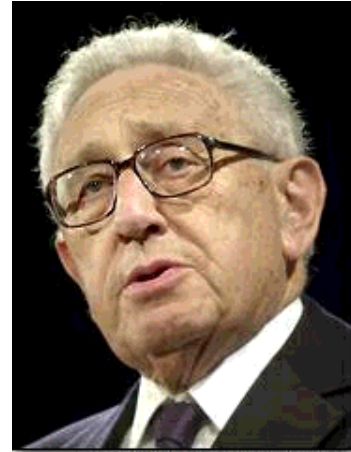


The Secret Keeper

by Paul Wolf, 29 September 2002

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From: Paul Wolf <paulwolf@icdc.com>
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Stefan Zaklin / Getty Images file

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The Latest Kissinger Outrage

Why is a proven liar and wanted man in charge of the 9/11 investigation?

By Christopher Hitchens, *Slate*, November 27, 2002

The Bush administration has been saying in public for several months that it does not desire an independent inquiry into the gross "failures of intelligence" that left U.S. society defenseless 14 months ago. By announcing that Henry Kissinger will be chairing the inquiry that it did not want, the president has now made the same point in a different way. But the cynicism of the decision and the gross insult to democracy and to the families of the victims that it represents has to be analyzed to be believed.

1. We already know quite a lot, thanks all the same, about who was behind the attacks. Most notable in incubating al-Qaida were the rotten client-state regimes of the Saudi Arabian oligarchy and the Pakistani military and police elite. Henry Kissinger is now, and always has been, an errand boy and apologist for such regimes.
2. When in office, Henry Kissinger organized massive deceptions of Congress and public opinion. The most notorious case concerned the "secret bombing" of Cambodia and Laos, and the unleashing of unconstitutional methods by Nixon and Kissinger to repress dissent from this illegal and atrocious policy. But Sen. Frank Church's commission of inquiry into the abuses of U.S. intelligence, which focused on illegal assassinations and the subversion of democratic governments overseas, was given incomplete and misleading information by Kissinger, especially on the matter of Chile. Rep. Otis Pike's parallel inquiry in the House (which brought to light Kissinger's

personal role in the not-insignificant matter of the betrayal of the Iraqi Kurds, among other offenses) was thwarted by Kissinger at every turn, and its eventual findings were classified. In other words, the new "commission" will be chaired by a man with a long, proven record of concealing evidence and of lying to Congress, the press, and the public.

3. In his second career as an obfuscator and a falsifier, Kissinger appropriated the records of his time at the State Department and took them on a truck to the Rockefeller family estate in New York. He has since been successfully sued for the return of much of this public property, but meanwhile he produced, for profit, three volumes of memoirs that purported to give a full account of his tenure. In several crucial instances, such as his rendering of U.S. diplomacy with China over Vietnam, with apartheid South Africa over Angola, and with Indonesia over the invasion of East Timor (to cite only some of the most conspicuous), declassified documents have since shown him to be a bald-faced liar. Does he deserve a third try at presenting a truthful record, after being caught twice as a fabricator? And on such a grave matter as this?
4. Kissinger's "consulting" firm, Kissinger Associates, is a privately held concern that does not publish a client list and that compels its clients to sign confidentiality agreements. Nonetheless, it has been established that Kissinger's business dealings with, say, the Chinese Communist leadership have closely matched his public pronouncements on such things as the massacre of Chinese students. Given the strong ties between himself, his partners Lawrence Eagleburger and Brent Scowcroft, and the oil oligarchies of the Gulf, it must be time for at least a full disclosure of his interests in the region. This thought does not seem to have occurred to the president or to the other friends of Prince Bandar and Prince Bandar's wife, who helped in the evacuation of the Bin Laden family from American soil, without an interrogation, in the week after Sept. 11.
5. On Memorial Day 2001, Kissinger was visited by the police in the Ritz Hotel in Paris and handed a warrant, issued by Judge Roger LeLoire, requesting his testimony in the matter of disappeared French citizens in Pinochet's Chile. Kissinger chose to leave town rather than appear at the Palais de Justice as requested. He has since been summoned as a witness by senior magistrates in Chile and Argentina who are investigating the international terrorist network that went under the name "Operation Condor" and that conducted assassinations, kidnappings, and bombings in several countries. The most spectacular such incident occurred in rush-hour traffic in downtown Washington, D.C., in September 1976, killing a senior Chilean dissident and his American companion. Until recently, this was the worst incident of externally sponsored criminal violence conducted on American soil. The order for the attack was given by Gen. Augusto Pinochet, who has been vigorously defended from prosecution by Henry Kissinger.

Moreover, on Sept. 10, 2001, a civil suit was filed in a Washington, D.C., federal court, charging Kissinger with murder. The suit, brought by the survivors of Gen. Rene Schneider of Chile, asserts that Kissinger gave the order for the elimination of this constitutional officer of a democratic country because he refused to endorse plans for a military coup. Every single document in the prosecution case is a U.S.-government

declassified paper. And the target of this devastating lawsuit is being invited to review the shortcomings of the "intelligence community"?

In late 2001, the Brazilian government canceled an invitation for Kissinger to speak in Sao Paulo because it could no longer guarantee his immunity. Earlier this year, a London court agreed to hear an application for Kissinger's imprisonment on war crimes charges while he was briefly in the United Kingdom. It is known that there are many countries to which he cannot travel at all, and it is also known that he takes legal advice before traveling anywhere. Does the Bush administration feel proud of appointing a man who is wanted in so many places, and wanted furthermore for his association with terrorism and crimes against humanity? Or does it hope to limit the scope of the inquiry to those areas where Kissinger has clients?

There is a tendency, some of it paranoid and disreputable, for the citizens of other countries and cultures to regard President Bush's "war on terror" as opportunist and even as contrived. I myself don't take any stock in such propaganda. But can Congress and the media be expected to swallow the appointment of a proven coverup artist, a discredited historian, a busted liar, and a man who is wanted in many jurisdictions for the vilest of offenses? The shame of this, and the open contempt for the families of our victims, ought to be the cause of a storm of protest.

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Henry's revenge

by Julian Borger, *The Guardian*, November 29, 2002

This man is regarded by many outside the US as a war criminal. There are countries he can't travel to for fear of arrest. Why has George Bush just given him a major job? Julian Borger on the Phoenix-like rise of Henry Kissinger.

The vastly different reactions on each side of the Atlantic to Henry Kissinger's return to the political centre stage says a lot about the constantly widening gap in political perceptions between the US and Europe. Those Europeans who were aware that the old cold warrior was still alive could be forgiven for assuming he was in a cell somewhere awaiting war crimes charges, or living the life of a fugitive, never sleeping in the same bed twice lest human rights investigators track him down.

In the US, the overwhelming response to Kissinger's appointment, at the age of 79, to head the investigation into the catastrophic intelligence failure that led to September 11 has been one of relief mixed with nostalgic affection. For many Americans, he is the avuncular wise man with the funny accent, secretary of state under presidents Nixon and Ford, the only man ever to serve as secretary of state and national security adviser, and a Nobel Peace Prize winner to boot, who is now coming to the rescue bringing half a century of international experience to bear on fixing the holes in national security.

From the point of view of the average citizen who has taken even a passing interest in international affairs, Kissinger has never really been away. Since September 11, he has been

a regular on television talk shows and in the opinion pages of the major newspapers, holding forth on the "war on terror". His views are held in such high esteem that a row broke out during the summer over the correct interpretation of a commentary he had written on policy towards Iraq. He gave overwhelming approval to the decision to confront Saddam Hussein over weapons of mass destruction, but advised the Bush administration to seek as broad an international consensus as possible before going to war. The New York Times interpreted this note of caution as opposition, and was roundly lambasted on the right for doing so.

While Kissinger's place in the Washington mainstream has never seriously been challenged, his principal detractor, the Washington-based British journalist Christopher Hitchens, who chronicled the legal case against him in his book, *The Trials of Henry Kissinger*, is generally treated here as an oddball curiosity. His arguments have scant media attention, certainly in comparison with their reception in Europe.

Kissinger has been canny in maintaining his celebrity status, appearing in a string of advertisements, alongside the likes of Woody Allen, intended to bring tourism back to New York. In Kissinger's ad, he is seen running around the bases in an empty New York Yankees baseball stadium, clearly imagining himself to be scoring a home run. The message was that the Big Apple was somewhere to live out your dreams.

The prophet of realpolitik, who once famously claimed that power was the ultimate aphrodisiac, now has a chance to live out his dreams again -- a man of ideas whose time has come once more in the harsh light of post-September 11 politics.

In that light, the secret bombing of Cambodia, which he orchestrated with Richard Nixon, could be argued to be the ultimate act of preemption, a concept on which the Bush administration's new national security doctrine is based. The same goes for his role in helping oust Salvador Allende from power in Chile, and his replacement by General Augusto Pinochet. The prevailing climate in national security circles in the age of terrorism favours early action against potential threats, before they pose direct danger.

It is a climate that makes it politically risky to criticise even such a controversial personality, and the chronically risk-averse Democrats have mostly stood to attention behind Kissinger's nomination. "He brings a stature to it, which is important," Sandy Berger, Bill Clinton's national security adviser, told the New York Times. "He brings historical perspective, which I think is equally important. And I think that he has a wide-ranging experience, which is relevant... It is a very good choice."

Privately, the Democrats are consoling themselves that their own elder statesman, former senator George Mitchell, will be at Kissinger's side in an attempt to ensure that the inquiry is not a total whitewash.

They realise that Kissinger is such an old hand at national security policy that he knows it is ultimately subordinate to domestic politics. There is convincing evidence that he played a role in convincing the South Vietnamese to reject a peace deal being negotiated by Lyndon Johnson in the dying months of his administration, which might have saved the Democrats in the 1968 elections. Instead, the collapse of the talks helped elect Kissinger's man, Nixon.

Kissinger now has another chance to be a player in the great game of international strategy, a game in which truth will inevitably be traded off against perceived national interest, a barter at which the American Machiavelli is a master. At the heart of his deliberations will be the role of Saudi Arabia, and the mysterious relationship between the kingdom's royal family, its intelligence services and the 9/11 hijackers, 15 out of 19 of whom were Saudi nationals.

On the other hand, the Saudi government is a long-term strategic ally, which has facilities near-essential to a war against Iraq, provides a major source of oil, and is a friend of the Bush family. It is a dilemma few would enjoy as much as Kissinger.

The German-born statesman is also well placed to appreciate the interplay of big money and politics, an alchemy that is at the heart of the Bush administration. At the head of Kissinger Associates since 1982, he has sold his expertise in the workings of the Washington policy machine and his international contacts to corporate clients, most of whom choose to remain anonymous, but who are thought to include Exxon Mobil, Arco and American Express.

Kissinger is also on the "European Strategy Board" of a Dallas investment company called Hicks, Muse, Tate & Furst, one of the biggest financial contributors to George Bush's political career. Tom Hicks, one of its partners, was instrumental in Bush's rise: his purchase of the Texas Rangers baseball team, in which the president had a stake, helped make him a millionaire.

All of the above may help explain why Kissinger is not a surprising choice for the Bush administration. However, it does not explain the popular acceptance, and even acclaim, his nomination has so far received.

This almost certainly has something to do with the national mood since September 11, which has been defensive for obvious reasons, and particularly ill-disposed to introspection and self-doubt. There is no longer an appetite for the sort of harsh reassessment of the US role in the world that was so prevalent in the 80s and early 90s in the form of books and films about Vietnam and Latin America, Kissinger's old stomping ground. In Hollywood's most recent Vietnam movie, the US is the hero once more. Meanwhile, the CIA's adventures in Chile, El Salvador and Nicaragua are largely forgotten.

It is worth remembering that Kissinger is not the sole beneficiary of this particular form of national amnesia. Earlier this month, Admiral John Poindexter, one of the central figures in the Iran-Contra scandal of the 80s, was appointed the head of a new Pentagon intelligence service, with Big Brother-style access to the personal information of ordinary Americans. Poindexter was formerly better known for destroying data than collecting it, having admitted to Congress that he destroyed a document bearing Ronald Reagan's signature authorising the sale of arms to Iran in return for the release of American hostages. The revenue was used to fund Contra guerrillas fighting the Nicaraguan government without the knowledge of Congress. Poindexter was convicted for his role but later won an appeal on a legal technicality. The motto of his new office is *scientia est potentia* -- knowledge is power.

Meanwhile, his celebrated subordinate, Colonel Oliver North, who carried out much of the shredding of embarrassing documents and who took the legal rap for the scandal, is also back on the Washington A list, as a television talk-show host and pundit. Another

Iran-Contra veteran, Elliott Abrams, who as assistant secretary of state under Reagan was convicted of misleading Congress, is now back in the national security council. Otto Reich, who masterminded pro-Contra propaganda, has also risen again, as an assistant secretary of state.

Consider, too, the strange career of G Gordon Liddy, the Watergate burglar who went to jail for breaking into the Democratic Party offices at the behest of Kissinger's boss, Nixon. He emerged from prison a born-again Christian and is now a radio talk-show host with a faithful following. His book of conservative rants again gun control and other liberal infringements on liberty, entitled *When I Was a Kid, This Was a Free Country*, was treated with reverence on CNN. The financial news anchor, Lou Dobbs, recommended it to his viewers "as a celebration of sorts of a time when boys could go hunting with a pal, make their own fireworks and just burn leaves on an autumn afternoon."

When he famously remarked that "there are no second acts in American lives", F Scott Fitzgerald could not have conceived of the modern American right, which -- unlike its liberal adversaries -- does not leave its wounded on the political battlefield.

Like Liddy, Poindexter and North, Kissinger has been helped back from eternal obscurity by a deep desire on the part of the nation's conservatives to avenge past humiliations, when men they saw as heroes were forced to answer to the law, and sometimes go to jail.

Kissinger's second act is sweeter than most -- his murky past has not only gone unpunished, it now looks like the unsettling prologue for US policy in years to come.

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Kissinger, The Secret Keeper

by Paul Vitello, *Newsday*, November 28, 2002

Henry Kissinger was appointed yesterday as chairman of a commission to investigate the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11.

One may wish him well. But no less-likely prominent American could have been found to shed light on what happened in this country's darkest hour.

Kissinger, 79, comes with hefty credentials. Between 1969 and 1975, during the administrations of Presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford, he was national security adviser and later secretary of state.

But in all those years of public service, Kissinger was famous for secrets.

He was the architect of secret diplomacy with China, secret peace talks with Vietnam, a secret war against Cambodia, a secret bombing of Laos. Kissinger's biographers have dubbed him a genius of secrets -- a man who played in-house politics better than any other official of his time. His control over the information of state reached the level of obsession. Leaks were cause for investigation -- unless they were leaks made by himself. He was said to

be a true artist of the media leak.

He was, and in some ways remains, a secretary of state in the truest sense: a keeper and feeder of the secrets of state. He has fought battles in and out of office to keep the public from knowing things.

Whether this background makes him the best choice to lead this commission -- whose purpose is supposedly to explore and expose the potential failures of the government's intelligence services -- is a fair question.

"I honestly don't think he has a stellar track record for this [assignment]," said Lucy Dalglish, executive director of the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, an organization that sued Kissinger over access to his official papers as national security adviser and secretary of state, and lost in the U.S. Supreme Court.

"One would hope the American public will learn what went wrong on Sept. 11," she said. "My concern is his propensity for secrecy, which unfortunately fits too well the pattern of the current White House."

It is not clear what aspects of the attacks the commission is to investigate. When first proposed by members of Congress, the Sept. 11 commission was supposed to probe how American intelligence agencies failed in the weeks and months prior to the attacks -- and to propose how they might be better prepared to head off the next attack.

When President George W. Bush announced Kissinger's appointment yesterday, he said the commission would study "the methods of America's enemies and the nature of the threats we face."

Whether that is the same thing or not, or whether the president's phrase seems like a softer focus for the investigation, probably doesn't matter that much.

The investigation will go where the 10 members of the commission -- five appointed by Republicans, five by Democrats -- tell it to go. Under the rules agreed upon during intense negotiations between the White House and congressional Democrats, the commission will have the power to subpoena witnesses -- but only if six members agree.

In the negotiations, Bush insisted on, and won, the right to appoint the commission's chairman.

In Kissinger, he has appointed a man who understands the prerogatives of power, and who would seem to believe in strict limits on the public's right to know what powerful people do or don't do behind closed doors.

In his memoirs, Adm. Elmo Zumwalt, former commander of naval forces in Vietnam, wrote of his frustration with the efforts of Kissinger and Nixon "to conceal, sometimes by simple silence, more often by articulate deceit, their real policies about the most critical matters of national security."

That could be a problem in the chairman of a truth commission.

Then, there is Kissinger's potential conflict of interest.

Since leaving public office, Kissinger has become wealthy as a consultant to international corporations seeking to do business with foreign governments. His firm, Kissinger Associates, has employed many former presidents, including the first Bush, and many former secretaries of state and national security advisers, including Brent Scowcroft, the architect of the Gulf War.

All these men may have an ox gored, potentially, by the 9/11 commission.

But worse, among the various clients Kissinger Associates have helped are oil companies and engineering firms that sought contracts with the oil sheikdoms of the Middle East.

Kuwait Petroleum Corp., a Kuwait government-owned company, was once a client. Multinational companies doing business with members of the Saudi royal family have been clients, as have members of the Saudi royal family themselves.

What if the commission's investigation -- of an attack in which 15 of 19 terrorists were Saudi citizens -- leads to members of the Saudi royal family?

Will this place Chairman Kissinger in conflict with his interests as a founding partner of Kissinger Associates?

"I think it's a good appointment," said Steve Push, co-chairman of Families of Sept. 11, a survivors organization that was instrumental in lobbying for the establishment of the commission. "We're optimistic. Obviously it's gonna be important who the other nine appointees are."

Whoever the appointees are, among the many questions they will face in their investigation of Sept. 11, the first and foremost will be the question of the man who is their chairman.

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The Kissinger Commission

The New York Times, November 29, 2002

In naming Henry Kissinger to direct a comprehensive examination of the government's failure to prevent the Sept. 11 attacks, President Bush has selected a consummate Washington insider. Mr. Kissinger obviously has a keen intellect and vast experience in national security matters. Unfortunately, his affinity for power and the commercial interests he has cultivated since leaving government may make him less than the staunchly independent figure that is needed for this critical post. Indeed, it is tempting to wonder if the choice of Mr. Kissinger is not a clever maneuver by the White House to contain an investigation it long opposed.

It seems improbable to expect Mr. Kissinger to report unflinchingly on the conduct of the government, including that of Mr. Bush. He would have to challenge the established order and risk sundering old friendships and business relationships.

The Kissinger commission, in theory, should provide the definitive account of how a raft of government agencies -- including the White House, Central Intelligence Agency and Federal Bureau of Investigation -- left the nation so vulnerable to terrorist attack. That final reckoning is overdue and so far absent from the narrower inquiries done by Congress and individual agencies. It is essential to ensuring that past mistakes are not repeated.

The new inquiry will be undone if the 10-member panel is hesitant to call government organizations and officials to account. There can be no place for the kind of political calculation and court flattery that Mr. Kissinger practiced so assiduously during his tenure as Richard Nixon's national security adviser and secretary of state. Nor is there any tolerance for the kind of cynicism that Mr. Kissinger applied to the prosecution of the Vietnam War.

The commission will be made up of five Republicans and five Democrats. Choosing its remaining members and staff director wisely will also be vital to its success. They must be fiercely independent and unafraid to challenge some of Washington's most powerful institutions. We were mildly encouraged to hear Mr. Kissinger say that he would "accept no restrictions" on the commission's work. To deliver on that promise, Mr. Kissinger must start by severing all ties to Kissinger Associates, the lucrative consulting business he has built up during the past two decades. As a consultant, Mr. Kissinger offered not just his own foreign policy expertise, but his famously easy access to the powerful and well connected.

Not long after Mr. Bush announced the appointment of Mr. Kissinger on Wednesday, Democratic Congressional leaders picked one of their brethren, former Senator George Mitchell, to serve as vice chairman. Like Mr. Kissinger, Mr. Mitchell has great experience and an understanding of how the world works -- and is not known for rocking established institutions.

The commission offers both men a chance for the kind of career-crowning legacy that many public personages dream of. But that would require rising above Washington's usual hedging and horse-trading. If they succeed, they could help the nation recover from the grievous wounds of Sept. 11 and make sure the country is never so vulnerable again.

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