

Nixon, Kissinger, and US Foreign Policy Making: The Machinery of Crisis

By Asaf Siniver

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The Machinery of Crisis examines for the first time the important role of crisis management in the making of U.S. foreign policy during the Nixon-Kissinger years. Notorious for their tight grip on the machinery of U.S. foreign policy, the book offers a critical account of the manner in which the president and his national security advisor dominated the structures and processes of foreign policy making. By drawing on a wealth of previously classified documents, Siniver reveals the story of the Washington Special Action Group, which managed foreign policy crises in the Nixon administration. In this thoroughly researched account of the performance of Nixon, Kissinger and the Washington Special Actions group in four international crises, Siniver provides a fresh analysis of the important relationship between individuals and the advisory system in the making of U.S. foreign policy during international crisis.

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Editorial Review

Review
"Asaf Siniver has written the first comprehensive analysis of the cognitive and personal interaction between Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger and its impact on the decision-making structure they set up for the conduct of U.S. foreign policy. Based on newly released documents, Siniver establishes six standards for investigating four case studies-the 1970 incursion into Cambodia, the Jordanian crisis, the 1971 India-Pakistan war, and the 1973 Yom Kippur War. These should prove valuable examples for examining other diplomatic actions of the Nixon administration once more information is declassified." -Joan Hoff, Research Professor of History, Montana State University, Bozeman

"Asaf Siniver's book provides a substantial, fascinating and well-written investigation of the development, implementation, and consequences of the organizational apparatus constructed by Nixon and Kissinger to direct U.S. foreign policy. This book makes a significant contribution to our understanding of this period through its detailed analysis of the recently opened National Security Council documents. Siniver's book displays a masterful integration of new material on an endlessly fascinating subject." -Rose McDermott, University of California at Santa Barbara

"Asaf Siniver shows how Nixon and Kissinger transformed the structure, as well as the substance, of US foreign policy. His book offers a thoughtful, well researched, and theoretically informed account of how the bureaucracy influenced crisis decision-making, despite the highly personalized policies of the imperial presidency. His book is also a timely reminder that presidents can benefit from close attention to the policy process, and the advice produced by a well organized analytical machinery in government. I recommend this book to all students, scholars, and practitioners of foreign policy." - Jeremi Suri, University of Wisconsin, Author of Henry Kissinger And The American Century

"...a valuable addition to the continuously growing body of scholarship on Nixon's and Kissinger's tenures in office." -Jussi Hanhimaki, H-Diplo

"This is a thoroughly researched and well-written book that should be read by all who are interested in the foreign policy of the Nixon administration." -Yafeng Xia, The Journal of American History

About the Author
Asaf Siniver is Lecturer in International Relations in the Department of Political Science and International Studies, University of Birmingham.

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