

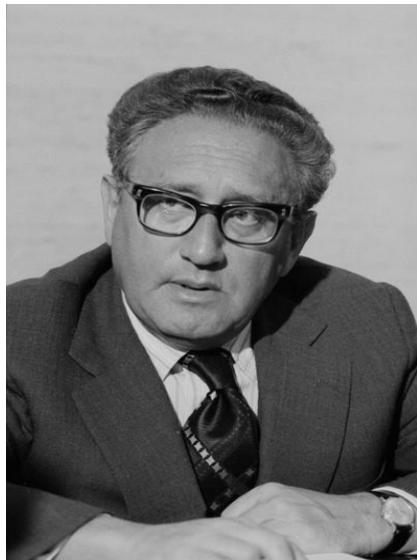
**LYNDA MARLOW**

*Institute for the Study of the Americas*

*September 2007*

*MSc in US Politics and Contemporary History*

*Supervisor: Dr Timothy Lynch*



**Foreign**

**Foreign Policy**

**Makers**



**The Influences of**

**An Emigré**

**Background**



**Foreign Foreign Policy Makers:**  
**The Influences of an Emigré Background**

**Table of Contents**

<b>Chapter 1 Introduction</b>	<b>Page 3</b>
<b>Chapter 2 Cognition Theory</b>	<b>Page 8</b>
<b>Chapter 3 Henry Kissinger</b>	<b>Page 16</b>
<b>Chapter 4 Zbigniew Brzezinski</b>	<b>Page 26</b>
<b>Chapter 5 Madeleine Albright</b>	<b>Page 37</b>
<b>Chapter 6 Conclusion</b>	<b>Page 47</b>

(11,876 words)

## **Introduction**

The aim of this research is to analyse the personalities and approaches of the only three foreign born holders of the positions of National Security Advisor and Secretary of State. I intend to consider the roles of these three individuals who were born outside America, to non-American parents and but also, significantly, who were all forced to leave their homeland and flee an oppressive regime with their families. My aim is to try and discover whether these unique backgrounds contributed something different to the way they approached their responsibilities as elite foreign policymakers. It is my contention that these three individuals are set apart from others because of the fact that war and turmoil meant something personal to them.

Henry Kissinger, Zbigniew Brzezinski and Madeleine Albright are the only people to have attained one or other of the two most powerful positions the foreign born individual can reach in the world of US foreign policy. The privilege of their positions gave them a level of influence second only to the president and analysis of them is important because, as psychologist Bjorn Christiansen pointed out in 1959, not only do they retain the prerogative of making decisions on behalf of the nation as a whole, they also have the power to translate their preferences into action.

(Christiansen 1959: 18) Some foreign policy scholars like Byman and Pollack, have concluded that rational responses are often affected when leaders perceive connections, consciously or subconsciously, between their own personal experiences and the affairs of state and consequently it is my contention that the consideration of attitudes and approaches of these foreign policy elites is a critical factor in foreign

policy analysis. As Henry Kissinger himself said ‘As a professor I tended to think of history as run by impersonal forces. But when you see it in practice, you see the difference personalities make.’ (Byman 2001: 108)

Much political science analysis has concentrated on the state’s role, the bureaucracy’ role or the institutional system’s role in forming foreign policy but it is my opinion that the part the individual plays is at least equally important. Furthermore the question that Lloyd Etheredge emphasises and the one which I would suggest needs to be addressed is ‘whether certain personality traits, in certain situations....actually have tipped the balance for or against a policy choice.’ (Etheredge 1978: 436)

The significant factor, in my view, that unites Kissinger, Brzezinski and Albright is that they were all born to non-American families, who experienced living under, and fleeing from, an oppressive regime. There was in fact a fourth foreign-born Secretary of State, Christian Herter who was born in Paris in 1895 and lived there until the age of 9 but there are two reasons why he has not been included in this research. Firstly, he was born to American parents who were living in Paris temporarily and secondly he and his family were not forced to leave France against their will. For these reasons I have considered him to be of American birth but temporarily re-located. It is the nature of policymakers’ childhood influences that is of interest to me, not their specific physical location at the time of their birth.

What I am looking to discover is whether my three subjects showed similar approaches in their foreign policy work that could feasibly be attributed to their exceptional backgrounds (exceptional in the world of elite US foreign policy maker

that is). The point of this piece of research is to try and ascertain whether the formative experiences of these three subjects can be shown to be the independent variable on which certain policy outcomes can be attributed.

There has been some work done on the area of cognition by scholars on the effects of childhood background on the personalities and decision making of elite foreign policy makers. Lloyd Etheredge, for example, in *A World of Men* looked at the role of personality and values in the foreign policy approaches of elite policy makers and Fred Greenstein considered the effects of personality on politics in his book *Personality and Politics* to name but two. However, there seems to have been little work which has concentrated specifically on émigré policymakers and this is an attempt to cover this neglected area. I would suggest that part of the explanation for this omission is due to the fact that much of the research on personality that has been done in this area has concentrated on the president where, of course, the émigré factor is irrelevant - as we all know, the Constitution demands the president be American born.

I should explain why I have chosen the holders of two foreign policy positions rather than concentrating on the apparently higher profile position of Secretary of State. Although the Secretary of State may be more visible, the NSA undoubtedly plays an equally important role. Jerel Rosati goes even further, believing that the NSA is the most important appointment in a president's team both because of the responsibilities he undertakes in the overall co-ordination of foreign policy and his level of influence as an advisor. (Rosati 2004: 113) It was Kissinger in particular who was mostly responsible for bringing the NSA role into ascendancy and it has remained at this high

level of influence ever since. Gerry Andrianopoulos described the role of NSA, when it was occupied by both Kissinger and Brzezinski as ‘architect, advocate and orchestrator of policy’ and ‘an extension’ of the president. These attributes make the NSA a very important and central figure in US foreign policy (Andrianopolous 1991: 1-3) and therefore I have chosen to consider the holders of this position alongside the Secretary of State because I consider them equally influential.

In this thesis I intend to consider how the effects of background are revealed in the individual policy makers’ approaches through some of the methods of cognition theory. By considering the wealth of information that has been produced in the field, I hope it will help to explain the extent of the effects that background and personal experience have on personality and decision making.

When it comes to considering each of the three subjects individually, I have tried to look at them from two angles. Firstly I have used some of the many works that have analysed their actions throughout their careers. Examples of the more helpful works include Walter Isaacson’s biography *Kissinger; Kissinger: the European Mind in American Politics* by Bruce Mazlish; Gerry Andrianopoulos’s *Kissinger and Brzezinski* and Thomas Lippman’s *Madeleine Albright and the New American Diplomacy*. There are many others which have added illumination and insight into the way these people have approached their roles. Secondly I have used some primary sources such as autobiographies and interviews in an effort to understand what the subjects themselves believe to have been their influences and also to find examples of incidents that have been dealt with in ways which betray their beliefs.

Although there have been many books written about these three policymakers separately, most have looked at their contributions to foreign policy in their entirety. I am not aware of any works that have looked at the common element of émigré status specifically and it is my hope that this piece of research will reveal some reasons why it is worthwhile exercise to attempt to fill this gap.

## **Cognition Theory**

### *Introduction*

Analysis of the cognitive processes at work in foreign policy decision making is an important exercise simply because, as Daniel Byman and Kenneth Pollack put it, ‘the goals, abilities and foibles of individuals are crucial to the intentions, capabilities, and strategies of a state’. (Byman 2001: 109) As far back as the early 20th century, the relevance of studying the background of policymakers was enunciated by Walter Lippman when he wrote that any consideration of politics that failed to take into account the effects of the personalities involved was ‘just the deepest error in our political thinking.’ (Greenstein 1969: 6)

Despite Lippman’s warning, Lloyd Etheredge came to the conclusion in his 1978 book, *A World of Men*, that traditionally the majority of scholars have simply accepted that individual personality characteristics have had little or no influence over American foreign policy. Etheredge’s objection to this state of affairs was that this acceptance had not been thoroughly tested, his criticism with these studies being that they had been insufficiently rigorous in eliminating other explanatory variables such as personality thereby in his view, making the results inconclusive. His own conclusion, when he looked at several studies together, was that the behaviour that individuals showed when dealing with international relations tended to be a magnification of the traits that were found in their personal lives. (Etheredge 1978: 435-436)

During the 1960s, Ole Holsti was one of the few political scientists who agreed that the effects of cognition were paramount. It was his argument that the personal, most central beliefs of policymakers led them, for example, to maintain ‘rigid images’ of other states and thus would affect the decisions they made regarding those states. (Holsti 1962: 250) Steve Yetiv was another who later argued that to use only government level factors in foreign policy analysis and neglect to consider how the personal experiences of the individuals involved affect the process ‘misses important parts of the picture’. (Yetiv 2004: 59)

Perhaps one of the major reasons that cognition has been neglected in the serious study of foreign policy making has been down to the difficulty of obtaining accurate data. As Richard Herrman commented in his work on the subject of perceptions, the study encounters the difficulty of getting ‘inside the head of our subject.’ But for Hermann this argument was irrelevant as in his opinion, evidence could be ‘inferred from observable consequences’ and, if done carefully, the perceptions of individuals could be effectively measured. (Herrman 1988: 180-181)

### *Personality*

In his book *Personality and Politics* Fred Greenstein simplified the references of cognition and its effects by using the concept and term ‘personality’ as a shorthand explanation for the collection of all the factors that contribute to policymaking decisions. (Greenstein 1969: 1) By using this term as a basis for analysis, it helps encapsulate all that is discovered when considering the effects of cognitive activity. Personality is, to put it simply, a summation of the complicated processes that contribute to a final decision, and therefore policy outcome.

Individual behaviour is in essence a product of individual personality combined with of the surrounding context. For Ralph Linton, the interaction of the individual with the ‘human environment’ produces responses which are never fixed but always remain individual. (Linton 1998: 86) But Bruce Mazlish defined the formation of personality in more detail by writing ‘a person is a complex inter-relation of such factors as genetic inheritance, generational experience, particular family upbringing, and specific life experiences.’ (Mazlish 1975: 17)

People acquire their values and attitudes from the society to which they belong and that society develops these parameters for the good of the society as a whole. (Linton 1998: 74) It is inevitable that different societies have different value-attitude systems. Although all of this work’s subjects left their homelands during early adolescence and so would likely not have had their personal value systems fully developed, it is fair to say, I think, that they would certainly have begun to build the framework that would stay with them through life. Indeed, work carried out by psychologist Erik Erikson produced the conclusion that ‘in considering an individual’s relationship with his society, we should focus on the years of adolescence during which time the individual expands his horizon from family and neighbours to a wider social existence.’ (Volkan 1997: 6)

Thomas Lippman as we have learned was one analyst who considered the effects of cognition and personality to be a hugely important aspect of policy outcome analysis. Lippmann’s theory had as its foundation the conviction that ‘we do not first see, and then define, we define first and then see.’ Jerel Rosati has taken this theory of

Lippman as the basis for his own study in which he concluded that human beings use this mechanism of maintaining already formed definitions in order to process the new information that is constantly received and which would otherwise overload them. This is necessary, Rosati argues because, in the words of political scientist John Steinbruner ‘the mind of man, for all its marvels, is a limited instrument’. (Rosati 2004: 280)

It is Rosati’s contention that human beings are what he terms ‘cognitive misers’, a reference to the fact that there is a limit to how much information can be processed by the mind. In order to reduce the load and simplify complex decisions, people almost always use cognitive shortcuts which are derived from patterns of belief already in existence. (Rosati 2004: 282) The ‘cognitive miser’ theory accepts that it is feasible for beliefs to change over time but it relies in essence on the fact that a stable, or relatively stable, central set of beliefs exist and that decision makers need to refer to them each time a decision is made. (Rosati 2000: 57) Without this process, the complexity of decision making would be overwhelming.

Many theorists have come to the verdict that cognitive consistency is the norm for human beings and that individuals are extremely reluctant to discard their central set of beliefs once they are formed. Once in existence these beliefs become something against which new information is measured and compared. The particularly significant thing about this process is that when new information is received, if it conforms to the existing belief pattern it will probably be retained but if does not conform, it is more likely to be ignored. Thus beliefs formed early on, formed long before decisionmakers take up their positions of responsibility, have an inordinate

influence on their actions whilst performing their later duties. Thus, in the context of international relations, no matter how much other state actors might modify their behaviour, it is likely, though it must be emphasised not certain, that the initial belief the decisionmaker holds about that state actor will not be altered. (Immerman 2004: 116-117)

### *Belief Systems*

Hence, in order to understand an individual's decision making process, these underlying key beliefs must be revealed first. The discovery of these is possible because, as Rosati argues, beliefs are not random but are formed by coherent, consistent systems. Separate studies made during the twentieth century by Newcomb and by Holsti revealed that the political attitudes of both elites and non-elites remained intact over their lifetimes and it is therefore reasonable to conclude that by looking at the attitudes of Kissinger, Brzezinski and Albright at earlier times in their lives, we can make the assumption that, at least to some extent, they would have remained broadly in the same position whilst in office. It goes too far to say that these attitudes never changed but it is widely accepted by many specialists that significant change would be unlikely. (Rosati 1987: 22-24)

Although this pattern of beliefs is highly influential, it is Robert Jervis's contention that they do not necessarily accurately reflect reality. (Jervis 1976: 3) This is partly because according to Jervis, the firsthand experience of an event, either through seeing or participating in it personally leaves impressions that are disproportionate to the event's significance. Thus, these experiences are especially important because, he believes, people 'learn too much from what happens to themselves.' The example

Jervis uses to illustrate his point is of diplomats seeing the effects of revolution in their country in which they are serving. He explains that the diplomat who sees reform lead to Communism will end up being more suspicious than the one who sees democracy emerge. The excessive suspicion will remain in spite of his close knowledge of the other's different experience (Jervis 1976: 239-240) This example leads me to conclude that this could just as appropriately be applied to those who saw it happen in their own country.

By looking at historical international situations, whether personally experienced or not, policymakers try to discern patterns because the assumption is made that the future will always look like the past. But Robert Jervis points out there are dangers in this when there is a reliance on perceptions of the past that are too narrow. Too often, failure to acknowledge that differences in circumstance exist between past and present results in, to use Jervis's phrase 'the tyranny of the past upon the imagination' and he warns of the pitfalls of having 'overlearned from traumatic events.' (Jervis 1976: 217-218)

### *Nationalism*

Alongside their own specifically individual experiences, policymakers are also products of the social and cultural conditions of the society from which they come. When a policymaker is appointed, they join an existing government institution, taking up membership of it with its rules and preferences but at the same time they retain membership of their larger social system. In this way they remain, as Snyder, Bruck and Sapin call them, 'culture bearers' and the patterns from their culture have a bearing on the decisions they make. When Kissinger, Brzezinski and Albright joined

their governments they were culture bearers not only of their American home but also brought with them the additional cultural patterns of their place of birth too. (Snyder 1962: 156)

Richard Herrman wrote ‘in a world of international relations the self is likely to be closely tied to the community to which the subject gives his or her ultimate loyalty, most likely the nation’ (Herrman 1988: 183) and this is where Kissinger, Brzezinski and Albright are set apart from other NSAs or Secretaries of State. Whilst not suggesting that their loyalty was compromised – clearly, in order for them to have attained the positions they did, they must have shown fierce loyalty and patriotism to the US – it does not require a very big leap of imagination to suspect that an element of their loyalty may rest with the country of their birth, particularly when they have been forced to leave it involuntarily.

One of Ralph Linton’s observations gives another, perhaps even advantageous feature of foreign birth with regard to the development of foreign policy. He said that it is impossible to really know your own culture without having knowledge of other cultures. (Linton 1998: 84) Therefore, the question arises whether it is feasible to suggest that those in government who began life in a different culture actually came to know their adoptive culture better than indigenous participants. Perhaps it can be argued that, ultimately our three subjects were in a better position than their American born colleagues to direct the nation’s policies toward other nations. However, there is a limit to what can be taken from these particular cases as all three came from European cultures, cultures which America, in essence, shares its roots.

### *Conclusion*

The message that advocates of cognition theory are trying to transmit is well put by Richard Immerman who wrote that ‘interpretation of information, the grist for the policymaking mill, does not occur in a contextual vacuum.’ (Immerman 2004: 106)

Context will always control outcome and the backgrounds and experiences brought by the participants of the decision making process contribute to that context.

Individual personalities produce the environment through which each policy decision is measured against and to ignore the effects of these when applying analysis means that not all elements are taken into consideration and consequently a robust conclusion is not achieved. However it must be remembered that a policy decision is rarely taken by one individual in isolation. Although the influence of individual personalities must be included for consideration in the analytical processing, it should be acknowledged that the overall effect is mitigated by the fact that multiple personalities and cognitive processes are working simultaneously and all are contributing to the final outcome. These, along with impersonal factors such as rigid bureaucratic forces and the effects of such concepts as ‘groupthink’ mean that, in order to produce a satisfactory reading of policy development, many effects have to be considered in parallel.

## **Henry Kissinger**

### *Introduction*

Henry Kissinger has been one of the most fascinating and central figures in modern American foreign policy. His appointment as Secretary of State in 1973 was a unique moment as he became the first person to achieve the highest political position open to someone of foreign birth. As President Nixon's National Security Advisor, then later his Secretary of State, Kissinger was responsible for some of the most radical policies of the Cold War period. Working closely with Nixon, Kissinger was largely responsible for the execution of the detente policies with China and the Soviet Union and introduced ideas of 'linkage' and the 'back channel' methods.

The increasing importance of the National Security Advisor role can also be attributed to Kissinger as he manoeuvred to make it central to Nixon's entire foreign policy organisation. His influence has rarely been matched and he became, to quote Jerel Rosati 'the president's manager, major advisor, spokesman and, in some cases, implementer of foreign policy'. (Rosati 2004: 121) Such was his influence during the time he spent in the White House that in 1974, *Time* magazine wrote of him that he was 'quite possibly....the world's most indispensable man.' (Mazlish 1975: 5)

When considering the question of how much of an influence the events of his childhood had over his career and his policies, if one were to rely solely on Kissinger's own answers, this would be a very short chapter. Time and again, he has denied any influence, refuting the idea that those dreadful events in any way affected

the decisions he made whether as Secretary of State, National Security Advisor or any of the other positions he held. He once claimed in an early interview that he had no lasting impression of the time of his growing up, later adding ‘that part of my childhood is not a key to anything’ and claimed not to have been particularly aware of the events which took place around him. (Isaacson 1992: 26)

Yet, despite his public denials, Kissinger in fact did make some references to how his background impinged on his policy approach, one of the most significant instances being during the ceremony following his swearing in as Secretary of State, when he said ‘If my origin can contribute anything to the formulation of policy, it is that at an early age I have seen what can happen to a society that is based on hatred and strength and distrust.’ (Isaacson 1992: 506)

### *Childhood*

Henry Kissinger was born in the Bavarian town of Fürth to Jewish parents and named Heinz Alfred Kissinger, only becoming ‘Henry’ upon his move to America. Fürth is situated just outside Nuremberg, a town described as ‘a stronghold of the Nazi party’ during the interwar period. Those early manifestations of Nazism would, in Ralph Blumenfeld’s view, ‘permeate Kissinger’s childhood and, at some level, program the rest of his life.’ (Blumenfeld 1974: 2)

In contrast to Kissinger’s own denials, many who grew up with the young Henry have spoken of the impossibility of remaining unaffected by the experiences of growing up as a Jew under Nazism. As a childhood friend once said ‘you can’t grow up like we

did and be untouched' although he did go on to add 'but Kissinger has to forget some of it if he is Secretary of State. (Blumenfeld 1974: 25)

Another who knew Kissinger well as a young man was an army officer called Fritz Kraemer. Kraemer had also fled Europe because of the Nazis and eventually became Private Kissinger's mentor. He agreed that it was impossible for Kissinger to have been unaffected by his experiences. 'For five years, the most formative years (10 to 15), Henry had to undergo this horror' he said (Blumenfeld 1974: 6) and inevitably, although Kissinger was strong 'the Nazis were able to damage his soul'. (Isaacson 1992: 29)

Kissinger proclaimed often that his childhood had no effect on him, but the reality was that he did accept there were influences. During the making of a TV documentary he acknowledged that having lived under totalitarianism himself, he understood what it meant and the personal experience of oppression undoubtedly contributed to what became his core of central beliefs. In a letter written shortly after the war, Kissinger revealed that one fundamental belief informed his thinking – survival was everything. He formed the conclusion that during the holocaust 'weakness was synonymous with death' and these early thoughts defined his position throughout his life. (Isaacson 1992: 761)

### *America*

As the situation became dangerous for Jews in Fürth and normal life gradually became more curtailed, the Kissinger family decided that they no longer had a future in the Germany they loved. They emigrated to America when Henry was aged 15,

moving into an area of New York where many others from their region of Germany had already settled. (Isaacson 1992: 28-29)

As a newly immigrant teenager, Henry was keen to assimilate, enrolling in High School and learning about baseball but curiously he never lost his heavy accent (Mazlish 1975: 37-40) The transformation of immigrant to American took place in the army. Not only officially – he was naturalised upon joining in 1943 – but psychologically too. He served in Europe and commented later that these army duties ‘made me feel like an American.’ (Isaacson 1992: 40)

Fervently patriotic toward his adopted country, Kissinger clearly never forgot his immigrant beginnings - something that was illustrated in an incident that occurred soon after the end of the Vietnam War in 1972. When a stranger came up to him, asking to shake his hand, Kissinger reacted humbly, remarking to his companion ‘Where else could it happen but in a country like this? To let a foreigner make peace for them, to accept a man like me – I even have a foreign accent.’ (Isaacson 1992: 462)

Kissinger’s psychological identity however, was not simply transformed from German Jew to American once he physically made the immigrant journey. Hugo Oppenheim, a fellow Jew from Fürth who saw Kissinger grow up was sure it was more complicated than this. As he explained to Ralph Blumenfeld, ‘Kissinger says simply that ‘I am an American’ but I don’t believe him. He is also a European’. (Blumenfeld 1974: 29) To someone who had made the same journey, the European identity was not something that could be discarded.

Simply being a European set Kissinger apart from most of his colleagues. Bruce Mazlish described Kissinger's contribution to politics as the 'Europeanization of American foreign policy.' (Mazlish 1975: vii) This effect of European history on Kissinger's politics was demonstrated in his first significant scholarly contribution. Based on his doctoral thesis, his book *A World Restored* betrayed what was to be his lifelong fascination with the 19<sup>th</sup> century European statesmen Bismarck, Castlereagh and Metternich. (Isaacson 1992: 77) Perhaps these European roots and historical influences explained how, although he considered himself American, the typically idealistic characteristic that America was built on was not to be found in Kissinger. He was not a crusader but an ardent advocate of the realist school - a disciple of, in Isaacson's words 'its Prussian-accented cousin realpolitick.' The important international status attained through power governed Kissinger's philosophy, not the idealism traditionally found in American politicians. (Isaacson 1992: 653)

#### *Realism versus ideology*

Although Kissinger has become renowned for his seemingly emotion free realpolitick approach, Bruch Mazlish nevertheless contends that he did have an unusual ability to put himself in other people's shoes. This quality showed itself during Kissinger's army experiences when he was involved in helping to rebuild German towns once the war had ended. Despite being in a position of some power he showed a determination to never humiliate the defeated Germans in retribution for the treatment of the Jews. (Mazlish 1975: 45) Moreover he held the most contempt for those who sought vengeance insisting that it was unpardonable for those who knew how it felt to abuse others. (Isaacson 1992: 53)

However, despite showing an ability to empathise, Kissinger was essentially cynical about the role of ‘goodness’ in foreign relations. It was his belief that success in world affairs ultimately came down to power and it is entirely feasible, Mazlish for one says, that this emanates directly from his experiences under the Nazis. Essentially, it is Mazlish’s argument that he had held his father in the image of goodness, yet had seen that even he had been unable to protect himself against Nazism; he had been forced to flee his homeland. This tragic event brought Kissinger to the simple conclusion that it wasn’t goodness that mattered in the world but power. (Mazlish 1975: 163)

Stability and order were the most important things in the world to Kissinger and power and strength were the things that ensured this. (Blumenfeld 1974: 2) He was a firm believer in balance of power politics, explaining in his memoir *The White House Years* how political influence was directly linked to military power. Diplomacy smoothed the way but was purely a side player to military capacity. (Kissinger 1979: 195) His definition of peace was the achievement of stability through the ‘equilibrium of forces’. (Andrianopoulos 1991: 14)

David Landau’s analysis of Kissinger’s writings brought him to the basic conclusion that international stability became his aim because revolution and upheaval were his fears. (Landau 1972: 15) Walter Isaacson agreed, contending that these conclusions were a direct result of his experiences as a Jew and as a German under the Weimar Republic, where societal breakdown allowed the growth of a totalitarian regime. (Isaacson 1992: 761) Landau argued that the ‘irrational, chaotic experience of

Kissinger's early life' produced his most foundational belief that order and stability were paramount. (Landau 1972: 16) The collapse of state systems, such as had happened with the Weimar Republic, had to be prevented at any cost.

For Kissinger the greatest threat to stability, and therefore peace, was the revolutionary power or, to put it another way, the state that moved through ideological motive. The precise type of ideology was, for Kissinger, irrelevant. (Andrianopoulos 1991: 14) The problem as he saw it was that these states could never be assured of security from opposing ideologies and consequently would always feel required to shore up their strength. His reasoning behind his belief was this.

‘The distinguishing feature of a revolutionary power is not that it feels threatened – such feeling is inherent in the nature of international relations based on sovereign states – *but that nothing can reassure it* – Only absolute security – the neutralization of the opponent – is considered a sufficient guarantee, and thus the desire of one power for absolute security means absolute insecurity for all the others.’ (Kissinger 1964: 2)

David Landau explained Kissinger's ‘revulsion of ideology’ as being at the very core of his personality quite simply because he had been ‘a victim of the greatest ideological holocaust of all time.’ (Landau 1972: 7)

Kissinger came out of the most cataclysmic event of his life by concluding that the ‘survival mentality’ was critical. (Andrianopoulos 1991: 28) He believed this on a

personal level and on an international level too - his responsibility was to defend America as a nation, not as an ideological cause. Its not that he disregarded values in foreign policy because he disagreed with their existence but rather that without survival, values were immaterial. A story he heard from an old friend from Fürth after the war convinced Kissinger once and for all of the tension that often existed between morality and survival. Helmut Reissner spent much of the war in a concentration camp and he explained to Kissinger how survival in the camps had relied on a 'disregard for moral standards. Kissinger was of the opinion that people who had lived sheltered lives in the US would never be able to understand this but it was up to people like him, people who had direct experience of when the world went wrong, to ensure America's safety. (Isaacson 1992: 52-3)

### *Nixon Administration*

As had been the case for all presidents since Word War II, the Nixon Administration's primary foreign policy concern was the relationship with the Soviet Union. Kissinger dealt with this quite differently from his predecessors by attempting to convince the Soviets that the relationship should no longer be pursued along ideological grounds. His method was to produce positive relationships, on non-ideological grounds, with both the main Communist powers – China as well as the Soviet Union. He was convinced that international stability could only be assured if all the great powers of the world were part of the international dialogue. By cultivating rapprochement with both countries, Kissinger's goal was to make the US a central figure in controlling the international order. He maintained that if he could convince the Soviet Union that China was a serious power it would encourage them to seek a strong, and thus more stable, relationship with the US and then greater international stability would follow.

(Landau 1972: 104-106) The steps that Kissinger forged were bold and a significant break with the past. His innovative way of looking at foreign policy, informed by his background, produced a radical style compared with containment policies that had dominated since the onset of the Cold War. A moderating of the US-Soviet relationship produced negotiations on a level formerly unheard of and the language of ideology was replaced by terms of moderation and diplomacy. (Landau 1972: 8)

Kissinger's realist foreign policy approach was distinct from many other US policymakers of the time because of his refusal to believe that America had an ideological superiority. All of his predecessors shared this fundamental conviction (Landau 1972: 32) but Kissinger was convinced that 'moral crusaders....made dangerous statesmen.' For this reason he was determined never to allow his personal experiences to influence his policy decisions. He firmly believed that if used his position to right the wrongs of personal experience he could never become the statesman he wanted to be. (Isaacson 1992: 653)

### *Conclusion*

Kissinger's foreign policy approach was individual and decisive. It was the approach of a man who, amongst his immediate peers and predecessors had an individual personal experience. The turbulent childhood that he lived through formulated a strategy he considered necessary though radical. Having experienced the trauma that totalitarianism can produce, he made it his responsibility to ensure that it would not be repeated. It was not his aim to right wrongs, but to prevent a repetition of those wrongs. Whilst he held office, he saw it as his responsibility, through the influential positions he held in one of the most powerful nations in the world, to make the

international arena as safe and secure as possible. The best way he saw of doing this was to seek a balance of power where no country could seek to oppress another because of a belief system.

Where it is hard to understand Kissinger's policy approach is in his lack of interest in supporting emerging democracies under authoritarian regimes. His need for order and stability overruled his sympathy for those under oppression yet knowing of his own experience of life under these conditions made this difficult for many in America to accept. But it seemed clear to him that any intervention at state level was a potential threat to the greater imperative of world order. If he could encourage order and stability through his policies, then repression could no longer flourish. Only when the power balance existed could oppression really be eradicated.

Nevertheless, it seems to me, that Kissinger himself seems to personify contradiction. Whilst he wholeheartedly acknowledged and embraced the freedom and opportunity that America had allowed him, he rejected the traditional American mindset of idealism and the inherent optimism that goes with it. Despite his loyalty to America, he has always appeared to remain distinctly European, at least in part. Bismarck was his influence, not Woodrow Wilson and he has carried with him a distinctly un-American pessimism that was instilled in him by the personal experience of total war.

## **Zbigniew Brzezinski**

### *Introduction*

Zbigniew Brzezinski was the second foreign-born citizen to hold the position of National Security Advisor, serving President Carter between 1977 and 1981. There are some interesting parallels to be seen between Brzezinski and Henry Kissinger which perhaps the similarity of an émigré background helps to explain. During Kissinger's time, Brzezinski had been a very public critic of many policies but despite this as well as the fact that they were of opposing parties, Brzezinski openly admitted that he did share some views with Kissinger. Perhaps the most significant similarity was that they both believed that instability of the international order was the world's biggest threat. (Andrianopoulos 1991: 43-44)

Inevitably though, the two statesmen also showed sharp differences. As has been seen in the previous chapter, Kissinger rejected the notion of foreign policy based on ideology but for Brzezinski, ideology was important. In his memoirs *Power and Principle*, Brzezinski was keen to emphasise what he saw as his contribution to the Carter Administration where he called a stronger foreign policy based on morality as well as power. (Brzezinski 1985: 50) He recalled how, immediately after the 1977 presidential inauguration, he went to his new office and wrote down three broad objectives. The first line began 'I felt it important to try to increase America's ideological impact on the world.' In stark contrast to Kissinger, Brzezinski urged a stronger, more optimistic American message. (Brzezinski 1985: 3)

### *Childhood*

Although both Brzezinski and Kissinger were both forced to abandon their homelands by repressive regimes, Brzezinski's circumstance was somewhat less dramatic than Kissinger's. In 1937, Brzezinski's father took his family with him to Canada whilst he served there as Poland's Consul General. During his term of duty Poland fell and the family found themselves unable to return safely to their homeland. Consequently in 1939, the 11 year old Zbigniew found himself living in Montreal and fiercely patriotic towards his country of birth. He could only watch from afar as his homeland ceased to exist, overtaken first by the Germans and then by the Soviet Communists. (Wooten 1979: 123-4.) He followed events in Europe closely after the outbreak of war, feeling personally involved and years later, the adult Brzezinski acknowledged in an interview that his interest in international affairs stemmed from that time. In that same interview he spoke of his sadness that 'Poland was again occupied' and how much he appreciated the freedoms he was allowed to enjoy living in Canada.

(Zilkowska: n.d.)

The Brzezinski family settled in Canada but Zbigniew himself never became a Canadian citizen, opting instead to become a citizen of the US later, whilst at Harvard. When asked about his identity in later years, he described himself as fashioned by 'America, Canada and, to a great extent, Poland' but went on to say how, when he returned to visit Poland after the war, he realised he was 'no longer a Pole, but an American of Polish descent'. He had embraced his adopted country wholeheartedly (Zilkowska: n.d.) and ascribed his loyalty toward it as based on the fact that it was a nation that was bound by ideals and not shared experience. In his mind it was this unique condition that made America a superior nation. (Rosati 1987: 67-8) However,

when questioned further about his feelings toward the US he revealingly spoke of how he viewed America as a place which could influence world affairs and ultimately help Poland. (Zilkowska: n.d.)

### *Beliefs*

Brzezinski showed throughout his life that he consistently held a very strong central pattern of beliefs. In particular, one overriding belief that he maintained, in Gerry Andrianopoulos's opinion, was a vivid 'enemy' image of Russia and China. This belief was held in such conviction that it contributed to other related beliefs too. (Andrianopolous 1991: 6) He vigorously held the opinion that the Soviet Union maintained 'an ideology of conflict' which threatened the international order. In common with Kissinger, one of his greatest concerns was the maintenance of international order, and the idea that revolutionary, ideological powers could threaten this was something that worried him deeply. He viewed the Soviet Union consistently as the primary threat in the world because its foreign policy was conducted along ideological lines and Communism, along with fascism and Nazism were to be feared because of their goals were 'the transformation of the international system.'

(Andrianopoulos 1991: 39-43)

Brzezinski's fear of the Soviet Union's threat to world stability led him base his foreign policy approach on the 'primacy of power'. He advocated militarily strong solutions to foreign policy problems. (Smith 1986: 36) His pessimism over the Soviet Union was longstanding and entrenched well before his arrival in the White House, pervading his writing in the 1950s and 1960s. His scholarly work however, did reveal something of a change of position at the end of the 60s as an interest in the field of

technological advancement saw a softening of his stance. But rather than a change in his underlying convictions Jerel Rosati came to the conclusion that this softening was actually down to ambition and a desire to be in step with elite opinion. Rosati believed that he was content to change position for personal advancement when he perceived it necessary and this was something Simon Serfaty had already noted in a 1978 *Foreign Policy* article, writing that Brzezinski showed a distinct inclination to pick up or drop ideas as they became fashionable. (Serfaty 1978: 6) Finally, Rosati noted, once Brzezinski had reached the foreign policy pinnacle of becoming the president's closest advisor, he no longer needed to adjust his approach but could revert to his genuinely held central beliefs. (Rosati 1987: 109)

James Wooten posed the question to Brzezinski, in a 1979 article for *Esquire* magazine, that his hardline attitude toward the Soviets was based on ‘historical antipathies between Poles and Russians.’ Whilst he did acknowledge that there may have been some truth in the suggestion, he was very keen to point out that, as he shared his anti-Communist views with most of the American population, they couldn’t have been rooted in his Polish Catholicism. (Wooten 1979: 122) Brzezinski wanted to make sure the American people saw him as American as them and publicly played down Polish references as much as he could.

He was keen to deny any differences with the American people because he was desperate to remain a powerful figure in Carter’s foreign policy team. Aware of the position and the power he commanded, he set out to maintain the NSA prominence that Kissinger had introduced. In order to do this, it was important to cultivate popular support. He was successful in his goals and his influence over Carter’s

foreign policies grew as the term progressed although he constantly competed with Secretary of State Cyrus Vance over who would have the greatest level of influence.

Carter experienced many problems during his term and many of these were due to the fact that he lacked a well defined ideology of his own and regularly wavered over his foreign policy approach. When he stopped wavering, however, it was most often Brzezinski's advice he took (Smith 1986: 47) something clearly illustrated during the final and most important foreign policy concern of Carter's term when the President sided with Brzezinski rather than Vance over the handling of the Iran Hostage Crisis, a decision that finally led to Vance's resignation. (Rosati 2004: 124) It is because of this high level of influence that the study of what influenced Brzezinski becomes very relevant.

### *Brzezinski and Carter*

The appointment of Brzezinski as National Security Advisor unsettled certain Soviet political players because of his quite obvious and extreme anti-Sovietism, something they attributed, at least in part, to his Polish birth. They were right to be unsettled because Brzezinski did live up to their fears somewhat by showing a dissatisfaction with the détente policies of the earlier period and advocating right from the beginning a far more activist approach toward the Soviets. Gaddis Smith explained how Brzezinski saw the Eastern European nations as playing a role in the demise of the Soviet empire by seeking greater independence and Smith further contends that Carter's official state visit to Poland in December 1977 was a confirmation, albeit a tacit one, of Brzezinski's view. (Smith 1986: 67)

It is highly likely that Brzezinski was responsible for keeping Poland high on the president's agenda. Poland played a significant part in the overall policies of the Carter administration and it was Brzezinski's input that surely guided that. In an attempt to contain and resist Soviet gain, the Carter Administration sought to increase détente with countries of Eastern Europe. But whilst Vance's angle was to encourage equal treatment of all Eastern European countries, Brzezinski advocated a policy of preferential relationships with those countries considered to be more liberal internally. Poland was one of these countries and although Carter initially preferred Vance's more equal approach he eventually sided with the more persuasive Brzezinski. Consequently, Poland received the advantages that a warm relationship with the US could bring.

Brzezinski was obviously very keen for Poland to play an important part in the offence against Russia and one of his first actions was to urge Carter to make his first, symbolically important, official visit to Poland, a suggestion to which Carter agreed. (Smith 1986: 238) However, Brzezinski himself recalled in *Power and Principle* that the State Department warned of the implications of this step; it was not without risk. They were worried this would be viewed by the Soviets as provocative and suggested other Eastern European countries be considered in preference to Poland. Nevertheless, the visit to Poland went ahead in spite the worries of Vance's department.

Brzezinski's strategy was to make Poland part of a larger policy restricting Moscow's grasp over Eastern Europe. Gerry Andrianopoulos referred to Poland as the 'linchpin

state' for Brzezinski, describing it as playing a central role in limiting 'Moscow's control over Eastern Europe.' (Andrianopoulos 1991: 263-267)

### *Brzezinski and Vance*

Whilst the Carter Administration was in office, it was apparent that there was a high level of dissension within the foreign policy team essentially because of such fundamental disagreements between Brzezinski and Vance. The regular criticism levelled at Brzezinski was that, in Gerry Andrianopolous's words, he contributed 'to the confusion in national security policy.' (Andrianopolous 1991: 2) He was generally regarded very much as a 'hardliner' in contrast to Vance's softer stance and the fact that Carter was considered to suffer from indecision on his general policy vision only helped to exaggerate the differences as he vacillated from one side or the other.

Brzezinski was activist and partisan, always keen to act quickly and decisively whereas Vance was less rigid and more thoughtful in his policy execution. (Rosati 1987: 111) Many scholars, like Jerel Rosati for example, put these difficulties down to their 'divergent world views', something especially obvious in their perceptions regarding the Soviet Union. (Rosati 1987: 20) Because of this difficult and important relationship it is especially interesting to consider how Brzezinski's childhood experiences might be an explanatory factor in the disagreements at the basis of their relationship.

One of Brzezinski's most central beliefs was that the Soviet Union had a 'grand offensive strategy' and his absolute adherence to this conviction was fundamental in

the disagreement that existed between he and Vance. (Aronoff 2006: 426) Vance could not agree with Brzezinski's stance and later in his own memoirs, blamed many of the policy problems the Carter White House experienced on Brzezinski's 'visceral anti-Sovietism'. (Smith 1986: 42)

Gaddis Smith contends that Brzezinski was a disruptive member of the team because he was out of step with the rest of the Carter Administration position right from the start. The new president proclaimed that he was going to view the Soviet Union more optimistically. He wanted to buck the trend of preceding foreign policies and end the US obsession with anti-Sovietism. (Rosati 1987: 52) He believed the Soviet Union had only peaceful intentions and was determined to work with them to achieve his ambition of eliminating nuclear weapons. (Smith 1986: 66) Although Vance agreed with this approach, Brzezinski was less optimistic although he was content to align himself with Carter's preferences at the start in order to fit in with the new Administration. (Smith 1986: 7)

It did not take long, however for Brzezinski's optimism to give way to his more natural pessimism. Rosati believes that Brzezinski's 'insecurity and rigid personality prompted his return to a previously held image,' (Rosati 1978: 103-7) this image having been formed by his 'well-developed and largely unchanging views of the Soviet Union.' Once this reversion to type took place, time and again, Brzezinski urged strong reactions to Soviet behaviour, far stronger than his foreign policy colleagues advised but his proposals were often adopted because of the sympathetic ear that Carter allowed him. Carter did not totally accept Brzezinski's conviction about a Soviet grand strategy until the later part of his presidency when, after

disillusionment with Brezhnev's actions regarding human rights, he eventually began to succumb to his NSA's constant attempts to press his beliefs home. Eventually, during the course of the term, Carter experienced a dramatic change in his attitude toward the Soviets, an occurrence in which Brzezinski's strongly held views and high level of influence were 'a key factor' in Yael Aronoff's view. Brzezinski's pessimism finally managed to drown out Vance's more optimistic and conciliatory advice.

(Aronoff 2006: 432-445)

In a speech made to Congress in 1977, Brzezinski claimed that the new administration had collectively made the decision to instigate an activist foreign policy which rejected the traditional concentration on the containment of the Soviet Union. (Rosati 1987: 43) He claimed that it was he who urged a move away from an 'over excessive preoccupation with the US Soviet relationship' and called for greater emphasis on Third World problems. (Brzezinski 1985: 148-149) But Rosati believes that it was a stance he temporarily adopted because it was in vogue. Once established in office, particularly after seeing Soviet intervention taking place in Africa in 1978, his intense, insecure personality meant he was unable to stop his negative image of the Soviet Union from resurfacing. This meant major repercussions for Carter's foreign policy (Rosati 1987: 110) as his deeply held views persuaded an already disillusioned Carter to bring an end to negotiations with the Soviet Union. (Aronoff 2006: 425)

Soviet intervention in Africa was devastating for Brzezinski because it provoked his deeply held scepticism of the Soviet Union. Whether consciously or subconsciously, he associated the African activities with those of military build up in Europe and considered them totally incompatible with détente policies and was of the firm belief

that the Soviet Union actively pursued dominance in military, economic and technological areas. Brzezinski saw a greater need than Vance to place constraints on the Soviet Union's expansionism (Rosati 1977: 56-61) and after the intervention in Africa, Brzezinski found himself unable to stay in line with the collective position. (Rosati 1987: 110) He began to advocate a much stronger national defence policy and made global stability through US power his priority. From then on, he diverged significantly from previous Administration stances but eventually managed to convince Carter to go along with his recommendations.

### *Conclusion*

Brzezinski's forceful personality and his unbending set of central beliefs were responsible for changing the shape of the foreign policy character of the Carter White House. His strong influence over Jimmy Carter had serious effects on the outcome of US foreign policy. Yael Aronoff asserts that it was Brzezinski's influence that pushed Carter into 'practically cutting off relations with the Soviet Union'. (Aronoff 2006: 426)

Such a dramatic outcome leads me to think it might have been a valuable exercise for Brzezinski's beliefs to have been analysed and then extrapolated into prediction. This may have resulted in a different outcome for an Administration whose foreign policy many considered to be a failure. If Carter had been able to predict how Brzezinski's strong views would have been suppressed at first and then allowed to resurface, perhaps he would have made a different choice. Ideological conflict amongst the major players resulted in one of the most ineffective foreign policy programmes to

have come out of the White House and it was Brzezinski's existing belief system that contributed to the unstable relationships that existed within the foreign policy team.

## **Madeleine Albright**

### *Introduction*

Madeleine Albright made headlines by becoming the first woman to hold the position of Secretary of State. But the reason she merits inclusion for this study is that, upon her appointment she also became the second foreign-born citizen to hold the role and only the third to hold either of the two major foreign policy jobs. One of the first things that becomes clear about Madeleine Albright when considering what influenced her is how she differs dramatically from both Kissinger and Brzezinski by embracing the fact that her background has shaped her foreign policy thinking. Kissinger and Brzezinski have almost zealously tried to deny that their backgrounds were influential on their duties yet Albright willingly acknowledges that her experiences shaped her and her actions as Secretary of State.

These early experiences were highly influential because Albright, as a child, saw oppression from both fascist Germany and Soviet communism. Consequently, as an adult, she performed her duties with ‘her heart on her sleeve, diplomatically speaking’ author Thomas Lippman commented, with her decisions being based ‘on her personal experiences as a woman, a refugee and a teacher.’ (Lippman 2000: 89) Biographer Michael Dobbs believes that these influences can be traced right back to when Albright was just a year old when Hitler made the decision to eliminate her Czech homeland. That event, he argues ‘shaped her foreign policy thinking for the rest of her life’. (Dobbs 1999: 34)

### *Childhood*

Madeleine Korbel Albright was born Marie Jana Körbel on 15 May 1937 in Prague, Czechoslovakia, changing Marie to Madeleine at the age of 10. She took the surname of Albright upon her marriage to Joseph Albright in 1959. At the time of her birth, Albright herself writes, the Czech population were optimistic because Czechoslovakia was able to claim to be the only functioning democracy in Central Europe. But all that changed as the Nazi party gained ground in Germany and became a threat to its neighbours. In 1939 her diplomat father discovered that, due to his political links, he was to be arrested by the Gestapo when the German army entered Prague. His politically high profile meant that Czechoslovakia was a dangerous place for them to be. Two year old Madeleine and her parents fled the city at night, finally arriving in London from where her father worked to ‘publicise the facts about Hitler’s occupation and to rally fellow Czechoslovaks.’ (Albright 2003: 4-9)

In a letter written decades later, Albright’s mother Mandula recalled the circumstances of their exile in 1939. They spent their last few days in the city in cafes and on the streets avoiding arrest and at night they hid in friends’ houses whilst waiting for false exit papers to be arranged. Taking Madeleine, they left Czechoslovakia by train at night and fled to Belgrade not realising that they had seen their parents for the last time. Belgrade was similarly dangerous and after two weeks the family pressed on to Britain where they settled in London (Blackman 1998: 39-40)

## *World War II*

When World War II broke out, the young Madeleine experienced firsthand the bombing raids in London, and in Thomas Blood's opinion, this was the period when her world view was formed. (Blood 1999: 173)

Although Albright didn't come to realise the truth for many decades, the Korbels had also been in danger because of the family's Jewish heritage. (Blackman 1998: 38) During their exile in London, Madeleine's three surviving grandparents perished in concentration camps. (Albright 2003: 11) She was 8 years old when the family returned to Prague and from that time on, little or no reference was ever made about the relatives who had died during their absence. It is evident that Madeleine's parents made the conscious decision to cover up their Jewish heritage and Josef explained that it had been done to make life easier for their children – so their lives would not be 'complicated by their Jewishness.' When Madeleine was 4 years old, the whole family converted to Catholicism and from then on she remained a devout Catholic. (Blackman 1998: 53-65) According to her autobiographical writings, it wasn't until the time of her appointment as Secretary of State that she discovered through newspaper revelations the truth about her grandparents' death and further investigations by the family revealed that many other relatives had died during the holocaust – more than a dozen. (Albright 2003: 235-244)

At the end of the war Josef Korbel was part of a group of Czech government officials who took the first plane from London after Czechoslovakia had been liberated. The rest of the family followed shortly after. The city they returned to now contained

large numbers of Russians (Dobbs 1999: 108) and for many Czechoslovaks the liberation of Prague had been a bittersweet moment. By allowing the Soviets to be the liberating army, America and the West were accused of abandoning Czechoslovakia's democratic future. The Czechoslovaks felt betrayed because they saw themselves as freed from one totalitarian state straight into the grip of another and the West cared little. For people like the Korbel family, it was a disaster. (Blackman 1998: 63-64)

Not long after they returned the family was sent on a diplomatic posting to Belgrade and shortly after, the young Madeleine was sent to school in Switzerland. The Korbels lived a very comfortable life but once again Josef's political credentials meant they began to worry for their safety. He was a 'progressive' and anti-Communist and became more and more disenchanted as he watched Communism gradually taking hold in Belgrade and Prague (Dobbs 1999: 115-6) with the democratic parties floundering. (Albright 2003: 12) When eventually the Communists gained enough power to take over the Czech government in 1948, Josef was removed from his post and temporarily assigned to UN duties in Kashmir where he decided to use his UN links to help them to flee once and for all to the US. (Blackman 1998: 70 and 80)

### *Becoming American*

When Madeleine Albright arrived in the US in 1948 at 11 years old, she felt different. Despite speaking 4 languages, including English, she noticed most of all that she didn't speak 'American'. She consciously lost the British accent with which she spoke English (Albright 2003: 18; Blackman 1998: 94) and immediately determined

to transform herself into ‘a model American’. The transformation process that began in that first American school saw its culmination in her rising to the highest position in the US government attainable by a first-generation immigrant (Dobbs 1999: 6)

In 1957, whilst a student at Wellesley College she became an American citizen (Albright 2003: 35) and though she fully embraced life as an American she nevertheless remained closely attached to her homeland and always remembered the traumas she had witnessed. Writing in her memoir, she said ‘as much as I wanted to be like my American contemporaries, I was not. I had spent nights in a bomb shelter. I had felt in my own life some of the disruption war could cause. My family had been driven from its homeland by the admirers of Stalin.’ (Albright 2003: 43) Having been persecuted for her heritage, like Brzezinski she now believed wholeheartedly in a nation where values were the glue that bound it together, not nationality (Albright 2003: 249) The years that Albright’s family spent moving, mostly unwillingly, from country to country left a profound and long lasting effect on her and caused her to comment in later life on how she viewed those experiences as symbolic and representative of ‘the turbulence of the twentieth century’. (Blood 1999: 173)

It may seem at first sight that this chapter has been more about Josef Korbel than his daughter but this is not an oversight. It is extremely apparent from reading Albright’s memoirs that one of the greatest influences on her foreign policy approach was her father. (Albright 2003: xiii) Those who have written about Madeleine agree that it is impossible to understand her without understanding her father. (Blackman 1998: 16) Perhaps because of her itinerant early life, Albright was extremely close to her parents and her father in particular, a man of strong political convictions, was hugely

influential. She modelled herself on him becoming, in the words of her sister, ‘Daddy reincarnate.’ (Dobbs 1999: 141)

Josef drummed into his daughter the belief that ‘Communists could not be trusted, because they did not desire co-existence, they desired conquest.’ This and the experience of watching from afar as Czechoslovakia was taken over by the terror of Stalin’s communism (Albright 2003: 26) combined to make the Cold War a vivid experience for the young Albright. She saw it as, in her words, an era of ‘stark, moral clarity. We were good, the Communists were bad.’ (Albright 2003: 43-44)

### *Munich*

The other significant belief that Albright acquired from her father was a vivid interpretation of the events of Munich. The Munich analogy was a consistent and highly evident factor in the decisions Albright made. Admitting readily how many of her fathers thoughts were mirrored in her own, she acknowledged in a radio interview that one of the most profound things she learnt from him was how disastrous the 1938 Munich negotiations were for Czechoslovakia. (*All Things Considered* 2006) Both she and her father would always ‘look at the world through the prism of the Munich disaster.’ The negotiations, which led to the ceding of the Czech Sudetenland, became forever more the symbol of appeasement and, in Ann Blackman’s words ‘synonymous with diplomatic cowardice.’ (Blackman 1998: 37) Through the Czech experience, both came to believe that it was the US and the West’s obligation to stand up to aggression. (Albright 2003: 27)

According to William Hyland, Munich was a preoccupation that saw Albright instigate a policy basis of ‘collective security’ which in turn led to ‘an inordinate reliance of the United Nations.’ (Hyland 1999: 21-22) Even Albright thought she brought a completely different stance compared to other foreign policy makers. In a *New York Times* in 1996, interview she proffered this highly personal comment to explain the decisions she had made during the Bosnian war. ‘My mindset is Munich; most of my generation’s is Vietnam..... I saw what happened when a dictator was allowed to take over a piece of a country and the country went down the tubes.’ (Sciolino 1996: 67)

### *America*

When Albright was appointed Secretary of State she made it quite clear that she saw America’s role as one which should actively involve itself on the world stage. She had seen firsthand how the entrance of America into the Second World War brought the hope of security and this prompted her to forever think of the US as ‘the indispensable nation’. (Blood 1999: 8) Her view, at its most basic, was constructed around the belief in America’s position of moral superiority over the Soviet Union. (Albright 2006: 87)

The result of her passionate stance on the triumph of democracy was to ensure that her time as Secretary of State would be spent making America as activist as possible. She determined to get the US involved wherever she saw oppression and aggression. But this brought criticism from many who believed the problems of countries far away were not the US’s responsibility. She gained a reputation amongst her colleagues for being, in Lippman’s words, rather ‘trigger happy’, something perhaps illustrated when

Colin Powell, then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of staff, recounted an exchange in which she famously remarked ‘What’s the point of having this superb military that you’re always talking about if we can’t use it?’ leading to Powell’s equally famous reflection over concern for his troops ‘I thought I would have an aneurysm’. (Powell 1995: 576)

But despite being aware of her many critics, Elaine Sciolino, in her 1996 article portrayed Albright as unperturbed and completely at ease with the powerful image with which she characterised American foreign policy. According to Sciolino, her confidence in its moral basis was directly attributable to her refugee experiences. (Sciolino 1996) Albright was, quite simply, an idealist not a realist and had no trouble defending her style.

### *The Balkans*

It is in the analysis of the Bosnian War that Albright’s background is perhaps most clearly seen because the crisis was something personal and visceral for her, directly related to her own family’s experiences during and after World War II according to Dobbs. (Dobbs 1999: 358) She appeared to feel personally the genocide and persecution that was taking place and this coloured her approach. In consequence, hers was the loudest voice amongst the calls being heard for strong US involvement. (Blood 1999: 173)

Richard Immerman was more specific when he wrote that it was impossible to analyse her calls for the use of force in Bosnia and Kosovo without considering the importance of Munich on Albright’s family. (Immerman 2004: 106) She clearly saw

a direct link between the ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and the Munich appeasement of 1938 and as a result urged the US not to allow what she saw as the abandonment of the Bosnians to the Serb army. This was in distinct contrast to other high profile decision makers (Dobbs 1999: 41) as not only were many European foreign ministers advocating minimal action on either side of the conflict but many in her own government were too. Upon learning of the Srebrenica massacre where 8,000 died, Albright found herself distraught at the idea the ethnic cleansing that took place at the hands of the Nazis could ever happen again. Force was the only thing, she believed, that could make the Serbs stop and she was in no doubt whatsoever that it was US responsibility to provide this force. (Dobbs 1999: 358-360)

### *Conclusion*

The personality and the effects of Madeleine Albright's own firsthand experiences had significant effects on all of her decision making processes, a condition she was only too ready to admit. The events she had witnessed were not something she tried to forget nor did she try to deny the fact that these events had repercussions throughout her adult life. Rather she saw them as something that informed her positions for the better, something that could be used to be able to interpret how America could best solve the problems of the world. Unlike Brzezinski and Kissinger, she was happy to acknowledge publicly that she believed her experiences were a positive influence on her work. In contrast to Kissinger, she was convinced her unique life story helped to qualify her for the role of statesman not preclude her from it.

She was very proud to be part of ‘the indispensable nation’ and she was especially proud to be able to contribute to the direction of its actions towards the rest of the world. Although her experiences were dramatic for her family, she saw the results of those experiences as something to be used for the good of the world. She vigorously seized the opportunity that being Secretary of State allowed her to take those personal events and use them to inform her decisions in a constructive and activist way.

## **Conclusion**

By analysing the effects of background on this exclusive group of three, this research, I believe, has shown that their émigré experiences did had an effect, at least to some extent, on US foreign policy during their terms in office. The magnitude of their experiences inevitably filtered down to their actions whilst in office. However, what was also revealed was that their similarly dramatic experiences did not necessarily lead to similar foreign policy approaches.

One of the biggest differences shown between Kissinger, Brzezinski and Albright when considering the question of childhood influences was the fact only Albright was willing to completely acknowledge that events in the past had an effect on her actions as policymakers. Both Kissinger and Brzezinski seemed distinctly unwilling to admit to such an effect yet both, when pressed, would concede that there were instances where influence might be seen.

When it comes to their policy approaches, Kissinger and Brzezinski, in spite of being members of opposing party administrations, did share the belief that international stability was paramount although they differed quite radically on how that stability should be achieved. Whereas Brzezinski envisaged stability controlled by US dominance, Kissinger believed it could only be achieved through superpower balance.

One factor that did seem to be shared amongst all three is that they each displayed a keenness to assimilate. All showed, to a greater or lesser degree, a loyalty and affection to the country of their birth but even greater than that was their loyalty to America. They may have professed to having various identities but the identity they adhered to most strongly was that of being American, an identity based on values not heritage.

When trying to summarise the extent to which background influences have affected US foreign policy, it is important to consider the reality that policymakers don't make decisions in isolation; they are one part of a large and unwieldy system of bureaucracy that can severely constrain the effects of decision and the analyst should be wary of attributing too much weight to the influence of personality over final foreign policy outcomes. Despite their elevated status, Albright, Brzezinski and Kissinger were still required to operate within the bureaucratic and presidential systems of the Administrations they served. The influence of the NSA or the Secretary of State's cognitive approach will always be tempered by the president's own decisions. However significantly the nature of the regimes they lived under impacted on their later lives, the character of both the president himself and the administration inevitably curtail their effects. However it should not be forgotten that there were certainly periods when the president has been less engaged in the processes and the next most important person has had greater influence. When the Watergate events were taking place, for example, Kissinger was permitted more influence over foreign policy simply because Nixon was distracted. I think it could also be assumed that Albright would have had freer rein when Clinton's impeachment process was underway too.

This research has prompted me to conclude that the studying of policymakers and their most central patterns of belief is highly relevant because of its potential for prediction. If the beliefs of foreign policy elites can be analysed, then some prediction is perhaps possible. (Rosati 1987: 174) For this prediction to achieve a level of reliability certain things must be considered such as how stable are the beliefs or are there severely contradictory beliefs held amongst the main players in the foreign policy team. Once the beliefs are summarised perhaps the next most important question to be asked is do the beliefs represent what is expected from the electorate?

I would contend that the aim of achieving insight into the individual player is not an end in itself but rather should be a tool to improve the policymaking system. The role of the elite individual is important in the execution of good constructive foreign relations. Surely it should be as important to subject these individuals to close analysis as it is for institutional, organisational or ideological role analysis.

## **Bibliography**

*All Things Considered* 2006. National Public Radio 28 June

Albright, Madeleine. 2003. *Madame Secretary*. London: Macmillan

Andrianopoulos, Gerry Argyris. 1991. *Kissinger and Brzezinski: The NSC and the Struggle for Control of U.S. National Security Policy*. London: Macmillan

Aronoff, Yael S. 2006. 'In Like a Lamb, Out Like a Lion: The Political Conversion of Jimmy Carter', *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 121, No. 3, p. 425-449

Blackman, Ann. 1998. *Seasons of her Life*. New York: Scribner

Blood, Thomas. 1999. *Madam Secretary*. New York: St Martin's

Blumenfeld, Ralph. 1974. *Henry Kissinger*. US

Brzezinski, Zbigniew. 1985. *Power and Principle*. New York: Collins

Byman, Daniel L., and Kenneth M. Pollack, 2001 'Let Us Now Praise Great Men: Bringing the Statesman Back In', *International Security*. Vol. 25, No. 4, p. 107-46.

Christiansen, Bjorn. 1959. *Attitudes Towards Foreign Affairs as a Function of Personality*. Oslo: Oslo University Press

Dobbs, Michael. 1999. *Madeleine Albright: A Twentieth Century Odyssey*. New York: Holt

Etheredge Lloyd S. 1978. *A World of Men: The Private Sources of American Foreign Policy*. Cambridge: MIT Press

Greenstein, Fred. 1969. *Personality and Politics: Problems of Evidence, Inference and conceptualization*. Chicago: Markham

Herrmann, Richard. 1988. 'The Empirical Challenge of the Cognitive Revolution: A Strategy for Drawing Inferences About Perceptions', *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 32, No. 2, p. 175-203

Holsti, Ole. 1962. 'The Belief System and National Images: A Case Study', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*. Vol. 6, No. 3, p244-251

Holsti, Ole. 1976. 'Foreign Policy Formation Viewed Cognitively', in Robert M Axelrod *Structure of Decisions: The Cognitive Maps of Political Elites*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Hyland, William. 1999. *Clinton's World: remaking American foriegn policy*. London: Praeger

Immerman, Richard. 2004. ‘Psychology’, in Michael J. Hogan and Thomas G. Paterson (eds), *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Isaacson, Walter. 1992. *Kissinger: A Biography*. London: Faber and Faber

Jervis, Robert. 1976. *Perception and Misperception in International Relations* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Kissinger, Henry. 1964. *A World Restored* New York: Grosset and Dunlap.

Kissinger, Henry. 1979. *The White House Years*. Boston: Little, Brown and Co.

Landau, David. 1972. *Kissinger: The Uses of Power*. Boston: Houghton

Linton, Ralph. 1947. *The Cultural Background of Personality*. London: Routledge and Kegan

Lippman, Thomas. 2000. *Madeleine Albright and the New American Diplomacy*. Boulder: Westview

Mazlish, Bruce. *Kissinger: the European Mind in American Politics*. New York: Basic Books

Powell, Colin. 1995. *My American Journey* New York: Ballantine Books

Rosati, Jerel. 1987. *The Carter Administration's Quest for Global Community*  
Columbia: University of South Carolina Press

Rosati, Jerel. 2000. 'The Power of Human Cognition in the Study of World Politics',  
*International Studies Review* Vol. 2, No. 3, p. 45-75

Rosati, Jerel. 2004. *Politics of US Foreign Policy*. Belmont: Wadsworth

Sciolino, Elaine. 1996. *New York Times Magazine* 22 Sept

Serfaty, Simon. 1978. 'Brzezinski: Play It Again Zbig' *Foreign Policy*. No. 32, p3-21

Smith, Gaddis. 1986. *Morality, Reason and Power*. New York: Hill and Wang

Snyder Richard (et al.). 1962. *Foreign Policy Decisionmaking*. New York: Free Press  
Volkan, Vamik D., (et al). 1997. *Richard Nixon: A Psychobiography*. New York:  
Columbia University Press

Wooten, James. 1979 (November). 'Here comes Zbig', *Esquire*

Yetiv, Steve A. 2004. *Explaining foreign policy: US decisionmaking and the Persian Gulf War*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press

Ziolkowska-Boehm, Aleksandra. [n.d.]

<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~atpc/heritage/articles/aleksandra/roots-brzezinski.html>

### **Additional Reading**

Axelrod, Robert. 1976. *Structure of Decisions: The Cognitive Maps of Political Elites*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Bernstein, Barton J., 2000 'Understanding Decisionmaking, US Foreign Policy and the Cuban Missile Crisis', *International Security* Vol. 25, No.1, p.134-164