

Harold Brown: Portrait of a Utopian Technocrat

"When a pessimist is asked how he evaluates an existing situation, he says that it is very bad but no doubt will become even worse; whereas an optimist, when asked the same question, says that the situation is so terrible that it could not get any worse. I think Dr. Brown's optimism is precisely of the kind to which I have just referred."

—Statement of Dr. Sadovski, Soviet representative to the Geneva Conference of Experts on nuclear testing, in response to the testimony of Dr. Harold Brown.

The selection of Trilateral Commission member Dr. Harold Brown as Secretary of Defense in the Carter cabinet is completely consistent with the military planning involved in putting the United States on a collision course for nuclear war with the Soviet Union. Brown's inexperience in strategic policy making, in combination with an avowedly "utopian" outlook on military matters in general, are already evident in his proposals for a reorganized Pentagon and defense budget which have been surfacing in the press this last week.

To begin with, the stage is already set for a military buildup, discarding the Carter campaign promise of cutting the defense budget by \$5 to \$7 billion. In an interview this week in the *Los Angeles Times*, of which Brown is a director, Brown let the truth be known about the Soviet civil defense system, saying that the size of this aspect alone of the Soviet buildup would probably mean leaving the fiscal 1978 defense budget at its present level or raising it. Carter press secretary Jody Powell backed up Dr. Brown in saying that he "cannot recall Mr. Carter ever promising to cut the defense budget" during the campaign. Brown stressed that any cuts which might be made in military expenditure would come in the area of personnel cost reductions — either the elimination and rationalization of forces, or pay reductions, which the *New York Times* floated this week, may involve the return to a draft army.

Dr. Brown's previous dealings with military affairs indicate the broader reasons for this push for war which a mere increase in the size of the defense budget cannot serve to indicate in itself. Ever since his initial affiliations with the Lawrence Livermore weapons laboratory in 1952, where he was a protege of Rockefeller family scientist Edward Teller, Brown has adhered to the "utopian" notion that warfare is made up of numbers and mechanics; that technicians and managers, not generals, are needed to run the military. Nominally this utopian doctrine has been opposed by a "traditionalist" one and has increasingly become centered on the one-

sided development of miracle weapons, or "wunderwaffen" as they were called in Germany during World War II. The utopian premise is based on the false conception of technological fetishism in warfare, leaving aside the traditional notions of planned strategy and tactics based on human mentation.

Brown studied the ins and outs of weapons systems, especially missiles and thermonuclear bombs, while at Lawrence Livermore. In 1958 he represented the U.S. as the technical expert at the Geneva Conference of Experts from which the above quote is taken. The reasons for the cynical comments by the Soviet representative are the absurd conditions which Brown in particular put on the seismic monitoring apparatus which would be needed to surveil underground tests, Brown saying that a system of 200 monitoring stations would have to be set up inside the Soviet Union in order to be effective. As Edward Teller's handpicked representative to the talks (Teller was barred from attending because of his rabid political views), Brown and his colleagues were given instructions to keep the talks "technical" and not to even entertain any Soviet proposals which aimed at a political solution to the nuclear testing problem. Publicity of the Brown testimony plus subsequent congressional hearings on the subject were aimed at whipping up hysteria over Eisenhower's self imposed unilateral testing ban to break the stalled talks.

The Kennedy Years

Brown was brought into the Pentagon in 1961, as one of Robert McNamara's "whiz-kids," and given the job of Director of Defense Research and Engineering. Unlike the policies of the present DDR and E, Malcom Currie, (see NSIPS Dec. 20, 1976) the weapons development policy under Brown proceeded from a standpoint of gadgetry and novel mechanical solutions, the effect of which led to 1) some of the biggest military boondoggles of the century, and 2) the weapons development policies which were to become standard during the Vietnam war — the nuts and bolts of the genocide business. Under the Kennedy administration, and directly under Brown, military R and D work suffered its worst regression since before World War II. Aside from the NASA program, there was no advanced research taking place at all; the approach to weapons became a single orientation to specific weapons program rather than a Currie-oriented broader commitment to theoretical groundwork of which subsequent military applications are a mere predicate.

A good case example is the FB-111 fighter bomber, a project which Brown followed through during his subse-

quent tenure as Secretary of the Air Force. The FB-111 was originally conceived of as a miracle solution to the entire spectrum of fighting aircraft missions; it would be a fighter, bomber, carrier plane, etc. Engineering problems caused the addition of an extra jet engine to the original design, an addition which, combined with a faulty theoretical framework to begin with, subsequently caused the extra vibration which caused several of the first planes to crash. This engineering boondoggle, which was later rammed through the appropriate channels by none other than current Secretary of State designee Cyrus Vance over many opposing voices, had the distinction of being the only major piece of military hardware to have ample funds voted for it by the Congress, only to be later rejected by the Pentagon.

As Secretary of the Air Force in the Johnson Administration, Brown was a public advocate, along with his top general Curtis LeMay, of "bombing Hanoi back into the Stone Age." This position, however, was simply consistent with long standing Air Force policy on the question, a policy which Brown gleefully went along with. Brown had no authority whatsoever to make policy on the question of battle plans in Vietnam. He is mostly remembered during this period for his gruesome numbers briefings on battle casualties.

The central point to be made about Brown's abilities in a cabinet can be seen in this context, and has a particularly important meaning for his present role. Given the well planned sociology of the Carter cabinet, the advent of any crisis situation, particularly one that is engineered, will facilitate the central control of policy through people like Brzezinski and Schlesinger. To take

the cabinet as a whole and determine how it will function as a body predetermines the role which someone like Brown will play. He is highly touted as a manager, much like McNamara was, but brings no experience under fire nor any shred of policy making experience to the office.

For the past several years Brown, as president of the California Institute of Technology, has been involved in a Ford and Rockefeller Foundation funded arms control seminar, a project sponsored by the Rand Corporation and the California Institute of Technology. While this supposedly has given Brown the title of an "arms control advocate" and is mentioned as the reason he was picked for the Defense post over Schlesinger, nothing could be further from the truth. Without the context of an expanding economy and economic treaty agreements, arms control is merely an alternative way of urging your opponent to lay down his weapons. Strictly military agreements have been shown to be unworkable not through any human frailty or abstention, but because the continuing economic and political problems which determine military buildups go unsolved. Brown is an "arms control advocate" only in this context.

Harold Brown will not be running the Pentagon. The Brookings Institution and the Committee on the Present Danger have already drafted the ground rules for what the defense posture of the U.S. will be. With slight differences in the scope of the U.S. sphere of influence, both bodies agree that the U.S. must ready itself for a "short, intense war" against the Soviets in Europe. Brown's profiled role will be to implement these plans in adequate technocratic fashion.