
Amory Lovins. He ends with a call for a Global Green Deal, with government refocusing much of the economy toward environmental restoration. I think he is correct, and I also think his reporting makes clear just how unlikely such a scheme really is, at least until

the attitudes he describes have begun to change.

Those attitudes, of course, are very nearly as strong in this country as they are in China. That's why we stand in desperate need of lots more reporting like this. ●

Eclipse of a Statesman

Why Dr. K's star has fallen

By Jacob Heilbrunn

ONE OF THE FEW HISTORICAL CONSTANTS is unexpected change. Consider the United States in the 1970s when gloom prevailed. America had been defeated in Vietnam. Richard Nixon had resigned. Stagflation—high unemployment coupled with even higher interest rates—made it appear that the economy was permanently weakened. So pervasive was the view of America's collapse that it stretched into the 1980s, reaching full flower in Yale professor Paul Kennedy's bestseller, *The Decline and Fall of the Great Powers*, which argued that because of imperial "overstretch" the United States was headed the way of the Habsburg, Spanish, and British empires—into the rubbish heap of history.

Today, apart from the mess in the Balkans, the outlook could not be cheerier. Bill Clinton, having survived impeachment, is riding high in the polls. The 1978 Humphrey-Hawkins bill defined full employment at four percent unemployed; now unemployment hovers at three percent, while interest rates remain at historically low levels. And the real victim of imperial overstretch was, of course, the Soviet Union.

History, especially U.S. history, tends to move in boom-bust cycles, but one question anyone looking at the past few decades has to ask is, "How did American elites get it so wrong?" In any such survey, one of the main culprits has to be Henry Kissinger. Kissinger, as the third and final installment of his memoirs suggests, was the first declinist—a pessimist about Amer-

ica's political system, its social cohesion, and its role in the world. A self-proclaimed realist, the one country Kissinger does not seem to have been very realistic about is the United States.

The mischief rests in Kissinger's embrace of realism. At a moment when the Clinton administration is being bludgeoned for pursuing a haphazard and reactive foreign policy, Kissinger's *Years of Renewal* offers a useful reminder of what can happen when a procrustean academic theory of politics is rigidly imposed on the messy, recalcitrant world abroad. Though seen as a Harvard liberal in the '60s, Kissinger easily jumped ship from the Rockefeller campaign to join the Nixon administration in 1968 as national security adviser. And the main thing he carried in his toolkit, fresh from the Harvard seminar room, was the doctrine of realism.

What did Kissinger understand by realism? Realism counsels that the world is a Hobbesian one, filled with warring states in which human rights considerations are a pesky, if not frivolous, annoyance. Stability is the highest goal; a balance of power the best possible outcome. Kissinger and Nixon attempted to create such an environment with what they called triangular diplomacy—a three-power world in which the Soviet Union, China, and the United States checked each other. Essentially, Kissinger saw himself as maintaining the status quo, and viewed with contempt the more aggressive breed of Republican that came on the scene with Reagan. The question that Kissinger's account raises is whether he was more than a transitional figure as a Secretary of State to the Carter and Reagan administrations. Despite the razzle-dazzle of

YEARS OF RENEWAL
By Henry Kissinger
Simon & Schuster, \$35

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his shuttle diplomacy in the Middle East and arms-control agreements with the Soviet Union, his tenure seems to have left few real accomplishments.

Indeed, as the title *Years of Renewal* suggests, this is no chronicle of triumphs because there wasn't all that much triumph. Rather, it is a settling of accounts. Kissinger's saturnine view of the world, and America's role in it, did not sit well with the former liberals turned neoconservatives such as Norman Podhoretz, nor with human rights activists on the Left. Now Kissinger responds. His enemies, real and imagined, come in for a drubbing. His main ideological opponent doesn't appear to be communism; instead, it is what he refers to as Wilsonianism—the notion that the United States should intervene abroad on behalf of democracy and human rights rather than vigilantly pursue what Kissinger would define as the national interest pure and simple.

The red thread running through Kissinger's account is the battle over détente. From the outset, Kissinger makes it clear that he and Nixon saw the United States as moving from “domination to leadership.” The American nuclear monopoly, Kissinger says, was dwindling. Europe was regaining its vitality, Asia was on the rise, and Africa was being swept by independence movements. Kissinger says that his ambition was to create not dominance based on power, but leadership resting on consensus. “But an attempt to balance rewards and penalties inseparable from consensus-building,” writes Kissinger, “ran counter to the prevailing Wilsonianism, which tried to bring about a global moral order through the direct application of America's political values undiluted by compromises with ‘realism.’”

What Kissinger objected to were two camps: liberals and the ex-liberal, budding neoconservatives who attempted to push for a pro-human rights policy inside the Soviet Union. *The New York Times* began arguing for linking agreements with the Soviet Union to changes in its internal behavior. At the same time, the neoconservatives started pushing for a more moralistic foreign policy as a means of regenerating American morale. In particular, Kissinger tangled with Sen. Henry M. Jackson over the Jackson-Vanik amendment which set firm numbers for the yearly emigration of Jews from the Soviet Union. The amendment tied those numbers to Most-Favored-Nation status for the Soviet Union. Kissinger was outraged. According to Kissinger, “Nixon and I agreed with the neoconservative premise, but we also believed that the simple Wilsonianism of the early '60s had lured us into adventures beyond our capacities and

deprived us of criteria to define the essential elements of our national purpose.”

Kissinger, however, glides over important developments in American foreign policy that made the '70s and '80s a far cry from the “simple Wilsonianism” he identifies as responsible for Vietnam. The truth is that the conduct of American foreign policy was becoming more, not less, complicated. For one thing, there was the emergence of Jewish concerns in American foreign policy. The fate of Israel, which looked as though it might go under in 1972, prompted new activism, leading to the rise of the neoconservative movement. But the neoconservatives that Kissinger decries had not shifted to the far right at that point; it was Daniel Patrick Moynihan, after all, who attacked the Reagan administration for excess zeal during Iran-Contra. The neoconservatives had a point in attacking the human rights-less stance of Kissinger and Nixon; given the ideals of American democracy, their indifference to the plight of Soviet Jews or other oppressed peoples was, over the long term, unsustainable. In the '70s, the neoconservatives did represent continuity with the Cold War liberal tradition of Arthur Schlesinger Jr. and Walter Reuther that seemed about to go under during the Vietnam War.

In the '80s, Reagan, more flexible than his advisers, essentially picked up this tradition in building up militarily and emphasizing human rights. Kissinger quite rightly complains about the gross exaggerations of American inferiority spread by Reagan and his acolytes; for all the denunciations of SALT II, Reagan was careful to observe its limits. But how much attention did Reagan himself pay to throw-weights and circular error probability of missiles? Probably as little attention as he paid to Education Secretary Samuel “Hello, Mr. Mayor” Pierce. Fortunate enough to have Mikhail Gorbachev as his counterpart, Reagan was able to wind down the Cold War—to the chagrin of many of his followers. (Norman Podhoretz was first off the mark: In 1983, he accused the Reagan administration of “appeasement by any other name.”) Soon enough conservative activist Howard Phillips was denouncing Reagan as a “useful idiot.” Kissinger is plainly bewildered by these developments: He cannot abide the notion that the homiletic Reagan could dispense with foreign policy theories and come out on top.

Kissinger's approach had been quite different. He had attempted to lend the Brezhnev regime legitimacy in negotiating with it as an equal power. Wracked by fears of illegitimacy, Brezhnev eagerly accepted. Stability, order, and calm were Kissinger's

watchwords. Allowing the Soviet Union to crumble would have flouted realist orthodoxy about the need for order; what would all those restive nationalities do with freedom? Chaos was sure to follow. So Kissinger and Nixon wanted to prop up the doddering Brezhnev. Reagan was different. Outlandish as it may have seemed, he wanted to see the Soviet Union go under. At least he said he did, and it did. Kissinger, it may be recalled, offered the Bush administration his services as a negotiator to cobble out a deal with the Soviet Union for a condominium over Eastern Europe even as the empire was collapsing. Now, rewriting Cold War history, Kissinger claims, "Reagan's policy was, in fact, a canny reassertion of the geopolitical strategies of the Nixon and Ford administration clothed in the rhetoric of Wilsonianism." So adept was this cloaking maneuver that it seems to have escaped everyone except Kissinger.

If Kissinger's Soviet policy has disappeared along with the empire, his lasting legacy has been in China. A cruder version of the '70s debate over détente has emerged, with today's generation of neoconservatives at *The Weekly Standard* bristling for a new Cold War, while the Clinton administration pursues its version of Kissingerian détente with Beijing. The origins of this impasse can be traced to the manner in which Nixon and Kissinger handled engagement with China. The problem is that it came almost entirely on Chinese terms, and it treated America's allies Taiwan and Japan shabbily. Once again, as a realist, Kissinger thought he could dispense with Taiwan and Japan, but they have proven to be more powerful than he could have expected. Basing foreign policy on apparent expedience rather than on democratic values, you might say, can end up being most inexpedient.

Kissinger and Nixon put much faith in Mao. Kissinger refers to him as "intellectually still vigorous" when he met with him in February 1973. But how intellectually vigorous was someone who, Kissinger reports, stated that "If the Soviet Union would throw its bombs and kill all those over 30 who are Chinese, that would solve the problem for us." Judging from the books and memoirs that have emerged from China in recent years, he was a sex-addicted, disease-ridden despot whose grasp on reality was tenuous at best. Missing from Kissinger's account is any sense of the enormity of Mao's crimes, of meeting someone who was prepared to sacrifice tens of millions in one fantastic industrial and agricultural scheme after another. All Kissinger can do is recount Mao's added lucubrations about swallows flapping their wings in

the great foreign policy storms to come. This is not exactly Churchill telling Stalin, in an allusion to freedom in Eastern Europe, that the eagle should let the small birds fly free.

Not surprisingly, Kissinger rushed to defend the Chinese regime after the Tiananmen Square massacre. Any government, he said, would have swept away such protestors from its square. Kissinger sees eye-to-eye with the Chinese. "I have generally questioned the wisdom of seeking by explicit pressures to compel societies with vastly different backgrounds to adopt, in a matter of years and at early stages of their political evolution, the same standards and procedures it took centuries to grow in the West," concludes Kissinger. Well, yes. But is urging the Chinese government not to imprison dissidents tantamount to asking it to turn into a democracy overnight? Recent events suggest that the Clinton administration's silence on human rights, coupled with free trade, has only led to a worsening of conditions inside the country. In following the Kissingerian formula, the United States has sold out human rights without getting anything in return.

Kissinger will have none of this. He concludes on a sentimental note. Dismissing the oft-cited notion that his childhood left him with a yearning for order—"the Germany of my youth had a great deal of order but very little justice"—Kissinger contends that his parents left a greater mark on him. But perhaps the true answer is that the thing he was most realistic about was orchestrating his own ascent. Realism can often be another term for opportunism. It fit right in with Kissinger's ambitions for himself. Turning himself into a small power at Harvard, he carefully climbed the greasy pole to become America's most celebrated foreign policy figure. But his celebrity has exceeded his insight; his vanity his perspicuity. The further his tenure recedes into the distance, the smaller his accomplishments will appear. Kissinger confused his own decline with America's. ☉

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Spy for a New Millenium

John le Carré takes on the global financial mobsters

By David Ignatius

GEORGE SMILEY IS BACK! THAT'S THE treasure hidden in John le Carré's newest novel. He isn't called George Smiley anymore—the author famously buried him after *The Secret Pilgrim*, supposedly because Smiley, the quintessential creature of the Cold War, had to die with the fall of the Berlin Wall. (Le Carré offered a simpler, and much funnier, explanation in a recent lecture—namely that Alec Guinness kidnapped Smiley, by playing him so brilliantly in the BBC television productions that le Carré could no longer hear his favorite character's voice, only Guinness', and had to abandon him.)

But whatever voice he's speaking, Smiley is back. His name in this book is Nat Brock, which has a crisper, TV-anchorman ring to it than Smiley, but that's part of the message—le Carré chooses his characters' names as mischievously as Dickens. And there are other obvious differences. The new Smiley doesn't read classical German, he isn't pudgy, he doesn't have a house in Bywater Street, he doesn't have a faithless wife, he isn't a member of the Oxbridge upper-middle-class. Indeed, he lacks nearly all the superficial attributes of George Smiley. He isn't even a real spy—he's a customs agent!

Still, Nat Brock has the inner qualities that defined George Smiley—and perfected the literary genre of the spy novel. He is a gray man, with a world-weariness so profound that the reader senses immediately that Brock has gazed into the very bottom of the abyss. You have the feeling with Brock, just as with Smiley, that he knows how the story will end before it begins.

And, like Smiley, Brock has the deferential personal habits that mask an awesome competence in his trade. He is the perfect British operative—his politeness and bonhomie masking an obsessive quest for

the truth. I've been convinced for many years that the central fact about the English is that they are the best liars in the world. They are raised from birth to dissemble, artfully and with self-deprecating wit. Where an American considers himself discreet if he keeps a secret for a week, the Brits take their secrets to the grave. And Brock is such a man.

Brock's enemy is a piratical gang of Russian crooks and the sleek, Turnbull-and-Asser-clad British banker, Tiger Single, who is laundering their money. Le Carré describes his villains with a reportorial precision, and the book is a veritable cookbook for money laundering—explaining how to use Swiss banks, Andorran offshore accounts, Viennese charitable foundations, and Turkish holiday villas to stash your stolen billions. It would be nice if these were purely imaginary characters, but they are emblematic of the New World Disorder—the fixers and Mafiosi who lurk in the shadows today in Russia, certainly, but also in France, China, Japan, Italy—even in merrie olde England.

Le Carré knows that choosing the right villain is the hardest part of writing a thriller these days. It used to be easy; the only question was which ruthless Communist stereotype to choose. Nobody ever found a better model than le Carré's Karla—as opaque and menacing as the system he represented. After the Cold War ended, le Carré suffered from a villain deficit, and he meandered a bit looking for the right target. To his credit, he never stooped to the Nazis, the very bottom of the thriller-writer's barrel.

But in this novel, le Carré has found precisely the right villain. The new financial mobsters really are the successors to the KGB as global enemy No. 1. They symbolize a world in which private power—the mafias, money launderers, currency speculators, and their attendant musclemen—have become more powerful and pervasive than any intelligence agency. The people who have to fight them are humble customs agents like Brock, and tax investigators, cops, and a few superannuated spies.

SINGLE & SINGLE

By John le Carré

Scribner, \$26

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