Rabe, Stephen. *Kissinger and Latin America: Intervention, Human Rights, and Diplomacy*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2020, p.316, $36.

Latin America looms large in the history of U.S. foreign relations, but many studies of the Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford administrations pay little mind to the region aside from the overthrow of Chilean president Salvador Allende. Many believe that Latin America was less important to these administrations, which both included Henry Kissinger as National Security Adviser and Secretary of State. Nixon and Kissinger barely discussed the region in their popular memoirs. Relations with China, the Soviet Union, and the Middle East dominate the diplomatic record, and therefore, scholarly attention. In *Kissinger and Latin America*, Stephen Rabe uses declassified government documents to disabuse scholars of the notion that Latin America was not important to Kissinger's diplomacy. Rabe presents a holistic view of Kissinger's involvement in Latin American affairs, showing that Kissinger "devoted more time and effort" to the region than any of his predecessors in the State Department or NSC (2). Although critical of Kissinger's support of brutal dictators, Rabe illustrates moments where Kissinger proved tolerant to Latin American concerns. These include his advocacy of Panamanian sovereignty of the Canal Zone and his work in safeguarding Mexican water rights on the Colorado River. *Kissinger and Latin America* offers a fair and comprehensive analysis of Henry Kissinger's Latin American diplomacy – something the field has needed for some time.

Rabe starts and finishes the book with historiographical discussion along two veins. One is a "Dr. Kissinger" school that portrays him as an accomplished diplomat with good intentions but claims his mistakes were similar to those of his predecessors. The other is a "Mr. Henry" camp that decries his actions as a central figure in the destruction of several democracies around the globe (7-15). Rabe aligns with the latter school of thought, arguing that Kissinger was not a victim of Nixon's "dark tutelage," but unabashedly tied the United States to right-wing dictators and overlooked abuses of human rights to meet Washington's goal of global anti-communism (249). Kissinger's record of supporting murderous regimes in Bolivia, Chile, and Argentina features prominently in Rabe's volume. Some of his later diplomatic overtures, such as the failed attempt at rapprochement with Cuba or the Panama Canal treaties, balance out this scholarly treatment of Kissinger. In so doing, Rabe agrees with critical historians, such as Barbara Keys and Jeremi

Suri, yet rounds out a controversial figure in American history.

Kissinger's apathy toward human rights is a main current through this book. Influenced by Nelson Rockefeller, who posited that military dictators could lead Latin America to social and economic progress, Kissinger lauded the brutal regimes in Brazil and Nicaragua (43). He saw in Brazil a populous and economically powerful country that could assist the United States in matters of trade and its international crusade against communism. Through the documentary record, Rabe demonstrates Kissinger never addressed the Brazilian regime's human rights violations and instead saw violators as "friends" (96). Kissinger developed similar friendships with Augusto Pinochet of Chile and the military regime in Argentina. Rabe places Kissinger, and not his bosses, at the center of these relationships. Kissinger advised gradual recognition of both regimes and he found ways for the U.S. government to maintain relationships once their murderous campaigns came to light. In Argentina, for example, Kissinger undercut his own ambassador who wished to condemn the regime's "Dirty War" against 30,000 political subversives and ethnic minorities. Much as he did with Pinochet, Kissinger advised his friends in Buenos Aires to conceal their actions as they continued to root out leftists. Rabe points out that Kissinger valued these South American friends as many U.S. allies distanced themselves from Washington over the quagmire in Southeast Asia. As most Americans were unaware of events in the Southern Cone, Kissinger wrapped a veil of secrecy around his calculated indifference to human rights.

Rabe's analysis of Kissinger's diplomacy with Central America is illuminating, specifically the case of Panama. By 1973, Kissinger was the leading spokesperson for Panamanian sovereignty of the Canal Zone within the Nixon administration. Kissinger sympathized with Panama's disdain for the 1903 treaty that fostered a colonial situation with the United States and led to unrest. Kissinger feared "another Vietnam" in Panama unless Washington negotiated a new treaty that laid out a transfer of control of the Panama Canal and Zone to the Panamanian people (180). Always a pragmatist, Kissinger reached out to the South American military regimes and found that none of them would support the U.S. in ongoing canal issues. With these concerns in mind, Kissinger lobbied both Nixon and Ford to negotiate with Panamanian nationalists. Even though the Jimmy Carter administration ushered in a new treaty with Panama, Rabe assigns some credit to Kissinger and uses Panama as an

example of tolerant diplomacy and Kissinger's growth as a statesman. However, Rabe slightly undermines Kissinger's pragmatism in the matter, for many in the U.S. asserted the canal was no longer economically or militarily vital by the 1970s. Omar Torrijos, the de facto Panamanian leader, was also consistent with the anti-communist authoritarians Kissinger befriended throughout the region. These are key reasons the U.S. government relinquished the canal and warranted more attention in Rabe's analysis of Kissinger's decision-making.

Rabe missed an opportunity to gender Kissinger's diplomacy. Other scholars, such as Robert Dean and Fredrik Logevall, have shown that masculinity – expressed through anti-communism and strong-arming lesser nations – shaped American Cold War politics. Rabe mentions this when discussing Kissinger's support for coups against Salvador Allende and Isabel Peron, but does not apply it to Kissinger's general approach to Latin American affairs. Kissinger, along with Nixon and other officials, equated weakness with femininity. Exercising control over their sphere of influence in Latin America was an opportunity for these policymakers to prove their masculinity and shore up their own political destinies.

Kissinger and Latin America is a refreshing addition to the dense Kissinger historiography. Rabe expands on the work of other historians to make Latin America a focal point of Cold War diplomacy. A comprehensive and balanced study, this book should be read by any scholar of U.S. foreign relations during the Cold War or anyone interested in Henry Kissinger's involvement in Latin American affairs.

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