

Henry Kissinger

1973

“for arranging a ceasefire agreement concluded between the United States of America and the Vietnamese Democratic Republic.”

Today, Henry Kissinger is making a lot of money as a television commentator, lecturer, and international relations consultant to news stations, national governments, and universities alike. He is one of the most well-known, most well-hated, and most well-respected political minds of our time. Americans have been intrigued and reviled by Henry Kissinger since he first came into public notice in 1968. Kissinger won the Peace Prize in 1973 to the approbation of some and the horror of others.



Courtesy: National Security Archive

Kissinger was the first foreign-born person to become Secretary of State of the United States. In 1923, he was born to a middle-class Jewish couple in Fuerth, Germany. As you may have guessed, he and his family experienced the discrimination and persecution of Nazi Germany. The Kissingers were able to escape to New York City in 1938, where Henry was quick to assimilate to high school life in America. He studied at City College, and afterwards enrolled in the U.S. Army as an intelligence specialist. Ironically, Kissinger was sent back to Germany to serve until 1946.

He married Anne Fleischer in 1943 with whom he had three children. He and Anne divorced amicably in 1964. In 1974, Kissinger married Nancy Maginnes.

He worked at Harvard earning a doctorate in international relations, as well as philosophy and history, and worked until the 1960s on studying and publishing on the issue of nuclear foreign policy, becoming one of the leading experts on the topic. Then, in 1968 Richard Nixon, the newly elected president, asked Kissinger to act as National Security Advisor. It was during these years as National Security Advisor that Kissinger became known as “the Invisible President” and one of the most powerful men on the planet.

Nixon and Kissinger are now infamous for their foreign policy enacted during their “reign.” Resolving the war in Vietnam was highest on their list of priorities together. By 1972, strategies that included handing over the war to the Vietnamese to fight (“Vietnamization”), trying to enlist the help of the Chinese and Soviets to quell the North Vietnamese, holding secret negotiations with the North Vietnamese that no one else in the government was privy to, as well as the secret bombing of the North Vietnamese and the Cambodians, each had had little effect on establishing peace in Vietnam. In 1973, the

North Vietnamese, South Vietnamese, and the United States (represented by Kissinger) met in Paris and reached a long-fought compromise to end the fighting. North Vietnamese troops, according to the treaty, would be allowed to stay in South Vietnam – a piece of

the agreement that many saw as Kissinger's betrayal of the South Vietnamese.

1923-

- He has appeared in over 42 films as himself
- In a 1973 Gallup poll, Kissinger was named the most admired person in America
- He was asked to lead an inquiry in to 9/11 by the Bush administration
- He was born in Germany and was the first foreign-born citizen to become Secretary of State
- Kissinger is a member of the faculty at Georgetown University?

"Power is the ultimate aphrodisiac."

In the treaty, the U.S. agreed to withdrawal, which had a devastating effect on the morale of the people of South Vietnam. The terms of the agreement were very unpopular with Le Duc Tho (or Thieu), leader of the South Vietnamese, but forced upon him by Nixon and Kissinger. Later in 1973, Kissinger and Tho were both awarded the Peace Prize. Tho rejected the award and Kissinger accepted. (Later, in 1975, the South Vietnamese were overrun by the North, thereby "undoing" any of the good of the Paris talks.)

Kissinger became Nixon's Secretary of State, also in 1973. One of his most well-known foreign policy maneuvers, labeled "shuttle diplomacy", came during this time. In 1973 Kissinger ferried between Israel and Arab nations to work

out a truce in the Yom Kippur War (also known as the Arab-Israeli War). Kissinger "shuttled" between the two sides, who were not on speaking terms, in order to work out a cease-fire agreement. When Nixon resigned in 1974, Ford had Kissinger stay on as Secretary of State.

Today, Kissinger is being sought after as a material witness in several countries (including countries in South East Asia and Latin America) in cases involving the secret policies and acts of the Nixon administration. Notably, Kissinger has been charged in a civil suit with the murder of General Rene Schneider, who was a constitutional officer in Chile. Kissinger allegedly gave the order for his elimination because Schneider refused to endorse plans for a military coup of the country. He is accused of supporting General Augusto Pinochet's notorious Chilean regime.

In 2001, the Bush administration asked Kissinger to head an inquiry into the World Trade attacks. He lives and works in New York City and heads the consulting firm Kissinger Associates.

Suggested Classroom Activities

Introduction/Warm-Up:

React to one of your favorite Henry Kissinger quotes:

“Accept everything about yourself--I mean everything. You are you and that is the beginning and the end--no apologies, no regrets.”

“The task of the leader is to get his people from where they are to where they have not been.”

What things do you know about the Vietnam War?

Some people have deemed Henry Kissinger the most controversial Peace Prize winner. What might make giving out a Peace Prize Winner controversial?

Discussion Questions:

1. What does it mean to assimilate to a culture? (Level 1)
2. What was going on in Germany where Kissinger was born in the 1930s and 1940s? (Level 1)
3. What was the agreement made in Paris in 1973? (Level 1)
4. How would you describe Henry Kissinger’s character? (Level 2)
5. Why do you think Le Duc Tho refused the Nobel Peace Prize? Do you think that was a good decision? (Level 2)
6. If you were a Nobel Prize Committee member in 1973, would you have voted to award the prize to Kissinger? (Level 3)
7. Should Henry Kissinger be honored with a place in the Nobel Peace Prize Park? Support your opinions with facts. (Level 3)

Vocabulary:

1. Reviled
2. Approbation
3. Persecution
4. Assimilate
5. Foreign policy

6. Quell
7. Shuttle diplomacy
8. General Augusto Pinochet

Activities:

Debate Activity on the Nobel Prize and Henry Kissinger (See following materials)

Technology Option:

CNN Interactive Profiles: Henry Kissinger

Use as a computer lab time lining exercise to map out world events and events in Henry Kissinger's life

<http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/cold.war/kbank/profiles/kissinger/>

Resources:

Movie: The Trials of Henry Kissinger (2002)

Directed by Eugene Jarecki

A documentary about the war crimes of Kissinger

CNN Interactive Profiles: Henry Kissinger

A brief biography of Kissinger, but also articles that serve to place Kissinger within the context of the Cold War . Educator's guide, primary source material.

<http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/cold.war/kbank/profiles/kissinger/>

NOW with Bill Moyers: The Trials of Henry Kissinger

Considers Kissinger in the role of 9/11 investigator and weighs the pros and cons of his appointment

<http://www.pbs.org/now/politics/kissinger.html>

Debate:

Should Henry Kissinger have been awarded a Nobel Peace Prize in 1973?

Pre-debate preparation:

What national and world events were happening in 1972/1973?

For what specific reasons was Kissinger awarded the Nobel Prize?

What criteria are used to determine who gets a Peace Prize? Does Kissinger fulfill them?

Who else might have made a good candidate for the Peace Prize that year?

Why would they have been better than Henry Kissinger?

What kind of character does that person have? What kind of character does Henry Kissinger have?

Do you think a person be judged for the Prize on their total character or just for one specific event or accomplishment?

Pro:

If you are on the “PRO” side of the debate, you believe that Henry Kissinger was the appropriate man to which to award the Nobel Prize in 1973. You must prove that there was no one better for the prize, and that Henry Kissinger’s accomplishments were sufficient.

Negative:

If you are on the “NEGATIVE” side of the debate, you believe that Kissinger was not the best person to which to award the 1973 Peace Prize. You must prove that, by the standards of the Nobel Prize Foundation’s criteria, there was someone who better deserved the prize that year.

Your team will debate against the other side in a 35 minute debate. Make sure your team works together and does enough research to be able to give lots of solid facts, quotes, information, and other solid ideas, rather than simply state your opinions. The side with the more “solid” case will win the debate.

The following outline is how the debate will be presented:

10 minutes PRO	Present case
10 minutes NEG	Present case
5 minutes PRO	Defend against the NEGATIVE’s case (called a rebuttal)
5 minutes NEG	Defend against the PRO’s case (rebuttal)
2 minutes PRO	Respond to the rebuttal, rebuild your case
2 minutes NEG	Respond to the rebuttal, rebuild your case
1 minute PRO	Closing argument, restatement of final case
1 minute NEG	Closing argument, restatement of final case