



Written by on September 22, 2008

Sarah Palin's Meeting With Henry Kissinger

She will also meet with President Álvaro Uribe of Colombia and President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan, and on the following day she will meet with President Jalal Talabani of Iraq, President Asif Ali Zardari of Pakistan, and President Mikheil Saakashvili of Georgia.

Observers widely view the meetings as a cram course in foreign policy to bolster Mrs. Palin's resumé before her one-on-one debate at Washington University in St. Louis on October 2 with Democratic vice-presidential nominee Joe Biden, who is chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Palin is being prepared for her meetings by Randy Scheunemann, a paid lobbyist for the country of Georgia, who is McCain's top foreign policy adviser.



Palin's meeting with Kissinger, however, is apt to be of far greater significance than the others. As the *New York Times* observed in a September 22 report:

It is likely that Mr. Kissinger, a close outside adviser to Mr. McCain's campaign, will give Ms. Palin a broad overview of international affairs, focusing particularly on Russia, China and the Middle East. Mr. Kissinger, who was national security adviser and secretary of state in the Nixon and Ford administrations, is regularly called on by Mr. McCain for advice on foreign affairs.

It could be said that for a foreign policy novice such as Sarah Palin, having a tutorial session with the great master of international affairs, Henry Kissinger, will be a unique learning experience. After all, Kissinger has been an adviser to presidents and is quite capable of bringing Palin up to speed in short order. Kissinger served as Secretary of State and National Security Adviser under presidents Nixon and Ford, was our nation's chief negotiator at the Paris Peace Accords with the North Vietnamese during the Vietnam War, helped negotiate the giveaway of the Panama Canal, served as the Disney Corporation's negotiator with the Chinese, and was involved in countless other globe-trotting missions involving foreign policy.

Since the relationship between Kissinger (a former Harvard professor) and Palin at the meeting will undoubtedly be one of mentor-to-protégé, we can reasonably expect that the mentor will indoctrinate his protégé on behalf of the interventionist foreign policy the U.S. government has followed for decades under both Republican and Democrat administrations. If Palin proves to be a good "student" under Kissinger's tutelage, she would tend toward resembling past Kissinger protégés such as Brent Scowcroft and Lawrence Eagleburger.

Veteran observers of post-World War II U.S. foreign policy will likely find few surprises in the direction taken by a future McCain administration (or, a future Obama administration, if that should be the case).



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The predictability of such policy is made relatively easy by the fact that since 1929, the overwhelming majority of secretaries of state have shared membership in a single influential private policy organization. These have included: Henry Stimson, Cordell Hull, E.R. Stittinius, Dean Acheson, John Foster Dulles, Christian Herter, Dean Rusk, William Rogers, Henry Kissinger, Cyrus Vance, Edmund Muskie, Alexander Haig, George Schultz, James Baker, Lawrence Eagleberger, Warren Christopher, William Richardson, Madeleine Albright, Colin Powell, and Condoleezza Rice.

Notice that Henry Kissinger, and current Secretary of State Rice belong to this same exclusive club, which, regardless of how one regards its policies, must certainly be regarded as extremely influential. So does Zbigniew Brzezinski, President Carter's national security adviser, who became one of Senator McCain's foreign policy advisers when McCain ran for president the first time and who is now Senator Obama's foreign policy advisor. McCain himself is also a member.

The organization? The New York-based Council on Foreign Relations.

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