addition, U.S. officials were interested in the global dimension and believed that the West Germans were concerned only with the regional aspect. Klitzing also highlights the deep suspicion of the FRG held by one of its most famous émigrés. He quotes Kissinger as saying to the old German hand, John McCloy, “never underestimate the depths of German stupidity” (p. 97). Kissinger and Nixon were suspicious of both Brandt and Egon Bahr, seeing them as neutralist nationalists who threatened to pull the FRG out of the West, something Edemskiy’s scrutiny of Soviet archives shows was entirely unfounded. Kissinger seemed to be fixated on German history rather than contemporary Germany. A reading of this chapter will be an antidote to nostalgia about the close U.S.-West German relationship that was seemingly lost after the Cold War.

The chapter on France by Marie-Pierre Rey, while brief and a bit too condensed, reveals the ambiguity that continues to this day in Paris over the German-Russian relationship. It is no accident that a French word, “détente,” came to represent the goal of relaxing Western tensions with the USSR, given the pioneering efforts of Charles de Gaulle and his successor, Georges Pompidou, in that regard. But as is so often the case, what the French believe is good for France is not good when applied to Germany. French leaders worried that Ostpolitik would mean that the FRG would turn away from Europe, a concern that returned in 1989–1990 over the prospect of German reunification. French leaders were also worried about engaging in a race with the FRG to get closer to Russia, a fear that remains today. Yet, at the end of the day, Franco-German solidarity prevailed.

The rest of the volume provides good portraits of reactions in Poland and Czechoslovakia. The other, further removed states, were less central to Ostpolitik, but they provide a global perspective on what turned out to be more than a regional development. Of special interest is Meung Hoan Noh’s chapter on how Ostpolitik was viewed in the Koreas, the world’s last major divided state. The absence of a chapter on the reaction in the United Kingdom is puzzling and a gap in this treatment. In short, this is an excellent look from a longer historical distance of what surely ranks as one of the greatest diplomatic achievements of the twentieth century.


Reviewed by William B. Quandt, University of Virginia (emeritus)

Salim Yaqub’s engaging book on U.S.-Arab relations in the 1970s is, in the words of its author, an “eclectic” approach that includes a deep look at both diplomatic history and the emergence of politically active Arab-American groups. The focus is heavily on the Arab-Israeli conflict, which was central to the U.S.-Arab interaction during this crucial decade. Key events were the rise of the Palestine Liberation Organization
(PLO), the Jordan crisis of 1970, changes of leadership in Egypt after the death of
President Gamal Abdel Nasser, the October 1973 War, the Arab oil embargo, the
outbreak of civil war in Lebanon in 1975, and the diplomacy that eventually led to
the Egyptian-Israeli peace agreement in 1979. This was indeed a momentous decade
for the Middle East and for U.S.-Arab relations.

Yaqub is a careful scholar and a good writer. He has read widely in the rich
archival sources that allow researchers to view and hear much of the detailed pol-
icy deliberations that took place at the White House, especially for the period when
Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger were shaping U.S. policy. Nixon’s taping system
and Kissinger’s habit of recording his phone conversations have left a rich and some-
times rather embarrassing record. The Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter presidencies are
not as fully documented, but there is nonetheless a vast store of information available.
Yaqub has read most of it, and readers will appreciate his judicious use of these rich
materials.

Part of the originality of the book is that it is more than a conventional diplomatic
history, although it is also that. Yaqub places considerable importance on the rise of
a newly active group of Arab-Americans during the 1970s. He provides portraits of
many of the key figures but acknowledges that their impact on policy during this
period was minimal.

A great deal has been written about the diplomatic events Yaqub covers. Special-
ists will not find much that is truly new or path-breaking in the book’s narrative of
the relevant diplomatic history, although Yaqub’s points of emphasis are worth not-
ing. The argument that the 1970s was a particularly crucial decade for U.S.-Arab
relations and for the Middle East is persuasive up to a point, but a fairly strong case
can be made for other pivotal periods as well—the Ronald Reagan era, Bill Clinton’s
failed efforts at peacemaking, and George W. Bush’s intervention in Iraq all had pro-
found consequences for the region. The notion that the 1970s were somehow more
important is not wholly convincing. The emergence of an articulate Arab-American
citizenship in the 1970s is noteworthy, but Yaqub does not provide much of a con-
nection between the diplomatic narrative and this sociopolitical phenomenon. The
Arab-American growth in organizational capacity and political awareness did not have
much influence on policy during this period.

Generally, Yaqub’s account of the diplomacy of the 1970s is very close to my
own understanding of it. I do, however, have a few quibbles. In detailing the events
leading up to the 1973 war, Yaqub says that by early 1973 it was almost impossible to
prevent the war (p. 53). This assertion is questionable. Egyptian President Anwar Sa-
dat was clearly frustrated with the stalemate, but this had led him to engage seriously
with the Nixon administration beginning in the spring of 1972. Kissinger met twice
in early 1973 with Sadat’s envoy and had made a general commitment to start a more
active political effort after the Israeli elections that were scheduled for late 1973. My
own sense is that Sadat came to the conclusion that war was inevitable only after the
U.S.-Soviet summit in June 1973 and his growing belief that Nixon’s Watergate prob-
lems would probably mean that little help could be expected from the White House.
But we really do not know what went on in Sadat’s mind. And the Egyptians have not made their archives available.

What is known from Israeli archives, as reported in Yigal Kipnis, 1973: The Road to War (Charlottesville, VA: Just World Books, 2013), pp. 203ff., is that Kissinger started to press the Israelis for greater flexibility before the war and met with a complete refusal from Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir.

Kissinger is portrayed in Yaqub’s account as largely responsible for steering post-October 1973 diplomacy in the direction of a separate Israeli-Egyptian deal. There is considerable truth to this. But Kissinger was deeply affected by the October war. He genuinely believed that a major diplomatic effort was needed to prevent a recurrence of hostilities. Over the next two years, he developed surprisingly good relationships with Arab leaders such as Syrian President Hafez al-Assad, Saudi King Faisal, King Hussein of Jordan, and President Houari Boumédiène of Algeria, to say nothing of his remarkable relationship with Egypt’s Sādāt. What he would have done if Ford had been elected president in 1976 is hard to say, but even Kissinger realized that his step-by-step diplomacy by then had run its course.

Yaqub sees Carter as fulfilling Kissinger’s goal of separating Egypt from the rest of the Arab world to make it possible for Israel to absorb the Syrian and Palestinian occupied territories. As a participant in the diplomacy of this period as a member of the National Security Council staff, I may not be totally objective, but I do think Yaqub underestimates two important factors. Carter and his team began with a strong preference for a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. This led some in the Arab world, including Sadat, to worry that the United States was paying too much attention to the Syrians and perhaps even the Palestinians. Once Menachem Begin came to power in June 1977, Carter and his team had to come to terms with a very different Israeli leader, one who was adamant in his refusal to relinquish the West Bank.

The combination of Begin’s intransigence and Sadat’s restlessness did produce a change in Carter’s priorities, especially after Sadat’s trip to Jerusalem in November 1977. But that trip was Sadat’s initiative, and his way of signaling that he was not going to be held back by the Syrians or Palestinians from recovering his own territory. Yaqub puts too much of the emphasis on the U.S. role in pushing Sadat to a separate peace and does not give Sadat himself enough credit (or blame) for the course that was taken.

On p. 340, Yaqub implies that if Egypt, under U.S. pressure, had not taken the route of making a separate peace after the 1973 war, it would have been possible for the Arabs to use the threat of war to get Israel to agree to a comprehensive peace. This is what many Arabs believe, and it explains why Sadat faced such hostility after his trip to Jerusalem and after the Camp David Accords. But I find it implausible to believe that after 1973 any Egyptian leader would have been ready to prepare for another round of war. Sadat had already concluded that the Soviet Union was a power in decline and that it would never be a reliable source of support for war. Sadat also was aware of how close Egypt had come to a humiliating defeat in the last days of the
October war and was not about to risk another military encounter. Rarely mentioned in public but very much on the minds of Arab leaders was the fact that Israel had nuclear weapons and could not be defeated by any combination of Arab forces.

Despite a few questionable points in Yaqub’s account, I certainly recommend the book to readers who want a well-researched and clearly written guide to the diplomacy of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the 1970s. The book does not contain much about the overarching Cold War framework of U.S. policy at this time, or about the impact of the Iranian revolution in 1978–1979, just as the Egyptian-Israeli negotiations were coming to a climax. Yaqub also could have said more about the role of pro-Israeli forces, especially in Congress, during this period. But he has made his analytical choices and has produced a fine book. Differences of interpretation on specific points will continue, but the overall picture is now pretty well in focus, and Yaqub has made a worthy contribution of his own.


Reviewed by Ruud van Dijk, University of Amsterdam

More than most other historical sub-disciplines, intelligence history can be a frustrating endeavor because of the pervasive classification of primary source materials. Yet, even though in many countries, not least the open societies of the West, government agencies continue to hold back or to sanitize far too many documents from the Cold War era, historians have in recent years gained access to new collections and papers. As Douglas MacDonald suggested recently, compared to the situation during his graduate student days in the 1970s, the glass today can be seen as half full.

Newly available, albeit still incomplete, archival collections are one reason for Keith Allen’s book; the suitability of Cold War Germany for the study of the activities of intelligence agencies is another. A third reason offered by Allen is continuity. After 1990 Western intelligence services sought to learn about the networks of people who moved to and through the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) during the Cold War. How did these activities affect the lives and personal freedoms of what often were vulnerable migrants? How did the activities of (especially) British and U.S. intelligence services, present in the country by virtue of their role as occupying powers after World War II, affect the sovereignty of the FRG? How did West German agencies cooperate with their Western counterparts active on their soil?

Allen, a research scholar at the Institute for Contemporary History in Berlin, has done a large amount of research in U.S., British, and German archives (supplemented by work with declassified East German State Security, or Stasi, and Czechoslovak State Security files) in order to map the geography, methods, and human impact of the interrogation of the hundreds of thousands of people who entered West Germany