

## The Axe Files with David Axelrod

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Ep. 502 — Henry Kissinger



Speakers Intro, David Axelrod, Henry Kissinger, Outro

00:00:05

**Intro** And now from the University of Chicago Institute of Politics and CNN Audio, The Axe Files with your host, David Axelrod.

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**David Axelrod** He only spent eight years of his long life in public service, and that was nearly half a century ago. Yet as he nears his hundredth birthday, former Secretary of State and National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger remains one of the most iconic, impactful and controversial diplomats in American history. I sat down with him this week to discuss his life, career, the world today and his new book, "Leadership." And just one note for you Axe Files listeners. We're going to take a few weeks off, but will be offering some great alternative programming here. We hope you'll enjoy. We'll see you after Labor Day. And now, my conversation with Dr. Henry Kissinger. Dr. Kissinger, you've written a book, "Leadership: Six Studies in World Strategy." And I want to ask you about the lessons learned in that book. But this is your 16th book as you approach your hundredth birthday, and there's plenty to be learned from your remarkable life and story as well. So if it's okay with you, I'd like to start there and ask you about your childhood. You grew up in Germany and you grew up in the years leading up to World War II. Your dad was an Orthodox Jew, and you and your family fled in 1935 after the Nuremberg laws were passed targeting Jews. You emigrated. I know that you you kind of you've spoken in the past about how this that experience didn't exactly shape your life. But looking back at that period, what gives rise to that kind of blood and soil ethno-nationalism that seized Germany then?

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**Henry Kissinger** First you said my father was an Orthodox Jew and I have to react to it. He was but he was also, he taught at a gymnasium, a school of the German, not that was the way integrated. And that for a Jew was quite an achievement to be taken into the regular school. That meant a lot to him. And as soon as Hitler came into power, he dismissed all Jewish public employees. And that included my father. In that period, Jews really didn't have any civil rights. And they'd had the Nuremberg Laws, which meant that they didn't, and they couldn't associate with non-Jewish people. So my parents, actually, my mother decided to emigrate. And in 1928 we came to the United States. It was Labor Day when we arrived on September 5th, my first view when we got off the boat was on a holiday it looked like, unexpectedly lively. People seemed wishing to have a good time. I knew so little about it did that I thought the fire escapes which I had never seen before, were bombs in it. So I thought every house had bombs in it, where people could fit. This was in New York.

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**David Axelrod**

I want to ask you more about your experience when you came, but I just want to ask you again, what conditions give rise to this kind of ethno-nationalism that Hitler proposed? And I ask you that because we're seeing it around the world now. You know, we just had we just had an episode where Orbán of Hungary came and spoke at the CPAC convention here in the United States. It was like a union of pro-Trump supporters and Orbán supporters, and it was very much steeped in that kind of ethno-nationalism. What is giving rise to that? And are there analogies to some of the things that went on in the 1930s?

00:04:39

**Henry Kissinger**

Actually, no comparison between what goes on here and what went on in Germany in the 1930s. Because here it is the act of individuals or of group that are distinct. There is no governmental action that supports it and public opinion doesn't support it. In Germany it was an action which was organized by the government in the law and it produced breaking up into ethnic units. It would totally separate it. It was what one reads about what the South might have been here for Black people before reforms that have passed and that haven't fully achieved their objective here but here it's an exception and it's against the law. There it was the rule that that if any group of people, if one encountered you in the street, could beat you up without anybody helping and well my mother be would be brought up in a village where she knew everybody and that would be permitted. They'll go to any public place. Swimming pools, or even restaurants had signs up, "Jews are not to dine here." It was a much more fundamental entity, something that we must never make to be approached here.

00:06:05

**David Axelrod**

You watched, I'm sure — I know, because I've seen your comments. You watched with distress the events of January 6th last year. I'm sure you've seen the polls that suggest that, you know, a significant number of Americans, 70% of Republicans think that the last election was illegitimate. Are these warning signs or are our institutions so strong enough essentially to resist that?

00:06:29

**Henry Kissinger**

Well, our institute and they've proved to be strong enough to resist that. The event was, it was not comparable to what Hitler did, but it was unacceptable and whatever was the view of the nature of individual elections during the voting day, the outgoing President of the United States has an obligation for the transition to his successor and that has been done throughout American history and so an organized demonstration against the Congress, invading the Congress, was totally impermissible.

00:07:10

**David Axelrod**

Let me, I just want to return to your story. You went to City College in New York. My father was a Jewish immigrant in New York at about the same time. You went to the City University of New York. You worked during the day at a, I read, a shaving brush factory to earn a living while you were in school.

00:07:29

**Henry Kissinger**

I went to night school. Correct, I was in the shaving brush factory for five years before I was drafted.

00:07:35

**David Axelrod**

When you were drafted, you ultimately returned to Germany, this time wearing the uniform of the United States Army. And you were among the liberators. You were in the 84th Infantry Division, and you liberated the Ahlem concentration camp. You were 22 years old. You were a German-born Jew. And I just want to read something that you wrote at the time as a 22 year old: "That is humanity in the 21st— in the 20th century. People reach such a stupor of suffering that life and death, animation or immobility can't be differentiated anymore. And then, who is dead and who is alive, the man whose agonized face stares at me from the cot or Folek Sama, who stands with bowed head and emaciated body? Who was lucky? The man who draws circles in the sand and mumbles, 'I am free' or the bones that are interred in the hillside." Searing, searing words. How did you process that as a 22 year old Jewish emigrant to the US?

00:08:35

**Henry Kissinger**

Well, by that time, I worked in the 84th Infantry Division.

00:08:40

**David Axelrod**

Yes.

00:08:40

**Henry Kissinger**

And our division liberated that camp. And it was really people were so in a state that I did not know human beings could reach. They looked barely human and they had captured one of their guards and tried to kill him or wound him. And they went to me to do any serious damage to him, or any damage to him. So the impact of this degree of suffering and also that in the camp the prisoners were put into categories. And the German prisoners, because criminals with a certain number of convictions were also put in the concentration camps, but they were the top-ranking people in the camp and the Jews were the lowest-ranking people in the camp and the depth of suffering that would be reached by the prisoners who were barely alive and some of them suffered when we gave them normal food because they couldn't digest it any more. It was a shocking experience to me, and then of course brought to mind that if my family had left 12 months later, were I to leave 12 months later, my parents would have been— my father would have been among them. Could have been among them if he survived that long. So it left an image with me of the degree of human degradation which is impermissible, and it must be fought.

00:10:17

**David Axelrod**

In fact, you said I saw speech you gave years later back there and you said there's nothing I'm more proud of in my service to this country than having been one of those who had the honor of liberating the Ahlem concentration camp. And I know you lost you lost some relatives, distant relatives in the Holocaust.

00:10:38

**Henry Kissinger**

Four sisters of my father. We lost about 13 members of our family, cousins and aunts. And about half of the people with whom I went to school, my schoolmates perished in the Holocaust.

00:10:55

**David Axelrod**

Awful, awful. It does raise a question because, you know, you know, you're such a towering figure in the whole foreign policy debate of the last 70, 80 years. And it raises the question about what America's obligations are relative to human rights in the world. You famously advanced in practice a theory of Realpolitik, the idea that leaders must place national interest ahead of moral concerns. And I know that in 1973 you were talking to President Nixon. This was in a taped conversation, probably didn't know it was being taped. But about the movement to pressure the Soviets to allow more Jews to emigrate from Russia by withholding trade so they could escape Soviet oppression. And you told Nixon the emigration of Jews from the Soviet Union is not an objective of American foreign policy. And if they put Jews in the gas chambers in the Soviet Union, it's not an American concern, maybe a humanitarian concern. And I ask you this not to be—

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**Henry Kissinger**

I have never understood where that conversation comes from. And my thought was that Jews were not put into gas chambers in the Soviet Union. And I can tell you what my basic view was. My basic view was that we had an obligation to try to prevent nuclear war and to try to improve humane conditions wherever possible. So specifically on the issue of Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union, my difference was one of method. I argued that if we asserted we had a right to demand it, that would create an obstacle rather than an advantage. So in my first month as Security Adviser, I told the Soviet ambassador that we did not demand it as a right, but we would adjust our foreign policy on the basis of their performance and on the basis of that conversation. Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union grew from 700 a month in the previous period to 37,000 at the end of the next two terms in office. That was my basic view. What somebody picked out of a conversation with Nixon, it's in a way incomprehensible to me because this was the policy that we went through and it would be our policy in general on human rights. It was different from what our political opponent had, whose views on the subject I expected. And it is an issue that still comes up periodically. But it's not a philosophical difference between my view and say most of the democratic view. It's a practical difference with how in concrete cases one should proceed. Now we have, there are many governments in the world that are pursuing inappropriate policies, immoral policies and so how to balance prejudice and persuasion. Every administration has to figure out for itself but that is my basic view.

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**David Axelrod**

Yeah. Just to be clear I think that came from one of the Nixon tapes that's why that that quote exists.

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**Henry Kissinger**

I have seen it. I don't understand the context of it. And I've never said anything even remotely like it.

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**David Axelrod**

Let me ask you about Nixon himself, because I find it so interesting. You know, he's a, as you've written and as you know better than anybody on the planet, was a very complex figure. And he was famously hostile to intellectuals, elites, particularly Harvard of the Harvard variety, having been deeply resentful toward Kennedy and the crowd that he brought in. How did you navigate that? Here you were, an eminent Harvard professor and public intellectual. How did you how did you develop the relationship you did with Nixon? Because you really became his kind of alter-ego on national security and foreign policy.

00:15:19

**Henry Kissinger**

Well, it was amazing that he appointed me to that position to begin with. I had been a consultant to President Kennedy in the White House for 15 months at the beginning of the Kennedy administration. And I had personal relationships with both the president and especially with Bobby Kennedy. And I still maintain these relationships with the Kennedy family to this day. My closest political associate in that period, I wasn't really a political figure, was Nelson Rockefeller.

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**David Axelrod**

Whose photo I see sitting over here over your left shoulder there.

00:16:02

**Henry Kissinger**

Yes. And so when Nixon was elected, I did not think that I would have any relationship with the Nixon administration. And then he invited me and I actually did something which I wouldn't advise ambitious people to do. I said, I'd like to think about it for a while and then I'd like to talk to the Rockefeller. And Nixon said, take a week. Which most presidents that I've met would not do to a person considered for a position. And Rockefeller said to me, you have to consider that Nixon is taking a much bigger chance on you than you on him. And so that was a pretty decisive argument. And I accepted it. And on foreign policy, Nixon and I had suspected that we'd stand, we were basically in agreement on what to do because you can't be Security Adviser if you are not when it happens. So I thought it would be an adjustment, but Nixon, as I'm saying in this new book that has come out, needed me as a partner and not as a political figure. Though there was — when I found out, Eisenhower when I called on him after I had been appointed, told me that he had opposed my appointment because he thought that professors could not do that job and it should be done by somebody with administrative experience.

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**David Axelrod**

So do you have any idea why Nixon chose you? Do you have any idea why he ignored Eisenhower and his aversion to you academic types and chose you?

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**Henry Kissinger**

Nixon was an ambivalent personality. You mentioned before of the hatred for the Kennedys. That wasn't exactly his feeling. He was very impressed by the Kennedys. And he would have liked to have had the impact publicly that John Kennedy did. And in the back of his head, he believed that intellectually he had served with it. But when he was in the tenant of Vice President, he ignored the Kennedy family. And it was in part an affliction of envy and of an effect of frustration that they had achieved what he most would have liked which was of envy, admiration, and symbolism. On the other hand he also was very opposed to them. But he never, it was not an— it was an unambiguous thing. He had a lot of admiration for the Kennedys, and envy.

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**David Axelrod**

We're going to take a short break and we'll be right back with more of The Axe Files. And now back to the show. Let me ask you about the thing that you did together that perhaps you'll most be remembered for, which is the outreach to China and ushering China back into, you know, out from the cold, as it were, in the international community. What made that so stunning was not just that it happened, but that it was Nixon who made it happen because he was such a flamboyant anti-communist. That's how he built his career. I think other than Joe McCarthy, there were few others who were so identified with anti-communism in the Congress than Nixon. Did that make it easier? Did that make it a more politically, a more palatable possibility? I know you were the architect of that. So tell me what your thinking was.

00:19:59

**Henry Kissinger**

I contributed to it, but he acted also independently. The thinking was when the Nixon administration came into office, it became apparent that there were conflict between the two big Communist countries. There was military action in Manchuria between the two sides. And so we came to the view that if you have two enemies and that it is unwise drive them together and you should try to see what differences that you could exploit, and if you had to back one against the other, you were better off backing the weaker against the stronger. And at that time, China was by far the weaker. They had gone through the Cultural Revolution, or they were going through it at the time. But they were going through it at the time and they were doing appalling things within their own country. So the courageous decision of Nixon was that he reached out to them on the basis that we both had a common interest in preventing the Soviet domination. And but there were very few communications between the two, were practically none. So we had to find a way to communicate with the Chinese. And the Chinese on their side did it also, it's clear now on very practical terms they thought that if they would make it look and if we had an interest in them it would restrain the Soviets. And we'd defeat them. And that's really what happened. But that wasn't— from the beginning, it wasn't so obvious. Once we had the relationship, we then deliberately used it to try to play the two sides against each other and to position ourselves so that we were always closer to each of them than they were to each other. But that was an evolution, that didn't happen the first day on, because at first we didn't know how to communicate with them. And so we tried various channels. And finally a message we sent through the Pakistan president received a reply, but it was a very tortured process, we would write out our messages, and type on machines you couldn't trace until evening. And we sent them by messenger, to Pakistan. And they sent them by messenger to Beijing so we could exchange. And because they were afraid of Soviet reaction and we felt we needed to determine that an opening was possible at all, so this went on for about nine months that way before Nixon sent me to Beijing as a representative.

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**David Axelrod**

Let me ask you, obviously, the strategic benefits in the next couple of decades were panned out, bore out. Today we have a situation where China is a competitor, a rising challenge. Relations are not good. And you have Xi Jinping who's taken a much more aggressive posture to a country that's notorious for stealing commercial secrets, a country that suppressed democracy in Taiwan, I'm sorry, in Hong Kong, it's menacing Taiwan. You know, it sent more than a million Uyghurs to concentration camps, labor camps. Has this move boomeranged? Now, did you guys unwittingly helped create a Frankenstein?

00:23:41

**Henry Kissinger**

First, I want to say that my personal view on foreign policy, all we learned parties had to have always been in contact with the Democratic administration when they were in office. And I never attack opposing presidents or secretaries of state.

00:24:01

**David Axelrod**

Well, let let me just interrupt and attest that you were very helpful to the Obama administration in trying to achieve the New START nuclear treaty, which is an issue that you've been involved in for 60 years. So I'm well aware of that.

00:24:15

**Henry Kissinger**

Thank you for saying that. And I did it without publicity.

00:24:19

**David Axelrod**

Yes. Well, we're giving you some right now.

00:24:21

**Henry Kissinger**

Thank you for doing that. Now, was the opening to China a mistake. I don't think, I think it was to great benefit of the United States for 30 years. Then China developed rapidly, more rapidly than anybody would imagine. And perhaps one should've taken a look at that earlier. Because that produced a Chinese capacity of making it the second most powerful state in the world until a fundamental problem arose, which is that we thought in the American interests for a country to exist that could overpower the United States. And so that automatically brought us into its own confrontation. When that point was really which then it became clear, which was, or clearer, which may have been at the end of the Obama administration or early in the Trump administration. The choice was whether we should deal with it by confrontation or whether we could attempt to deal with this absolutely unique situation initially, well, primarily by dialog, because what is absolutely unique about the situation is that both countries have the unilateral capacity to destroy the world. And if they get into a conflict there is no inherent restraint in the technology and if you look even to World War I and compare, none of the leaders who went into World War I would have dreamt of doing it had they known what the world would look like at the end. The world now in a Chinese-American military conflict would look infinitely worse than it did after World War I. I think that it's an obligation for our foreign policy and theirs to discuss the issues that might get out of control. And we have not handled that well. Trump started it, Biden in my view, conducts exactly the same policy towards China. And it is the biggest balance before humanity late in my life, I became interested in artificial intelligence.

00:26:45

**David Axelrod**

You wrote a book about it.

00:26:46

**Henry Kissinger**

I wrote a book about it. And when you look artificial intelligence and study a little about it, you see that objects can develop their own objectives and weapons and how to aim the weapons you have created. That's an overriding trap. So we have two contradictory needs. One, we have to defend the national interests and achieve our security. And we must build up technology for that purpose, but we should also be in a dialog with other high-tech countries about how to prevent it from getting out of hand. This hasn't been achieved yet.

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**David Axelrod**

Let me ask you what your reaction to Speaker Pelosi's visit to Taiwan was.

00:27:35

**Henry Kissinger**

I thought it was unwise to attempt to do. I didn't say anything publicly, but I thought it was unwise. But it was just one more drop of water and it was a drop of water that, it was the move that gave the other side an opportunity to threaten explicitly how they might blockade Taiwan. The Pelosi trip is just one example of an attempt by someone outside to deal with its issue on the basis of confrontation and when bad things happen and threatening things happen we must be willing to confront and I, many of your friends would be a hardliner but of this overriding issue of war and peace. I think we need new approaches for both sides. We can't do it alone. If the Chinese don't cooperate, will be a confrontation. And I am very uneasy, where it goes from here on Taiwan, and it's not it bothers me, it's a damned thing that both parties should do, and both parties should talk to each other what they think. There are a lot of other issues on which they can disagree easily. But this is not an issue in which every four years the question arises who will defend America better. It should be assumed that the incumbents want America defended. And that one should work together in helping them do it.

00:29:21

**David Axelrod**

Let me just ask you one more thing about the Nixon years and the issue of sort of secrecy. You were extraordinarily active in foreign policy, national security in that period. Nixon was. The Ford administration was. And among the things that happened were the bombing of Cambodia and Laos without informing Congress, support for the coup in Chile, support for the crackdown by the authoritarian regime in Argentina, all sort of subrosa wiretapping of one of your NSC colleagues over a long period of time. Is that kind of secrecy healthy for a democracy?

00:30:01

**Henry Kissinger**

No. In the proper setting, when it did fail, if the prudent public existence, made aware to the public. But let me make a few points about the incidents you mentioned. The bombing of Vietnam and Laos, let's take those first. The political action in the beginning of the Nixon administration was that the Democrats had initiated would look like the war in Vietnam. At least the immediate war, and they sent the troops there. They refrain from attacking the conduct of the war in Vietnam, but Cambodia and Laos were not— actually, Laos had been already attacked in the Democratic administration. But here was the issue. All the supply with which Americans were killed came through Laos and a major target of American bombing in any administration was to halt human trail through Laos. Through it, 90% of the supplies into Vietnam went. So I put that aside that anybody would have done, and Democrats did it when they fought. The bombing of Cambodia, I wish somebody would go through the individual decisions. Because it was the different aspects of the bombing of Cambodia. The first was that the North Vietnamese had put an extensive right along the Cambodian border inside Cambodia. And they were having them brought and killing Americans and then withdrawing back into their areas. Any American president would have faced the decision whether to go after those base areas and the leader of Cambodia actually asked Senator Mansfield, the majority leader of the Senate, and others that didn't see territories had been occupied by the Vietnamese. He would not object. He would not know what's going on there. Then there was the all-out attack by Vietnam into Cambodia, which happened a year later and to which Nixon responded and I agreed with it. You know, we could go on about it.

00:32:37

**David Axelrod**

I don't want to make you do that. The question really wasn't about the policy, if the policy were meritorious, if the policy were justified. The question is just whether the policy should have been openly debated and discussed rather than done in secret.

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**Henry Kissinger**

Absolutely, it's a statement of what American policy should be. But there are situations, I believe, even in later periods, when a president thought that taking out one target in a different country is something that he had to prepare secretly. But, your question is two parts, whether one should let the plan be known or whether one should deny it afterwards. It's a basic principle, one should be as open as one can. And you cannot sustain it was a mistake, not to make that clearer, or not to make it public.

00:33:32

**David Axelrod**

What was your reaction when you heard the story last week about these reams of documents, national security documents that wound up in President Trump's basement at Mar-a-Lago? Were you alarmed by that?

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**Henry Kissinger**

In my mind, of course they should be returned to the government. The question of sending U.S. marshals into the home of the former president is one that bothers me, but I have not taken a public position on this.

00:34:04

**David Axelrod**

I guess the question is what if that president does not return the documents?

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**Henry Kissinger**

I don't know enough of the details.

00:34:11

**David Axelrod**

Okay, that's fine. Listen, I want to leave a little bit of time here to talk about your book. But I have to ask you, last question about Ukraine. Obviously, you've been a scholar of the Soviet Union and the Russians for years. You actually have, a you've had a relationship with Vladimir Putin. How does this end, this protracted war and how should it end?

00:34:35

**Henry Kissinger**

The first, my relationship with Putin. It was a relationship of state — he would receive me once a year for discussion of foreign policy issues, which I reported back to the government, as you've repeatedly pointed out. So I have that, that is the relationship.

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**David Axelrod**

Right. I'm not suggesting anything other than that.

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**Henry Kissinger**

There's no personal relationship. Now, which is — how to end it, or?

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**David Axelrod**

Well, yes. But let me ask you before you speak to that, what does it mean for Europe? What does it mean for the rules-based order of the world for one country to go in and snatch another?

00:35:13

**Henry Kissinger**

I think the administration is correct in exactly that. And I basically agree with the measures they have taken to resist it because it was necessary to demonstrate that Russia does not have the right or the possibility of imposing it forever by military rule. That part of it, I'm fully in agreement with the administration.

00:35:42

**David Axelrod**

How does it, how does it end?

00:35:44

**Henry Kissinger**

That's the question. It has to end with the negotiations. Would you assume that Russia will continue as a state after, and Ukraine would be there now as a state and it will be a state, so the situation would change quite radically because Ukraine, has been armed by NATO— has been so closely connected with NATO that at the end of the war, some relationship with NATO will continue. And I would suppose to offer it NATO membership to Ukraine, I think it was a mistake, but that's now water over the dam in light of what has happened. So there has to be a negotiation and I would warn about letting the war drag on indefinitely. Because then it would become like World War I, leading to escalation, possibly escalation. So I hope that shortly, if NATO countries will agree among themselves about what the outcome should be and begin to see what negotiated outcome is possible. But they cannot give Russia any gain from its war in Ukraine. The issue that I suggested that was received— they should go back to the line that existed when the war started, which means that Russia would have to give up the sort of 15 to 20% of Ukrainian territory that it captured in this war before a ceasefire. After that, NATO should consider what its long term relation with Russia, with its survivors, Russia will be. And I think it is important to see whether we— Russia on one level has already lost the war. It has lost the war in the sense that the old idea that Russia could just march into Europe and unfold itself, that has ended, because they can't even defeat Ukraine, so they can't defeat NATO so it's impossible to have a relationship with Russia in which Russia considers itself part of Europe. Who would Russia be, sort of an output of China at the edge of Europe. I would aim for the former object. Now, how we achieve in it is not something we're going to settle in the conversation here but this would be my strategic goal.

00:38:29

**David Axelrod**

Yeah. I would just say, I want to get to your book right now, but I would just say what you're suggesting was really the that was the substance of the Minsk agreement in 2015. The Russians overran that. And for the Ukrainians, that's a tough decision to at this point, given everything all the blood and tears and and loss to just return to the status quo may be a politically difficult decision for Zelensky. I guess what you're suggesting is that NATO need to have a hard talk with him?

00:39:01

**Henry Kissinger**

Well I'm not asking Zelensky to give up anything that Ukraine would said at the beginning of the war and the other disputed territory should be left open to negotiations. But not to war. And it may take a while to settle it, but that is only a small part of the Ukraine.

00:39:24

**David Axelrod**

We're going to take a short break and we'll be right back with more of The Axe Files. And now back to the show. I'd be remiss if I didn't get to your book. It is really a fascinating book. It is really an account of six leaders who you for whom you have deep admiration, who you worked with, who had great historical import in the world. Konrad Adenauer, the post chancellor of Germany, a postwar chancellor of Germany who helped Germany recover, who helped establish a democracy and reestablish democracy. Germany, Charles de Gaulle, who led the resistance to Nazi control during the war, later became a towering figure as France's president, Lee Kuan Yew, the father of the modern city state of Singapore. Anwar Sadat, who was a wartime Nazi collaborator, ultimately gave his life to the cause of peace with Israel. Assassinated. I wish I had more time to talk to you about the damage the assassin's bullet has done over the course of history. Margaret Thatcher, who took the helm of Britain at a time of industrial decline and in a dispirited country. And of course, Nixon himself. I have to ask you the question. Each of them and you you describe this in detail from your own interactions, but each of them displayed qualities that were unique to them. What is the quality, what is the through line among all of these leaders that you see as as imperative to leadership?

00:41:10

**Henry Kissinger**

A conviction about the purposes of their society and courage in pursuing objectives, in ambiguous situations, and thereby help their society to move from where they are to where they have not yet been. Dig deep. The attributes in all the leaders I described.

00:41:34

**David Axelrod**

I was struck 60 years ago, almost 60 years ago. You said something that, it seems to me underlies your analysis in this book. You said, "There are two kinds of realists: those who manipulate facts and those who create them. The West requires nothing so much as men who create their own reality." And that's really what you're talking about. The force of will, the clarity of purpose, the vision of what the future could look like, and an appreciation for the qualities of a society, the most important values and qualities of a society that need to be the foundation of that future.

00:42:11

**Henry Kissinger**

That's exactly the point I was trying to make, yes.

00:42:14

**David Axelrod**

You have led such an extraordinary life and you have had an impact in so many ways on history and always have interesting insights, and I would highly recommend this book to anyone who has an interest in statesmanship. And it's called "Leadership: Six Studies in World Strategy." Dr. Kissinger, thank you so much for being with me.

00:42:40

**Henry Kissinger**

Thank you for inviting me. And thank you for the spirit in which you conducted this conversation.

00:42:47

**David Axelrod**

Thank you. Appreciate it.

00:42:52

**Outro**

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