

LETTERS

Alger Hiss, Daniel Bell, Eduard A. Lopez, Sidney L. Jones, Louis D. Enoff, Robert J. Myers, Horace B. Deets, Dallas L. Salisbury, Owen Harries, Ray S. Cline, Robert B. Oxnam, Ben Stavis, Lee Edwards, Phillip D. Grub, June Teufel Dreyer, Keith Idso, G. M. Woodwell, Walter C. Oechel, Mark Harmon, Marion Clawson, Daniel Lashof, Andrew Gettelman, William A. Nierenberg, James M. Strock

To Tell the Truth

On April 6, 1992, Adam Meyerson, editor of Policy Review, sent the following letter to Alger Hiss:

Dear Mr. Hiss:

The archives of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union are becoming available to historians now, and the details of whatever involvement you may have had with the CPSU will presumably become known. Should you wish to make your story known yourself, *Policy Review* would be very interested in publishing it.

Policy Review is the quarterly magazine and flagship publication of The Heritage Foundation. I enclose a copy of a recent issue, which includes tributes to seven heroes of the Cold War—Winston Churchill, Harry Truman, Konrad Adenauer, George Meany, Whittaker Chambers, John Paul II, and Ronald Reagan.

Should you wish to make your story known in our pages, we would be interested in either an article or an interview. If you joined the Communist Party, we would want to know why. If you ever committed espionage for the Soviet Union, we would want to know why. If you would want to apologize to Whittaker Chambers for any reason, we would want to publish your apology. We would also want to know if you ever became disillusioned with the Soviet Union or ever broke with the Communist Party and, if so, why.

Please let us know if you would like to tell your story in this way.

State of Denial

Mr. Hiss replied to this request on October 7, 1992.

Dear Mr. Meyerson:

Thank you for your letter of 6 April 1992 inviting me "to make [my] story known in [your] pages" now that formerly secret archives of the Soviet Union are becoming available to historians. The delay in my reply is occasioned by the time it has taken to conduct thorough research at the archives in Russia.

As I have said and written for some 44 years, I was never a member of the Communist Party and never committed espionage for the Soviet Union. Therefore, I personally have nothing to add. However, I am pleased to inform you that, as a result of the opening up of the archives of the CPSU and intelligence services of the Soviet Union, I do have something new to report.

I wrote to Russian officials in charge of the archives to ask them for all the Soviet materials about my case. Following up my letters and at my behest (advanced age and poor eyesight keep me close to home), John Lowenthal, an historian/documentary filmmaker of the Cold War and of my case, conducted research at the archives and met with Colonel-General Dmitry A. Volkogonov, Counsellor of the President of Russia, People's Deputy of the Russian Federation, and Corresponding-Member of the Russian Academy of Sciences. General Volkogonov is Chairman of the Commission for the Accession of KGB and CPSU Central Committee Archives of the Supreme Council of the Russian Federation as well as co-chairman of the American-Russian commission investigating the fate of prisoners of war and other Americans held in the Soviet Union. He is also an historian and biog-

rapher of Stalin and Trotsky.

I enclose a copy of General Volkogonov's response of 14 October 1992 authoritatively confirming that I was never a spy for the Soviet Union. (As for the accusation that I was a member of the Communist Party USA, there is no supporting evidence whatsoever in any archive or known to any Russian official consulted by Mr. Lowenthal.)

I trust that this answers your questions and that you will print this entire letter and as written.

Alger Hiss

Dear Mr. Hiss:

Thank you for your letter of 27 October 1992, which we shall publish in a forthcoming issue of *Policy Review*.

Our invitation to you still stands. If you ever joined the Communist Party or ever committed espionage for the Soviet Union, we would be happy to publish an article in which you explained why. General Dmitry Volkogonov's statement cannot be regarded as the last word on this subject.

General Volkogonov is a distinguished historian with extraordinary access to Soviet files, but he may not have had access to all the relevant archives on Soviet agents in the United States in the 1930s. Indeed his declaration that he saw no evidence that Whittaker Chambers was a Soviet agent may have been a signal by Volkogonov that he did not see the proper documents. The truth can be better judged when KGB and Soviet military intelligence (GRU) archives are made openly available to Western as well as Russian historians.

Even then, historians must con-

sider the possibility that documents have been destroyed or hidden. Numerous allegations of KGB destruction of its documents have been made in the Russian press. On a number of recent occasions, Soviet and Russian authorities have initially denied knowledge of files that they subsequently revealed had been in their possession—among them the secret protocol of the Molotov–Ribbentrop (Hitler–Stalin) pact and the files on the Katyn massacre of Polish officers.

Moreover, General Volkogonov's statement does not contradict any of the evidence that led to your conviction of perjury by a jury of your peers. In addition to, or, if you prefer, instead of, the questions I asked you in my letter of 6 April 1992, I invite you to write for *Policy Review* on the following question: In your responses to Whittaker Chambers's charges about his relationship with you, where (and for what reason) were you lying and where were you telling the truth?

Please let us know if you would like to tell your story in this way.

Adam Meyerson

No Neocon

Dear Sir:

In "Battler for the Republic: Irving Kristol's Terrible Swift Pen" (Fall 1992), Mark Gerson makes a number of errors and omissions that distort the history of the *Public Interest*, as well as the character of "neo-conservatism."

Mr. Gerson writes of Alcove One at City College and Kristol and his "Trotskyist friends," among whom he lists me and Nathan Glazer. Neither of us were Trotskyists—I was, and remain a social democrat—and Glazer was a few years behind us, although we all became friends soon after.

Mr. Gerson writes of the anti-Communist Left, centered about *Commentary* and the Congress for Cultural Freedom, with whom he names Irving Howe and Michael Harrington. Although the two were anti-Communist, both were hostile to the Congress for Cultural Freedom.

About the men who wrote for the *Public Interest*, Mr. Gerson lists a

number of regular contributors and then states: "The works of Jude Wanniski on supply-side economics, Charles Murray...were launched in this journal." But this distorts completely the early character of the *Public Interest*. From 1965 to 1972, those who wrote on economic policy for the *Public Interest* were Robert M. Solow, Thomas Schelling, Robert Heilbroner, and Edwin Kuh, all Democrats and Keynesians. Moreover, Senator McGovern's "demogrant proposal" in 1972 first appeared in the pages of the *Public Interest*, as proposed by the late

ample of neoconservatism, arose out of a dissatisfaction with the simplicities of the Kennedy-Johnson domestic programs, and the fact that magazines such as Norman Podhoretz's *Commentary*, and *Partisan Review* were closed to us. In fact, in his first memoirs, Podhoretz derided the *Public Interest* as a "company suggestion box" for capitalism. It was only when foreign policy became salient that Podhoretz became "neoconservative."

But on those divisions, individuals such as Nathan Glazer and Seymour Martin Lipset were "doves," not

I was never a member of the Communist Party and never committed espionage for the Soviet Union.

—Alger Hiss

Edwin Kuh of M.I.T.

The magazine at that time was distinctively liberal. The character changed after I resigned as co-editor because of political differences with Irving Kristol. But as I wrote him at the time, I think that friendship is more important than ideology and I prefer to continue our relationship as friends rather than fight in the magazine over ideology. I respect Kristol enormously, and we remain friends.

Mr. Gerson remarks that the early issues of the *Public Interest* reflected my views on the end of ideology: "...the idea that all policy problems could be solved technically." What a strange characterization. Curiously, it was one that was usually made by the Left in criticism of the magazine, and equally misleading. For all of us, moral and political questions were always intertwined with policy, especially as I do not accept the "fact/value" distinction.

Toward the end of his article, Mr. Gerson repeats the familiar names of neoconservatism in which he includes myself (no neoconservative) along with Norman Podhoretz, Jeane Kirkpatrick, and many others. But this is to jumble hopelessly the history of that term and the individuals identified with it. The *Public Interest*, if that is the first ex-

"hawks." In short, an effort to put these events into pigeon-holes distorts the complexity of those times and serves mythmaking, not history. In fact, the only one who probably was consistent was Irving Kristol. He was, and probably is, the one true neoconservative.

Daniel Bell

Scholar in Residence
American Academy of Arts and
Sciences
Cambridge, MA

Mark Gerson Replies:

Nowhere in my article did I imply that Mr. Bell was a Trotskyist and not a "social democrat." I wrote that Mr. Bell was a member of Alcove Number One at City College, which, as Irving Kristol wrote in *Memoirs of a Trotskyist*, was predominantly Trotskyist, and was where most of his friendships were formed. According to Mr. Kristol, Mr. Bell was a "rarity," whose "skepticism toward all our ideologies would ordinarily have disqualified him from membership in Alcove One."

Mr. Bell is quite right that Mr. Howe and Mr. Harrington criticized the Congress for Cultural Freedom. I simply made the point in my article—one that Mr. Bell does not contest—that both were members of the anti-communist Left which, as a

whole, was closely allied with the Congress and with *Commentary*.

It is true that the early *Public Interest* was liberal. Its meliorism is reflected in the articles that Mr. Bell cites and others that assume social problems can be solved through a restructuring of incentives. Despite Mr. Bell's description of my "end of ideology" thesis as "strange," the *Public Interest* clearly backed away from this view as it moved to the right. As co-editor Nathan Glazer writes in a critical essay of the early *Public Interest*, "What better example of the end of ideology, of the reign of professionalism?"

Mr. Bell objects to my labeling him as a neoconservative because the term also encompasses others with whom he disagrees. As I wrote in my article, the neocons are "such a politically diverse group" that many observers have suggested the term no longer has any meaning.

Mr. Bell objects to being called a neoconservative because the term also encompasses others with whom he disagrees.

—Mark Gerson

Yet, as George Will holds, labels do not imply ideological conformity, but instead represent "familiar clusters of ideas [that] manifest congruences and affinities that express political temperaments as well as political philosophies." In different contexts and circumstances, numerous scholars, including Seymour Martin Lipset, Robert Nisbet, Peter Steinfels, and Irving Kristol have referred to Mr. Bell as a neoconservative.

Pay-As-You-Go

Dear Sir:

In "Sooner Than You Think: The Coming Bankruptcy of Social Security" (Fall 1992) Bruce Schobel does an excellent job in drawing attention to Social Security's inadequate finances for the very long term. It is commonly thought that

in 1983 Congress decided to build up a large reserve in the Social Security trust funds for the retirement of the baby boom. This is largely a myth. In reality, Congress fixed the ailing system with a mix of spending cuts and Social Security tax increases, and did so under economic assumptions that turned out to be overly pessimistic. As a result, the Social Security program is now running larger and growing annual surpluses of \$55 billion this year, rising to \$126 billion by 2001. These surpluses are invested in Treasury bonds, which is to say they are used to help finance the budget deficit. It is a fluke that the projected accumulation in the Social Security trust funds of trillions of dollars of Treasury debt in the next 25-30 years will coincide with the aging and retirement of the baby boomers.

The Social Security system is overfunded for the short term and over-

funded for the long term. While underfunding is a more serious problem than overfunding, unnecessarily high Social Security taxes for the next 20 years will make government finances more regressive and will tend to discourage employment. The solution is to reduce Social Security taxes for the next two decades, and provide for gradual increases in Social Security tax rates thereafter. This solution has been proposed tirelessly for years by former Social Security chief actuary Robert J. Myers, a Republican, and more recently by Democratic Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Chairman of the Senate Finance Subcommittee on Social Security.

Eduard A. Lopez
Legislative Assistant
Office of Senator Daniel P.
Moynihan
Washington, DC

Government Can Be Trusted

Dear Sir:

We take exception to Bruce Schobel's argument that the Federal government is likely to default on federal obligations held in the Social Security trust funds.

Mr. Schobel says that when the Social Security trust funds shift from a cash flow surplus to a cash flow deficit in 2016, Social Security surpluses will no longer be available to partially offset a non-Social Security deficit. As a result, the government may need to find additional financing from expenditure cuts, tax increases, or more bond sales to the public, depending on the balance in the non-Social Security budget at that time.

The rising Social Security cash flow deficits projected after 2016 will certainly begin to strain the consolidated Federal budget unless the non-Social Security budget is running offsetting surpluses. However, it is misleading and irresponsible to equate the fiscal policy choices that will have to be faced then with the specter of the government defaulting on its "special obligation" bonds held in the trust funds.

Further, to state, as Schobel does, that "the (Social Security) program will not be able to meet all its obligations" at that time is unnecessarily frightening to the millions of retirees who are depending on Social Security.

The federal government has never defaulted on any outstanding federal debt, nor has it ever failed to pay monthly Social Security benefits in time. The bonds held in the trust funds, like marketable securities, are backed by the "full faith and credit" of the United States government. That promise is no less meaningful because the bulk of those trust funds' holdings are special obligations. The notion that default would be considered a viable policy option is just not plausible.

The Social Security Board of Trustees currently projects that the combined Old-Age and Survivors Insurance and Disability Insurance Trust Funds will not be exhausted until 2036. That projection is based

upon the justifiable expectation that the benefit promises embodied in the government bonds held in the Social Security trust funds will be honored totally in the future as they have been in the past.

Sidney L. Jones
Assistant Secretary for Economic
Policy
Louis D. Enoff
Acting Commissioner of Social
Security
Department of the Treasury
Washington, DC

Bonds Are Valid

Dear Sir:

Mr. Schobel and I agree the combined Social Security trust funds will become bankrupt *within* 45 years, as also stated by their board of trustees. Where we differ is that the Board of Trustees and I believe that the point of bankruptcy will be in 44 years, and Mr. Schobel believes that this will occur, in essence, in 24 years. Our opinions differ because he considers the government bonds in the trust funds to be "phantom assets" on which "phantom interest" is paid.

Not so. These bonds are as valid as any other government bonds and are part of the recorded national debt. The interest on these bonds is currently being reinvested in similar bonds—just as is done in common stocks' dividend reinvestment programs. Certainly, the Treasury will have problems providing the necessary monies 25 to 45 years from now, but it would have had exactly these same problems if the trust funds had not had these bonds, because then they would have been held privately.

Even though Mr. Schobel and I disagree as to the validity of the trust fund's investments, I thoroughly concur that immediate action on the overall problem should be taken. This is so even though its effects will not arise until some years hence. The solution is to adopt the Moynihan pay-as-you-go proposal. Then, there would be no problem as to Social Security's bankruptcy occurring in the next 75 years.

Robert J. Myers
Former-Chief Actuary
Social Security Administration
Silver Spring, MD

America Can Pay For Retirees

Dear Sir:

Mr. Schobel focuses on the year (2016) the actuaries have predicted Social Security will begin to run a cash deficit. He notes that after this date, the Treasury will have to find cash somewhere other than the "phantom" trust funds. His facts are not in dispute, but his emphasis is misplaced.

It is not the Social Security trust funds that face a financial crisis, but



the rest of the federal budget. While it is true, as Schobel says, that the Congress has the power to revoke Social Security's "budget authority," such an irresponsible act is unthinkable. The credibility of the government would be shattered.

The system will more than likely need some additional financing in the next 20 years. However, this is not an insurmountable barrier. Whatever we, the American people, decide to pay in benefits, we can finance in one of several ways: make the system pay-as-you-go (accompanied by a contingency reserve); continue to build the trust fund reserves and invest them in ways other than they are invested now; or, continue as we are today, building huge reserves and spending them on non-productive government outlays. I agree with Mr. Schobel that this is the least desirable of the three options for the long-term.

Social Security is a compact between the people of the United States and their government, and between the generations. Looking now at Social Security for the long-term allows us to have informed

debates and ultimately to make informed decisions about a program that provides income protection for all Americans.

Horace B. Deets
Executive Director
American Association of Retired
Persons
Washington, DC

Even Sooner Than You Think

Dear Sir:

I expect Mr. Schobel may be too optimistic in thinking we have until 2016 before Social Security's cash flow is negative. As the Employee Benefit Research Institute pointed out in a recent paper, "the funds are projected to show a negative balance in 2001 under pessimistic assumptions." These pessimistic assumptions are a close match to the economy today.

The key point in Mr. Schobel's article is that the government will have to find cash when it wants to draw down the trust funds.

Even if Congress honors the bonds, rather than revoking them, it must raise taxes, cut other spending, or issue new bonds to the public to get the cash to pay benefits. This is a fact, but it is certainly not the way the "surplus" is explained to the taxpayers and beneficiaries of Social Security.

Given the American political process, if Social Security taxes were lowered, we might all focus better on the decisions that will ultimately have to be made. This would require the government either to raise other taxes now, cut other spending now, or sell more bonds to the public now. This would make it clear that the federal government is at least \$60 billion worse off this year than it says it is.

Promises should be made only if they are going to be kept. Social Security and Medicare both hold the potential for a tragic breaking of promises if action is not taken soon.

The result, as Mr. Schobel implies, is that employment-based pensions, IRAs, and other personal savings will be vital for the baby boom and those who follow. The time to strengthen these programs, and to save more is now.

Mr. Schobel and *Policy Review* do

the public a service by putting forward the facts about Social Security.

Dallas L. Salisbury
President
Employee Benefit Research
Institute
Washington, DC

Bruce Schobel Replies:

No one should be surprised when government officials, looking to the past, insist that all benefit promises will be kept in the future, even though this would require the extraordinary and unprecedented redemption of \$5.6 trillion in special-issue government bonds over just 12 years. While I cannot totally rule out this possibility, it must be considered unlikely. We also need to remember that the government's

trustees the next year. Finally, if experience is more pessimistic than anticipated, it will happen gradually, over many years. In contrast, the problems associated with redeeming the funds' assets will be very sudden and enormous.

China Is a Real Threat

Dear Sir:

Ross Munro's article, "Awakening Dragon: The Real Danger In Asia from China," (Fall 1992) is a very powerful one. It is particularly important given the way that American attention has focused heavily on Japan in recent years. While Japan is a one-dimensional power that can never rival the United States across the board, China has the "weight"

growth. I am absolutely sure that Mr. Munro is right. The "Awakening Dragon" is a danger to East Asia and the whole world.

All but forgotten is the Tiananmen Square disaster of 1989 when the Chinese communists, intent on preserving their one-party dictatorship, massacred students. The seven leaders of the Standing Committee of the Politburo are dedicated to keeping political control, and do not intend to give any power to the local people. Economic growth is useful to them, but social stability is their main concern.

Mr. Munro suggests that there is at least a possible opportunity for democratic and capitalist Taiwan to promote "greater political and economic freedom on the mainland." He says "Taiwan, not America, has the unique resources" to change the hearts and minds of the Chinese people. Washington officials should make better use of their special relationship with the Republic of China on Taiwan to develop American-PRC cooperation. If an expansionist China becomes the dominant power in Asia, the United States will then have to create a military and political balance of power against China.

Ray S. Cline
Chairman

U.S. Global Strategy Council
Washington, DC

Close to two percent of the Chinese population may be confined to the *laigai* archipelago.

—Lee Edwards

inability to redeem those bonds—and the consequent failure to keep today's benefit promises—would never be described in plain language. The true situation would be obscured. Future government officials may be expected to say, "Of course, we are capable of redeeming the bonds, but redemption would not be in the best interests of future generations. Instead we will keep the trust funds at their present level forever, holding the bonds in reserve." The effect is the same: Benefit levels would need to be reduced "sooner than you think."

While I focused on the asset side of Social Security's balance sheet, some writers suggest that the program's trustees are underestimating liabilities through the use of overly optimistic actuarial assumptions. This is a difficult case to make. Most independent actuaries have found the assumptions to be reasonable. As recently as 1990, a panel of actuaries and economists appointed by the Advisory Council on Social Security suggested only minor changes in assumptions, which were largely adopted by the

(size, population, strategic viability, cultural influence) that would enable it to do so, if the current rate of economic growth were sustained for another generation or so.

I agree very much with what Mr. Munro has to say about human rights and democracy, and their relationship to trade policy. The mixture of cant and naivete that prevails on this subject is distressing.

I think that Mr. Munro dismisses too easily the possibility that the "nasty leadership succession struggle" that is probably coming will lead to a prolonged internal breakdown and a loss of economic momentum. But at the same time it is wise not to bet on such a breakdown solving the problem for us.

Owen Harries
Editor

The National Interest
Washington, DC

Create Balance of Power

Dear Sir:

Ross Munro has written a remarkable article about China's explosive pattern of economic and military

The Cold War Is Over

Dear Sir:

Mr. Munro's vision of China, as the title suggests, harkens back to the China Lobby rhetoric of the early Cold War years. He envisions a militant, mercantilist, expansionist China that threatens American interests on multiple fronts and undercuts the stability of the Asia/Pacific region as a whole.

I agree that China's modernization has been much more successful than many outsiders, still distracted by memories of the Tiananmen massacre, have realized. Indeed, many parts of China have achieved "Newly-Industrializing Economies" status. But that economic takeoff has prompted

China to proceed cooperatively with much of Asia—not just Japan and Hong Kong, but also the ASEAN countries, South Korea, and Taiwan. And those ties of trade and technology ultimately underscore, rather than undercut, Asia/Pacific prosperity and stability. China will surely be a tougher trade partner in the years ahead, but that should prompt us to strong negotiations, not some fearful posture.

It is true that China has increased its military expenditures in recent years and has purchased foreign military technology. It is also true that China has taken a more aggressive diplomatic and commercial stance over the Spratly Islands. But to extrapolate from this evidence a long-term demonic expansionist strategy on the part of the PRC greatly overstates the case. There is simply no evidence that China's troops are about to spill over her borders into neighboring terrain.

It is revealing that Mr. Munro states that "our long-term problem in Asia is China—not stable, democratic, and still quasi-pacifist Japan." It sounds as if he is looking around the landscape for a new number-one enemy. Why not China? After all, it worked once before—back in the 1950s—when we justified huge military expenditures countering Mao's "blue ants."

When it comes to internal reform, Mr. Munro believes that the coming succession battles will not bring a "change in political course" and will leave in place the current "Leninist-capitalist consensus." And the "most far-fetched scenario is that China will become democratic in the near future."

Somehow Mr. Munro misses the possibility that China will follow an intermediate path taken by many other Asian nations—growing political pluralism, prompted by rising economic standards and social change. China might well move away from its repressive post-Tiananmen politics toward an era of greater openness. Such a trend should not be dismissed because it is not fully "democratic"—it would indeed mark a significant change in political course.

Not until late in his article does Mr. Munro drop his fearsome

rhetoric and address American policy interests in a relatively balanced fashion. Ironically, after learning about this malevolent China, we are told that the United States should not become the leader of "a hostile, anti-Chinese alliance." We are also encouraged to keep up human rights pressure on China even though "any U.S. administration can bring about only a tiny,

for China may make China's foreign policy more nationalist. However, it is premature to link the words nationalist and expansionist, as though they go together as love and marriage. Historically, Chinese leaders have built walls to separate themselves from foreigners; they have not sent fleets to conquer them. They certainly have absorbed the Japanese discovery that it is

There is simply no evidence that China's troops are about to spill over her borders into neighboring terrain.

—Robert B. Oxnam

marginal improvement in Chinese political conditions." Mr. Munro's mild policy prescription seems totally unrelated to the ferocious image of China he has conveyed.

Frankly, Mr. Munro doesn't seem to know how we should cope with his Fu Manchu vision of China. Maybe that's because it exists more in his mind than in reality.

Robert B. Oxnam
President
The Asia Society
New York, NY

Vigorous Diplomacy Needed

Dear Sir:

Ross Munro is correct about the underlying structure of American-Chinese relations. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, we no longer need to pay to be able to play the China card. Our relations in East Asia are in flux.

The phrase "Leninist-capitalism" is accurate but does not portend a radically new challenge. China is freeing its economy from direct control of the state but is maintaining an authoritarian political system that guides the economy. This is basically the same approach that South Korea and Taiwan followed for decades. We have learned to cope with economically vigorous autocracies that have embryonic democratic forces. In China we have a larger challenge in a new environment, but nothing fundamentally new.

The evaporation of socialist goals

cheaper to buy resources than to conquer them, and that military threats undermine trade access.

The international environment will be very important in guiding China to a more narrow concept of nationalism. It will be very hard to end China's sales of weapons to the Mideast while we and others sell to those markets. It will be hard to dissuade China from using force as long as it is used successfully in Serbia. We are entering an era in which vigorous international diplomacy is urgently needed as a complement to a redefined United States policy.

Ben Stavis
Department of Political Science
Temple University
Philadelphia, PA

The Chinese Palm

Dear Sir:

Ross Munro is correct: China, not Japan, is America's most serious long-range challenge in Asia. As Walter Judd liked to say, China is the palm of Asia, with Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines, India, and Vietnam extending from it like so many fingers. So long as China remains under communist control, the freedom and independence of the region's other nations are at serious risk, and America's strategic interests are directly affected.

Given that China is now the greatest military power in Asia, it is

not surprising that Japanese Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa and South Korean President Roh Tae Woo have jointly declared that a continuing American presence in Asia is "indispensable."

In his generally excellent analysis, however, Mr. Munro fails to give sufficient attention to the infamous Chinese Gulag. Hongda Harry Woo and other experts estimate that at least 10 million, and as many as 21 million prisoners are being held in China's labor camp system—meaning that close to two percent of the Chinese population may be confined to the *laigai* archipelago.

In the face of such "ideological cleansing," America should pursue an aggressive foreign policy (including strict sanctions against the import of labor camp products) to help the Chinese people move from communism and militarism toward freedom and democracy. Such a policy is in our long-range interests as a Pacific power and consistent with our role as the exemplar of liberty in the free world.

Lee Edwards

President

Center for International Relations
Washington, DC

Sino-Superpower

Dear Sir:

Ross Munro's article is an accurate appraisal of a key issue that the United States Congress has failed to address properly. Few recognize that by the year 2010, or shortly thereafter, China will have emerged as one of the key superpowers in the world, economically as well as militarily. Military superiority will, in fact, come in the next five years. Furthermore, Chinese influence is not contained within the triad of the mainland, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, but extends throughout Chinese Asia.

Little attention was paid to China until the events of Tiananmen Square and since then focus has been on human rights issues. No attention was paid whatsoever to the industrial growth that has taken place in the last five years until some were alerted to the fact that there was a major balance of trade deficit and that it was expanding by leaps

and bounds. After all, why should we? China is ruled by a group of elder statesmen who often give the outward appearance of being united but, behind the scenes, each would like to become emperor. With such discord, why should the United



States consider China a threat?

First, China is one of the most rapidly growing economic powers in the world. Growth rates in the "gold coast" have ranged between 17 and 20 percent per year and overall growth of the country is in the range of ten percent. With sound management practices being put into place by private-sector Chinese corporations as well as joint venture operations, these firms are becoming more profitable than ever imagined.

A question remains as to whether economic freedom in China will lead to increased political freedom. In the long-term, the answer is yes; in the short-term, however, the answer is no. China will have several decades of autocratic rule before a new generation of educated elite comes to the helm. What is encouraging, however, is that a better-informed, moderate and progressive leadership is beginning to emerge.

Phillip D. Grub

Department of International
Business

The George Washington University
Washington, DC

China in Check

Dear Sir:

Ross Munro's article confirms his reputation for well-informed, trenchant analysis. Yet before we ring the alarm bell, we should take

note of several factors that will prohibit China from becoming a threat to Asia.

First, there are pressing domestic concerns that are likely to worsen rather than become better. The serious regional income disparities Mr. Munro mentions have exacerbated traditional frictions. Meanwhile, Deng Xiaoping's open door policy has encouraged the regions to look outward. Guangdong's economy is now closely linked with money and managerial expertise from fellow Cantonese in Hong Kong; the same can be said for Fujian's with *minnan* speakers from Taiwan. Xinjiang, and Ningxia are increasingly attracting capital from other Muslim states. With trade comes influence, weakening the provinces' dependence on Beijing, and Beijing's ability to extract compliance with its directives. One Hong Kong democracy activist who is not otherwise known for his optimism states that if Guangdong troops were ordered to march on Hong Kong they would refuse. The same lack of enthusiasm would likely characterize Fujian forces ordered to move on Taiwan.

The floating population is now over 100 million, and growing. Its hallmark is indifference to government directives, be it with regard to birth control, tax collection, or service in the military. While the amount of money being devoted to military modernization and the attention paid to training have both increased, corruption is a growing problem and will dull the edge of the military's sword. One should also note that military modernization is a lengthy process, and that China has a strong tendency to change policies abruptly.

Second, China's Asian neighbors are not without the ability to exert counterpressures. Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore have significantly upgraded their arsenals within the last year; joint exercises have become both more frequent and more sophisticated. Taiwan's purchases of American F16s and French Mirages are accompanied by the indigenous development of air-defense technology. And nothing would energize Japanese nationalism faster than a perceived

threat from China.

Mr. Munro is right on the mark in his description of the unreality in Washington with regard to China. But let's not create a threat that may not actually materialize.

June Teufel Dreyer

Department of Political Science
The University of Miami
Coral Gables, FL

CO₂, Elixir of Life

Dear Sir:

Sylvan Wittwer is right on the mark in "Flower Power: Rising Carbon Dioxide Is Great for Plants" (Fall 1992) in saying that earth's plants will benefit greatly from higher atmospheric CO₂ concentrations. But his estimate of the benefits may actually be a bit conservative.

Recently, I completed one of the most comprehensive reviews of the scientific literature ever conducted into the effects of atmospheric CO₂ enrichment on plant growth and development (Scientific Paper No. 23 of Arizona State University's Laboratory of Climatology). This review began where Bruce Kimball's review of 1983 ended and covered the past 10 years of work in this area. In it, I analyzed 1,087 individual observations of plant-growth responses to increased levels of atmospheric CO₂ contained in 342 peer-reviewed journal articles authored by 484 scientists from 28 different countries. In distilling the salient features of this wealth of scientific evidence, I found that 93 percent of the plants studied had a positive response to atmospheric CO₂ enrichment, while 5 percent exhibited no change, and only 2 percent suffered detrimental effects. On average, an atmospheric CO₂ increase of 330 ppm increased plant productivity 52 percent. Furthermore, plant productivity increased linearly with CO₂ enrichment all the way to the highest CO₂ concentration investigated (2,250 ppm), where the increase in productivity was 166 percent.

At the conclusion of this study, I scrutinized the papers that reported results for plants suffering from lack of light, water, and nutrients, as well as those exposed to aerial pollutants and high soil salinity and air

temperature, finding that the relative benefits of atmospheric CO₂ enrichment were often greater in the face of these environmental stresses than when growth conditions were ideal (Laboratory of Climatology Scientific Paper No. 24). Hence, as these empirical observations clearly demonstrate, and as Wittwer plainly states, rising CO₂ is indeed "great for plants."

Keith Idso

Botany Department
Arizona State University
Tempe, AZ

No News on CO₂

It does a great disservice to suggest the scientific community has in any way suppressed the publication of data concerning carbon dioxide fertilization.

—Mark Harmon

Dear Sir:

There is no news in Mr. Wittwer's statements about the response of plants to enhanced atmospheric carbon dioxide. Although there are experiments that confirm Mr. Wittwer's assertion that enhanced carbon dioxide concentrations improve the growth of plants and the efficiency of the use of water, the extent of this effect in nature has, so far, escaped detection despite many attempts to show it.

One would expect that if the benefits Mr. Wittwer and a few others advance so enthusiastically were real benefits to the world as a whole, we would see measurable increases in the growth of such perennial plants as trees, and that the benefit would be universal, especially after a 30 percent increase in the carbon dioxide concentration in the atmosphere in the last century. No such universal advantage has been measured, despite many efforts.

There are several reasons for this, including the fact that the growth of plants is limited by such factors as the availability of water, nutrients, light energy, temperature, and genetic facts. Longer term experi-

ments than those Mr. Wittwer is relying on show that the initial stimulations due to enhanced carbon dioxide concentrations diminish with time, and the stimulation of growth that Mr. Wittwer advances as a great benefit disappears in perennials. Paul Kramer, the physiologist from Duke University, called attention to these factors many years ago and his caution has proved to be well-founded wisdom.

Despite Mr. Wittwer's enthusiasm for his one-factor approach to the environment, a rapid warming of the earth is widely expected to have an opposite effect by making con-

tinental centers drier; expanding the arid zones of the earth; and bringing destructive changes to forests that can be expected to release additional quantities of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere from green plants and soils. That effect will, by all evidence available now, speed the warming.

G. M. Woodwell

Director
The Woods Hole Research Center
Woods Hole, MA

An Unfortunate Mistake

Dear Sir:

Sylvan H. Wittwer makes the unfortunate mistake of extrapolating directly from agricultural and horticultural situations to ecosystems. When he states that trees "love carbon dioxide, and the more they get of it, the more they love it," he assumes that native species in unmanaged (or modestly managed) ecosystems will react like agricultural and horticultural species growing under highly managed conditions where production-limiting genetic and environmental factors are minimized.

Productivity in native ecosystems

is often simultaneously limited by a number of factors, including inorganic nutrition and temperature. If a plant is strongly limited by factors other than photosynthate (sugar) supply, it is unlikely that there will be a major, long-term stimulation of productivity by elevated CO₂.

In Alaska, we found no detectable stimulation of production in native, undisturbed arctic tundra following three years of treatment at elevated atmospheric CO₂. This appeared to be due in part to genetics and environmental limitations of low temperature and low nutrient availability. Similar results were found by Professor Boyd Strain of Duke University, working with loblolly pine in the field.

Many ecologists expect to see some stimulation in production in ecosystems where there is ample nutrient, where temperatures are warm, or where water is limiting. However, in a great many ecosystems that are already limited by low temperatures or nutrient availability, there may be minimal or no stimulation of productivity from elevated CO₂. It is therefore misleading to predict an "enormous expansion in forest biomass" or that there will be "major increases in bird, fish, and mammal populations." In fact, current areas of investigation include estimating limitation of productivity to elevated CO₂, estimating negative impacts on plant species following increases in atmospheric CO₂, and determining the extent to which food quality for animals in nature may be reduced at elevated CO₂.

Walter C. Oechel
Professor of Biology
San Diego State University
San Diego, CA

Quite Misleading

Dear Sir:

Sylvan Wittwer claims that "one of the best-kept secrets in the global warming debate is that the plant life of Planet Earth would benefit greatly from a higher level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere." This is quite a dramatic way to start, but it is also quite misleading, if not actually false. It is true that controlled greenhouse and growth-chamber

studies have indicated increased CO₂ concentrations can increase plant production. This is only true, however, if other factors (moisture, temperature, mineral nutrients, and biotic interactions) are not limiting plant production. In fact, these other factors often limit plant production within the real world.



For example, in vast areas the production of terrestrial plants is largely limited by shortages of water. Reducing water loss in a desert grassland ecosystem may only marginally increase plant production. Temperature also limits terrestrial production in the polar zones. Increasing production under low light levels will have little effect if seasonal temperatures are too low—unlike the winter greenhouse studies cited by the author.

Few aquatic systems are so nutrient rich that CO₂ is limiting. It has been recently suggested that oceanic systems are limited by the amount of iron present in solution, not by the abundance of dissolved CO₂ (*Science*, January 1991). In fact, there is so much carbon dioxide already dissolved in the ocean that summer-time production does not reduce atmospheric concentrations (*Nature*, August 1992). In contrast, the amount of production in the ocean is substantial and causes a dramatic increase in atmospheric oxygen.

It is also quite misleading to suggest that limits to terrestrial plant production can be eliminated by fertilizing with elements such as nitrogen or phosphorus. First, this would be very expensive. Second, such biotic interactions as pest outbreaks may limit production. One

must also consider such abiotic disturbances as fire, which can limit the accumulation of plant mass. For example, trees can grow in much of the Midwest; however, historically fire—and currently agricultural cropping—limited the geographical extent of these larger and more-productive plants from this region. Similarly, tree lines at high elevations are not usually caused by low temperatures, but by wind and ice damage.

In examining the potential effects of climate change one must bear in mind two things. First, there is a great uncertainty about the future. The biosphere does not operate in the simplistic, additive manner that Wittwer describes. A greenhouse is one thing, the earth another. Second, although the long-term changes may be beneficial, this does not mean the transition period will be rosy. Modeling studies indicate production of terrestrial plants may increase under a warmer climate. To achieve this increased level of production, however, plant species will need to migrate, and if the climate changes as rapidly as some global-circulation models suggest, then terrestrial production will decrease during the transition period.

Finally, it does a great disservice to suggest the scientific community has in any way suppressed the publication, dissemination, or use of data concerning CO₂ fertilization. There have been numerous greenhouse, field, and model simulation studies on this subject. The jury is still out on exactly what increased carbon-dioxide concentrations will mean in the world.

Mark Harmon
Assistant Professor of Forest
Ecology
Oregon State University
Corvallis, OR

Hidden Costs

Dear Sir:

As a natural resource economist, I endorse Mr. Wittwer's point that the full ramifications of increased carbon dioxide content of the atmosphere are likely to be complex and not easily foreseeable. I also endorse his view that the advantages of

more carbon dioxide should be fully considered, as well as the costs.

Director Wittwer has accurately described some of the benefits that would flow from higher levels of carbon dioxide. In so doing, he seems to have been concerned to present a case offsetting that of more pessimistic analysts. He mentions but does not elaborate on the costs likely to be associated with higher levels of carbon dioxide. His statement is valuable and significant but it is not a full analysis of the benefits and costs of increased carbon dioxide.

Marion Clawson
Senior Fellow Emeritus
Resources for the Future
Washington, DC

Nobody Really Knows

Dear Sir:

Contrary to the suggestion in Mr. Wittwer's article that the direct effects of carbon dioxide on plants have been ignored in the global warming debate, the United States Department of Energy has for years funded extensive research in an attempt to demonstrate benefits from higher CO₂ concentrations.

Despite greenhouse studies showing increased growth rates, results in the field are much more ambiguous. Gains in the efficiency of photosynthesis and other direct effects of increased CO₂ are limited by nitrogen and phosphorus supplies in the soil. Though studies have shown increased sapling growth for trees in controlled conditions, several recent reports on tropical and temperate tree species have failed to show additional growth under elevated CO₂ conditions.

Additionally, recent tree-ring studies indicate that tree growth is not related to increasing atmospheric CO₂ concentrations, but to temperature, water, and available nutrients.

Mr. Wittwer is correct in concluding that we do not really know if there will be a positive effect upon plant growth due to increased CO₂ alone. He is also correct in noting the significance of changing climatic stresses upon plant species and crops. The most comprehensive study of the impact of higher CO₂

on agriculture took into account higher crop yields (30 percent and



more) in some regions due to the direct effects of CO₂ as well as expected climate changes. The study determined that global food production would decrease between one and seven percent with the doubling of carbon dioxide.

While CO₂ does stimulate

article on CO₂ fertilization by referring to the National Research Council report of 1983, "Changing Climate," that I chaired. We had a chapter on the effect of increasing CO₂ on crops in the U.S.. The conclusion was that, on balance, there would be no net change in productivity of essential agriculture. We agreed that there would be significant enrichment due to the increasing CO₂, but that it would be cancelled out by diminished precipitation in that part of the world.

However, while the CO₂ effect is well established, the change in precipitation is based on climate models that are much less certain and often disagree on just these regional issues. In a sense, comparing effects of increased CO₂ on tropical rain forests with that on agriculture in temperate regions is somewhat in the same category nor is it simple. It depends strongly on assigned values to the changes in

Tree growth is not related to increasing atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations, but to temperature, water, and available nutrients.

—Daniel Lashof and Andrew Gettelman

photosynthesis under ideal conditions, there is great doubt that benefits can be realized in the field. And when the impact of climate change associated with higher carbon dioxide is taken into account it becomes clear that severe biological impoverishment is the most likely outcome of the global experiment that is currently underway.

Daniel Lashof
Senior Scientist
Andrew Gettelman
Research Associate
National Resources Defense
Council
Washington, DC

CO₂ Effect Is Well Established

Dear Sir:

I respond to Sylvan H. Wittwer's

each. Also, a similarity exists in that current estimates of effects on tropical forests are fragile at best and are subject to doubt even as to the signs whereas, again, the agricultural effects, in gross, would seem to be quite positive.

William A. Nierenberg
Director Emeritus
Scripps Institute of Oceanography
La Jolla, CA

Sylvan Wittwer Replies:

The primary charge of my critics is that the fertilizing effects of carbon dioxide are only on a few agricultural crops grown for very short periods in greenhouses. Further, that the growth-promoting effects are primarily on seedlings, are not sustainable, and only occur when water and mineral nutrients are seldom limiting. These erroneous con-

cepts have arisen primarily from a single report (Kramer, *Bio Science*, 31:29-32), which appeared over a decade ago. The paper presents no new data, adapts and reinterprets the results of other selected reports, and is admittedly speculative.

Hundreds of laboratory, controlled environment, and top free-air experiments now verify the early greenhouse observations. Increased CO₂ in the atmosphere actually reduces the impacts of moisture deficiencies and salinity toxicity, and may even increase photosynthesis in drought-stricken plants. Cotton, for example, has been grown in open top-free air experiments for five continuous seasons, with both optimal and limiting levels of water and nitrogen. Evidence to date shows that for all experimental treatments, cotton yields and plant dry weights were increased significantly by continuous CO₂ enrichment. Even more striking results have been obtained with citrus and other tree species.

As for forests, which carry on two-thirds of global photosynthesis, there has been a 25-30 percent in-

crease in the growing stock of forests in Northern Europe between 1971 and 1990, which may be attributed to a nine percent increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide. There has also been a phenomenal expansion of brushlands at the expense of grasslands in the North American Southwest. It has been concluded that some fraction—perhaps as

much as 10 to 12 percent—of the increased global agricultural



productivity during the past 100 years could have resulted from the effects of CO₂ enhancement.

The promotive effects of CO₂ on root growth and biological nitrogen fixation on food production in developing countries may be even more pronounced than in the developed world because of the prevalence of drought, salinity

The promotive effects of carbon dioxide on food production in developing countries may be even more pronounced than in the developed world.

—Sylvan Wittwer

crease in the growing stock of forests in Northern Europe between 1971 and 1990, which may be attributed to a nine percent increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide. There has also been a phenomenal expansion of brushlands at the expense of grasslands in the North American Southwest. It has been concluded that some fraction—perhaps as

problems, and nitrogen fertilizer shortages.

Finally, the role of the rising level of atmospheric carbon dioxide in the life of the whole biosphere deserves much more attention that it has heretofore received. There is an urgent need for whole-system experimental approaches to global-change research.

Real-World Data

Dear Sir:

After reading the letter (Summer 1992) challenging the utility of the Stedman device as described in "Dirty Driving: Donald Stedman and the EPA's Sins of Emission" (Spring, 1992), perhaps a state perspective is in order.

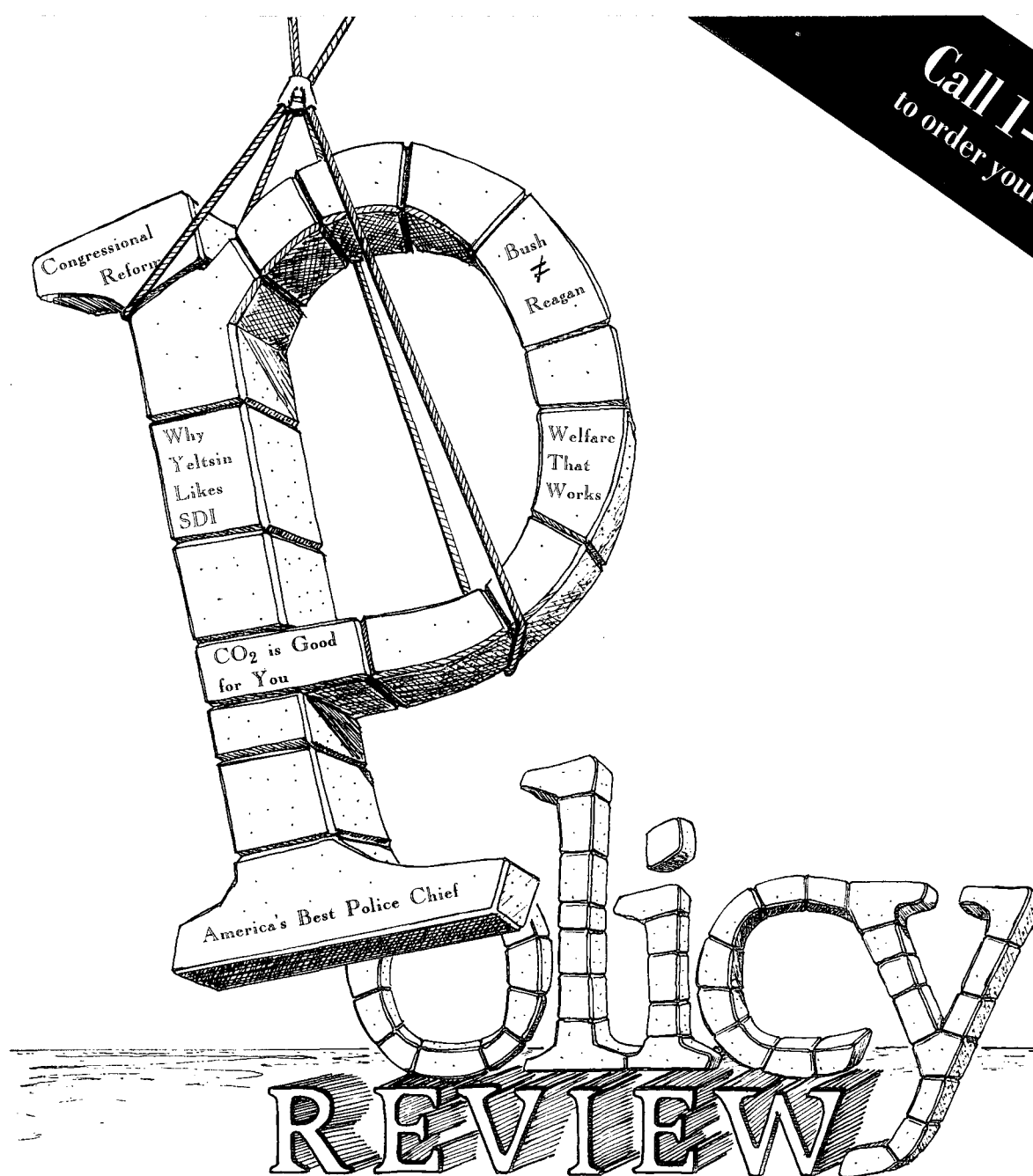
In California, our "Smog Check" automobile program is the centerpiece of our air pollution control strategy. Data show that a single "gross polluting" car can emit as much as two tons of carbon monoxide every year. For both environmental and economic reasons, we must identify these cars and assure their repair. Remote sensing devices present great potential for this purpose and we should begin putting them to the test.

Remote sensors also hold promise to make certain that real-world data in mobile-source emissions are provided. Recent studies suggest that the emissions inventories, based on computer modeling, both in California and nationally, underestimate key pollutants. The data retrieved from remote sensors could be used to re-evaluate and correct these inventories. More accurate inventory would allow air pollution control agencies to plan more effective clean-air strategies; and may provide greater flexibility in achieving clean-air goals.

The remote sensing issue has for too long led to argument based upon theoretical possibilities. Now is the time to begin real-world testing and application of these devices, rather than questioning them incessantly. We hope that California will provide an important laboratory for this effort.

James M. Strock
Secretary for Environmental
Protection
California EPA
Sacramento, CA

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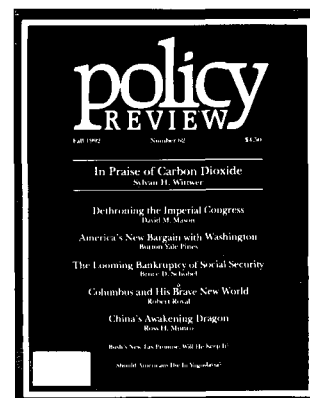
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policy REVIEW

Many freshmen campaigned on the “change” platform, but few offered much detail. Will the new class really depart from the careerist status quo? Their backgrounds point to a reason for doubt. Even more than returning incumbents, the freshmen of 1992 appear to be professional politicians.

John J. Pitney Jr.

Going for the Silver:

*Why the GOP Placed Second in the
Race for Congress*