

# A conspiracy of morons: the CFR Project 1980s

For four-odd years, beginning in mid-1975, an unusual ferment of activities has been dominating New York's Harold Pratt House, the Council on Foreign Relations' elegant offices at 58 East 68th Street. A group of over 300 public personalities met frequently, held seminars, presented reports, analyzed computer printouts, exchanged correspondence, led special study groups, stayed up late in mahogany-lined libraries, and spinned out plots between cigars and brandy. As a result of this activity, countless policy memos, strategic projections, implementation papers, etc. were written and passed hands.

In January of 1977, upon the inauguration of President Carter, a rupture occurred in this distinguished group's activities—all its leaders transferred to Washington, D.C. to become cabinet members of the Carter Administration. These leaders were Cyrus R. Vance, chairman of the CFR's "Working Group on Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction"; Leslie Gelb, chairman of the "Working Group on Armed Conflict"; W. Michael Blumenthal, head of the Central Coordinating Group for Project 1980s; Zbigniew Brzezinski, member of the Project's governing body, the Committee on Studies. Richard Cooper, Marshall Shulman, and others were included among those who headed for Washington where implementation of their Project would be carried out.

After the departure of the Project's leaders to Washington, the group's work shifted gear and went into the write-up and public relations phase: the policy formulations and strategic concepts which had already been agreed upon were now distributed among various academics who were instructed to put them in writing in some presentable, sugar-coated form. By late last year, this phase was concluded and the manuscripts were taken to the publishers. As Project 1980s is winding down, McGraw Hill is currently putting into circulation 30-odd volumes of policy essays.

The publication of these 30 volumes is itself a significant ingredient of the conspiracy. Why publish

the secrets of the conspiracy? As Richard H. Ullman, the chairman of the Project Coordinating Group, explains in the foreword which accompanies each of the 30 volumes, "The published products of the Project are aimed at a broad readership, including policy makers and potential policy makers and those who would influence the policy making process."

For citizens of our nations, as well as for Western European and other government leaders, the task of understanding why the CFR conspirators are attempting now to recruit the "policy making public" to their perspective, is now a matter of life and death. It is also the only available path for finally understanding how American politics really works, from the Theodore Roosevelt administration to date. Only two rival institutions in American political life, the U.S. Labor Party and the forces arrayed around the CFR, understand what must now be understood by our rank-and-file citizens and by government leaders among the nations of our allies: that politics in the USA, over and above anything else, is primarily a war of ideas. The CFR is now publishing because it must win over to its side people willing to put its program to work.

But the CFR crowd has a problem—though it has the power to install its people in positions of public authority and power, although it can dominate the composition of every administration since the assassination of President McKinley, it does not possess ideas that would be sufficiently powerful to win over and motivate people. The CFR is stupid.

In fact, the element of stupidity in the CFR conspiracy is critical. It is in fact so critical that under appropriate circumstances in political analysis, one must justifiably assume that the presence of stupidity, ipso facto, constitutes sufficient evidence to prove the presence of conspiracy.

This matter of conspiracy versus stupidity has become a celebrated debate-issue especially during the Carter Administration. An example: during last year, U.S. Labor Party officers both in this country and in

## The 1980s books

*When completed, the 1980s Project plans to release 30 books discussing regional areas of the world and such issues as "resource management, human rights, population studies, and relations between the developing and developed societies." The volumes released to date include the following:*

**Africa in the 1980s: A Continent in Crisis**, studies by Colin Legum, I. William Zartman, and by Steven Langdon and Lynn K. Mytelka

**Enhancing Global Human Rights**, studies by Jorge I. Dominguez, Nigel S. Rodley, Bryce Wood, and Richard Falk

**Oil Politics in the 1980s: Patterns of International Cooperation** by Øystein Noreng

**Six Billion People: Demographic Dilemmas and World Politics**, studies by Georges Tapinos and Phyllis T. Piotrow

**The Middle East in the Coming Decade: From Wellhead to Well-being?** studies by John Waterbury and Ragaei El Mallakh

**Reducing Global Inequities**, studies by W. Howard Wiggins and Gunnar Adler-Karlsson

**Rich and Poor Nations in the World Economy**, studies by Albert Fishlow, Carlos F. Diaz-Alejandro, Richard R. Fagen, and Roger D. Hansen

**Diversity and Development in Southeast Asia: The Coming Decade**, studies by Guy J. Pauker, Frank H. Golay, and Cynthia H. Enloe

**Nuclear Weapons and World Politics: Alternatives for the Future**, studies by David C. Gompert, Michael Mandelbaum, Richard L. Garwin, and John H. Barton

**China's Future: Foreign Policy and Economic Development in the Post-Mao Era**, studies by Allen S. Whiting and Robert F. Dernberger

**Alternatives to Monetary Disorder**, studies by Fred Hirsch and Michael W. Doyle and Edward L. Morse

**Nuclear Proliferation: Motivations, Capabilities, and Strategies for Control**, studies by Ted Greenwood, Harold A. Feiveson, and Theodore B. Taylor

**International Disaster Relief: Toward a Responsive System** by Stephen Green

**Controlling Future Arms Trade**, studies by Anne Hessing Cahn and Joseph J. Kruzal, Peter M. Dawkins, and Jacques Huntzinger

Europe held numerous exchanges with various public personalities of considerable experience and intelligence in public affairs, to discuss why Treasury Secretary W. Michael Blumenthal was engaged in policies of overt sabotage of the U.S. dollar. Our officers, at the time, correctly argued that Secretary Blumenthal's actions were resulting from his commitments to the CFR conspiracy to which he belonged. But, virtually all of our well-meaning interlocutors at the time vigorously objected that "we cannot accept your conspiracy theory, because we can just as justifiably attribute Blumenthal's actions to stupidity."

The same argument was repeated, and is still being repeated to this day with respect to virtually every policy aspect of the Carter Administration. Regarding Camp David, nuclear energy, monetary policy, North-

South relations, disarmament, the Panama Canal, China, etc., etc., we say that the Carter Administration is controlled by a conspiracy, our well-meaning allies and interlocutors insist that it is controlled by stupidity.

The point is this: if one observes that every single position of power in the United States government is held by a stupid person, one must ineluctably conclude that only a powerful conspiracy could arrange to have all these idiots in power at the same time. The uniform dominance of stupidity in government proves the existence of conspiracy because idiots do not have the intellectual resources to propel themselves to positions of power.

So, we must now answer three questions. What is the power of the conspiracy behind the idiots, what are the strategic objectives of the conspiracy, and how are

objectives translated into relations among states? The 1980s Project of the CFR supplies the answer to all these questions.

## The strategic objectives of the 1980s Project

Contrary to what a naive political observer would expect, the CFR's Project 1980s does not proceed from the assumption that the main strategic conflict in the world is "socialism versus capitalism" or "East versus West," or "USSR versus USA." As Richard H. Ullman, chairman of the Project Coordinating Group, puts it, "The political and economic relations between rich and poor countries promise to remain central issues on the international agenda for the indefinite future. The 1980s Project has devoted considerable attention to the likely and desirable evolution of these relations ... 'North-South' issues between rich and poor societies infuse most of the Project's work."

According to the authors of the Project, the main political threat from the "South" is the potential for an alliance between "Hamiltonian" and "Marxian" political tendencies against the British "liberal" school of thought. This threat, also according to the CFR, emerged in the period from April 1974, when the United Nations General Assembly passed its now famous "New World Economic Order" Resolution and September 1974 when the United Nations' Conference on Population in Bucharest rejected the Malthusian approach to population problems.

It was from approximately that time onward that the CFR went to work to launch its 1980s Project. The result of that project is a set of succinctly presented policies for countering the "Hamiltonian" prodevelopment thrust of the developing world. In summary form, the CFR strategy consists of the following immediate objectives: (1) Impose a worldwide regime of economic "controlled disintegration"; (2) Impose throughout the Third World the "Cambodia model" of ruralization and destruction of the cities; (3) Restore an old-style colonial world through the doctrine of "limited sovereignty"; (4) Form an alliance between China and the "West" in order to implement this perspective in the Third World; (5) Force the USSR to choose between (a) a treaty agreement to limit the growth of science and technology or (b) general thermonuclear war; (6) Develop a series of "alternate paths" for arriving at these specified objectives; (7) Conduct United States foreign policy for the purpose of compelling all other nations to choose among these "alternate paths."

The most succinct presentation of the CFR's concerns is presented by the late Fred Hirsch, editor of the London *Economist* in his book *Alternatives to Monetary Disorder*, from which we shall quote extensively:

"A common thread that runs through diagnosis of current trends in the international economy is the theme of increasing politicization. Economic matters that were once dealt with at a technical level or left entirely to the outcome of market forces are increasingly the subject of international diplomacy. The leading economic powers of the noncommunist world have institutionalized the economic summit conference. An almost continuous series of conferences has brought together representatives of the developed countries, the less developed countries, the oil-exporting countries to discuss the problems of energy supply, raw materials, economic development, and international finance. These matters have hitherto been dealt with independently and in low key. It is now the overt aim of the developing world to link these issues. Beyond this, by elevating decisions to the highest political level, developing nations hope to substitute politicization for what they see as tacit acceptance of the status quo as it manifests itself through the operation of market forces and technical management.

"The developing world, as challenger of today's balance and structure of political and economic power, sees increasing the explicit politicization of the international economy as an opportunity to forge a new international economic order more favorable to its interests. By contrast, in the view that dominates both governmental attitudes and the main thrust of analytical discussion in the developed world, the focus is on the dangers of increased political friction and economic disruption that would result from the substitution of political decisions for market or technical influences. Western governments see politicization as a threat to both economic prosperity and political harmony. In their opinion, the containment and reversal of the trend toward increasing politicization are among the most urgent international problems of the next decade."

Following this definition of "the most urgent international problem of the next decade," the CFR author, searching to find the most efficient way for marshalling forces against the developing world, is compelled to make a strategic admission about political economy which, up until now, was only presented in the publications of the U.S. Labor Party. He asserts that the central conflict in economic theory is between the American System (Alexander Hamilton, Friedrich List, et al.) and the British (liberal) System of Adam Smith, Ricardo, et al.:

"Politicization (of economic issues) ... can be evaluated differently, according to the perspective from which (it is) viewed. Mainstream liberal thought—prevalent in the United States and most of the Western world—traditionally regards the politicization of economic issues as both an inefficient way to create and allocate wealth and a potentially destructive influence on harmonious relationships, both in domestic affairs

## U.S. Report: Who's behind the project

*Drafts of the initial set of 1980s Project studies evolved out of a series of 10 Working Groups that met during 1975-76 to discuss major international issues. Along with the Committee on Studies of the CFR's Board of Directors, which acted as the oversight body of the Project, and the 1980s Project Coordinating Group, which acted as an advisory board, these are the individuals responsible for the megadisaster scenarios spelled out in the volume series. Many of the individuals listed here subsequently took these ideas into the Carter Administration. The major notable addition to the list of conspirators since 1976 is Henry A. Kissinger, who is now a member of the Committee on Studies.*

### Chairmen of the Working Groups

Cyrus R. Vance  
Leslie H. Gelb  
Roger Fisher  
Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh  
Joseph S. Nye, Jr.

Harold Van B. Cleveland  
Lawrence C. McQuade  
William Diebold, Jr.  
Eugene B. Skolnikoff  
Miriam Camps

### Committee on Studies (1975-76)

W. Michael Blumenthal  
Zbigniew Brzezinski  
Robert A. Charpie  
Richard N. Cooper  
Walter J. Levy

James A. Perkins  
Joseph S. Nye, Jr.  
Robert V. Roosa  
Carroll L. Wilson

### Coordinating Group, 1980s Project (1975-76)

W. Michael Blumenthal  
Richard N. Cooper  
Carlos R. Diaz-Alejandro  
Richard A. Falk  
Edward K. Hamilton  
Stanley Hoffman  
Samuel P. Huntington  
Gordon J. MacDonald  
Bruce K. MacLaury

Bayless Manning  
Theodore R. Marmor  
Ali Mazrui  
Joseph S. Nye, Jr.  
Michael O'Neill  
Marshall D. Shulman  
Stephen Stamas  
Fritz Stern  
Allen S. Whiting

and among nations. It therefore ought to be minimized....

"Another normative approach that now has strong appeal in the developing world has its intellectual roots in *Marxist* and in *neo-mercantilist* thought. ... The pervasiveness of these perceptions helps to explain the remarkable unity of the less developed countries in their demands for a new international economic order.

"These impediments encountered by the liberal ideal are not surprising to persons in the less developed world and also in some developed states whose perspectives are Marxist or mercantilist. Politicization to them means an open challenging on political relationships previously only implicit in economic

activities. The analytical basis of this challenge lies in the political roles embodied in economic relations, which are in principle twofold. First, economic exchange can always be used as a tool of political power through boycotts, bribery, and manipulation of trade incentives. Second, economic relationships can operate on a more fundamental level, shaping the political economic foundations of a weaker, less developed economy through the opportunity offered to it in the form of trade and finance. The weaker country in an economic relationship, like a weaker class, then becomes not just a group of assorted individuals but a particularized, isolated, and dependent participant in the world economy—e.g., a single crop exporter, an

economy split into largely self-contained export and domestic sectors, or a 'hewer of wood.' Mercantilists see nations, as Marxists see classes, becoming alienated in the process of production and exchange.

"These normative nationalist concerns are far from new; they were eloquently addressed by Hamilton in his *Report on Manufacturers* of 1790, in which he expressed the opposition of American nationalists to their country's assuming the role of a raw materials exporter to Britain. Nationalists feared and opposed two aspects of this role: the tying of American economic development to the British economy and the growing dependence on Britain for goods vital to national defense. Friedrich List, inspired by Hamilton's observations of American trade policy, outlined in *American Political Economy* what he saw as the proper object for a developing country's commercial policy:

"This object is not to gain matter, in exchanging matter for matter, as it is in individual and liberal economy, and particularly in the trade of the merchant. But it is to gain *productive and political power* by means of exchange with other nations; or to prevent the depression of productive and political power, by restricting that exchange.'

"... These Marxian doctrines are plainly evident in the development strategies of the Second World of Russia, Eastern Europe and China. And in the First World, mercantilism inspired de Gaulle's challenge to the dominance of the dollar. Both these strands of thought find place in the developmental programs and campaigns of Third World leaders in the postwar world."

Despite the lies on matters of fact and sleights of hand in matters of theory, the London-controlled crowd at the Council on Foreign Relations has finally been forced to present the fundamental matter clearly and succinctly: the fundamental issue of war and peace during the present period is whether Hamiltonian economics, the American System, will prevail in the world or not. The question of "Marxism" in economic theory is a moot one. As the CFR and author Fred Hirsch well know, what is salvageable in Marxian economics is the so-called "labor theory of value," that is, the central scientific concept presented by Alexander Hamilton to the United States Congress in 1790. That which is unsalvageable in Marxian theory is not an economic concept, but the concept of class struggle as a method of historical interpretation, as it was misused by certain dubious, self-proclaimed "followers" of Marx.

In short, the positive contribution of Karl Marx is properly subsumed under the historical progress of humanist Neoplatonic science of which both Marx and Hamilton are parts. The CFR, by identifying the threat of a "Marxian-Hamiltonian" alliance in the "Second"

and "Third" world, is in fact revealing that the immediate political task in world affairs today is the joining of hands of the historical Neoplatonic humanist elites which, in the last 60 or so years have found themselves torn apart and contained within the confines of the artificial division between East and West.

From the standpoint of strategic priorities, the gamemasters behind the CFR understand that those humanist-Neoplatonic elites located in the "West," like "de Gaulle," "Adenauer," American nationalism and the Hamiltonian tendency, represent a more immediate threat to British "liberalism" than the humanist elites within the "East." The humanist elites in the East become a major threat at the point when a strategic humanist-Neoplatonic alliance between East and West comes together to work for the joint purpose of Third World development.

How does the CFR's 1980s Project plan to counter this strategic threat during the current period? Fred Hirsch spells out the answer:

"A degree of *controlled disintegration* in the world economy is a legitimate objective for the 1980s and may be the most realistic one for a moderate international economic order. A central normative problem for the international economic order in the years ahead is how to ensure that the disintegration indeed occurs in a controlled way and does not rather spiral into damaging restrictionism.

"The problem therefore is not to minimize politicization in the process sense of political intervention in market outcomes; it is rather to create a framework capable of containing the increased level of such politicization that emerges naturally from the changed balance of forces in both domestic economies and the international system. The function of the loosened international economic order would be to provide such a framework by setting bounds to arbitrary national action and thereby containing the tendencies toward piecemeal unilateral action and bilateral bargaining that may ultimately be detrimental to the interests of all parties concerned."

Fred Hirsch's book quoted above is perhaps the most compelling proof that the Carter Administration has throughout its tenure acted exclusively on the basis of the guidelines of the CFR's 1980s Project. Controlled disintegration is its specific international policy. Its sabotage of Giscard's and Schmidt's European Monetary System has proceeded from this standpoint; its sabotage of the GATT negotiations similarly; its policy toward Mexico, Turkey, Iran, and the Middle East also. The purpose of the "China card" is "controlled disintegration." And this is the meaning of Zbigniew Brzezinski's concept of a "multipolar world."

—Criton Zoakos