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World Order



Henry Kissinger World Order

Read by Nicholas Hormann

Unabridged



Synopsis

Henry Kissinger has traveled the world, advised presidents, and been a close observer and participant in the central foreign policy events of our era. Now he offers his analysis of the twenty first century's ultimate challenge: how to build a shared international order in a world of divergent historic perspectives, violent conflict, proliferating technology, and ideological extremism. There has never been a true "world order," Kissinger observes. For most of history, civilizations defined their own concepts of order. Each considered itself the center of the world, and envisioned its distinct principles as universally relevant. China conceived of a global cultural hierarchy with the Emperor at its pinnacle. In Europe, Rome imagined itself surrounded by barbarians; when Rome fragmented, European peoples refined a concept of an equilibrium of sovereign states and sought to export it across the world. Islam considered itself the world's sole legitimate political unit, destined to expand indefinitely until the world was brought into harmony by Muslim principles. The United States was born of a conviction about the universal applicability of democratic principles - a conviction that has guided its policies ever since. Now international affairs take place on a global basis, and these historic concepts of world order are meeting. Every region participates in questions of high policy in every other, often instantaneously. Yet there is no consensus among the major actors about the rules and limits guiding this process, or its ultimate destination. The result is mounting tension. Grounded in Kissinger's deep study of history and experience as national security advisor and secretary of state, *World Order* guides readers on a tour of the globe. It examines the events and ideas that formed the historic concepts of order, their manifestations in contemporary controversies, and the ways in which they might ultimately be reconciled.

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Customer Reviews

I have read most of Henry Kissinger's previously published books and reviewed several of them. In my opinion, his latest -- *World Power* -- is the most valuable thus far because it addresses a challenge that the human race faces in months and years to come, one that it has never faced before: the possibility of total global chaos. Consider these observations by Kissinger in the Introduction: "No truly global 'world power' has ever existed. What passes for order in our time was devised in Western Europe nearly four centuries ago, at a peace conference in the German region of Westphalia, conducted without the involvement or even the awareness of most other continents or civilizations." Without a global world power, obviously, there can be no world order. The title of my review refers to a number of compelling questions and the first one posed in the Introduction is a whopper: "Are we facing a period in which forces beyond the constraints of any order determine the future?" Here are some others to which Kissinger also responds:

- o What is the relevance of the Westphalian System to world order? So what?
- o To what extent has Islamism threatened world order throughout the last 1,000 years?
- o To what extent does Islamism (or at least radical Islamism) threaten world order today?
- o What can be learned from the relationship between the U.S. and Iran during the last 50 years?
- o What is the relevance of Asian multiplicity to world order?
- o What are the various stages of development of the U.S. foreign policies with regard to world order since Theodore Roosevelt became president in 1901?
- o Insofar as world order is concerned, what valuable lessons can be learned from the Cold War?
- o Are nuclear military power and world order incompatible?

At age 91, Henry Kissinger has had ample time in his career to ruminate, to write, and to create both ardent followers and enemies. In a way, he seems to transcend time as his influence for better or worse influences sequential generations of political folly. One thing is certain about Mr. Kissinger, however, it is hard to deny that the vantage of his perspective has earned him the ear of both politicians and the public in a way that has rarely been paralleled throughout history. And so he carries on in *World Order*, trying to bring light to the patterns and organizations that propel recent events, much in the ways we have seen in comparable historical forms. (What was it that Mark Twain wrote? That history does not repeat, but it rhymes?) In *World Order*, Kissinger revisits themes that were explored in *Diplomacy*, and in his lesser known (but well recommended) *A World Restored*. In retrospect, it is that youthful ode to Prince Klemens von Metternich, the nineteenth

century expert ambassador, which serves as an excellent opening chapter to Kissinger's life work (of which presumably World Order may well be his last major undertaking). For Kissinger, the Peace of Westphalia was such a key point in history, and the creation of such a Westphalian sovereignty as being integral to our current world order, that our path from this point in time hinges upon the forging of similar power-balancing agreements today.

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