

'Roasting' Henry Kissinger is useful but far from adequate

by Scott Thompson

Kissinger, A Biography

by Walter Isaacson

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Walter Isaacson's biography of Henry Kissinger betrays a gossip columnist's grasp of history and policy matters. It never gets beyond the kind of mild smear that usually is associated with a Hollywood or Washington celebrity "roast."

But, Isaacson has made a marginally useful contribution to the Kissinger lore by at least assembling a fairly broad sample of nasty comments and anecdotes from some of Kissinger's closest collaborators, allies, and victims. While the book is thoroughly lacking in any in-depth appreciation of Kissinger's lengthy career of treachery, it is not surprising to find a senior editor of *Time* magazine pulling his punches when it comes to dissecting the life of one of the leading British agents-of-influence of the postwar era.

This reviewer personally corresponded with Isaacson during the research phase of his work and is therefore certain that Isaacson was in possession of the now-infamous May 10, 1982 Chatham House speech to the Royal Institute of International Affairs, in which Kissinger boasted that he had been taking his orders from London throughout his "incarnation" as U.S. secretary of state and national security adviser. No mention was made of Kissinger's foreign agency.

Isaacson was also aware of the blood vendetta that Kissinger directed against Lyndon LaRouche. His only reference to the LaRouche-Kissinger wars that played so major a role in the behind-the-scenes policy battles of the 1970s and '80s is a one-paragraph description of a 1982 Newark Airport encounter between Kissinger's wife and a LaRouche supporter. And in that instance, Isaacson betrays a nauseating sympathy to Kissinger.

It clearly remains for a true historian to deliver the final word on Dr. Kissinger and the trail of political assassinations, wars, dope dealing, and genocide that mark his career. To date, the closest appreciation of Kissinger's evil is contained

in the handful of references in the recently published third edition of *Dope, Inc.*, which is appropriately subtitled "The Book That Drove Kissinger Crazy."

Nevertheless, the appearance of the Kissinger biography has served as an occasion for many of Henry's former friends and allies—including *Der Spiegel* publisher Rudolf Augstein, *Foreign Affairs* editor William Hyland, and others—to uncork with a series of venomous reviews and commentaries that make it clear that Henry's days in the sun are numbered. Whether Isaacson knew in advance that his book would occasion such an outpouring of personal hatred against Fat Henry is a matter of speculation. The fact that Henry is being duly roasted on a personal level is a long-overdue event. Back in 1982, Lyndon LaRouche had written a psycho-sexual appraisal of Kissinger and had concluded that this kind of anal-sadistic personality has no proper place in world affairs. If anything, the Isaacson book provides a significant amount of eyewitness information underscoring the accuracy of the LaRouche evaluation.

Highlights of a low-life

- During Kissinger's work on Castlereagh and Metternich at Harvard's School of Government, his Harvard colleague Stanley Hoffman said that Kissinger's "was a quest for a *Realpolitik* devoid of moral homilies." Kissinger paraphrased Goethe to describe himself: "If I had to choose between justice and disorder, on the one hand, and injustice and order, on the other, I would always choose the latter." One theme in *Kissinger* that Isaacson has gotten right, is that for Henry, morality has no place in his foreign policy.

- Another theme that Isaacson stresses is how Kissinger combined sycophancy with an egomaniacal sense of his self-importance: "His tendency to play up to powerful people prompted fellow students to take his middle initial A, and behind his back call him Henry Ass-Kissinger, recalled Herbert Spiro, later a foreign service officer."

- Kissinger's 1954 book *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy*, published by the Council on Foreign Relations, wedded Marquess of Queensberry rules for proper boxing to Bertrand Russell's doctrine of limited nuclear war. Kissinger was exposed to this insane doctrine through his participation in Russell's Pugwash Conferences—a fact that Isaacson has

missed. Yet, Paul Nitze said that when Kissinger was confronted with well-thought-out opposition to his utopian schemes, "Henry managed to convey that no one had thought intelligently about nuclear weapons and foreign policy until he came along to do it himself." Isaacson continues: "More significant, however, was Nitze's fundamental criticism that Kissinger had not been able to explain how a limited war, once under way, would stay limited. 'If the limitations are really to stand up under the immense pressures of even a "little" war,' Nitze wrote, 'It would seem something more is required than a Rube Goldberg chart of arbitrary limitations.' "

'I wonder who's Kissinger now'

- Many people recall what a thin skin Kissinger has. Oscar Ruebhausen, who was an assistant to New York Gov. Nelson Rockefeller (one of Kissinger's many patrons), told Isaacson: "He suffered a great deal by taking things personally, simple things, like whether or not a car met him at the airport and whether it was a Cadillac. . . . He would weep on one's shoulders at some slight. . . . it was candor and Machiavellian scheming at the same time."

- When Henry Kissinger was offered the post of national security adviser by Nixon in 1968, he took it with an alacrity that shocked Rockefeller's staff: "Among the Rockefeller staff, there was a sense of betrayal. Oscar Ruebhausen was with other advisers in the governor's office when the word came that Kissinger had gotten the offer. 'We were shocked,' he recalls. 'There was a sense that he was a whore.' Or, a chameleon. Kissinger's fickleness led some Rockefeller staffers to parody a popular song: 'I wonder who's Kissinger now?'"

- Isaacson describes the bond between Kissinger and Nixon, as follows: "Both were practitioners of *Realpolitik*, that blend of cold realism and power-oriented statecraft that tended to be, to use Kissinger's description of Bismarck, 'unencumbered by moral scruples.' . . . In a conversation with Golda Meir, Nixon once twisted the golden rule into a power game, telling her, 'My rule in international affairs is, "Do unto others as they would do unto you." At which Kissinger interjected: 'Plus 10%.' " But, Kissinger was also contemptuous of Nixon, whom he railed against in the presence of White House staffers, as being a "madman," "our drunken friend," "the meatball mind," "basket case." Once Kissinger shouted, "If the President had his way, there would be a nuclear war each week!" Isaacson hints at a truth—that Kissinger toyed with Nixon's flaws, particularly by triggering Nixon's paranoia, in a way that led to Nixon's Watergate downfall. According to Isaacson: "So Kissinger became an enabler for the dark side of Nixon's personality, someone who joined in his backbiting. . . . A willingness to talk tough and applaud ruthlessness was the best way to become Nixon's co-conspirator against a hostile world." But, as Isaacson implies, Kissinger acted behind Nixon's back—



Self-avowed British agent Henry Kissinger meeting with Mao Zedong in 1972, during the murderous Cultural Revolution. Mao and Maoism, as EIR has documented, were also a product of British imperial policy for China.

not to mention triggering the paranoid moments that led to Watergate, as when "he would tell aides, because as they alone knew, he was the one man who kept 'that drunken lunatic' from doing things that would 'blow up the world.' "

- Kissinger's deceitfulness is no secret. Frank Shakespeare addressed this vein, when he said: "Kissinger can meet with six different people, smart as hell, learned, knowledgeable, experienced, of very different views, and persuade all six of them that the real Henry Kissinger is just where they are." Isaacson adds: "Swapping tales of Kissinger's deceits soon became the staple of Washington dinner parties. [John] Lehman told of listening as Kissinger ordered arms negotiator Gerard Smith to proceed with an antiballistic missile (ABM) proposal for two American sites rather than four, hanging up the phone, then taking Defense Secretary Laird's call on another line and saying, 'I agree with you on the need for four sites, but that goddamn Gerry is constantly making concessions.' "

Few associates were fooled by Kissinger's deceit, says Isaacson: "It also squandered the staff's sense of moral worthiness. 'Some secrecy is necessary in government,' said Tony Lake, 'but Henry crossed the line from secrecy to deceit.' " Kissinger's obsessive secrecy was not shared by everyone, Isaacson reveals: "What infuriated him most of all was that the North Vietnamese clearly did not share his zeal for secrecy, back channels, and saying different things in private. 'Hanoi's "private" view was identical to its public one,' he later wrote with disdain."

Kissinger quickly earned a far-reaching reputation for deviousness. Isaacson writes of the Israelis' view, that Shi-

mon Peres “once privately told [Yitzhak] Rabin, ‘With due respect to Kissinger, he is the most devious man I’ve ever met.’ ” Isaacson quotes Kissinger’s colleague James Schlesinger, “ ‘Henry’s style of deception is less condemned in Europe than it is here,’ Schlesinger said. ‘Being excessively manipulative does not go over well in Anglo-Saxon countries.’ ” Or, again, Schlesinger said: “Henry enjoys the complexity of deviousness. . . . Other people when they lie look ashamed. Henry does it with style, as if it were an arabesque.” Others shared a similar view, such as Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Nixon’s ambassador to India, who “liked to repeat a line said to him by Helmut Sonnenfeldt: ‘You do not understand. Henry does not lie because it is in his interest. He lies because it is in his nature.’ Later Moynihan would say that Kissinger’s conspiratorial nature ‘helped bring on’ Watergate.”

● As national security adviser, Kissinger did everything possible to cut out Secretary of State William P. Rogers. Isaacson describes Nixon’s view of the matter as follows: “ ‘I’m sorry about how Henry and Bill go at each other,’ Nixon told William Safire one day. ‘It’s really rather deep-seated. Henry thinks Bill isn’t very deep, and Bill thinks Henry is power crazy.’ Then the President smiled and put his finger on the problem. ‘And in a sense,’ he said, ‘they’re both right.’ ” Nixon became disturbed by Kissinger’s vendetta against his secretary of state, however: “Kissinger’s obsession with Rogers began to get on Nixon’s nerves. . . . ‘The President got into a snit,’ [H.R.] Haldeman recalled, ‘and asked us to form a Henry-Handling Committee to deal with it.’ ” Later, this Henry-Handling Committee would convey the President’s order to Kissinger that he seek psychiatric attention.

Kissinger, who would increasingly speak in the voice of the President without even consulting Nixon, as Watergate loomed, took the same devious approach to the arms control talks that became the May, 1972 SALT and ABM Treaties: “ ‘At least in the Soviet Union, the whole Politburo was consulted,’ Gerard Smith said of the May 20 agreement. ‘The bulk of the American national security leadership was never consulted.’ ”

● The Handling-Henry Committee had to be reconvened after Kissinger’s meteoric eruption, when it was revealed that the Joint Chiefs of Staff were spying on him through Yeoman Radford: “ ‘Nixon wondered aloud,’ [John] Ehrlichman recalled, ‘if Henry needed psychiatric care.’ . . . But there was a stiletto sharpness to the President’s musings, and at one point he said that perhaps he would have to fire Kissinger if he did not agree to seek psychological help. ‘Talk to him, John,’ Nixon implored. ‘And talk to Al Haig. He will listen to Al.’ Haig agreed that Kissinger needed psychiatric help, and he told Ehrlichman so. He had repeatedly made that point to Haldeman. ‘Al told me that Henry had gone to a psychiatrist before,’ Haldeman later recalled, ‘and that he really needed psychiatric help again. Al would

complain to me all the time about Henry’s temper and paranoia. Or he would rant about Henry’s personal peccadillos and the demands he made. In the process, he would always get into psychiatric troubles.’ ” Later, Ehrlichman wrote a piece for an obscure British collection of spy tales about the situation, quoting President Nixon as having told the Henry-Handling Committee: “Just tell him [Kissinger], don’t ask him. Tell him: he sees a psychiatrist or he is out. Period. No appeal.”

● Kissinger sought and gained a treaty with North Vietnam which gave a “decent interval” before the signing of the treaty and the collapse of the South Vietnamese government: “On the day of the signing, Haig said to James Schlesinger, who would soon become defense secretary and one of Kissinger’s hard-line rivals: ‘This is a day of national shame.’ ” Isaacson quotes South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu as saying: “The U.S. made a deal over my head. . . . It was another Munich.” Kissinger inadvertently affirmed this assessment, when, as Isaacson writes, he made a gaffe at a press conference convened after the Paris Peace Accords were signed: “Kissinger uttered at the outset of his briefing a sound bite that was to haunt him for years. ‘We believe,’ he said, ‘that peace is at hand.’ ” Thieu told Isaacson: “ ‘If Kissinger had possessed the power to bomb the Independence Palace to force me to sign the agreement,’ Thieu later said with a caustic smile, ‘he would not hesitate to do so.’ ”

● Kissinger does confirm *EIR*’s analysis that, as President Nixon sank deeper into Watergate, Kissinger and Al Haig, who had become chief of staff, ran the White House: “Thus Kissinger had a freer hand. . . . In fact, in many of their conversations, Haig and Kissinger made critical decisions without even consulting the President.” In fact, Nixon was being nursed by Al Haig throughout Kissinger’s entire intervention into the 1973 Yom Kippur War, where he directly violated President Nixon’s orders to apply pressure to Israel. When Nixon tried to assert himself during the crisis, Kissinger told Haig: “I urge you to keep any Walter Mitty tendencies under control.” Meanwhile, as Isaacson reveals, Al Haig was leaking the White House secrets that fueled the Watergate crisis to the press, including to Bob Woodward at the *Washington Post*. Isaacson also reveals that Kissinger and Haig formed a conspiracy to force President Nixon to resign, rather than fight his impeachment: “Though they had bickered like schoolboys a few weeks earlier over who would get the suite next door to Nixon’s in the Kremlin at the final summit there (Haig won), they had begun putting aside their rivalry as they sought to guide Nixon toward resignation. Each day, Haig would call Kissinger to report on the progress he was making and the meetings he was setting up. Kissinger would help by arranging for telephone calls that would edge Nixon in the desired direction.” (For an additional dimension of this situation—the role of George Bush—see *EIR*’s book *George Bush: The Unauthorized Biography*, by Webster Tarpley and Anton Chaitkin.)