joy of power, a glandular stimulant that is not found in Widener Library stacks or in graduate seminars on international affairs. Another part is the realization that three years of the Nixon-Kissinger sense of objective and order have perceptibly calmed the world and nurtured hope.

"That's our major concern about Vietnam," Kissinger says, shifting so he can watch the progress of the thin sun against the frost on the window panes. He throws a leg over the chair arm. "The President very badly wants to end the war, but not in a way that breaks the American spirit, in a way that this country can preserve its confidence in itself." Behind him are shelves of books on history and politics, a kind of background tapestry to Kissinger's life. Since his childhood in Germany, he has lived in a world of collapsing po-

litical systems. A "sense of things failing" has been the subject of his scholarship, and guided the choice of one of his major study areas, the five weeks of miscalculation and error which preceded World War I. "History is not a cookbook from which you can get recipes," Kissinger has said. But his cardinal rule of diplomatic planning comes from his understanding of historical precedent—have an objective in mind before taking action and be aware of possible consequences.

"Here are some of the papers and reports on which we base our discussions," remarks Kissinger, rising and thumping an eight-inch pile of documents in the middle of his cluttered table. They are neatly packaged and tabbed, a compendium of charts and tables, analyses, options and consequences. It is Kissinger's daily fare. From it he prepares for Richard Nixon what may be the clearest, most concise and most accurate action reports on world affairs that any President has ever received.

The Historian Making History

Early in 1971 the trouble broke out in East Pakistan. President Yahya Khan ordered West Pakistani troops to put down the bid for independence in the East, and a long dark season of terror and exile began. News of developments clacked in over the wires in the Situation Room in the base-

ment of the White House. Henry Kissinger's cadre of young aides (there are 46 assistants and 105 administrative personnel) gathered the yellow cables and delivered them raw to him. Other reports from the Central Intelligence Agency and the State Department came in, filling out the bleak picture. Kissinger advised his staff that there was one more trouble spot in the world to add to the dozen or so that the White House already had under intensive care, and nudged his own crowded mind to make room for it.

The weeks went by and the bloodshed and misery worsened. Millions of Bengalis streamed across the border into India. Kissinger, between secret flights to Paris and the supersecret communication with China, studied the Pakistani political picture and the personalities of Yahya and Indira Gandhi, then traæd back into history the roots of the anger now being so violently displayed.

In July he took off for a trip around the world. His central mission, deeply secret, was to slip into Peking from West Pakistan with the help of Yahya—a bit of assistance, incidentally, which played a part in Washington's reluctance to criticize the atrocities committed in East Pakistan by Yahya's troops. He almost incidentally paused in both Pakistan and India to get the facts on the crisis there.

Aides flying with him noted that he sat for long minutes at the window of the plane, staring out into the clouds or looking unseeing at the ground

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In the Situation Room, his questions come like projectiles

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30,000 feet below. The jet plane has intensified the life of the diplomat. But it also offers escape from telephones and bureaucrats, and Kissinger values the unencumbered hours which flying provides. "This government is geared to making decisions," he said once. "There is no time for reflection. That bothers me." He has designed his administrative system to cut down as much as possible on "the amount of nervous energy which must be given to managing the bureaucracy." When there is no crisis, he devotes no more than 10% of his time to operational details. More important, with Nixon's blessing he simply circumvents the bureaucracy which they both feel cannot act with the speed and secrecy which the President's initiative demands.

Kissinger began to get a feeling about India. He does not make written outlines. Even when writing books he submerges himself in his subject, then waits for his mind to organize the parts into a new and meaningful picture and pour it back in orderly detail. It has always worked. Now he wondered if there was not ripening on the subcontinent a historical opportunity for India that might be too compelling for her to ignore.

Back in Washington Kissinger thought out loud to Richard Nixon. He sees the President early in the morning and sometimes at midday. He almost always sees him in the evening, before Nixon

leaves the Oval Office in the Executive Wing, or later, just before the President quits the Lincoln Sitting Room for bed. There are details to iron out in these sessions but, like Kissinger, Nixon would rather be philosophical. At least 75% of their time together is devoted to worldly meditations, which in the end probably have a greater influence on our foreign policy than any other high-level discussions conducted in Washington. This is a circumstance that dispirits the State Department's civil servants and has angered ranking U.S. diplomats around the globe.

Now, Kissinger gave his reading on Pakistan and India. Pakistan had become morally isolated, he believed, while India's military position was overwhelmingly favorable. All this was adding up to great war pressure on India. The White House instituted a policy calling quietly for restraint by both sides. It was not enough. Pakistan plunged ahead with the killing, and the U.S., hampered by the China obligation, did not protest. Mrs. Gandhi prepared for war, deliberately ignoring peace alternatives suggested during her visit to Washington. U.S. policy turned into angry opposition to India, plus undercover sympathy for Pakistan. Nixon and Kissinger were stunned by the criticism of this policy following India's liberation of East Pakistan and the formation of Bangladesh. Had the U.S. failed to counterbalance Indian ag-

gressiveness, Kissinger insists, India might have attacked West Pakistan too. When the record is known, he argues, it will show that the U.S. made a determined search for peace. He recently arranged for the *New York Times* to publish a detailed account of the American role in the crisis, as an answer to critics. Then the Anderson papers came out, with verbatim reports of secret deliberations; Kissinger halted the *Times* project for fear it would appear to be a rebuttal.

The Devil's Advocate

It is late on an April afternoon in the Situation Room, the stark news center of national security affairs in the White House. Senior advisers have been summoned from State, Defense and the CIA. Henry Kissinger, who runs the group, is ten minutes late, a habit some who recollect these meetings resent. When he enters at last, he gets down to business immediately. That day, the subject is mutual balanced force reductions in Europe between NATO and Warsaw Pact countries.

Kissinger's questions come like projectiles. What happens during the first seven days if war breaks out after we have cut our forces by 10%? The answer is barely out and he asks for a reading on 14 days. Thirty days? He recalls a memorandum from an earlier meeting which suggests that following a mutual force reduction the offense can be more effective than the defense, since they can concentrate and attack at will; defenders have to spread out. Is that right? he asks.

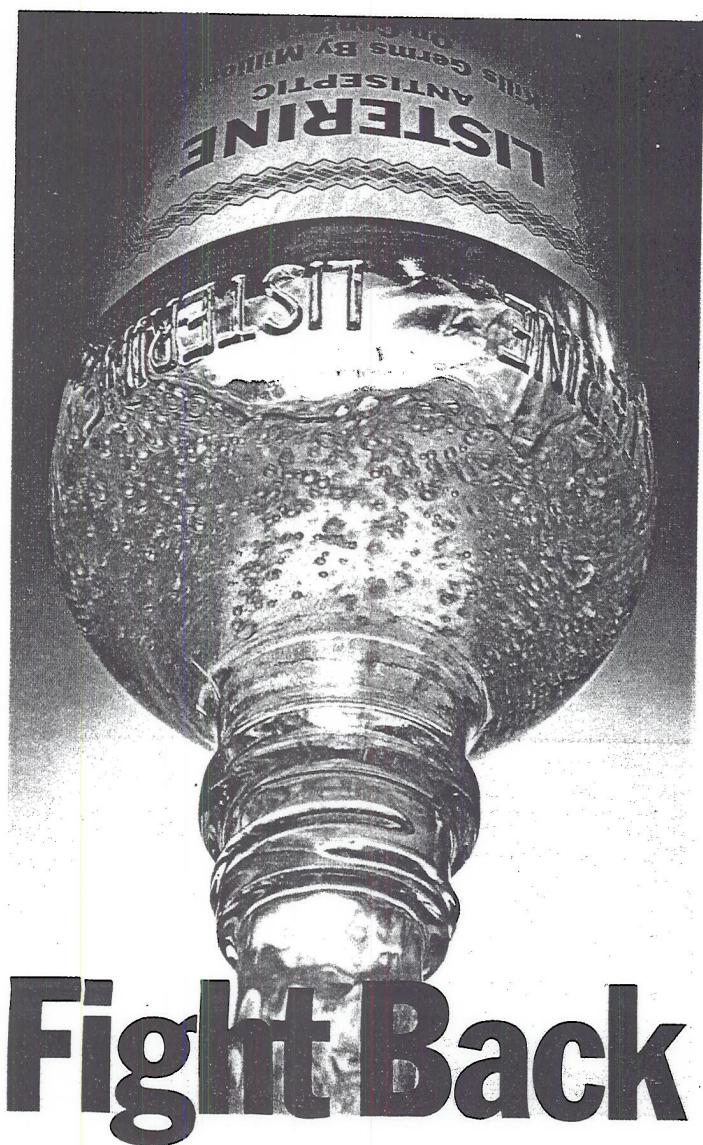
Kissinger knows the details that are in the thick report on which the discussion is based. He compliments the people who wrote it, but then wonders if the propositions they make are any good. He knows the formula for trading off tanks for fighter bombers if we can ever come to terms. Somewhere in the back of his mind is lodged the timetable telling just how long it might take the Soviet Union to get reserve troops up to the border between East and West Europe if war broke out. Kissinger half mutters something about there being a light-year between our understanding of these problems and the way some of our allies understand them. In less than an hour the group has dispersed and new instructions have been issued calling for more study.

Other days, other meetings. The subjects and the men who line the sides of the table change, Kissinger stays the same. He wants to know how much ammunition the air force has stored in Europe and the facts of resupply. If our European ground forces had to fall back in case of an attack, how far back would they go? Again, what would be our response if something went wrong with Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik*?

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In the White House Press Room, Kissinger trades jokes with Secretary of State William Rogers (left) and presidential adviser Robert Haldeman.



Fight Back

**YOU CAN'T STOP COLDS,
BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO GIVE UP.**

The colds-catching season is now in full swing. And there's no way to keep your kids warm and dry all the time. So what do you do? Give up? No! You fight back.

You make sure your family gets plenty of rest, dresses properly, and eats lots of good food. And you make them gargle twice a day with Listerine Antiseptic. You can't stop colds, but at least this way you have a fighting chance.

This colds season, fight back with Listerine Antiseptic.

'The Chinese seem to want a summit'

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The girls Kissinger takes to Chasen's can't even imagine these endless, tedious hours of thinking, straining, groping for answers in a bewildering world. It is doubtful if even Nixon knows the weary lengths of these discussions, and their excruciating detail. What's it all about? an acquaintance asks Kissinger one day. He seems surprised that there is a question. "I am deliberately playing the devil's advocate to crystallize our thinking about alternate policies," he says. Then the questions march out on long lines once more.

The Negotiator

On a night in April, 1971, Richard Nixon was entertaining at a stag dinner in the mansion. Over in the West Wing, Kissinger, with mounting excitement, was reading a handwritten message on a flimsy scrap of paper. It was from a man who had served as an intermediary between China and the United States. Kissinger called the President's military aide and said, "Don't let the President go to bed. I must see him. It is imperative." When the dinner ended Kissinger was summoned. Clutching the thin paper, he strode into the Lincoln Sitting Room and read the message aloud to Nixon. "It seems to me," Nixon said, "they want a very high-level contact—maybe even a summit meeting." Until 12:30 the two of them read the short message over and over, analyzing each sentence, suggesting how they should respond, who should go to Peking. Two days later Nixon had settled the question of the negotiator. "I've thought about it," he told Kissinger one morning. "I will send you."

So deep had Nixon's trust of Kissinger grown, so thoroughly had Kissinger learned Nixon's mind, so complete was his loyalty to the President that he was the logical choice for so delicate and important a mission.

The details of the encounter, even how he was to get to Peking, were left to Kissinger. He told Nixon about the mechanics and almost always the President approved, devoting his own time and energy to broader policy considerations. The meetings between Nixon and Kissinger increased in frequency, Kissinger memorizing every point and nuance the President wanted conveyed to Chou En-lai.

On July 9 Kissinger leaned forward in his chair in the state guest house outside Peking and began to read the formal statement that he and Nixon had worked on for six full hours. It was a clear and simple exposition of why Nixon wanted the two nations to resume their dialogue after 20 years. In ten minutes Kissinger was at the end of it, declaring that at last Americans were in the land of "mystery." Mystery? asked the gracious Chou En-lai. Why was China the land of mystery and what was the meaning of mystery?

For the next ten minutes the two men drifted away from the frigid realities of power politics between East and West. They behaved more like philosophers than politicians, wondering about why nations develop particular concepts of each other. Kissinger liked it. So did Chou. The men seemed to take a new measure of each other. The temperature in the room moved up into the comfort zone. Kissinger preserved the personal rapport with careful humor. Chou responded and there were smiles at each of their subsequent sessions—including one at 4 a.m. in Kissinger's hotel suite.

This was a significant diplomatic departure. Lawyers have done most of such talking before, energetically clinging to fixed points and pursuing the business at hand as if a tight-fisted client

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'Kissinger just knows more than anyone here'

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were waiting outside. Now whenever Kissinger and Chou felt like it they paused for reflection on their countries and their political systems. They covered history from the 19th-century intervention in China by foreign powers to the Long March of the 1930s when the Communists went into exile to gather strength, and how these events relate to today's suspicions. Then they delved into the development of both countries since World War II. The political lines did not bend much but the human rapport added gratifying dimensions for the opening of this new diplomatic era.

It was much the same during the recently revealed secret sessions in Paris. Kissinger opened by offering Le Duc Tho a sincere profession of respect for the North Vietnamese. "They are an heroic people," he said, watching for the small signs of human understanding that ease the hours of argument. Again he encouraged banter during the short breaks in the negotiations. When Le Duc Tho apologized for one lengthy exposition, Kissinger said he would invite him to Harvard since everybody there talked 50 minutes anyway. "Every time we part," said Le Duc Tho at the close of one session, "we part with a smile." That was about the only thing which Kissinger brought back from the tiring hours in Paris. It still is more than anyone else has gotten.

The Presence

On this day not long ago, the members of the National Security Council have gathered in the Cabinet Room to await the President. Secretary of State William Rogers, Defense Secretary Melvin Laird and George Lincoln, director of the Office of Emergency Preparedness, are there. Vice-President Spiro Agnew strides in and there are subdued greetings. Intelligence experts, including Richard Helms, director of the CIA, take their seats and fish out their papers. At the edges of the room young administration aides sit silently.

There is sun in the Rose Garden outside and it splashes into the Cabinet Room, giving it warmth. The genial Rogers laughs over an exchange with Laird. They flank the President's empty chair. The others silently study the agendas which have been neatly laid on the huge oval table before each of them, along with a gold ball-point pen and a fresh writing pad.

In the hall there is a quick, quiet tread. Henry Kissinger enters. He carries a black notebook in one hand, he is dressed in banker's blue and he moves majestically behind his prow of a nose. In the few strides it takes him to reach the first extended hand, something beneath the long stretch of forehead instructs his mouth to form a smile.

It comes, almost boyish. "Bill . . . Mel . . . Dick . . . Mr. Vice-President." He is quickly at his place, across and to the left of the President's position, and he places the massive notebook before him.

The mood has changed in the room. Henry Kissinger is a very special force. Involuntarily, the eyes of each of the men are drawn to the notebook which he now opens. They visually measure the pages. There is only one other such notebook in the room and it lies closed at the President's empty chair. A lesser participant in the corner watches Kissinger and wonders to himself about the aura of authority he seems to exude. Then he suddenly realizes that at that moment everyone in the room is doing the same thing and probably thinking the same thing—that Henry Kissinger has just come from the President's office. He alone knows Nixon's thoughts and attitudes, knows what he wants to hear and what he wants to do. They are aware, too, that Kissinger saw him the first thing that morning, saw him the night before and so on all the nights and days. The brass name plates on the backs of the massive brown leather chairs seem meaningless. So does the geography of the table. Somewhat in disbelief, the man watching from the fringes can see that Henry Kissinger dominates the room without doing anything.

"Gentlemen," announces an aide, "the President." Nixon comes through the door almost at a lope. He has a perfunctory, cheery "Good morning" and descends into the chair at the table's midships. The atmosphere has changed again. Nixon possesses all he beholds, even Kissinger. This is pure power. All but Nixon are supplicants. The small movements of the men are slightly more restrained, posture subtly more correct. Eyes, heads, bodies perceptibly incline toward the President.

Nixon opens the meeting. He states the problem and then he looks across the table to his left. "Henry," he says, "will you present the options for us?" Kissinger clears his throat, as he will do about every minute and a half for the next 20 minutes. His voice is steady and strong.

From the corner our observer notes another change. It is as if Kissinger has been led center stage by the king. There is a certain possessive pride in Nixon's manner as he settles back to listen. Kissinger becomes the teacher for everyone there, even Nixon. (Harvard Professor Stanley Hoffman, an old friend and colleague, not totally in jest, likens the situation to Aristotle and Philip of Macedon.) His intellect fills the room. It is soon plain that Kissinger and his staff have taken all those prosaic memos from State and Defense and trimmed off the fat. Causes and consequences of action or inaction have been extended beyond the point where the bureaucracy had stopped. Kissinger pours out brief assessments of personalities, politics and hardware. As he goes

Silhouetted against the facade of the Executive Office Building, Kissinger takes a call in his White House office.

he paws through his notes like a cub bear, sometimes using the exact language which he has so carefully written down in his notebook, but sometimes framing his ideas in fresh phrases that flow extemporaneously. The meanings are unaltered; he is fanatical about being fair to every department, about presenting every dissent without distortion. In a strange way this is an additional frustration for the orphaned bureaucracy. Kissinger cannot be accused of showing bias.

Nixon has his own notebook, also prepared by Kissinger, with a summary of the issues and points for the President to make. Sometimes he follows it. Most of the time he just listens. Rogers takes a furtive glance or two over the President's shoulder as if trying to get an idea what Kissinger will say next. There are no challenges from the audience, hostility having been overwhelmed by facts and intellect. The man watching from the corner tells himself that arguments from any person but Nixon would be almost meaningless. "Kissinger just knows more than anyone here," he says to himself.

When Kissinger finishes his presentation, Nixon takes charge again. He goes around the table querying each participant for other thoughts. There are few meaningful suggestions about the substance. The discussion turns to departmental and congressional concerns. The meeting ends and the cabinet officers scurry for their limousines. Kissinger tucks his huge notebook under his arm and strides off down the hall. Something nags at him. He mutters, half to himself, "Not one of us mentioned the national interest." ■

