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Trilateralists to Abound In Carter's White House

Catch 22 for Women But What Are They?

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The women were angry as they looked back on golden campaign promises and then saw the long list of white male Cabinet and other high-ranking appointments.

So a delegation of leading Democratic women, who had worked hard to get Jimmy Carter elected President, went to see him and his close adviser, Charles Kirbo. They heard a Catch 22 story.

Carter told them his problem was that he had to pick from the most "experienced" for the highest level jobs. By experience he meant the kind of traditional, top-ranking administrative experience most women didn't have—because they'd been excluded from those jobs.

Mary Anne Krupsak, lieutenant governor of New York, responded in kind. Using that criteria, she said, Carter—the Georgia outsider—would never have been picked for Vice President and "probably not the Cabinet."

There was some truth to that, Carter allowed. He assured the women that he would "build a base" of women assistant secretaries and deputy secretaries from which to pick Cabinet members in future administrations.

There are many women and some

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If you like conspiracy theories about secret plots to take over the world, you are going to love the administration of President-elect Jimmy Carter.

Right-wingers are going bananas over it. So are left-wingers. It looks to them like the apocalyptic piece of evidence that fits every wacky puzzle, the missing link in every weird scenario. Sound the alarm: the Trilateralists are coming! Good grief, the Trilateralists are taking over the government!

Trilateralists are not three-sided people. They are members of a private, though not secret, international organization put together by the wealthy banker, David Rockefeller, to stimulate the establishment dialogue between Western Europe, Japan and the United States.

The Trilateral Commission holds meetings every nine months or so on one continent or another to discuss international problems. It hires various professors to write prolix reports with epochal titles. "The Crisis of International Cooperation" and "Towards a Renovated World Monetary System" and "A New Regime for the Oceans" and stuff like that. Most of

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these reports read like a big yawn, unless you are a freak for "global cooperation" rhetoric.

But here is the unsettling thing about the Trilateral Commission. The President-elect is a member. So is Vice-President-elect Walter F. Mondale. So are the new Secretaries of State, Defense and Treasury, Cyrus R. Vance, Harold Brown and W. Michael Blumenthal. So is Zbigniew Brzezinski, who is a former Trilateral director. Carter's national security adviser, also a bunch of others who will make foreign policy for America in the next four years.

At last count, 13 Trilateralists had gone into top positions in the administration, not to mention six other Trilateralists who are established as policy advisers, some of whom may also get jobs. This is extraordinary when you consider that the Trilateral Commission only has about 65 American members.

For the conspiracy chartists, it all fits. Militant political groups like the U.S. Labor Party have been predicting for months that Carter was hand-picked by Trilateral gnomes to deliver Rockefeller-dominated world fascist government, not to mention nuclear holocaust. On the far right, the John Birch Society substitutes Communist for fascist, but comes up with a similar script, involving the same villains.

In the muddled middle ranges of opinion, the Trilateral connections seem a lot less spooky, but still significant. Its members are not drafting secret blueprints for running the world, but they are defining the perceptions that may dominate U.S. foreign policy in the next era, an amorphous process of "consensus building" which always seems to be in the hands of the same important folks.

In the simplest terms, the Trilateral Commission is an establishment booster club, a floating seminar for business and academic and political leaders. "These people are a bunch of very sophisticated Rotarians," said one Trilateralist, a foreign-policy scholar. "These are booster types, forward-looking businessmen, hopeful about the world."

On a deeper level, the Trilateral Commission is an effort to re-establish consensus in the American foreign-policy community, where even the harmony of that small club was shattered by Vietnam.

The new outlook, enunciated by Brzezinski, does not shut down the Cold War, but it directs our thinking to a second front—the demands for economic justice from the poor and developing nations, the Third World's capacity for disrupting the world, not to mention the advanced industrial economies.

In a sense, the established thinkers are playing catch-up ball, trying to un-

derstand a wide range of world problems which they once kissed off as secondary to the struggle with the Communist superpowers.

In any case, it is the Carter connection which insures that the Trilateral Commission will be important to history, not the other way around.

"If Carter had never been elected," said one politician who serves on the commission, "you'd never have heard of the Trilateral Commission again. It probably would have disappeared in the depths of the ocean, like everything else like this."

Freelance critic Roger Morris of the New Republic suggests that, just as the Harvard professor became the symbolic shorthand used to describe the Kennedy administration, the Rockefeller-Trilateral connection may become the equivalent image for Carter's, displacing the bucolic charm of South Georgia with a more worldly aura of high finance and international business.

At the very least, Carter's heavy reliance on the Trilateral membership list demonstrates what has long been true—that U.S. foreign policy is shaped by a very exclusive circle of people. This is not going to change under Carter, campaign rhetoric to the contrary notwithstanding.

The Trilateralists were picked originally by David Rockefeller, aided by Brzezinski and Rockefeller's foreign-policy assistant, George Franklin, longtime executive director of the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR). The organization has all the interlocking features which inspire the conspiracy theorizers—an overlap with the CFR and the Bilderberg Society, that Atlantic organization of movers and shakers which was tarnished somewhat when its founder, Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands, was exposed as a bagman for corporate arms bribery.

The American membership, which is said to be somewhat more establishment-heavy than the European section, mixes global thinkers (Harvard, MIT, Caltech, Brookings Institution and others) with multinational business executives (Exxon, Chase Manhattan Bank, Coca-Cola, Texas Instruments, Sears Roebuck, et al). There is a sprinkling from labor (AFL-CIO, United Auto Workers, the Steelworkers) and the civic sector (the League of Women Voters).

The business sector with the best representation, by far, is banking, followed closely by the news media (CBS, Time magazine, columnist Carl Rowan, The Chicago Sun-Times, plus directors from The New York Times and the Los Angeles Times). The media presence has an obvious importance: a consensus is a consensus in this realm only if the public knows about it.

The Trilateral Commission is not secretive about its doings, though it is not completely open, either. The press

is always informed about its major meetings; selected reporters are even invited to sit in on them. But the discussions are private and off-the-record, so the reporters may quote statements from the meetings, but not who made them.

The notion that David Rockefeller is personally picking up the tab for all this is wrong, too. Rockefeller has made a "token" donation personally, according to the commission, but, most of the money comes from tax-exempt foundations, Ford, the Rockefeller Brothers, the Lilly Endowment, the German Marshall Fund, plus smaller gifts from corporations, Time, Wells-Fargo and Texas Instruments, among others.

The cost is small change, as these things go, because most Trilateralists pay their own travel and expenses. The commission picks up travel costs for academics and, occasionally, politicians and, of course, pays for the reports written by North American, Japanese and European scholars. Francois Sauzey, publications editor, said the budget for the first three years was a bit less than \$1 million.

The selection of the politicians is the stunning feature—Rockefeller and his aides were either very lucky or extraordinarily prescient about the direction of American politics. Perhaps a little of both. They guessed right that Carter and Mondale were comers. They guessed wrong about Rep. Wilbur Mills and Sen. Robert Taft Jr. of Ohio. In the case of Bill Brock of Tennessee, they lost a senator but gained a GOP national chairman.

Sen. John C. Culver, an Iowa Democrat who was chosen because of his interest in foreign policy, regards the experience—attending several of the meetings, reading some but not all of the reports—as valuable but unexceptional.

"These kinds of efforts can be extremely beneficial, both for participants and in the published documents," Culver said. "But it's just part of the stimulative mix of considered judgments that you try to keep up with."

David, the youngest Rockefeller brother, must be deriving a little sibling gratification from his creation. The four brothers have always carefully delineated their individual areas of public concern, but David's Trilateral Commission simultaneously preempts John III's long-held interest in Asia and Nelson's franchise in politics. David, also a Republican, enjoys a new level of national prominence, just as his big brother, the Vice President, must leave the stage.

"David Rockefeller basks in the acclaim he gets around the world," explained one Trilateralist scholar. "In that sense, it's psychic reward and a form of conspicuous consumption."

In Carter's case, the Trilateral experience must have meant more. He was a not very famous governor of Geor-

gia, interested in foreign trade and national politics, when Brzezinski, Franklin and Rockefeller went looking for a Southern governor to serve. They were impressed by his seriousness, and Carter did participate earnestly—attended all the North American meetings and the one international session in Japan before the presidential campaign swallowed up all his time. He phones personally to commission headquarters in New York to keep up with the latest studies.

The political symbiosis was perhaps more important to Carter than any educational qualities. It introduced him to a range of expert opinion which he needed for credibility as a presidential candidate, but it also gave him an opportunity to convince the corporate and media leaders that he was not a rustic yahoo, but a man to be taken seriously.

Brzezinski was among the early converts—he praised Carter lavishly at the commission's plenary meeting in Kyoto, Japan, in May of 1975, hailing him as at least one political leader with the courage to speak forthrightly on difficult issues. There was some grumbling about bad taste in the back benches, especially among other politicians, because Carter was already a declared candidate.

Brzezinski coined the Trilateral theology himself (a kind of geometric riposte to Henry A. Kissinger's "triangular" strategies, which concentrated on the three superpowers and often slighted the U.S. industrial allies in Europe and Japan). "I think it's fair to say the word Trilateralism has become a new word in the foreign policy vocabulary," publications editor Sauzey allowed.

What does it mean? The positive interpretation, as promulgated by Brzezinski and kindred academics, is that the three allied industrial regions must minimize economic friction among themselves, create new mechanisms for coordinated action, so they can deal equitably with the rest of the world. If they fail, Western wealth is threatened by "a denial of cooperation" from these poorer nations—anything from regional wars to nuclear blackmail to commodity disruptions like the Arab oil embargo of 1973.

A less charitable interpretation, advanced by suspicious Third World observers, is that the Trilateral Commission is the "rich man's club" trying belatedly to recapture the leverage lost by military defeat in Vietnam and economic defeat by Arab oil.

If one samples the Trilateralist papers, two themes are repeatedly expressed or implied, both provocative in the context of American politics but apparently accepted as beyond argument in the Trilateral viewpoint.

One is that American foreign policy, on the whole, has been a great success over the last 25 years. "A time

of relative peace and prosperity without parallel," as one report called it. Foreign-policy critics outside the establishment might argue that this period was, more accurately, "a time of relative war."

The other controversial premise is that multinational corporations, except for rare lapses by a handful of them, are a blessing to mankind and possibly the bridge to world peace. Many of the proposals do suggest new international agreements to regulate the taxes, antitrust violations, and capital investment by these global giants.

Richard Barnet, co-author of "Global Reach," a critique of the multinationals, said he fears that Trilateralism will attempt to jump over national control without replacing it with effective international controls.

"The possibilities of moving in new directions are there," Barnet said. "The danger is that we end up with two Cold Wars, a continuation of the one with the Russians and another with the developing nations. Unless we are willing to question the assumptions scattered through those reports, we're going to have another Cold War on our hands."

Nobody can say with any certainty, however, how much the details of those academic reports actually reflect the opinions of the commission members. The assumption is that the group is like-minded, generally, but sometimes that assumption proves wrong.

There are no roll-call votes, no attempt to alter the academic reports afterward to conform with the range of opinions expressed in the private meetings. All of the reports contain disclaimers—the views expressed belong to the authors only—but that doesn't always help.

"Ultimately," said one Trilateralist, "you always have a core group which does the hard work and they put the thing together. That's where it could be a potential problem or a deception."

As it happened, one Trilateral report did prove to be highly controversial with the commission's members—a study called "The Crisis of Democracy," co-authored by Samuel P. Huntington of Harvard, an old friend and co-author of Brzezinski, a leading academic apologist for the war in Vietnam.

Huntington's section on American democracy offered a provocative interpretation of recent history:

The great dislocations in American politics over the last 15 years did not stem primarily from Vietnam or Watergate, nor from deceptions by Presidents or law-breaking by government agencies. The problem was in the people themselves.

"A democratic distemper," Huntington called it. "An excess of democracy" which threatens the authority of government, "credal passions" which

must be tempered or the United States will become ungovernable.

Huntington's essay is rich in disturbing themes, especially if one assumes that the Trilateralists share his views. He suggests, for instance, that a President must organize a "governing coalition" from key establishment leaders, not from voters. "Once he is elected President, the president's electoral coalition has, in a sense, served its purpose," the professor wrote.

He suggested several ways to restore authority to American government and reduce popular excesses. One is to trim back on higher education. Another is to regulate the news media, something like the way the Interstate Commerce Act attempted to regulate corporations in the 19th century.

The conspiracy watchers have read this book and see it as an ominous blueprint, confirming their worst suspicions. The problem is, when many Trilateralists read it they didn't like it either.

At the 1975 plenary meeting in Kyoto, a long line of commission members rose to protest the drift of Huntington's thinking. Some urged that it not be published, others complained that copies had already been distributed to the press.

Thomas L. Hughes, president of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, complained:

"Instead of criticizing the last two Presidents for grievously misgoverning the country, the burden of the Huntington message is to criticize the country for not submitting to the misgoverning. Recently, we have escaped the excesses of an immoral and unwinnable war and a cynical and criminal President. One might have thought that was the purpose of democracy—to make criminal government unmanageable. . . . But the wars and crimes are brushed over lightly while the 'democratic surge' that ended them is condemned as 'excessive.'"

Many of the Trilateralists predicted, correctly, that the Huntington report with its controversial proposals would be blamed on all of them. When it was published later by New York University Press, it contained a brief appendix which noted anonymous dissents from a number of commission members, but it still bears the imprimatur of a report to the commission.

"At least," said one member, "the Huntington business does put the lie to the image of the commission as a bunch of like-minded elitists who are multinational apologists."

It does, sort of. On the other hand, for those who are clinging to dark theories, there is this to add: Samuel P. Huntington, it is rumored, may join Brzezinski's national security staff in the White House, which would add another strand to the webs they are spinning.