

The Trilaterals

Like the chain that holds the trinkets on a charm bracelet, the Trilateral Commission binds together the principle appointments of the Carter Administration. In previous issues, we have profiled Blumenthal and Vance; in this issue we look at Brown and Brzezinski, the other two appointees from the Commission. Commentator Alan Wolfe lays bare both the policies being pursued and the challenge they present to us.

Enter Brzezinski

By Joe Stork

President-elect Jimmy Carter's selection of Zbigniew Brzezinski to be National Security Adviser brings to that potentially powerful post a man whose political views and connections make him an appropriate replacement for predecessors like Henry Kissinger and Walt Rostow. Like Kissinger he is a refugee from Europe, was trained at Harvard, and shares close ties to the Rockefeller empire. Like Rostow he comes to the job as an accomplished academic ideologue and professional anti-Communist. His writings over the last decade suggest that he is a particularly appropriate adviser for the administration that may be taking us all the way to 1984.

Brzezinski, a professor of history at Columbia University and director of its Research Institute on Communist Affairs was born in Warsaw, the son of a Polish diplomat who fled to Canada with the onset of World War II. He became an American citizen in 1958.

He made his mark on the '60s as a prolific analyst of political developments in the Soviet Union and the socialist bloc.

In the university teach-ins that grew in protest of American intervention in Indochina, Brzezinski was, according to *Time*, a "persuasive advocate" of the U.S. position. In 1966 LBJ brought him to Washington to direct the State Department's Policy Planning Council. A few months later he was hailed by *Newsweek* as the "kind of hard-nosed intellectual who does not suffer fools gladly" and after only four months on the job was "one of the architects of U.S. foreign policy." *Newsweek* is still infatuated with what it calls "Brzezinski's big-think conceptual brilliance."

►Critical of Kissinger's style.

His recent writings display a critical tone towards Kissinger's policies, but little by way of concrete alternatives. His emphasis is on the need for an alliance of industrial capitalist powers with lip service towards "an active stake in the global system" for "the global *nouveaux riches*" (the oil producers). There is also much polemic against an "erosion of trust," "an accumulation of bitterness," "a growing resentment" of major allies towards Kissinger's style and practice. In its place Brzezinski urges "open debate and shared political responsibility," "real consultations" and "genuine consensus."

Brzezinski has long been angling for a job like this. In the early '70s he broadened his "expertise," publishing an effort at social analysis (*Between Two Ages*, 1970) and a political analysis of Japan (*The Fragile Blossom*, 1972). In 1973 he latched onto Carter as a prospective candidate-client. Since then he has been writing from the stance of a global strategist, and moonlighting as director of the Rockefeller-financed Trilateral Commission, an assemblage of top industrial and finance capitalists, politicians and academics from the U.S., Europe and Japan (including Carter, Mondale, Cyrus Vance and Michael Blumenthal) who lend their names to various pronouncements of the present and future state of the status quo.

►American initiative in Mideast.

Ever sensitive to the needs of the hour, Brzezinski has lately devoted some effort towards developing a full-blown strategy for settling the Arab-Israeli conflict. "Without a settlement of that issue in the near future, any stable arrangement in the energy area is simply not possible." Framed as a critique of Kissinger's "step by step" approach, it more nearly rep-

resents the next stage of Kissinger's strategy and is not quite in harmony with candidate Carter's pro-Israeli pronouncements on the campaign trail.

Brzezinski advocates an "overt American initiative, outlining both the substance of an eventual settlement and the required international framework for it." While he would no doubt refrain from labeling it an "imposed solution," he does say that the "inherently rigid" Israeli political situation is pervaded by "a sense of permanent isolation and defensiveness which make far-sighted statesmanship almost impossible." This is especially true with regard to "the central problem of the Middle East conflict, the relationship between Israel and the Palestinians (which almost certainly means, in practice, the PLO)."

Brzezinski advocates the creation of a de-militarized but PLO-dominated Palestinian state composed of the West Bank and Gaza, with its capital in a united Jerusalem. Israel would be accorded full recognition and its 1967 borders guaranteed by security zones and enforced by the superpowers.

On the level of the world capitalist economy, Brzezinski apprehends certain important dimensions of the current crisis, as when he notes that "modern inflation is deeply rooted in the social fabric of consumption-oriented advanced societies," but of course he fails to attribute the systemic nature of the crisis to the monopoly character of late capitalism.

►Democracy "overloaded."

Rather he plays a theme that is echoed by some of the Trilateral Commission pronouncements: the problem is that "democratic" institutions have been "overloaded" with participants and demands, and "effective countermeasures are hard to adopt because sacrifices are not easy to distribute through the democratic process."

Like Kissinger, he sees the core of the problem resting in the fact that people no longer believe in the system. "The economic crisis...intersects with a deep cultural malaise in the Western world, a malaise that is pregnant with dangerous political consequences."

Brzezinski's own ideas about how to rectify the situation are among the most dangerous of those consequences. In a 1968 article for the *New Republic* entitled "Revolution and Counterrevolution (But Not Necessarily About Columbia)" he opined that the U.S. was undergoing "a profound shift in the prevailing values," which he attributed to the fact that the society is in transition from an industrial to a "technotronic" society "in which technology, especially electronic communications and computers, is prompting basic social changes." With this preface he proceeds to instruct the authorities on how to respond to the wave of unrest then current in the country ("a revolutionary act is likely to be condemned by most, provided it is rapidly suppressed") and assures them that "some of the recent upheavals have been led by people who increasingly will have no role to play in the new technotronic society." Their violence and slogans he writes, are "merely the death rattle of the historical irrelevants."

►Manipulation and control.

Themes of manipulation and control remain fundamental to Brzezinski's prescriptions for the future. To create the requisite "new international system," it must be "the advanced countries which consult closely and undertake the joint initiatives, enlisting on an ad hoc basis those developing and particularly energy-

ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI

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FOR IN THESE TIMES



producing countries that are capable and willing to become partners in such an architectural endeavor." This cartel-like grouping will be required to coordinate economic and trade policies, taking into account high economic growth rates will no longer be available to mitigate class conflict in the "advanced" societies.

The problem as Brzezinski sees it then becomes one of generating the political will necessary to implement this "significant change in our social and political lifestyle." "Accordingly the challenge that we face today may require some political dramatization.... One useful approach might be for the heads of our advanced democratic governments to hold a joint meeting on the emerging state of social emergency (his emphasis) as the point of departure for the adoption of the needed reforms."

Writing in *Foreign Policy* at the end of 1974, Brzezinski urged "an adminis-

tration of national unity" since "these problems...simply cannot wait for 1976 and the selection of a President through older methods." He proposed that the Vice-President be charged with developing "joint economic-political international machinery, capable of integrating our policies and mobilizing the best brains in the country into a bipartisan effort." In a *New York* article he described this proposal as "a supra-departmental integration of our global policy." policy."

On Jan. 20, Zbigniew Brzezinski, with his "big-think conceptual brilliance," will take over responsibility in the office that most closely resembles his "effective instrument for world planning." Historical irrelevants beware!

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Brown already insider—nothing new likely

Defense dept. head is convenient compromise for Carter

By John Markoff

Harold Brown's appointment as Secretary of Defense has lengthened the shadow that the elite Trilateral Commission is casting over the new administration of President-elect Jimmy Carter. Brown is the fifth high-level Carter appointee to be drawn from the ranks of the commission.

Brown's appointment as Secretary of Defense signifies that Jimmy Carter's military policy will differ little from that of his predecessors. Brown is another insider. He already has served in the Pentagon as Director of the Directorate of Defense Research and Engineering (DDR&E) and as Secretary of the Air Force.

Brown represented a convenient compromise for Jimmy Carter. He fell somewhere between hawk James Schlesinger, who is anathema to liberal Democrats, and Washington lawyer Paul Warnke, who was unacceptable to the Pentagon.

Brown was a hawk during the Kennedy era and helped preside over the air war

in Vietnam under Lyndon Johnson. However, he is said to have undergone a "soul-change" after Nixon's election in 1968. Since that time Brown has become an ardent strategic arms controller, albeit one who falls well within establishment limits.

►Commitment to SALT.

Brown's appointment may represent a genuine commitment to reach some kind of SALT II agreement over arms limitations with the Soviet Union. Brown has ties with Dr. Georgii Arbatov, a member of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist party and the leading American expert in the USSR. Arbatov is active as a SALT negotiator from the Russian side. Several weeks ago he called on Carter to revive the stalled negotiations.

Recent press reports have stated that Brown is willing to ban cruise missiles as part of a SALT agreement. The cruise missile, which the U.S. is developing, is a major stumbling block in negotiations.

Continued on page 7.

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Alan Wolfe

Carter kills populist hopes early— It's now up to the left to organize



"If, after the inauguration, you find a Cy Vance as secretary of state and Zbigniew Brzezinski as head of national security, then I would say we failed," said Hamilton Jordon, Carter's key aid, last summer.

Rarely has an administration failed, by its own standards, even before assuming office. Carter is not yet President and he has already broken just about every progressive promise he made during the campaign. Populism is out, and the Trilateral Commission is in. The appointments made by Jimmy Carter reflect the greatest domination of the federal government by Wall Street since Herbert Hoover.

"Membership on this commission has provided me with a splendid learning opportunity, and many of the other members have helped me in my study of foreign affairs," Carter wrote in *Why Not the Best?* Clearly he expects to transfer his seminar right into the White House.

Of the 60 original U.S. members of the Trilateral Commission, only six were politicians. But two of them were Carter and Walter Mondale. Other members were Brzezinski and Vance, Michael Blumenthal (Secretary of the Treasury), Richard Cooper (probable Assistant Secretary of State for International Economic Affairs), Harold Brown (Secretary of Defense), Paul Warnke (mentioned for several positions), A.W. Clausen (rumored for Treasury until disqualifying himself), and Peter Peterson (rumored for a variety of positions until disqualifying himself).

Carter has, in a word, appointed a member of the commission to every important post in the government save one—the director of the Office of Management and Budget. And even Thomas Bertram Lance has his connection: his dear friend J.P. Austin of Coca Cola is the member of the commission responsible for bringing Jimmy Carter, as they say, "aboard."

►Only place for Carter to turn.

The point, however, is not to attack the commission, but to understand it. Can we really be surprised that Carter would turn to Wall Street when Kennedy followed exactly the same process at the start of his administration? The real question is why the commission was the only place for Carter to turn, and the answer is that this is one of the few elite organizations around that is making a serious attempt to understand what is happening to the U.S. and what can be done about it.

The commission is a response to the crisis of the '60s. Three extremely important developments took place during that decade, now overshadowed by Watergate. The first is that the U.S. position in the world declined; the second that demands by groups at home for state services reached the breaking point for a capitalist society; and the third is that the economy entered a period of protracted difficulty. Only the Trilateral Commission—certainly not Reagan or the old line New Deal Democrats like Humphrey—have fashioned a response to this triple threat.

In the minds of the commission, the U.S. is no longer capable of ruling the world system by itself. Economically, the advanced capitalist nations, in their analysis, have become more and more intertwined, so that the actions of one affects them all. This alone suggests the need for greater cooperation among them.

But in addition, the pursuit of *realpolitik* objectives on the part of Kissinger has made the U.S. seem overextended and often illegitimate. What we need, the commission suggests, is a flexible strategy that can maximize American power in the face of the limitations upon it. Such a strategy would include a reliance on economic pressure as opposed to military intervention, a greater emphasis on joint foreign policy initiatives with Europe and Japan, and a downplaying of brinkmanship in favor of stable transnational or-

ganization like the European Economic Community.

►Controlling social programs.

Domestically, the commission views the demands of oppressed groups for greater political rewards from the state as counter-productive to a flexible ruling strategy. Above all else, the state should avoid being "locked in" to policies that limit its options. Given that defense related industries seem to have an inexhaustible appetite for public funds, the state budget can only be held under control if social welfare spending is rationalized and streamlined.

This means a reorganization of the government, one of Carter's pet themes, and a reliance on what could be called post-Keynesian economic policy. Ultimately, some members of the commission feel, the demands on the state may have to be curtailed through the adoption of some fairly harsh anti-democratic measures.

Finally, the commission is aware that the economic situation in which the U.S. finds itself is more than just another phase in a business cycle. In contrast to those who proclaim that the economy will shortly reassert itself, commission intellectuals believe that we are in for a relatively systemic decline in the ability of American capitalism to generate ever higher rates of growth. The problem, for them, is to manage economic contradictions, not to ignore them.

Many members of the commission, for example, believe in wage and price controls as a device that may be needed to keep the economy from falling apart. Others call for a system of national planning. In the peculiar language of American politics this makes them "liberals" on economic policy, since they do not favor the free market. But in reality their plans are highly illiberal, for they all involve controls on the working class in order to protect the capitalist system as a whole.

►Our choice is now easier.

Carter has turned to the commission because there is nowhere else to turn. In his campaign he called himself a populist, but also courted the favor of these men. He cannot continue to do both, and one should realize that he has made a fundamental choice. We owe him respect, perhaps, for making his decision so early, for he has made our decision that much easier.

By deciding to go all the way with the Trilateral Commission, Carter has told blacks and working class people who made his election possible what he thinks of them. There is no question that it was these folks and not the bankers who elected Carter and he has responded by rubbing power in their faces. He is not even making an attempt to mystify the power with kind words. After two decades of economic mismanagement, political scandal and increasing illegitimacy, Carter has cast his lot with the mismanagers, corrupters and illegitimizers. His gall is phenomenal, but in truth his only two options were to do what he did or be a real populist, and the latter was never a serious option.

If these were normal times, then Carter, like Kennedy, would have kept the myths alive for two or three years before disillusion set in. Instead—since innocence can normally be lost only once—he has killed them within a couple of months. By doing so he has thrown the ball to us. It is clearer than ever that popular control over corporate power can only come from mass pressure from below. The Trilateral Commission has won state power and will use it for its own ends. It is up to the popular movement, to the left, to organize popular power for its own ends. In his own way, Carter has invited us—almost defiantly demanded us—to do so.

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Continued from page 6.

Brown will offer no improvement as a military manager, says Pentagon critic Gordon Adams. Adams, research director of the New York-based Council on Economic Priorities, said in a recent interview with *In These Times*, "Obviously he [Brown] had to have played some role as Secretary of the Air Force in the B-1 decision. As Director of DDR&E he had to play a role in a number of critical decisions about total package procurement, all of which were disasters. As a cost controller and as a weapons systems builder, he's got a lousy record."

Brown, trained as a nuclear scientist, has been associated with American military planning since the early 50s when he left Columbia University, where he had been an academic phenomenon, to work on the hydrogen bomb with Edward Teller at the Lawrence Radiation Laboratory in California. Brown's rise to power at Lawrence has been described as meteoric. In 1952, two years after he arrived, he was placed in charge of thermonuclear weapons development at the new Livermore component of the Laboratory.

►Effort to avoid test ban treaty.

Brown became director of Lawrence in 1959, a position that allowed him to participate in the national debate going on around the testing of nuclear weapons. Brown was an opponent of test bans and with a group of scientists who were proteges of Teller helped to devise a hypothetical method by which detection of an underground nuclear blast could be avoided.

It involved hollowing out a huge underground cavern to deaden the shock of a nuclear explosion. The theory, which was apparently advanced to delay any test ban, was put to rest when it was revealed that the digging of a cavern of sufficient size would require moving more earth than all American mining operations moved in a year.

Brown left Lawrence in 1961 for the Pentagon where he assumed charge of the overall development of new weapons. He took much of the responsibility for backing Secretary McNamara's pet project, the F-111 fighter-bomber. McNamara attempted to force the Air Force and the Navy to accept a common multi-mission plane. The attempt ended in failure and both services have since developed different planes.

He was responsible for scaling back the B-70 strategic bomber, the predecessor to the controversial B-1. At the same time, however, he advocated a step-up in chemical and biological warfare planning.

Around the halls of the Pentagon he was called "child Brown" because of his youth and referred to as being, "brash, coldly arrogant, humorless, and overly ambitious," by military oldtimers.

►Vietnam a mistake...now.

When he accepted his nomination as Secretary of Defense, Brown called Vietnam a mistake and said that he would be more cautious about similar American intervention in the future.

As Secretary of the Air Force under Lyndon Johnson, Brown felt no such

When he accepted his nomination as Secretary of Defense, Brown called Vietnam a mistake.... As secretary of the Air Force under Lyndon Johnson, Brown felt no such qualms.... He was one of the first officials to propose 'free fire' zones as a substitute for increased ground troops.

qualms. "The free world forces are in Vietnam to prevent the success of aggression," Brown told the Phoenix Chamber of Commerce on Armed Forces Day four months after the Vietnamese Tet Offensive, "[We are there] to provide the South Vietnamese with a free choice as to how they shall be governed."

Before the Tet offensive an internal debate had gone on in the Pentagon over the effectiveness of bombing North Vietnam. Brown had argued forcefully, according to the *Pentagon Papers*, for a middle position between that of the Navy, which argued that bombing should cease above the 20th parallel in North Vietnam and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who had argued for unrestricted bombing including Hanoi and Haiphong and for mining of harbors and inland waterways. Brown convinced McNamara, who was leaning to the Navy's position, to continue to permit air strikes against targets north of the 20th parallel. He regarded bombing of the North as a "blue chip" to be exchanged for some recipro-

city by the North Vietnamese.

After the Tet offensive, when McNamara had become disenchanted with the war, Brown continued to call for greater escalation and heavier reliance on American airpower. He was one of the first Pentagon officials to propose "free fire" zones as a substitute for an increase in ground forces in South Vietnam.

When Nixon was elected in 1968 Brown left the Pentagon for the presidency of the California Institute of Technology. It was at this point that he underwent his "soul change" and joined the Nixon administration as a SALT negotiator.

During the last seven years Brown has also joined the boards of directors of several large corporations including IBM, where he shares a directorship with Cyrus Vance, the future Secretary of State, Times-Mirror, the parent company of the *Los Angeles Times*, and Schroders, Inc., a New York subsidiary of a London bank where he is a banking partner of Paul Nitze, a former Deputy Secretary of Defense and Carter adviser. ■