maintenance of the status quo. To that end, in his time, 20,492 more Americans died in Vietnam and hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese. The war was expanded into Cambodia, destroying that peaceable land. And all for nothing.

With such a record, how is it that people vie to place laurels on the head of the departing Secretary of State? The answer became clear the other night during an extraordinarily thoughtful Public Broadcasting television program on Mr. Kissinger's career: He has discovered that in our age publicity is power, and he has played the press as Dr. Miracle played his violin. He is intelligent and hard-working and ruthless, but those qualities are common enough. His secret is showmanship.

Henry Kissinger is our P. T. Barnum—a Barnum who plays in a vastly larger tent and whose jokes have about them the air of the grave. That we honor a person who has done such things in our name is a comment on us.

E S S A Y S

In the first essay, Joan Hoff, a Nixon biographer who teaches at Montana State University, presents a positive appraisal of Nixon's Grand Design. Although Hoff faults the administration for conducting foreign policy under a veil of secrecy, particularly when combating suspected communism in the Third World, she places much of the blame for the administration's shortcomings on the president's adviser, Henry A. Kissinger. She praises Nixon, on the other hand, for his bold and imaginative policy of détente toward the People's Republic of China and the Soviet Union, his pursuit of arms control, and his ability to adjust U.S. policy to the realities of a more competitive world economy. Nixon, according to Hoff, deserves credit for initiating a foreign policy that transcended constraints imposed by Cold War ideology, deftly balanced détente with U.S. security goals in Western Europe, and effectively managed a Democratic Congress. Détente broke down, according to Hoff, largely because Moscow did not seek at the time to end the Cold War, and détente's opponents exploited popular distaste for Soviet human-rights violations.

In the second essay, Raymond L. Garthoff, a former foreign service officer and ambassador who is currently a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C., advances a more negative interpretation, finding détente a failure. He criticizes the Nixon-Kissinger team for not defining the meaning of détente more clearly and for not developing with Moscow a viable code of conduct and collaborative measures for managing the superpower rivalry. Each side expected too much from détente and misperceived the other's continued military buildup and interventions as threatening and destabilizing. The United States, Garthoff argues, maintained a particularly idealized concept of détente that condemned aggressive Soviet behavior but failed to acknowledge that the vigorous foreign policy of the United States itself at times violated the spirit of détente.

The last selection is drawn from Walter Isaacson's lengthy biography of Henry A. Kissinger. In the excerpt, Isaacson, an editor at *Time* magazine, examines Kissinger's foreign policy "realism." In contrast to Hoff, Isaacson respects Kissinger's intellectual brilliance and political savvy. Isaacson, however, emphasizes that Kissinger's concern for U.S. credibility led to imprudent interventions in the Third World. Most

Nixon's Innovative Grand Design and the Wisdom of Détente

JOAN HOFF

Any revisionist approach to Nixon's management of foreign policy must begin by attempting to place in perspective the complex interaction developed between Nixon and Kissinger, whose "advanced megalomania remains legendary." In retrospect, I believe that one of the most unfortunate decisions the president-elect made during the interregnum was to appoint Kissinger, about whom he knew only that, as a Nelson Rockefeller supporter, Kissinger had been openly disdainful of Nixon and his bid for the Republican nomination in 1968. If Nixon thought Kissinger's views on U.S. policy were important, he could have employed him as consultant to the NSC, as the Kennedy administration had briefly done. This opinion, however, [was] not shared by Nixon or most of his former advisers, one of whom defended Kissinger's appointment by saying that "the care and feeding of Henry" was worth all the paranoia, backbiting, leaking, rumor-mongering, and pseudo-intellectual posturing that he brought to the White House. . . .

On the surface Nixon and Kissinger—an American Quaker and a German-American Jew—appear to have been the odd couple of U.S. foreign policy. Given his long personal and professional association with the Rockefeller family and his blunt criticisms of Nixon, Kissinger apparently did not think he would last even six months in the new Nixon administration. Yet when these two men came together in 1968, they actually shared many viewpoints and had developed similar operational styles. Both relished covert activity and liked making unilateral decisions; both distrusted bureaucracies; both resented any attempt by Congress to interfere with initiatives; and both agreed that the United States could impose order and stability on the world only if the White House controlled policy by appearing conciliatory but acting tough. While neither had headed any complex organization, both thought "personalized executive control" and formal application of procedures would lead to success. Even more coincidental, perhaps, each had a history of failure and rejection, which made them susceptible to devising ways of protecting themselves and their positions of power. Often the concern for protection appeared as obsession with eavesdropping, whether wiretaps or reconnaissance flights. They even eavesdropped on themselves: Nixon by installing an automatic taping system in the Oval Office, Kissinger by having some of his meetings and all of his phone conversations taped or transcribed from notes. In a word, instead of compensating for each other's weaknesses and enhancing strengths, Nixon and Kissinger shared their worst characteristics. . . .

Kissinger did not share Nixon's optimistic approach to diplomacy and proclivity for taking risky, far-reaching foreign policy actions. As vice president under Eisenhower, Nixon had said: "I am not necessarily a respecter of the *status quo* in foreign affairs. I am a *chance taker* in foreign affairs. I would take chances for peace." Along these same lines, Nixon told Kissinger in August 1969: "just because [I] supported [something] as a private individual does not mean [I] will as president." In contrast,

practically every analyst of Kissinger's ideas points out their essentially conservative (and profoundly pessimistic), nineteenth-century European roots. When he joined the Nixon administration, Kissinger seems not to have changed his ideas (and dense writing style) much from the time he wrote his Ph.D. dissertation, in which he recommended the Metternichian [in reference to the nineteenth century Austrian count Klemens von Metternich] system of alliances among conservative regimes to check the forces of revolution in the modern, Western world. Kissinger's early writings presaged what his memoirs confirmed: the mind of "a middle-level manager who has learned to conceal vacuity with pretentious verbiage." His pre-1968 political science writings convey very conventional cold warrior ideas about Vietnam, anti-Communist views that opposed ideologically driven grand designs in foreign policy and at best paid only occasional lip service to the necessity for some risk taking. And as an "inveterate conceptualizer," he was seldom on top of specific contemporary issues in his search for global solutions. . . .

It remained for the president to lead the way toward genuinely innovative, grand designs for redirecting of U.S. diplomacy. . . . Henry Kissinger was a geopolitical follower rather than a leader, although his talent for dramatic, back-channel diplomacy may have made the execution of some of Nixon's policies exemplary rather than simply ordinary. The scholar Richard Falk, among a variety of contemporary commentators, noted specifically that "Nixon deserves the main credit, and bore the main responsibility, for shifts in political direction implicit in the moves toward accommodation with China and détente with the Soviet Union. In both instances there had been receptivity on the Sino-Soviet side . . . [but] it was Nixon who decided to respond affirmatively." In addition, Washington aficionados as politically and socially diverse as [Nixon cabinet member] Elliot Richardson and Ralph de Toledano (biographer of the rich and famous) agreed that Nixon's diplomacy was, indeed, "his own." . . .

In Kansas City on July 6, 1971, Nixon announced his five-power, or "northern tier" strategy, which he hoped would replace the bipolar, confrontational aspects of the cold war. Instead of continuing to deal only bilaterally with the Soviet Union, Nixon wanted to bring the five great economic regions of the world—the United States, the USSR, mainland China, Japan, and Western Europe—into constructive negotiation and mutually profitable economic competition. Admitting that the United States could not long maintain its post–World War II position of "complete preeminence or predominance," Nixon outlined a "pentagonal strategy" for promoting peace and economic progress by linking the interests of the major regional powers. Kissinger never officially endorsed this plan, preferring the more exclusive Rockefeller "trilateral" approach that included only the U.S., Japan, and the Common Market nations of Western Europe (including the United Kingdom). . . .

This meant, of course, that from the beginning of the Nixon administration, entire areas of the Third World—southern Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Latin America—occupied a secondary place in the president's (and his national security adviser's) political approach to foreign policy. In particular, Nixon and Kissinger largely ignored economic foreign policy considerations in dealing with the Third

pentagonal strategy. Nixon was more interested in maintaining American spheres of influence in the Third World than in the economic needs of these developing nations. Thus, the United States promoted the overthrow of [Salvador] Allende in Chile; restrained Egyptian and Syrian aggression in the Middle East, while ignoring the potential instability of the shah's [(Mohammed Reza Pahlavi)] regime in Iran and indirectly encouraging the rise in OPEC oil prices; continued to oppose [Fidel] Castro in Cuba; and supported Pakistan against India [in their 1971 war]. The "grand design" may have been grand by superpower standards, but it remained ineffectual with respect to the Third World. . . .

Long before Nixon and Kissinger formally adopted the word *détente* to describe their diplomatic strategies and goals, the president's use of the term in early foreign policy statements and in private notes for speeches clearly indicates that he thought the relationship between NATO and détente with the USSR problematic. This uncertainty was considerably exacerbated when the bilateral, back-channel methods used to achieve rapprochement with China and détente with the Soviet Union bypassed the North Atlantic Treaty countries. In particular, both the ABM [Anti Ballistic Missile] and SALT I [Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty] agreements were negotiated with a minimum of consultation with NATO nations. The same was true of the New Economic Policy announced by Nixon in August 1971. Among other things, the NEP unilaterally "floated" the U.S. dollar on international financial markets, setting the stage for its subsequent devaluation and ending the post–World War II Bretton Woods international monetary system. . . .

Nixon almost immediately resorted to sporadic back-channel dealings with, or neglect of, NATO nations. For example, he told Kissinger on February 4, 1969, that he wanted "to go forward with a heads of government meeting" during the NATO twentieth-anniversary gathering in April, but that this plan should be "very closely held until we complete our European trip. I will discuss this matter of other NATO heads of government and then make the announcement on my return from the trip." Not until he and Kissinger proclaimed 1973 to be the Year of Europe did the president concentrate on concrete ways to improve relations with NATO. By that time they thought they had secured relations with both China and the Soviet Union and successfully ended the war in Vietnam.

The United States was on the verge of developing a defensive antiballistic missile system just as LBJ and Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin had agreed in the summer of 1967 to discussions about reducing their countries' respective nuclear arsenals. It was obvious to both Nixon and Kissinger that the ABM might prove counterproductive if it resulted in an increased number of missiles (as did indeed occur later with the multiple independently targeted reentry vehicles, or MIRVs), but the president, in particular, was convinced that he had to have the ABM as a "bargaining chip" because intelligence reports indicated a buildup in Soviet offensive nuclear weapons. Unable to reveal these reports, the administration had to rationalize the ABM system to critics on Capitol Hill on other grounds. Consequently, Nixon publicly said that opposition from Congress to the ABM system threatened the possibility of détente and continued U.S. conventional arms support for the North Atlantic

of Defense and State to close ranks behind the ABM, instead of encouraging more dissent among senators with "informed sources leaks."

The administration also did not place as much emphasis as its opponents within Congress and the arms-control community on the danger of the ABM system jeopardizing the ongoing negotiations between Gerard C. Smith, head of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA), and his Soviet counterpart, Vladimir Semenov, who were meeting in Vienna. As head of the U.S. SALT delegation as well, Smith wanted the development and deployment of MIRVs and ABM systems to be limited. This placed him immediately in opposition with Nixingerism [the Nixon-Kissinger policy] on two counts because the administration was in the process of striking a private bargain with the Joint Chiefs of Staff in which they would receive MIRVs in exchange for their agreement to limit ABM sites. (Smith was to add a third point of opposition in 1972, when he disagreed with specific provisions of SALT I.) But in 1970 the administration tried its best to downplay disagreement with Smith because he could sway so many congressional votes. . . .

During the spring and summer of 1969, Nixon dealt publicly and privately with NATO nations and his gradually emerging détente policy while battling senators over the ABM. The president's handwritten comments and memoranda testify to his personal involvement in the domestic political fight over the ABM issue. From telling his staff to "raise hell with CBS" for its anti-ABM television coverage when polls showed 64 percent of the American public in favor, to criticizing members of his own cabinet, like Secretary of Defense [Melvyn] Laird, for not "doing enough," he alternately cajoled his supporters and berated his opponents. After informing Congress on March 14 of his decision to go forward with a "substantial modification in the ABM system submitted by the previous administration," Nixon privately called [Democratic] Senator Edmund Muskie's proposal to use the $6.6 billion proposed for the ABM on hunger and poverty at home and abroad "unbelievable nonsense from a national leader!" When he read that [another Democrat,] Senator John Glenn, the former astronaut, had called the ABM a "false hope" because "no one knows if it works," the president sarcastically asked: "did he know the first space shot would absolutely work?" These private outbursts notwithstanding, Nixon, always the hardball politician, told [presidential aide H. R.] Haldeman, "this is war," and issued heavy-handed orders to his staff to "concentrate on those [senators] who are on the fence and *only* on those where we have a chance to win." Nonetheless, on August 6 he only narrowly won the battle on this antiballistic missile system in three separate amendment votes, with Vice President [Spiro T.] Agnew breaking a tie on the crucial amendment providing "spending for Safeguard deployment." The struggle left bitterness on both sides that did not bode well for future White House–Capitol Hill cooperation on other foreign or domestic issues, and the press treated it "as an anticlimactic victory for the administration."

While carefully monitoring and refusing to compromise his basic ABM proposal, Nixon authorized back-channel meetings between Kissinger and Anatoly Dobrynin, garnered support for the ABM from NATO nations, and decided to go ahead with MIRV testing despite the opposition of nonmilitary experts—all before leaving for

to East Asia, although it continued to support regional security and national self-sufficiency in the area. Hence, the Nixon Doctrine was more necessary from an American perspective as a foundation block upon which to build the détente agreements with the Soviet Union (and China) than was the ABM legislation, despite the greater domestic attention that the latter received in the United States during the spring and summer of 1969. . . .

As a defense system, the ABM was more important to Soviet foreign policy than it was to the American grand design. The relative unimportance of the ABM issue for Nixingerism became more evident after Kissinger and Dobrynin agreed to divide the issues of the defensive weapons (the ABM) and offensive weapons (ultimately SALT I) in May 1971. By that time, the president and his national security adviser had decided that it would be easier to come to an agreement over future deployment of their respective ABM systems, which primarily existed only on paper, than it would be to conclude a treaty limiting the deployment of existing nuclear weapons. After campaigning against congressmen who opposed the ABM in the 1970 midterm elections, Nixon continued his "war" against Capitol Hill in the spring of 1971 by deciding it was time to "break the back of the establishment and Democratic leadership . . . [and] then build a strong defense in [our] second term" When the president wrote this to Kissinger, he faced stiff opposition in Congress over three military issues: U.S. NATO troop commitments, suspicion about a Soviet ABM system, and, of course, the ongoing Strategic Arms Limitation Talks. Even under this domestic political duress, the president did not forget the dual nature of détente; from his perspective, despite its public call for arms limitations and economic exchanges with the USSR, it privately meant continued military buildup—except in Vietnam. . . .

From 1949 until 1979 the United States refused to recognize the Communist government of the People's Republic of China. Not until the early 1970s, during Nixon's first administration, did the U.S. government begin to reverse this standard cold war policy of nonrecognition with a number of unilateral gestures of reconciliation, which ultimately brought about rapprochement (the establishment of friendly relations) under Nixon and recognition under Jimmy Carter in 1979. Setting in motion a process that ended in recognition of China remains one of Nixon's longest-lasting diplomatic accomplishments. Normalization of U.S. relations with China was part of Nixon's grand design to bring this giant Communist nation into the ranks of the superpowers. . . .

Opening relations with China . . . appears to have been on Nixon's mind from the beginning of his presidency. By the mid-1960s China specialists had openly begun to complain about continuing to isolate the People's Republic and, even though anti-Chinese sentiments loomed large in the public mind because of China's support for the North Vietnamese, China had been gaining international credibility for over twenty years and was recognized by over fifty countries when Nixon assumed office. As leader of the nonaligned nations, China challenged the superpowers' right to dictate to Third World nations. Its ties with the Soviet Union had been severely strained, if not actually broken, by 1969. And the cultural revolution inside China had subsided.

that country might launch an irrational attack against one of them. In rationalizing his new approach to the Chinese, Nixon argued to his top foreign policy adviser in April 1969 that "the tragic fact of history [is] that most of the great wars were not started by responsible men and that we have to base our assumptions on what potentially irresponsible or irrational men may do, rather than simply on what we, as responsible leaders, might do." Rapprochement might help make "irrational" Communist Chinese leaders more rational, or so the president ethnocentrically implied. . . .

By the time Nixon became president he had decided to establish a new policy toward the People's Republic of China in several stages. First, American anti-Chinese rhetoric had to be toned down in order to bring about a more rational discourse than had prevailed in fifteen years of discussion largely conducted through the mediation of Poland. Second, trade and visa restrictions needed to be reduced. Third, the number of U.S. troops at bases surrounding China and in Vietnam would be reduced. Finally, Nixon wanted the Communist leaders to know that he would personally consider revising the rigid cold war position of the United States on Taiwan and its heretofore unstinting support of Chiang. These attitude changes and low-level diplomatic actions initially took place without fanfare. Nixon underscored this approach in a memorandum to Kissinger on February 1, 1969, wanting "to give every encouragement to the attitude that this Administration is 'exploring the possibilities of rapprochement with the Chinese.' This should be done privately and under no circumstances get into public prints from this direction." Around the same time, Nixon privately told Senate majority leader Mike Mansfield that he wanted to involve China in "global responsibility." Then, on February 18, 1969, he instructed Secretary of State William Rogers to make a public announcement that the United States now favored a program of cultural and scientific exchanges with the People's Republic. . . .

Peking's slow response was fortunate in that it allowed Kissinger to come up to speed on Nixon's rapprochement policy. In August 1969, Kissinger finally invited Allen S. Whiting, a former State Department specialist on China, to brief him personally about Sino-Soviet border clashes that had occurred in March. Up to this point Kissinger had only generally endorsed Nixon's idea of rapprochement, but did not contribute specifically to it. Whiting convinced Kissinger that the administration had reacted to these military skirmishes much too casually, and that it was inaccurate to think that China would attack Russia. In fact, China so feared a Soviet attack that this was a historic opportunity to change traditional U.S. cold war policy, which had been more "favorably" disposed toward the USSR than toward China. "Belatedly, Kissinger became a convert—a latter-day Marco Polo discovering the new China," according to Marvin and Bernard Kalb, "and he plunged into his subject with all of the eagerness and occasional naiveté of the newcomer to Asia." . . .

The stage was set for a breakthrough in Sino-American relations. An encouraging message from China through Romania at the beginning of 1971 prompted the United States in March and April to terminate all restrictions on American travel to the Chinese mainland and the twenty-year-old embargo on trade. Following the highly publicized Ping-Pong games between Chinese and American teams in April, the Pakistan ambassador to the United States also delivered a message from Chinese

publicly in Peking a special envoy of the President of the United States . . . for direct meetings and discussions."

It has never been made absolutely clear by either Nixon or Kissinger why the contacts after this note had to be conducted in secret. The obvious reasons are that the mission might have failed and that it might have provoked both the Russians and the Japanese—neither of whom knew about the previously secret contacts with the Chinese. Thus secrecy bred secrecy. Additionally, Nixon paid lip service in his memoirs to the realization that there would be conservative opposition to open, direct contacts; Kissinger gives no reason for keeping his mission secret. He does, however, manage to exaggerate both his initial role in the policy and its potential danger: "I felt immense relief [at being chosen as envoy] after so long a preoccupation with its design I would be able to bring the enterprise to fruition. . . . Assisted only by his security adviser, without the alibi provided by normal processes of bureaucratic clearance, [Nixon] authorized a mission that, had it failed, would surely have produced a political catastrophe for him and an international catastrophe for his country." More likely, covert foreign policy operations had simply become so common that Kissinger was the obvious choice as secret envoy, even though others mentioned for the mission were more qualified. Secrecy certainly made Nixon's July 15, 1971, announcement of Kissinger's undercover trip and of his own decision to visit China early in 1972 more dramatic. . . .

Although various government officials denied that Nixon courted China in order to bring pressure to bear on the Soviet Union, the president's triumphant visit to the People's Republic of China in February 1972 (with its attendant joint "Shanghai Communiqué") was clearly part of the Nixinger "triangularization" policy. Moreover, in July 1971 when Nixon announced the visit, there is some indication that possible Sino-American rapprochement made the Soviets more amenable to moving ahead with détente in the fall of 1971. It is often forgotten, however, that the original purpose behind improved relations with both China and the USSR was to bring leverage to bear on both nations to improve the situation for the United States in Vietnam. Like so many other attempts at linkage, this one did not prove successful.

There is no direct evidence that because of Soviet concern over the results of Nixon's trip to China, rapprochement became indirectly linked to the success of negotiations leading to the ten formal summit agreements signed in Moscow between the United States and the USSR in May 1972. . . . They provided for prevention of military incidents at sea and in the air; scholarly cooperation and exchange in the fields of science and technology; cooperation in health research; cooperation in environmental matters; cooperation in the exploration of outer space; facilitation of commercial and economic relations; and, most important, the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, the Interim Agreement on the Limitations on Strategic Arms (SALT I), and the Basic Principles of U.S.-Soviet Relations.

In the area of arms control, Nixinger détente policy contained the potential not only to substitute for containment—the standard way the United States had fought the cold war against the Soviet Union since the late 1940s—but also to transcend the procrustean ideological constraints at the very heart of the post–World War II

communism in central and eastern Europe and the Soviet Union almost thirty years later, their immediate successors proved unable (or unwilling) to build upon the delicate distinction between containment and détente that they left behind. Also, there was no changed leadership or structural base in the USSR (or the former Soviet bloc countries) to reinforce the concept of détente inside or outside its borders during the last half of the 1970s, as there began to appear at the end of the 1980s. It must be remembered that the Nixon-Brezhnev détente remained essentially tactical because the cold war had not yet significantly begun to recede. Hence, there was no basic change in conflicting cold war strategies under Nixingerism—only a temporary blurring of hostilities that Reagan revived to a fever pitch in the 1980s.

SALT I, conducted in Helsinki in 1969 and Vienna in 1970, led to two arms-control documents at the 1972 Moscow summit—both in keeping with the tactical aspects of Nixon's détente. These included a treaty limiting the deployment of antiballistic missile systems (ABMs) to two for each country, and an agreement freezing the number of offensive intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) at the level of those then under production or deployed. Unlike SALT I, the ABM Treaty was of "unlimited duration . . . and not open to material unilateral revision," despite attempts by the Reagan administration to do just this beginning in 1985. Until the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) efforts in the last half of the 1980s, however, the ABM Treaty essentially succeeded in relegating deployment of conventional ballistic missile defense systems to minor strategic significance.

SALT I, on the other hand, was an agreement of limited, five-year duration that attempted to establish a rough balance or parity between the offensive nuclear arsenals of the two superpowers, despite the "missile gaps" that continued to exist between them in specific weapons. For example, when Nixon signed SALT I, the United States had a total of 1,710 missiles: 1,054 land-based ICBMs and 656 on submarines (sub-launched ballistic missiles, or SLBMs). The USSR had a total of 2,358 missiles: 1,618 landbased ICBMs and 740 SLBMs. SALT I not only recognized the strategic parity of the USSR but gave it a numerical edge in missiles and a slight throw-weight [a measurement of rocket thrust] advantage. The United States retained a numerical advantage in warheads and a superiority in strategic bombers—460 in 1972 to 120 for the Soviets. SALT I by no means stopped the nuclear arms race, but it recognized that unregulated weapons competition between the two superpowers could no longer be rationally condoned. By freezing further missile buildup, SALT I meant that by the time SALT II was signed in 1979, total American-Soviet missile strength remained essentially unchanged: 2,283 to 2,504, respectively. From 1972 until the mid-1980s, therefore, SALT talks were regarded as a barometer of relations between the two countries, contrary to the claims of critics, even though the "MIRVing" engaged in by both sides has tended to obscure their generally parallel buildup since 1972. . . .

Nixon and Kissinger returned from the May 1972 Moscow summit meeting triumphant, but more vulnerable than ever on three fronts: military, economic, and moral and ideological. All three boded ill for the SALT II talks that would begin six months later. Critics immediately asserted that the United States had been "hood-

agreements still three years away and no mutual and balanced force reductions [(MBFR), on conventional forces in Europe] in sight, as negotiations over SALT II dragged on into the 1970s, an additional military criticism became that the Soviets were violating the terms of both the ABM and SALT I agreements. . . . Moral criticism of Nixingerism based on ideological hostility to the USSR became more credible in the wake of Watergate, but had always been strong in the minds of particular Republican and Democratic conservatives in Congress and across the country. It was this criticism that Nixon and Kissinger found the hardest to answer, because their approach to détente had not, in fact, been based on moral or ideological considerations, but on very pragmatic ones. . . .

Beginning in 1972 certain members of Congress insisted that in return for most-favored-nation treatment (MFN), the Soviet Union should liberalize emigration policies affecting Jews. As late as March 1974, Kissinger referred to "domestic obstacles, some of a highly irresponsible nature," after Brezhnev brought up [Democratic] Senator "Scoop" Jackson's opposition to granting MFN status to the USSR. When Brezhnev said that Jackson was linking "something [the question of Jewish migration] that bears no relation to this entire matter [MFN]," Kissinger agreed, saying: "We don't consider this a proper subject of inquiry by the United States Government." The general secretary's fears, which he had expressed the previous year to [Treasury Secretary] George Shultz, proved more realistic than the secretary of state's optimism on this question.

Once again, as on NATO troop reductions and arms control, Senator Jackson orchestrated a Senate amendment to counter the Soviet-American trade agreement. After two and a half years of haggling over various versions of the Jackson-Vanik amendment, which was extended in 1974 to include a ceiling on loans to the Soviet Union from the Export-Import Bank, [President Gerald R.] Ford signed the Trade Reform Bill with the amendment on January 3, 1975, and the Soviet government officially refused to comply with it on January 10. Later that month the president withdrew his support for the MFN treatment of the USSR because of Soviet intervention into the Angolan civil war. Thus ended the move toward liberalizing trade with the Communist world (at least as represented by the Soviet Union) in the name of détente that had begun so optimistically under the Nixon administration with the passage of the Export Administration Act of 1969, liberalizing export controls.

In the interim, the October 1973 war in the Middle East not only misleadingly contributed to the popular impression in the United States that détente was not working with the Soviet Union; it also exacerbated all the underlyng differences between the European and American conceptions of détente—placing even more strain on the Atlantic Alliance. . . .

In July 1975, with American-Soviet trade relations temporarily on hold and NATO allies restive over having been bypassed at the Moscow summit and uncertain over how the United States would respond to talk of increasing Soviet military strength, the long-awaited Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe began. The declaration of ten principles signed by thirty-five nations at Helsinki on August 1 was important to the United States and the Soviet Union for different

frankly agreed to thwart the "impossible proposals" for "military détente" being put forward by the Western allies of the United States at CSCE and MBFR meetings. The Soviet Union, for example, opposed supplying . . . information about troop maneuvers. "I have told you we will not support this proposal," Kissinger assured Gromyko with Brezhnev listening, adding, "we can weaken these proposals substantially." Kissinger even assured the Soviet foreign minister and secretary general in this 1974 meeting that the United States would "use its influence not to embarrass the Soviet Union or raise provocative issues" with respect to Basket III, which called for humanitarian and cultural cooperation, including the freer movement of people, which the Soviets opposed.

By the time President Ford traveled to Helsinki to sign the CSCE agreements before the election of 1976, Basket III had been not only included in them but "linked" to further East-West economic cooperation at the insistence of Western Europe. Significantly, Ford's political opponents within the Republican party, such as Ronald Reagan and members of his own staff, implied in press statements that the Helsinki Accords represented "another Kissinger deal that was forced down the President's throat." They simply didn't understand how much these agreements differed from the promises Kissinger had made to Gromyko in 1974. Gone were the halcyon days of détente under the Nixon administration. . . .

The U.S. government, especially under President Carter, stressed the human rights provision of the CSCE and used it as a standard by which to measure the treatment of citizens in foreign countries, including the USSR and its satellite nations. This principle became a bone of contention between the United States and the Soviet Union in ways not anticipated by the Nixon administration. Moscow, on the other hand, logically preferred to focus on those segments of the Final Act that granted implied recognition of Soviet hegemony in eastern Europe. A major legacy of Nixinger foreign policy from 1975 until the disintegration of the Soviet Union has been manifested by agreement to disagree over the importance of the Helsinki Accords. Little wonder that Nixon's successors (including Ford) quickly retreated from a defense of Nixon's brand of détente to the point of dropping the use of the word. Yet, in light of the fall of communism, it deserved more credit than it received before Nixon's death. Détente was more than "deals with Moscow in return for no demonstrable Soviet restraint," as some commentators in the early 1990s asserted.

Why Détente Failed

RAYMOND L. GARTHOFF

Foremost among the causes of the ultimate failure of détente in the 1970s was a fatal difference in the conception of its basic role by the two sides. The American leaders saw it (in [Henry] Kissinger's words) as a way of "managing the emergence of Soviet power" into world politics in an age of nuclear parity. The Soviet leaders envisaged it as a way of managing the transition of the United States from its former superiority to a more modest role in world politics in an age of nuclear parity. Thus each saw itself as the manager of a transition of the other. Moreover, while the advent of parity ineluctably meant some decrease in the ability of the United States to manage world affairs, this fact was not sufficiently appreciated in Washington. And while it meant a relatively more important role for the Soviet Union, it did not mean acquisition of the kind of power the United States wielded. Finally, both had diverging images of the world order, and although that fact was well enough understood, its implications were not. Thus, underlying the attempts by each of the two powers to manage the adjustment of the other to a changing correlation of forces in the world there were even more basic parallel attempts by both to modify the fundamental world order—in different directions.

The Soviet leaders, conditioned by their Marxist-Leninist ideology, believed that a certain historical movement would ultimately lead to the replacement of capitalism (imperialism) in the world by socialism (communism). But they realized this transition would have to occur in a world made incalculably more dangerous by massive arsenals of nuclear weapons. Peaceful coexistence and détente were seen as offering a path to neutralize this danger by ruling out war between states, permitting historical change to occur, as the Soviets believed it must, through fundamental indigenous social-economic-political processes within states. While Marxist-Leninists did not shun the use of any other instrument of power if it was expedient, they did not see military power as the fundamental moving force of history. On the contrary, they saw it as a possible ultimate recourse of the doomed capitalist class ruling the imperialist citadels of the West. There was, therefore, no ideological barrier to or reservation about pursuing a policy of détente aimed at preventing nuclear war. Quite the contrary—détente represented a policy aimed at providing stability to a world order that allowed progressive historical change.

The American leadership and the American people, not holding a deterministic ideology, while self-confident, were much less sure of the trend of history. Insofar as they held an ideology for a global order, it was one of pluralism. That ideology did not assume the whole world would choose an American-style democratic and free enterprise system. The world order has been seen as one that should provide stability and at least protect the democratic option for peoples. Occasionally during the Cold War there were crusades to extirpate communism in the world. . . . But the dominant American aim was to contain and deter Soviet or Soviet-controlled communist expansion at the expense of a pluralistic and, in that sense, "free" world order. What varied and periodically was at issue was the relative weight to be placed, on the one hand, on containment achieved by building positions of counterposing power, and on the other, on cooperation, pursued by seeking common ground for mutual efforts to reduce tension and accommodate the differing interests of the two sides. There were varied judgments in both countries about whether objective circumstances permit the latter approach or require the former, and therefore about whether détente was feasible or confrontation was necessary.

When [Richard] Nixon and Kissinger developed a strategy of détente to replace a strategy of confrontation, the underlying expectation was that as the Soviet Union became more and more extensively engaged in an organic network of relations with