

2010

# H-Diplo

## H-Diplo Article Reviews

<http://www.h-net.org/~diplo/reviews/>

No. 257b

Published on 18 February 2010

H-Diplo Article Review Editors: Thomas Maddux and Diane N. Labrosse

Web and Production Editor: George Fujii

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Commissioned for H-Diplo by Thomas Maddux

**Part II of an H-Diplo Article Review Forum on “Special Forum: U.S.-Soviet Relations in the Era of Détente,”** *Diplomatic History* 33:4 (September 2009).

**Dan Caldwell.** “The Legitimation of the Nixon-Kissinger Grand Design and Grand Strategy.” 633-652. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-7709.2009.00801.x. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7709.2009.00801.x>

**Julian F. Zelizer.** “Détente and Domestic Politics.” 653-670. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-7709.2009.00805.x. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7709.2009.00805.x>

**Douglas E. Selvage.** “Transforming the Soviet Sphere of Influence? U.S.-Soviet Détente and Eastern Europe, 1969-1976.” 671-688. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-7709.2009.00804.x. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7709.2009.00804.x>

**Stephen R. Twigge.** “Operation Hullabaloo: Henry Kissinger, British Diplomacy, and the Agreement on the Prevention of Nuclear War.” 689-702. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-7709.2009.00807.x. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7709.2009.00807.x>

**Angela Romano.** “Détente, Entente, or Linkage? The Helsinki Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe in U.S. Relations with the Soviet Union.” 703-722. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-7709.2009.00802.x. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7709.2009.00802.x>

**Kathleen Parthé.** “The Politics of Détente-Era Cultural Texts: 1969-1976.” 723-734. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-7709.2009.00803.x. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7709.2009.00803.x>

**Effie G. H. Pedaliu.** “‘A Sea of Confusion’: The Mediterranean and Détente, 1969-1974.” 735-750. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-7709.2009.00806.x. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7709.2009.00806.x>

URL: <http://www.h-net.org/~diplo/reviews/PDF/AR257a.pdf>

Review by **Werner D. Lippert**, Indiana University of Pennsylvania

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In 1971, Undersecretary of State, George W. Ball, stated that “Détente is a French word we employ to conceal the fact that we have only the vaguest of ideas what we are trying to say.” For no détente policy is this truer than for the attempted superpower détente between the United States and the Soviet Union during the early 1970s. Faced with economic difficulties, political turmoil and weary allies, détente was the buzz-word of the early 1970s that promised many things to many people. Exploring various aspects of U.S. – Soviet relations, then, helps not only to appreciate agency, motivation, and outcome of the ups and downs of the superpower relationship, but also allows for a better understanding of the exact nature of détente.

At the heart of this lies the question of ideology in foreign policy and how its presence (or absence) shaped foreign policy. Whether one explores the impact of the U.S. public opinion on international relations; the treatment of secondary powers; military strategies; or the causes for the end of the Cold War, on a more abstract level, these nuances illustrate the inherent conflict between Wilsonianism and Realism, and their effectiveness in spreading Western ideals across the globe.

No study of this subject would be complete without an analysis of the interesting yet complex partnership between President Richard Nixon and his National Security Adviser (and later Secretary of State) Henry Kissinger. In “The Legitimation of the Nixon-Kissinger Grand Design and Grand Strategy,” Dan Caldwell highlights the motives and designs behind Nixon and Kissinger’s foreign policy and their efforts to gain domestic support for their grand design/strategy. Caldwell elaborates upon their quest to transcend the problematic foreign policy bureaucracy, notably the State Department, for fear of it impeding progress in U.S. foreign policy. Caldwell points out that “Nixon and Kissinger sought to create a policy-making structure that centralized power in their hands, and that included the public relations efforts of the administration.” (636) The Nixon-Kissinger team also “sought legitimation [of their grand policy design/strategy] by staging dramatic initiatives and overemphasizing the significance of what they had accomplished.” (637)

Caldwell lucidly illustrates how Nixon and Kissinger did not at first appreciate the importance of public opinion in foreign policy, but eventually came to realize its unmistakable importance in sustaining the foreign policy agendas and objectives of a presidential administration. He rather appropriately draws extensively from the diaries of H.R. Haldeman for revealing insights into Nixon’s public relations drive throughout his presidency, which illustrates how Kissinger relished the limelight in the press, despite Nixon’s jealousy and their apparent conviction that liberal media critics were out to get them. Ultimately, though, Caldwell concludes that the Nixon/Kissinger team failed in convincing the American public of the novel *realpolitik* approach to U.S. foreign policy, away from the traditional U.S. foreign policy framework founded upon societal “values, traditions and ideals.” (652)

Attention to the domestic pressures on U.S. foreign policy is also apparent, as Julian Zelizer, in “Détente and Domestic Politics,” argues that “Nixon’s and Ford’s national security centrism failed to create a stable political majority within the Republican party.” (653) As the title of his article implies, Zelizer examines the power of domestic politics in shaping

foreign policy with a decidedly nuanced study of contemporary media sources, including television news footage. Nixon had to walk a fine line to appease conservatives, neoconservatives, and moderates, and he found this to be a difficult dilemma that challenged his realist conceptual framework for U.S.-Soviet relations. Zelizer notes, for example, that Nixon emphatically rejected the neoconservative argument that “[U.S.] foreign policy should attempt to sway the internal behavior of the Soviets.” (656) Despite these not insignificant obstacles, Nixon had breathing room with his conservative base of support that lauded his accomplishment of détente with the Soviets near the twilight of his presidency.

Nevertheless, persistent domestic turmoil, ongoing internal political strife within the Republican party, and the gradual yet utter defaming of Nixon led to the discrediting of his détente policy and those associated with it. In this, Zelizer provides an impressive appraisal of the American social dynamics relating to the dismantling of détente, and vividly traces the public reaction to Nixon’s policies with the march of time and changing of circumstances. He significantly notes how the dramatic shift in the Republican party during 1976 decisively ended the “centrist foreign policy agenda that Republicans had pursued since 1968” and created a social demand for the reintegration of the moralistic, ideological, and strong national security elements in U.S. foreign policy that would come to fruition under Carter in the mid-70s and, to a greater extent, Reagan in the 80s. (668-669)

Stephen Twigge’s “Operation Hullabaloo: Henry Kissinger, British Diplomacy, and the Agreement on the Prevention of Nuclear War,” features a critical appraisal of superpower détente from a British perspective. He demonstrates how Kissinger’s notoriety for secrecy (a well-documented staple of his foreign policy-making modus-operandi) contributed to European suspicions and skepticism, leaving even the staunchest U.S. ally, Britain, caught between a rock and a hard place. The superpower agreement on the prevention of nuclear war might have added strength to superpower détente but at the same time it weakened alliance cohesion and sparked criticism from the excluded countries.

In “Transforming the Soviet Sphere of Influence? U.S.-Soviet Détente and Eastern Europe, 1969-1976,” Douglas Selva seeks to address the wisdom of U.S. realism in fighting the Cold War. He argues that the Nixon and Ford Administrations (1969-76) erroneously acquiesced and sought to destabilize the Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern Europe by encouraging East European independence from Moscow. The hopes both administrations nurtured for Soviet bloc countries to assert their sovereignty against Moscow “ultimately turned out to be misplaced” (672). Rather than diplomacy and a power shift from above, it was the transformation from below that triggered the fall of the East bloc.

In “Détente, Entente, or Linkage? The Helsinki Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe in U.S. Relations with the Soviet Union,” Angela Romano examines the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and its integration with U.S. foreign policy as an “application of the linkage theory that characterized the Nixon-Kissinger administration.” (706) Romano notes that to Nixon and Kissinger, the CSCE was not envisioned as a practical component of détente with the Soviet Union, although it was important in placating Western European allies and achieving an “atmospheric détente”

(710). Indeed, Romano provides a convincing argument that the U.S. part in promoting the CSCE was designed as a way to form an entente with the Soviets, a separate lynchpin from which both the U.S. and Soviets could yield fruitful bilateral negotiations on the high policy issues that most concerned Nixon and Kissinger—such as the Middle East, SALT, and Vietnam. This approach, however, had the effect of alienating the Western European allies, for they were restricted from putting forth their own overtures, that Nixon and Kissinger believed would antagonize the Soviets and further impede progress with the Soviets. Romano concludes that Nixon and Kissinger conceptualized the CSCE as “applying diplomatic means likely to preserve and develop its strategy of dialogue with the USSR.” (721)

Kathleen Parthé addresses another important, yet often forgotten aspect to détente policies: censorship of cultural texts. Highlighting the continued arrests and censorship of Soviet writers throughout the key years of détente, she illustrates that Soviets and Americans alike pursued a not entirely coherent approach to literary censorship that was predominated by restraint more than ideological warfare. (7) Yet, even if the ideological battle over literature was fought haphazardly, the fact that it continued to be fought reminds us that the détente of the early 1970s was by no means a reconciliation, but rather an attempt to peacefully preserve the division of the world.

Effie Pedaliu rounds out the discussion on détente policies with an *Annales*-type approach to the Mediterranean situation. To Pedaliu, détente was decidedly a “process of superpowers focusing, almost exclusively, on each other,” which left other areas—such as the Mediterranean—vulnerable. (735) She depicts the Mediterranean countries as outclassed in regards to security by the power plays of the two superpowers which, contrary to the spirit of détente, failed to come together in a cooperative spirit to “dictate agendas and resolve localized yet potentially explosive issues.” (749) Establishing *a priori* superpower agreements on resolving regional crises, so she thinks, could have promoted a new thinking and defused volatility in the Mediterranean. (749) Even if such criticism seems somewhat harsh, considering that the superpowers were only in the embryonic stages of establishing true superpower détente before it crumbled again, Pedaliu skillfully illustrates the difficulty of effective superpower governance over independent-minded secondary powers. Certainly, maintaining alliance coherence in the Mediterranean was no small feat considering the independent Mediterranean policies by the French and Italians or the willingness of various Southern Mediterranean states to accept Soviet aid. The reinterpretation of the CSCE as a political outlet for smaller European powers who saw themselves excluded from superpower politics gains particular significance in this regard. The most important observation, however, lies with the inability of the superpowers to deal with the Middle Eastern issues and the Yom Kippur war as the ultimate damper to U.S.-Soviet détente policies.

Collectively, these articles stand as laudable contributions to the growing scholarship on U.S. foreign relations during the Nixon and Ford eras. Since the articles combine erudite arguments and analyses with fresh perspectives and encompassing a wide spectrum of topics and themes relevant to the time—economic, social, cultural, diplomatic, strategic, transatlantic, and others—it is difficult for one interested in this era of U.S. foreign relations

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to not find an area that engenders further fruitful academic debate. The sheer breadth of sources that serve as the foundation for these studies—including extensive and substantial archival material, media resources, and personal participatory memoirs, to name but a few—do justice to the complex and interwoven détente policies of the 1970s. If one should point to an additional area of study that would truly complete the assessment of détente, it would have to be the Soviet perspective. While it is relatively easy to evaluate Nixon and Kissinger’s détente policies from a teleological perspective, questions of Soviet interests invariably play a key role in judging the efficacy of Western foreign policies. The East bloc economic downturn, to give but one example, has only been touched on in one article. Even so, the wealth of information and the multiple perspectives in this collection are a great step forward in properly assessing détente in the context of U.S.-Soviet relations.

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