



## **American Legends: The Life of Henry Kissinger**

Charles River Editors

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\*Includes pictures \*Includes Kissinger's own quotes about his life and career \*Includes online resources, footnotes and a bibliography for further reading \*Includes a table of contents "There cannot be a crisis next week. My schedule is already full." - Henry Kissinger "The longer I am out of office, the more infallible I appear to myself." - Henry Kissinger A lot of ink has been spilled covering the lives of history's most influential figures, but how much of the forest is lost for the trees? In Charles River Editors' American Legends series, readers can get caught up to speed on the lives of America's most important men and women in the time it takes to finish a commute, while learning interesting facts long forgotten or never known. The latter half of the 20th century was privy to one of the greatest displays of ongoing international diplomacy seen in American history, but to say that Henry A. Kissinger's career as an American diplomat was purely American would be short-sighted and simplistic. The diplomatic atmosphere, particularly in the 1970s, was far from the image of a public official manning an office in Washington, D.C., greeting foreign dignitaries, and traveling on occasion to sign foreign agreements. In the post-World War II environment, old allies became new enemies, and a series of crises appeared almost simultaneously around the world, involving virtually every nation in the world, on every continent. From Richard Nixon's opening of relations with China to the ensuing conflict with Taiwan, as well as the potential benefits of détente with the Soviet Union, a fellow nuclear power, Secretary of State Kissinger had his hands full. In addition to that, he had to deal with the churning of leadership changes and military rule in South America, the seething tension between the newly-founded Israel and its surrounding Arab states. The diplomatic demands on the United States as a central and powerful presence were profound and ongoing. As the man who would become the 56th American Secretary of State, Kissinger presided over a vast network of partnerships, rivalries, cultural obstacle courses, and world ideologies. His dealings with every section of the globe were conducted in parallel regimens of public and private negotiations, and power plays in both natural and purposefully manipulated scenarios. As a staunch devotee of the "Realpolitik" concept, which espouses a dispassionate, amoral approach to all conflict, based on ultimate practicality and circumstantial realism, Kissinger, with his deeply embedded pragmatic streak, has been hailed by some as the Archimedes of Diplomacy, a diplomatic genius. Others, on both the left and right, refer to him overtly as a war criminal, with some still insisting that he be brought to justice decades after the zenith of his career for surreptitious policies that interfered with the normal progression of foreign governments. All, however, agree that Kissinger was a master of power plays and superb rhetorical influence; whether ruthless or gentle, he was a diplomatic artist who could inexplicably "manufacture opportunities out of chaos." Through his work with the Nixon administration, Kissinger ultimately became the most celebrated foreign diplomat since Thomas Jefferson, and for a time, he was, according to a national Gallup Poll, the most popular and admired man in America. The highest ranking Jewish official in the history of the United States, even Egyptian politicians sitting across the desk in direct and vehement opposition referred to him behind closed doors as "the magician." American Legends: The Life of Henry Kissinger explores the life and career of one of America's most famous diplomats. Along with pictures of important people, places, and events, you will learn about Kissinger like never before, in no time at all.

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