

RELEASE IN FULL

From: Sullivan, Jacob J <SullivanJJ@state.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, August 17, 2011 7:46 PM
To: H
Subject: FW: Kissinger and the Heartland

Worth a read. DKP has captured it just right.

From: Kurtz-Phelan, Daniel
Sent: Wednesday, August 17, 2011 5:24 PM
To: Sullivan, Jacob J
Cc: McAuliffe, Marisa S
Subject: Kissinger and the Heartland

Kissinger did his series of a dozen or so domestic appearances, which he took to calling "the Heartland speeches," over the course of 1975 – in the wake of Nixon's resignation and the fall of Saigon and in the midst of a growing backlash against détente. Worried about the partisanship and isolationism apparent in congressional withdrawal of support for south Vietnam, frustrated by the public's abiding faith in exceptionalism and idealism, and angry over attacks on him and his "amoral" approach to foreign policy (especially after he was blamed and widely criticized for blocking a Ford-Solzhenitsyn meeting ahead of Helsinki), Win Lord, his S/P Director, suggested that Kissinger set out to "educate" the American public in a more sophisticated view of foreign policy and the national interest and show that his strategy rested on a deeper morality.

He took 14 domestic trips as part of this "vast educational effort," to places like Cincinnati and Dallas and to gatherings like the Southern Commodity Producers Conference in Birmingham and the MLB All-Star Game in Milwaukee, where he threw out the first pitch. The speeches were conceptual and professorial, and they argued against both the partisan isolationist backlash he saw in our defunding of South Vietnam and the growing pressure to prioritize human rights, especially in U.S.-Soviet relations. He called on the public "to outgrow some of the illusions" of the past and questioned "to what extent we are able to affect the internal policies of other governments and to what extent it is desirable." The speech that got the most attention was, naturally, in Minneapolis. He spoke on "the moral foundations of foreign policy": "The nation must be true to its own beliefs ... but at the same time it must survive in a world of sovereign nations and competing wills." A reporter noted that the remarks all sounded like they were being given to a CFR audience regardless of whom Kissinger was actually speaking to.

Kissinger himself bemoaned the fact that little attention was paid to the substance of the speeches. And most historians don't see them as having done a whole lot to change opinions on the wisdom of détente or Helsinki or the folly of over-emphasizing human rights. But they still represented an undeniably serious attempt to engage the public in serious discussion of foreign policy. And they drew large and often adoring crowds, and so certainly helped advance his celebrity and burnish his super-intellectual reputation, which may have been the main purpose anyway.