

From [State of Denial](#) by Bob Woodward (2006)

FORMER SECRETARY OF STATE Henry Kissinger had a powerful, largely invisible influence on the foreign policy of the Bush administration.

“Of the outside people that I talk to in this job,” Vice President Cheney told me in the summer of 2005, “I probably talk to Henry Kissinger more than I talk to anybody else. He just comes by and I guess at least once a month, Scooter and I sit down with him.”

Cheney had worked closely with Kissinger in the Ford administration, when Cheney was deputy and later chief of staff. Kissinger at first had been both secretary of state and national security adviser, an arrangement that every subsequent secretary of state had envied. Kissinger’s ego was monumental, but Cheney found his hard-line advice useful after 9/11. They shared a worldview that international relations were a matter of military and economic power. Diplomatic power derived from threatening to and then actually using that power. In its rawest form, using the military sent a useful message to the world: It’s dangerous to be an enemy of the United States.

The president also met privately with Kissinger every couple of months, making the former secretary the most regular and frequent outside adviser to Bush on foreign affairs. Bush, according to Cheney, was “a big fan” of Kissinger. Of the Bush-Kissinger meetings, Rumsfeld said, “I helped set it up.” The president, who generally discounts the importance of outside advisers, found his discussions with Kissinger important, according to Cheney, Rumsfeld and others in the White House.

Card and the president’s personal office staff knew that Kissinger was one of the few nonfamily outsiders with a standing invitation to call whenever he was coming to Washington to see if the president was available. By Card’s calculation about half the meetings were just the president and Kissinger. Either he or Rice attended the other half.

No one in the American foreign policy establishment was more controversial or carried more baggage than Kissinger, then 82 years old.

Vietnam was like a stone around his neck and the prism through which he saw the world. After Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon and