



## Years of Upheaval

*Henry Kissinger*

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In *Years of Upheaval* Henry Kissinger recalls the turbulent years of the second Administration of Richard Nixon, which began on 20 January 1973. Two momentous events and their consequences dominate this account: the Watergate scandal, and the 1973 October war in the Middle East. The book opens at the Western White House on a summer afternoon in August of that year, when Dr Kissinger is told by the President during a poolside conversation that he is to become Secretary of State. The memories that follow are a rich compendium of his experiences in the months before and after appointment: an eerie trip to Hanoi shortly after the Vietnam cease-fire; efforts to settle the war in Cambodia; two Nixon-Brezhnev summits and the controversy over detente; the Shah of Iran; the oil crisis and the efforts to overcome it; the US airlift to Israel and the military alert during the Middle East war; the origins of shuttle diplomacy; the fall of Salvador Allende in Chile; and the events surrounding Nixon's resignation. His frank portrait of Nixon's last days is perhaps the most perceptive to date. At once illuminating, fascinating, and profound, *Years of Upheaval* is a lasting contribution to the history of our time, by one of its chief protagonists.

## Years of Upheaval Details

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### **SALAH ALMAHMEED says**

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### **Jeff Keehr says**

Again, this was another Kissinger tome but I found it fascinating. I believe this covers the period during and after Nixon's resignation. Kissinger was never implicated in any of Nixon's dirty work.

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### **Dale says**

Excellent book to read, learn, and be critical about..

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### **Shawn says**

This second volume of Henry Kissinger's monumental memoirs covers his years as President Richard Nixon's Secretary of State (1972–1974), including the ending of the Vietnam War, the 1973 Middle East War and oil embargo, Watergate, and Nixon's resignation. *Years of Upheaval* opens with Dr. Kissinger being appointed Secretary of State.

Among other events of these turbulent years that he recounts are his trip to Hanoi after the Vietnam cease-fire, his efforts to settle the war in Cambodia, the "Year of Europe," two Nixon-Brezhnev summit meetings and the controversies over arms control and détente, the military alert and showdown with the Soviet Union over the Middle East war, the subsequent oil crisis, the origins of shuttle diplomacy in the Middle East, the fall of Salvador Allende in Chile, and the tumultuous events surrounding Nixon's resignation. Throughout are candid appraisals of world leaders, including Nixon, Golda Meir, Anwar Sadat, King Faisal, Hafez al-Asad, Chairman Mao, Leonid Brezhnev, Willy Brandt, Helmut Schmidt, Georges Pompidou, and many more.

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### **Aaron Million says**

Volume II of Kissinger's years in the Nixon White House, this one beginning with the start of Nixon's second (doomed) term in January 1973 and ending with his resignation on 8/9/74. In between, Kissinger discusses the conclusion of the Vietnam War; Egypt and Syria's surprise attack on Israel in 1973, followed by Kissinger's "Shuttle Diplomacy" in an attempt to bring peace to the Middle East; SALT negotiations with the Soviet Union; his talks with Zhou Enlai and Mao Zedong in China; his appointment as Secretary of State; and his complex, distant, relationship with Nixon.

A large portion of this volume is spent on the Middle East War and Kissinger's subsequent back-breaking efforts to forge a peace between Israel, Egypt, and Syria. It is amazing that anyone had the stamina required to sit through and conduct negotiations night after night, week after week, and then factor in all of the traveling. Plus, he still had his other responsibilities as Secretary of State. However, a few hundred pages of reading about the negotiations does become a tad dry.

Kissinger devotes one chapter to Chile, specifically the overthrow of Salvador Allende. This chapter seems forced, and really does not fit in with the rest of the book. It reads more as a constant defense that neither he nor the CIA had anything to do with the coup that brought the dictator Augusto Pinochet to power. His assertions of innocence seem to ring hollow.

Kissinger's biting sense of humor is present here, and welcome at times to help get through some of the more dense parts of the book. On page 683, writing about Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, of Pakistan: Bhutto had seen me off at Islamabad airport with a flattering parade of horse guards normally reserved for heads of state. Bhutto explained on television that given the number of 'nincompoops' occupying that office who had visited Pakistan, it was only fair to the horses that they get to see an intelligent example of the human species." And on page 1094, talking about potentially meeting Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko, he writes: "Gromyko was now scheduled to arrive in Damascus on May 27 - my birthday. I could have wished myself a better present."

At 1,214 pages (not including the Appendix), this volume is - incredibly - shorter than the prior volume, *White House Years*. Kissinger's ego is apparent throughout, particularly when he speaks of his disagreements with Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger over arms control, and when he and Chief of Staff Alexander Haig fight over who gets the quarters closest to Nixon's at San Clemente. Things such as this prolong the book and make it start to drag - especially after the reader gets bogged down in interminable discussions about SALT (Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty) negotiations that features Kissinger going on for page after page using terms such as "throw weight" and "MIRVs."

Near the end, Kissinger writes an excellent character study of Nixon, bordering on psychoanalysis. But he keeps it respectful, and seems to go out of his way to equally recognize both Nixon's flaws and greatness and the seeming contradiction of the man. While never close to Nixon personally, Kissinger struggles with seeing someone who had accomplished so many great things while President implode from the inside due to his unending insecurities.

For anyone interested in Kissinger, Nixon, the Mideast War of 1973, or American foreign policy during this period, this book is essential reading. However, while immensely interesting at times, it does not quite pack the punch of the first volume.

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### **Jonnie Enloe says**

You can only say so many things about Kissinger. He is a very learned, experienced man. His subjects are not to be taken lightly and are certainly not light reads. His books go on and on almost a minute by minute account of politics at the highest levels. If there is truly a man that knows everyone in the world, that matters, it is Kissinger. When he writes we are privileged to be an eavesdropper to contemporary history as it happened in our lifetimes.

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## Shelley says

4.5

Eric\_W says

“A critic who can suck like that, as was once dryly said by one of my moral mentors, need never dine alone. Nor need his subject. Except that, every now and then, the recipient (and donor) of so much sycophancy feels a tremor of anxiety. He leaves the well-furnished table and scurries to the bathroom.”

Christopher Hitchens referring to a review by Norman Podhoretz of Henry Kissinger's second volume of memoirs. Harper's, February 2000.

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**Cws says**

92K

## **John Harder says**

I have to give this monster of a book only two stars. This is unfair in a way, but I think Dr. Kissinger's ego can sustain the blow. As a historical reference Years of Upheaval is an indispensable resource. However, this could never be a popular history (a la David McCullough) for the layman -- 1,300 pages of the minutia involved in shuttle diplomacy is a bit of a slog.