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Chapter II From "Establishment" to "Professional Elite"

During the 1960s, a revolution was taking place in the structure of America's foreign-policy leadership. Power was passing almost imperceptibly from the old Eastern Establishment to a new Professional Elite, from bankers and lawyers who would take time off to help manage the affairs of government to full-time foreign-policy experts, from an essentially homogeneous group of centrists and pragmatists to those with views that tended toward (and sometimes were at) the ideological extremes of American political thought, and from an essentially bipartisan or nonpartisan approach to a highly political one.

The men (and, rarely, women) who run American foreign policy have always operated in a small world, so the transformation was something of a revolution in a teapot. But from this teapot came the ideas and actions that shaped the great issues of war and peace. This transformation in the 1960s and 1970s thus helped to unhook the United States from the moorings of more than two decades of policy. From about 1970 on, our foreign policy tumbled first in one direction and then in another as views polarized within the country and as groups within the new Professional Elite contended for power. The anchor provided by the old Establishment was gone, for good and for ill.

The anchor had been personified by men like Robert A. Lovett. When he was named Deputy Defense Secretary on September 28, 1950, *The New York Times* applauded his "impressive" record as Assistant Secretary of War for Air during World War II and as Under Secretary of State from 1947 to 1949. "He has worked quietly and efficiently, he has avoided rash statements, he has kept out of needless controversies and he has made himself felt as a man of character, industry and intelligence," the editorial stated. A year later, the *Times* was no less kind when it bannered the retirement of George C. Marshall as Secretary of Defense and his replacement by Mr. Lovett.

A decade later, when President-elect John F. Kennedy was searching for ballast for his young Administration, he invited Lovett down from his Wall Street office for a chat in Georgetown. He offered the older man his choice of portfolios—Secretary of State, Defense or Treasury. It is said that the old man, whose soft eyes belied his strength of character, gently told the President that he had voted for his opponent, Richard Nixon. Kennedy said this did not matter. Then, pleading poor health, Lovett declined all the positions. He recommended instead Dean Rusk, President of the Rockefeller Foundation, Robert S. McNamara, President of the Ford Motor Company, and C. Douglas Dillon, a partner in the Wall Street firm of Dillon and Read, the very men Mr. Kennedy was to select for these posts.

Lovett was to serve in various capacities on prestigious Presidential commissions on arms control and intelligence during the 1960s. But mostly he stayed put in his Wall Street firm of Brown Brothers, Harriman and Company. Years before, he had married the daughter of one of the Brown brothers. Like so many of the old policy establishment, he had all the right tickets for any marriage and any position. At twenty-three, fresh from Yale, he had joined the Great War as a pilot and won the Navy Cross. After the war, he had gone on to Harvard Law School.

Space for Notes



Lovett was a man who could look a fact in the face. Like his partners in the Truman Administration, he continued to urge support for Chiang Kai-shek and the Chinese nationalists until it was clear that money would not help, that Chiang's regime was hopelessly corrupt, and that the wave of the future was with Mao Tse-tung and his Communists. As hard as it was, the bond of support for Chiang had to be cut, and Lovett was prepared to do it. He showed the same kind of flexibility when it came to recognition of the new state of Israel.

"Few men in the State Department were more coldly pragmatic than Robert Lovett," wrote Dan Kurzman in *Genesis 1948*. Drawing on accounts of Mr. Lovett by his contemporaries, Kurzman judged that Lovett had neither sympathy for Zionism nor the Lawrence-like attachment for Arabs so prevalent in the State Department. He had been persuaded that America had far more to gain from backing forty million Arabs than from backing a few hundred thousand Jews in Palestine. Despite all the arguments he had been making against the recognition of the state of Israel, he finally concluded that the establishment of a Jewish state was inevitable. He and the State Department had fought against it and lost. Now, as a practical matter, the United States had to adjust, and Lovett played an important role in the ultimate conversion of the State Department to that view.

If Robert Lovett was the prototypical man of the Establishment, Zbigniew Brzezinski seemed to embody the new Professional Elite. Like so many key members of this new elite (Harvard professors like Henry A. Kissinger and Stanley H. Hoffmann and Georgetown Center for Strategic and International Studies pundits like Edward Luttwak and Walter Lacquer), he was foreign born. Son of a Polish diplomat, a Harvard Ph.D., Brzezinski first made his mark as a scholar. His career pattern was the reverse of the Establishmentarian's; he was to write first and serve in government later.

Power came to Lovett; Brzezinski had to claw for it. Lovett, like most of his contemporaries, went far out of his way to avoid making news or saying anything catchy; Brzezinski, like his contemporaries, wrote for effect and raced after headlines. Lovett was a man of little or no theory and a lot of action. For Brzezinski and the Elite, words, articles and theories were the route of elevation. Lovett's power base was Wall Street; Brzezinski's were his ideas and his ties to politicians.

In 1959, Harvard had one tenured opening for a young professor of international politics. As was to happen often in Brzezinski's career, the mantle was placed on Kissinger. Brzezinski retreated to Columbia University and began to climb a ladder parallel to, but always one rung behind, Kissinger's. They both built reputations as scholars, though Kissinger's was more luminous. They both wrote articles in magazines like *Foreign Affairs*, the organ of the Council on Foreign Relations, but Kissinger's always seemed to get more attention. They both derived their views from the school of power realists, from the writings of Hans Morgenthau, a Chicago University professor who spoke the language of power politics with a German accent. Both Kissinger and Brzezinski believed in balance-of-power diplomacy, in containment of Soviet power, and in the Vietnam War. Yet, they were always competitive and quarreling. Members of the new Professional Elite always seemed to be quarreling with one another.

Henry Kissinger was the first from the new elite to make it to the top, now defined not just by power but by publicity as well. To be sure, Walt W. Rostow, an MIT professor, was the national-security assistant to President Lyndon Johnson, but his work was still behind the scenes. Kissinger, under President Nixon, was to transform that position into *de facto* cabinet rank, virtually the protocol equal of the Secretaries of State and Defense, and soon more than the policy equal. Kissinger, protege of the old Establishment, was to become the first powerhouse of the new

elite, the model.

Kissinger made Nelson Rockefeller his base. He advised Rockefeller in his perpetual quest for the Republican Presidential nomination. He ran a variety of foreign-policy projects for the Council on Foreign Relations and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, one of which led in 1957 to his path-breaking book, *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy*. Brzezinski fastened onto David Rockefeller, head of the Chase Manhattan Bank. Together, in 1973 they fashioned the Trilateral Commission, a kind of international Council on Foreign Relations dedicated to fostering better relations among North America, Western Europe and Japan. It was Nelson Rockefeller, Nixon's perennial rival, who opened the doors for Kissinger into Nixon's world. It was David Rockefeller, whose contacts were everywhere, who provided the opportunity for Brzezinski to meet Jimmy Carter.

The Trilateral Commission was a club, and Brzezinski and David Rockefeller got to choose its members. They chose the then virtually unknown Georgia governor. At a time when few members of the Elite had ever even heard of Jimmy Carter, let alone dreamed of his going anywhere on the national stage, Brzezinski befriended him and began advising him. Few were surprised when President-elect Carter named Brzezinski to be his Assistant for National Security Affairs.

Nor would it have been surprising if Brzezinski had gotten this post under almost any Democratic President. By the time Carter's long-shot campaign was under way in 1976, almost every Democratic hopeful had been the beneficiary of private conversations with the Columbia professor. He had positioned himself substantively. His articles and advice carried the perfect blend of anti-Communism and liberal humanism, of checking Soviet power and of advancing human rights. He would have the Democrats contain Moscow better than Kissinger and be more humane than Kissinger at the same time. Under Kissinger, he told the Democratic hopefuls, America had lost its sense of values; it had stopped caring and standing for anything. He was selling himself as a kind of "Good Henry Kissinger."

It was not as if Brzezinski had to break down the doors to meet the Democratic candidates. By the time he went to them, they all wanted him. He gave them a kind of legitimacy, the most important kind for the 1970s: expertise. Like his contemporaries who were working in the same vineyard, he had met the politicians at conferences, dined with them, sent them copies of his articles, and took their telephone calls to provide quick advice for a comment to the news media.

Like Kissinger, Brzezinski knew how to talk to men of power, to appreciate politics, to combine the language of scholarship and expertise with the world of power. He could explain problems and ideas simply, put them in words that politicians could use in speeches and television appearances, give them a clever phrase to catch a headline. He understood their dilemmas, the need to combine high moral purpose with new-sounding approaches and phrases that could win elections. It was not a waste of time for politicians to talk with this professor.

Before Carter named Brzezinski to be his White House national-security aide, he chose Cyrus R. Vance as Secretary of State and Harold Brown as Defense Secretary. No surprises here either. Vance, a Wall Street lawyer, was a man who had held high office previously in the Pentagon. He was every inch the safe and sound Establishmentarian, or so it seemed, despite the fact that he had become a critic of the Vietnam War. Harold Brown, the former President of the California Institute of Technology, former head of Pentagon research, and Secretary of the Air Force during the Johnson administration, also was a natural choice. But together, Brzezinski the professor, Vance the Establishment lawyer with liberal views, and Brown the

technocrat were to mark the crossover point. With them, and the people they brought with them, the revolution was complete. The new Professional Elite had come of age.

It was an irony that Vance was to help usher in the new era. He was, by birth, style, temperament, character and career, an exemplar of the old Establishment. To many, it seemed that Vance would be the natural successor to John J. McCloy, the Wall Street banker and confidant of Presidents, as the unofficial head of the Establishment. But from the time when Vance left his post as Deputy to Defense Secretary Robert McNamara in 1966 and returned to Simpson, Thacher and Bartlett, his law firm, something happened to him. His thinking about foreign policy changed. He moved from safe centrist positions to a more liberal line, from being a man whose career had defined the center to someone who would take the point position on controversial issues he cared about. As Secretary of State, he was to surprise almost everyone. Instead of using his well-honed skills to shape centrist consensus as he had done in the past, he became the point man in the Carter Administration in arguing for arms-control agreements with the Soviet Union and tolerance in accepting change in the Third World.

But while his views had moved leftward, his style and sense of values and fair play remained very much of the Old World. He saw very early in 1977 that Brzezinski was not playing by the same rules.

From reporters, legislators and friends at the White House, it was clear that Brzezinski had already begun to position himself as the practitioner of Realpolitik in the administration, painting Vance and his subordinates as left-wingers. But Vance would not respond in kind. He would not try to make alliances with Harold Brown or with key White House aides against Brzezinski. He would not call in newsmen to correct stories about him planted by Brzezinski and his aides, nor would he countenance his own aides doing that work for him.

Early on, a story appeared in *Time* magazine attacking Brzezinski, with the calumny ascribed to a State Department official. Vance called in the assistant secretary suspected of the leak and said, "Did you do it?" The response was yes. "Don't do it again," said the Secretary. "That's the wrong way. It will only spread the poison and make it worse. I'll take the issues up with the President. But I'm not going to talk to him about Zbig or any bureaucratic nonsense. I'll talk to him about the issues. That's the way to do it."

His strategy worked for a time. He did have the President's ear, and most decisions went his way in the first year. But the country was moving to the conservative side of the foreign-policy debate, the White House wanted to bend in that direction, and Brzezinski was caricaturing his position. But by temperament and conviction, Vance would live by the gentlemen's rules from the old era—and eventually be hit by the new rules. He knew that their policy differences were substantial. He did not want to recognize the lengths to which Brzezinski and his allies would go in trying to win.

But Brzezinski, Brown, their staffs, and Vance's aides were products of the new game and the new rules. The people they brought in with them were at the very heart of the new Professional Elite. By the dozens, they came in, to take over almost every top position in the State Department, Defense Department and National Security Council staff. There were scores more who were placed in lower-level positions and in the critical special-assistant slots. To be sure, the Nixon administration brought a number of Republican foreign-policy specialists into government in 1969 and removed a good many professionals with Democratic connections. At the same time, however, many professionals—civil servants and

Foreign Service officers—were kept on. Henry Kissinger's National Security Council staff was a blend of outside experts and career professionals, Democrats and Republicans, liberals and conservatives alike, pro- and anti-Vietnam. Foreign Service officers also held their own in many key State Department positions. The biggest turnover under Nixon occurred in the Pentagon, where many civilian experts had constituted the hotbed of opposition to the Vietnam War, and where McNamara's "whiz kids" had done much over the years to alienate the professional military.

The takeover by the new types in 1977 was not partial as it had been in 1969; it was virtually total. More than one hundred critical foreign-affairs positions were filled by people coming from outside government. A sizable percentage were serving in the Executive Branch for the first time.

Perhaps more important than numbers was the fact that almost all the new policy makers were from the center, center-left and left on the ideological spectrum. It was not just a physical turnover, but an intellectual one. There was as much continuity as change in policy in the transfer of power from the Johnson administration to the Nixon and Ford administrations. From Ford to Carter, there was far more change than continuity. It represented a takeover of the Vietnam War critics, advocates of arms-control agreements with the Soviets, and those who felt strongly that the power of the United States should be used to affect human-rights issues in other countries. Conservative Democratic foreign-policy experts were excluded, sometimes by calculation, sometimes by their own choice, and most often simply by the force of the old-boy network on the center and left. Those who could choose their own staffs selected people who had fought by their sides in past battles and those who would serve with them in future battles.

They came in especially at the Assistant Secretary rank. In the State Department could be found Richard Moose as Deputy Under Secretary of State for Management and later Assistant Secretary for Africa; Richard C. Holbrooke as head of Asian and Pacific Affairs; Douglas Bennet to manage Congressional Relations; Anthony Lake to run the policy-planning staff; Leslie H. Gelb to manage political-military matters; Marshall Shulman to serve as Vance's special adviser for Soviet affairs; Matthew Nimitz as Counselor; and Daniel Spiegel as Vance's special assistant.

Harold Brown took as his key people: David McGiffert, a Washington attorney and former Under Secretary of the Army in the Johnson administration, to be Assistant Secretary for International Security Affairs, the Pentagon's little State Department; Walter Slocombe, a Washington tax lawyer and arms-control specialist who had worked on the Presidential campaign of George S. McGovern in 1972, to oversee work on strategic-arms-limitation talks with Moscow; Russell Murray, one of McNamara's "whiz kids," to be Assistant Secretary for Systems Analysis; and Lynn Davis, a Columbia specialist in defense policy, to run the policy-planning staff. Later, Robert Komer, an NSC aide under Kennedy and Johnson, moved in as Under Secretary for Policy.

Brzezinski filled his critical White House billets with similar types: David Aaron, a former Foreign Service officer and then aide to Senator (later Vice-President) Walter F. Mondale, as Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security; Robert Hunter, a former aide to Senators Hubert Humphrey and Edward M. Kennedy, for Western European Affairs, Michel Oksenberg, a professor from the University of Michigan, to be his China expert; William Quandt, another professor from the University of Pennsylvania, as the main man "on Middle East negotiations; and as Special Assistant Rick Inderfurth, a former member of the

Church Committee staff that investigated wrongdoing in the Central Intelligence Agency.

Paul C. Warnke was named by President Carter as Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. Warnke, as Assistant Secretary of Defense in the Johnson Administration, had come to symbolize opposition to the Vietnam War from within the government and advocacy of arms control. At the beginning of the administration, Warnke was in many respects the darling of the Carter foreign-policy team for his outspokenness and courage. Later, when the public mood shifted rightward and Brzezinski went on the attack against what he called left-wing policies, Warnke became the main target of the NSC staff. As his deputy, Warnke chose Spurgeon Keeny, an arms-control specialist from the agency in the 1960s. John Newhouse, a foreign-policy writer with previous government experience in the agency and the Senate, was selected as an Assistant Director. Another was Barry Blechman, who had headed the defense-studies staff at the Brookings Institution.

Along with these established experts on traditional foreign- and defense-policy matters came a number of people who were to be the experts in the new areas of diplomacy, people with essentially political backgrounds. Vance chose Patt Derian, a former Mississippi civil-rights activist, to be the Assistant Secretary for the new bureau of human-rights affairs. Brzezinski picked Jessica Tuchman Mathews, an aide to Representative Morris Udall, to run his global-issues "cluster" dealing with nuclear nonproliferation, human rights and arms sales. President Carter made the most daring move himself in naming Andrew Young, a protege of Martin Luther King and a man with highly unorthodox notions about foreign policy, as United States Ambassador to the United Nations. These people were a new breed within the new Professional Elite. They operated on the frontiers of late-twentieth-century diplomacy in ways that were to symbolize the Carter Administration to its conservative detractors. Promoting human rights in countries friendly to the United States and preventing the proliferation and export of nuclear capabilities from allies to Third World countries were delicate matters and bound to cause great controversy. And they did.

None of these Carter administration appointees stayed on in the Reagan administration. Nor, with very few exceptions, did career officers with any policy identification with the Carter foreign-policy line. Instead, the right side of the new Professional Elite came to power. Secretary of State Alexander M. Haig, Jr., Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, and Richard Allen, as head of the National Security Council staff, made a sweep that was broader than the 1977 one, extending to Foreign Service officers and civil servants. And just as the Carter Administration had excluded conservatives, the Reagan team eliminated not only those who might conceivably have any liberal and left leanings, but also those with moderate Republican tendencies. Foreign Service officers who were being considered for lower-middle-level positions in the State Department were summoned for interviews by the political staff of the White House. This was unprecedented. But so was the commitment to conservative ideology that characterized the new administration.

These feelings were so strong that even experts with ties to former Secretary of State Kissinger, hardly a liberal, were either prevented from getting jobs or were made to pronounce their political and ideological allegiance to the new wave. Haig was permitted to make Lawrence S. Eagleburger, a former Kissinger aide, his Assistant Secretary for European Affairs. But the price was accepting William P. Clark as Deputy Secretary. Clark was a political aide to President Reagan when he was Governor Reagan of California, and a man who admittedly knew nothing about foreign affairs. White House officials did not hesitate to acknowledge that "the Judge," as he was called, was being sent to Foggy Bottom as the watchdog. Not least, he was dispatched

to keep an eye on Haig himself, who had once been Kissinger's deputy at the National Security Council staff.

Haig's other appointments were very much the mirror image of the Vance appointments. Paul Wolfowitz, a Democrat with ties to conservative Senator Henry M. Jackson of Washington, became Director of the Policy Planning staff. Richard S. Burt, a reporter for *The New York Times*, assumed the management of the Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs. Elliot Abrams, another conservative Democrat, replaced Patt Derian in the Human Rights Bureau after Congressional resistance forced Ernest Lefever, who showed little sympathy for the purposes of the Bureau, to withdraw his name. Chester Crocker from the conservative Georgetown Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington was named to head the African Affairs Bureau.

Weinberger's appointments went much further to the right, a fact that was to lead to constant friction between the Defense Department and the State Department, much as Carter's State Department and National Security Council staff warred with each other.

Fred C. Ikle, the head of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency under Nixon and President Ford, became Under Secretary for Policy. Richard Perle, *eminence grise* to Senator Jackson, and one of the most formidable opponents of past arms-control treaties with the Soviet Union, became Assistant Secretary for International Security Policy.

Richard Allen won for his NSC staff the award for the greatest ideological purity. He wanted all "Reaganauts," as those who had supported Mr. Reagan all along were known. His staff, even within the Administration itself, gained low marks for competence but high grades for ideological devotion. Harvard Professor Richard Pipes was put in charge of Soviet Affairs; he was regarded as far to the right by even the most conservative members of the Administration. Among the more moderate members of the staff was Geoffrey Kemp, a Middle East specialist. Kemp was a professor at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy and Tufts University and a strong conservative himself.

Two key symbolic figures were Eugene V. Rostow and Jeane Kirkpatrick. Rostow was named as Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. He had been the chairman of The Committee on the Present Danger, a powerful conservative lobby that pressed for increased military spending and opposed the SALT II Treaty with the Soviet Union. He was widely regarded as an opponent of arms control. But in two years, he was to surprise some of his closest friends, perhaps himself, and certainly the White House, when he started to advocate compromises with Moscow to reach arms-reduction accords.

Kirkpatrick was the anti-Derian, a professor at Georgetown University who had spent much of the previous four years attacking the human-rights policies of the Carter Administration. She was the author of a famous article in *Commentary* magazine proclaiming the distinction between totalitarian and authoritarian governments. Totalitarian governments were of the left, anti-American, hopelessly dictatorial, and had to be opposed. Authoritarian governments, she argued in the article, tended to be friendly to the United States, were clearly preferable to the totalitarian ones, and could be made to be less dictatorial. But she insisted in the article that their viability should not be jeopardized by pressuring them to follow human-rights dictates from Washington. Just this kind of idealism, she claimed, had caused Washington to call on the Shah of Iran to liberalize his regime, leading to the Shah's political weakening and ultimate overthrow. The United States had done the same with Anastasio Somoza in Nicaragua, and gotten the Sandinistas as

our reward. There were only two choices, and better *our* sons of bitches than theirs: this was the bottom line of her argument.

After the Carter and Reagan Administrations, the transformation was complete. The Establishment had been submerged by both wings of the new Professional Elite. For more than twenty years after World War II, the debate over American foreign policy covered no more than an octave, and now it ran over the whole keyboard. The narrow range that bounded the real choices for two decades first broke left under Carter and then right under Reagan.

For all practical purposes, the Establishment center was gone. The story of this transformation can be told in five parts: in the decline of the Establishment and then of its club, the Council on Foreign Relations; and in the ascent of new, more partisan "think tanks," of ideology, and of the Professional Elite itself.

The Decline of the Establishment

Typically for an informal institution, the Establishment came into prominence just as its days of glory were drawing to a close. Richard Rovere, with tongue firmly in cheek, revealed its existence in an Autumn 1961 article in *The American Scholar*, then expanded his diagnosis in the opening chapter of his 1962 book, *The American Establishment and Other Reports, Opinions, and Speculations* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1962). He found that "there is an Establishment in America—a more or less closed and self-sustaining institution that holds a preponderance of power in our more or less open society." Its "chairman" in 1958, he asserted, was John J. McCloy, Chairman of the Board of the Chase Manhattan Bank and Chairman of the Council on Foreign Relations. It "constitutes itself a ready pool of manpower" for leadership positions. "The perfect Establishment type," wrote Rovere quoting John Kenneth Galbraith, "would be the Republican called to service in a Democratic administration," or "vice versa." He added that Galbraith himself, just appointed Kennedy's ambassador to India, did not meet this criterion, "for he could not hope to be held over in a Republican administration."

British correspondent Godfrey Hodgson, writing in the Spring 1973 issue of *Foreign Policy*, reached a similar working definition: "a self-recruiting group of men (virtually no women) who have shared a bipartisan philosophy towards, and have exercised practical influence on, the course of American defense and foreign policy." Hodgson went on:

I would add that to qualify for membership a man must have a reputation for ability in this field that is accepted by at least two of three worlds: the world of international business, banking and the law in New York; the world of government in Washington; and the academic world, especially in Cambridge, but also in a handful of the other great graduate schools and in the major foundations. And I would further suggest that this group of men was in fact characterized, from World War II until the late 1960s at least, by a history of common action, a shared policy of "liberal internationalism," an aspiration to world leadership, an instinct for the center, and the habit of working privately through the power of the newly bureaucratized Presidency.

Foreign affairs was the peculiar preserve of the Establishment. Almost anyone could become involved in domestic politics. Positions in local, state, and even federal government in the domestic area had been open to people of virtually all backgrounds since the beginning of the Republic. But to be a diplomat was something special. It required education, money, and time for travel.

Almost from the beginning of the Republic, foreign policy was the glamour field—and more so into the twentieth century, when issues of war and peace became paramount. For an ambitious young man playing for the highest career stakes and

for service to his government, there was nothing to match it. The name of an Assistant Secretary of State might well be better known to the readers of *Time* magazine and on the Washington social circuit than that of the Secretaries of Commerce, Labor or the Interior.

Most prominent in the early twentieth century were Elihu Root, Secretary of War under William McKinley and Secretary of State under Theodore Roosevelt, and Henry Stimson, Secretary of State under Herbert Hoover and Secretary of War under William Howard Taft and Franklin D. Roosevelt. Others who followed them were not so well known to the public, but were recognized by the powers that were in the United States and around the world. After World War II, they included W. Averell Harriman and John J. McCloy. These men were reliable. One could have confidence in them and they in each other. They had dealt with the Europeans in the war, so they knew the world. No one else in America at these times knew the world so well.

The Establishment was white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant, Ivy League, and comfortably well-off. There was a relatively small number of men competing for a relatively small number of positions in the State Department or the civilian sector of the military establishment. There was a place for them in foreign policy; they were secure.

These men, when they were finished with their high government positions, went back to their banks and law firms. Back in private affairs, they rarely wrote or gave formal speeches about foreign policy. Mostly, they supported whatever the President was doing in foreign policy. If a President needed help in resisting some politically motivated effort in foreign affairs, he would call on them, regardless of party, to help. And they did. They were always ready to heed the President's calls to help preserve the pillars of postwar American foreign policy: to lobby Congress against a pullout of American troops in Europe, for example, or for foreign aid.

The Establishment, in many ways, gave the President what it felt was his due. He alone had access to all the facts, knew all the angles. The problem and the responsibility were both his. He generally wanted to go in the direction of containment and internationalism desired by the Establishment. Who knew better than the President? Give him the benefit of the doubt. And the Establishment did.

The Establishmentarians were ideological, but their dogma was that of the center. Its members were basically centrists and concerned primarily about methods and procedures. It was almost more important to them how things were done than what things were done. Thus, the way the Establishment framed its objective in the Vietnam War showed a great deal about what really bothered them and why. The objective was not simply to prevent a Communist takeover of Vietnam—it was to prevent such a takeover *by force*. They remembered Neville Chamberlain's miscalculation with Hitler at Munich—military aggression had to be resisted and turned back or it would be encouraged. Presumably, if the Communists could win at the ballot box or the negotiating table, the accession to power would be acceptable. Maybe it would have been and maybe not. But this was how most of them thought about the problem and explained it to themselves and others.

The basic ideology of the Establishment was set by two of its most shining lights: Paul Nitze and George Kennan. The latter was considered not quite reliable, perhaps because of his tendency to challenge assumptions. But his intellectual strength and lucidity of expression still made him a leading Establishment figure. The former was

later to play a leading role in the battles among the Professional Elite on arms control. Together with Dean Acheson, they were the principal framers of the doctrine of containment, of holding the spread of Russian influence to Eastern Europe. They saw Moscow as hostile and expansionist; the prime goal of American policy should be to stop the expansion of Russia and Communist power by a blend of force and diplomacy. These precepts had the weight of religion. They constituted the consensus on foreign policy within the United States, and the Establishment was mainly responsible for shaping that consensus.

Prior to the Vietnam War, the only time their comfortable world was disturbed was during the McCarthy period in the early 1950s. The anti-Establishment Irish-Catholic, Senator Joseph R. McCarthy from Wisconsin, terrorized them. He said that they were soft on Communism, said that many of them were indeed Communists. There was no harsher epithet. But it was one thing for an outsider like McCarthy to hurl stones and another for one of their own to attack them. John Foster Dulles was one of their own, and yet he too drew blood of Foreign Service Establishment types as he sought to shield himself from the right-wing attack. Together, but for very different reasons, they traumatized the Establishment and drove it to the right, making most of its members even more anti-Communist and anti-Soviet than they were before.

All this set the stage for the most conspicuous failure of the Establishment: the war in Vietnam. That was the ultimate test of the containment doctrine that they held so dearly, and with few exceptions, the Establishment rallied around Presidents Kennedy and Johnson in its pursuit. Only as the war wore on, as American and Vietnamese deaths piled up, as the Treasury was drained, as their children took to the street in protest, as America seemed to fall apart, without victory in sight—only then did many members of the Establishment see another light than the one "at the end of the tunnel." When they did, the Establishment split asunder, and a new American foreign-policy elite began to replace it—just as a plethora of new, competing foreign-policy "think tanks" emerged to diminish the importance of the Council on Foreign Relations.

The Decline of the Council

The Council on Foreign Relations was the embodiment of the Establishment. In 1961, Richard Rovere called its directors "a sort of Praesidium for that part of the Establishment that guides our destiny as a nation." Conceived at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 to resist isolationism and promote American involvement in the world, the organization was nurtured by the internationally minded rich of New York, the high church of the elect. During the 1930s, with the growing threat from Nazi Germany, members of the Council were in the forefront of efforts to drop American neutrality and support France and Britain. After World War II, the Council led the fight once again against isolationism, for a bipartisan foreign policy, and for containment of the Soviet Union and Communism.

But it had been just before and during the war that the members of its house on Sixty-eighth Street and Park Avenue in New York City began to reach the apogee of their influence. In 1939, backed by Rockefeller money and encouraged by Secretary of State Cordell Hull, the Council established four planning groups to help shape the political, economic and strategic objectives of the United States for the war and its aftermath. In 1942 the studies, and many of the Council members involved in them, were transferred lock, stock and barrel to the State Department. There, their work took shape as idea papers for the United Nations, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund.

John J. McCloy, then Assistant Secretary of War for Air, is widely quoted as having once said that whenever the War Department needed someone, "we thumbed through the roll of Council members and put through a call to New York." From then until recent years, the Council became a recruiting ground for the plum jobs in the State Department, the Defense Department and the National Security Council staff. From President Truman through President Carter, more than 50 percent of each administration's senior foreign-policy appointees came from Council ranks, and many others became Council members upon acquiring high office in Washington.

It had all the earmarks of a conspiracy—a few hundred Wall Street bankers, lawyers, foundation executives and businessmen, meeting to arrange the deals far from the prying eye of the public and their elected officials. Even the home of the Council lent weight to such suspicions. It was named for its former owner, Harold Pratt, a man who described himself unashamedly as a "Capitalist." But despite the worst imaginings of the left and the right, what went on inside the Pratt House was all too often pretty tame. (John Kenneth Galbraith resigned his membership "out of boredom.") The anointed, with invited experts and guests, would meet in different study groups or listen to a distinguished speaker and ask questions, retire for a dinner and further discussion, and adjourn by nine-thirty. The Council, on occasion, would foster a book that had some wider impact. The most famous of these was Henry Kissinger's *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy*, published under Council auspices as an outgrowth of a Council study group.

It was not as if Council members in these years had identical views. They had their differences, sometimes spirited, over the tactics of dealing with Moscow or the wisdom of a foreign intervention, and while they were mostly Republicans, there were a good number of Democrats as well. But they did share a centrist outlook and a disposition to back the President in foreign policy. Because of these attitudes, columnist Joseph Kraft wrote in a 1958 article for *Harper's* magazine, "The Council plays a special part in helping to bridge the gap between the two parties, affording unofficially a measure of continuity when the guard changes in Washington."

Whatever the internal differences, it was a cozy world—until the Vietnam War started to heat up. The Council leadership scrambled to accommodate the critics of the war, first by providing them an opportunity within the walls of the Pratt House to speak their piece as guests, then later as Council members. In the traditional manner of a sophisticated elite, their initial instinct was to co-opt new leaders, to make them part of the club. But the critics would not play by traditional rules; they would not confine their policy objections to the paneled rooms of the Pratt House. The Council could no longer play its traditional role, that of containing differences, or settling matters behind walls, or working toward a consensus and helping to recruit the officials who would govern by its precepts. The more so because many of the Council lions were being blamed by Vietnam critics for their role in getting the United States involved in Vietnam. Epitaphs like "war criminal" were being thrown around; the wounds were too deep.

Council troubles came uncharacteristically into public view in the matter of William P. Bundy's appointment as editor of *Foreign Affairs Quarterly*, which the Council had published for fifty years. As Assistant Secretary of State for the Far East, Bundy had been a key architect of Vietnam War policy, and when it became known in the summer of 1971 that the Council's board had offered him the editorship, critics struck with a letter calling for a referendum on Bundy. David Rockefeller, chairman of the board, responded with a public letter reaffirming the choice. Bundy's supporters grumbled about "McCarthyism of the left."

Much to the unhappiness of the insurgents and after a good deal of name-calling, Bundy took the job.

Ten years later, insurgents won a different battle. As part of the opening-up process triggered by the Vietnam War, procedures for electing the Council Board of Directors had been democratized in 1972. Under a complicated formula, the Nominating Committee would propose more names than the eight slots required; usually nine to twelve. Others could be added to the list by petition. Valid ballots had to include votes for at least eight candidates, to avoid bullet voting for one or two candidates, and also to help insure the election of the best-recognized names. Under this procedure, former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger was renominated as a Council Director in 1981, one of nine names for eight slots. He had been the golden boy, the star of the Council for two decades. But in the eight years he had ruled over American foreign policy, he had also become the *bete noire* of many of those hundreds of new Council members. In particular, the insurgents held him personally responsible for the prolongation of the Vietnam War and its extension into Cambodia. With no suggestion of a conspiracy, many of these insurgents skipped over Kissinger's box and checked the eight others, and he lost.

The Council had other travails. During his campaign for the 1980 Presidential nomination, George [H.W.] Bush quietly resigned his membership. As a moderate Republican, he already had one strike against him in conservative circles. His association with the Council, long a symbol of appeasement and capitulationism for the right wing of the party, was deemed to be a dangerous second strike. In the judgment of some of Bush's political advisers, the resignation also made it easier for Ronald Reagan to choose Bush as his Vice-President. (A year later, when ultraconservative Senator Jesse Helms (Republican, North Carolina) was giving his ideological purity test to Reagan foreign-policy nominees, a standard question was "Are you a member of the Council on Foreign Relations?" The prize for the best answer went to conservative former Senator James Buckley, who replied, "No, but I have a well-known brother who is." William F. Buckley, Jr.'s, old right was comfortable with such establishment ties. The new right was not.)

Four years earlier, during the campaign of Jimmy Carter, his closest political advisers showed they had no love for the Council either. Hamilton Jordan, in an interview at the time, said that he would not serve in an administration that included a Cyrus Vance or a Zbigniew Brzezinski, two Council stalwarts. To populists such as Jordan, the Council was the symbol of political elitism, a symbol and source of power from which they wanted to wean the Democratic party. (Jordan was able to overcome his squeamishness when faced with the actual choice.)

Writing in *The New York Times Magazine* on November 21, 1971, J. Anthony Lucas concluded that "the public's tolerance for a self-elected and self-perpetuating foreign-policy elite is rapidly diminishing." He pointed out that this did not mean an end to the Council, but rather a clear decline in its influence as an institution on policy makers. Council President Bayless Manning, former Dean of Stanford University Law School and just chosen by the Council Board as a "new face" for a new era, told Lucas: "We're moving into a period when we don't have any idea what we're doing in foreign relations. Vietnam was the last spasm of one way of looking at the world. The Council's role, as I envision it, will be to help the country evolve a new consensus." In 1977, Winston Lord, Manning's successor, was to make the quest for a new consensus his goal too.

But there was no consensus to be found or developed by the Council. The splits

were too deep to be reconciled by gentlemanly discourse. And the New York bankers and Wall Street lawyers were being supplanted by the New Elite, whose base was not New York but Washington. The Council had lost its principal historical function, shaping the foreign-policy consensus and using this consensus as a kind of third force between the political extremes. It had also lost its power to co-opt new leaders, although most of the new professional elite came to join. Thus, after a decade of trying to recapture a major role for itself, the Council had to settle for something less. It is now an institution that reflects rather than shapes the policy debates, and one that now confirms status rather than confers legitimacy.

By the early 1970s, the Council was merely one of many foreign-policy organizations. It remained the most prestigious, but was no longer the most influential. The new model was the Brookings Institution.

The Ascent of New Centers

Founded in 1927 by Robert Somers Brookings, another businessman with a hunger to contribute to public policy, the institution on Massachusetts Avenue in Washington, D.C., quietly soaked up prestige for several decades as a producer of respectable academic books. But in 1969, the Establishment-like board and Brookings President Kermit Gordon decided to chart a new course. They would beef up the staff, mostly from the ranks of middle-level officials from the outgoing Johnson Administration, and they would offer balanced "alternatives" to the new policies of the Nixon Administration. Brookings rapidly acquired a reputation as a Democratic "government in exile."

The Brookings model was to be more emulated than that of the Council. The Washington location was critical. Political power in Washington was no longer seen to be subordinate to financial power in New York. Political factors as seen from the nation's capital would be overriding, not money concerns. The people did not have to go to New York, and usually did not have the time to make the airline shuttle trip. New York would have to travel to Washington now and not the reverse. The Council's being in New York was now a disadvantage, which the Council would seek to overcome by initiating a program of regular study groups and speakers in the nation's capital.

Brookings made a special effort to target Senators, Congressmen and their aides. The Vietnam War had caused Congress to assert itself passionately and institutionally in the foreign-policy-making process. With roll-call votes and committee meetings, there was not time for them to go to New York. Brookings was convenient. The legislators and their aides could stop by for drinks and dinner from six-thirty to nine-thirty, and still work a full day. And if they went to the Brookings meetings, it was in the interest of officials in the Executive Branch to go as well

It was Kermit Gordon's idea that what the people from Congress wanted most was information and, above all, alternatives—new ideas for which they might themselves get some attention. That meant hiring a high-powered full-time staff of people who had the knowledge or knew where to get it, who had experience in government, who knew how things worked. So, Gordon went out and recruited Henry Owen, the former head of the State Department's Policy Planning Council, and made him director of Brookings' foreign-policy studies. Owen in turn hired people such as Edward Fried, an international economist from the National Security Council staff; Morton H. Halperin, former head of policy planning for international security in the Pentagon, and a former Kissinger aide at the White House; and A. Doak Barnett, a prominent Columbia University China scholar.

The boldest move made by Gordon and Owen was to establish a defense-policy staff, with financing from the Ford Foundation. For the first time in Washington, there was a respected alternative source of expertise on military matters outside the Pentagon. In a departure from the role traditionally played by the Council on Foreign Relations, Brookings began to turn out an annual set of alternatives to the Administration's budget, a book entitled *Setting National Priorities*. And this book included alternative defense budgets. Nor could this document be lightly dismissed; it was being produced by experts, including military officers, who had done just this kind of analysis for the Defense Department itself.

Another Brookings consumer in search of facts and alternatives was the national news media. While the headquarters of almost all major-media outlets remained in New York, their Washington bureaus were becoming increasingly important. That meant more and more reporters based in Washington, looking for stories. Like the Congress, the media had also been jolted by the Vietnam experience. For them as for the legislators, the word of the Executive Branch was no longer taken for granted. Brookings' books, pamphlets and meetings became an alternative "source."

The Brookings product was self-consciously "balanced" and centrist. But Brookings could not escape the fact that what it had to offer was being done mostly by Democrats, former officials and scholars not particularly sympathetic to President Nixon or conservative ideas. And no matter how "balanced" and "centrist," the product was also an alternative. Nor could conservatives escape the fact that Brookings, through its experts and their ideas, had found a new formula for power.

And Brookings was shortly joined on the activist, moderate-liberal side of the policy spectrum by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. For decades, Carnegie was based in New York, across the street from the United Nations, very much a centrist neighbor of the Council on Foreign Relations. Dwight Eisenhower and John Foster Dulles had been Carnegie trustees in 1952. But during the Nixon administration, the Board chose Thomas L. Hughes as Carnegie's new president. He swung the organization leftward in its policy orientation while shifting its primary focus from international organization to American foreign policy. In a new Washington office on Dupont Circle, he put together a stable of former Foreign Service officers, young and ambitious, to work on new international issues such as human rights and Africa. Among the Hughes stars were C. William Maynes and Donald McHenry, who were to gain high office in the Carter Administration.

Perhaps the most important step that Hughes took was to provide a home for a new quarterly called *Foreign Policy*. With managing editors John Franklin Campbell and then Richard C. Holbrooke, both former Foreign Service officers, the magazine became a focal point for shaping liberal alternatives to Kissinger foreign policy. *Foreign Policy* became "the place" to publish critiques of Kissinger and new ideas. Its principal themes became the guidelines for the Carter Administration—reaching back to traditional humanistic American values rather than Kissingerian balance-of-power diplomacy as the foundation of American foreign policy; emphasis on new issues such as human rights, law of the sea, nuclear nonproliferation, control of conventional arms; less emphasis on containing the Soviet Union directly and more on shoring up the American position in Western Europe, Japan and the developing world; and more attention to the economic and political instruments of diplomacy.

So as not to leave the field to Brookings and Carnegie, conservatives borrowed the model and joined the new scramble for influence with the Congress and press. The

first conservative to see and act on the need to compete with liberals in the world of ideas and information in Washington was William Baroody, Sr. In the late sixties and early seventies, Baroody went to conservative leaders and businessmen seeking funds for the expansion of the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, of which he was president, into a conservative Brookings. With his drive and their money, he succeeded. Like Brookings, it would cover American politics and economics as well as foreign and defense policy. Here, on the top floors of an office building at Seventeenth and L Street, denizens of Capitol Hill and the press corps could go to hear the arguments in favor of Nixon and Ford policies, although Baroody was always careful to present a variety of viewpoints.

Baroody's enterprise was less book-oriented than Kermit Gordon's. He knew that Washingtonians were not great readers. What they really wanted were facts and arguments to buttress their political predilections. Conservatives also needed some bucking-up in a town dominated by liberal ideas. They needed to be able to argue back. And Baroody gathered some conservative thinkers who could help them out. Among the leading lights of AEI were Ben Wattenberg, a former aide to Lyndon Johnson and coauthor of polling expert Richard Scammon; Herbert Stein, former chief of Nixon's Council of Economic Advisers; and Irving Kristol, guru of the so-called neoconservatives and coeditor of *The Public Interest Quarterly*. These men were less concerned with the nitty-gritty details of the defense budget than were the Brookings experts; they were big-picture men.

The conservatives still needed a place that could compete on foreign-policy expertise. Into this breach stepped David Abshire, the shrewd Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Relations in the early days of the Nixon administration, to energize the moribund Georgetown Center for Strategic and International Studies. The Georgetown Center had actually been formed in 1962, but its conservative founders such as Richard V. Allen, later to become for a short while President Reagan's national-security adviser, did not pay effective attention to institution-building until the Brookings experiment proved irresistible. Over the years, Abshire was able to round up luminaries on the order of Henry Kissinger, former Defense Secretary James R. Schlesinger, and Zbigniew Brzezinski. And Abshire, with his soft Southern twang and judicious manner, was highly successful in creating superboards, trustees, advisory groups, and the like, filled with conservatives who wanted some contact with the world of foreign affairs. For them and for an eager group of conservative legislators and their aides, he put together an almost continuous program of conferences. Again, the subjects were treated in a serious scholarly manner, as with Brookings and AEI, but the slant was moderately right of center.

Neither AEI nor the Georgetown Center was sufficiently conservative to please the right wing of the Republican party. They wanted organizations that would make an unadulterated hard-line pitch—the Russians are coming, they're already superior militarily to the United States, forget arms control and concentrate on building up American armaments. Right-wing money and plenty of it began pouring into places such as the Hoover War and Peace Institute at Stanford, California, and the Heritage Foundation in Washington. With funds principally from the Scaife-Mellon Foundation, a new right-wing think tank was created in Cambridge, Massachusetts, with Washington offices, called the Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis. All of them started producing reports and holding conferences and when it came to financing, the liberals were no match for the conservatives.

Even before a number of *Foreign Policy's* principal authors left to people the Carter Administration and try to put their new ideas into effect, another journal had jumped into the limelight to present the conservative alternative. *Commentary*

magazine, under the editorship of Norman Podhoretz, former socialist and now a leader of the neoconservative movement, launched an all-out barrage against the Carter team. Some of its heavy hitters were Edmund Luttwak and Walter Lacquer of the Georgetown Center and Robert W. Tucker, a professor at John Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies in Washington. The main lines of their critique were: America was becoming overwhelmed by the "Vietnam syndrome"; there was a liberal unwillingness to see the world as it was (which, in power terms, required a relentless struggle against the Soviet Union) and a hesitancy to use American power; the United States had to rebuild its military strength and beware of letting arms control lead to unilateral American disarmament; there should be less concern about traditional American ties with a Western Europe falling inevitably into a position of moral and military neutrality between East and West, a Europe becoming "Finlandized."

If *Commentary* provided the ideas, the Committee on the Present Danger provided the action. Under the leadership of Eugene V. Rostow and Paul H. Nitze, both former high officials in the Johnson Administration, this group became the most potent political force against the Carter foreign policy. The Committee's special target was the strategic-arms-limitation talks between Moscow and Washington. If any one man can take credit for scuttling Senate ratification of the Treaty signed in June 1979 it was Paul Nitze. And there was no other group that contributed more high foreign-policy officials to the Reagan Administration.

On the left, meanwhile, the Institute for Policy Studies continued to provide support for activist scholars who challenged many of the basic assumptions of American foreign policy that mainstream liberals held dear.

By the middle 1970s the foreign-policy landscape was littered with think tanks, conferences, reports, quarterlies and chaos. Think tanks now provided homes and money for adversaries to wage perpetual war against one another. Experts wrote competing articles for the op-ed pages of *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*, and otherwise extended traditional battles within the bureaucracy by other means.

The Ascent of Ideology

For a brief moment at the end of the Ford Administration and the beginning of the Carter term, it appeared as if the center-left and left were ascendant. The Nixon-Ford-Kissinger foreign policy was on the defensive, as much from attack by the right as by the left. Most of the top spots on the Carter team went to Vietnam war critics, liberals. Much to the later woe of the White House, conservative Democrats had been excluded by and large. Many of those excluded worked against the Carter foreign policy through the Committee for a Democratic Majority and the Committee on the Present Danger.

But the halcyon days of the liberal-left faded quickly under the pressure of events, and the power and money of the conservatives. By the end of 1979, the momentum had shifted dramatically. The Soviet Union had transported Cuban troops into the Horn of Africa. Vietnam, Moscow's key ally in Asia, was fighting a savage war of repression in Cambodia. It did not matter that Washington was now defending Somalia, the aggressor against Ethiopia in the Horn of Africa and Moscow's friend for more than a decade. Nor did it seem to make a difference that Washington now found itself supporting the likes of mass murderer Pol Pot in his battle against the Vietnamese puppet government for the Cambodian seat at the United Nations. The fact remained that the Soviet Union was gaining influence in new areas and exercising military power. It was easy to portray the United States

as doing nothing about it. Above all, conservatives had succeeded in convincing much of Congress and the national news media that the Soviet Union had gained military superiority over the United States.

The last point was a classic example of how the extremes managed to manipulate public opinion through simple arguments and a one-sided statement of the facts. Some on the left did it in the wake of Vietnam with the pitch that economic and military aid to Third World countries fighting insurgencies inevitably would lead to deepening American commitment, and eventually to American combat involvement. The argument was a *reductio ad absurdum*. It meant that doing anything would later drag the United States into everything, that no lines could be drawn, that there was no possibility of calibrating policy. It would have meant abandoning virtually every Third World country facing an insurgent challenge. It played to one of the deep-seated fears of the American people—fear of another Korean or Vietnam war. It was also quite effective politically.

The right was no newcomer to distortions of its own about Soviet military power, but in the 1970s it was to raise them to a new art form. There was no denying the fact that, over the course of the preceding fifteen years, Moscow had consolidated conventional or non-nuclear military advantages in Europe and that it had achieved effective parity with the United States in strategic nuclear power. The Soviet military budget had been increasing steadily since Moscow's humiliation at having to back down during the Cuban missile crisis of October 1962. During this same period, the United States was mired down in Vietnam and, in its aftermath, leveled off military spending in favor of domestic priorities. It was also true that Moscow had opened up about a three-to-one lead over Washington in tactical aircraft, tanks, artillery pieces and other conventional armaments; and it was true, too, that Moscow had developed land-based intercontinental missiles of far greater destructive power than their American counterparts.

But these simple and powerful facts told only part of the story. In the first place, they took no account of the overall geo-strategic situation, where the Soviet Union had to face the prospect of adversaries on two fronts, NATO in Western Europe and China to the east. Nor did the three-to-one bean counting include the forces of America's allies on the scales. Nor did it reflect the well-known intelligence judgment that Moscow knew that it could not count on most East European forces in any conflict with the West and, indeed, Soviet troops would be required to garrison these satellites during a war. Nor did it reflect continuing American superiority in quality of weaponry, albeit this gap had been closed in a number of areas. As for the fact of Soviet superiority in land-based intercontinental missiles, that was counterbalanced by the fact that Washington remained superior in the number of warheads, in less vulnerable strategic submarines and in their long-range missiles, and in bombers. True, American bombers were older than the latest Soviet models. But truer still, the U.S. Air Force continued to regard our old B-52s as far better in both range and payload than Soviet bombers.

But it was easy for the right to make the charges, to state the "facts" and let them speak for themselves. It was far harder for its targets to put the more complicated situation in reasonable perspective. Television and daily and weekly news publications gave more attention to the simple accusations than to the complicated responses. For the accusations played on deep-seated public fears after the humiliation of Vietnam.

The Carter Administration was on the defensive for its liberalism almost from the beginning, even though it contained several centrists in senior positions. Both Brzezinski and Defense Secretary Harold Brown were backers of the Vietnam War,

and both had good standing with conservative Democrats. Brzezinski also made it a point to hire several experts for his NSC staff who also had good conservative credentials—such as Harvard professor Samuel Huntington, CIA strategic analyst Fritz Ermath, and Army Colonel William Odom. Brown, too, picked a number of subordinates with conservative ties—such as R. James Woolsey, a Washington attorney who was close to Democratic Senator Sam Nunn of Georgia, and William Perry, a businessman from the California military-industrial world. Woolsey was Under Secretary of the Navy and Perry filled the number-three job in the Pentagon, Director of Research and Engineering. These men were far from the kind of right-wingers who came to people the Reagan Administration. But they leaned to the conservative side of the ledger. Thus, even at the height of liberal-left power, Carter could not govern without some conservative ballast. Reagan, on the other hand, saw no need for cover to his left.

From World War I and the Russian Revolution in 1917, it was always harder politically for the left than for the right to hold sway in popular foreign-policy debates. The left undertook the burden of arguing that the United States should make an effort to get along with the new Communist giant, while the right was in the more comfortable position of being skeptical, suspicious and hostile. These were attitudes toward Communism more in keeping with American history and values. Communism represented a kind of triple threat to America from the beginning. Even before the Russian upheaval, the philosophical atheism in Communist doctrine rubbed a religious American the wrong way. Even before the revolution, but especially thereafter, the state control of the economy inherent in Communism ran directly counter to the free-enterprise ethic of America. And when Communism was harnessed to Russian nationhood and, after World War II, to growing Soviet military might, it became a direct security threat to the United States as well.

To make matters worse, Communism was seen also as a threat from within, from subversives controlled by Moscow and dedicated to the overthrow of the American government. Then anti-Communist fever subsided during the late 1930s and when the United States was allied to the Soviet Union in World War II. But it came back with a vengeance in the late 1940s and early 1950s during the heyday of McCarthyism.

The red scares and witch hunts came to be deeply ingrained in the American psyche. Even tough-minded conservative Democrats like Dean Acheson, Truman's Secretary of State, and Paul Nitze, Acheson's policy-planning chief, were vilified as being too conciliatory toward Moscow. And these were two men in the forefront of organizing the NATO alliance and arguing for an American military response to North Korea's attack on South Korea in 1950. The cruelest and most devastating epithet to hurl at someone's career was to say that he was "soft on Communism." By contrast, few if any were to lose political office or their position in the Executive Branch for favoring right-wing military dictatorships or American military buildup, or being anti-Communist.

While the liberal-left in the Carter Administration could not govern without conservatives, the conservative right in the Reagan Administration thus could and did get along without any liberals. There is no doubt that the spectrum under Carter that ran from Brzezinski to Pat Derian or UN Ambassador Andrew Young was far greater than the ideological distance under Reagan that ran from Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger to Secretary of State Alexander M. Haig, Jr. The striking feature of the Reagan team was its ideological purity. White House political honchos who oversaw the appointments process in the various departments even reached down to ensure purity in positions normally free from politics. For

example, anyone associated with the SALT II enterprise, whether at the Foreign Service or the civil-service-expert level, was removed from the strategic-arms negotiations under Reagan

The policies of the Reagan Administration swung so far to the right that they soon became vulnerable to political attack as well. A conservative administration was one thing; but one that pursued a hard anti-Communist line, one with uncompromising rhetoric that did not admit to prospects of serious negotiations with Moscow, one that appeared hell-bent on an arms buildup with disdain for arms control, went too far. The news media and Congress have usually felt comfortable with a right-of-center foreign policy. Whatever their personal philosophical and political orientation, they have generally found a moderately conservative foreign policy to be politically unassailable.

The media and Congress also held their peace in the first year of the Reagan administration, waiting to see how far the new team would go. But by the second year Reagan too was paying a price for his foreign policy. Slightly more than midway through his first term, public-opinion polls began to show that while Reagan's overall popularity was once again on the rise, his conduct of foreign affairs was being greeted with wide disapproval. For example, a *New York Times*-CBS news poll conducted in March 1983 showed that by about two-to-one the respondents agreed with Reagan's description of the Soviet threat, but that by about three-to-one they disagreed with his strategy for dealing with it. Even in the wake of the popular Grenada invasion, there was broad concern about the state of United States-Soviet relations.

That said, there remained no doubt that Carter's perceived soft-line policies were much more injurious to him politically, in his first three years, than were Reagan's perceived hard-line policies. Even before the fiasco of Americans held hostage by Iran and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, foreign policy was already a political noose for Carter. This was so despite the fact that before the end of the third year of his administration he had put together the Panama Canal Treaty, the SALT II treaty, normal relations with China, and the Camp David accords between Israel and Egypt, and had helped to achieve a settlement in Rhodesia. At a comparable time in his administration, Reagan had failed to produce a single concrete accomplishment of comparable significance. The lesson not lost on political leaders or foreign-policy experts was that the American people and political system still preferred to err on the side of what they saw as toughness than on the side of weakness.

The Ascent of the Professional Elite

The swings of the foreign-policy pendulum, from Nixon to Carter to Reagan and then seemingly away from Reagan did not occur simply because the liberal left and the conservative right were having at each other. Nor did the rise of the New Elite occur only because of the fissures caused by the Vietnam War. The volatility in the small world of the foreign-policy maker and expert was a reflection of larger changes taking place in the country. The United States itself was undergoing a metamorphosis that was, in turn, transforming the political culture, including the foreign-policy subculture.

American society and politics were becoming democratized, leveled, fragmented and specialized. Establishments and entrenched power brokers of almost every kind were becoming less in tune with the times, less relevant and less effective.

The two world wars, the Depression, labor unions, and more nearly equal access to

education had all contributed to making Americans more middle class and more equal than ever before. But economic sameness did not produce uniform political views. Despite the reassertion of ethnic loyalties, Americans looked more like one another in dress and lived more like one another in their homes, but they still did not think like one another. There was a spectacular rise in the number of special-interest groups and single-issue groups, and an increase in their power. In the process, the sense of the general or public interest was being submerged, and it was this larger sense that had given the old Establishment some of its leverage.

There were virtually no more captains of industry or Hollywood moguls or big-city bosses. Giant industries had become too complicated for one-man rule, and the giants who used to run them were being replaced by accountants and salesmen and money managers. By the middle 1960s Mayor Richard Daley of Chicago was the last of the big-city bosses, and when he died in 1976, no one could take over his once awesome machine. City leaders had all they could do to hold onto their own jobs, let alone command the reins of the city as in years past. By 1970, there were lots of fingers on the buttons of industry, entertainment and politics.

The changes in the culture and economy generally preceded and foreshadowed the changes in the political arena. As has been noted, the trend toward Presidential primaries accentuated the hold of party activists and extremists. The process of fragmentation was nowhere clearer than in Congress. The committee chairmen died off or had their wings clipped by backbenchers demanding more power and possessing the votes to make their demands stick. The assertion of Congressional authority against the President was followed rapidly by individual legislators establishing their own authority outside the committee structure. Instead of a few committee chairmen, Presidents had to consult dozens of different legislators on hundreds of different issues in order to build a coalition to get a bill enacted or a foreign initiative sustained.

With these changes in society and politics generally came the new Professional Elite in foreign policy. With Vietnam, with the growing importance of economic issues, with the domesticization of foreign affairs, politicians and press needed to know more and say more about international events. The political stakes in foreign policy were high, and so was the demand for foreign-policy expertise. And so the old Establishment was thus infiltrated, transformed and subsumed by the new broader grouping, a compound of professors, lawyers, think-tank experts, foundation executives, businessmen, Congressional aides and journalists. At their top is a smaller group of a few hundred wielders of power and ideas, jockeying to influence policy and to obtain the senior positions of government.

The seventies and eighties thus brought a demand for advocates not adjudicators, experts not generalists, full-time professionals not persons looking for an avocation, ideological loyalists and not simply good party men, and people who could operate in the public domain with words and symbols and not just the insider with committee skills. And these qualities, with all their advantages and disadvantages, were what the new class had to offer.

The Elite, like the Establishment, still came mostly from the best schools—Harvard, Yale, Princeton—but now also from places like Tufts' Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, the University of Chicago and the University of Virginia. They still came mostly from the Northeast, but increasingly from elsewhere. Many of the new breed did not come from the wealthy and privileged backgrounds of their predecessors either.

But what differentiated the Elite most from the Establishment was that they were full-time foreign-policy professionals. Their rise has altered the rules of the game for seeking power, and even the way the government operates in managing our foreign affairs. Most of them chose not to join businesses and law firms to go home to after government. If they were not in government, they would mostly be outside in the think tanks and universities or, even if in business, still at conferences working on foreign policy, writing about foreign policy, and talking to journalists about foreign policy. And all the while, they would be waiting to return to government, in a higher position than last time.

As full-timers, they were also experts. Modern foreign policy was highly complex and technical. The government had become deeply involved in trade and international monetary policy, and a specialized background was needed for an understanding of these fields. Arms control called for a certain amount of scientific knowledge and a keen grasp of concepts. Everything was connected with everything else, and everything seemed to have a domestic angle or a domestic impact. Trade issues affected jobs, arms control affected the military budget, and grain sales abroad to friendly and unfriendly nations helped to set the profit margins of American farmers. Efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear capabilities necessitated technical knowledge of nuclear energy, international trade and domestic energy needs. The part-time cadre of Establishmentarians could not stay on top of such issues. They were quickly outpaced by the full-timers and came to depend on them for advice.

The Establishment had sought power in Congress and the Executive Branch—but quietly, in the back rooms. The Elite sought influence more openly and over a wide range of foreign-affairs issues, courting the news media, and vice versa. Its members were sought by newsmen and legislators for the ideas they had to offer in challenging administrations. When a new party came to power, they were available to oppose.

It was not only ambition, of course, that drove them to write on and debate the issues. Ideas matter, and the views of most of the experts were deeply and sincerely held. Some, like Stanley Hoffmann showed little inclination to parlay a luminous academic reputation into a job in Washington. But many more denizens of the Elite prepared and positioned themselves for official jobs during the whole of their professional careers. It was done through timing—knowing when to speak at a meeting, when to look for a new job, when to turn down a job that might be too visible, perhaps, or one that might type its holder too much. It was done by having former government service as a badge to point to, and by proving oneself on the outside by running a foundation, chairing a meeting, making the circuit of conferences, being among those in the "little groups" that were assembled to advise the candidates, having thoughtful articles printed in *Foreign Affairs*, *Foreign Policy*, *Commentary*, and the op-ed pages of *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*, helping Senators and Congressmen write their speeches, and operating through the social connections known in Washington as "friends."

The writing game was itself revolutionary. With rare exceptions, Establishmentarians did not put their ideas down on paper, even in *Foreign Affairs*. It was totally against their ethos, a kind of intellectual indulgence of doubtful taste. Gentlefolk appeared in the newspapers only three times: at birth, marriage (once), and death. Much like that of the Foreign Service officer, their attitude was that foreign policy was less a matter of ratiocination and planning than getting in there and seeing what the problems were, of flexibility. But to the Professional Elite, words and books and articles were the very currency of their lives. An article was the way of announcing one's existence and showing the colors, of being talked about and asked to meetings and conferences.

Words and writings were also the link between the Professional Elite and the politicians. Politicians had become full-time performers and needed endless lines to deliver on a variety of complex subjects. And they needed respectability too. Reporters always wanted to know whom a politician had talked to in preparing his opus. Who were his authorities? His own staff aides were not sufficient; recognized authors and former government officials had to be named.

And politicians were the ticket to power for the Professional Elite. Getting top jobs in an administration was no longer a matter of someone thumbing through the membership list of the Council on Foreign Relations. One of the best ways was to have the backing of a politician whose support was needed by the new President.

This, in turn, made the Professional Elite more partisan than their Establishment predecessors. To be sure, Establishmentarians were Democrats and Republicans. But in as many cases as not, the party label had been secondary, and they were ready to serve Republicans and Democrats alike. Now nonpartisanship was a sign not of objectivity, but of lack of commitment. Partisans came first when rewards were distributed, and so many stood in line that little was left for people who saw both good and bad in what was going on.

The ink wars and partisan battles led to an atmosphere of highly competitive unfriendliness within the Professional Elite, as compared to the gentlemanly forms of disagreement within the Establishment. Grudges were bound to emerge in the Elite. Its members were putting their egos on the line with every page they wrote, and when they were attacked, arguments inevitably ensued. Not only did they criticize one another, but it became common practice to caricature an adversary's view. Professional politicians might have been able to shrug off such things as just business, but not intellectuals. Thus, personal animosities added a bitter edge to everything else. Motives were always being questioned, and no one in the opposing camp was to be given the benefit of the doubt. For those out of power, it meant getting back in. It meant not giving the President an inch.

The Establishment was in the main willing to go along with the President, whatever his political affiliation, and even if his views differed in some measure from their own, but the Professional Elite were unwilling to lend their support to an administration unless its policies agreed in nearly full measure with their own views. Even when in power, it was not easy for many of the Elite to compromise with their ideological cousins. For all of its ideological homogeneity as seen from the outside, internecine warfare within the Reagan Administration was every bit as intense as in the Carter Administration. In part, this had to do with the traditionalist tug of the Foreign Service officers who held key positions in the Reagan State Department. But the deeper reason had to do with the new breed of foreign-policy experts. Precisely because they were more ideologically committed than their predecessors, they were far less tolerant of differences even among their confreres.

In general, the Establishmentarians were used to adjusting conflicting opinions and beliefs, and they were experienced at it. It was a natural thing to do, among those for whom, by philosophical temperament, one view was essentially as good as another as long as it was somewhere near the center. In contrast, members of the Professional Elite were not so comfortable with compromise and adjustment, because they felt more passionately the "truth" of their views. And unlike their predecessors, who had been part of organizations, partnerships and systems for their entire careers, many of the Elite had been intellectual loners, working essentially by themselves.

The net effect was to make American foreign policy much more rigid and riddled

with contradictions than before. Once in power, Presidents and their acolytes from the Elite neither wanted to walk away from their rhetoric as challengers nor found it easy to do so. True believers were always there to hold their feet to the fire. And when Presidents did alter untenable policies because of the press of realities and politics, they left a large residue of contradiction. For example, Reagan was never able to successfully explain to America's allies why it was unacceptable for them to sell industrial goods to the Soviet Union, while it was permissible for the United States to sell Moscow grain.

The net result of the transformation from the Establishment to the Professional Elite was the destruction of the foreign-policy center. It was the center that served as the sea anchor against the tides of popular passion, as a wall against extreme views and sharp breaks and lurches in the conduct of American foreign policy. With its demise, there was little to prevent wild swings in policy. And a President or Presidential candidate who might want to stay somewhere in the middle of the debate found it harder to mobilize support.

Traditionally, power in the politics of foreign-policy making resided in the center. As on a chessboard, whoever controlled the middle squares won the game, and the main battles in American politics were for the center squares. But where there was once power, there was now closer to a void. The extremes were dominating on issues such as human rights or relations with the Soviet Union or military spending or the handling of nuclear nonproliferation. The strength was at or near the extremes, and the Presidents and the Professional Elite who had led in those directions had to go there to find support.