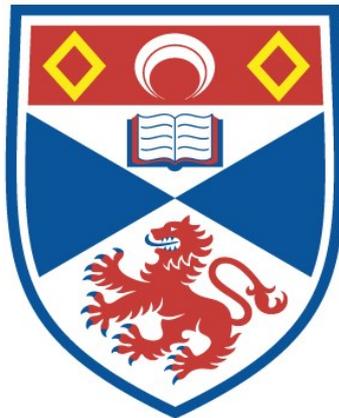


**THE SUM OF THEIR FEARS:
THE COMMITTEE ON THE PRESENT DANGER, THE DEMISE
OF DÉTENTE, AND THREAT INFLATION, 1976-1980**

Nicholas Blackburn

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
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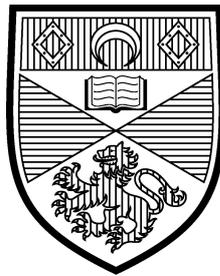
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Détente, and Threat Inflation, 1976-1980

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University of
St Andrews

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews

September 2015

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**The Sum of Their Fears:
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Nicholas Blackbourn

Abstract

This dissertation seeks to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the political pressure group the Committee on the Present Danger (CPD), which formed in 1976. The group's establishment, attainment of credibility, and influence in critical national security debates during the late 1970s has not yet been given sufficient attention.

The Committee on the Present Danger has often been interpreted as a disingenuous propaganda group that dishonestly compiled an alarmist message to deceive politicians and journalists of the threat posed by the Soviet Union. However, the dissertation argues that the Committee's alarmism was genuine. The fact that CPD board members themselves became so fearful of the Soviet threat is the most striking aspect of the group's first four years of operation, and is the primary focus of this study. An examination of the group's formation and activities from 1976 to 1980 permits a more sophisticated appreciation of the group's goals, the promotion of its views, and the effects of its campaign on national security debates during this period. The dissertation adopts a chronological approach that recognises the creeping alarmism of the CPD over these years: warning of the dangers of détente gave way to prophesying an imminent Soviet invasion of Western Europe.

Keeping the CPD as the focus of study in this period permits one to argue that the Committee's members, as a private citizens' group without government oversight and a shared worst-case methodology for assessing national security risks, sincerely came to believe in the veracity of their analysis of imminent Soviet military expansion. Committee experts generated and publicised a number of metrics that purported to demonstrate a military imbalance between the Soviet Union and the United States. Over time, and seemingly confirmed by alleged Soviet global aggression, the Committee came to believe that their worst-case estimates reflected reality.

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List of Abbreviations

ABM	Anti-Ballistic Missile
ACDA	Arms Control and Disarmament Agency
ACEWA	The American Committee for East-West Accord
ASC	The American Security Council
CIA	The Central Intelligence Agency
CPD	The Committee on the Present Danger
CPTS	The Coalition for Peace Through Strength
GLCMs	Ground Launched Cruise Missiles
ICBM	Intercontinental Ballistic Missile
LRTNF	Long-Range Theatre Nuclear Forces
MAPS	Multiple Aim Point System
MIRV	Multiple Independently targetable Re-entry Vehicle
NIE	National Intelligence Estimate
NSC-68	National Security Council Report 68
MX	Missile eXperimental (LGM-118 Missile)
PD-18	Presidential Directive 18 on U.S. National Security
PD-59	Presidential Directive 59 on Nuclear Weapons Employment Policy
PFIAB	President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board
SALT	Strategic Arms Limitation Talks

Introduction

Détente failed to usher in a new era of peaceful coexistence and was instead losing the United States the Cold War. So argued the Committee on the Present Danger (CPD) who announced in November 1976 that 'Our country is in a period of danger, and the danger is increasing.'¹ Many journalists at this public unveiling judged the group as a caricature of missile gap alarmists of the late-1950s. The news magazine *New Republic* slammed the CPD's warning, calling the group 'ghosts returned' from that earlier nuclear age.² Less than two years later, however, the group was frequently introduced as 'non-partisan', 'prominent', and 'influential'.³ Furthermore, following a series of crises culminating in the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in late 1979, the CPD's repeated warning of the Soviet Union's enduring hostility appeared to have 'always been right' to a number of observers in hindsight.⁴ Ignored or dismissed by numerous national newspapers and politicians in 1976, dozens of CPD board members would join the Reagan Administration in 1981.

This was a substantial change of fortune, and this dissertation seeks to understand how in just four years the perception of this group shifted from being an unwelcome group of alarmists to a respected authority on national security issues. In doing so, the dissertation examines the role of the CPD in ending détente, preventing SALT II ratification, and its function in Ronald Reagan's presidential campaign over

¹ CPD Executive Committee, "Common Sense and the Common Danger: Policy Statement of the Committee on the Present Danger", in *Alerting America: The Papers of the Committee on the Present Danger*, ed. Charles Tyroler II (New York: Pergamon Press, 1984), 3.

² Morton Kondracke, "Is There a Present Danger?", *The New Republic*, 29 January, 1977, 18.

³ Robert S Allen, "'SALT Negotiations in Troubled Waters - The Tribune' in 'The Second Year as Reflected in the Media'", 1978, Box 2, CPD Papers, Hoover Institution, Stanford, CA, 17. (Hereafter CPD Papers.); Roscoe Drummond, "'The Divided Democrats - The Christian Science Monitor' in 'The Second Year as Reflected in the Media,'" 1978, Box 2, CPD Papers, 24.; "'Quest of National Survival - The San Diego Union' in 'The Second Year as Reflected in the Media,'" 1978, Box 2, CPD Papers, 14.

⁴ "'Detroit News, 18 February 1980' in 'The Fourth Year: What We Have Said 1976 - 1980 and What Has Been Said About Us'", 1980, Box 2, CPD Papers, 9.

the summer of 1980. Most importantly, the dissertation considers the evolution of the CPD's alarmist message: how did a concern that détente was eroding support for adequate defence expenditure morph into a prediction of an imminent Soviet invasion of Western Europe between 1976 and 1980? The dissertation concludes that a group of national security experts came to believe that their own worst-case analysis of Soviet capabilities and intentions was not just a tool for planning future national security requirements but was a prediction unfolding in reality.

The 1970s was a turbulent period in American domestic and foreign affairs.⁵ The Vietnam War, the Watergate scandal, oil shocks, and persistent stagflation all acted to erode confidence in American national strength.⁶ In this 'Age of Limits', détente became the basis of foreign policy, which was President Nixon and Henry Kissinger's solution to maintain America's superpower status while recognising the fact that the Soviet Union was reaching military parity. The policy was an attempt to foster a mutually beneficial reduction of political tension in order to preserve international stability.⁷ In return for political engagement and the pursuit of trade agreements with the Soviet Union, Nixon and Kissinger expected Soviet help in ending the Vietnam War and a restraint on international competition. Superpower summits and arms control negotiations – most notably SALT I, agreed in 1972 - seemed to offer an alternative to the Cold War stalemate, a far more satisfying prospect than a continuation of the disruptive and disorientating 1960s.⁸

⁵ See “The Poverty of Power” in Laura Kalman, *Right Star Rising: A New Politics, 1974-1980* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co, 2010), 38.

⁶ See Chapter I, “The Crosscurrents of Crisis in 1970s America” in Thomas Borstelmann, *The 1970s: A New Global History From Civil Rights to Economic Inequality* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 19.

⁷ Raymond L Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation: American-Soviet Relations from Nixon to Reagan* (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1994), 28-39.

⁸ Jeremi Suri, *Power and Protest: Global Revolution and the Rise of Détente* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 5

However, to some national security experts, détente was an unacceptable and dangerous approach to relations with the Soviet Union.⁹ The Committee on the Present Danger, whose founding board members began planning the group's activities from late 1975, attracted many prominent figures who shared a concern that détente was undermining American national security. In particular, they argued that the policy encouraged a dangerous underestimation of the threat from the U.S.S.R. In their view, the Cold War rivals were not peacefully coexisting because continued Soviet military growth directly threatened American interests. For them, Soviet military power could not be ignored simply because Premier Brezhnev had temporarily adopted a conciliatory tone in political relations.

The Committee on the Present Danger attracted supporters who shared this conviction that peaceful coexistence was a dangerous myth, and that the American military required substantial investment in order to counteract the effects of unabated Soviet military growth. They argued that this expansion of Soviet military capabilities had continued despite the pursuit of détente and remained a direct threat to American national security just as it had since the late 1940s. Détente changed nothing; CPD board members were adamant that seeking improved relations with the Soviets would not alter the fact that the U.S.S.R. was doctrinally committed to Socialist revolution and therefore a present danger to American national security.

The CPD's board members assessed that détente gave the appearance of peace, but had two fundamental flaws. First, in their pursuit of détente, American leaders did not inform voters of the threat that the Soviet Union posed to their security. This contributed to reduced support for the public expenditures necessary to maintain an adequate military strength. Second, the CPD argued that détente had permitted the

⁹ Jeremi Suri, "Détente and Its Discontents", in *Rightward Bound: Making America Conservative in the 1970s*, ed. Bruce J Schulman and Julian E Zelizer (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 227.

Soviet Union to 'catch-up' and perhaps even surpass American strength. Soviet military growth over the 1960s and early 1970s had been substantial and resulted in approximate military parity.¹⁰ A continuation of détente offered no assurance that the U.S.S.R. would cease this growth and resist the temptation to attain unambiguous overall military superiority. The effects of parity were uncertain but the CPD's board members were convinced, given its commitment to global socialist revolution, that a militarily superior Soviet Union would not be a benign force in the world. It was therefore dangerous for American leaders to act as if détente had solved the Cold War's security dilemma.

Urging caution over the pursuit of détente was perhaps a legitimate concern at the Committee's inception, but between 1976 and 1980 the CPD took the fears of its board members too far. By 1980, this rejection of détente had become a prediction of imminent Soviet action in Western Europe. Why did their caution turn to panic? The Committee's leading board members were predominately strategic planners and military commanders, and had been involved in planning American Cold War strategy since the late 1940s. This group of national security experts regarded the American strategy of containment as a successful policy that was undermined by détente. They believed that deviating from a resolute application of military containment risked defeat.

Their fear was a result of assessing the Cold War exclusively through the lens of military power; they judged that this was the only language of diplomacy that Kremlin leaders understood. Given the importance that Committee board members assumed that Soviet leaders attached to military strength, the group chose to adhere to a worst-case methodology when assessing Soviet military capabilities. They assumed that only by planning on this basis could America be certain to maintain a deterrent strength capable of averting Soviet expansion. It was axiomatic to the CPD's board members that there

¹⁰ David M. Walsh, *The Military Balance in the Cold War: US Perceptions and Policy, 1976-85* (Oxford: Routledge, 2008), 198.

should be no doubt over American deterrent capabilities, and they therefore rejected what they perceived as optimistic assessments of Soviet capabilities and intentions, encouraged by the intoxicating climate of détente. As the Cold War confrontation was potentially existential, the optimism represented by détente was an unacceptable risk to CPD supporters.¹¹ The Committee argued that if Soviet leaders perceived military superiority then they would be tempted to use their strength to extend their global influence in the name of socialism. It was the responsibility of American leaders to deny this opportunity.

Committee board members felt that it was their duty to inform ordinary Americans of this substantial and growing threat posed by the Soviet Union. The establishment of détente as the guiding principle of U.S.-Soviet relations had never been publicly debated and the CPD was established to ensure that there would finally be a fully informed 'national discussion' on American national security before it was too late to restore an effective deterrent.¹² To highlight this risk the Committee issued pamphlets, attended local debating groups, appeared on national television programming, met privately with senators and congressmen, gave Senate and Congressional testimony, and, later, received invitations to discuss their concerns with President Carter at the White House.¹³ The Committee on the Present Danger, as its provocative name suggests, would not be neutral in its desired debate on national security policy. It had a clear preference for a higher defence budget and a restoration of the strategy of military containment. For the CPD, this meant bolstering strategic and conventional forces,

¹¹ See "The Charter Problem and the Credibility Problem" for more on the tendency towards worst-case scenario estimate among military service intelligence organisations in Noel E. Firth and James H. Noren, *Soviet Defense Spending: A History of CIA Estimates, 1950-1990* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1998), 26.

¹² CPD Executive Committee, "How the Committee on the Present Danger Will Operate- What It Will Do, and What It Will Not Do", in *Alerting America: The Papers of the Committee on the Present Danger*, ed. Charles Tyroler II (New York: Pergamon Press, 1984), 1.

¹³ See Appendix II, CPD Publications 1976 – 1980.

rejecting restrictive arms control agreements, and opposing Soviet expansion into any area that threatened American national interests.

This intention to spark a national discussion on security policy was not seen as particularly controversial by early CPD board members. Numerous liberal, Democratic, public figures enthusiastically joined the group to assist in this effort, which they regarded as a sensible and objective mission, and certainly not a brazen, unsubstantiated propaganda effort. Yet between 1976 and 1980 this pursuit of a national discussion morphed into an effort to express an amalgamation of CPD board members' fears of Soviet capabilities and intentions. With an illustrious and determined membership, the CPD's message came to reflect the combined worst-case assessments of individual board members, and the belief that this was an accurate representation of reality. Starting in 1976, CPD Executive Committee members attended fortnightly meetings, authored more than sixteen major pamphlets, and delivered hundreds of speeches warning of Soviet military strength. By 1979, after three years of repeated public warning of the Soviet threat, CPD members believed that their worst-case estimates of Soviet military strength and intentions were judicious assessments.

Strobe Talbott, a political correspondent for *Time* magazine, concluded at the close of the Cold War that

for more than four decades, Western policy has been based on a grotesque exaggeration of what the U.S.S.R. could do if it wanted, therefore what it might do, therefore what the West must be prepared to do in response ... Worst-case assumptions about Soviet intentions have fed, and fed upon, worst-case assumptions about Soviet capabilities.¹⁴

This certainly characterises the Committee's own path in the first four years of its activities. The CPD was a microcosm of this wider phenomenon; unbridled by direct political supervision and supercharged by the professional background of its Executive

¹⁴ Strobe Talbott, "Rethinking the Red Menace", *Time*, 1 January, 1990, 37.

Committee membership, the group rapidly made this progression from discussing a hypothetical threat to proclaiming an unfolding disaster.

It was the prestige of the Committee's board members and their determined pursuit of publicity that meant that the effect of this alarmist message was particularly significant. Committee members included notable national security experts – Paul Nitze and Elmo Zumwalt especially commanded attention – who had the respect of politicians and journalists.¹⁵ These board members ensured that CPD analysis would be seriously considered even though the group's launch in 1976 was initially a disappointment. James Fallows, a speechwriter for President Carter, claims that CPD members were eventually invited to the White House for discussions with administration officials because ‘everyone thought it was necessary ... They were too politically strong to win over.’¹⁶ This sentiment of the CPD's prestige was echoed by another Carter Administration official, who regarded the group as ‘in the community of experts ... the most influential’ interest group during the SALT II ratification process.¹⁷ The Committee achieved significant political influence in addition to receiving extensive media coverage, and its reputation has resulted in considerable scholarly attention.

The CPD, given its stature, has featured in scholarly studies ever since the group began contributing to national security debates in the late-1970s. However, a number of important questions about the Committee have been left unanswered. Should their

¹⁵ Paul Nitze was the Committee's highest profile member. After entering government in 1940, Nitze would serve in every Cold War era administration except the Carter Administration. He had worked on American Cold War strategy since the late 1940s, most significantly in his role as Director of Policy Planning in the State Department where he authored National Security Council document 68. Nitze was also involved in negotiating the SALT I agreement, as well as the ABM Treaty. Nitze's appointments also included Secretary of the Navy and Deputy Secretary of Defense; Elmo Zumwalt was another high profile Committee member. After his appointment as Commander of Naval Forces in Vietnam from 1968 to 1970, Zumwalt became Chief of Naval Operations from 1970 to 1974. He was a close friend of Nitze, who had been his superior while Secretary of the Navy.

¹⁶ James Fallows quoted in Beth Ann Ingold, “The Committee on the Present Danger: A Study of Elite and Public Influence, 1976-1980”, (PhD diss., University of Pittsburgh, 1989), 418–9.

¹⁷ Unnamed Carter Administration spokesperson quoted in David Carl Kurkowski, “The Role of Interest Groups in the Domestic Debate on SALT II”, (PhD diss., Temple University, 1982), 153.

overestimation of the Soviet threat be regarded as disingenuous threat inflation or as prudent worst-case scenario thinking? What was the more important goal to the CPD: the abandonment of SALT II or the more abstract effort of re-establishing the Cold War consensus in support of containment? What was the influence of the Committee in the Reagan campaign in 1980? While we have an understanding of the substance of the CPD's message of danger as well as a number of interpretations of its influence on the Carter Administration, current scholarly literature lacks sufficient detail of how the group directed its informational campaign and how it functioned as an organisation. Most importantly, there has not yet been an investigation as to why the Committee's message became progressively more alarmist.

This existing historiography of the Committee on the Present Danger can be divided into four approaches. First, initial studies of the CPD, written before the end of the Cold War, tended to act as warnings of the group's continued alarmist message of Soviet military power. This approach was to undertake a discourse analysis of the group's pamphlets and was sometimes augmented by interviews with CPD board members. This body of literature illuminates how the Committee contributed to the creation of a new 'security discourse' surrounding the 'Soviet threat' in the late 1970s. This focus of study was most prominent during and immediately following the most active years of the CPD, which can be explained as an attempt by political scientists and journalists to understand what the group was intending to accomplish through its activities. It focused less on the influence of the CPD's ideas and messages on national security policy, which at the time appeared substantial given the media coverage the group received, and more on understanding the political objectives of the CPD.

The first comprehensive analysis of the CPD remains a key study for understanding the historical significance of the group. *Peddlers of Crisis* by Jerry

Sanders, a sociologist, utilises interviews with CPD members as well as an analysis of their pamphlets and an evaluation of the group's policy objectives. Sanders' key finding is that 'as a result of this well-organized and even better financed campaign, the policy debate took place within increasingly narrow limits veering sharply to the right'.¹⁸ One objective of Sanders' study is to raise awareness of a group whose influence in national security debates troubled him. Sanders registers his concern that 'by its continuing presence the CPD will be able to control the terrain between domestic politics and foreign policy'.¹⁹ While Sanders' study is well researched and provides detailed analysis of the activities of the CPD, the overriding theme of his analysis is to warn of what the group might yet accomplish. With the Cold War now over and the CPD's papers accessible it is no longer necessary to warn of the group's alarmist message, and the nature and development of the Committee's alarmism can now be assessed with less emphasis on the group's future conduct.

Also in this first approach, Simon Dalby has undertaken a detailed study of CPD discourse in *Creating the Second Cold War: The Discourse of Politics*, written in the late 1980s. He seeks to examine,

the discursive strategies of the CPD arguments, how the Other [the Soviet Union] is defined, how alternative formulations are rendered invalid and how their various concerns with the security discourses are articulated in a geopolitical scheme structured in terms of their omnipresent threatening Other.²⁰

Put simply, Dalby deconstructs the Committee's pamphlets and argues that it used its expert status to make its assessment of increasing Soviet military threat dominant within national security debates of the era. He suggests that the group's experts acted as if their

¹⁸ Jerry Sanders, *Peddlers of Crisis: The Committee on the Present Danger and the Politics of Containment*. (Boston: South End Press, 1983), 17.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 18.

²⁰ Simon Dalby, *Creating the Second Cold War: The Discourse of Politics*, (London: Pinter, 1990), 14.

interpretation was the only possible way to evaluate Soviet intentions and capabilities.²¹ A great limitation of studying the CPD's discourse in this way is that while it evaluates the group's written material and assesses what board members hoped to achieve, the approach offers little on how the group worked to popularise its views. Dalby's approach, by focusing predominately on the output of the CPD as 'security intellectuals', offers limited analysis on the strategy and coordination of the CPD's public campaign. Its message was tailored to appeal to influential journalists and politicians in national security debates, yet Dalby does not offer an explanation of how the CPD was organised to ensure that its warning would reach and persuade this prominent audience.

Other studies within this first approach that feature the CPD's message without a thorough analysis of the group's success in popularising its assessments include Gregg Herken's *Counsels of War* and Fred Kaplan's *Wizards of Armageddon*.²² These studies seek to offer an analysis of the strategists who administered America's Cold War campaign and demonstrate the continuity of personnel in the creation of American strategy. Kaplan argues that Paul Nitze, through his CPD membership, 'dominated the debate' over SALT II ratification.²³ Herken also recognises the CPD's stature, and states that the group's 'rise to prominence ... marked a stunning and portentous change'.²⁴ But as the purpose of these studies is to explain the development of American strategy in the post war era there is no discussion of how the CPD was able to achieve this prominent position. It is not sufficient to state *that* the CPD had influence without an adequate explanation of *how* it was acquired.

In *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Threat: Domestic Sources of the Cold War Consensus*, Alan Wolfe asks 'why, when the evidence is always ambiguous, [do] the

²¹ Ibid., 59

²² Gregg Herken, *Counsels of War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985); Fred M. Kaplan, *The Wizards of Armageddon* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984).

²³ Kaplan, *Wizards of Armageddon*, 381

²⁴ Herken, *Counsels of War*, 318

more negative perceptions develop at the time they do?’ However, he does not answer this question as it relates to the CPD.²⁵ Wolfe argues that the CPD ‘took steps to launch a new surge in anti-Soviet perceptions’ but, aside from mentioning the group’s ‘ideological fervor’ and its ‘host of statistics’, the methods used by the CPD to gain respectability for its message are left unexamined.²⁶ The Committee’s statistics were not dismissed – they were regularly cited in national security debates, and therefore their formulation needs to be examined in much greater depth. These early studies of the CPD too often take its influence for granted and do not adequately examine how the group attained its reputation.

The second approach to CPD study has been to evaluate the group’s influence over the Carter Administration and its role in ending détente, particularly through its efforts in the SALT II ratification process. In light of Carter's single term as president, these studies identify the CPD as a key and vocal administration opponent and seek to ascertain the extent of the group's influence on national security politics in the late 1970s. This approach remains highly politicised. Those on the left argue that the CPD helped destroy détente through disingenuous argument, which derailed President Carter’s attempts to reorient American foreign policy away from East-West relations and towards human rights issues. For example, Thomas Bodenheimer and Robert Gould in *Rollback!: Right-wing Power in U.S. Foreign Policy* claim that the ‘CPD was so successful that it turned Carter’s foreign and military policies around’.²⁷ The CPD, the study suggests, achieved this result via a propaganda campaign: ‘By the late 1970s, the renewed media blitz of right wing groups such as the Committee on the Present

²⁵ Alan Wolfe, *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Threat: Domestic Sources of the Cold War Consensus* (Boston: South End Press, 1984), 39.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 31.

²⁷ Thomas Bodenheimer and Robert Gould, *Rollback!: Right-Wing Power in U.S. Foreign Policy* (Boston: South End Press, 1989), 165.

Danger had a major impact on renewing public Cold War fears.’²⁸ Charges of being right-wing propagandists, however, fail to consider that the Committee was in fact a majority Democrat organisation, which included both Henry ‘Scoop’ Jackson Democrats *and* liberal Democrats.²⁹ For example, the group’s composition included a union leader, Lane Kirkland, and a feminist campaigner, Estelle Ramey.³⁰ A carefully selected, diverse board membership makes it difficult to sustain an argument that the CPD was comprised exclusively of right-wing members.

Studies conducted by those on the right claim that the CPD alerted Americans to the adversely shifting U.S.-Soviet balance of power and ensured that Soviet abuse of détente ended. In this view, the CPD forced Carter to reconsider his own policies by highlighting their contradictions and dangers, especially given that the Soviet Union continued to present an ominous military threat. For example, Brian Auten in *Carter’s Conversion: The Hardening of American Defense Policy* asserts that their activities ‘had little influence’ on Carter’s conversion towards confrontation.³¹ He argues that ‘Carter’s “Conversion” ... is best understood when examined from the external-in rather than as something that was constructed out of the warp and woof of domestic politics.’³² If Bodenheimer overemphasises the right-wing make-up of CPD board members, Auten underestimates its political influence. The Carter Administration consulted the

²⁸ Ibid., 234.

²⁹ Scoop Jackson Democrats were supporters of Senator Henry Jackson, a Democrat often regarded as a Cold War ‘Hawk’ due to his opposition to détente and his advocacy of increased military strength. A number of Jackson Democrats would end up leaving the Democratic Party and supporting Ronald Reagan’s candidacy in 1980. While the CPD was undoubtedly supported by those who might be called ‘defence-right’ advocates, the group itself contained enough board members from outside of traditional defence-related professions for its claims of ideological neutrality to be taken seriously.

³⁰ Lane Kirkland was a labor union leader and held the position of secretary-treasurer president of the AFL-CIO union in 1976 before becoming its president in 1979. He was a founding member of the CPD and was one of the group’s Honorary Chairmen; Estelle Ramey was an endocrinologist at Georgetown University Medical Center in the 1970s. She had become a prominent feminist activist after challenging a Democrat National Convention committee member, Edgar Berman, when he had claimed that women were unfit for leadership positions in 1970.

³¹ Brian J. Auten, “Carter’s Conversion: An Analysis of Defence Policy Transformation Administration (1977-1979)”, (PhD diss., University of Reading, 2004), 302.

³² Ibid., 1.

Committee on numerous occasions between 1976 and 1980, and especially during the SALT II negotiations when the group directly influenced administration proposals.

Apportioning blame for the limitations of the Carter Administration has not facilitated an objective assessment of the Committee on the Present Danger. Rather than continuing to focus on whether it is Carter or the CPD who should be blamed for a failure to reform foreign policy, it would be more useful to examine the ability of the CPD to gain credibility by nature of its board membership, and recognise a more complicated relationship with the Carter Administration. In 1977, the new administration and the Committee expected to work together on national security issues; it is not true that the group was started specifically to oppose Carter, as is often argued.³³

The third approach to analysing the CPD, less politicised than the previous approach, has been to emphasise the continuity of the group's alarmist message in a Cold War context. In *The Committee on the Present Danger: A Study of Elite and Public Influence, 1976-1980* Beth Ann Ingold demonstrates how the group expanded its appeal by focusing on long standing national security concerns. Ingold argues that the CPD's message succeeded 'by tapping into deeply-ingrained convictions concerning America's special mission while playing on fears and frustrations of a nation in decline ... [and] successfully revitalized the well-worn foreign policy ideology'.³⁴ Her study is a rhetorical analysis of the Committee and of the Carter Administration, and is more interested in examining the CPD's ability to control the national security narrative rather than how the Committee's analysis evolved from 1976 to 1980. Her conclusion is that the CPD 'provided the analyses, evidence, and arguments' that supported what

³³ Campbell Craig and Fredrik Logevall, *America's Cold War: The Politics of Insecurity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 306; Dan Caldwell, *The Dynamics of Domestic Politics and Arms Control*, (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1991), 188.

³⁴ Ingold, "The Committee on the Present Danger: A Study of Elite and Public Influence, 1976-1980," 13.

many Americans already believed – that the U.S.S.R. was militant and expansionist.³⁵ Ingold emphasises how the Carter Administration ceded the ground on national security issues due to the president’s inability to build a consensus for his policies. There is less attention given to how the Committee’s own analyses become progressively more alarmist, a task which can now be completed with the opening of the group’s archive.

A similar study on the CPD’s role in advancing evidence of Soviet malevolence has been made by Edward Linenthal, who suggests the CPD message tapped into the ‘fear and frustrations’ of the distrust in American government in the post-Watergate climate.³⁶ He argues that the CPD’s ‘ability to construct a milieu of crisis at a time when the perplexing memories of Vietnam and more current foreign policy dilemmas made Americans susceptible to the comfortable, if not comforting, symbols of the Cold War’.³⁷ The Committee did indeed construct the case for crisis, but Linenthal does not consider that the group did legitimately sense a mounting crisis. In *The Making of the Second Cold War*, Fred Halliday also proposes that the CPD created the ‘mythical “Window of Vulnerability”... [for which] much of the argument rests upon a combination of linguistic slippage and debatable systems of measurement’.³⁸ Once again, by focusing on the group’s supposedly fear-mongering statements, these studies do not examine how the CPD gained credence for its viewpoint among policymakers, which was a necessary precondition for the Carter Administration to feel compelled to address the concerns highlighted by the CPD. Other groups with similar ambition to influence the direction of national security policy – notably the American Committee for East-West Accord who were committed to pointing out the dangers of nuclear war –

³⁵ Ingold, “The Committee on the Present Danger: A Study of Elite and Public Influence, 1976-1980,” 428.

³⁶ Edward T. Linenthal, “War and Sacrifice in the Nuclear Age: The Committee on the Present Danger and the Renewal of Martial Enthusiasm”, in *A Shuddering Dawn: Religious Studies and the Nuclear Age*, ed. Ira Chernus and Edward T. Linenthal (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 28.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Fred Halliday, *The Making of the Second Cold War*, (London, UK: Verso, 1986), 71.

did not achieve the prominence enjoyed by the CPD, and this failure requires explanation.

Strobe Talbott's *Endgame: The Inside Story of SALT II*, and Dan Caldwell's *The Dynamics of Domestic Politics and Arms Control: The SALT II Treaty Ratification Debate* also attribute significant responsibility to the Committee for the failure of SALT II ratification, but do not examine the CPD's rise to prominence outside the confines of the SALT II ratification debate.³⁹ The CPD established its credibility as an authority on national security issues *before* the SALT II debate, and this is an important consideration when weighing the historical importance of the group.

This third approach of assessing the Committee has been revisited more recently, with its alarmist warnings being incorporated within an assessment of a numbers of organisations accused of threat inflation in post war America. This scholarship examines the CPD in the context of threat inflation that stretches from 1950s missile gap concerns to early 21st century fears of terrorism. These studies are useful in placing the CPD's message into historical context, showing that the Committee's alarmism was not a novel feature in the 1970s but was in fact a resilient feature of the American post war experience.

Historian Sheldon Ungar, for example, argues that 'the generalized and relatively constant fear of the Soviet threat was punctuated by moral panics unleashed by the perception of spectacular and startling Soviet challenges' to U.S. hegemony.⁴⁰ In his view, the CPD propagated just such a panic, undertaking 'a concerted propaganda effort ... [that] used the window of vulnerability as the fulcrum of the panic'.⁴¹ In *Killing Détente: The Right Attacks the CIA*, Anne Hessing Cahn also argues that the

³⁹ Strobe Talbott, *Endgame: The Inside Story of SALT II*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), 204; Caldwell, *The Dynamics of Domestic Politics and Arms Control*, 104.

⁴⁰ Sheldon Ungar, "Moral Panics, the Military-Industrial Complex, and the Arms Race", *The Sociological Quarterly* 31, no. 2 (1990), 166.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 179.

CPD 'viewed themselves as modern Paul Reveres attempting to awaken a sleeping nation'.⁴² These claims are not sufficiently explained, however. The implication is that the Committee consciously decided to incite panic among Americans in order to encourage its plea for higher defence spending to be accepted. Yet this dissertation argues that it was the CPD board members themselves that panicked, and this was not a concerted, deceitful effort to incite a panic among ordinary Americans. These studies, however, treat the CPD as one example within a long line of threat inflators and do not examine the group's own alarmism in sufficient detail. They therefore fail to explain why board members *themselves* grew so fearful of the Soviet Union, and how they subsequently gained recognition for their alarming interpretation of Soviet capabilities and intentions.

This trend of approaching the CPD within the theme of threat inflation has expanded in the wake of intelligence failures in the run up to the Iraq War of 2003, which has prompted renewed focus on the CPD's activities. In *America's Cold War: The Politics of Insecurity*, Campbell Craig and Fredrik Logevall emphasise the enduring feature of threat inflation in American national security policymaking. They point out the tendency of the political middle ground to drift 'in the direction of alarmism and militarism'.⁴³ They argue that the structure of American politics was often conducive to threat inflation for a number of reasons, including presidential politics, international politics, and, ultimately, fear of threats to the American way of life. Studies that adopt the threat inflation approach, including *America's Cold War*, tend to argue that the CPD was influential because it exploited this feature of U.S. politics, successfully incited

⁴² Anne Hessing Cahn, *Killing Detente: The Right Attacks the CIA*. (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 16.

⁴³ Craig and Logevall, *America's Cold War*, 9.

panic, and secured the adoption of its preferred defence policies.⁴⁴ However, this approach lacks a detailed examination of exactly how the CPD was able to take advantage of this enduring feature of American national security politics. The CPD did not attain prominence by nature of its alarming message alone – other contemporary alarmist groups, the National Security Information Center for example, did not match the CPD's stature. It is also important, therefore, to understand how the group's membership composition legitimised the CPD's message. Accordingly, this dissertation pays particular attention to the Committee's board members and how the group's warning of increasing threat resonated as a consequence of their claim of the 'common sense' nature of their warning.

The fourth and most recent approach to the study of the CPD has been to place the group within the ideological lineage of neoconservatism. There has been substantial scholarly interest in the intellectual roots of the movement since the recognition of neoconservative influence in American foreign policy making. These studies have provided a detailed understanding of the intellectual background of the CPD members who scholars consider to be neoconservative. Through this approach a number of studies clearly demonstrate how neoconservative national security thought evolved. In one such study Jacob Heilbrunn charts the neoconservative reaction to the Vietnam War and the worry of an overreaction in favour of isolation by ordinary Americans in *They Knew They Were Right: The Rise of the Neocons*.⁴⁵ In Heilbrunn's account the Committee 'served as the locus of the convergence of the traditional right and neoconservatives'.⁴⁶ Another study *Neoconservatism: The Biography of a Movement* by Justin Vaïsse is the most comprehensive recent study of neoconservatism and features

⁴⁴ In Craig and Logevall's terms the Committee 'went for the jugular' in its efforts to bring about a return to the black and white verities of the Cold War. See Craig and Logevall, *America's Cold War*, 307.

⁴⁵ See chapter two, "Wilderness", Jacob Heilbrunn, *They Knew They Were Right: The Rise of the Neocons*, (New York: Doubleday, 2008).

⁴⁶ Heilbrunn, *The Rise of the Neocons*, 146-7

an entire chapter dedicated to the CPD.⁴⁷ Vaïsse also explains that the CPD ‘played a key role in the shift of allegiance by certain Democrats – Scoop Jackson Democrats – to the administration of Ronald Reagan ... [it] also served as an incubator ... and a source of inspiration for the neoconservatism of the third age’.⁴⁸ This might well be true, but it is important to examine the process by which the CPD served as an incubator. The focus on neoconservatism tends to overstate the importance of the movement on the Committee. While Vaïsse concedes that ‘It is misleading to treat the Committee on the Present Danger as an essentially neoconservative organization’, the focus of his study nonetheless remains on the CPD as a neoconservative group.⁴⁹ By examining how the group functioned in practice it is possible to establish a more comprehensive understanding of the shared concerns of disparate CPD board members – neoconservative and otherwise – over Soviet military strength. For example, Matthew Ridgway and Edward Rowny, two high ranking army officers who joined the CPD board of directors, cannot be labelled as neoconservative intellectuals yet their presence was essential in bolstering the Committee’s claims of national security expertise.⁵⁰

Another important study within this approach is John Ehrman’s *The Rise of Neoconservatism: Intellectuals and Foreign Affairs, 1945-1994*. He attributes the success of the CPD to the fact that ‘they did not forget a fundamental truth – that the Soviet Union posed terrible threats to American security’.⁵¹ Like Vaïsse, Ehrman

⁴⁷ See in particular chapter five, “Nuclear Alarm: The Committee on the Present Danger”, Justin Vaïsse, *Neoconservatism: The Biography of a Movement*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010).

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 150.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 149.

⁵⁰ Matthew Ridgway was a career soldier who commanded numerous U.S. Army units between 1917 and 1955, most notably during the Korean War when he commanded the 8th Army. After his retirement from active duty, Ridgway continued to advocate for a strong military, and participated in numerous organisations, including the CPD, that worked towards this goal; Edward Rowny joined the CPD in 1979 after resigning his post as the representative of the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the SALT II negotiations. Prior to this appointment, Rowny had commanded U.S. Army units in the Second World War, the Korean War, and in the Vietnam War.

⁵¹ John Ehrman, *The Rise of Neoconservatism: Intellectuals and Foreign Affairs, 1945-1994*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 189.

concedes that ‘the committee was not a strictly neoconservative organization’ but also proceeds to examine in detail only the neoconservative members.⁵² When he argues that the ‘neoconservatives began using their rhetorical talents to attack the new policymakers’, he also neglects the crucial non-neoconservative element within the CPD – including Ridgway and Rowny – who supplied the national security credibility that permitted the neoconservative members' rhetorical talent to resonate.⁵³

Thus, important aspects of the CPD’s success have been obscured by focusing exclusively on neoconservatism rather than on the group itself. The bipartisan nature of the CPD is one of its most interesting features, which many studies, including Ehrman’s, do not explore. There was undoubtedly overlap between the neoconservative movement and the Committee's membership but to focus exclusively on the neoconservative element of the CPD's board members misrepresents the character of the group.

This dissertation will address the limitations of these four approaches to examining the CPD and, in doing so, will offer an interpretation that stands on its own. This analysis will be achieved by dispassionately studying the group chronologically over its first four years of operation. Such an approach gives due recognition and importance to the evolution of the group's arguments between 1976 and 1980, which is crucial to understanding how the CPD was able to generate interest in its worrying conclusions. Most importantly a chronological approach clarifies the process by which board members came to assess their worst-case assessments as reflective of reality over this short period of time. Committee board members convinced themselves of an emerging crisis, which seemed to be unfolding by late 1979. The dissertation will therefore analyse the actions taken by the Executive Committee of the CPD and assess

⁵² Ibid., 112.

⁵³ Ibid., 110.

how they contributed to the group's alarming prediction of a conflict with the U.S.S.R. in the early 1980s.

The chronological structure allows us to demonstrate how the group's involvement in a number of policy debates between 1976 and 1980 meant that its advocacy for the estimation of Soviet military capabilities to be compiled on a worst-case basis came to be superseded by an urgent warning that this worst-case assessment had already come to pass. How the CPD initially compiled its worst-case analysis and over the next three years came to assess the veracity of its alarming warning can best be argued by using a chronological approach. Only by examining the group from its initial argument against détente, to its insistence the SALT II handed the U.S.S.R. military superiority, and finally that its rival superpower was poised to expand militarily into Western Europe can the reasons for the group's increasingly alarmist message be adequately evaluated and understood.

Rather than assess the role of the CPD in a number of separate policy debates, as has too often been the case, the dissertation isolates the group and places it at the centre of analysis. An appreciation of the evolution of the group's assessments over the four years between 1976 and 1980 is critical in attempting to understand how the CPD's message became so alarmist, the reason for their participation in the SALT II ratification debate, and why Committee members themselves became ever more convinced of the accuracy of their assessment. The dissertation recognises the mounting alarmism of the Committee on the Present Danger, which by 1979 appears overwrought even though board members themselves considered their warning as objective, prudent, and logical. This is an important goal given that through its analyses the CPD, as the historian Bruce Schulman argues, 'offered Ronald Reagan intellectual and political

legitimacy'.⁵⁴ In addition, as Julian Zelizer argues, the CPD was able to portray itself as 'a well-prepared group that ... made it difficult for Carter to depict his opponents as extremists'.⁵⁵ Alarmist though it might have been, the Committee did have an influential role in national security debates of the late 1970s.

The dissertation ends with the inauguration of President Reagan in January 1981. This was a clear juncture in the organisation's history, and the participation of over 30 CPD board members in the Reagan Administration, including the president himself, emphasised the acceptance of the group's concerns in just four years. Reagan's election ushered in a new era for the CPD and its most active board members in particular. Committee ideas were no longer regarded as particularly controversial. Appointments in government presented new challenges for Committee board members, and changed the nature of the group. In addition, at the beginning of 1981 the views of the Committee and the Reagan Administration become problematic to delineate, and requires a careful examination of the Reagan Administration that is beyond the scope of this study. It is therefore with Reagan's victory in late-1980 that the dissertation ends its analysis in order to draw conclusions from the CPD's successful activities in its first years of operation.

The dissertation argues that during the four years between November 1976 and November 1980 the CPD was able to establish itself as a respected group on national security issues and was influential in normalising arguments for containment. Its success was a function of its board members' efforts to foster an image of impartial expertise, which was also assisted by President Carter's perceived inadequacies and by Soviet actions in the Third World. The CPD articulated rising concern for national

⁵⁴ Bruce J Schulman, *The Seventies: The Great Shift in American Culture, Society, and Politics* (New York: Free Press, 2001), 204.

⁵⁵ Julian E Zelizer, "Conservatives, Carter, and the Politics of National Security", in *Rightward Bound: Making America Conservative in the 1970s*, ed. Bruce J Schulman and Julian E Zelizer (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 275.

decline and was successful because alongside its warnings of Soviet military strength it also proposed a 'common sense' solution to the problem: higher defence spending.⁵⁶ Containment was once again established as the 'middle ground' for American Cold War policy.⁵⁷ The CPD's argument for a worst-case approach was accepted as the prudent basis for national security planning after Soviet activities seemed to corroborate the Committee's longstanding message of the danger presented by America's Cold War rival.

Evidence from the CPD's papers does not support Craig and Logevall's view that the Committee was one of a group of disingenuous threat inflators, motivated by self-interest, who used propaganda techniques to promote increased military spending because of a 'need for the Cold War to continue'.⁵⁸ The dissertation makes a different argument; self-interest was not the driving motivation for the Committee's board members. A more persuasive explanation is that professional dedication to the preservation of national security coupled with the absence of civilian government oversight meant that the CPD's analysis steadily grew more alarmist. Each board member's fears were incorporated into the CPD assessment of Soviet power, and any indication of Soviet aggression – actual or perceived – was taken as proof that the CPD's worst-case assessment was correct. In this way, the Committee's 1976 warning of détente's risks morphed into an analysis of impending Cold War defeat by the end of 1979.

The interpretation that the Committee acted as a deceitful group of propagandists between 1976 and 1980 is too simplistic and is not supported by the evidence now accessible in the CPD's papers. The CPD's national security planners, all experts in their field, created an analysis that presented the Soviet Union in its worst

⁵⁶ Dalby, *Creating the Second Cold War*, 51.

⁵⁷ Craig and Logevall, *America's Cold War*, 9.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 8

possible light. They believed that this was a prudent methodology given the malice they assumed of their communist adversary. These malevolent intentions of Kremlin leaders were taken for granted, and Soviet defence programmes were assessed in this context. Military capabilities were then taken as an indicator of strategic intent, and a feedback loop was created: Committee board members ‘prudently’ compiled evidence that further convinced them of the validity of their alarming warnings. By 1979, the result was an analysis of a Soviet strategy to win the Cold War buttressed by formidable military strength that the U.S. could barely hope to deter. This assessment was not imagined without any evidence, but because definitive evidence of Soviet intentions and capabilities was scarce the CPD felt justified in quantifying indicators of strength using the least optimistic interpretation of the available data. Over time the Committee's board members came to believe that their pessimistic assessment, even though it was based on inconclusive evidence, was entirely accurate. As the political scientist John Mueller argues, defence analysts of the era became 'mesmerized by their own exquisite, mathematized analyses of the Soviet-American arms race ... [and] managed to convince themselves that disaster was likely'.⁵⁹ This assessment accurately summarises the CPD. By examining the Committee's four-year opposition to détente, the dissertation demonstrates the process by which CPD board members convinced themselves that their worst-case assumptions of Soviet intentions were indeed unfolding.

This tendency towards alarmism among a group of national security experts was not new. Winston Churchill, for example, noted the same tendency among the British Chiefs of Staff during the Second World War: 'You may take the most gallant sailor, the most intrepid airman, or the most audacious soldier, put them at a table together — what

⁵⁹ John Mueller, *Overblown: How Politicians and the Terrorism Industry Inflate National Security Threats, and Why We Believe Them* (New York: Free Press, 2006), 77.

do you get? The sum of their fears.’⁶⁰ By 1979, after over three years of fortnightly meetings, the co-writing of numerous pamphlets on Soviet capabilities and intentions, and evidence that *prima facie* seemed to confirm Soviet aggression in the Third World, the Committee's analysis of the Soviet threat had become the sum of its members' fears.

The dissertation utilises the recently opened archives of the group, held at the Hoover Institute at Stanford University in California, to determine how the Committee's analyses tended towards alarmism. These records are comprehensive, and as well as providing documentation of the group's activities they allow an appreciation of how board members' assessments of the military balance altered in reaction to domestic politics as well as Soviet actions. Of particular importance to the dissertation are transcripts from each of the group's annual meetings, which capture a snapshot of CPD thinking in November each year between 1976 and 1980. The group's archive also includes previously unseen memoranda sent to board members explaining the CPD's objectives and assessments of its performance. This extensive archive has only recently been opened to scholars and permits a far more complete assessment of the CPD to be undertaken than has previously been possible. Rather than assume that the group's views on national security issues were static, one can chart the evolution of the Committee's thinking on these issues by making use of the abundance of documentation in the group's archive. This facilitates a far more sophisticated understanding of the group, as researchers no longer have to rely solely on publicly released pamphlets to assess the CPD's intentions – it is now possible to assess the underlying motives.

In addition to the organisation's own collection, the private papers of a number of CPD board members are held at the Library of Congress in Washington D.C., and have been utilised in the dissertation. In particular, Paul Nitze and Clare Boothe Luce's

⁶⁰ Churchill quoted in Harold Macmillan, *The Blast of War, 1939-1945* (London: Harper & Row, 1968), 424.

private papers feature valuable material that permits some of the Committee's activities to be reconsidered.⁶¹ For example, the extent of Committee board members' correspondence with Carter Administration officials has not previously been recognised, and records in Nitze's private papers indicate that the CPD had direct influence on the Carter Administration's SALT II negotiating position in the summer of 1978. The specific nature of this role has not been revealed in previous studies of the Committee.

A frequently neglected aspect of CPD activity has been board members' regular appearances on television programming during national security debates of the late 1970s, and during the SALT II ratification process in particular. Board members often appeared on news programmes and televised debates, and the dissertation has consulted such material from the Vanderbilt University Television Archive in Tennessee. These television appearances indicate a wider national audience than many studies assume and also contribute to our understanding of the Committee's influence on shaping the discussion of national security issues in media coverage.

By consulting the CPD's own archival material – its published pamphlets, internal memoranda, and annual meeting transcripts – alongside board members' televised appearances and private correspondence between CPD board members, the dissertation attempts to analyse the group comprehensively and free of political or ideological agenda. Assessing the Committee's campaign in this way ensures that the group's activities can be accurately assessed rather than assumed. As the literature review has demonstrated, the tendency to place the Committee within certain ideological perspectives or long-term analyses of national security politics has frequently led to a mischaracterisation of the group. This dissertation avoids this

⁶¹ Clare Boothe Luce was a Republican Congresswoman in the 1940s and Ambassador to Italy between 1953 and 1956. In 1973, she had been appointed to the President's Foreign Policy Advisory Board by President Nixon, and continued in this role under President Ford. Boothe Luce had recommended the Team B exercise to Ford, and was a founding board member of the CPD in 1976.

problem by not seeking to place the group within a particular ideological grouping or in the lineage of threat politics at the outset of the study. This deliberate focus on the Committee, its board members, and its activities permits the dissertation to analyse the group without political agenda. Given the group's influence in national security debates of the era and in re-establishing the credibility of containment in particular, this is an important objective especially that the group's archives are now available to scholars. In effect, the dissertation treats the CPD as a case study of a group suspected of threat inflation; its influence in national security debates in the late 1970s warrants such close analysis, and access to the group's archive now makes a study of this nature possible.

The dissertation has seven chapters: an introductory chapter, a chapter analysing each year from 1976 to 1980, and a concluding chapter. Together, they argue that the CPD formulated its analysis through worst-case estimations, not deceptive propaganda, and that its board members came to view this assessment as an accurate representation of the threat presented by the Soviet Union.

Chapter One, an introductory chapter, explores the context for the establishment of the CPD. It challenges a number of scholars who suggest that Committee members were motivated by careerist goals to embark on a threat inflation campaign. Instead, the chapter argues that the CPD was sincerely concerned with highlighting adverse trends in the U.S.-Soviet military balance, which they believed was a consequence of *détente*. The chapter also analyses the efforts of the most influential members of the CPD prior to joining the group and demonstrates a long-standing concern with the deterioration of American military strength.

Chapter Two examines the creation of the Committee over 1976, as well as the initial objectives of its Executive Committee. It argues that the CPD, contrary to a number of scholarly accounts, was not founded specifically to oppose the new Carter

Administration. The chapter traces the treatment of détente in the 1976 presidential election campaign and also the Committee's contact with the Ford and Carter campaigns. The chapter also examines the reception of the Committee's public launch in November 1976, and concludes that in 1976 Committee had little expectation of success but nevertheless felt duty-bound to attempt to influence the discussion of national security issues.

Chapter Three explains how the CPD was able to establish credibility for itself and its message over 1977. It argues that by deliberately focusing on acquiring a bipartisan membership of notable public figures its message was not dismissed as the work of Cold War hawks as the group's board included a number of liberal Democrats unaffiliated with the Military-Industrial complex. The chapter also examines the nature of Committee projects in order to demonstrate that the group intended for its publications to be regarded as works of scholarship worthy of careful and considered critique rather than dismissed as pressure group propaganda. The chapter also examines the CPD's relationship with the Carter Administration showing that although both the administration and the Committee intended to establish a working relationship in good faith it became apparent that their approaches to U.S.-Soviet relations were incompatible.

Chapter Four analyses how the CPD presented its case against détente and for renewed confrontation through its participation in the SALT II ratification process in 1978. The chapter argues that Paul Nitze, the CPD's Director of Policy Studies, attempted to quantify the risks associated with treaty ratification, which seemed to add credibility to the Committee's analysis of Soviet strength. The chapter also contrasts the CPD's activities with those of its principal opponent, the American Committee for East-West Accord (ACEWA). The chapter concludes that the CPD's quantification of risk

seemed more a credible and persuasive argument than ACEWA's appeal for trust in Kremlin leaders' sincerity over détente.

Chapter Five argues that by 1979 the CPD believed that there was irrefutable proof that the U.S.S.R. was pursuing a victory strategy after a series of crises that the Executive Committee assumed were orchestrated from the Kremlin. The chapter also examines the CPD's view that Carter's determination to ratify SALT II was dangerous in this context of apparent Soviet expansion. Committee pamphlets charged that American forces were demonstrably not deterring Kremlin leaders' expansion plans, and the chapter concludes that by the end of 1979 Committee board members considered their worst-case assessments were in fact accurate; the Soviet Union was taking advantage of its comparative military strength to extend its influence. For CPD board members, Cold War defeat had become an imminent prospect.

Chapter Six examines the CPD's approach to the election year of 1980 in the context of its assessment of imminent and potentially decisive Soviet expansion. The Executive Committee deemed President Carter's response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan as dangerously inadequate. The chapter argues that CPD board members were determined to defeat Carter and replace him with a leader who would take the Soviet threat seriously. Their support of Reagan was based on the fact that he alone sufficiently acknowledged the significance of recent Soviet military expansion; the Committee had become single-issue advocates on the need to restore American deterrent capabilities. The chapter concludes that the Committee, still assessing imminent Soviet activity in Western Europe, were not mollified after Reagan's victory, but considered it of the utmost importance to continue their campaign in order to ensure lasting public support for the confrontation of Soviet expansion.

The final, concluding chapter summarises the significance and legacy of the CPD. Committee members were convinced of the accuracy of their assessment of Soviet strength and intentions by 1980. As a result, the CPD opted to continue its efforts despite so many of its board members joining the Reagan Administration. The Executive Committee were convinced that while the Soviet Union remained in existence there would remain a threat, and therefore CPD would continue to warn of the danger. The chapter argues that the threat that the CPD perceived grew exponentially between 1976 and 1980 by piecemeal incorporation of all the security fears of board members. As military planners, the Committee's leaders believed they were sensibly using the logic of military assessment and prudent planning. However, rather than an accurate analysis of a present danger, as CPD board members were convinced that they offered, the Committee in fact presented worst-case estimations that supported their unnecessarily fearful hypothesis of Soviet expansion.

The Committee on the Present Danger established itself as an important voice in national security debates in the second half of the 1970s. Its opposition to détente and warning of a Soviet expansion strategy seemed to many Americans a valid explanation for their country's apparent setbacks on the international stage. However, despite the CPD's influence, there has not yet been a study of how the group became so influential or how its alarmist hypothesis evolved that utilises the archival material of the group now available to scholars. These recently accessible sources suggest that too many studies mischaracterise precisely what the group argued and how this changed over time. Conclusions that board members made deliberately disingenuous claims and that insinuate ulterior motives for the CPD's campaign cannot be supported by this recently accessible archival material, nor does it support the notion that the group should be primarily assessed as a neoconservative group.

This dissertation seeks to analyse the group objectively and without a predetermined designation. Given the group's influence and legacy, an impartial assessment is essential. The CPD directly influenced a number of national security debates during the single term of President Carter and many Executive Committee members would later receive appointments in the Reagan Administration. A comprehensive and careful analysis of the Committee's activities, private correspondence, and interactions with the executive and legislative branches of government supports an argument that the group's alarmist message was sincerely made. The Committee's national security experts became genuinely concerned of a Soviet military invasion of Western Europe in the early 1980s, a striking progression from the group's warnings of détente's limitations when the group formed in 1976. This substantial four-year shift requires explanation, and this is the objective of the dissertation.

The Dangers of Détente

'If ... we allow ourselves to be deceived by a myth of detente, reduce our military strength, and permit our alliances to erode, we may well suffer irreversible defeats, which could imperil the safety of democracy in America.'⁶²

The Committee on the Present Danger's board members believed that détente was a dangerous strategy that put 'national survival itself ... in peril'.⁶³ A number of historians have asserted that this was an attitude motivated by self-interest and represents another instance of actors within the military-industrial complex distorting domestic politics. The historian Derek Leebaert, for example, asserts that the CPD represented 'the usual Cold War nature of self-interest, habit, and experience'.⁶⁴ Fredrik Logevall similarly dismisses the Committee's campaign as simply 'echoing the missile gap alarmism'.⁶⁵ In his view, the CPD was merely another example of ambitious officials crying wolf and claiming a 'ridiculous' threat in order to advance their own 'careerist goals'.⁶⁶ Such an interpretation suggests that the Committee's board members were insincere and perhaps even devious in their appraisal of U.S.-Soviet relations, what another historian, Sheldon Ungar, calls 'a concerted propaganda effort'.⁶⁷

This opening chapter will challenge this suspicious view of the Committee's intentions. It demonstrates that the efforts of the CPD were not aimed at invoking a 'moral panic' based on fabricated, fictitious assessments, but instead argues that the CPD's Executive Committee members were sincerely anxious about America's prospects in the Cold War.⁶⁸ For those who would become CPD board members, the

⁶² "The Quest for Detente: A Statement by the Foreign Policy Task Force of the Coalition for a Democratic Majority," 31 July, 1974, Box 447, CPD Papers, 15.

⁶³ CPD Executive Committee, "Common Sense and the Common Danger: Policy Statement of the Committee on the Present Danger," 5.

⁶⁴ Derek Leebaert, *The Fifty-Year Wound: The True Price of America's Cold War Victory* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 2002), 450.

⁶⁵ Craig and Logevall, *America's Cold War*, 306.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 306 and 363.

⁶⁷ Ungar, "Moral Panics, the Military-Industrial Complex, and the Arms Race", 179.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

strategy of containment was an axiom of sound U.S. Cold War conduct, a belief based on decades of government or military experience (and sometimes both). Without the guiding principle of containment as well as sufficient military capabilities to enforce the policy, these national security experts were certain, the Soviet Union would be able to expand its global influence unmolested. The chapter suggests that the Committee was formed not as an effort to manipulate or to deceive, but as an act of duty to alert Americans to a genuine concern that détente undermined national security.

The first section will demonstrate how containment strategy had become axiomatic for many national security experts who would join the Committee as board members. They viewed containment as the only realistic approach to national security policy that would prevent the erosion, and eventual capitulation, of American global influence in the face of an aggressive and determined U.S.S.R. The second section introduces the earlier efforts of the Committee's founding board members to argue against détente, and makes clear that their assessment of a present danger in 1976 was not fabricated as a pretext to form an alarmist group. A sense of emerging vulnerability had deeply worried the group's founding members since the end of the Vietnam War. Their efforts on behalf of the newly formed CPD were regarded as necessary out of a sense of duty, not careerism. The Committee's most prominent members had previously held government posts, and in a number of cases resigned from government service in order to speak freely on national security issues. A final section examines the role of the Team B competitive intelligence exercise in the formation of the Committee. The chapter concludes that the background of its founding members does not indicate that the CPD operated on the basis of its members' self-interest, but on a shared, sincere alarm that the Cold War was heading towards defeat.

Cold War Strategists and Containment

The CPD's two principal founders, Paul Nitze and Eugene Rostow, regarded the Cold War as primarily a military and not an ideological struggle.⁶⁹ Military capabilities would decide the victor, and, to Nitze and Rostow, American capabilities increasingly seemed unable to match those of its Soviet adversary. By the mid-1970s they perceived that military setbacks were possible as there seemed little prospect of the imbalance being addressed promptly while Nixon (and later Ford) 'claimed too much [of détente] in explaining the state of Soviet-American relations' and in doing so weakened 'the responsible bipartisan consensus without which a strong and effective American foreign policy [was impossible]'.⁷⁰ Nitze and Rostow deliberated the group's formation for over six months between December 1975 and April 1976.⁷¹ They introduced the Committee to the public in November 1976 after a number of planning meetings over the summer. Individuals who joined Rostow and Nitze included Elmo Zumwalt, Edward Rowny, and Matthew Ridgway. They had attained high military rank and by nature of their military training also perceived the Cold War as primarily an issue of comparative American and Soviet military strength, which they also believed was deteriorating through the pursuit of détente.

All of the CPD's founding board members expressed concern at the lack of military investment following the Vietnam War and noted the concurrent strengthening

⁶⁹ In 1976, Eugene Rostow was Dean of the Yale Law School, a position he held from 1955. During the Second World War he served in the Lend Lease Administration under Dean Acheson, who would become Secretary of State in the Truman Administration. Rostow also served as Lyndon Johnson's Under-Secretary of Defense from 1966 to 1969. During this time, Rostow rigorously defended American involvement in Vietnam as necessary under its treaty obligations to South Vietnam. After leaving government service and returning to Yale, Rostow remained active in foreign policy, heading the Coalition for a Democratic Majority Foreign Policy Task Force before becoming the driving force behind the CPD.

⁷⁰ "The Quest For Detente", 31 July, 1974, Box 447, CPD Papers, 14-15.

⁷¹ Eugene Rostow to Charls Walker and Paul Nitze, 1 December, 1975, Box 68, CPD Papers; Eugene Rostow to Henry Kissinger, 5 April, 1976, Box 17, CPD Papers.

of Soviet forces.⁷² In their view, a dangerous disparity in military strength was emerging and efforts to contain or deter Soviet actions were losing credibility. According to this analysis, America was unprepared for conflict thus preventing the application of containment strategy that had guided Cold War policy since the early 1950s. The CPD would attract those who shared the view that détente was an affront to the long-standing verities of a successful Cold War strategy. Détente represented what Rostow frequently labelled ‘wishful thinking’ because it suggested that Cold War tensions had been alleviated even though Soviet military capabilities had steadily improved.⁷³ Increasing Soviet strength and the threat to American national interests that this characterised obligated Rostow to pursue extensive public coverage and discussion of the issue in order to facilitate support for the necessary corrective defence programmes.

The fears of the CPD's founders were not intended to generate a 'moral panic', as Ungar argues.⁷⁴ It is important to recognise that the CPD's Executive Committee members were not ardent anti-communists, adopting an alarmist position on Soviet relations and American fortunes in the Cold War by nature of their ideological conviction. In fact, the Committee's leaders were not particularly concerned at all with the ideological component of the struggle with the Soviet Union, and were instead fixated on the military balance between the superpowers. They were professional arms control negotiators, military planners, and nuclear strategists who had extensive experience administering America's Cold War campaign. They had agonised over current and future capabilities of both American and Soviet nuclear and conventional forces; between them, members of the CPD's board had served in seven previous administrations. Their concerns over the state of America's Cold War campaign were

⁷² CPD Executive Committee, “Common Sense and the Common Danger: Policy Statement of the Committee on the Present Danger”, 4.

⁷³ Eugene Rostow to the Editor of the New York Times Magazine, 28 November, 1977, Box 71, CPD Papers.

⁷⁴ Ungar, “Moral Panics, the Military-Industrial Complex, and the Arms Race”, 179.

based on long running professional assessments of its armed forces and nuclear arsenal, a commitment to containment, and a belief that the effect of détente was to veil dangerously the harsh realities of the Cold War from the American public.

For these planners, the Cold War was experienced through the lens of military strategy. ‘There is a partial analogy between strategy and chess’, Nitze noted in 1980, highlighting his own role as a gamesman.⁷⁵ As national security professionals it was the planners’ job to consider the threat posed by Moscow and the military capabilities – in Nitze’s analogy, American chess pieces – necessary to deter the danger. As officials within the State Department, both Rostow and Nitze had helped plan and implement containment strategy as America’s Cold War grand strategy. This experience had convinced them that without the rigorous application of the strategy to contain the Soviet Union, America would lose the Cold War. Throughout the Cold War, State Department and Pentagon planners weighed American and Soviet military capabilities and intentions when recommending strategy and the requisite defence programmes.⁷⁶ Their function was to determine long-term strategy to ensure the national security requirements of the U.S. were taken into account. Tensions with the U.S.S.R. might rise and fall but the military threat was constant. The CPD’s first statement specified board members’ assumption that ‘The Soviet Union has not altered its long-held goal of a world dominated from a single center – Moscow.’⁷⁷ For this reason Rostow and Nitze considered that the strategy of containment should not be abandoned but reaffirmed.

By the mid-1970s a combination of defence analyst experience in government, academia, and the military led this elite group of strategic planners to sense a pivotal moment in the Cold War. Without urgent remedial action the Soviet Union would be

⁷⁵ Paul H Nitze, “The President’s 1980 State of the Union Address: A Response,” February 1980, Box 20 Folder 7, Nitze Papers. Library of Congress, Washington D.C. (Hereafter Nitze Papers), 7.

⁷⁶ See Chapter 2 “Getting Started” in Firth and Noren, *Soviet Defense Spending*, 9.

⁷⁷ CPD Executive Committee, “Common Sense and the Common Danger: Policy Statement of the Committee on the Present Danger”, 3.

handed an opportunity to attain unassailable military superiority and win the Cold War. They believed that a reinstatement of the principles of containment – articulated by George Kennan in 1946, codified into a strategy by Nitze in 1949 – were urgently necessary to avoid Cold War defeat.⁷⁸

It was George Kennan who first put this concept of ‘containment’ in written form when he authored a letter to *Foreign Affairs* under the pseudonym ‘X’ in 1947.⁷⁹ He argued that the Soviet Union represented a political threat that necessitated a political response.⁸⁰ In the following decades, his letter provided a universal claim for resisting the U.S.S.R. across the globe. Kennan lamented that his concentration on a political response turned into a concentration on a predominately military response, which he considered a distortion of his recommendation. This concern would fuel Kennan’s opposition to the CPD in 1978, and will be discussed in a later chapter.

National Security Council Report 68 (NSC-68), issued on 14 April 1950, was a ‘foundational statement’ of American Cold War strategy.⁸¹ President Truman had commissioned the report to assess the impact on U.S. strategic planning of the Soviet atomic bomb development in 1949. The purpose of NSC-68, for its primary authors Nitze and Secretary of State Dean Acheson, was to make abundantly clear to the president and to Congress the threat posed by the Soviet Union to American global interests. Acheson wrote in his memoirs that ‘the purpose of NSC-68 was to so bludgeon the mass mind of “top government” that not only could the President make a

⁷⁸ George Kennan was appointed counselor, the second ranking position in the State Department’s Moscow embassy, in 1944 and stayed in the Russian capital until 1946. He became Director of Policy Planning in the State Department in 1947. By the mid-1970s Kennan was distancing himself from military containment, primarily through his membership of the American Committee on East West Accord.

⁷⁹ See Chapter 12 “Mr. X: 1947” in John Lewis Gaddis, *George F. Kennan: An American Life* (New York: Penguin Press, 2011), 249.

⁸⁰ Ernest May, *American Cold War Strategy: Interpreting NSC 68* (New York: Bedford Books of St. Martin’s Press, 1993), 7.

⁸¹ Gaddis, *George F. Kennan*, 391.

decision but that the decision could be carried out'.⁸² He further explained that 'qualification must give way to simplicity of statement, nicety and nuance to bluntness, almost brutality, in carrying home a point ... we made our points clearer than truth'.⁸³ The threat from the Soviet Union should not be explained in hedged diplomatic terminology, the NSC-68 report concluded, or else ordinary Americans would not appreciate the magnitude of the danger they faced.

The document argued that higher military spending and confronting Soviet activity across the globe was critical to prevent Soviet control of the vital centres of the world. 'It is clear', Nitze reported, that 'a substantial and rapid building up of strength in the free world [is necessary] ... to support a firm policy intended to check and roll back the Kremlin's drive for world domination'.⁸⁴ After highlighting the threat posed by the Soviets, the report delivered its recommendations: 'it appears to be imperative to increase as rapidly as possible our general air, ground and sea strength and that of our allies to a point where we are militarily not so heavily dependent on atomic weapons'.⁸⁵ The doctrine of military containment was established, calling for the pursuit of all methods apart from open conflict to curtail Soviet attempts to extend its global influence:

As for the policy of "containment," it is one which seeks by all possible means short of war to (1) block further expansion of Soviet power, (2) expose the falsities of Soviet pretensions, (3) induce a retraction of the Kremlin's control and influence and (4) in general, so foster the seeds of destruction within the Soviet system that the Kremlin is brought at least to the point of modifying its behaviour to conform to generally accepted international standards.⁸⁶

⁸² Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1987), 374.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 375.

⁸⁴ Paul H Nitze, Steven L Rearden, and Ann M Smith, *From Hiroshima to Glasnost: At the Center of Decision: A Memoir* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1989), 96.

⁸⁵ "A Report to the National Security Council - NSC 68," 12 April, 1950, President's Secretary's File, Truman Papers, Henry S. Truman Presidential Library, http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/coldwar/documents/pdf/10-1.pdf (accessed 2 May 2014), 38.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 21.

Nitze's vision in NSC-68 was to maintain military pressure on the Kremlin to prevent further expansion of its influence. In doing so, the frailties of the Soviet system would be exposed and, over time, would ensure integration into the American led international community. In short, America should play a waiting game: stand up to the Soviets, avoid war, and eventually they would capitulate.

The Soviet Union, in Nitze's analysis, responded only to military power yet, in 1949, American military capabilities remained in post-Second World War decline. Containment logic required that America possess the military strength to enforce its own political claims vis-à-vis the Soviet Union, rather than to fight for them in a direct conflict. Military strength was an essential component of the defence against the U.S.S.R.:

The frustration of the Kremlin design requires the free world to develop a successfully functioning political and economic system and a vigorous political offensive against the Soviet Union. These, in turn, require an adequate military shield under which they can develop. It is necessary to have the military power to deter, if possible, Soviet expansion, and to defeat, if necessary, aggressive Soviet or Soviet-directed actions of a limited or total character.⁸⁷

For Nitze, an adequate 'military shield' was to be a necessary and permanent feature of American strategy to prevent Soviet expansion. Threats to national security, Nitze noted, would result from a lack of commitment to containment and insufficient maintenance of the 'military shield'. 'Our fundamental purpose', Nitze argued, 'is more likely to be defeated from lack of the will to maintain it, than from any mistakes we may make or assault we may undergo because of asserting that will.'⁸⁸ Maintaining popular support for the 'military shield' would be key to sustaining containment.

Nitze's report and its policy recommendations hinged on an acceptance of the threat posed by the Soviet Union. Could ordinary Americans be convinced that the

⁸⁷ Ibid., 36.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

Soviets were indeed driving for world domination that necessitated a large increase in defence expenditure? If they could not then the Cold War would perhaps be lost, not in a decisive battle, but in a series of small, limited confrontations that would erode American power. Nitze assessed that Kremlin leaders could remain committed to their strategy of expansion, but as a democracy the U.S. was obligated to maintain public support for its own strategy. The key problem for State Department planners in 1949 was how to generate and then maintain a broad base of support for containment.

The NSC-68 report was successful in mobilising America for the Cold War in the 1950s, not because the document itself successfully persuaded Americans, but because Soviet actions seemed to validate its conclusion of Kremlin expansionist intent. On 25 June 1950, Kim Il-Sung, with Stalin's permission, ordered the Korean People's Army to attack South Korea.⁸⁹ President Truman had initially returned NSC-68, which reached him in April 1950, to the State Department for more detailed cost assessment, but following the June invasion Nitze's recommendations were readily accepted. As one State Department official stated: 'We were sweating it, and then – with regard to NSC-68 – thank God Korea came along.'⁹⁰ Military expenditures jumped, rising from 5 per cent of GDP in 1950 to 14.2 per cent of GDP in 1953.⁹¹ The allocation of GDP to defence would not again decline to 5 per cent per year until the mid-1970s.

In the following decades containment seemed to provide an effective strategy for America's struggle with the Soviet Union. In critical confrontations, the Berlin Crisis in 1961 and the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, the superior military capabilities of the

⁸⁹ Bruce Cummings, *The Korean War: A History* (New York: Modern Library, 2011), 5.

⁹⁰ Unnamed State Department Official quoted in Curt Cardwell, *NSC 68 and the Political Economy of the Early Cold War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 210.

⁹¹ John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 393.

United States were initially perceived to have forced the Soviet Union to back down.⁹² The Titan and Jupiter strategic missile forces that seemed to threaten and deter the U.S.S.R. in 1962 were a direct result of the increased defence spending that NSC-68 had recommended in 1950 and, at the time, appeared the reason for Khrushchev's retreat during the Cuban Crisis. Nitze's conception of military containment appeared vindicated. American military strength, he assumed, demonstrably deterred Soviet expansion.⁹³

By the early 1970s, however, support for military containment had eroded. Nitze's strategy was increasingly interpreted as having provided the misguided intellectual framework for American involvement in the Vietnam War.⁹⁴ To a number of defence planners Vietnam seemed a Soviet attempt at expansion that, as the strategy of containment prescribed, should be blocked. The application of containment meant that the U.S. resisted Soviet-backed North Vietnam and supported its South Vietnamese ally in order to demonstrate resolute adherence to its military commitments. As NSC-68 had outlined, the United States would not permit the expansion of Soviet influence in vital areas. President Johnson expressed commitment to containment: 'the battle against communism ... must be joined ... with strength and determination.'⁹⁵ The result was just under 60,000 total American casualties, a total of 2.7 million veterans, and a

⁹² It should be noted that there is debate over this interpretation of the Cuban Missile Crisis. See, for example, Leslie H. Gelb, "The Myth That Screwed Up 50 Years of U.S. Foreign Policy", *Foreign Policy*, October 8, 2012, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/10/08/the_lie_that_screwed_up_50_years_of_us_foreign_policy (accessed 15 June 2015).

⁹³ Nitze, Rearden, and Smith, *From Hiroshima to Glasnost*, 250.

⁹⁴ Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 275.

⁹⁵ President Johnson quoted in Stanley Karnow, *Vietnam: A History*, 2nd ed. (London: Penguin Books, 1997), 339.

fractured society at home.⁹⁶ To many Americans this seemed much less a successful application of containment than a disastrous mistake.⁹⁷

The Vietnam War was a traumatic episode and involvement prompted intense scrutiny of America's global role in general and military containment in particular, a process that Thomas Borstelmann has called 'a national identity crisis'.⁹⁸ Nitze himself prevaricated in his opinion of the war. He was worried that the war was 'taking our eye off the ball ... [from] the overall strategic problem'.⁹⁹ In the aftermath of defeat, it was unclear if military containment was a liability to American interests and required replacement, or whether Nitze's strategy had been misapplied and was in need of reinforcement. Henry Kissinger, Secretary of State and National Security Advisor in the Nixon Administration, explored different foundations for American foreign policy. To him, the limits of containment were revealed in Vietnam: American voters were unwilling to support the deployment of Nitze's military shield in areas that did not directly threaten U.S. interests.¹⁰⁰ Kissinger concluded that a new Cold War strategy was required as 'There will be no international stability unless both the Soviet Union and the United States conduct themselves with restraint and they use their enormous power for the benefit of mankind.'¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ Gerard De Groot, *A Noble Cause? America and the Vietnam War* (Harlow: Longman, 2000), 340; Michael Hall, *The Vietnam War*, 2nd ed. (Harlow: Pearson, 2007), 77.

⁹⁷ Lien-Hang T. Nguyen, "The Vietnam Decade: The Global Shock of the War", in *The Shock of the Global: The 1970s in Perspective*, ed. Niall Ferguson et al. (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010), 160.

⁹⁸ Borstelmann, *The 1970s*, 203.

⁹⁹ Nitze quoted in Strobe Talbott, *The Master of the Game: Paul Nitze and the Nuclear Peace* (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 101.

¹⁰⁰ Robert D. Schulzinger, "Détente in the Nixon-Ford Years, 1969-1976", in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, ed. Melvyn P Leffler and Odd Arne Westad, vol. 2. Crises and Détente (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 374.

¹⁰¹ Henry Kissinger, *American Foreign Policy* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1977), 144.

Détente and its Discontents

Détente emerged under President Nixon, who had used his impeccable anti-communist credentials to gain support for a range of arms control negotiations with the Soviet Union.¹⁰² He and Kissinger hoped to pursue more harmonious relations in order to limit the arms race and reduce the burden of military expenditures on the American economy; in addition to creating a 'structure of peace', this would usher in a new era of the Cold War.¹⁰³ When the Soviet Soyuz spacecraft linked with the American Apollo spacecraft in 1974 as part of a joint space programme during the Ford Administration, relations with the Soviet Union seemed to have reached a literal high point. Yet even as good relations seemed to reduce the threat of nuclear war, support for détente began to unravel.¹⁰⁴ By 1974, there was a clear division over Soviet relations among foreign policymakers. Should détente go further or had it already gone too far? There was no clear answer and no simple alternatives.

Even without the defeat in Vietnam, as Kissinger later suggested, 'a major reassessment of American foreign policy would have been in order, for the age of America's nearly total dominance of the world stage was drawing to a close'.¹⁰⁵ Soviet military capabilities appeared to be approaching parity with those of the U.S.. No one could be sure whether the Soviet Union would continue the development of its military forces and thus attain a position of superiority. Kissinger's response to this emerging security dilemma had been to limit superpower confrontation as much as possible through détente. The experience of Vietnam suggested to him that Americans would not support expensive wars in distant countries: he told Ford in 1976 that 'the American

¹⁰² Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation*, 77.

¹⁰³ Nixon quoted in Schulzinger, "Détente in the Nixon–Ford Years, 1969–1976", 375.

¹⁰⁴ Zelizer, "Detente and Domestic Politics", *Diplomatic History* 33, no. 4 (2009), 657.

¹⁰⁵ Henry Kissinger quoted in Craig and Logevall, *America's Cold War*, 253.

people want tough talk about the Soviets, but they don't want to do anything about it'.¹⁰⁶

In Kissinger's interpretation, with ongoing economic problems including the OPEC coordinated Oil Embargo in 1974, American global influence was diminishing. 'Our interdependence on this planet is becoming the central fact of our diplomacy', the Secretary of State stated in 1975.¹⁰⁷ His pursuit of détente as an attempt to 'manage' rather than overcome the erosion of American global dominance was deeply troubling for many, especially those who thought that containment should be strengthened and not abandoned.¹⁰⁸ Elmo Zumwalt, the Chief of Naval Operations between 1970 and 1974, claimed that Kissinger confided to him that 'The US has passed its historic high-point, like so many other civilizations, and cannot be roused to the political challenge. We must persuade the Russians to give us the best deal we can get.'¹⁰⁹ To Zumwalt this attitude seemed not only to renounce containment strategy but was tantamount to an admission of Cold War defeat.

To those contemplating the formation of the CPD, and Zumwalt in particular, Kissinger was fundamentally mistaken. Zumwalt was certain that Americans were not inclined to give up and accept Soviet superiority. Apathy was a symptom of détente, which suggested to Americans that the Cold War had subsided. It appeared to Zumwalt and many others in the foreign policy elite that the Soviet Union was nearing military parity and, with involvement in Laos, Vietnam, Angola, Ethiopia, and Mozambique, was expanding its global commitments just as the U.S. seemed to be withdrawing from

¹⁰⁶ Kissinger in "Memorandum of Conversation, Ford, Kissinger, and Scrowcroft", 16 February, 1976, Folder: February 16, 1976 - Ford, Kissinger, Box 17, NSA Memcoms, Gerald R. Ford Library, Ann Arbor, MI. (Hereafter Ford Library), 2.

¹⁰⁷ Kissinger quoted in Daniel Sargent, "The United States and Globalization in the 1970s", in *The Shock of the Global: The 1970s in Perspective*, ed. Niall Ferguson et al. (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010), 57.

¹⁰⁸ Kissinger in "Memorandum of Conversation, Ford, Kissinger, and Scrowcroft", 18 December, 1975, Folder: December 18, 1975 - Ford, Kissinger, Scrowcroft Box 17, NSA Memcoms, Ford Library, 2.

¹⁰⁹ Zumwalt quoted in Murray Friedman, *The Neoconservative Revolution: Jewish Intellectuals and the Shaping of Public Policy*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 138.

its own.¹¹⁰ The Soviet Union, in the analysis of Zumwalt, Nitze, and Rostow, had taken advantage of American ‘wishful thinking’ of détente.¹¹¹ Ordinary Americans, Rostow told Kissinger in 1974, had not been made aware of this Soviet military growth and adventurism:

Certainly we do not want a foreign policy of ideological crusade ... Of course we strongly favor any and all relaxations of tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union. But we deny that any relaxation of tensions between the two countries has in fact occurred. And we think it is not only wrong, but dangerous to lull Western public opinion by proclaiming an end of the Cold War, a substitution of negotiation for confrontation, and a generation of peace.¹¹²

For the sake of good relations with Moscow, Rostow contended, the American public remained uninformed of Soviet acts of aggression, and public support of a strong defence posture had suffered accordingly. A 1974 poll revealed that only one in eight respondents thought defence spending was too little with 32 per cent thinking the amount was ‘about right’.¹¹³ This alarmed opponents of détente because as the Soviet Union was increasing its own military strength, Americans were unwilling to support additional spending to ensure parity. For Rostow, this attitude was not because Americans had ‘given up’ the Cold War as Kissinger concluded, but because, in the spirit of goodwill, the Secretary of State had failed to inform the public of Soviet military growth and its involvement in Africa and the Middle East.

Nitze's warning in NSC-68 of the necessity to maintain ‘national will’ now seemed prescient. Yet this was not because the American public were themselves weary of the Cold War struggle as Nitze had cautioned, but because their national leaders had not made clear that the Soviet Union remained a threat. ‘[If] we allow ourselves to be

¹¹⁰ See Chapter 7 “The Prospects of Socialism: Ethiopia and the Horn”, Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War : Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

¹¹¹ “The Quest For Detente”, 31 July, 1974, CPD Papers, 2.

¹¹² Eugene Rostow to Henry Kissinger, 4 September, 1974, Box 447, CPD Papers.

¹¹³ Cahn, *Killing Detente*, 7.

deceived by a myth of détente', Rostow argued, America risked 'irreversible defeats' amounting to Cold War defeat.¹¹⁴ Détente needed to cease in order for containment to be restored. In December 1975, Nitze wrote to Robert Joyce, a former State Department colleague, that in order to prevent 'Soviet world hegemony' the U.S. needed 'first to put our own house in better order ... [and] get rid of Nixon and his gang. We haven't yet completed this process.'¹¹⁵ A number of experts who favoured a return to the principles of containment, including Nitze, Rostow, and Zumwalt, decided to speak out against détente.

The historian Vaïsse argues that 'many who joined the CDM [Coalition for a Democratic Majority] and CPD had been "converted" or at any rate alerted' by the CPD leadership of Zumwalt, Rostow, or Nitze.¹¹⁶ But this is only partially true as the CPD attracted members that had long been concerned by the U.S.-Soviet military balance. Most of the CPD's members did not require 'conversion' because it was self-evident to them that under détente Kissinger had permitted the Soviets to erode American strategic superiority.

Rostow resolved to establish the CPD in December 1975 but the determination to end détente was not new. In fact, a number of the Committee's founding members participated in similar organisations that campaigned to end détente and revive containment. Rostow, for example, had chaired the Coalition for a Democratic Majority Foreign Policy Task Force. Nitze had co-founded the Committee to Maintain a Prudent Defense in 1969 with Dean Rusk.¹¹⁷ Charles Tyroler, who would become the CPD's Executive Director, had held the same position with the Committee for Peace with

¹¹⁴ "The Quest For Detente", 31 July, 1974, Box 447, CPD Papers, 15.

¹¹⁵ Paul H. Nitze to Robert P. Joyce, 4 December, 1975, Box 26 Folder 23, Nitze Papers, 2.

¹¹⁶ Vaïsse, *Neoconservatism*, 109.

¹¹⁷ Dean Rusk was Secretary of State in the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations from 1961 to 1969.

Freedom in Vietnam (CPWFV).¹¹⁸ These efforts had not been particularly successful in re-establishing containment, but the experience of participating in these organisations directly influenced how the CPD would operate.

Tyroler joined Rostow's group as director in April 1976 and established the CPD's organisational structure. Similar to a number of the CPD's founding members, Tyroler had worked in the Department of Defense during the early 1950s. He had also acted as the CPWFV director, which formed in 1967 and attempted to maintain support for the Vietnam War. The CPWFV had attracted an impressive bipartisan membership, including two former presidents, Truman and Eisenhower, two former Secretaries of State, Dean Acheson and James Byrnes, as well as labour leaders, businessmen, and academics.¹¹⁹ 'Our objective', the group announced, 'is to make sure that the majority voice of America is heard – loud and clear – so that Peking and Hanoi will not mistake the strident voices of some dissenters for American discouragement and a weakening of will.'¹²⁰ The principles of containment were clearly restated in the CPWFV manifesto, and the CPD would operate similarly under Tyroler's direction. Taking direction from the CPWFV in its opposition to détente, the CPD would seek to recruit important national figures, vocally support the need for a strong defence policy, and advocate the principles of containment.

Nitze regarded the CPD as an extension of his own efforts in the Committee to Maintain a Prudent Defense Policy (CMPDP), which he had organised with Dean Rusk in 1969 to support the funding of the 'Safeguard' anti-ballistic missile system.¹²¹ Consistent with his views on containment – that Kremlin leaders responded only to

¹¹⁸ Charles Tyroler II was a Democratic Party strategist, and assisted the presidential campaigns of John Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, and Hubert Humphrey.

¹¹⁹ "A Warning on Vietnam to the American People by 130 National Leaders", *The American Legion Magazine*, September 1968, 6-10 and 50-53

¹²⁰ Citizens Committee for Peace with Freedom in Vietnam statement in Rick Perlstein, *Nixonland: The Rise of a President and the Fracturing of America* (New York: Scribner, 2008), 207.

¹²¹ Nitze, Rearden, and Smith, *From Hiroshima to Glasnost*, 295.

strength – Nitze hoped funding the system would ensure a better negotiating position. A limited deployment of Safeguard passed a Senate vote on 6 August 1969 ahead of ABM treaty negotiations with the Soviet Union in November. (An ABM Treaty was eventually signed in May 1972.) Foreshadowing the CPD’s efforts seven years later, Nitze intended for the efforts of his CMPDP to create a ‘balanced debate’ by undertaking the ‘necessary nitty-gritty of drafting papers to combat the arrant nonsense’ of opponents to the ABM system.¹²² The pattern of Nitze’s involvement in the CPD was based on his efforts with the CMPDP.

Cass Canfield, editor in chief of the publishing firm Harper Row, organised opposition to the ABM programme by collating analyses that demonstrated its inadequacies. Nitze explains in his memoirs that he regarded this opposition a result of unease ‘with defense policy in general and Vietnam in particular’, in short, opposition to the principles of containment.¹²³ Nitze believed his CMPDP papers,

ran rings around the misinformed and illogical papers produced by Cass's polemical and pompous scientists... our committee [to Maintain a Prudent Defense] became the principal source of witnesses before the Senate Armed Services Committee on behalf of the [Safeguard] authorisation bill.¹²⁴

Nitze's efforts were successful as the Senate approved the Safeguard bill. He realised that his own analyses were a potent weapon in challenging the findings of his opponents and in advocating containment. This was true not only within classified State Department Policy Planning reports but also when addressing public debates in Senate testimony.

Rostow headed the Coalition for a Democratic Majority Foreign Policy Task Group (CDM), which had been formed in 1972 to ‘fight this battle for the soul of the

¹²² Nitze quoted in Heilbrunn, *They Knew They Were Right*, 121.; Nitze quoted in Talbott, *The Master of the Game*, 112.

¹²³ Nitze, Rearden, and Smith, *From Hiroshima to Glasnost*, 294.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 295.

Democratic Party' and confront the party's liberal 'McGovern wing'.¹²⁵ The fact that George McGovern had represented the Democratic Party in the 1972 presidential election greatly alarmed CDM members. The CDM issued reports on foreign policy to counter the influence of the 'McGovern approach' that advocated an abandonment of the Cold War. The group, however, did not attract widespread attention outside the Democratic Party.¹²⁶ While Rostow was content with the membership and message of the task force, by 1975 he was determined to start a nonpartisan group to influence national political issues.¹²⁷

Clearly, the CPD's efforts were grounded in previous attempts by its leading members to achieve similar goals in the late-1960s and early-1970s. Vaïsse argues that 'the most important precursor of the CPD was the CDM: it was because the CDM's foreign policy task force (1973-1976) was not sufficiently effective in combatting détente and alerting America to the growing Soviet threat that Gene Rostow decided to found the CPD'.¹²⁸ However, a number of groups, and not just the CDM, influenced the CPD's founding members. The CPD represented the culmination of its members' experience in maintaining containment principles. These efforts prior to 1976 had limited success in their attempts to reassert containment, but Rostow's proposed group seemed an important opportunity to bring together likeminded experts, draw on their professional experience, and revitalise containment before Soviet military strength attained superiority.

In this way the CPD should be seen as an application of experiences within the CDM, the CPWFV, and the CMPDP. The limited success of these groups in challenging détente inspired the creation of the CPD, which would be a collaborative

¹²⁵ Ben Wattenberg quoted in Ehrman, *The Rise of Neoconservatism*, 60.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 60–62.

¹²⁷ Vaïsse, *Neoconservatism*, 109.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 157.

effort to influence national security policy debates. By the end of 1975, the CPD was regarded by its founders as a last ditch effort. Rostow wrote to James Schlesinger on 24 June 1976 asking whether he had ‘any real alternatives [to starting the CPD] ... Viewing the problems as we do, can we really leave them alone?’ Rostow told Schlesinger that he felt the responsibility of governance, which he regarded as ‘an obligation, a burden, not just a passage in our lives’¹²⁹ Similar to Rostow’s establishment of the CPD, Nitze’s CMPD, and Tyroler’s CPWFV were efforts by national security bureaucrats who felt duty-bound to act and restore containment. This was a sincere, even impassioned, concern towards a growing national security danger.

The sustained upward trend of Soviet defence spending genuinely troubled the CPD’s founders. The ‘momentum’ of this build-up became an important concept, even within the Ford Administration. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld reported to the president that ‘It is clear that the Soviets now have a great momentum in defence spending. In contrast our momentum has been to take \$33 billion out of the President’s budget requests.’¹³⁰ Did this momentum provide an indicator of Soviet intentions? If so, then the Soviet Union might soon achieve military superiority.

Disagreement over the future ‘trend lines’ of Soviet forces would remain at the core of the CPD’s concerns for the rest of the decade. Its founding members argued that doubt over whether the Soviets were seeking superiority meant the U.S. should plan its defence programmes on the basis that attaining military superiority was the Kremlin’s goal. If American military capabilities did not match this increase and the Kremlin reached unambiguous superiority it would be too late. Containment would fail, as the military shield would be insufficient to deter Soviet expansion.

¹²⁹ Eugene Rostow to James Schlesinger, 24 June, 1976, Box 447, CPD Papers.

¹³⁰ Rumsfeld in “Memorandum of Conversation, Ford, Rumsfeld, Scrowcroft, and House Budget Committee Members,” March 8, 1976, Folder: March 8, 1976 - Ford, Rumsfeld, House Budget Committee Members, Box 18, NSA Memcoms, Ford Library, 2.

This debate over defence spending merged with the evolution of nuclear strategy. Until the early 1970s, the superior American nuclear arsenal had acted as a counterbalance to Soviet conventional superiority: U.S. nuclear weapons offset larger Soviet conventional forces.¹³¹ Kissinger, however, questioned the continuing value of strategic superiority: ‘what do you do with it?’, he asked.¹³² Yet this did not convince his critics. Richard Pipes, a founding Committee board member, accused Kissinger of ‘mirror-imaging’.¹³³ Pipes argued that military planners in the Kremlin might find uses for strategic superiority even if Kissinger could not. The CPD's fear, as Strobe Talbott aptly summarises, was that ‘the Russian Bear armed with the Bomb posed a special threat not so much because of the nature of the Bomb as because of the nature of the Bear’.¹³⁴

For Pipes, permitting Soviet strategic superiority and trusting the deterrent strength of U.S. nuclear forces was tempting ‘very detrimental effects on U.S. security’.¹³⁵ If a Soviet first strike could destroy American Minuteman missiles in their silos it was unlikely that a president would react. The remaining U.S. strategic force could target Soviet cities in retaliation, yet this would invite a Soviet ‘second strike’ against U.S. cities. This second strike scenario suggested that until the Minuteman missile force could be better protected, America’s ability to deter Soviet expansion and maintain an adequate military shield was limited.¹³⁶ Ensuring strategic parity was

¹³¹ By the early 1970s the Soviet Union also possessed the capability to launch a disarming first strike. Walsh, *The Military Balance in the Cold War*, 16

¹³² Kissinger quoted in Herken, *Counsels of War*, 266.

¹³³ Richard Pipes was Professor of Russian history at Harvard University, acting as Director of its Russian Research Center from 1968 to 1973; “Intelligence Community Experiment in Competitive Analysis: Soviet Strategic Objectives, An Alternative View, Report of Team ‘B,’” December 1976, The National Security Archive, George Washington University, <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB139/nitze10.pdf> (accessed 17/08/2015), 1.

¹³⁴ Talbott, *The Master of the Game*, 4.

¹³⁵ Richard Pipes, “Why the Soviet Union Thinks It Could Fight and Win a Nuclear War,” *Commentary* 64, no. 1 (1977): 34.

¹³⁶ For a discussion on this see, Pavel Podvig, “The Window of Vulnerability That Wasn’t: Soviet Military Buildup in the 1970s-A Research Note”, *International Security* 33, no. 1 (2008): 118–38.

therefore crucial to Kissinger's critics. If current trends of military spending continued, then the Soviet Union would attain superiority before America could address its own military weaknesses. As a result, containment would no longer be credible and Soviet expansion could not be resisted: The Cold War would be lost.

Team B and the CPD

In the spring of 1976, an opportunity arose for a number of CPD board members to begin their campaign to alert Americans to the dangers of détente. The Team B exercise was a competitive intelligence assessment recommended by the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board (PFIAB) and was commissioned in 1976 by CIA Director George Bush. The panel was commissioned because of questions over CIA competence.¹³⁷ First, the emergence of the 'Family Jewels' in late 1974 had shaken faith in America's intelligence agency.¹³⁸ The New York Times revealed 'a massive, illegal domestic intelligence operation during the Nixon Administration', prompting fury among the public and in Congress.¹³⁹ In January a 'Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operation with Respect to Intelligence Activities' was established.¹⁴⁰ Then, in May 1976, the CIA announced what historians Firth and Noren have labelled 'the bombshell'.¹⁴¹ An agency report announced 'an unusually large body of new information' that gave the impression of an upward revision of Soviet defence spending.¹⁴² The Soviet Union, on first reading, had spent much more on defence than had previously been estimated, and confidence in the CIA's competence was further

¹³⁷ Newsweek, for example, ran an article entitled "Abolish the CIA" in July 1975. See chapter 4, "The CIA as a Vulnerable Institution", in Cahn, *Killing Detente*, 71.

¹³⁸ See "The White House Reacts", John Prados, *The Family Jewels: The CIA, Secrecy, and Presidential Power* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2013), 22.

¹³⁹ Seymour Hersh, "Huge C.I.A. Operation Reported in U.S. Against Antiwar Forces, Other Dissidents in Nixon Years," *New York Times*, December 22, 1974.

¹⁴⁰ Andrew Downer Crain, *The Ford Presidency: A History* (Jefferson: McFarland & Co, 2009), 117.

¹⁴¹ Firth and Noren, *Soviet Defense Spending*, 59.

¹⁴² CIA, "Estimated Defense Spending in Rubles, 1970-1975", SR 76-1012U. Cited in *ibid*.

shaken.¹⁴³ As a result, questions over the CIA's proficiency in compiling the National Intelligence Estimates put President Ford under pressure to investigate claims of systemic underestimation of Soviet military capabilities.¹⁴⁴ Ford's PFIAB recommended that independent experts examine the same material as CIA experts and determine the accuracy of CIA estimates.

Richard Pipes was chosen to select the 'B' Team, and invited a number of like-minded experts to join the B panel. Pipes included Nitze on the advisory panel and Nitze returned the favour, inviting Pipes onto the CPD's Executive Committee on 22 October 1976.¹⁴⁵ Pipes intended to overturn the CIA's optimistic 'most likely' method for generating the National Intelligence Estimates. He argued that

there is no point in another, what you might call, optimistic view. In general there has been a disposition in Washington to underestimate the Soviet drive. The moderately optimistic line has prevailed ... we have imposed very severe limitations on ourselves. The hope has been that all these steps would lead the Russians to slow down. They haven't.¹⁴⁶

Pipes regarded the Team B exercise as an opportunity to challenge the methodology of assessing the Soviet threat. In presenting 'optimistic' judgments of Soviet military capabilities the president was then limited in requesting funding from Congress for what Pipes regarded as a more prudent defence budget. In short, Pipes charged that the CIA's optimistic methodology was hampering the ability to maintain the military shield necessary for containment.

¹⁴³ What the CIA report actually announced was a change in how the Ruble costing of Soviet defence spending was calculated. The overall assessment of Soviet defence spending did not change only the proportion of Soviet total government spending on defence, which suggested the sector was more inefficient than previously considered. This distinction was lost on the CIA's critics.

¹⁴⁴ Walsh, *The Military Balance in the Cold War*, 175.

¹⁴⁵ Paul H Nitze to Richard E Pipes, 22 October, 1976, Box 68 Folder 8, Nitze Papers.

¹⁴⁶ Pipes quoted in Murrey Marder, "Carter to Inherit Intense Dispute on Soviet Intentions", *Washington Post*, 2 January, 1977.

The Deputy for National Intelligence, George Carver, defended the CIA's methodology in a memorandum to President Ford. Carver identified the methodological shift that would result after the Team B exercise. He warned prior to the exercise that,

under the approach the [PFIAB] Board is recommending, the President and his senior policy advisors will simply have this range of possibilities laid before them, hence, powerful arguments could be advanced that the only course to follow to protect the nation's interests would be to hedge against the worst case threats, and NIEs developed through the recommended procedure would serve as ammunition supporting such a pitch ... This procedure would leave the decision maker at the mercy of technical shamans with no basis for ascertaining which of these shamans' analyses or predictions were more credible than their competitors.¹⁴⁷

Yet, despite being labelled as 'shamans', Pipes' and the B Team's rationale for overturning the methodology behind compiling intelligence estimates could not be entirely dismissed. The exercise represented a difference of opinion among national security experts over how the president should be presented with intelligence. Pipes' B Team, and Nitze in particular, disapproved of Kissinger's handling of American foreign policy based on 'political posturing' and back-channel negotiation that Nitze regarded as 'unseemly', his grandson and biographer argues.¹⁴⁸ This, alongside allegations of systemic CIA underreporting, was the reason behind Pipes' insistence to include differences of opinion in intelligence estimates. Nitze concurred, reflecting that at the CIA it had been decided that

the NIEs [National Intelligence Estimates] should not forecast future Soviet arms developments or deployments ... unless there was positive and unambiguous evidence of those developments and deployments. In case of doubt, reassuring rather than worrying statements were in order.¹⁴⁹

Worst-case estimation as a basis for intelligence was not simply an academic exercise, however. In retrospect it is clear that a number of the B Team estimates were wrong, yet

¹⁴⁷ George Carver quoted in Cahn, *Killing Detente*, 131.

¹⁴⁸ Nicholas Thompson, *The Hawk and the Dove: Paul Nitze, George Kennan, and the History of the Cold War* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2009), 241 and 233.

¹⁴⁹ Nitze, Rearden, and Smith, *From Hiroshima to Glasnost*, 352.

we cannot entirely dismiss the sense of alarm that informed the exercise's findings. The Soviet military build-up over the early 1970s was real and had significantly improved its military capabilities, a consequence of what the historian Vladislav Zubok has termed 'Cuban missile syndrome', the desire never again to be outgunned by the U.S. following the 1962 crisis.¹⁵⁰ The SS-20 'Pioneer' MIRVed (multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicle) ICBM was introduced in 1976, as well as the SS-18 'Satan' ICBM, first deployed in 1975.¹⁵¹ Additional warhead delivery systems developed in the 1970s included the TU-22M 'Backfire' strategic bomber and the 'Typhoon' ballistic missile submarine. The Soviet Navy, under Admiral of the Fleet Sergei Gorshkov, also received substantial investment, expanding its number of cruisers, destroyers, and submarines. In addition, alarmingly for American military planners, the Soviet Navy commissioned its first aircraft carrier, the *Kiev*, in late 1975.¹⁵²

Why were these programmes necessary? The Team B report – echoing NSC-68 – stressed the importance the Kremlin placed on military capabilities to capitalise on opportunities to extend its global influence:

the Soviet leadership places unusual reliance on coercion as a regular instrument of policy at home as well as abroad. It likes to have a great deal of coercive capability at its disposal at all times, and it likes for it to come in a rich mix so that it can be optimally structured for any contingency that may arise.¹⁵³

The Team B report argued that Soviet strategy was not defensive and did not recognise a strategic stalemate. Instead, Kremlin leaders were 'under positive obligation ... to realize and nail down potential gains' as a result of socialist doctrine.¹⁵⁴ In this view, Soviet forces were not simply to act as a deterrent to American strategic forces but were

¹⁵⁰ Vladislav M Zubok, *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 243.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 242.

¹⁵² Walsh, *The Military Balance in the Cold War*, 132.

¹⁵³ "Team 'B' Report", 4.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

intended to exploit situations where they enjoyed local military superiority to advance socialism. The Team B report charged the CIA with ‘mirror-imaging’; just because the U.S. had adopted the doctrine of deterrence the CIA should not assume the same of Kremlin strategy. Team B argued that intelligence reports needed to reflect these growing capabilities when determining Soviet intentions. By 1976, it was clear the Kremlin was intent on modernising its forces – new weapon systems had been observed entering service – and there was no indication that this modernisation effort would cease.

Détente, the report maintained, had blinded the CIA to the purpose of the Soviet build-up: ‘[T]he drafters of NIE display an evident inclination to minimize the Soviet strategic buildup because of its implications for detente.’¹⁵⁵ The suggestion was that CIA analysts did not want to undermine détente and therefore presented an optimistic view of Soviet military capabilities to avoid upsetting their political masters. But the crucial point for the B Team was that détente did not mean that the Cold War had subsided. The Soviet Union continued to foster socialist revolutions globally as a matter of doctrine, and détente did not change that fact.

‘[B]oth detente and SALT’, the B Team report argued, ‘are seen by Soviet leaders not as cooperative efforts to ensure global peace, but as means more effectively to compete with the United States.’¹⁵⁶ If Soviet expansionist intentions and growth in military capabilities were not reflected in intelligence estimates then American military forces would be unable, as NSC-68 had pointed out in 1949, to ‘block further expansion of Soviet power’.¹⁵⁷ For Team B, the pursuit of détente meant that the principles of containment had been jettisoned; optimistic intelligence estimates were undermining the ability of the U.S. to match Soviet military power, which could soon lead to strategic disaster. American forces would no longer act as a deterrent and the Soviet Union

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 4.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 6.

¹⁵⁷ “A Report to the National Security Council - NSC 68”, 21.

would be permitted a free hand to expand its global influence. The Team B report was leaked in October and a number of panel members joined Nitze, Rostow, and Zumwalt in the CPD.

When the CPD announced its launch in November 1976 its board membership numbered 144.¹⁵⁸ ‘Board Members’ are best understood as supporters of the Committee’s mission, appointed for their ‘level and tone and distinction’, but were not the primary authors of CPD statements.¹⁵⁹ It was predominately the CPD’s Executive Committee who actively engaged in the planning, drafting, and delivery of statements. This section will introduce the Executive Committee members who formulated and presented the campaign to highlight the ‘present danger’.

The composition of the Executive Committee was relatively constant and this section will introduce its members as of the summer of 1979 as the Committee opposed the SALT II treaty, the group’s highest profile effort. Tyroler, the Committee’s director, recorded the activities of eight members who conducted the overwhelming proportion of Committee activities from November 1978 to November 1979.¹⁶⁰ In fact, seven of these eight members were Executive Committee members throughout the four-year period of this study. When referring to the activities of the ‘Committee on the Present Danger’ it is the efforts of these eight members that are most significant.

Tyroler identified Eugene Rostow, Paul Nitze, Charles Burton Marshall¹⁶¹, Elmo Zumwalt, Edward Rowny, Richard Pipes, William Van Cleave,¹⁶² and Charles

¹⁵⁸ See Appendix I

¹⁵⁹ “Committee on the Present Danger: Second Annual Meeting, Cassette One,” November 10, 1978, Box 164, CPD Papers, 2.

¹⁶⁰ “Table of Executive Committee Member Activities, November 1978 - November 1979,” November 1979, Box 163, CPD Papers.

¹⁶¹ Charles Burton Marshall had worked with Nitze on the Policy Planning Staff at the State Department in the early 1950s. He had also been a staff consultant to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, and a Professor of International Politics at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies.

¹⁶² William Van Cleave was Director of the Strategic and Security Studies programme at the University of Southern California (USC). He was a member of the SALT I delegation from 1969 to 1971, and member of Pipes’ B Team in 1976.

Kupperman¹⁶³ as the most active Executive Committee members. Executive Committee meeting attendance records show that less active members in CPD campaigning but regular contributors to written statements over the 1976 to 1980 period included Richard Allen, Colin Gray, Dick Whalen, Rita Hauser, Max Kampelman, Charls Walker, Richard Stilwell, Dean Rusk, John Roche, Edmund Gullion, and Frank Hoerber.

Executive Committee participants were former government officials, tenured academics, and retired military figures. A number of them had in fact declined opportunities to enter government posts in order to participate in the CPD, which operated as an independent and all-volunteer organisation. This makes it difficult to argue, as do Campbell Craig and Fredrik Logevall, that the Committee's members were 'careerist' and motivated predominately by personal ambition.¹⁶⁴ Self-interest prompted the Committee's formation, they argue, as Cold War hardliners had been side-lined and wished to reassert control over the administration of national security policy. Their argument stresses the efficacy of the military-industrial complex in propelling the CPD to its high-profile status in such a short time. However, the formation and early successes of the CPD are not best explained as a result of personal ambition augmented by financing from organisations within the military-industrial complex.

Rostow, Nitze, and Marshall in particular had a long record of involvement in developing and implementing America's Cold War strategy. Neither Rostow nor Nitze, the Committee's co-founders, had any need aside from their sense of duty to pursue the substantial effort of forming a new organisation. Nitze's government role ended after he quit the SALT II negotiating team in 1974 in order to 'be freer to support the strong domestic, foreign, and defense policies that present circumstances appear to me to

¹⁶³ Kupperman had been Van Cleave's PhD student at the University of Southern California.

¹⁶⁴ Craig and Logevall, *America's Cold War*, 363.

require'.¹⁶⁵ Rostow was tenured as Dean at Yale Law School. Alistair Cooke, the BBC's American correspondent, was a friend of Rostow and later recalled his 'intellect, his tolerance of opponents, most of all his having a genuinely judicial temperament'.¹⁶⁶ It does not seem credible to dismiss their founding of the CPD as motivated primarily by careerist ambition.

Pipes, who Nitze invited to join the Executive Committee after their joint effort on the Team B panel, suggests that his 'modest political career was unsought and came unasked' after delivering an address to the American Historical Association in 1969.¹⁶⁷ He was subsequently asked to testify at the SALT I hearings by Senator Henry Jackson. Pipes intended to emphasise the importance of considering Russian history and culture when compiling threat assessments, which he demonstrated during his Team B efforts.¹⁶⁸ Pipes – a Polish émigré – stressed the character of Kremlin leaders when contemplating the threat posed by the Soviet Union.

William Van Cleave, like Pipes, regarded the Soviet build-up as ominous.¹⁶⁹ He eventually worked on contract for the CPD, though Tyroler noted his fees in 1979 as 'a gross undercharge ... [that] equals a significant financial contribution'.¹⁷⁰ Charles Kupperman, hired in February 1978 as the CPD's 'Defense Analyst and Research Associate', was the only other paid member of the Executive Committee.¹⁷¹

After completing a rotation on the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1974 Zumwalt refused an offer to be Director of the Veterans Administration or the equivalent of a 4-star

¹⁶⁵ Paul Nitze to James Schlesinger, 28 May, 1974, Box 103, CPD Papers.

¹⁶⁶ Alistair Cooke, "Remembering a Dear Friend," *Letter from America by Alistair Cooke*, December 13, 2002, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/5ISDRb5MBpzYgdDsspWyhPl/remembering-a-dear-friend-13-december-2002> (Accessed 19/03/2015).

¹⁶⁷ Richard Pipes, *Vixi: Memoirs of a Non-Belonger* (Cambridge, MA: Yale University Press, 2003), 125 and 129.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 126.

¹⁶⁹ J.D. Crouch II, "William Van Cleave Eulogy," *Missouri State Department of Strategic Studies*, April 28, 2013, <http://dss.missouristate.edu/Van%20Cleave%20Eulogy.html> (accessed 2 May 2014).

¹⁷⁰ Charles Tyroler II to William Van Cleave, 24 January, 1979, Box 384, CPD Papers.

¹⁷¹ Charles Tyroler II to Charles Kupperman, 9 February, 1978, Box 172, CPD Papers.

admiral posting, and retired. He 'wanted to be free to say how perilous I thought the course was that Henry Kissinger had set for America'.¹⁷² Edward Rowny, a Lieutenant General in the army, joined the CPD in similar circumstances in 1979 after resigning from the SALT II negotiating team in Geneva. '[W]hen the SALT II Treaty limiting strategic weapons was initialled', Rowny recalled, 'I resigned in protest from my post as the Joint Chiefs of Staff representative to the U.S. negotiating team. I was convinced that the SALT II Treaty would be detrimental to the security of the United States.'¹⁷³ He immediately began campaigning with the CPD to oppose Senate ratification of the treaty. Rowny and Zumwalt clearly felt obligated to act on their concerns over policy having both retired from the military in order to criticise freely government policy and advocate a return to military containment.

It is problematic to suggest that the motivation for participation in the Committee was solely self-interest. Edward Rowny resigned in 1979 and Paul Nitze had similarly resigned as a SALT negotiator in 1975. Elmo Zumwalt had chosen retirement despite offers of government employment. The sense of 'duty' among the Committee's most influential members is clear and should not be readily dismissed. Nor should we ignore the commitment required of the CPD's Executive Committee. While 'ordinary' CPD members were expected to attend an annual meeting just once a year, the demands on Executive Committee members were much more significant. They usually met once a month in addition to 'working group' meetings to draft CPD statements. From 1976 to 1980, sixteen Committee statements were written though several more publications including SALT II negotiation updates, responses to administration policies, and summaries of CPD positions were also printed.¹⁷⁴ Executive Committee members also

¹⁷² Elmo R. Zumwalt, *On Watch: A Memoir* (New York: Quadrangle/New York Times Book Co., 1976), 493.

¹⁷³ Edward L. Rowny, *It Takes One to Tango* (New York: Brassey's Inc, 1992), x.

¹⁷⁴ See Appendix II

attended hundreds of community and televised debates on a voluntary basis to promote the Committee's concerns. Genuine concern with the direction of national security policy prompted this level of involvement; it was not merely personal ambition for a government appointment or financial gain.

Clearly Executive Committee members felt duty-bound to undertake their mission with the CPD. They perceived themselves as public servants who by nature of their professional training understood the dangers facing the United States, which, as a result of détente, were being ignored by American leaders. To end détente and restore containment, the CPD was established as an organisation for and by those individuals who intended to continue public service outside of government and warn of the potential dangers of Soviet military expansion.

Conclusion

The Committee's main participants cannot be regarded simply as threat inflators motivated by 'self-interest'.¹⁷⁵ Their argument that America needed to increase its military strength was a function of genuine concern and the Committee's campaign was devised to express this trepidation publicly. Its Executive Committee members had extensive experience of planning America's Cold War strategy and forecast defeat if Kissinger's concept of détente endured. Containment strategy, which Paul Nitze had conceptualised in the 1950s as Director of Policy Planning in the State Department, seemed at risk of abandonment under détente. To the Committee, Kissinger seemed to lack the faith that ordinary Americans would support the maintenance of an adequate military shield in the face of growing Soviet military strength. A number of respected

¹⁷⁵ Leebaert, *The Fifty-Year Wound*, 450.

government, academic, and military figures who rejected what they perceived as Kissinger's pessimism resolved to take action and therefore joined the CPD.

The Committee was not, however, a panicked and hastily constituted response to détente. Prior to the creation of the CPD a number of founding members had been involved in similar efforts to bolster popular and government support of containment. The CDM, CMPDP, and the CPFV were important predecessor groups to the CPD itself, and the experiences of these groups greatly influenced how the CPD would operate.

The Team B exercise was particularly influential in the development of the CPD. It permitted the national security experts who opposed what they judged as an optimistic approach to threat assessment the opportunity to articulate the case for worst-case planning in its place. Richard Pipes invited Nitze onto the B Team, who in turn invited Pipes onto the CPD's Executive Committee. The structure of the CPD warning of the Soviet threat was set. Concern over détente, and the rejection of containment that the policy seemed to represent, remained a sincere concern of Committee members for the next four years.

There was genuine and considerable concern from a substantial section of the foreign policy elite that Kissinger's pursuit of détente was dangerous. Over the early 1970s, a number of these experts grew so alarmed at the potential risks of the policy that they took independent action. When their efforts largely failed, these increasingly agitated national security specialists joined the Committee on the Present Danger.

1976 – An Election Year Launch

‘I [Eugene Rostow] told Paul [Nitze] that if it [the Committee] worked at all, it would be the most important thing either of us ever did.’¹⁷⁶

Eugene Rostow, struck by ‘inspiration after a Bloody Mary on Thanksgiving’ in 1975, resolved to organise a group to sound the alarm over the deteriorating state of America’s Cold War campaign.¹⁷⁷ The formation of the group was not prompted by the accession of the Carter Administration in November 1976, but was a result of the Committee’s founding members’ determination to revitalise containment. Rostow and Nitze had been discussing the group for over a year, before Rostow, fortified by his drink, asked Charls Walker and Nitze ‘why don’t we just do it?’¹⁷⁸ Containment had suffered a loss of prestige following the Vietnam War and was further undermined by the pursuit of détente. This drift away from confrontation, for Rostow, necessitated a group dedicated to rehabilitate the strategy. This chapter argues that this was a long-term dissatisfaction with détente and was not simply a reaction to the presidential election, or merely an offshoot of the Team B episode in 1976.

It was not Ford, the Republican and self-professed ‘hawk on defense’, but the prospect of a new Carter Administration that seemed to provide a better opportunity to facilitate a return to containment.¹⁷⁹ Ford, despite his self-assessment as a hawk, remained wedded to détente. Given that CPD members diagnosed détente as the cause of America’s deteriorating military status it is unsurprising that Carter was the more attractive prospect in the 1976 presidential election. To the CPD’s founding members, the U.S.S.R. had increased its military strength while first Nixon and then Ford doggedly pursued improved relations to the detriment of American national security

¹⁷⁶ Eugene Rostow to George Mitchell, 21 November, 1980, Box 69, Folder 3, Nitze Papers.

¹⁷⁷ Eugene Rostow to Charls Walker and Paul Nitze, 1 December, 1975, Box 68, CPD Papers.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Ford in “Memorandum of Conversation, Ford, Kohl, Scowcroft,” May 4, 1976, Folder: May 4, 1976 - Ford, Helmut Kohly (FRG), Box 19, NSA Memcoms, Ford Library, 5.

interests. Compared with Ford's dedication to détente, Carter's emphasis on human rights offered the prospect of a new, more realistic approach to Soviet relations.

This chapter argues that the formation of the Committee was not a reaction to Carter's victory. Ford's re-election campaign, despite calling for increased defence spending, did not signal a shift away from détente, which alarmed the Committee. In Rostow's view the Committee was necessary regardless of the election's outcome: in the event of a second term for Ford the Committee would criticise the administration's policies, and in the event of a Carter victory the Committee would support the new administration's policies that conformed to the principles of containment. A first section concludes that by the autumn of 1976, Ford's continuing commitment to détente was far more distressing to the Committee than Carter's focus on morality and human rights.

Ultimately, election year presidential politics do not explain why the CPD's founding board members moved ahead with their project. The chapter's final section discusses the Committee's intention to start a national debate not only by lobbying the president but also by issuing studies, meeting with politicians, and addressing community leaders. CPD members hoped that by discussing the national security issues that Nixon and Ford had ignored as a result of their pursuit of détente, containment would once again form the basis of U.S.-Soviet relations. The challenges of this mission, however, were exposed at the Committee's first press conference on 11 November. The media greeted the CPD's mission with scepticism, demonstrating to the Executive Committee that their objective would not be attained easily. A long-term effort was necessary to overcome distrust at what appeared to many journalists as a hawkish political group. By the end of 1976, as the Committee's initial reception indicated, there was little to suggest that the group would be able to influence the discourse of national security issues and restore containment.

Détente in the 1976 Election

This section argues that the Committee's election year launch was coincidental, and was not a factor in Rostow's decision to start the group. In fact, election year politics seemed a distraction to the CPD's founding board members as the state of U.S.-Soviet military balance was an issue too important to be subsumed in campaign rhetoric. Re-establishing containment, Rostow recognised, would be a long-term project that would outlast election year politics so the Committee's launch was delayed until after the campaign to ensure that its message would not be dropped immediately after the election. Rostow explained the CPD's nonpartisan approach in the election to a supporter early in 1977:

It was always clear — to us, at least — that the Committee would be useful, if it got off the ground at all, whoever was elected. The basic problem is to bring public opinion back to reality after the shock of Vietnam, Watergate, and Kissinger's cynical pretense of "detente." If we elected a President who wanted to lead that kind of an effort, in Truman's mantle, the Committee would face one set of problems: how to help? If, on the other hand, we elected a President who wanted to continue deceiving us about the state of the world, a la Nixon, Kissinger, and Ford, the Committee's job would obviously be different. In any event, a citizens' committee would be needed because so few of the pundits of public opinion — Congressmen, Senators, media heroes, professors, and so on — were addressing the problem — on the contrary, they were running like rabbits.¹⁸⁰

The election was an interference at the start of the CPD's effort to 'address the problem'. Its campaign intended to encourage officials and 'media heroes' to end the deception of détente, and not to ensure the election of one presidential candidate over the other. In this way, rather than serving as an inspiration for the CPD's foundation, the election should instead be regarded as an unwelcome distraction during the Committee's launch.

The assumption of political scientist Adam Fuller that CPD members 'were mostly Republican' and created their group 'in response to Carter's liberal foreign

¹⁸⁰ Eugene Rostow to Joseph Kraft, 21 February, 1977, Box 109, CPD Papers.

policy' is unfounded.¹⁸¹ This is not only because the majority of its founding members were in fact Democrats, but more significantly because the Ford campaign's rhetoric concerned them considerably more than did Carter's. Ford remained staunchly committed to détente, which was precisely what the Committee perceived as the chief impediment to revitalising containment. The CPD was concerned with national security policy in general rather than opposing individual politicians in 1976, and was much more interested in bringing discussion of foreign policy 'back to reality', as Rostow told CPD honorary chairman Lane Kirkland, than with supporting any particular candidate.¹⁸² The management of America's Cold War strategy was too important for the Committee to attach its fortunes to any one political figure or even party: for the Committee in 1976, politics did indeed end at the water's edge.

In any case, foreign policy was not to be a pivotal issue in the 1976 elections even if it did feature prominently in the Republican primaries. Polling data indicated that election concerns were mostly domestic issues. 'Listen to the people more' and 'Show trust in the people more' were statements that, respectively, 83 and 79 percent of respondents to one poll agreed were top priorities for a new administration.¹⁸³

President Ford was fully committed to continuing détente and, despite criticism during the primary campaign, was unwilling to abandon the approach to Soviet relations. At the beginning of his campaign the president believed his foreign policy to be popular among ordinary Americans, and that his record on U.S.-Soviet relations would be a strength in the 1976 election campaign.¹⁸⁴ After taking an oath of office on 9 August

¹⁸¹ Adam L. Fuller, *Taking the Fight to the Enemy: Neoconservatism and the Age of Ideology* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2012), 40.

¹⁸² Eugene Rostow to Lane Kirkland, 10 February, 1977, Box 109, CPD Papers.

¹⁸³ Louis Harris, "Top Concerns: Abuses Of Power", *ABC News-Harris Survey*, November 18, 1976, <http://www.harrisinteractive.com/vault/Harris-Interactive-Poll-Research-TOP-CONCERNS-ABUSES-OF-POWER-1976-11.pdf> (accessed 29/01/2014).

¹⁸⁴ 'the American people agree with me', Ford told Brezhnev "Brezhnev Memcoms, Helsinki 1975", August 1975, 3, Folder: July 30 - August 2, 1975 - Ford/Brezhnev Meetings in Helsinki, Box 1, NSA Memcoms, Ford Library.

1974, Ford had largely sustained Nixon's foreign policy, retaining Henry Kissinger as his Secretary of State and maintaining détente. He was proud of successful negotiations with Leonid Brezhnev in Vladivostok in December 1974, which resulted in an interim agreement on arms control, and also in Helsinki over the summer of 1975, where the Helsinki Accords were signed.¹⁸⁵ Supplementing improving U.S.-Soviet relations with a strong defence policy; the Ford Administration submitted the highest peacetime defence budget in U.S. history. It was Ford who first used the term 'peace through strength' to describe his approach to U.S.-Soviet relations.¹⁸⁶ With détente as a cornerstone of his administration's foreign policy, Ford assumed his re-election campaign was on steady ground.

To Ford's surprise, however, détente was heavily criticised during the Republican primary campaign. The Ford Administration's press officer, Robert Goldwin, wrote a memorandum in July 1974, summarising the difficulties explaining détente:

Detente suggests that we are not in danger from the Soviets, the need for defense efforts suggests that we are in danger from them – and the seeming contradiction is more than most people can cope with ... What is needed, therefore, it [sic] a clear and persistently repeated explanation of US policy in which detente and defense are presented as two elements of one consistent whole.¹⁸⁷

Goldwin recognised that détente was not an easily explained policy, but stressed that the administration 'should not shun complexity'.¹⁸⁸ In its FY1976 Annual Defense Department Report the Ford Administration acknowledged the growth in Soviet military power and advocated a higher defence budget to ensure that the Soviet Union

¹⁸⁵ Warren I. Cohen, *America in the Age of Soviet Power, 1945–1991*, 1st ed., vol. 4, The Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 206.

¹⁸⁶ Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation*, 604.

¹⁸⁷ Robert A. Goldwin, "Memorandum to the Ambassador, Subject: Détente", July 3, 1974, Folder: Détente, Box 2, Goldwin Papers, Ford Library.

¹⁸⁸ Robert A. Goldwin, "Morality in Foreign Policy", March 14, 1975, Folder: Détente, Box 2, Goldwin Papers, Ford Library, 2.

would not attain strategic superiority.¹⁸⁹ Expansion of the Soviet nuclear arsenal was seen as compatible with détente, but, as Goldwin predicted, détente's critics seized upon this growth in Soviet military power. If relations were improving, Rostow asked, why were the Soviets expanding their military capabilities?¹⁹⁰ This contradiction proved difficult for the Ford Administration to explain.

The inconsistency especially frustrated those who would imminently join the CPD's Executive Committee. Ford seemed to acknowledge the military danger posed by the Soviet Union's growing capabilities, reflected in his request for additional defence spending, yet he would not express these concerns in simple terms to the American public. Privately, for example, Ford perceived that Soviet involvement in the Horn of Africa constituted a significant threat to American interests, and even drew a comparison to the prelude to the Second World War. In February 1976, he confided to Clare Boothe Luce, a PFIAB member and early CPD board member, 'I think we have to show historically that we may be going through the 30's again. If Britain and France had kept Italy out of Ethiopia in 1935, there might have been no World War II. Angola might be a latter day Ethiopia.'¹⁹¹ Such a statement made publicly would have been wholeheartedly welcomed by the nascent CPD, but Ford refused to use such language in public as he did not want to sour Soviet relations.

This contradiction, on the one hand recognising threat, on the other desiring continued cordial relations, deeply troubled the CPD's founding members. For Rostow, withholding these alarming interpretations of Soviet behaviour from the public was

¹⁸⁹ James Schlesinger, as Secretary of Defense, wrote "it is important that we continue to pursue programs that will permit us various options for responding to the growing Soviet counterforce threat against our fixed ICBMS." James R. Schlesinger, "Report of Secretary of Defense," February 5, 1975, 16, Historical Office, Office of the Secretary of Defense, http://history.defense.gov/resources/1976-77_DoD_AR.pdf (accessed 19 June 2014).

¹⁹⁰ "The Quest For Detente", 31 July, 1974, CPD Papers.

¹⁹¹ Ford in "Memorandum of Conversation, Ford, Boothe Luce, and Scrowcroft," February 25, 1976, Folder: February 25, 1976 - Ford, Clare Boothe Luce (PFIAB), Box 18, NSA Memcoms, Ford Library, 3.

tantamount to ‘deceiving us about the state of the world’.¹⁹² The Ford Administration’s emphasis on good relations often resulted in the awkward position of defending their Soviet adversaries and justifying the actions of Soviet leaders. Kissinger, in a memorandum dated 18 March 1976, explained ‘I think we are undermining detente. Except for Angola, I think the Soviets are getting a bum rap. I don’t believe they have massively increased their forces. It is a gradual trend and will continue no matter what. They have been quiet in the Middle East. Only Angola was out of bounds.’¹⁹³ Kissinger’s attitude astounded Committee members. It seemed representative of the illusion of détente that they believed had gripped the Ford Administration. Kissinger suggested that a relaxation of tensions had occurred even while the Soviets continued the Cold War confrontation in the Horn of Africa.

Recognising this uncomfortable situation, Rostow attempted to encourage Ford to discuss Soviet relations more soberly with the American people. He wrote to the president on 25 August 1976 imploring him ‘to follow the line of our Committee manifesto during the campaign ... It seems to be far more naturally your own view of things than the ambiguous and overly optimistic approach you and the Secretary of State have been presenting to the people.’¹⁹⁴ The fact that Ford had raised defence spending was insufficient for Rostow. Not explaining to Americans why the rise was necessary hampered the long-term viability of containment. If the administration gave the impression that the Cold War had ended, and had been superseded by an era of peaceful coexistence, then Americans would not understand why the burden of additional defence spending was necessary. Committee members believed that Americans deserved to be told by their national leaders about Soviet activities, and that

¹⁹² Eugene Rostow to Joseph Kraft, 21 February 1977, Box 109, CPD Papers

¹⁹³ Kissinger in “Memorandum of Conversation, Ford, Kissinger, and Scrowcroft”, 18 March, 1976, Folder: March 18, 1976 - Ford, Kissinger, Box 18, NSA Memcoms, Ford Library, 1.

¹⁹⁴ Eugene Rostow to Gerald Ford, 25 August, 1976, Folder: ND National Security - Defense 1/19/77 - 1/20/77 Box 1, White House Central Files, Ford Library.

the true nature of the Soviet threat should not be withheld merely for the sake of good relations.

Ford assumed that higher defence spending would assuage détente critics such as Rostow, and that continued emphasis on cordial relations would satisfy détente supporters, but the approach pleased no one. He underestimated the growing antipathy towards détente, informing Brezhnev at Helsinki in August 1975 that ‘the criticism at home has come from elements in America that can be, as I said, brushed aside’.¹⁹⁵ Months later his dismissal of détente’s opponents was less confident. Ford revealed his frustrations with the Republican party primary campaign to West German politician Helmut Kohl on 4 May 1976: ‘I have always been a hawk on defense, yet Reagan is trying to portray me [as] just the opposite. It is really ridiculous.’¹⁹⁶ Ford did not share the view of Reagan and of the CPD that it was dangerous to acknowledge the growing Soviet threat and yet still support détente.

Reagan’s challenge in the Republican Primaries in the spring of 1976 publicised the inconsistencies of the Ford Administration’s national security policy. Appearing on an NBC’s *Meet the Press* in March, Reagan declared détente ‘has been a one-way street. We are making the concessions, we are giving them [the Soviet Union] the things they want; we ask nothing in return. In fact, we give them things before we ask for the return.’¹⁹⁷ Reagan’s allegations of Soviet manipulation and U.S. acquiescence proved difficult to dismiss, and greatly concerned the Ford campaign. Campaign officials hoped to portray Reagan as dangerous and unelectable in response. ‘[W]e must go for the

¹⁹⁵ Ford in “Brezhnev Memcoms, Helsinki 1975,” 14, Folder: July 30 - August 2, 1975 - Ford/Brezhnev Meetings in Helsinki, Box 1, NSA Memcoms, Ford Library.

¹⁹⁶ Ford in “Memorandum of Conversation, Ford, Kohl, Scowcroft,” Folder: May 4, 1976 - Ford, Helmut Kohl (FRG), Box 19, NSA Memcoms, Ford Library, 5.

¹⁹⁷ Reagan quoted in Zelizer, “Detente and Domestic Politics”, 665.

jugular and eliminate the credibility of the Reagan campaign', Rogers Morton, chairman of the President Ford Committee, was told by a campaign advisor on 7 April.¹⁹⁸

Yet Reagan's arguments reflected the concerns of an increasing number of Americans as polls indicated mounting unease with détente. Between December 1975 and March 1976 Harris poll respondents expressing opposition to détente rose from 15 per cent to 23 per cent, a small but notable shift.¹⁹⁹ Reagan's primary challenge ultimately failed but did succeed in pushing the administration to the right in style if not in substance.²⁰⁰ As a result of Reagan's attacks, Ford stopped using the word 'détente' in his campaign in February 1976.²⁰¹ However, despite announcing 'we are going to forget the use of the word detente', there was little doubt that Ford remained committed to the spirit of the policy.²⁰² Ford had told Brezhnev in 1975 that 'very forcefully I am committed to detente ... my aim, objective and total effort on my part will be to narrow our differences and achieve the benefits for your people, for our people, and I believe for the world as a whole'.²⁰³ Ford was a passionate advocate of the policy, and there was little doubt that his victory would have resulted in a continuation of détente.

In summary, the Ford campaign deeply frustrated the Committee. He proposed an increased defence budget to ensure military parity, indicating that his administration had the substance of a platform consistent with containment. However, the necessity of new and expensive defence programmes remained unclear to ordinary Americans without explaining why the Soviet Union still remained a threat. Following his election

¹⁹⁸ "Memorandum from Bruce Wagner to Rogers Morton, Subject: Ronald Reagan", 7 April, 1976, Folder: Reagan, Ronald, Box B2, Ford Committee Records, Ford Library, 2.

¹⁹⁹ Louis Harris, "Reagan's Big Mistake", *ABC News-Harris Survey*, 19 April, 1976, <http://www.harrisinteractive.com/vault/Harris-Interactive-Poll-Research-REAGANS-BIG-MISTAKE-1976-04.pdf> (accessed 28/01/2014).

²⁰⁰ At the Republican National Convention in Kansas City Ford secured nomination by a small margin, 1,187 delegates to 1,070.

²⁰¹ Schulzinger, "Détente in the Nixon-Ford Years, 1969-1976", 391.

²⁰² Ford quoted in Kalman, *Right Star Rising*, 131.

²⁰³ Ford in "Brezhnev Memcoms, Helsinki 1975", Folder: July 30 - August 2, 1975 - Ford/Brezhnev Meetings in Helsinki, Box 1, NSA Memcoms, Ford Library, 3.

defeat, Ford wrote to Rostow to defend his failed campaign. Referring to his defence spending plans he maintained that 'actions speak louder than words', yet without hearing the words to explain the actions from their president Rostow was concerned that Americans would not support his defence policy.²⁰⁴ This was the CPD's fundamental grievance with détente. Ford's intention to maintain the policy meant that the aggressive activities of the Soviet Union were downplayed to Americans and the rationale for containment was therefore obscured. This reluctance to explain the Soviet threat constituted the bad leadership of Nixon and Ford that particularly frustrated a number of national security experts who would become Committee board members over 1976.²⁰⁵

For these CPD early board members, as for most of the country outside Georgia, Jimmy Carter was an unknown political figure at the outset of his presidential campaign.²⁰⁶ It was unclear what kind of policies he would pursue in office, and of particular concern to the CPD, what his approach would be to national security and Soviet relations. Carter had carefully positioned himself as the Washington outsider in the Democratic primary campaign, which proved popular following the Vietnam War, the Watergate Scandal, Nixon's impeachment, and Ford's pardon of the disgraced former president.²⁰⁷ In contrast to Nixon, Carter seemed to many Americans as 'a man of high integrity' and 'the kind of new, fresh face that is needed in the White House'.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁴ Gerald Ford to Eugene Rostow, 9 December, 1976, Folder: ND National Security - Defense 10/1/76 - 12/31/76, Box 1, White House Central Files, Ford Library.

²⁰⁵ Rostow was highly critical of Nixon's pursuit of détente: '[Nixon] has explained his policies to Congress and to the public in ways calculated to gain partisan advantage, which in the long run can only serve to weaken the responsible bipartisan consensus'. "The Quest For Detente", 31 July, 1974, Box 447, CPD Papers.

²⁰⁶ Betty Glad, *An Outsider in the White House: Jimmy Carter, His Advisors, and the Making of American Foreign Policy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 1.

²⁰⁷ Nancy Mitchell, "The Cold War and Jimmy Carter," in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, ed. Melvyn P Leffler and Odd Arne Westad, vol. 2. Crises and Détente (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 71.

²⁰⁸ Louis Harris, "Carter Shows Wide Public Appeal", *ABC News-Harris Survey*, 23 August, 1976, <http://www.harrisinteractive.com/vault/Harris-Interactive-Poll-Research-CARTER-SHOWS-WIDE-PUBLIC-APPEAL-1976-08.pdf> (accessed 28/01/2014).

The historian Gaddis Smith argues that Carter ‘offered a morally responsible and farsighted vision’, which proved popular in 1976 as Carter, ‘like a surfer’, caught ‘the one wave of the day’ that led to success.²⁰⁹ As part of his campaign as an outsider, Carter promised the application of morality in foreign policy, offering an approach ‘that reflects the decency and generosity and common sense of our own people’.²¹⁰

This promise appealed to the CPD’s Executive Committee as it suggested ordinary Americans would be informed of national security decision-making, unlike Kissinger’s ‘back channel’ approach within the Ford Administration, which relied on secret negotiations.²¹¹ Rostow was certain, he later announced, that ‘If our people are told the truth, they will respond today, as they have always responded in the past’, and support a return to containment.²¹² As a result, Carter seemed the more promising candidate for advancing the Committee’s agenda because, as they did, he promised to trust the American people.

Precise policy initiatives, however, were vague. While Carter promised to lower defence spending by six per cent, CPD board members considered that perhaps his focus on morality could signify a return to containment. At the very least, challenging the Kremlin’s human rights record seemed preferable to maintaining ‘illusory’ good relations through détente. As Rostow told the gathered press at the CPD’s initial press conference in November, ‘[t]here’s nothing incompatible ... [with] the pledge of President Carter’.²¹³ A new Democratic president inexperienced in national security issues seemed a better prospect for change than another term for Ford, clearly

²⁰⁹ Gaddis Smith, *Morality, Reason, and Power: American Diplomacy in the Carter Years* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1987), 2 and 242.

²¹⁰ Carter quoted in Derek N. Buckaloo, “Carter’s Nicaragua and Other Democratic Quagmires,” in *Rightward Bound: Making America Conservative in the 1970s*, ed. Bruce J Schulman and Julian E Zelizer (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 246.

²¹¹ This secrecy particularly upset Nitze, see Thompson, *The Hawk and the Dove*, 240.

²¹² Eugene Rostow, “The Taste of SALT: Remarks before the Annual Dinner of the Board of Directors of the Committee on the Present Danger, Washington D.C.,” 8 November, 1979, Box 163, CPD Papers, 11.

²¹³ Rostow in “Press Conference of the Committee on the Present Danger”, 11 November, 1976, Box 288, CPD Papers, 12.

committed to détente. Rather than hope that Ford would change his entire approach to Soviet relations, Executive Committee members were enthusiastic to try their luck with the unknown candidate.

Joining the Carter Administration and pursuing a return to containment strategy from within the White House was a distinct possibility for Nitze and James Schlesinger, two influential founding CPD members. Schlesinger had been a prominent figure in the Nixon and Ford Administrations until President Ford removed him as Secretary of Defense in November 1975. Like Nitze, Schlesinger was a vocal advocate of increased defence spending and a more confrontational relationship with the Soviet Union, and these views had led Rostow to include him in CPD planning.²¹⁴ In May 1976, however, Schlesinger hesitated over his involvement in the Committee, and opted to influence policy from within the Carter campaign instead. Having fostered a good working relationship with the presidential candidate, Schlesinger felt that Carter would be receptive to his advice, especially as a newcomer to Washington politics with limited foreign policy experience.²¹⁵ Following Carter's win, however, Schlesinger later admitted that their relationship 'deteriorated reasonably rapidly', limiting his influence on administration national security policy.²¹⁶ He perceived that his involvement in the administration was a 'way of generating political support' rather than Carter attempting to access his advice and counsel.²¹⁷ As Energy Secretary, Schlesinger would have limited opportunities to raise his concerns over national security policy from within the administration.

²¹⁴ Eugene Rostow to James Schlesinger, 24 June, 1976, Box 447, CPD Papers

²¹⁵ Schlesinger quoted in Jane Rafal Wilson, ed., "Presidential Oral History Program. Carter Presidency Project. Final Edited Transcript. Interview with Dr. James Schlesinger." (Miller Center of Public Affairs, July 19, 1984), http://web1.millercenter.org/poh/transcripts/ohp_1984_0719_schlesinger.pdf (accessed 8 May 2014), 12.

²¹⁶ Schlesinger quoted in *ibid.*, 13.

²¹⁷ Schlesinger quoted in *ibid.*

Nitze's opportunity to join the Carter campaign came in the form of an invitation to participate in an advisory meeting in April 1976 at Carter's ranch in Plains, Georgia.²¹⁸ 'If I could make a constructive contribution', Nitze recalled, 'I was anxious to help'.²¹⁹ But during the meeting he refused to emulate 'the rosy picture' of Soviet relations presented by the other advisors.²²⁰ As a result, Carter perceived Nitze as 'arrogant and inflexible ... and he had a doomsday approach'.²²¹ Nitze was not offered a position in the administration and was the only participant at the Plains meeting who did not join Carter's staff. Schlesinger and Nitze, both noted advocates of increased military strength, took different paths in their efforts to reorient policy back towards containment.

In summary, Schlesinger and Nitze's initial willingness to participate in the Carter Administration demonstrates that the candidate's platform of morality did not necessarily alienate advocates of containment in 1976. On the contrary, a focus on human rights perhaps signalled that the new administration might confront the Soviet Union with new vigour. With Zbigniew Brzezinski, a Polish émigré and noted hardliner, as the new administration's National Security Advisor there seemed a better chance of eschewing détente than under a re-elected Ford Administration.

The Committee's Objectives

The first full meeting of the CPD's Executive Committee was held on 19 October 1976.²²² The meeting was intended to determine what exactly the CPD intended to accomplish in its first year. It was decided that a primary focus of 'shaping leadership opinion' would be achieved by expanding the Committee's membership base, seeking additional funding, and, most importantly, by regularly releasing statements on

²¹⁸ Peter Bourne to Paul Nitze, 25 April, 1976, Box 143, Folder 1, Paul H. Nitze Papers.

²¹⁹ Nitze, Rearden, and Smith, *From Hiroshima to Glasnost*, 348.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 349.

²²¹ Carter quoted in Strobe Talbott, "Arms and the Man", *Time Magazine*, 21 December, 1987.

²²² "First Official Meeting of The Committee on the Present Danger - Agenda", 19 October, 1976, Folder 8, Box 70, Nitze Papers.

issues affecting the U.S.-Soviet military balance.²²³ The result of this gathering was the CPD's first statement *How the Committee on the Present Danger Will Operate*. The statement explained that the Committee's publications were to be based on a 'full, fair and objective factual foundation' and would involve 'as many sectors of society as our resources permit'.²²⁴ The statement also identified the objective of the Committee as 'to facilitate a national discussion' of national security policy to ensure 'a secure peace with freedom'.²²⁵ It argued the need to 'build a fresh consensus' behind containment in American foreign policy was necessary to achieve this goal.²²⁶ The Committee recognised it had 'set a big task for itself [and was] aware how difficult it will be to accomplish'.²²⁷

Nitze believed that the Committee's activities would fill an important but neglected role. He later recalled that the CPD programme had been necessary as

None of the existing think tanks or other similar institutions was doing the objective analyses and presentations needed to stimulate public awareness ... What was missing, I decided, was an effective vehicle that could bring these questions [of strategic disadvantage] to the public's attention.²²⁸

The CPD would take on this task.

In Nitze's vision the Committee was not a lobbying group but an educational group. Authoring research articles, giving congressional testimony, and participating in debates were not activities considered to be lobbying, and meant the group could receive tax free donations. The Inland Revenue Service agreed, assessing the

²²³ "Committee on the Present Danger First Year Program", 5 October, 1976, Box 17, CPD Papers.

²²⁴ CPD Executive Committee, "How the Committee on the Present Danger Will Operate- What It Will Do, and What It Will Not Do", 1-2.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 1.

²²⁶ CPD Executive Committee, "Common Sense and the Common Danger: Policy Statement of the Committee on the Present Danger", 5.

²²⁷ CPD Executive Committee, "How the Committee on the Present Danger Will Operate- What It Will Do, and What It Will Not Do", 2.

²²⁸ Nitze, Rearden, and Smith, *From Hiroshima to Glasnost*, 353.

Committee's activities as educational – not lobbying – and granted non-profit status.²²⁹ To educate on national security issues, Nitze, as the CPD's Director of Policy Studies, would select national security issues and run a series of 'computations' to generate statistics that would form the basis of a CPD report. A Committee working group would then draft a report to be circulated around the Executive Committee. After a collaborative redrafting effort, a laborious process that lasted hours, the statements were finalised and distributed to the Committee's mailing list.

In this important respect, the CPD campaign was not intended to replicate the 'clearer than truth' style of the NSC-68 report that had first established containment in the early 1950s.²³⁰ A subtler approach was required to build support for containment in the post-Vietnam War era. The Committee would not stoke fear by presenting startling images of the threat of a Soviet initiated nuclear war, but would instead appeal to Americans' desire to match the military strength of their communist rivals by logically demonstrating Soviet superiority with statistics and graphs. The campaign to re-establish containment would be advanced through relatively uncontroversial topics of analysis including 'the nature and purposes of Soviet foreign policy ... the state of the arms race ... [and] the problem of restoring a viable world economy'.²³¹ The CPD's analyses would address 'broad principles' and avoid 'day to day, tactical issues'.²³² This approach meant that the Committee could present its analysis in a disinterested style that would be better received in the more sceptical 1970s.

The broad principles the Committee would tackle could in fact be reduced to just a single principle: one had to assume that the Soviet Union, like Rome or the Mongols,

²²⁹ "501(c)(3) Determination Letter From Internal Revenue Service", 27 September, 1977, Box 381, CPD Papers.

²³⁰ Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, 375

²³¹ Rostow in "Press Conference of the Committee on the Present Danger", Box 288, CPD Papers, 4.

²³² Rostow in *ibid.*

was dangerous because it was inherently expansionist.²³³ This assumption was axiomatic to CPD board members and was the basis for all the Committee's analyses. The notion would never be challenged as it was the main point of agreement between the group's disparate membership, and this meant that every Soviet action that conceivably supported this hypothesis was taken as incontrovertible proof that the hypothesis was accurate. If one agreed with the premise of the CPD's analysis, then the logic that underpinned its alarming message was rational. What evidence did the group provide to justify its assumption of inherent expansionism? Pipes' reading of Russian history supposedly gave substantiation to the view of a civilisation obsessed with military power and territorial gain.²³⁴ This insight fuelled both the Committee's urgency and the conviction that its assessments of future malevolent Soviet conduct were accurate.

The CPD's axiomatic assumption of Soviet expansionism would be presented in publications in a disinterested, analytical style. This effort was bolstered by the Committee's focus on recruiting an elite membership. The Executive Committee members attending the first October meeting were well-connected and influential members of the Washington political elite. These CPD leaders had the political stature to be granted access to senators, congressman, and White House officials to discuss concerns over national security policy. The Committee's *First Year Program* prioritised meeting key congressional personnel 'in the informal surroundings of clubs or private homes in order to promote one-on-one exchange'.²³⁵ The Executive Committee was concerned about the status and influence of those it reached rather than their quantity,

²³³ Dalby, *Creating the Second Cold War*, 58

²³⁴ Pipes' contribution to the CPD's assumptions on Soviet Grand Strategy are best represented in Pipes' article *Why the Soviet Union Thinks it Could Fight and Win a Nuclear War* and the Committee's similar pamphlet *What is the Soviet Union Up To?* Richard Pipes, 'Why the Soviet Union Thinks It Could Fight and Win a Nuclear War', *Commentary* 64, no. 1 (1977): 21–34; CPD Executive Committee. "What Is the Soviet Union Up To?" In *Alerting America: The Papers of the Committee on the Present Danger*, edited by Charles Tyroler II, (New York, NY: Pergamon Press, 1984).

²³⁵ "Committee on the Present Danger First Year Program", Box 17, CPD Papers, 2.

and its programme was to be 'directed primarily toward shaping leadership opinion in the Congress, the media and the community'.²³⁶ It is clear that the Committee did not seek to create a mass movement, but sought to generate support among 'opinion leaders' for the policies that would permit a return to containment.²³⁷ As Rostow told CPD board members in December 1976, 'We can generate an effective public opinion only if each of you helps, locally and nationally, to multiply the impact of the Committee's output.'²³⁸ In addition to releasing statements to supporters, the *First Year Program* included plans to conduct conferences and seminars, for which the CPD would supply speakers and written materials and to 'secure local and regional media attention' for the CPD's statements.²³⁹

This focus on 'national leaders' was also a matter of funding; the Committee had very limited financial resources in 1976 and speaking events – where event organisers often paid expenses – kept expenditures low. It was far beyond the CPD's resources to print the large numbers of pamphlets necessary for a meaningful mailing campaign on the same scale as the groups such as the Conservative Caucus or the American Conservative Union, which could send millions of direct mailings as part of their well-funded campaigns.²⁴⁰ Funds were better spent, the Executive Committee reasoned, on directing efforts towards those with immediate political influence. In relying on volunteer efforts and personal contacts with noted public figures it could spread its message among an influential audience despite such limited resources.

The Committee did not receive substantial financial backing to start its effort. It is only partially true, as the historian Bodenheimer has suggested, that the 'CPD

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.

²³⁷ "Public/Congressional Relations Plan for the Committee on the Present Danger.", 10 June, 1977, Box 447, CPD Papers, 9.

²³⁸ Eugene Rostow, "Report No. 1 - Our Debut", 7 December, 1976, Box 288, CPD Papers, 2.

²³⁹ "Committee on the Present Danger First Year Program", Box 17, CPD Papers, 2-3.

²⁴⁰ On the substantial efforts of these groups during the Panama Canal Treaties debate, see David Skidmore, "Foreign Policy Interest Groups and Presidential Power: Jimmy Carter and the Battle over Ratification of the Panama Canal Treaties," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 23, no. 3 (1993): 479–483.

received its start-up grant from David Packard'.²⁴¹ To maintain impartiality the Executive Committee imposed strict financing rules that prevented any individual giving more than \$10,000 each year, and refused donations from any organisation receiving 15 per cent of its revenues from the defence industry.²⁴² These provisions proved restrictive and rather than attracting funds from the defence industry, as is often argued, the Committee was in fact predominately funded by its own members. David Packard, Paul Nitze, Henry Fowler, and C. Douglas Dillon each donated between \$5,000 and \$10,000 of seed funding. Charls Walker, the CPD's treasurer, arranged an event for a group of Houston businessmen on 4 August 1976 where four bankers donated a total of \$27,500.²⁴³ On 10 November 1976, the day before its public launch, the Committee had just \$36,602.75 in its bank account.²⁴⁴ Over the first year of operations the CPD spent just \$98,144.32.²⁴⁵ To limit expenses the Committee budgeted to employ only two full time non-secretarial staff; Charles Tyroler as director, and Paul Green.²⁴⁶ Green coordinated media relations, arranging visits to newspaper editorial meetings, television appearances, and allocating CPD members to regional speaking events.

It is clear that in explaining the CPD's success funding was certainly not as important as was the group's membership. The group operated as a volunteer organisation that relied almost exclusively on its Executive Committee members to author statements and perform outreach efforts. Additional funding amplified its message but the CPD did not rely on substantial financial resources to fund its basic operations, in contrast to the direct mailing model of organisations like the American

²⁴¹ Bodenheimer and Gould, *Rollback!*, 165.

²⁴² Max Kampelman, "Introduction", in *Alerting America: The Papers of the Committee on the Present Danger*, ed. Charles Tyroler II (New York: Pergamon Press, 1984), xvi.

²⁴³ 'CPD Meetings Prior to November 11, 1976', undated, Box 381, CPD Papers.

²⁴⁴ 'Riggs National Bank Deposit Book', 10 November, 1976, Box 446, CPD Papers, 1.

²⁴⁵ 'Memorandum for Charls Walker', 8 November, 1977, Box 3, CPD Papers.

²⁴⁶ '1st Annual Budget', undated, Box 17, CPD Papers.

Conservative Union. The intellectual work of report writing, letter writing, and debating formed the core of Committee activity and was performed by members at no cost. The only significant expenses were its small number of support staff, printing, mailing, and travel costs. Access to a senator's office to present the Committee's latest pamphlet could not be bought; the ability to influence directly politicians was a result of CPD members' prestige. As we shall see later, the composition of membership was much more important to the Committee's initial success than was substantial funding.

Conscious of the 'special risks' of launching in an election year, the Executive Committee waited to introduce itself and its message to the public until after the conclusion of the presidential election.²⁴⁷ Rostow had originally intended to launch in the summer of 1976 but ultimately chose to wait until the resolution of the presidential campaign to protect the Committee's nonpartisan image. He had informed a number of politicians, including Donald Rumsfeld and Henry Kissinger, of the existence of the CPD in April 1976, stressing its 'bipartisanship, nonpartisan' nature and intention to operate 'in a scrupulously non-polemic fashion', and to 'avoid controversies' in national security debates.²⁴⁸ Announcing the Committee after the election, Rostow hoped, would permit a longer-term campaign to rebuild a consensus behind containment.

On 11 November 1976, seventy journalists were invited to the National Press Club in Washington for the public unveiling of the new organisation. Rostow introduced the CPD's 'honorary chairmen' who explained their mission and invited questions from the gathered press. He explained that the Committee's honorary chairmen had been appointed to demonstrate that CPD membership was 'being drawn from every section of the country and every major walk of life'.²⁴⁹ Lane Kirkland, the

²⁴⁷ Eugene Rostow to Donald Rumsfeld, 5 April, 1976, Box 19, CPD Papers.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ CPD Executive Committee, "How the Committee on the Present Danger Will Operate- What It Will Do, and What It Will Not Do", 2.

chairman of the AFL-CIO trade union, represented labour. David Packard, the cofounder of the Hewlett-Packard Company, represented business. Packard had also served as Deputy Secretary of Defense from 1969 to 1971 in the Nixon Administration. Finally, Henry Fowler, who had served as the Secretary of the Treasury in the Johnson Administration, represented government. Each of the honorary chairmen was a prominent and well-respected political figure, and their affiliation to the CPD was intended to demonstrate both widespread concern over the inadequacy of détente as well as support for the need for enhanced military capabilities.

From its first conference the CPD was determined to manage the media perception of its campaign, and to challenge the labelling of the group as Cold War ‘hawks’. The CPD’s first public appearance was designed to highlight the respectable, bipartisan makeup of its supporters, and, by extension, their message. Each honorary chairman read aloud a portion of the CPD’s statement, *Common Sense and Common Danger*.²⁵⁰ It unambiguously explained the Committee’s assessment of the threat facing America: ‘Our country is in a period of danger and the danger is increasing. Unless decisive steps are taken to alert the nation and to change the course of its policy, our economic and military capacity will become inadequate to assure peace with security.’²⁵¹ The statement suggested that ‘awareness of danger has diminished’ and that political determination was required to ‘restore the strength and coherence of our foreign policy’.²⁵² Soviet expansion was the single largest threat to the ‘survival of freedom,’ and restored confidence, strength, and leadership were required as ‘national survival’ was at risk.²⁵³ The opening message was intended to balance the gravity of the group’s warning with the gravitas of the group’s honorary chairmen. This was a

²⁵⁰ CPD Executive Committee, “Common Sense and the Common Danger: Policy Statement of the Committee on the Present Danger”, 3.

²⁵¹ Nitze in “Press Conference of the Committee on the Present Danger”, Box 288, CPD Papers, 4.

²⁵² Nitze in *ibid.*, 5.

²⁵³ Kirkland in *ibid.*, 8 and 9.

carefully considered introduction for the group: not a shrill cry for Cold War renewal, but a reasoned warning that the superpower rivalry had never subsided, despite the pursuit of détente.

The CPD had been created, the statement declared, to ‘build a fresh consensus to expand the opportunities and diminish the dangers of a world in flux’, alluding to a reestablishment of containment as the basis for national security policy.²⁵⁴ The Committee’s immediate objective was ‘to promote a realistic public discussion’ in response to ‘difficult’ and ‘deteriorating’ global political climate.²⁵⁵ This discussion would involve explaining the growing military capabilities of the Soviet Union and in doing so, it was hoped, generate support for the defence programmes that would allow American armed forces to match Soviet strength. Rostow explained that his mission was urgent; the Committee needed ‘to move American public opinion, American public policy, early enough, while there’s still time’.²⁵⁶ Détente had numbed Americans to the dangers presented by the Soviet Union and the Committee would articulate these threats and rebuild a consensus behind the maintenance of an adequate military shield to contain the Soviet threat.

Rostow was keen to stress that the Committee’s efforts were not merely a reaction to the newly elected Carter Administration. Rather than announce opposition to the administration, Rostow instead struck a constructive tone: ‘[W]e’re talking now only in terms of broad policy objectives’, he remarked, and stressed the necessity of a ‘long term effort’ of re-establishing consensus.²⁵⁷ The CPD had avoided the presidential election cycle as the issue of national security was far more important and because the

²⁵⁴ Fowler in *ibid.*, 10.

²⁵⁵ Rostow in *ibid.*, 3.

²⁵⁶ Rostow in *ibid.*, 21.

²⁵⁷ Rostow in *ibid.*, 13 and 17.

Committee was ‘concerned with trends and not personalities’.²⁵⁸ Party politics, Rostow was keen to stress, did not interest the Executive Committee. He told reporters that ‘the activities of this committee should serve a useful national purpose, should help whoever is President and whoever are members of Congress for a long time to come, without regard to which party is in control of the Congress’.²⁵⁹ The Committee’s foe was the ‘illusory’ policy of détente that now, following Ford’s defeat, could be abandoned and the process of restoring containment begun.²⁶⁰

The introduction of the Committee’s mission invited hostile press questioning of the honorary chairmen, and demonstrated the uphill battle facing the CPD in their effort to influence policy. To journalists the Committee appeared to be another effort by Cold War hawks to raise military spending by unsubstantiated scaremongering. Packard was asked why he had not raised similar concerns while serving as Secretary of Defense.²⁶¹ Defending his record, Packard responded that it was the current adverse ‘trends’ in the military balance that concerned him and that inflation had eroded the defence budget in real terms since his tenure.²⁶² Lane Kirkland, as chairman of the country’s largest trade union, was asked whether the Committee’s position on higher defence spending would in fact lower the standard of living of his own union members. Kirkland’s view was that deciding on the defence budget was ‘a question of how big a chance you’re willing to take ... [it is] prudent to take out fire insurance, particularly if you’re living next door to a pyromaniac’.²⁶³ Paul Nitze contested the insinuation that the CPD was just another hawkish group, determined to fight the Cold War in a particularly aggressive manner. He was adamant that when polled the majority of Americans agreed with the position

²⁵⁸ Rostow in *ibid.*, 25.

²⁵⁹ Rostow in *ibid.*, 3.

²⁶⁰ Rostow in *ibid.*, 25.

²⁶¹ Unidentified Journalist in *ibid.*, 17.

²⁶² Packard in *ibid.*

²⁶³ Kirkland in *ibid.*, 22–23.

the Committee had outlined.²⁶⁴ To an extent this was true. Détente, while still popular, was slowly losing popularity and support for increased defence spending was rising.²⁶⁵ The Chairmen's responses, however, did not prevent a mixed reception for the Committee.

The launch resulted in editorial comment in some newspapers welcoming the Committee's formation, noting its prominent membership in particular. *The Columbia Record* welcomed the CPD 'because of its nature, because of its expertise among experienced and dedicated men ... Informed, intense dialogue in a democracy is essential for the public weal.'²⁶⁶ A syndicated editorial in *The Montgomery Advertiser*, however, asked 'Where's the Wolf?', and compared the premise of the Committee's efforts unfavourably to the missile-gap controversies of previous years.²⁶⁷ The presentation of the Committee's honorary chairman was designed to portray an image of widespread concern to justify their mission, but the more common reaction was recognition of prominent members coupled with scepticism of their message.

The CPD's press unveiling did not result in a surge of sympathetic publicity for its view that the Soviet Union constituted a growing danger to American interests. Significantly, the Committee's launch was entirely ignored by the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*.²⁶⁸ In addition, 'Television coverage', Tyroler noted, 'was highly disappointing'.²⁶⁹ Tyroler later admitted that after the launch 'All of us were crushed and feeling lower than a snake's belly.'²⁷⁰ Unsurprisingly the announcement of the

²⁶⁴ Nitze in *ibid.*, 18–19.

²⁶⁵ Louis Harris, "Defense Cuts Opposed", *ABC News-Harris Survey*, 10 April, 1976, <http://www.harrisinteractive.com/vault/Harris-Interactive-Poll-Research-DEFENSE-CUTS-OPPOSED-1976-10.pdf> (accessed 28/01/2014).

²⁶⁶ 'A Present Danger', *Columbia Record*, in "The Nation's Editors Speak Up On 'The Present Danger'", 1977, Folder 8, Box 69, Nitze Papers.

²⁶⁷ "Where's the Wolf", *The Montgomery Advertiser* in *ibid.*

²⁶⁸ Charles Tyroler II, "Report on Media Reaction to Initial Press Conference, 11 November 1976", 9 December, 1976, Box 18, CPD Papers.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁰ Charles Tyroler II to Mrs Achilles, 8 May, 1986, Box 19, CPD Papers.

Committee's formation did not immediately spark a national debate on defence issues, but the Executive Committee had recognised this was to be a long term effort. The *First Year Program* would now be enacted and the Committee's studies would ensure that the 'other side' of the debate on Soviet relations – the less optimistic view that Team B had advocated – would now be heard.²⁷¹

Conclusion

In 1976, the Committee launched in order to function as an association for those who did not think that national leaders sufficiently acknowledged the threat from the Soviet Union, and who believed that a return to containment was necessary. Despite Reagan's success in exposing the contradictions of détente during the Republican primary campaign, it was uncertain that the Ford Administration would scrap the policy and restore containment in its place. In the Executive Committee's view Ford was unwilling to tell the truth about Soviet relations, and while Carter seemed open to change, his intentions for Soviet relations and defence policy were uncertain. In this context, the Executive Committee's objective was to gather those in favour of containment within one group, coordinate activities to reach as many influential people as possible, and then persuade them that the Committee's stance on containment was reasonable.

This chapter has shown that the Committee was not started in opposition to the newly elected Carter Administration. In fact, the Carter Administration was welcomed over the Ford Administration, which, despite committing to increases in defence spending, seemed incapable of recognising the dangers of détente. In contrast, despite a campaign pledge to reduce defence spending, Carter was seen as far more likely to be

²⁷¹ "Committee on the Present Danger First Year Program", 5 October, 1976, Box 17, CPD Papers.

receptive to Committee views. His inexperience in foreign affairs suggested he might be persuaded to return to containment as the basis of national security. This was certainly the view taken by James Schlesinger, a noted advocate of higher defence spending, who ended his CPD affiliation to work within the new administration.

The Committee intended to reach influential members of the public and congressmen. It had no ambition to replicate larger, more prominent conservative pressure groups and to operate as a direct mailing operation with a large mailing list. Instead, given its limited financial resources, the group would operate as an enhanced speakers group. By leveraging the prominence of its membership the Committee would prepare and distribute studies on national security and speak at events in order to build the case for containment. This would not be an easy task, and Rostow and Nitze attempted to leverage the prominence of the Committee's supporters to gain national exposure for its controversial message of a present danger and the need to spend more on defence. Without financial backing to support an advertising campaign, the Committee rested on the quality of its analyses to overcome the preconceptions of a sceptical press.

The sceptical reception at its launch reaffirmed the difficult balance that the Committee faced between forcefully presenting its alarming warning, which might invite accusations of undue alarmism, and adopting a bureaucratic style, which might risk being ignored by a bewildered press. Given the severity of the threat that the Committee's board members believed America faced, this dilemma would vex the Executive Committee in the years ahead. Dispassionately warning of an existential threat would not be straightforward.

1977 – Establishing Credibility

‘We have established our base and our credibility. Now we must really get to work.’²⁷²

In a June 1977 planning document, the CPD’s Executive Committee identified that their ‘program must have credibility’.²⁷³ Given that the Committee was a new organisation arguing for increased defence spending while détente remained broadly popular, the Executive Committee appeared to have set itself a difficult task. In late 1976, for example, the group’s members were accused of being ‘representatives of the military-industrial complex’.²⁷⁴ A mere six months later, however, the press attitude was much less scathing. This was especially true after the CPD’s Executive Committee visited the White House to discuss their concerns over national security policy with President Carter in the summer of 1977. White House officials noted the Committee’s newfound credibility on national security issues and sought to consult Executive Committee members in order to moderate their public criticism of administration defence policy. Even if many Americans still disagreed with the group’s conclusions, by the end of 1977 the Committee was increasingly viewed as an authority on national security issues.

This chapter argues that the Committee attained credibility for the group and its message by pursuing a deliberate and ultimately successful legitimisation strategy. First, the chapter will show how the selection of prominent board members provided a public platform for the Committee’s views on the U.S.-Soviet military balance. Second, it will explain how the CPD gained authority through the style and format of its publications. Finally, the chapter will demonstrate that as the CPD’s stature grew its relationship with the Carter Administration shifted from tentative support to direct opposition. This

²⁷² Eugene Rostow to The Board of Directors, 16 September, 1977, Box 164, CPD Papers.

²⁷³ “Public/Congressional Relations Plan for the Committee on the Present Danger.”, Box 447, CPD Papers, 1.

²⁷⁴ Nitze, Rearden, and Smith, *From Hiroshima to Glasnost*, 359.

examination will demonstrate that the CPD was successful in establishing credibility because it portrayed itself as a trustworthy and reliable organisation, which, backed by prominent board members, ensured that opinion makers could not dismiss its calls for higher defence spending out of hand. The CPD was not simply perceived by contemporaries as a 'right wing' group, as a number of studies featuring the group have argued.²⁷⁵ In fact, the Committee was increasingly respected as an authority by the media and politicians, and was able to participate directly in public debates on national security policy.

Attaining Credibility

Gaining credibility for the CPD's message meant 'to get members of the media to see the legitimacy of its positions even if they do not favor them', a planning document suggested.²⁷⁶ This appears a rather limited goal, but reflects the CPD's appreciation of the difficulty of its effort to argue against détente in favour of higher defence spending. Even if media outlets featured Committee positions despite disagreeing with them, the Executive Committee recognised, the seeds of a debate on defence policy and Soviet relations would be sown. The fact that there was disagreement among foreign policy experts over détente would provide the media with a story and as a result encourage coverage of Committee analyses. An energetic and forceful campaign would then expand the debate that the CPD, the Executive Committee was convinced, would eventually win. However, this media relations plan rested on first establishing the Committee's credibility.

²⁷⁵ See, for example, Bodenheimer and Gould, *Rollback!*, 134.

²⁷⁶ 'Public/Congressional Relations Plan for the Committee on the Present Danger.', Box 447, CPD Papers, 23.

Following its launch in 1976 the CPD achieved a mixed reception from the press. Max Kampelman,²⁷⁷ an Executive Committee member, later admitted that ‘the Committee’s message was slow in reaching the public’.²⁷⁸ Yet by the spring of 1977 attitudes in the press towards the Committee began to shift. In April, just six months after its first press conference, Rostow noted that ‘Our Committee has somehow achieved public notice. I couldn’t explain how this happened. But it did, and we are delighted.’²⁷⁹ The *Washington Post*, for example, which had pointedly ignored the CPD’s launch in late 1976, referred to the group as ‘a number of experienced national security affairs hands’, in February 1977.²⁸⁰

This rapid shift in the CPD’s public perception, despite Rostow’s claim to the contrary, can be explained. It was the result of a well-planned public relations strategy that deliberately targeted an influential audience, emphasised the unusual nature of the Committee’s membership, and appeared to justify its argument with clear logic and abundant supporting data. The Committee encouraged a more favourable view of itself by demonstrating its differences from previous ‘alarmist’ groups. The majority of its members, for example, were Democratic Party members and a number were noted liberals. Its arguments were presented in long-form written studies, scrupulously evidenced with appendices of graphs and statistics. Their campaign would not rest on unsubstantiated assertions of Soviet malevolence - ‘red baiting’ - but would instead carefully build its case and set out the underlying data of its analysis for readers to follow.

²⁷⁷ Max Kampelman was a prominent Washington D.C. lawyer in the 1970s. He had worked as an aide to Hubert Humphrey during his presidential campaigns in 1968 and 1972.

²⁷⁸ Kampelman, “Introduction”, xviii.

²⁷⁹ Eugene Rostow to Harry Jaffa, 12 April, 1977, Box 109, CPD Papers.

²⁸⁰ Lee Lescaze, “Warnke Confirmation Seen Virtually Certain Despite Critics”, *The Washington Post*, February 6, 1977, sec. 1; A7.

Of course, this approach did not exempt the Committee from press criticism. A number of journalists shared the *New Republic's* view that CPD's 'furore over Soviet strategic power seems laughably familiar'.²⁸¹ Such dismissive reporting certainly threatened the Committee's attempt to instigate a debate on U.S.-Soviet relations. However, as the Executive Committee hoped, a number of newspapers did take their warning seriously and noted the expert, bipartisan image that the Committee sought to portray. The *Denver Post*, for example, told readers that 'we are bound out of politeness and shared concern to pay attention to this group of distinguished peers'.²⁸² In many media outlets the Committee's messages were not dismissed as the work of Cold Warriors but were regarded as serious warnings presented by a group of notable American citizens.

The rise in the CPD's stature was not the result of large donations to buy coverage for its message, as one *New York Post* article suggested.²⁸³ Instead, as Rostow told CPD members on 30 March, 'Adequate funding threatens to continue [as] a serious problem.'²⁸⁴ Charls Walker, the Committee's Treasurer, reported in November 1977 that the CPD's financial position was precarious. '[W]e're operating literally on a shoe string', he told Board Members.²⁸⁵ This funding limitation, as noted in the previous chapter, was in part due to donor restrictions. In addition to a \$10,000 donation ceiling, any serving government official or employee of a defence contractor was unable to contribute to the Committee at all. This self-imposed restriction severely hampered the Committee's ability to raise funds, but ensured that it would not be dismissed as the mouthpiece of the defence industry. In Walker's view this had proved 'a very, very wise

²⁸¹ Kondracke, "Is There a Present Danger?", 18.

²⁸² Tweedell, Robert, 'Formed: Committee on Present Danger', *The Denver Post*, in "The Nation's Editors Speak Up On 'The Present Danger'", 3.

²⁸³ Mary McGrory, "Payday for Peace Workers", *New York Post*, 8 March, 1977.

²⁸⁴ Eugene Rostow to Members of the Board of Directors, 30 March, 1977, Box 337, CPD Papers.

²⁸⁵ Walker in "The Committee on the Present Danger, First Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors, Washington D.C.", November 11, 1977, Box 166, CPD Papers, 18.

move to make' as it had 'saved us a great deal of trouble with the press'.²⁸⁶ Walker correctly predicted that the Committee's aims were better served by focusing on fostering a reputation for independent expertise rather than maximising fundraising.

The Committee's success in establishing its name in the early months of 1977 was not, therefore, a result of financial clout but of clarity of message and an emphasis on the composition of its membership. The Executive Committee recognised the importance of attracting high profile board members 'based on their leadership roles in American life' in order to enhance its public standing.²⁸⁷ The Committee's public relations plan stressed that its membership 'is a vehicle for the acquisition of political power'.²⁸⁸ A number of high profile board members would collectively promote the CPD message and enhance its political influence. The Committee would be greater than the sum of its parts, and its ability to influence the discourse of national security issues, backed by these sympathetic and prominent members, would be enhanced.

The initial recruitment of board members in 1976 had been extremely successful.²⁸⁹ Only three people declined membership in the first year, one from ill health, one of old age, and only one straight refusal.²⁹⁰ By November 1977, the number of permitted board members had to be increased to 200 in order to accommodate the unexpectedly high acceptance rate of invitations issued by the Executive Committee.²⁹¹ Backed by hundreds of prestigious board members, the Executive Committee hoped that it would prove impossible for media outlets to ignore their message.

CPD board membership, it should be emphasised, was separate from Executive Committee membership. Executive Committee members invited carefully selected

²⁸⁶ Walker in *ibid.*, 19.

²⁸⁷ Paul Green to R.W. Lee, 2 February, 1977, Box 179, CPD Papers.

²⁸⁸ 'Public/Congressional Relations Plan for the Committee on the Present Danger', Box 447, CPD Papers, 4.

²⁸⁹ See Appendix I, Founding Board Members of the Committee on the Present Danger.

²⁹⁰ 'The Committee on the Present Danger, First Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors, Washington D.C.', 11 November, 1977, Box 166, CPD Papers, 2.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*

individuals to demonstrate support for the work of the CPD by accepting membership on its board of directors. Two nominees were rejected for each one proposed, and an invitation was extended only after consideration at a minimum of two Executive Committee meetings.²⁹² While a handful of board members assisted writing publications, the function of the vast majority was only to display public support of the CPD's activities.

Unsurprisingly, the majority of early board members were drawn from the social networks of Executive Committee members. Rostow and Nitze in particular were able to recruit notable individuals whose affiliation to the Committee added gravitas to its warnings. 'We picked the people as carefully as we could', Tyroler explained.²⁹³ We should not conclude that the Committee was just a social club, however; board members joined because they genuinely supported the CPD's mission after it was explained to them by prominent people they knew and trusted.

One board member in particular, Ronald Reagan, has attracted considerable interest from scholars. Jeremi Suri, in one example, argues that 'Reagan also popularized the viewpoint of [the CPD]'.²⁹⁴ But this overstates Reagan's importance to the CPD in its crucial first year of operation. Reagan was not among the early members of the Committee who initially helped establish its reputation. He joined as a board member only in March 1977, and, contrary to Suri's argument, had limited influence within the group at this early stage. Reagan did not even meet with the Executive Committee in person until February 1979.²⁹⁵ Reagan's support in early 1977, if anything, was a negative factor in the CPD's establishment of credibility: he was the

²⁹² 'Committee on the Present Danger: Second Annual Meeting, Cassette One', 10 November, 1978, CPD Papers, 2.

²⁹³ Tyroler II quoted in William Delaney, 'Trying to Awaken Us to Russia's 'Present Danger'', *Washington Star*, 4 April, 1977, Box 447, CPD Papers.

²⁹⁴ Suri, "Détente and Its Discontents", 242.

²⁹⁵ Ronald Reagan to Paul Nitze, 2 February, 1979, Box 36, Folder 17, Nitze Papers.

type of conservative member that might contribute to the right-wing stereotype the CPD endeavoured to avoid. It was for this reason that the CPD emphasised its Democratic members and not its Republican contingent when stressing its bipartisan composition.

The Executive Committee was keen to highlight its liberal members to the media, including Nobel Prize winners Saul Bellow, Eugene Wigner, and W. F. Libby. These Committee board members were persuaded, or ‘converted’ as Justin Vaisse argues, by Executive Committee members.²⁹⁶ Nathan Glazer, a Harvard University sociologist, explained that he joined the CPD because ‘in a world of specialists, you rely on friends ... if my friends who know about arms say they are scared, then I am scared’.²⁹⁷ The ability to recruit a membership that included these respected liberal figures was a curiosity, and attracted media interest in the CPD and its message.

A number of newspaper articles made the unlikely membership composition the focus of its coverage of the CPD. A *New Republic* article, for example, registered surprise at the individuals backing the CPD’s warnings and explained to readers why they had joined the Committee. ‘[Saul] Bellow said in a telephone interview that he is "appalled by the self-hypnosis" of intellectuals who "understand only one kind of police state" and he is "frightened when I realize in whose hands these new weapons are being held.”’²⁹⁸ Another article featured Estelle Ramey, an endocrinologist at Georgetown University and a noted Women’s Rights campaigner. She explained her support of the Committee: ‘Normally I don’t get involved in this sort of thing because I’m so busy with my feminism ... I thought about it a good bit. I know so many of the people involved. It [the CPD] did give the names of other people I respect and agree with.’²⁹⁹

²⁹⁶ Vaisse, *Neoconservatism*, 109.

²⁹⁷ Glazer quoted in WETA Radio N, NPR Network, “Transcript of ‘All Things Considered’”, December 24, 1977, Box 337, CPD Papers, 3.

²⁹⁸ Kondracke, “Is There a Present Danger?”, 18.

²⁹⁹ Estelle Ramey quoted in Delaney, “Trying to Awaken Us to Russia’s ‘Present Danger’”, 4 April, 1977, CPD Papers.

Inviting Democratic, liberal figures onto the board encouraged coverage based on the intriguing mix of the CPD membership, and discouraged instant dismissal of the group as Cold War hawks. The Executive Committee wanted to promote its message and also specify an unexpected roster of supporters.

Other ‘surprising’ CPD board members who intrigued the press included: James T. Farrell, the novelist and poet; Steven Muller, the President of John Hopkins University; J. Peter Grace, the industrialist; Seymour Martin Lipset, the sociologist; Albert Shanker, the Teacher’s Union leader; and John Hannan, the former director of the United Nations World Food Program. These were not figures usually associated with groups concerned with national security issues, and each contributed to journalists’ curiosity toward the group and its message.

News organisations took note of the Committee’s unusual mix of supporters and began to refer to the Committee less disparagingly. While criticism did continue – one *Washington Post* article labelled their view as ‘A Hawkish Argument with Holes’ – the Committee was also introduced in the *Chicago Sun-Times* as ‘knowledgeable Americans from all walks of life concerned with the strengthening of U.S. Foreign and National security policies’.³⁰⁰ The *Nashville Banner*, a Tennessee regional newspaper, featured the Committee in an editorial noting that the group included ‘some of the most prestigious names in American liberalism’, and concluded that it signified ‘that concern about our defenses and the continued aggression of the Soviets is widespread and growing, embracing liberals as well as conservatives, Democrats and independents as well as Republicans’.³⁰¹ By the summer of 1977 the goal of the Executive Committee to

³⁰⁰ Stephen Rosenfeld, “A Hawkish Argument with Holes”, *Washington Post*, 8 July, 1977, Final ed., First sec.; Op-Ed; A25; “Report cautions U.S. on the Soviet strategy”, *The Chicago Sun-Times*, in CPD, “What the Media Said About ‘What Is the Soviet Union Up To?’”, 1 August, 1977, Box 273, CPD Papers, 9.

³⁰¹ “Urgency About Defense: The Knowledgeable, Right To Left, Are Concerned”, *Nashville Banner*, in *ibid.*, 13.

achieve credibility appeared to have been met as its views gained attention in newspapers across America. The Committee's warning of increasing Soviet military strength coupled with a surprising membership proved to be a combination that encouraged media coverage.

Gaining Influence

The Committee's success in establishing credibility meant that Executive Committee members began to be asked for comment on a number of national security issues by the press. The CPD took full advantage of this opportunity. Rostow, at the CPD's 1977 annual conference, told supporters that 'we must build on the base that has been established and use the pulpit that goes with it'.³⁰² The Committee wanted to make the case from its 'pulpit' that the Soviet Union remained a serious threat and the renewal of containment was necessary to meet the danger. The Committee intended to highlight this danger, as noted in its opening statement, by facilitating 'a national discussion of the foreign and national security policies of the United States directed toward a secure peace with freedom'.³⁰³ The Executive Committee was convinced that reasoned public debate would result in the abandonment of détente, as the threat presented by the U.S.S.R. would gain wider recognition.

The historian Raymond Garthoff has observed that under Nixon and Kissinger 'there was virtually no public discussion of the issue' of strategic doctrine and of détente in particular.³⁰⁴ CPD board members had reached the same conclusion, and, in 1977, following the establishment of its reputation in the media, intended to spark an overdue debate on American Cold War strategy. To instigate this debate and change

³⁰² Eugene Rostow to Members of the Board of Directors, 2 June, 1977, Box 337, CPD Papers, 3.

³⁰³ CPD Executive Committee, "How the Committee on the Present Danger Will Operate- What It Will Do, and What It Will Not Do", 1.

³⁰⁴ Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation*, 61.

policy the CPD formulated a strategy consisting of three components. First, the group attempted to influence the Executive Branch directly. Second, Committee members attempted to influence congressmen and senators by providing studies and reports as well as delivering testimony at Washington hearings and participating in private briefings. Third, the CPD sought to influence legislators indirectly by gathering support in swing congressional districts through speaking events. This strategy reveals the CPD's primary focus on reaching those with direct political influence in the Executive and Legislative branches of government. Necessary fixes to the strategic force, the Executive Committee concluded, required quick action, and persuading political leaders was the fastest way to end America's 'self-imposed restraint' rather than by building a grass roots movement.³⁰⁵

In order to focus its efforts the Executive Committee divided congressmen and senators into three groups: one-third 'that are always going to be against us', one third 'who are always going to be for us', and one-third 'in the middle'.³⁰⁶ The Committee's activities were focused on the middle one-third, and convincing these uncommitted congressmen and senators to accept its analysis of the 'present danger'. The Committee also targeted likely supporters sitting on relevant Senate and Congressional Committees, including the Appropriations Committee, the Armed Services Committee, the Budget Committee and the Select Committee on Intelligence.³⁰⁷ Targeting these relatively few but highly influential politicians would be an effective use of the Committee's limited resources.

³⁰⁵ CPD Executive Committee, "What Is the Soviet Union Up To?", in *Alerting America: The Papers of the Committee on the Present Danger*, ed. Charles Tyroler II (New York: Pergamon Press, 1984), 13.

³⁰⁶ Walker in "The Committee on the Present Danger, First Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors, Washington D.C.", 11 November, 1977, Box 166, CPD Papers, 16.

³⁰⁷ "Public/Congressional Relations Plan for the Committee on the Present Danger.", 10 June, 1977, Box 447, CPD Papers, 33-47.

The Executive Committee was convinced that politicians underestimated the resolve of ordinary Americans to confront international challenges. The CPD's public relations plan emphasised that 'much more time must be devoted to convincing influential members of Congress that the national security situation is of critical importance and an area for which there is broad national support'.³⁰⁸ This low profile activity, often overlooked by historians in favour of the Committee's publications, had a significant impact over time as Committee studies entered the working documents of legislators. Later, in 1979, Thomas Halsted, a State Department advisor, noted that Nitze had 'done quite a job of getting anti-SALT facts into the hands of editorial writers and commentators'.³⁰⁹ This was a deliberate and successful CPD tactic.

While a prestigious board enhanced the CPD's credibility in the media, it was the Executive Committee members who were known personally by congressman and senators. Nitze and Zumwalt, both noted experts on national security issues, frequently met with legislators to discuss defence issues.³¹⁰ Their prior experience in government and the military ensured a captive audience among respectful politicians, particularly in the SALT II ratification debate.³¹¹ On behalf of the Committee, Nitze and Zumwalt provided talking points and written reports that bolstered the group's case, intending for these materials to resurface later in policy debates in Congress and the Senate.³¹²

The 'one-third' of senators that the CPD counted as supporters of its mission ensured that there were sympathetic legislators keen to assist the Committee's campaign. Undoubtedly the most important was Henry 'Scoop' Jackson, the Democratic senator from Washington who had been a key critic of Kissinger's managerial conception of

³⁰⁸ Ibid., 11.

³⁰⁹ Halsted quoted in Kenneth H. Bacon, "Fighting a Treaty", *The Wall Street Journal*, 29 June, 1979.

³¹⁰ From September 1978 the Executive Committee began noting all its engagements. See, for example, "Paul H. Nitze: Interviews, Discussions, Panels, Addresses, September 1978 to Present", August 1981, Box 289, CPD Papers.

³¹¹ Caldwell, *The Dynamics of Domestic Politics and Arms Control*, 59.

³¹² 'Every place I go', Thomas Halsted, a State Department official later commented, 'somebody has got Nitze's documents and starts asking me questions.' Halsted quoted in Vaïsse, *Neoconservatism*, 178.

foreign policy. The ‘Senator from Boeing’, as critics called him, had supported increased military strength for many years, and was a vocal opponent of détente.³¹³ In 1974, he had co-sponsored the Jackson-Vanik Amendment to the Trade Act, which was intended to undermine building economic relations with the Soviet Union, considered a cornerstone of détente.³¹⁴ This attitude ensured longstanding admiration from Executive Committee members. While there was no official link between the Committee and the senator, Committee members were familiar with Jackson’s staffers including Dorothy Fosdick, Richard Perle and Paul Wolfowitz. The latter two had worked with Nitze in the Coalition to Maintain a Prudent Defence Policy.³¹⁵

Jackson’s invitations to testify before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, of which he was a senior member, gave the CPD additional exposure. This provided CPD members an opportunity, as its public relations plan had prescribed, to present legislators ‘with substantive arguments used to convince them of the wisdom of the Committee positions based on information in our possession and available to them through other sources’.³¹⁶ Testimony not only placed the Committee’s views in Senate and Congressional records, but also drew further attention from both politicians and the media, who were intrigued by the Committee’s formidable messengers, its alarming views, and its persuasive analysis.

Away from Washington, the Committee’s strategy aimed to reach ‘opinion leaders’ in “‘swing” Congressmen and Senators’ Districts’.³¹⁷ At the heart of the public outreach activities in the Committee’s campaign was the belief that the American people *were* prepared to spend more on defence. Participation in regional activities was

³¹³ Robert G. Kaufman, *Henry M. Jackson: A Life in Politics* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000), 243.

³¹⁴ Kalman, *Right Star Rising*, 95.

³¹⁵ Vaïsse, *Neoconservatism*, 119.

³¹⁶ ‘Public/Congressional Relations Plan for the Committee on the Present Danger.’, 10 June, 1977, Box 447, CPD Papers, 31.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 9 and 51.

an attempt to convince elected representatives in Washington D.C. that their constituents did support a more confrontational approach to the Soviet Union, and were prepared to pay for the necessary defence programmes. Executive Committee members met national and regional newspaper editorial teams, contributed opinion pieces, attended local speaking events, and accepted invitations to appear on local television. The intention was for CPD members to ‘develop themselves as sources for newsmen’s stories’, which would ensure that the Committee’s message would receive attention.³¹⁸ Local support could be demonstrated to Washington leaders who would legislate national security policy accordingly, wary of a voter backlash in their own State or Congressional District.

The Committee, having established its credibility, turned to publicising its analysis in the context of current national security debates.

Selecting Policy Debates

Even if the Committee took care in targeting its audience, intending to ‘facilitate a national discussion’ was a somewhat vague mission.³¹⁹ What would this discussion specifically address? The Committee’s publications, debate participation, and newspaper editorials sought to provide evidence for claims of a ‘present danger’, but this was not sufficient to spark a meaningful national discussion capable of shifting American Cold War strategy. The CPD, a recently established committee of private citizens, was simply unable to provoke a widespread debate on Soviet relations by declaring American military capabilities inadequate in self-published pamphlets. The CPD recognised it would have ‘to attempt to affect some shorter range legislative or

³¹⁸ Ibid., 24.

³¹⁹ CPD Executive Committee, “How the Committee on the Present Danger Will Operate- What It Will Do, and What It Will Not Do”, 1.

policy matters prior to the time that a consensus has been created'.³²⁰ Suitable issues, however, had not been determined prior to the group's launch.

The need to find policy issues was balanced with the need to maintain the Committee's emerging credibility. The group was wary of getting drawn into individual policy debates that would detract from the overall objective of restoring containment. Given the Executive Committee's expertise it would have been easy to lose focus among the many debates surrounding the development and procurement of weapons systems. The looming cancellation of the B1 bomber, for example, was a potential issue for CPD comment but debate over an individual weapon system, it was decided, would not restore containment. 'The development of a national consensus', the Executive Committee realised, 'must be based on broad principles. The focus therefore should be on the threat presented by the Soviet Union and the necessity for continued effort to meet that threat, rather than arguments over specific weapons systems or individual politicians [sic].'³²¹ In particular, the Executive Committee had noted the inability of another group, the National Strategy Information Center, to attract media attention for its own anti-détente message: 'It mostly adds up to a small group of like-minded [people] talking to one another. Outside the closed circle nobody much pays any heed, least of all the media.'³²² The CPD was determined not to repeat this mistake.

The Executive Committee contemplated the difficult balance of selecting specific issues for CPD comment that would attract the attention of the media – yet was not too specific and thus tangential to the CPD's broader objectives – or too controversial – needlessly damaging its reputation. National security issues that the Committee might have addressed in 1977 included the Carter Administration's

³²⁰ "Public/Congressional Relations Plan for the Committee on the Present Danger.", 10 June, 1977, Box 447, CPD Papers, 2.

³²¹ Ibid., 1.

³²² Charles Tyroler II[?] to Eugene Rostow, 9 May, 1977, Box 109, CPD Papers.

nominations for national security related offices, the Panama Canal Treaty, and SALT II. Each was an issue that garnered national attention and seemed directly relevant to addressing the CPD's concerns over the principles of national security policy.

How We Will Operate, the CPD's opening statement, explained that, in order to maintain its non-partisan status, the Committee would not oppose political appointments, which meant the Committee did not take a position on Paul Warnke's nomination as Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA).³²³ The Warnke nomination was nonetheless an important episode for the Committee. The Senate eventually approved Warnke's nomination, but by a 58-40 margin that, if repeated, would prevent ratification of the SALT II treaty Warnke would now be negotiating on the Carter Administration's behalf. The nomination episode served notice to the Carter Administration that advocates for renewed confrontation and a more assertive national security policy, including the CPD, had the political strength to frustrate its policy agenda.

In February 1977, Nitze, acting strictly in a personal capacity, testified in opposition to Warnke's nomination as Director of the ACDA. As the historian Nicholas Thompson remarks, Nitze 'laid his body across the tracks' to prevent the appointment.³²⁴ When asked by the nominating committee if he considered himself 'a better American' than Warnke, Nitze replied 'I really do'.³²⁵ Nitze was heavily criticised for his comments, as his opposition to Warnke's approach to arms control was perceived as a personal attack. Nitze took note, recognising that he had made the mistake of criticising the man and not his ideas. Rather than drawing attention to the

³²³ Rostow wrote to the Senator John Stennis, Chairman of the Armed Service Committee, to indicate his personal disapproval of Warnke, but that the CPD would not support or oppose any political appointment. Eugene Rostow to John C. Stennis, 17 February, 1977, Box 168, CPD Papers.

³²⁴ Thompson, *The Hawk and the Dove*, 264.

³²⁵ Nitze quoted in *ibid.*, 265.

validity of his own analysis on arms control Nitze's testimony instead highlighted his own character flaws.

Rostow consoled Nitze over the negative reaction to his Warnke testimony. '[T]he sense of being responsible for the success of our Committee', Rostow told his friend, 'helps to persuade us to take on public initiatives we might otherwise ignore'.³²⁶ While a number of Executive Committee members privately opposed Warnke's appointment they learned from Nitze's experience that the national debate the CPD wished to start should focus exclusively on policy issues.

The Committee also avoided taking a position on the Panama Canal Treaties, a divisive issue the Executive Committee did not deem vital to the goal of promoting the recognition of the threat presented by Soviet military growth. In addition, the CPD was unable to gain consensus among its membership on the issue. Nitze supported the treaty and was even asked by the White House to publicise this view, which he did not.³²⁷ The issue attracted the interest of many conservative organisations, and Reagan, not representing the Committee, led a 'Truth Squad' that travelled the country opposing the treaty.³²⁸ Even without direct participation, the Canal Treaties debate was encouraging for the Committee. The success of groups such as Reagan's Truth Squad demonstrated that the argument for renewed strength and resolve in American foreign policy was gaining popularity. For example, in one poll a 53-29 percent majority agreed that if the treaty were ratified 'the communists will take it as a sign that we can be pushed around in other parts of Latin America'.³²⁹ While this was certainly not indicative of widespread support for a renewal of containment, the poll did suggest public opinion was becoming

³²⁶ Eugene Rostow to Paul Nitze, 17 March, 1977, Box 103, CPD Papers.

³²⁷ See, Jimmy Carter to Paul Nitze, 29 August, 1977, Box 140, CPD Papers and; "Telegram from Paul Nitze to the President", 25 August, 1977, Box 140, CPD Papers.

³²⁸ Natasha Zaretsky, "Restraint or Retreat? The Debate over the Panama Canal Treaties and U.S. Nationalism after Vietnam," *Diplomatic History* 35, no. 3 (2011): 536.

³²⁹ Louis Harris, "Public Opposes Canal Treaty", *ABC News-Harris Survey*, 20 October, 1977, <http://www.harrisinteractive.com/vault/Harris-Interactive-Poll-Research-PUBLIC-OPPOSES-CANAL-TREATY-1977-10.pdf> (accessed 28/01/2014).

more favourable. The Carter Administration expended much of its political goodwill to secure ratification of the Panama Canal Treaties, and senators were served notice of the shifting preference of Americans towards foreign policy. Fourteen senators who voted in favour of the treaty sought re-election in autumn 1978; half were unsuccessful.³³⁰

After avoiding direct participation in two major foreign policy debates, the CPD eventually chose involvement in an issue that drew on its expertise, was nationally significant, and vital to national security. The emergence of SALT II as the Committee's issue of primary concern was reflected in the Committee's publications. In July 1977, the Committee released *Where We Stand On SALT*.³³¹ Nitze, as Director of Policy Studies, approached the SALT II issue carefully. It was clearly an area of expertise for the Committee but he wanted the group to appear constructive rather than dismissive of the agreement from the outset; his experience during the Warnke nomination encouraged caution. Possessing technical expertise as well as first-hand experience of negotiating the treaty, Nitze was in a privileged position. As a private citizen working in the independent CPD he was able to critique the negotiations before they had reached a conclusion. The Carter Administration, however, felt unable to respond publicly to Nitze's criticisms while negotiations continued in case their negotiating position was compromised. In effect, the administration soon found itself negotiating with the U.S.S.R. and also with Nitze in its efforts to secure an acceptable arms control treaty that would be able to navigate the Senate ratification process.

Commenting on the unresolved negotiations was not without risk. On 1 November 1977, Nitze released an update to the CPD publication *Current SALT II Negotiating Posture* that critics believed was too accurate to have been based solely on

³³⁰ Kalman, *Right Star Rising*, 271.

³³¹ CPD Executive Committee, "Where We Stand on SALT", in *Alerting America: The Papers of the Committee on the Present Danger*, ed. Charles Tyroler II (New York: Pergamon Press, 1984), 16.

unclassified information. Jeremy Stone of the Federation of Atomic Scientists accused Nitze of releasing

seven pages of the most tightly held information in Washington on the status of the negotiations ... [Nitze] knows, as a negotiator, how mischievous such a release can be to the negotiating teams on both sides ... Premature release of negotiating details can transmute criticism into sabotage.³³²

Nitze forcefully defended himself against Stone's accusation:

The most reasonable charge that you could have made against me was that I spent more time and energy than others in putting together into a reasonably clear and understandable whole what previously was being made available only partially or in inherently misleading bits and pieces.³³³

He also took the opportunity to encourage a public debate on the issue:

It was intended to be, and was, a factual and objective analysis. I have yet to see any constructive suggestions as to how that analysis can be improved. Just because the analysis leads to legitimate doubts as to the wisdom of such a treaty does not therefore make it a "denunciation." The question at issue is whether the analysis is or is not sound.³³⁴

Nitze, it appears, was not privy to classified documents. He was entirely unsympathetic to Stone's charge of mischief and also to the administration's reluctance to respond to his analysis in public. Backed by the Executive Committee, he was adamant that the critically important issue of a legally binding arms control treaty should be discussed freely and comprehensively in public before its provisions became a *fait accompli*. The CPD's analysis of SALT II, presented by Nitze, attracted considerable press interest and fostered the debate that the Executive Committee had planned.

The CPD's desire to facilitate a debate on SALT II appeared a modest goal for a group convinced that the agreement was so damaging to U.S. interests, but once the debate had been instigated the Executive Committee was determined to win. Its style of communication, detailed and bureaucratic, was intended to shift the terms of the debate

³³² Jeremy Stone to Matthew Ridgway, 2 November, 1977, Box 20, CPD Papers.

³³³ Paul Nitze to Jeremy Stone, 7 November, 1977, Box 20, CPD Papers.

³³⁴ Ibid.

on arms control and, by extension, defence policy. Consistent with the Executive Committee's intent to influence decision makers in Washington, the CPD released reports written in a format familiar to government officials to encourage use of their reports in policymaking; Committee statements would seek to persuade by thorough analysis of hard evidence.³³⁵

Those who disagreed with the CPD's position could not simply dismiss its conclusions but would have to engage with the analysis and demonstrate, on the CPD's terms, how it was incorrect. For this reason, the Committee's public relations plan stressed, 'the most conservative and most easily defended information should be selected'.³³⁶ In this way Committee statements were intended to be utterly reliable, ensuring that government officials, legislators, and journalists could confidently cite CPD reports in their work. The Committee's public relations plan also advised that 'If errors are made they must be admitted quickly and confessed readily in order for the Committee to maintain its believability.'³³⁷ This emphasis on accuracy ensured the continuing credibility of the CPD and its message, and also explains why its analysis proved so difficult for critics to ignore. Nitze insisted that it was not just the current balance that was a concern, but that there was also the likelihood that 'if past trends continue the USSR will ... achieve strategic superiority'.³³⁸ Raising doubt over future trends meant that it was extremely difficult to portray the Committee as either extreme or unreasonable.

The historian Simon Dalby suggests that the CPD was 'attempting to change the terrain of political debate to exclude detente and economic managerial concerns from

³³⁵ Committee publications typical of this style included 'Is America Becoming Number Two?' and, from 1978, Nitze's regularly updated 'Current SALT II Negotiating Posture'. See "Is America Becoming Number Two?", in *Alerting America*, 39, and "Current SALT II Negotiating Posture" in *Alerting America*, 124.

³³⁶ 'Public/Congressional Relations Plan for the Committee on the Present Danger.', 10 June, 1977, Box 447, CPD Papers, 2.

³³⁷ Ibid.

³³⁸ CPD Executive Committee, "What Is the Soviet Union Up To?", 14.

the discussion of U.S. foreign policy'.³³⁹ He argues that by creating a debate around the military balance and utilising details incomprehensible to those uninitiated to defence jargon the Committee was able to influence how Soviet relations were perceived. As Dalby suggests, by emphasising numbers, tables, and graphs above all else, 'political considerations are removed; the answer to the "Soviet threat" is purely technological'.³⁴⁰ Dalby persuasively argues that the Committee was successful in framing the terms of the strategic debate around the technical aspects of nuclear strategy, their area of expertise. Even though the Executive Committee claimed to be democratising the debate over SALT II the effect of their campaign was in fact the opposite. Introducing a series of statistics incomprehensible to even the most educated Americans was not democratising an important debate, as Nitze claimed in his letter to Stone. It was a means to hide a subjective argument about Soviet intentions behind a screen of seemingly objective scientific enquiry.

In making its highly technical arguments against the treaty the Executive Committee epitomised what the physicist Ralph Lapp had labelled in a 1965 book as 'the new priesthood ... [who] enjoy a privileged area of argument and can always retreat to a sanctuary of secret dataland'.³⁴¹ By the late 1970s a faction of the priesthood went public to make their argument. Nitze, at a press conference to launch the CPD's latest pamphlet in March 1977, asked for his analysis to be challenged: 'all we want is for people to argue and look at these things ... nobody has attempted to demonstrate that we were wrong in our first statement'.³⁴² The format of Committee statements compelled opponents to engage the CPD on their own terms in 'dataland'. Arguing over the detail made their opponents seem either petty – by nit-picking the Committee's

³³⁹ Dalby, *Creating the Second Cold War*, 8.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 157.

³⁴¹ Ralph E. Lapp, *The New Priesthood: The Scientific Elite and the Uses of Power* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1965), 36.

³⁴² Nitze in "Press Conference by Paul H. Nitze", 31 March, 1977, Box 288, CPD Papers, 41.

reports without addressing their substantive claims – or ignorant – by not sufficiently grasping the meaning of the statistics.

Fred Kaplan, who has labelled nuclear strategists like Nitze the ‘Wizards of Armageddon’, argues that by the 1970s the Cold War had reached a level of abstraction where Nitze’s calculations were regarded by many politicians as ‘endlessly fascinating’.³⁴³ Americans who did not understand the difference between ‘throw weight’ and ‘circular error probable’ were excluded from the debate and left to admire the Committee’s nuclear arithmetic.³⁴⁴ Clare Boothe Luce, a Committee board member, admitted in a public interview that ‘it is so confusing to talk about MIRVed and throw weights and hard silos and soft silos and refire capacity, and all of that. It’s very difficult for t[he] average person to understand ... one of the things that the committee wanted to do was avoid involving people [in the detail].’³⁴⁵ Boothe Luce’s admission exposes as false the Committee’s suggestion that it was democratising debates on national security. The CPD claimed that its understanding of the detail demonstrated its credentials to initiate a public debate, but in practice it did not intend to involve the public in this debate but merely present them with the CPD’s interpretation. Committee materials did not democratise the debate, but provided the public – in a similar way to Team B – with an alternative view on assessments of military strength in the context of SALT II.

In this way the Committee used the complexity of SALT II to make its case for a present danger. When considering an unfamiliar, complex issue the average person will select the position that appears to offer the least risk.³⁴⁶ Presenting its opposition to

³⁴³ Kaplan, *The Wizards of Armageddon*, 382.

³⁴⁴ ‘Throw Weight’ is the maximum payload a missile is capable of carrying. ‘Circular Error Probable’, a measure of accuracy, is the area in which half of a missile’s payload can be expected to fall.

³⁴⁵ Boothe Luce in WTTG TV, “Transcript of ‘Panorama’”, 12 May, 1977, Box 181, CPD Papers, 3-4

³⁴⁶ The CPD offered what the psychologist Gerd Gigerenzer has called “illusory certainty”. See Gerd Gigerenzer, *Reckoning with Risk: Learning to Live with Uncertainty* (London: Penguin Books, 2002), 14.

SALT II as a prudent and logical interpretation of the facts, the CPD suggested parity could only be maintained by rejecting the treaty and spending more on defence.

In order to maintain a perception of credibility and expertise, the style and tone of the Committee's publications was crucial. Rostow was firm in his vision of how the CPD would operate: 'It is perfectly clear in this year of experience what our style is, what tone we want. We get very uncomfortable if we get too raucous or too uproarious. Some of the most devastating things can be said effectively in a very austere, dignified manner.'³⁴⁷ Committee reports were designed to resemble papers of government, not propaganda leaflets. The disinterestedness and matter-of-fact tone of CPD written material was not designed emotively to plead with the reader but clearly and logically to demonstrate the danger the Committee perceived. In this way, the CPD created the impression that it was providing the only logical interpretation of data, and not one of many possible interpretations. '[N]obody', Rostow reported with satisfaction in November 1977, 'has challenged the actual accuracy of anything we've said so far'.³⁴⁸ The apparent accuracy of supporting evidence was a vital factor in the Committee gaining media acceptance for its views. The stoic tone of the analysis obscured that its conclusion was just one of many possible interpretations of the evidence.

Nitze made accuracy the focus of his presentation of the Committee's report *What is the Soviet Union Up To?* on 31 March. '[A] lot of work has gone into that statement. It is a very dense statement', he explained, 'where each sentence and series of words in there have been thought through by members ... [we] Went through six drafts — 17 people involved and we have worked long hours trying to get this thing in shape.'³⁴⁹ Nitze wanted the press to understand how much care had been taken in

³⁴⁷ Rostow in "The Committee on the Present Danger, First Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors, Washington D.C.", 11 November, 1977, Box 166, CPD Papers, 106.

³⁴⁸ Rostow in *ibid.*, 42.

³⁴⁹ Nitze in "Press Conference by Paul H. Nitze", 31 March, 1977, Box 288, CPD Papers, 31.

preparing the document so its findings would not be dismissed as the work of propagandists. Committee reports, he stressed, should be regarded as serious works of scholarship to be closely studied and carefully critiqued. The CPD's call for higher defence spending, Nitze and the Executive Committee regularly pointed out, was based on expert analysis.

As SALT II emerged as the focus of CPD efforts, the most important publication series of the Committee became its *Current SALT II Negotiating Posture*. This was a regularly updated publication – there were 17 versions between 1977 and 1979 – analysing the military capabilities of the U.S. and the Soviet Union in the context of the on-going arms control negotiations in Geneva.³⁵⁰ Committee materials on SALT II were predominately authored by Nitze, and included numerous graphs and tables of statistics, which often overwhelmed readers with detail.³⁵¹ This was true even within the Committee's board. '[W]e need a little running commentary on what these charts show', one board member pleaded at the group's first annual meeting.³⁵² '[Nitze's] detailed analyses are Sanskrit to me', another board member, Edward Bennett Williams, told Rostow.³⁵³

Nitze's style was deliberate. The purpose of his pamphlets was to demonstrate the CPD's expertise and authority on defence issues and SALT II in particular. Critics of the Committee's interpretation on the military balance would be forced to pick through Nitze's statistics and make the case that either a certain metric was incorrect, insignificant, or argue more generally that America did not require equal military strength with the U.S.S.R..

³⁵⁰ Vaïsse, *Neoconservatism*, 175.

³⁵¹ 'Is America Becoming Number 2?', for example, was a 46 page pamphlet that assessed the overall strategic balance with the USSR. "Is America Becoming Number 2? Current Trends in the U.S.-Soviet Military Balance", 5 October, 1978, Box 272, CPD Papers.

³⁵² Unidentified CPD Board Member in "The Committee on the Present Danger, First Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors, Washington D.C.", 11 November, 1977, Box 166, CPD Papers, 32.

³⁵³ Bennett-Williams quoted in, Charles Tyroler II to Board Members and Key Supporters, 8 May, 1978, Box 337, CPD Papers.

The Committee's public relations plan proved remarkably successful in establishing credibility over 1977. The Executive Committee developed a platform for debating defence issues by recruiting a prestigious board and by releasing evidence-based materials that quickly placed them in a position of authority. When critics complained about the terms of the Committee's debate it was they who seemed unreasonable: why did they not address Nitze's statistics? By emphasising that its analyses were based on fact, logic, and prudence the Committee positioned itself as a reasonable voice on national security policy by mid-1977.

The CPD and the Carter Administration

Carter Administration officials recognised the Committee as an increasingly influential group. As a majority Democrat group, the administration noted, the CPD could be a useful ally in deflecting critics of its defence policies. The Executive Committee, as the previous chapter argued, hoped to convince Carter to abandon détente and recognise the increasing danger posed by the Soviet Union. Consequently, early in 1977, both the Committee and the administration sought to foster a working relationship. While both sides sought to develop this relationship in good faith, fundamental differences in evaluating the U.S.S.R. quickly became apparent and meant that cooperation proved impossible by the end of the year. This was because administration officials underestimated the CPD's determination decisively to overturn détente. The CPD did not simply advocate an increased defence budget, as their ambivalence to Ford's re-election had demonstrated, but rejected the entire structure of détente, and particularly the suggestion that 'peaceful coexistence' was even a possibility. The administration, on the other hand, saw no reason so soon after its electoral victory fundamentally to restructure its national security strategy on the Committee's terms.

During the 1976 election campaign, Carter announced his intention to make America ‘a beacon of light for human rights throughout the world’, and suggested that his policies would reflect the morality and decency of ordinary Americans.³⁵⁴ The nomination of advisers such as Leslie Gelb, Cyrus Vance, Paul Warnke, and Andrew Young epitomised an approach based on transcending conceptions of geopolitics defined solely by the Cold War. Gelb explained that ‘the Carter approach to foreign policy rests on a belief that not only is the world far too complex to be reduced to a doctrine, but that there is something inherently wrong with having a doctrine at all’.³⁵⁵ There would be no more doctrines, containment included, and policy would instead be decided on a case-by-case basis.

This deeply troubled the Executive Committee. Rostow lamented that ‘[when I] recall that Carter has actually nominated Sorensen, Warnke, Brown, Tony Lake, Leslie Gelb, and dozens more, I sigh, and realize there is no rest for the likes of us’.³⁵⁶ These appointments did not suggest an end to détente, but rather an uphill challenge for the Executive Committee to convince Carter to adopt their analysis, change administration policy, and prevent further deterioration of America’s Cold War position. Despite Rostow’s reservations, however, there were some positive signs at the start of 1977 that the president might be persuaded to alter his approach and adopt the CPD’s view on national security. Alongside the appointments that concerned Rostow, Zbigniew Brzezinski, whose approach to U.S.-Soviet relations was much more compatible with CPD thinking, also joined the administration as Carter’s National Security Adviser.

³⁵⁴ Carter quoted in Burton I. Kaufman, *The Presidency of James Earl Carter Jr.* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1993), 38.

³⁵⁵ Gelb quoted in Skidmore, *Reversing Course: Carter’s Foreign Policy, Domestic Politics, and the Failure of Reform*, (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1996), 87.

³⁵⁶ Eugene Rostow to Paul Nitze, March 17, 1977, Box 103, CPD Papers

Brzezinski, a Polish émigré, was a political scientist who first entered politics as an adviser to the Kennedy campaign in 1960.³⁵⁷ He was sympathetic to the CPD's hard-line approach towards national security issues. In his memoir, Brzezinski states that he shared Carter's vision only 'up to a point' and nevertheless remained convinced 'that power had to come first ... [without it] we would simply not be able either to protect our interests or to advance more humane goals'.³⁵⁸ Vance and Brzezinski seemed to represent two factions within the Carter Administration, a split that 'became an issue behind the scenes' according to historian Betty Glad.³⁵⁹ The Committee were themselves unsure which faction, Vance or Brzezinski's, best represented the basis of Carter's foreign policy.

Early in 1977, the Committee was tentatively satisfied with the Carter Administration, especially in April when Carter presented the Soviet Union with a new, more stringent SALT proposal.³⁶⁰ Surprised and angered that Carter had ignored prior negotiations with the Ford Administration at Vladivostok, Kremlin leaders rejected the proposal, which the historian Strobe Talbot argues 'was inevitable' as these new terms reneged on previously negotiated terms.³⁶¹ Yet the fact that the administration seemed to favour a renegotiation of the SALT II agreement was welcomed by Nitze who, in the wake of the new proposal, declared that 'the President is doing very well'.³⁶² The proposal encouraged hope that Carter would come around to the Committee's position, acknowledge the reality of the Soviet build up, and reconstitute containment.

³⁵⁷ See Part 1: "From the Ivy League" in Charles Gati, ed., *Zbig: The Strategy and Statecraft of Zbigniew Brzezinski* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013).

³⁵⁸ Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Power and Principle: Memoirs of the National Security Adviser, 1977-1981* (New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 1983), 49.

³⁵⁹ Glad, *An Outsider in the White House*, 25.

³⁶⁰ See "Carter's New Approach" in Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation*, 883.

³⁶¹ Talbot, *Endgame*, 67.

³⁶² Nitze quoted in New York Times, "Group Warns on Soviet Expansion" in CPD, "What the Media Said About 'What Is the Soviet Union Up To?'," 1 August, 1977, Box 273, CPD Papers, 13.

The Executive Committee attempted to engage with the administration to discover if it could assist the restoration of a policy more consistent with containment. A month into the administration's term Rostow explained to Vance that 'our Committee on the Present Danger wants to be helpful to you ... We should prefer to defend the foreign policy of the United States, not criticize it.'³⁶³ Rostow hoped for sustained dialogue with the administration to allow for an explanation of the CPD's position before policies were formulated and implemented. In addition to his correspondence with Vance over the first half of the year, Rostow exchanged letters in March 1977 with Phil Habib, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, revealing the less conciliatory nature of the Committee:

The function of leaders is to lead, not to follow the god-damn Gallup Polls. And the situation really requires Churchillian vision, programs, and rhetoric, not a government of small men and small ideas. War can be prevented, still. But ... not by pussy footing. We are at 1935 or 1936, in my view.³⁶⁴

Rostow made his strength of feeling clear, and hoped he would convince the administration to take the Committee's analysis seriously, not merely question the terminology of its critique of SALT II negotiations.

Administration officials recognised the Committee's growing influence among senators and congressmen on foreign policy matters. In addition to exchanging written correspondence, administration officials met with CPD members five times during 1977. In July, Rostow and Nitze met Vance.³⁶⁵ On 4 August, a CPD group met Carter at the White House.³⁶⁶ On 17 August, the same group met Harold Brown, Secretary of Defence, and Brzezinski again at the White House.³⁶⁷ On 16 September, Samuel

³⁶³ Eugene Rostow to Cyrus Vance, 28 February, 1977, Box 109, CPD Papers, 2.

³⁶⁴ Eugene Rostow to Philip Habib, 18 March, 1977, 2, Box 109, CPD Papers.

³⁶⁵ Eugene Rostow to Charles Tyroler II, 25 July, 1977, Box 109, CPD Papers.

³⁶⁶ Eugene Rostow to Jimmy Carter, 10 August, 1977, Box 109, CPD Papers.

³⁶⁷ Eugene Rostow to Jimmy Carter, 8 September, 1977, Box 109, CPD Papers.

Huntington visited the CPD's offices.³⁶⁸ Finally, on 11 November, Brown agreed to speak at the Committee's annual conference.³⁶⁹ This was a substantial level of engagement between the administration and a group less than a year old. Clearly, Brzezinski and Vance, Carter's chief foreign policy advisers, took the Committee very seriously. They recognised its potential influence on public and congressional reception of administration policy.

By mid-1977, Rostow and Nitze believed that Carter was in danger of repeating the same mistake as Ford: his administration was also unwilling to explain to Americans that growing Soviet military power remained the single greatest threat to national security. Nitze and Rostow met with Vance in June 1977 and stated that their 'most important single criticism of the administration's foreign policy was its failure thus far to liberate the nation from the Nixon-Kissinger vocabulary about "detente"'.³⁷⁰ In their estimation Carter was too focused on his polling data, rather than the observable growth in Soviet military power. This responsiveness to public opinion made sense to the president, who told University of Notre Dame students in a major foreign policy speech that he was 'confident of the good sense of the American people, and so we let them share in the process of making foreign policy decisions. We can thus speak with the voices of 215 million, not just an isolated handful.'³⁷¹ Following public attitudes so closely, however, infuriated the Committee, who regarded Carter's sensitivity to public opinion as weak leadership.

To the CPD, it was the president's duty to explain the challenges facing the nation. Americans should not be asked whether they were willing to spend more on

³⁶⁸ Eugene Rostow to Jimmy Carter, 19 September, 1977, Box 109, CPD Papers.

³⁶⁹ Eugene Rostow to Dean Rusk, 14 November, 1977, Box 168, CPD Papers.

³⁷⁰ Eugene Rostow to Charles Tyroler II, 25 April, 1977, Box 109, CPD Papers.

³⁷¹ Jimmy Carter, "University of Notre Dame - Address at Commencement Exercises at the University", *Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project.*, 22 May, 1977, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=7552> (accessed 21 July 2014).

defence, the CPD stressed, they should be persuaded that it was necessary. The Committee stated that it wanted ‘to further the two-way process of communications here at home on foreign and national security policy matters’.³⁷² Leaders should inform the public before attempting to incorporate opinion into policymaking and not the other way around. As this fundamental disagreement over national security leadership became apparent, the Executive Committee’s initial optimism of working with the administration on national security issues faded. Faint hope that the Committee might persuade Carter to break decisively from détente remained until the summer of 1977, when a handful of Committee members met with the president. After this meeting the Executive Committee feared that its 1976 nightmare had come to pass: another presidential term of détente was in prospect.

On 4 August, a number of Committee members, recorded in the White House diary as ‘a group of national leaders’, met the president.³⁷³ Reading from a ‘talking points’ document for the White House meeting, the Committee repeated their June criticisms to the president:

In our view, it will be difficult if not impossible to develop a fresh bipartisan consensus on foreign and defense policy until you liberate the nation from the misleading vocabulary President Nixon used in claiming that detente had become a reality; that negotiation had been substituted for confrontation; and that the Soviet Union was cooperating with us in the quest for peace ... Until we face these facts as a nation, and take the steps necessary to restore a stable balance of forces in the world and policies of collective defense based upon it, none of the other great political, social, economic, and human objectives of our foreign policy is within our reach.³⁷⁴

The CPD hoped to persuade Carter to drop the conciliatory language of détente, which they argued obscured Soviet aggression and prevented Americans from understanding

³⁷² CPD Executive Committee, “How the Committee on the Present Danger Will Operate- What It Will Do, and What It Will Not Do”, 2.

³⁷³ Jimmy Carter, “The Daily Diary of President Jimmy Carter”, 4 August, 1977, Jimmy Carter Library, <http://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/documents/diary/1977/d080477t.pdf> (accessed 16 September 2014), 3.

³⁷⁴ ‘Talking Points for Opening Statement by E.V. Rostow, Chairman of the Executive, at a Meeting with President Carter, August 4, 1977’, Box 288, CPD Papers, 4.

that the Cold War was an ongoing conflict. 'We made as much input as they'd take and with as much force as we could muster', Rostow reported to board members after the meeting.³⁷⁵ In a memorandum of the meeting Rostow assessed that 'The President's personality and style came through as pathetic, almost pitiful.'³⁷⁶ Carter did not impress Executive Committee members who, despite optimism when he had been elected, were now convinced that this was not an inexperienced president searching for a coherent policy, but a naïve idealist repeating the mistakes of Nixon and Ford.

Two weeks after his meeting with the CPD, on 26 August 1977, Carter issued Presidential Directive 18 (PD-18). It outlined a strategy to 'Counterbalance ... by a combination of military forces, political efforts, and economic programs, Soviet military power and adverse influence in key areas'.³⁷⁷ The president dispatched Samuel Huntington, a National Security Council advisor, to the CPD's offices on 16 September to convince the Executive Committee that change had arrived. However, to the Committee PD-18 hinted at a return to containment but without conviction or substance; it was not sufficient to spend more on defence without explaining why it was necessary. Rostow wrote to the president, considering PD-18 'promising', but that 'its background and content should be explained to the American people'.³⁷⁸ The Executive Committee assumed that Carter was attempting to take the minimum action that would deflect their own criticism, but without accepting the basis of their analysis of the adverse strategic situation. The CPD's April 1977 publication *What is the Soviet Union Up To?* had argued that Kremlin leaders responded to real power, 'the ultimate instrument', and not

³⁷⁵ Rostow in 'The Committee on the Present Danger, First Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors, Washington D.C.', 11 November, 1977, Box 166, CPD Papers, 66.

³⁷⁶ Eugene V Rostow, 'Memorandum for the Files: Meeting with President Carter, Secretary of Defense Brown, and Zbigniew Brzezinski, National Security Advisor. August 4, 1977, The White House.', Box 288, CPD Papers, 1.

³⁷⁷ Jimmy Carter, "Presidential Directive 18 (PD-18): 'US National Strategy'", 26 August, 1977, Jimmy Carter Library, <http://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/documents/pddirectives/pd18.pdf> (accessed 4 September 2014), 2.

³⁷⁸ Eugene Rostow to Jimmy Carter, 12 September, 1977, Box 109, CPD Papers.

to statements of intent.³⁷⁹ PD-18, the Committee was convinced, would make no difference to limiting the present danger.

Carter had not taken advantage of the presidential platform to explain the challenges of the Cold War and to inspire public support to overcome them. In fact, the CPD worried, his speeches implied the very opposite of confronting the Soviet threat. In his inauguration speech, Carter had called for ‘the elimination of all nuclear weapons from this Earth’, in his first White House press conference he announced the withdrawal of U.S. ground troops from South Korea, and in June he announced the cancellation of the B1 bomber project.³⁸⁰ Alongside an election pledge to reduce defence spending, these actions did not convey to Americans the enormity of the strategic problems facing the country as Soviet military capabilities continued to improve. To the CPD, PD-18 was a meaningless piece of paper without the president’s full and unequivocal backing, stated forcefully and frequently in public speeches.

Despite becoming increasingly frustrated at the president’s refusal to accept their analysis, the Executive Committee understood that it would be counterproductive to cease all communication with the White House. On 8 September 1977, Rostow wrote to Carter: ‘I hope the process of discussion will clarify the issues, and narrow — or indeed eliminate — the gap between our positions on SALT, and on Soviet policy more generally.’³⁸¹ With markedly less enthusiasm than earlier in the year, both sides agreed to continued discussion. Rostow recalled to board members that Carter told him ‘regular meetings might narrow differences and make it possible for our Committee to support his policies in the years ahead’.³⁸² However, continued dialogue did not resolve these

³⁷⁹ CPD Executive Committee, “What Is the Soviet Union Up To?”, 13.

³⁸⁰ Jimmy Carter, “Inaugural Address of President Jimmy Carter”, 20 January, 1977, Jimmy Carter Library, <http://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/documents/speeches/inaugadd.phtml> (accessed 4 September 2014); Smith, *Morality, Reason, and Power*, 104; Talbott, *Endgame*, 104.

³⁸¹ Eugene Rostow to Jimmy Carter, 8 September, 1977, Box 109, CPD Papers.

³⁸² Eugene Rostow to The Executive Committee, 10 August, 1977, Box 288, CPD Papers.

differences, and instead the relationship reached an impasse. Neither side was prepared to compromise. With the creation of PD-18 Carter believed the CPD should be satisfied that the Soviet threat was recognised in an administration strategy document. The Executive Committee, however, would not be satisfied until their analysis was fully incorporated in administration policy and explained to the public.

Brzezinski wrote to Rostow on 11 October 1977 hoping to maintain contact between the administration and the Committee. The National Security Advisor told Rostow that ‘the President wants to continue to benefit from the advice and help which you and the other members of your Committee can furnish him.’³⁸³ A month later Harold Brown attended the Committee’s annual meeting, but he failed to impress the Committee after he ‘lost his temper’.³⁸⁴ Rostow told CPD member Dean Rusk that Brown’s discussion ‘was interesting, and indeed rather stupefying’.³⁸⁵ By November, the Committee recognised it would have to focus on its legislative branch outreach and public activities in order to generate external pressure on the White House to prompt policy change. In Rostow’s view the CPD had tried to be ‘a good friend of the administration’, but at the end of 1977 had ‘come to a crossroads’.³⁸⁶ The Committee initially hoped to ‘influence the administration [rather] than fight it’ Rostow told CPD board members, but this proved impossible.³⁸⁷

The administration also recognised that the relationship was broken. Phil Habib, Undersecretary for Political Affairs, told Rostow later in 1977 that he considered the CPD to have ‘declared war’.³⁸⁸ Relations with the White House had not resulted in policy change, so the Executive Committee shifted the Committee’s focus towards

³⁸³ Zbigniew Brzezinski to Eugene Rostow, 11 October, 1977, Box 109, CPD Papers.

³⁸⁴ Eugene Rostow to John Danforth, 16 November, 1977, Box 109, CPD Papers.

³⁸⁵ Eugene Rostow to Dean Rusk, 14 November, 1977, Box 168, CPD Papers,

³⁸⁶ Rostow in “The Committee on the Present Danger, First Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors, Washington D.C.”, 11 November, 1977, Box 166, CPD Papers, 70.

³⁸⁷ Rostow in *ibid.*, 66.

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 67.

affecting public opinion. Committee members were now prepared to ‘act like back benchers of the Churchillian stripe’.³⁸⁹ By the end of 1977, they realised that Carter would not be persuaded of the validity of their analysis and prepared themselves for direct opposition of the president's policies.

Conclusion

In a speech at the Committee’s annual meeting Rostow explained to members that ‘our efforts and ... our approaches to the media ... have produced absolutely extraordinary results’.³⁹⁰ Driven by its notable membership, the message of danger that the CPD presented had attracted considerable attention from opinion makers in early 1977. Its analyses of America’s national security problems were not easily dismissed as a result of the carefully argued and well-evidenced materials the Committee published. These seemingly reliable reports, written in a bureaucratic style and endorsed by a list of unusual board members, ensured that the media covered the CPD’s argument of American military weakness.

Symptomatic of this elevated status was the Carter Administration’s invitation to the Executive Committee for discussions at the White House. The president, however, was not willing to change his approach to the satisfaction of the Committee. Rostow explained that the Executive Committee considered that Carter was trying to silence a vocal critic of his policies and only ‘responding to the political winds’, using the Committee as political cover.³⁹¹ While the CPD had hoped to persuade the administration, it was apparent by the end of the year that it would have to oppose Carter to alter national security policy.

³⁸⁹ Eugene Rostow to Harry Jaffa, 12 April, 1977, Box 109, CPD Papers.

³⁹⁰ Rostow in “The Committee on the Present Danger, First Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors, Washington D.C.”, 11 November, 1977, Box 166, CPD Papers, 7–8.

³⁹¹ Eugene Rostow to John McCloy, 8 September, 1977, Box 109, CPD Papers.

Rostow prepared the group for an oppositional role, cautioning board members against ‘any sense of despair about our task’.³⁹² To succeed, he continued, the Committee needed ‘to reach as far as we can reach and we have to multiply efforts’.³⁹³ The Executive Committee would use its credible status to influence the developing debate on SALT II. Referring to the CPD programme for 1978, Rostow targeted an expansion of the Committee’s operation, not widening the focus of its publications, but ‘in the realm of getting the message across’.³⁹⁴ SALT II, the Executive Committee decided, was critically important to American national security and would occupy the Committee’s activities until the treaty was defeated and American military strength restored.

Over 1977 the Committee had established its reputation but had also learned that it would not be a partner with the Carter Administration. Restoring détente would have to be achieved by generating external pressure on the White House. Nitze’s involvement in the nascent SALT II ratification debate would provide the ideal ‘pulpit’ that Rostow had identified as necessary to spread the CPD’s message of danger.

³⁹² Rostow in “The Committee on the Present Danger, First Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors, Washington D.C.”, 11 November, 1977, Box 166, CPD Papers, 98.

³⁹³ Rostow in *ibid.*

³⁹⁴ Rostow in *ibid.*, 109.

1978 – The Military Balance

‘Our appearance [in the Senate] ... has become the most important opportunity we have had so far to convert the changing climate of opinion into a change in policy.’³⁹⁵

Throughout 1978 American and Soviet negotiators in Geneva were attempting to finalise a SALT II agreement. Paul Warnke, the chief SALT negotiator, was also mindful that two-thirds of senators would have to assent to the treaty for the agreement to be approved.³⁹⁶ In effect the Carter Administration had two SALT II negotiations, one in Geneva and another at home. The CPD noted this need for domestic approval and recognised that vigorous opposition to the treaty might defeat ratification and, more importantly for the Executive Committee, also publicise the wider issue of raising defence spending in order to match CPD estimates of Soviet military strength.

The SALT II issue provided a national forum for the Committee to discuss the need to redress the military imbalance with the Soviet Union. Due to the high-profile nature of arms control negotiations, the Committee’s allegations regarding inferior American strength generated significant media attention over 1978 and 1979. This chapter will examine the CPD’s efforts to shift the terms of the debate away from the merits of arms control and towards SALT II’s risks and supposed inequalities. As a result of these efforts, as the Executive Committee intended, the treaty debate frequently morphed into a discussion of the ‘Soviet military buildup ... [and] the significance one attaches to it and the way one explains the reasons behind it’.³⁹⁷ This had the effect of limiting senatorial support for the treaty and bolstering calls for additional defence spending.

³⁹⁵ Eugene Rostow to David Packard, 7 March, 1978, Box 208, CPD Papers.

³⁹⁶ Warnke would resign his post in October 1978.

³⁹⁷ CPD Executive Committee, “Peace With Freedom”, in *Alerting America: The Papers of the Committee on the Present Danger*, ed. Charles Tyroler II (New York: Pergamon Press, 1984), 25.

Executive Committee members had a particularly influential role in the domestic debate over the treaty. On 1 March, for example, Rostow, Pipes and Nitze were invited to testify at the Senate Committee on the Budget.³⁹⁸ In addition, on 13 March Rostow appeared before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.³⁹⁹ Over the summer Executive Committee members were invited to the White House as the Carter Administration once again attempted to gain CPD support for its national security policy. In August, the Committee assisted a new organisation, the Coalition for Peace Through Strength (CPTS) in reaching a mass audience to oppose SALT II. The CPD lent its expertise for CPTS materials, which buttressed CPTS's own more forceful arguments against SALT II and for increased defence spending.

This chapter shows that the Committee's activities in the debate successfully influenced how the treaty was framed to the public. The CPD argued that the need to maintain parity necessitated the rejection of SALT II. *Is America Becoming Number Two?* was published in October and set out this case against the treaty.⁴⁰⁰ The pamphlet implied that the treaty was decidedly unequal and constructed this case on carefully selected metrics and worst-case projections. The CPD believed that its metrics permitted those uninitiated in nuclear strategic thinking to participate in the treaty debate. In practice, however, the Committee used these metrics to distort the issue and create the perception that SALT II was dangerously unequal. It presented its worst-case predictions as established fact, and did not explain or justify this methodology in its pamphlets. This omission, the Executive Committee maintained, was to enhance accessibility to the issue of SALT and was not a misrepresentation of the facts.

³⁹⁸ 'Memorandum by Charles Tyroler II', 13 March, 1978, Box 446, CPD Papers.

³⁹⁹ John Sparkman Pipes to Eugene Rostow, 22 February, 1978, Box 287, CPD Papers.

⁴⁰⁰ CPD Executive Committee, "Is America Becoming Number 2? Current Trends in the U.S.-Soviet Military Balance", in *Alerting America: The Papers of the Committee on the Present Danger*, ed. Charles Tyroler II (New York: Pergamon Press, 1984).

The Executive Committee's presentation of its fears as fact and recommendations as 'common sense' explains the difficulty that faced pro-SALT groups in arguing against CPD analysis of the treaty.⁴⁰¹ The Committee claimed to have quantified the treaty's risks, which placed the burden of proof on the treaty's supporters to explain how the CPD's metrics had been miscalculated. Nitze generated a number of metrics to express his concerns, but George Kennan, a leading supporter of the treaty within the American Committee for East-West Accord (ACEWA), was unable to do the same. As a result, the chapter concludes, CPD publications convinced many senators to doubt American military strength and conclude that SALT II was an unnecessary risk to national security.

The SALT II Debate

At the Committee's 1978 annual meeting, held on 10 November at the Sulgrave Club in Washington, Rostow shared the Executive Committee's belief that the U.S.S.R. now presented a 'risk of enveloping Europe'.⁴⁰² The CPD's task, Rostow stressed, was to 'arouse the sleeping giant before that kind of event'.⁴⁰³ The SALT II debate offered a means for the Committee to raise its concerns and change defence policy before Rostow's nightmare scenario could unfold. Nitze told board members that as the group's Director of Policy Studies he regarded the SALT debate as 'absolutely central to this whole network of problems, political as well as military'.⁴⁰⁴ The terms of SALT II, if ratified, would determine the legal parameters of the Cold War arms race until the end of 1985, and its provisions were therefore vital in determining American strategy well

⁴⁰¹ CPD Executive Committee, "Common Sense and the Common Danger: Policy Statement of the Committee on the Present Danger."

⁴⁰² Rostow in 'Committee on the Present Danger: Second Annual Meeting, Cassette Two', 10 November, 1978, Box 164, CPD Papers, 14.

⁴⁰³ Rostow in *ibid.*, 5.

⁴⁰⁴ Nitze in 'Committee on the Present Danger: Second Annual Meeting, Cassette Four', 10 November, 1978, Box 164, CPD Papers, 13.

into the next decade.⁴⁰⁵ Accordingly, the CPD would be dedicated for the next two years to defeating a treaty that, in their estimation, preserved the status quo and could potentially facilitate Soviet action in Western Europe.

There was no guarantee of success for the Executive Committee's objective to derail SALT II. For most Americans the benefits of détente were manifested most prominently in arms control agreements, and the prospect of a SALT II agreement was undoubtedly popular. One June 1977 poll found that 77 per cent of respondents favoured a SALT agreement.⁴⁰⁶ The same poll also found, however, that 78 per cent of respondents agreed that 'The Russians only want agreements under which they can gain an advantage.'⁴⁰⁷ Even as Americans desired arms limitation agreements many also distrusted the Soviet Union. It was this contradiction, a result of 'doubt and confusion' over the technical aspects of the negotiation process, that the Committee intended to exploit in its campaign to defeat SALT II.⁴⁰⁸ If Americans discovered the compromises contained within the treaty, the Committee reasoned, they would be less likely to favour SALT II and more likely to support matching Soviet strength. In this way the Committee hoped to kill two birds with one stone: its efforts would defeat SALT II and in doing so rally support for an expansion of American military strength. The CPD would therefore author pamphlets to present its interpretation of the treaty's risks, create metrics showing U.S. weakness, and publicise its analysis of a shifting military balance in the U.S.S.R.'s favour.

⁴⁰⁵ Talbott, *Endgame*, 32.

⁴⁰⁶ Louis Harris, "Americans Favor SALT Agreement", *ABC News-Harris Survey*, 16 June, 1977, <http://www.harrisinteractive.com/vault/Harris-Interactive-Poll-Research-AMERICANS-FAVOR-SALT-AGREEMENT-1977-06.pdf> (accessed 16/06/2015), 1.

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁴⁰⁸ CPD Executive Committee, "Where We Stand on SALT", 16.

Rostow recognised that the necessity of Senate ratification meant SALT II was ‘an internal domestic issue in the first instance’.⁴⁰⁹ Most Americans, including senators, did not fully understand the subtleties of the treaty’s convoluted provisions and their potential effect on the Cold War confrontation with the Soviet Union. One 1978 poll revealed that just 34 per cent of respondents were aware which two countries were negotiating the SALT II treaty, let alone details of the treaty’s provisions.⁴¹⁰ In this context, expert opinion was crucial. Executive Committee members utilised the CPD’s growing influence in defence issues to exploit the lack of understanding of the treaty and generate doubt over its merits. Executive Committee members were confident they could persuade one-third of senators to block ratification and approve remedial improvements to American defence capabilities.

Max Kampelman identified ‘one objective’ for the Committee in the SALT II debate, ‘to persuade at least one third of the Senate that the Treaty should not be ratified’.⁴¹¹ He set out six steps to achieve this: first, ‘to translate the complicated technical data ... into language and concepts that non-experts can understand’.⁴¹² Second, to identify the senators who were undecided on their position towards ratification. Third, ‘assemble a team of four or five people ... [to] personally meet with as many of the Target Senators as will meet with us’.⁴¹³ Fourth, to create documents ‘with devastating facts and argument, logically and clearly presented’.⁴¹⁴ Fifth, determine whether a reservation be drafted to attach to ratification. And finally, sixth, ‘continue to assign our people to speak at public forums’.⁴¹⁵ Kampelman’s strategy

⁴⁰⁹ Rostow in ‘Committee on the Present Danger: Second Annual Meeting, Cassette Four’, 10 November, 1978, Box 164, CPD Papers, 11.

⁴¹⁰ Caldwell, *The Dynamics of Domestic Politics and Arms Control*, 82.

⁴¹¹ ‘Memorandum from Max Kampelman to Henry H. Fowler, Lane Kirkland, Paul Nitze, Eugene V. Rostow, Charles Tyroler II, and Elmo Zumwalt’, 16 November, 1978, Box 289, CPD Papers, 2.

⁴¹² *Ibid.*

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*, 2–3.

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*

demonstrates that the Committee intended to play an extensive role in the ratification debate.

In practice the first objective of ‘translating’ the treaty's technical data meant framing the debate in an oversimplified manner to emphasise the Committee's concerns. The Committee was able to shift the terms of the debate as the Carter Administration shied away from public discussion while still negotiating the treaty, which gave the CPD a significant advantage. While ostensibly a debate over the particulars of an arms control treaty the deliberation morphed, as the Committee intended, into a general discussion on the U.S.-Soviet military balance. As the historian Garthoff argues, ‘SALT II became a lightning rod that attracted attacks on the administration, on détente, and on SALT.’⁴¹⁶

The CPD campaign against SALT II began in earnest in March 1978 when several Committee members were invited by Senator Edward Muskie to address the Senate Budget Committee on the defence budget. Rostow described the platform as ‘the best opportunity we have had so far to strike a dramatic and effective blow for progress’.⁴¹⁷ In his testimony to the Senate committee Rostow read a prepared statement from the Executive Committee,

We appeal to you, and through you to the Congress, to seize the opportunity for leadership which events have thrust upon you. Our plea, Mr. Chairman, is that you stir the nation to wake up from its prolonged dream, and face the world as it is. We can conceive of no step we could take to improve our national health and security more valuable than a decision to raise this budget prudently, substantially, and with determination.⁴¹⁸

The Executive Committee hoped this Churchillian rhetoric would inspire the Senate committee to raise the FY1979 defence budget under consideration. The CPD, in

⁴¹⁶ Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation*, 813.

⁴¹⁷ Eugene Rostow to Lane Kirkland, 3 March, 1978, Box 74, Folder 8, Nitze Papers.

⁴¹⁸ ‘United States Senate Committee on the Budget - Statement to Be Presented 1 March 1978 by Eugene V. Rostow’, 1 March, 1977, Box 288, CPD Papers, 5.

implored the Senate committee to 'stir the nation', was searching for likeminded leadership in the legislative branch to recognise, as its own board members did, the present danger of Soviet military power.

The FY1979 defence budget did increase though not as substantially as the CPD hoped, rising from \$105.3 billion for FY1978 to \$115.2 billion for FY1979.⁴¹⁹ The CPD's appearance before the Budget Committee did demonstrate that invitations to provide testimony offered a means to sidestep the White House and achieve a budget increase directly from the Congress. Accordingly, Committee board members would give seventeen testimonies over 1978 and 1979.⁴²⁰

Senate testimony did not preclude CPD efforts to influence the White House, despite the disappointing relationship of 1977. Rostow told Brzezinski in March 1978 that 'We are more anxious to persuade the Administration than to win a spectacular victory in Congress: — much more.'⁴²¹ Lobbying the Executive Branch was an easier task than persuading the dozens of senators and congressmen that Kampelman's plans singled out. The CPD still hoped to convince Carter to alter his approach to national security, but, it should be stressed, had no intention of supporting the president at the cost of a compromised agreement on national security.

The White House did seek compromise, however. To ensure a SALT agreement and its ratification the Carter Administration was prepared to tweak the treaty's provisions to satisfy domestic critics, including the increasingly outspoken CPD. On 13 June 1978, Nitze, Kirkland, and Fowler met with Landon Butler, Deputy to the Chief of Staff and the administration's coordinator for SALT II ratification, at the White House.

⁴¹⁹ Walsh, *The Military Balance in the Cold War*, 183.

⁴²⁰ 'Committee on the Present Danger: Third Annual Meeting, Cassette 6', 8-9 November, 1979, Box 166, CPD Papers, 9.

⁴²¹ Eugene Rostow to Zbigniew Brzezinski, 7 March, 1978, Box 74, Folder 8, Nitze Papers.

In a memorandum of the meeting, Nitze noted the ‘President's problem’.⁴²² ‘Domestically’, he recognised, ‘if he agrees with COPD position [he] will lose [the] McGovern wing of [the] Party. If [he] agrees with Warnke/Kennan/McGovern view [he] will lose [the] center and conservative wing of [the] Party. Either would open [the] field to Republicans. Therefore, [Carter] tries to straddle.’⁴²³ Nitze clearly understood how domestic politics affected Carter’s approach to arms control. Yet Carter's political problems did not concern the Committee. The Executive Committee sought a policy that in their view best preserved American national security. Given their fears of growing Soviet military power, Executive Committee members were little concerned with maintaining Democratic Party unity. The Committee position was clear: ‘[T]he issue is not so much whether a SALT II Treaty can be negotiated and ratified’, its March pamphlet *Peace with Freedom* declared, ‘but rather what the United States should be doing to correct the currently adverse trends in our strategic posture’.⁴²⁴ SALT should not be approached as a way to heal divisions within the Democratic Party when America’s strategic position was so precarious.

At the 13 June meeting Butler expressed his frustration that the majority Democrat CPD continued to oppose the administration even as SALT negotiations continued. He hoped the Committee would ‘come out against’ the efforts of grassroots conservative groups to criticise the treaty.⁴²⁵ Nitze, however, was unsympathetic and refused to restrict debate over such an important issue: ‘Why should it be all one-sided?’, he asked Butler.⁴²⁶ An ‘understanding of facts’, Nitze believed, ‘should confirm doubts’ over the treaty and thus reduce support for ratification.⁴²⁷ Instead of offering

⁴²² ‘Notes On Discussion With Landon Butler’, 13 June, 1978, Box 70, Folder 4, Nitze Papers, 2.

⁴²³ Ibid.

⁴²⁴ CPD Executive Committee, “Peace With Freedom”, 28.

⁴²⁵ ‘Notes On Discussion With Landon Butler’, 13 June, 1978, Box 70, Folder 4, Nitze Papers, 4.

⁴²⁶ Ibid.

⁴²⁷ Ibid., 3.

assistance, Nitze repeated his two main criticisms of the negotiations, survivability of Minuteman ICBMs and the need for a higher defence budget to match Soviet procurement, but stated if these issues were addressed he 'would then be for [the SALT] package'.⁴²⁸ Nitze was not prepared to offer Butler the Committee's support without his two concerns resolved, and the meeting ended without cooperation on SALT II. A compromise could not be reached because while the administration was committed to finalising the treaty, the CPD was equally committed to avoiding any restrictions on American defence programmes. Appeals to party loyalty would not sway Executive Committee members, who were convinced that SALT II would not restrict Soviet military expansion but instead further weaken American military capabilities.

Perhaps dismissing the Executive Committee's Churchillian rhetoric as posturing, the administration did not grasp the strength of the CPD's concerns. A month after Nitze's first meeting, Butler again met him and Zumwalt on 11 July desperate to secure the Committee's support. Butler explained that Nitze's criticisms of 13 June had been specifically clarified during treaty negotiations in Geneva, and that 'his understanding of Nitze's previous position [w]as the basis of his subsequent inputs which had been a factor in moving the Executive Branch toward its present position affirming the preservation of a right to deploy [Multiple Aim Point System] MAPS'.⁴²⁹ This initiative was undertaken exclusively to satisfy Nitze's concerns about Minuteman vulnerability. Yet Nitze still refused to support the treaty. Butler was furious, and 'expressed chagrin over having been prompted to make his initiatives by a misperception of Nitze's attitude'.⁴³⁰ Nitze was unmoved and told Butler of 'his doubts concerning the Executive

⁴²⁸ Ibid., 1.

⁴²⁹ 'Memorandum of Conversation. Participants: Landon Butler, Paul H. Nitze, E. R. Zumwalt, Jr.', 11 July, 1978, Box 70, Folder 4, Nitze Papers, 3.

⁴³⁰ Ibid.

Branch's grasp of the realities of the U.S. strategic situation'.⁴³¹ He also described 'the President's presentation [in a commencement speech at Annapolis on 7 June 1978] as a set of misleading suggestions amounting in sum to deception of the American people'.⁴³² Nitze, determined to raise defence spending, saw no reason for compromise on the SALT treaty.

Butler, desperate to dampen CPD criticism and prepare for the treaty's passage through Senate ratification, 'again urged COPD examination of the question of what it can do in support of Executive Branch initiatives. He stressed the importance of a feeling of common understanding in enhancing COPD influence with the Executive Branch and the greater utility of discussion as opposed to confrontation.'⁴³³ But unless President Carter indicated that he shared the Committee's alarming analysis of the Soviet Union there would be no support. Butler went to great lengths to satisfy Nitze, but the administration and the CPD were separated by an entirely different perception of the risks presented by the U.S.S.R. and not by relatively minor technicalities within the SALT treaty.

The administration's decision to leave the public forum to groups like the CPD while they attempted to assuage its critics in private 'failed utterly', as Garthoff has argued.⁴³⁴ When compromise with the CPD proved impossible and the administration began its own public appeals in favour of the agreement, treaty opponents had already been permitted many months to frame the debate entirely on their own terms. Administration officials underestimated the CPD's determination to oppose SALT II and wasted time and effort negotiating directly with Nitze when it would have been

⁴³¹ Ibid., 5.

⁴³² Ibid.

⁴³³ Ibid., 6.

⁴³⁴ Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation*, 801.

more effective – as the CPD was doing – to try to convince undecided senators of the treaty's merits.

The Coalition for Peace Through Strength

Commencing with Senate appearances in March the Committee implemented Kampelman's strategy to oppose the treaty, and continued to follow its media strategy as formulated in its 1977 *Public/Congressional Relations Plan*.⁴³⁵ As part of this campaign, the Committee published three pamphlets over the rest of 1978 (and a further six in 1979), Executive Committee members continued to brief senators in private, and also contributed to local discussion forums across the country.⁴³⁶ All these activities were designed to persuade opinion leaders to oppose SALT II ratification.

Despite the importance of its written studies – 14,000 for its largest print run was sizeable but by no means vast⁴³⁷ – contributions to newspapers and television appearances reached far greater numbers. In one typical example, Zumwalt and Nitze were invited as guests on a televised NBC News SALT II debate that aired on 10 July 1979, and were introduced as experts on the treaty. 'NBC News', anchor John Chancellor announced, 'has invited some of the more distinguished and knowledgeable supporters and opponents of the treaty' to debate.⁴³⁸ Alongside Senator Jake Garn, the two CPD officers made the case for the rejection of the SALT II treaty. This format was repeated on a number of television shows and also at local discussion groups as part of CPD strategy to reach beyond a limited Washington audience and present their message to a national audience.

⁴³⁵ 'Public/Congressional Relations Plan for the Committee on the Present Danger', 10 June, 1977, Box 447, CPD Papers.

⁴³⁶ 'Table of Executive Committee Member Activities, November 1978 - November 1979', November 1979, Box 163, CPD Papers.

⁴³⁷ 'Printing of Committee Pamphlets [attachment to Agenda for the Fourth Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Committee on the Present Danger]', 6 November, 1980, Box 163, CPD Papers.

⁴³⁸ John Chancellor in "NBC News National Forum: The SALT II Debate", *NBC News* (NBC, 10 July, 1979), Record Number 838099, Vanderbilt University Television News Archive, Nashville, TN.

Some CPD board members questioned the effectiveness of this approach of measured debate and discussion, suggesting that it did not convey sufficient urgency. '[T]he time has come for us to bring about some very effective and startling and terrifying realization on the part of the people what we are really confronted with', one board member suggested at the CPD's 1978 annual meeting.⁴³⁹ It was discussed whether an even more alarmist rhetorical style would decisively shift public opinion against the agreement, but the Executive Committee, and Rostow in particular, rejected this more forceful approach. 'We're trying to deal with it in the only way we know', he responded, 'which is through reason and persuasion'.⁴⁴⁰ The Executive Committee was adamant that pamphlets, meetings, and debate would remain its principal activities. This discussion highlights the CPD's dilemma of persuading Americans in a stoic, measured manner that there was a dangerous and urgent threat. The Executive Committee intended to explain its concerns in a style that drew on its reputation for credible analysis, but this style did not amount to a rallying cry for an immediate change in national security policy. More forceful appeals were rejected, as they would be perceived as propaganda and potentially tarnish its hard-won reputation, thus limiting its ability to influence national security policy in Washington. The Executive Committee, conscious of balancing its credible reputation with the need to spread its urgent message, instead left more bombastic methods to other SALT II oppositional groups.⁴⁴¹

The historian Bruce Shulman has shown that over the early 1970s conservative activism became 'an institutionalized, disciplined, well-organized and well-financed

⁴³⁹ Unidentified CPD Board Member in 'Committee on the Present Danger: Second Annual Meeting, Cassette Four', 10 November, 1978, Box 164, CPD Papers, 8.

⁴⁴⁰ Rostow in 'Committee on the Present Danger: Second Annual Meeting, Cassette Two', 10 November, 1978, Box 164, CPD Papers, 4.

⁴⁴¹ Further details of the opposition groups can be found in Caldwell, *The Dynamics of Domestic Politics and Arms Control*, 101

movement of loosely knit affiliates'.⁴⁴² Organisations focused on creating grass roots movements were becoming particularly effective in mobilising support for single-issue campaigns. The 1977 Panama Canal Treaties campaign, for example, was particularly important in developing formal and informal cooperation between myriad conservative groups on foreign policy issues. Millions of dollars were spent sending millions of letters, organising rallies, and securing airtime for advertisements that made the case against the treaties.⁴⁴³ These activities did not prevent ratification of the Canal treaties, but nevertheless developed formidable campaign structures and experience.⁴⁴⁴

On 8 August 1978, the American Security Council, a leading opponent of the Canal Treaty, announced the formation of the Coalition for Peace Through Strength (CPTS). Its purpose was to oppose SALT II, make the case for renewed military strength, and reject a recent period of 'Official Washington ... unilaterally disarming the United States'.⁴⁴⁵ CPTS, said co-director Paul Laxalt, would gather 'some of the most prestigious names and groups in the defense community to build a formidable organization dedicated to the adoption of a national strategy for Peace Through Strength'.⁴⁴⁶ The CPTS counted 145 Congressmen among its initial membership, demonstrating the growing popularity and political impetus of the 'peace through strength' message.⁴⁴⁷

The CPD did not formally join the CPTS as it was prohibited from any such affiliation in its articles of association. However, the American Security Council, Rostow reported to Committee board members, 'are in touch with us all the time'.⁴⁴⁸

⁴⁴² Schulman, *The Seventies*, 196.

⁴⁴³ Skidmore, *Reversing Course*, 114.

⁴⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 112.

⁴⁴⁵ 'The Need for a National Strategy of Peace Through Strength', 1978[?], Box 211, CPD Papers.

⁴⁴⁶ 'Statement by Hon. Paul Laxalt, Co-Director Coalition for Peace Through Strength', 8 August, 1978, Box 211, CPD Papers.

⁴⁴⁷ 'Coalition For Peace Through Strength Member Subscription Form', 1978, Box 211, CPD Papers.

⁴⁴⁸ Rostow in 'Committee on the Present Danger: Second Annual Meeting, Cassette Four', 10 November, 1978, Box 164, CPD Papers, 12.

The Committee's role within the CPTS was to provide intellectual substance to its claims of growing American inferiority. 'What is clear so far', Rostow explained to board members in November 1978, 'is that many groups are going to be depending upon us for our analysis of the SALT problems and our formulation of it. That is the function we have already defined for ourselves.'⁴⁴⁹ The CPD role was to provide the detailed analytical studies that would underpin anti-SALT arguments. This solved the CPD's dilemma over the presentation of the 'present danger'. It would provide the credible analysis, and the CPTS would stress the urgency of the message.

CPD work, and Nitze's *Current Negotiating Posture* pamphlets in particular, were frequently cited in Coalition materials.⁴⁵⁰ In the 1980 ASC documentary film *The SALT Syndrome* a number of CPD officers provided commentary.⁴⁵¹ In this film, dramatic music and ominous footage of Soviet military hardware created an alarming context for experts, often Committee members, to explain the growing threat of the Soviet Union. This represented how the CPD and the ASC worked together most effectively: the CPD offered expert credibility, and the CPTS provided a platform stressing urgency and danger. The CPTS claimed that *The SALT Syndrome* aired 2,300 times on local television stations, and, rather optimistically, that the film reached an estimated 100,000,000 viewers across the country.⁴⁵²

The American Security Council operated as the organiser of a mass movement that worked to foster popular support for 'peace through strength'. The CPD, through its pamphlets of policy analysis, provided more sophisticated materials for opinion leaders

⁴⁴⁹ Rostow in *ibid.*, 13.

⁴⁵⁰ 'Coalition For Peace Through Strength Folder Sources of Statistics and Charts', 1979[?], Box 211, CPD Papers.

⁴⁵¹ American Security Council Education Foundation, "The SALT Syndrome" (CBS, 30 March, 1980), Record Number 659151, Vanderbilt University Television News Archive, Nashville, TN.

⁴⁵² John Fisher, "History Milestones: American Security Council and American Security Council Foundation", November 5, 2005, 22, <http://www.ascfusa.org/app/webroot/files/fckfiles/HISTORY%20MILESTONES.pdf> (accessed 15 July 2012).

and politicians who recognised the shifting policy preferences of the wider public in favour of greater military capabilities. These functions were complimentary and were both crucial in the campaign to oppose SALT II. CPD and CPTS campaigns successfully raised the issue of military strength through the SALT II debate and activated public awareness of American weakness. In December 1976, 27 percent of poll respondents, and in July 1978, 31 percent of respondents, expressed the opinion that the U.S. defence system was weaker than the Russian defence system.⁴⁵³ A December 1978 poll found that 40 percent of respondents felt the same, demonstrating a clear trend in the public attitude as Americans became more supportive of an assertive foreign policy after the CPD and CPTS entered the SALT II debate.⁴⁵⁴

Metrics of the Military Balance

The Committee's most important contribution to the SALT campaign, the historian David Skidmore suggests, 'was to issue reports critical of the treaty written by noted arms control and defense experts'.⁴⁵⁵ This was certainly the Committee's intention. Its 1978 pamphlet *Where We Stand on SALT* suggested that American deterrent capability was insufficient, urgently required strengthening, and that the SALT II agreement would hamper this vital effort.⁴⁵⁶ It was 'common sense', Committee pamphlets argued, that American strength should match that of the U.S.S.R..⁴⁵⁷ Rejecting the treaty and increasing defence spending, the CPD wrote in a letter to Carter,

⁴⁵³ Louis Harris, "Americans Shift Attitudes Toward Defense Spending", *ABC News-Harris Survey*, 18 December, 1978, <http://www.harrisinteractive.com/vault/Harris-Interactive-Poll-Research-AMERICANS-SHIFT-ATTITUDES-TOWARD-DEFENSE-SPENDING-1978-12.pdf> (accessed 28/01/2014), 2.

⁴⁵⁴ Daniel Yankelovich and Larry Kaagan, "Assertive America", *Foreign Affairs* 59, no. 3 (January 1980): 706.

⁴⁵⁵ Skidmore, *Reversing Course*, 138.

⁴⁵⁶ CPD Executive Committee, "Where We Stand on SALT", 21.

⁴⁵⁷ CPD Executive Committee, "Common Sense and the Common Danger: Policy Statement of the Committee on the Present Danger".

was ‘wise and prudent’ in order to maintain parity and dissuade Soviet aggression.⁴⁵⁸ To argue this position, the CPD assessed strategic disparity using a handful of metrics, and claimed that they clearly demonstrated America was falling behind.

Looking for Eggs in a Cuckoo Clock, for example, highlighted three ‘dangerous disparities’ in the treaty.⁴⁵⁹ The first disparity was the permitted number of launchers, the second was the permitted numbers of warheads on MIRVed ICBMs and the third was the prospective deployments of ICBMs.⁴⁶⁰ The CPD argued that these disparities indicated ‘the basis for a determinative strategic imbalance’, even though these were certainly not the only metrics by which the treaty's merits could be judged.⁴⁶¹ By late 1978, as the Committee hoped, the SALT II debate was no longer simply an issue of negotiating a final agreement with the U.S.S.R., but had widened to encompass public debate over how to assess the military balance and whether SALT II was a positive or negative influence on the balance.

The CPD's simplified metrics that informed this debate, however, distorted America's strategic situation, and, as Garthoff correctly argues, increased ‘sensitivity to a symbolic arithmetical "balance"’.⁴⁶² The CPD argued that the survival of American land-based Minuteman III missiles could no longer be assured as the Soviet Union had vastly strengthened its strategic arsenal, pointing out that ‘a *third*-strike capability ... would undermine the credibility of our second-strike capacity’.⁴⁶³ But this assessment of Soviet capabilities was based on the CPD's own estimated metrics, which were

⁴⁵⁸ ‘Committee on the Present Danger Letter to President Carter’, 4 August, 1977, Box 70, Folder 5, Nitze Papers, 2.

⁴⁵⁹ Charles Burton Marshall, “Looking For Eggs in a Cuckoo Clock: Observations on SALT II”, in *Alerting America: The Papers of the Committee on the Present Danger*, ed. Charles Tyroler II (New York: Pergamon Press, 1984), 95.

⁴⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶² Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation*, 1142.

⁴⁶³ CPD Executive Committee, “Is America Becoming Number 2? Current Trends in the U.S.-Soviet Military Balance”, 41.

compiled through hypothetical worst-case assumptions of current trends of Soviet strength and deployments.

Nitze was particularly troubled by comparative throw-weight, a metric that represented the effective payload each side could deliver in a nuclear attack. In 1978 this was an area of Soviet advantage following the deployment of SS-18 and SS-19 ICBMs.⁴⁶⁴ Nitze concocted a nightmare scenario, which underpinned the Committee's alarm during the SALT II debate. *If* the accuracy of guidance systems were enhanced, and *if* MIRV technology improved to allow the attachment of additional warheads, then Kremlin leaders *might* be able to launch a disarming first strike against U.S. land-based Minuteman III missiles. However, this scenario assumed the perfect coordination of a surprise missile attack, which obviously had never before been attempted. It also assumed that Soviet leaders would not anticipate an immediate, 'launch on warning' response by American missiles before the hypothetical Soviet strike hit its targets. There were considerable doubts over Soviet strategic capabilities as well as its ability to coordinate a disarming first strike, but the Committee repeatedly made the case that American weakness stemmed from the risk of this unlikely scenario.⁴⁶⁵

As Kampelman suggested in his planning document, the Committee would 'translate' these esoteric concepts into terms that could be readily understood. Put simply, despite the apparent complexity of CPD analyses, its pamphlets appealed to the desire of many Americans to match the military capabilities of their communist rivals. Committee pamphlets did not offer a balanced case for a re-examination of Cold War military strategy and a return to containment. Instead the CPD provided an unambiguous conclusion that the consequences of SALT II and lack of military investment would be catastrophic. Executive Committee members recognised that a

⁴⁶⁴ Talbott, *Endgame*, 180.

⁴⁶⁵ For example, first printed in 1977, see Fred M. Kaplan, *Dubious Specter: A Skeptical Look at the Soviet Nuclear Threat*, (Washington D.C.: Institute for Policy Studies, 1982).

simplified argument over who was the stronger power would resonate. ‘Those people out there don’t want to be number two’, Charls Walker explained at the 1978 annual conference, ‘They don’t want to be anywhere close to number two, when it comes to military strength and security. That one you can sell around the country.’⁴⁶⁶ The Committee clearly understood the power of its publications that offered clear conclusions that seemed to be based on complex analyses.

Zumwalt expressed his own understanding of the Committee's tactics in his memoir. For him opposition to SALT II was based on using the very complexity of the treaty to encourage doubt:

I thought the most intense resistance possible was the appropriate tactic ... It was necessary to stick to the forms, to construct and marshal the elaborate agreements about MIRVs and Throw Weight and Forward Based Systems and Threshold Test Bans and Denuclearization ... [but] those arguments were pretty much a cover. The substance was, "Stop the Talks! We Want to Get Off!"⁴⁶⁷

Walker and Zumwalt’s comments suggest that the Committee understood that its detailed analysis was less important than the conclusion that it purported to support. The alarming conclusion would receive more attention than the metrics that underpinned the interpretation. The Executive Committee started with the premise of inferiority and created the metrics that would demonstrate this view. As the historian Halliday argues, ‘much of the argument rests upon a combination of linguistic slippage and debatable systems of measurement’.⁴⁶⁸ How to assess the military balance was an issue of intense disagreement as there was no easy measure of nuclear parity. Although the Committee was clearly sincere in its belief in American inferiority, its case against SALT II was not based on the clear logic and reason that Rostow claimed was the Committee’s style.

⁴⁶⁶ Walker in ‘The Committee on the Present Danger, First Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors, Washington D.C.’, 11 November, 1977, Box 166, CPD Papers, 101.

⁴⁶⁷ Zumwalt, *On Watch: A Memoir*, 489.

⁴⁶⁸ Halliday, *The Making of the Second Cold War*, 71.

The veneer of evidenced logic exposes the CPD's claim of democratising national security as misleading. Committee metrics highlighted only the Executive Committee's view of the military balance and either obscured or ignored other metrics that undermined their own analysis. For example, as Garthoff points out, 'The American lead in absolute numbers of strategic bombs and warheads actually widened between 1970 and 1980.'⁴⁶⁹ This fact was not highlighted in Committee material. There was no simple measure of nuclear parity, but the Committee chose to ignore the less alarming possibility that there was rough parity between the Soviet Union and the United States. The Committee instead focused on the areas of contention and, rather than acknowledge the ambiguity of comparing relative strengths and weaknesses of each side's military capabilities, argued that 'if present trends continue, the U.S. will soon be in a situation of military inferiority'.⁴⁷⁰ It made this claim on the basis of comparative throw weight, projections of MIRVing, and predictions of Soviet technological developments, which were measures the CPD selected precisely because they presented the military balance in its least favourable terms.

In the Executive Committee's view, they were permitting wider participation by providing these metrics to the public, but their pursuit of simplicity also meant that the group did not present a detailed clarification of their approach to threat assessment. Rostow believed that 'If our people are told the truth, they will respond today.'⁴⁷¹ However, CPD members did not explain that the metrics they presented as 'truth' were merely estimates calculated using a worst-case methodology. Kampelman later explained that the Committee followed the Team B approach of 1976, which he

⁴⁶⁹ Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation*, 874.

⁴⁷⁰ CPD Executive Committee, "Is America Becoming Number 2? Current Trends in the U.S.-Soviet Military Balance", 88.

⁴⁷¹ Rostow, 'The Taste of SALT: Remarks before the Annual Dinner of the Board of Directors of the Committee on the Present Danger, Washington D.C.', 8 November, 1979, Box 163, CPD Papers, 11.

described as the CPD's 'intellectual basis'.⁴⁷² Executive Committee members felt justified in adopting a worst-case approach to threat assessment rather than explaining a range of possibilities in military developments. In their view readers did not need to know the optimistic analysis but, given Soviet hostility, should be informed how potentially dangerous their adversary remained. However, by withholding an explanation of this worst-case methodology the CPD gave the impression that their estimates were not merely a possibility but were an accurate representation of future trends.

This approach is seen clearly in *Is America Becoming Number Two?*, which was published in October 1978 and sought to worry readers about American inferiority in relation to the Soviet Union. This publication, the CPD's longest and most detailed pamphlet yet released, set out an analysis of the U.S.-Soviet military balance in the context of the SALT II negotiations. The pamphlet argued that the Soviet Union was close to reaching superiority but that there was still opportunity to prevent that eventuality albeit only with a prompt and decisive effort to raise defence spending to match Soviet strength.

The Committee's assessment of technological research in the pamphlet demonstrates its worst-case approach. '[I]t is clear', the pamphlet warned readers, 'that unless present trends are reversed they [the U.S.S.R.] will achieve superiority'.⁴⁷³ It cautioned against 'a strategically significant "breakthrough" ... that could give them, overnight as it were, a decisive military advantage'.⁴⁷⁴ To make this case the pamphlet alleged that the Soviet Union was developing an 'anti-satellite satellite' with 'high-

⁴⁷² Kampelman, "Introduction", xv.

⁴⁷³ CPD Executive Committee, "Is America Becoming Number 2? Current Trends in the U.S.-Soviet Military Balance", 83.

⁴⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 85.

energy lasers’, and ‘directed-energy charged-particle beams’.⁴⁷⁵ The Committee claimed that the Soviet Civil Defence programme ‘directly affects the basic arithmetic of deterrence’ and this programme had been so successful that the U.S.S.R. might suffer just one-tenth the casualties of the U.S. in a nuclear exchange.⁴⁷⁶ Soviet capabilities in 1978, even before considering these developments, ‘raise doubt as to whether we possess an adequate second-strike capability today’.⁴⁷⁷

While these Soviet research programmes were assumed to be on the verge of deployment the possibility of American technological advances were played down. For example, many experts considered cruise missile technology as an area of American advantage, but the CPD argued that the technology should not be assessed in this way. ‘Like the Japanese a generation ago, Soviet science has often surprised our experts’, the Committee cautioned.⁴⁷⁸ ‘Policy should prudently assume that Soviet cruise missile technology ... will soon at least equal our own.’⁴⁷⁹ CIA predictions of Soviet economic constraints in the 1980s, which suggested restraint in Soviet military procurement, were dismissed as long term ‘uncertainties’ when compared to how the ‘risks of the shifting military balance threaten the position of the United States in international diplomacy now and in the 1980s’.⁴⁸⁰ In short, the Committee analysis assumed a formidable enemy and a hapless defence. This was a very one-sided approach to threat perception.

These technological developments were all complicated issues within assessments of comparative military power that years of SALT II negotiations had failed to solve. With different force mixes, deployments, and technologies it was extremely difficult to establish parameters for mutual security. Yet the Committee

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid., 58.

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid., 59.

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid., 54.

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid., 87.

highlighted any area of unfavourable comparison in their assessment of SALT and in doing so presented the treaty in its worst possible light. Executive Committee members did not explain to readers that General David Jones, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, regarded the treaty as 'a modest but useful step'.⁴⁸¹ By restricting Soviet programmes, he reasoned, they would be more predictable and therefore make planning effective countermeasures less fraught with uncertainty.

The Committee's assessments purported to offer a simplified view of the military balance. In simplifying, however, the Committee distorted. Undoubtedly Executive Committee members sincerely believed that worst-case planning was the prudent course against America's most potent adversary. But the Committee did not attempt to justify this basis for assessing the Soviet threat. 'It was easy, all too easy', Fred Kaplan observes.⁴⁸² It certainly proved easier to highlight and publicise disparity to generate support for its opposition to SALT. CPD examples of American inferiority were based on conjecture, worst-case projections, and unrealistic scenarios. A more accurate presentation of its views would have explained that there was a chance that the Soviet Union might gain certain advantages in some fields of military technology, but that American research might also develop similar advantages in other fields. To claim, as Committee publications did, that it was 'clear' that the U.S.S.R. was on the brink of gaining military superiority could not be supported by the firm evidence available.

Fred Kaplan also suggests that Nitze 'hit new heights of abstraction in strategic thought' during the SALT II debate.⁴⁸³ This level of abstraction was incorporated as an additional component to the Committee's analysis, which stressed the need to 'demonstrate our determination' to Kremlin leaders.⁴⁸⁴ *Is America Becoming Number 2?*

⁴⁸¹ General David James in Smith, *Morality, Reason, and Power*, 158.

⁴⁸² Kaplan, *The Wizards of Armageddon*, 382.

⁴⁸³ *Ibid.*, 379.

⁴⁸⁴ CPD Executive Committee, "Where We Stand on SALT", 21.

warned that if the U.S. were to ‘permit these clear trends to materialize, we may expect to lose the “battle of perceived capabilities”’.⁴⁸⁵ If Kremlin leaders *believed* they could win a war, the Executive Committee reasoned, they just might try. Deterring Soviet aggression therefore required not only matching their capabilities in practice, but being *perceived* by Kremlin leaders as matching their capabilities. Therefore, the Committee argued, ‘it is essential that our second-strike capacities be convincing and visible beyond the shadow of a doubt’.⁴⁸⁶ The conclusion was that ‘Until we have adequate capabilities for the most demanding contingency, we can hardly have assurance of deterring aggression.’⁴⁸⁷ This was a high bar for American security needs, and essentially defined security as possible only with Soviet insecurity. The Committee’s critics pointed out that it was this logic that fuelled the arms race.⁴⁸⁸

The American Committee on East-West Accord

President Carter’s Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, Hodding Carter, warned in December 1978 that ‘the public will be highly susceptible to attention-arresting, seemingly plausible criticisms of SALT’.⁴⁸⁹ This, as has been demonstrated, became the basis of the CPD’s publications. Their presentation of metrics that appeared to demonstrate growing Soviet power proved extremely effective in sowing seeds of doubt over the SALT II treaty. After one presentation to the regional San Diego World Affairs Council, for example, its president wrote to the Committee ‘You really were primed with facts and figures which were difficult to refute.’⁴⁹⁰ Apparent inequalities in the military balance, when pointed out by CPD experts, struck

⁴⁸⁵ CPD Executive Committee, “Is America Becoming Number 2? Current Trends in the U.S.-Soviet Military Balance”, 63.

⁴⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁴⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 77.

⁴⁸⁸ An influential counterpoint to the CPD’s thinking was Paul C. Warnke, “Apes on a Treadmill”, *Foreign Policy* 18 (1975): 12–29.

⁴⁸⁹ Hodding Carter quoted in Caldwell, *The Dynamics of Domestic Politics and Arms Control*, 158.

⁴⁹⁰ Laurence Springer to Charles Kupperman, 30 October, 1979, Box 88, CPD Papers.

many Americans as unfair as well as dangerous, and opposition to the treaty seemed prudent. The CPD's unsettling metrics forced advocates of the SALT II treaty to explain to the public how, despite the Committee's suggestions of disparity, the treaty was in fact beneficial to American national security.

'Competition', Richard Pipes noted in March 1978, emerged 'in the form of the American Committee on East-West Accord [ACEWA]'.⁴⁹¹ The success of the CPD's model of bureaucratic opposition prompted imitation from supporters of the SALT process. The ACEWA had been founded in July 1974, but reorganised its efforts in early 1978 to participate in the SALT II debate.⁴⁹² Its membership included George Kennan,⁴⁹³ W. Averell Harriman,⁴⁹⁴ Sidney Drell,⁴⁹⁵ and John-Kenneth Galbraith.⁴⁹⁶ In language strikingly similar to the CPD's own public introduction, the ACEWA announced it would set forth the 'moderate, objective, expert opinions of distinguished Americans, based on realistic concern for the best interest of the United States'.⁴⁹⁷ Its members, the group claimed, were a 'remarkable non-partisan group of private citizens — corporation executives, former ambassadors, college presidents, Soviet specialists, nuclear physicists, clergymen of all faiths — who differ widely among themselves about politics, economics, and international affairs'.⁴⁹⁸ The ACEWA intended to replicate the success of the CPD by establishing itself as an independent authority on defence issues, but in contrast the ACEWA sought to rally support for arms control and

⁴⁹¹ Pipes in CPD Executive Committee, "Peace With Freedom", 24–25.

⁴⁹² 'American Committee for East-West Accord Pamphlet', Undated, Box 327, CPD Papers.

⁴⁹³ George Kennan worked at the State Department from 1931 to 1950. In addition to a number of diplomatic appointments he worked at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton until his death in 2005. See Gaddis, *George F. Kennan*.

⁴⁹⁴ Averell Harriman was US Ambassador to the Soviet Union from 1943 to 1946. He later held a number of posts in the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations.

⁴⁹⁵ Sidney Drell is a Professor Emeritus in nuclear physics at Stanford University, and cofounded the Center for International Security and Arms Control in 1970.

⁴⁹⁶ John-Kenneth Galbraith was a Professor of economics at Harvard University and a noted public intellectual.

⁴⁹⁷ Fred Warner Neal, "Introduction", in *Detente or Debacle: Common Sense in U.S. - Soviet Relations*, ed. Fred Warner Neal (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1979), XIII.

⁴⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, XIII – XIV.

détente. This was a clear example of what the historian Francis Gavin has called ‘the rift in the strategy “church”’ in the late-1970s.⁴⁹⁹

The ACEWA's primary concern was not the risk of Soviet expansion, but the risk of nuclear war. Kremlin leaders, Kennan argued, were ‘moderate’ and Brezhnev himself was ‘a man of peace’.⁵⁰⁰ Kennan also likened those who saw ‘dangers on every hand’, obviously referring to CPD members, to ‘frightened children’.⁵⁰¹ If American leaders took the lead in lowering tensions and promoting arms control, ACEWA members believed, Kremlin leaders would reciprocate. They ‘have good and sound reason, rooted in their own interests’, and Kennan argued that they desired ‘a peaceful and constructive relationship with the United States’.⁵⁰² This was in direct contrast to the CPD view, which maintained that Kremlin leaders, inspired by Marxist-Leninism theory and guided by a history of Russian imperialism, were inherently committed to expansion.⁵⁰³ The ACEWA and the CPD in effect provided the intellectual leadership for the opposing positions on SALT II and on U.S.-Soviet relations.

Containment’s primary architects, Kennan and Nitze, were on separate sides of this debate on U.S.-Soviet relations by the late-1970s. Kennan believed his famous ‘X’ article in 1947 had ‘dogged my footsteps ever since’, because he did not emphasise that the ‘danger was not one of further military conquest’.⁵⁰⁴ Nitze, however, thought that his own approach, first in NSC-68 and now through the CPD, ‘more realistically set forth the requirements necessary to assure success of George Kennan's idea of

⁴⁹⁹ Francis J. Gavin, “Wrestling with Parity: The Nuclear Revolution Revisited”, in *The Shock of the Global: The 1970s in Perspective*, ed. Niall Ferguson et al. (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010), 198.

⁵⁰⁰ George F. Kennan, “Needed: A New American View of the USSR”, in *Detente or Debacle: Common Sense in U.S. - Soviet Relations*, ed. Fred Warner Neal (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1979), 30.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid.

⁵⁰² Ibid., 34.

⁵⁰³ CPD Executive Committee, “What Is the Soviet Union Up To?”, 11.

⁵⁰⁴ Kennan, “Needed: A New American View of the USSR”, 29.

containment'.⁵⁰⁵ The contrasting views on how to perceive Soviet capabilities gained national prominence in a May 1978 *New Times Magazine* feature on Soviet relations, which included two lengthy articles featuring Nitze and Kennan.⁵⁰⁶

Nitze repeated his warning about Carter's 'misreading of the Russians'.⁵⁰⁷ The Kremlin, he argued, was 'doctrinally dedicated to achieving world hegemony' and the president did not acknowledge this threat to American interests.⁵⁰⁸ Kennan, in contrast, made 'An Appeal for Thought', arguing that Soviet leaders were 'Not at all adventurous ... they have something approaching a complex about the possibility of another war.'⁵⁰⁹ In Kennan's view 'alarmists', a reference to the CPD, had taken its concerns over the military balance too far:

What bothers me about a great deal of the present discussion of the military realities is that they all have ... a certain image of the Soviet leadership ... Somehow or other, when you start to think in military terms of what we could do to them and what they could do to us, insensibly you move quietly to the assumption that since they could do this, this is what they would like to do.⁵¹⁰

Nitze observed Soviet capabilities, in theory a quantifiable factor, and attempted to deduce intentions. Kennan advocated the reverse. He argued that Soviet intentions were defensive in nature, but did not quantify this assessment. Nitze, on the other hand, had meticulously quantified his own thinking in CPD analyses. The ability to refer to numbers gave Nitze's interpretation of Soviet intentions the appearance of credibility. As the historian Johnson observes, 'Quantification appears to reduce uncertainty and enhance predictability.'⁵¹¹ The Committee's approach, which seemed to be based on

⁵⁰⁵ Nitze quoted in Thompson, *The Hawk and the Dove*, 114.

⁵⁰⁶ "Can Carter Handle Him? Two Opposing Views, Paul H. Nitze/George F. Kennan", *New York Times Magazine*, 7 May, 1978, sec. 6.

⁵⁰⁷ Paul H. Nitze, "An Appeal For Action...", *New York Times Magazine*, 7 May, 1978, sec. 6.

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁹ Kennan quoted in Marilyn Berger, "An Appeal For Thought...", *New York Times Magazine*, 7 May, 1978, sec. 6.

⁵¹⁰ Kennan quoted in *ibid.*

⁵¹¹ Robert H. Johnson, *Improbable Dangers: U.S. Conceptions of Threat in the Cold War and After*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 121.

hard evidence rather than intuition, struck many as the more prudent method of assessing the threat of the U.S.S.R.. As Gaddis correctly notes, ‘Nitze seemed right in the short run, because only the long run could confirm Kennan’s claim.’⁵¹²

Quantification was the Committee’s trump card in the SALT II debate. Parity was ambiguous, but Nitze relished the task of quantifying the unquantifiable. In the words of his biographer, Strobe Talbott, he had put ‘Calipers on the Rubble’ as part of the U.S. Bombing Survey at Hiroshima in 1945.⁵¹³ Nitze later described this task as measuring ‘precisely the physical effects and other effects as well, to put calipers on it, instead of describing it in emotive terms. I was trying to put quantitative numbers on something that was considered immeasurable.’⁵¹⁴ Over thirty years later Nitze was undertaking a similar task on the SALT II treaty. This time, however, there was no actual rubble to measure only the hypothetical worst-case situations that Executive Committee members had themselves devised.

Nitze claimed that he was worried solely about measurable military realities. However, a letter he wrote to a CPD supporter demonstrates his uncertainty over assessing capabilities:

One can never be certain that what one believes to be true is in fact true. All that is possible is to be as careful in searching out the evidence and as clear in laying out that evidence and the chains of logic derived therefrom as possible.⁵¹⁵

Nitze was convinced that his own chain of logic was common sense. Yet he also admitted ‘I still worry about surprises.’⁵¹⁶ He presented his intuition in CPD analyses as evidenced logic, rationalising his own fears as prudence and incorporating them in his computations. However, when his ACEWA critics incorporated their own less fearful

⁵¹² Gaddis, *George F. Kennan*, 640.

⁵¹³ Talbott, *The Master of the Game*, 31.

⁵¹⁴ Nitze, quoted in *ibid.*, 37.

⁵¹⁵ Paul Nitze to Charles Watts, 28 April, 1977, Box 182, CPD Papers.

⁵¹⁶ Nitze in ‘The Committee on the Present Danger, First Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors, Washington D.C.’, 11 November, 1977, Box 166, CPD Papers, 43.

assumptions into their assessments he dismissed their logic. His conclusion was logical, whereas, he wrote to a newspaper in 1980, ‘Averell [Harriman]’s piece is over simplified, polemical, and hardly contributes to sound judgment.’⁵¹⁷

‘Nitze was an operational pessimist’, Talbott suggests, ‘someone who believed that policy was largely a matter of making the best of a bad situation, of planning for the worst, while doing so in a way that would prevent it from happening’.⁵¹⁸ The effect was that Nitze, and his likeminded CPD colleagues, regarded those who did not subscribe to similar pessimistic planning to be naive, even reckless. Kennan, in particular, was seen as particularly dangerous. Rostow, in a scathing review of Kennan’s 1978 book *The Cloud of Danger*, called him ‘an impressionist, a poet, not an earthling’.⁵¹⁹ He labelled Kennan’s ideas on foreign policy ‘as confused, inconsistent, and detached from the most objective measures of reality’.⁵²⁰

Kennan and his ACEWA colleagues, despite replicating the CPD’s structure, were unable to match its success. The CPD’s calls for additional military strength proved much more popular than the East-West Accord’s calls for reconciliation. The ACEWA members recognised the seductive the appeal of the Committee’s approach, but could not shift the terms of debate away from CPD metrics of inferiority. Galbraith agreed with Kennan and claimed that ‘The subject of American-Soviet relations is one that invites the worse tendencies in our political literature – apocalyptic vision, the elaborately torrid phrase, discovery of deeply sinister motive.’⁵²¹ But appeals to hope and trust did not address the issues raised by the CPD’s anti-SALT campaign. Ignoring the CPD’s heavily publicised indices of inferiority seemed naive and dangerous. Why

⁵¹⁷ Paul H. Nitze to Joseph Kingsbury-Smith, 9 December, 1980, Box 27, CPD Papers.

⁵¹⁸ Talbott, *The Master of the Game*, 15.

⁵¹⁹ Eugene V Rostow, “Searching for Kennan’s Grand Design: The Cloud of Danger: Current Realities of American Foreign Policy by George F. Kennan”, *The Yale Law Journal* 87, no. 7 (June 1978): 1528.

⁵²⁰ *Ibid.*, 1527.

⁵²¹ John Kenneth Galbraith, “The Arms Race and American Politics”, in *Detente or Debauch: Common Sense in U.S. - Soviet Relations*, ed. Fred Warner Neal (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1979), 45.

should America take the risk of limiting its military strength and hope that the U.S.S.R. would reciprocate? The CPD recognised and encouraged this sense of distrust, whereas the ACEWA appealed to the desire for peace and arms control. When the SALT II treaty was framed in terms of its risks the CPD's argument for additional military strength seemed sensible.

Ultimately the CPD was proved correct; a clear majority of Americans *did* accept a higher burden of military expenditure.⁵²² By using the complexity of the treaty to point out areas of potential risk the Committee activated longstanding distrust towards America's communist adversary. Once the CPD established that the Soviet Union was expanding its military capabilities Americans were more likely to accept the argument that this expansion would continue. This is shown in polls, which by the end of 1978 indicated that Americans were increasingly wary of Soviet military strength and suspicious of Kremlin leaders' motives; the CPD's campaign to restore containment was proving successful.

Conclusion

After attaining considerable credibility as an expert group on defence issues in 1977 the CPD were in a position to take an active role in the SALT II debate the following year. The platform of credibility that the Executive Committee had established for the group ensured that Committee publications were able to frame the issue in terms that shifted the debate away from hopes of peaceful coexistence and towards fears of Soviet strength and intentions. In part because of the Committee's activities, SALT II became a focal point for a wider debate over national security requirements and the need for additional military strength in particular.

⁵²² One poll revealed that whereas in July 1977 "a decisive 59-36 percent majority opposed any increase in the military budget" by December 1978, 50-47 percent wanted defence spending increased. Harris, "Americans Shift Attitudes Toward Defense Spending", 1.

The Committee was prepared to work with the Carter Administration, but only on the basis of a substantial policy shift from the president. In meetings with Landon Butler, Nitze suggested that with a provision for MAPS included in the treaty, alongside an increased defence budget, the Committee could support an agreement. Yet when this provision was later included Nitze refused to give his support. Nitze and his Executive Committee colleagues, this episode suggests, were less concerned with details of the SALT treaty than with the president recognising their broader view of growing Soviet power and the need to raise defence spending to confront the concomitant danger.

The Coalition for Peace Through Strength was established in August 1978. While the Committee did not pursue official affiliation with this new group it nevertheless was a key constituent of the coalition, providing the intellectual substance that much of the campaign against the treaty relied upon. The Committee's analyses received a wide audience through CPTS grassroots campaigns and public doubt over the risks of the SALT II agreement rose steadily.

Much of the Committee's evidence, however, was based on an oversimplified presentation of carefully picked metrics of the military balance. These purported to demonstrate clearly emerging Soviet superiority but were in fact based on worst-case assumptions that presented Soviet military capabilities in their most favourable terms and downplayed any American advantages. This was not a disingenuous argument but the CPD did not explain the methodology of their worst-case analysis. Planning national security requirements on this basis was a valid approach but the Committee too often presented its analysis as fact rather than as one interpretation of the limited evidence available. Committee publications appeared to quantify the threat of Soviet superiority and placed a high burden on opponents to unpick these metrics. This proved to be an extremely difficult task.

The CPD's appeal to distrust of Soviet leaders, which rested on its worst-case estimates, proved much more successful than the efforts of the group's direct opposition, the American Committee on East-West Accord. The Committee's ostensibly comprehensive studies seemed authoritative, and were exceedingly effective in spreading doubt over the current state and future direction of the military balance. SALT II, Committee pamphlets argued, had become an agreement not worth the risk to American national security. As Kremlin leaders responded only to military strength, the Committee argued, it was higher defence spending alone that would redress the balance and 'secure peace with freedom'.⁵²³

Over 1978 the CPD was able to convert its credibility as a national security authority into political influence, and became an important participant in the debate over SALT II. Through this issue the group had secured the means of spreading its warning of Soviet strength to a national audience. Its alarming analysis of Soviet strength was increasingly accepted as accurate, rather than as just one interpretation. This contributed to a climate of anxiety over Soviet military strength, which would shape how a number of international crises were perceived in 1979.

⁵²³ CPD Executive Committee, "Peace With Freedom", 23.

1979 – SALT II and the Soviet Victory Strategy

‘The analysis offered by the Committee in 1976 has been fully confirmed by subsequent events.’⁵²⁴

In 1978, participation in the SALT II ratification debate permitted the CPD a national stage to share its analysis of the military balance. This analysis was based on a collection of metrics that purported to show a widening imbalance of military strength. These computations, while undoubtedly adding credibility to the argument of treaty opponents, remained in dispute at the beginning of 1979. This chapter establishes that by the end of the year the Committee regarded its interpretation of Soviet intentions as unambiguously vindicated by Red Army 'adventurism': The U.S.S.R. perceived its own military superiority, the CPD argued, and was actively expanding. The Iranian Revolution, Cuban Combat Brigade crisis, Soviet-backed South American revolutionary movements, and, most dramatically, the Afghanistan Invasion, were all crises that the CPD attributed to the machinations of Kremlin planners. They were interpreted by Committee board members as unambiguous indicators that their analysis of insufficient U.S. military strength was correct. The chapter also argues that the Executive Committee judged that Carter still did not grasp the nature of this Soviet strategy. It demonstrates that the Committee considered that without substantial military investment, a 'hot' war with the Soviet Union was a risk, thus equating Carter's dedication to SALT II ratification to a repetition of 1930s appeasement.

The first section explores the CPD's efforts to expose the risks of the SALT II agreement. Over 1978 and 1979, Executive Committee members made 17

⁵²⁴ CPD Executive Committee, "The 1980 Crisis and What We Should Do About It.", in *Alerting America: The Papers of the Committee on the Present Danger*, ed. Charles Tyroler II (New York: Pergamon Press, 1984), 170.

Congressional testimonies, the most of any oppositional group.⁵²⁵ Over 200,000 copies of CPD pamphlets were distributed to its mailing list of over 13,000 subscribers.⁵²⁶ In addition, between November 1978 and November 1979, the Executive Committee made 479 public appearances, a figure that does not include private meetings with senators or meetings with newspaper editorial boards.⁵²⁷ The Committee also commissioned and published a poll that revealed that a majority of Americans desired, at a minimum, equal military strength, and would oppose the treaty if this were in doubt.⁵²⁸ Aimed at influencing undecided senators, the poll suggested that voting against ratification would not be punished at the ballot box. As a result of these activities the SALT II treaty would never attain the 60 Senate votes necessary for ratification. Nitze, in early January 1980, told fellow CPD member Clare Boothe Luce: ‘SALT II was dead in the water well before Afghanistan and Iran. Our count showed 39 solid anti-votes.’⁵²⁹ This was not just Nitze's opinion. Independent polling demonstrated that Americans were increasingly sympathetic to the Committee's argument that military capabilities needed to be strengthened by the end of the summer of 1979.

The second section argues that this focus on the risks of SALT II ratification resonated over the summer of 1979. The Executive Committee insisted that the Iranian Revolution, the revolution in Nicaragua, and the alleged discovery of a Red Army combat brigade in Cuba were all the result of U.S. military weakness and an expansionist Kremlin strategy. The invasion of Afghanistan on 24 December was merely the most egregious example of a growing trend of Soviet aggression, they

⁵²⁵ ‘Committee on the Present Danger: Third Annual Meeting, Cassette 6’, 8-9 November, 1979, Box 166, CPD Papers, 9.

⁵²⁶ Eugene Rostow to Friends and Supporters of the Committee, 5 December, 1979, Box 207, CPD Papers.

⁵²⁷ ‘Committee on the Present Danger: Third Annual Meeting, Cassette 6’, 8-9 November, 1979, Box 166, CPD Papers, 10–12.

⁵²⁸ CPD Executive Committee, “Public Attitudes on SALT II: The Results of a Scientific Poll of American Opinion”, in *Alerting America: The Papers of the Committee on the Present Danger*, ed. Charles Tyroler II (New York: Pergamon Press, 1984), 119.

⁵²⁹ Paul Nitze to Clare Boothe Luce, 15 January, 1980, Box 182, CPD Papers.

suggested. The section demonstrates that the CPD's explanation of Soviet expansion amounted to a critique of American strategy in the absence of containment. Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) did not deter Soviet Third World expansion without conventional military strength, and, if containment was not fully restored, an encirclement of Western Europe and Cold War defeat were in prospect.

A final section argues that the Committee, in the context of its assessment of a Soviet victory strategy, regarded the Carter Administration's insistence on SALT II ratification as dangerous and obviously detrimental to American national security. While a number of new defence policies were enacted, Executive Committee members assessed that they served only to assuage SALT II's critics and were not earnestly designed to restore American deterrent capability. The Assistant Secretary of State, Russell Murray II, attended the CPD's 1979 annual meeting in November to persuade the CPD that the administration did in fact accept its analysis of military imbalance. This attempted reconciliation, however, was rejected as CPD board members noted that the president still refused to warn Americans of Soviet expansion in his public statements. Carter, they decided, had consistently demonstrated his lack of commitment to containment and could no longer be trusted to lead the American response to the now observable Soviet policy of expansion.

The chapter concludes that the CPD regarded its analyses since 1976 to have been unequivocally proved correct by the end of 1979. The invasion of Afghanistan on 24 December, for many Americans, emphatically confirmed the CPD's analysis of Soviet strength and aggression. The Executive Committee, judging that a clear majority of Americans supported its call for increased defence spending, was concerned that the president's response was dangerously inadequate. They believed that Carter's inability even to perceive the threat, let alone to propose an adequate response to supersede the

antiquated MAD doctrine, would permit the U.S.S.R. to continue its expansion undeterred. As a result, CPD board members feared, the United States faced an imminent risk of Cold War defeat.

Failure of SALT II Ratification

The SALT II ratification debate provided a significant platform for the CPD to offer its analysis that a Soviet expansion strategy was being pursued. In particular, the CPD's two-year campaign to highlight American military weakness contributed to the alarm over a series of crises during 1979. As a result, the Committee's analysis became increasingly popular as it appeared to offer both a clear explanation for the crises — Soviet malevolence — and a simple remedy to rectify the situation — rejecting SALT II and raising defence spending. In part as a result of the Committee's warnings to undecided senators, and also as a result of perceived Soviet aggression, the SALT II treaty would never attain two-thirds Senate support. Rostow told CPD board members on 8 November 1979 that 'we can stop focusing on that'.⁵³⁰ This section concludes that by the end of the year the appetite for arms control was superseded by an ambition to end perceived American weakness in order to block Soviet expansion.

As details of the finalised treaty terms emerged from Geneva over the first half of 1979, the Committee's primary justification for its opposition shifted. In 1978, the Committee had focused on creating and publicising metrics that demonstrated unequal military strength, and had suggested that SALT II would preserve this Soviet advantage. In 1979, Committee criticism of the treaty was substantiated by stressing the inadequacy of the verification methods that would ensure adherence to the treaty's terms. Without

⁵³⁰ Rostow in 'Committee on the Present Danger: Third Annual Meeting, Cassette 1', 8-9 November, 1979, Box 166, CPD Papers, 2.

reliable verification Kremlin leaders might ignore the treaty and continue Soviet military growth.

A number of treaty critics argued that the loss of listening posts in Iran, following the January revolution, would hamper monitoring Soviet weapons testing in Kazakhstan. It also emerged that the Soviet Union refused to ban the encryption of telemetry data.⁵³¹ The ability to intercept unencrypted telemetry data was a crucial method of verifying that ICBM tests conformed to treaty provisions. Both of these developments made SALT II 'far from being verifiable', Nitze argued in a Committee pamphlet, thereby fuelling the Committee's charge that the treaty was an unacceptable risk and not in American interests.⁵³²

In tandem with highlighting these risks, the CPD hoped to convince undecided senators that voters would not punish opposition. The Executive Committee believed that ordinary Americans desired equal, if not superior, military capabilities to the U.S.S.R. and commissioned a poll to confirm this assumption.⁵³³ The Committee hoped that the poll would convince senators that rejecting ratification was not a political risk and would also encourage further scepticism toward the administration's claims about the treaty's benefits. The poll asked respondents their reaction should their senator vote against the treaty, and a substantial 60.9 per cent of respondents agreed that 'It wouldn't make that much difference.' In contrast, just 7.9 per cent would 'definitely oppose him [their senator] for reelection'. The poll, the Executive Committee intended, comforted undecided senators who were contemplating withholding support for the SALT II treaty.⁵³⁴

⁵³¹ See "Scrambling and Spying" in Talbott, *Endgame*, 194.

⁵³² Paul H Nitze, "Is SALT II a Fair Deal for the United States?", in *Alerting America: The Papers of the Committee on the Present Danger*, ed. Charles Tyroler II (New York: Pergamon Press, 1984), 162.

⁵³³ CPD Executive Committee, 'Public Attitudes on SALT II: The Results of a Scientific Poll of American Opinion', 119.

⁵³⁴ *Ibid.*, 122.

The CPD's poll also exposed a general lack of understanding of the treaty's provisions. It was no surprise that Americans favoured the general concept of arms control, the Committee pointed out in its explanatory pamphlet.⁵³⁵ Reducing the cost and number of nuclear weapons was a universally popular ideal. However, poll respondents were less enthusiastic when they were asked to consider specific provisions in the SALT II agreement. When asked whether the exclusion of the Backfire bomber from the treaty – 'capable of attacking the U.S. with nuclear weapons' – would lead to respondents either 'definitely' or be 'somewhat more inclined to' oppose the treaty, 42.4 percent and 30.7 percent of respondents agreed with these statements respectively.⁵³⁶ Overall, the Executive Committee concluded, their poll demonstrated that 'The American people are skeptical about SALT II, don't know much about it and, clearly, are not prepared to support the treaty without additional safeguards.'⁵³⁷ The poll was published in March 1979 and featured in Committee breakfast meetings with undecided senators. The poll indicates that the Committee was conscious that when its opposition to the treaty was presented in terms of its risks, ordinary Americans were much more likely to express reservations towards arms control. Highlighting the compromises within the treaty, such as the exclusion of the Soviet Backfire bomber, ensured that support for the treaty dropped among those surveyed.

To convince undecided senators, the Committee established that Americans were unwilling to compromise security for the sake of the SALT II treaty. In this way the CPD's contribution to the ratification debate in 1979 was to continue to provide the intellectual substance for opposition to the treaty. This included supplying its poll to senators, but also providing analyses of details of the treaty's flaws and the risks these presented to American security. Executive Committee members continued to appear

⁵³⁵ Ibid., 119.

⁵³⁶ Ibid., 121.

⁵³⁷ Ibid., 122.

before Senate Committees to testify against the treaty, featured in numerous televised debates with administration representatives, and frequently met with undecided senators at 'breakfast sessions'.⁵³⁸ During the SALT II debate, Executive Committee member William Van Cleave noted, there were 'too many [meetings] to list' with senators, congressmen, and their staff.⁵³⁹ In focusing on the Senate the Committee was able to keep support below the two-thirds threshold required for treaty ratification.

How far can we attribute the treaty's defeat to the efforts of the CPD? The group systematically targeted wavering senators and supplied them with evidence of risk and uncertainty about the treaty's effects. Any uncertainty over verification, assessments of Soviet military strength, or indication of Soviet malevolent intent was leapt upon by Executive Committee members and presented to senators as proof of American weakness, emphasising the need to reject SALT II and reinstate containment. The risks to national security of the treaty's compromises, the CPD suggested to senators both in person and in its pamphlets, were too great. '[T]he core of the question', the Committee asked in *Looking for Eggs in a Cuckoo Clock*, '[is] whether SALT II is consistent with the obligation to provide for the common defense', and their answer was that it was not.⁵⁴⁰ It is impossible to gauge accurately the effect of the Committee's efforts, but there is little doubt that its studies, meetings, and testimonies did reach the senators who would withhold support for ratification.

Eugene Rostow wrote in the autumn to Senator Jackson, the leader of treaty opposition in the Senate, explaining that the CPD had 'done everything you have asked us to do' in opposing the treaty by 'producing analyses, and in briefing veterans' groups,

⁵³⁸ Rostow told Packard that the CPD was 'entering a whole new dimension of our activity with the "breakfast sessions"', Eugene Rostow to David Packard, 7 March, 1978, Box 208, CPD Papers; For more details of CPD activities during 1979 see 'Table of Executive Committee Member Activities, November 1978 - November 1979', November 1979, Box 163, CPD Papers.

⁵³⁹ 'William R. Van Cleave - Summary of SALT Activities, 1979', Undated, Box 384, CPD Papers.

⁵⁴⁰ Burton Marshall, "Looking For Eggs in a Cuckoo Clock: Observations on SALT II", 98.

editorial writers, and members of the Senate'.⁵⁴¹ Rostow was convinced that these efforts helped to ensure that the treaty would not be ratified. CPD studies and briefings emphasising the risk and uncertainty of SALT II – in conjunction with the efforts of the Coalition for Peace Through Strength, and the political organisation of Senator Jackson – persuaded many undecided senators that the agreement was unfair and potentially dangerous. In a significant indicator of unease over SALT II, on 20 December, before the Afghanistan invasion, ten members of the Senate Armed Service Committee adopted a report from Jackson's office stating that the treaty was not in the national interest.⁵⁴²

This statement followed testimony earlier in the year by Nitze to the Foreign Relations Committee in which he argued that in contemplating SALT II ratification 'the Senate must first resolve the question of whether, in times of increasing danger, including military danger, it is wise to let down our guard or whether it is time to pull the country together for the effort that is required on many fronts'.⁵⁴³ SALT II was unequal, Nitze proposed, and senate leaders should recognise their 'broader ... role to advise' on the treaty rather than merely consent to it, and ensure that the treaty would not permit the Soviet Union a clear margin of military superiority.⁵⁴⁴ Ratifying the treaty as it was written limited the policy options that would allow an adequate response to Soviet military expansion. Nitze was certain that CPD studies established that American forces were inferior; if senators could not refute the CPD analysis then they should not ratify the treaty before 'appropriate steps to correct' the military balance

⁵⁴¹ Eugene Rostow to Henry Jackson, 17 October, 1979, Box 109, CPD Papers.

⁵⁴² Kalman, *Right Star Rising*, 338.

⁵⁴³ Nitze quoted in Skidmore, *Reversing Course*, 140.

⁵⁴⁴ 'Prepared Statement of Paul H. Nitze for Presentation Before the Committee on Foreign Relations of the United States', 12 July, 1979, Box 261, CPD Papers, 1.

were taken.⁵⁴⁵ To do otherwise was a dangerous gamble with American national security.

The resignation of the military representative to the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Geneva, Edward Rowny, emphasised the strength of the CPD's warnings about SALT II's dangers. The agreement was signed on 18 June and in early August Rowny retired and joined the Committee to assist its efforts to oppose the treaty.⁵⁴⁶ This was a high profile addition to the CPD's Executive Committee that further corroborated its analysis of the treaty's deficiencies. Rowny argued that he had witnessed the negotiation of an inadequate treaty, in part due to the fact that Carter 'lacked the experience required to be practical in dealing with the worldly Soviets'.⁵⁴⁷ Kremlin leaders wanted an agreement, Rowny argued, but the Carter Administration was overeager to finalise the treaty and had been out-negotiated as a result. He wanted the treaty rejected by the Senate and the process for an entirely new agreement started.⁵⁴⁸ A number of newspaper reports noted that such a prominent negotiator had resigned to join the Committee.⁵⁴⁹ Rowny's resignation was only the first incident over the summer of 1979 that raised doubts over the merits of SALT II ratification and strengthened the Committee's argument for rejection.

As the ratification debate entered its final stage of Senate deliberation in the late summer, Senator Frank Church, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, announced on 30 August that a Soviet combat brigade had been discovered in Cuba.⁵⁵⁰ The existence of the combat brigade was deeply troubling; if intelligence services were

⁵⁴⁵ Paul H Nitze, "Considerations Bearing on the Merits of the SALT II Agreements as Signed at Vienna", in *Alerting America: The Papers of the Committee on the Present Danger*, ed. Charles Tyroler II (New York: Pergamon Press, 1984), 142.

⁵⁴⁶ Rowny, *It Takes One to Tango*, 122.

⁵⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 94.

⁵⁴⁸ Rowny in 'Committee on the Present Danger: Third Annual Meeting, Cassette 5', 8-9 November, 1979, Box 166, CPD Papers, 4-5.

⁵⁴⁹ Arnaud de Borchgrave, "A New Case Against SALT", *Newsweek*, 16 April, 1979, United States Edition edition, sec. International.

⁵⁵⁰ Glad, *An Outsider in the White House*, 187.

unable to identify a combat brigade 90 miles from the Florida coast, the CPD suggested to undecided senators, monitoring adherence to SALT II provisions on Soviet territory thousands of miles away was surely impossible to guarantee.⁵⁵¹ Within days, however, it was revealed that the Soviet Union had been permitted the brigade in 1962 following the Missile Crisis, and that it was incapable of offensive operations; its existence having been forgotten by the intelligence services. Despite the legality of the brigade, the damage to SALT II ratification was considerable. The timing of the discovery and the mismanagement of the crisis by the Carter Administration was a major setback in the treaty's Senate passage after deliberations were suspended for a month. The episode was perceived as yet another indicator of Soviet strength, which further eroded support for the treaty.⁵⁵²

CPD pamphlets had presented metrics and evaluations of U.S. military inferiority since 1976, and these studies plausibly identified the underlying cause of the apparent rise of Soviet adventurism. In 1979, perceived by many Americans as a year of crisis, the Committee's insistence on substantial qualitative and quantitative improvement in military capabilities seemed a reasonable solution to limit global instability.⁵⁵³ The Executive Committee was in no doubt that its analysis of a victory strategy had been verified by Soviet actions, and any delay in restoring the military balance and re-establishing containment was not only naive but also dangerous.

An October 1979 Committee pamphlet, *Considerations Bearing on the Merits of the SALT II Agreements as Signed at Vienna*, concluded that ‘The present situation is

⁵⁵¹ Caldwell, *The Dynamics of Domestic Politics and Arms Control*, 167.

⁵⁵² Gloria Duffy, “Crisis Mangling and the Cuban Brigade”, *International Security* 8, no. 1 (Summer 1983): 67–87.

⁵⁵³ A February 1979 poll indicated that a 55-42 percent majority felt that “the United States ought to play a more important role as a world leader” with 80 percent perceiving that “the rest of the world is now greatly dependent on America for military defense”. Louis Harris, “Majority Feels U.S. Should Play More Prominent World Role”, *ABC News-Harris Survey I*, no. 18 (12 February, 1979), <http://www.harrisinteractive.com/vault/Harris-Interactive-Poll-Research-MAJORITY-FEELS-US-SHOULD-PLAY-MORE-PROMINENT-WORLD-ROLE-1979-02.pdf> (accessed 29/01/2014), 1.

the result of the American tendency towards self-delusion.⁵⁵⁴ The response to Soviet expansion, the Executive Committee was adamant, should not be the ratification of a treaty that would signal acquiescence to Soviet superiority. Instead, the response should be to accept the accuracy of the Committee's appraisal, encourage the public's understanding of this situation of weakness, and undertake an immediate strengthening of military forces. The Committee's view was clear: Kremlin leaders 'placed great reliance on military instrumentalities ... Militarism is the very essence of the Communist mentality'.⁵⁵⁵ SALT II should be rejected as a first step in demonstrating a determination to match Soviet strength and provoke a 'change in their view as to the probable evolution of the correlation of forces'.⁵⁵⁶ Higher defence spending would redress the military balance and demonstrate a firm commitment to oppose Soviet territorial ambitions. On the other hand, ratification of SALT II would signal acquiescence to Soviet superiority and, in effect, permit the militarist Kremlin to continue its Third World expansion. A return to confrontation and reversing the trend towards Soviet military superiority was critical to signal to Soviet leaders American determination to resist its expansion.⁵⁵⁷

A Year of Crisis

The Executive Committee foresaw a substantial risk of Cold War defeat on the basis of current trends in Soviet military growth and its apparent territorial expansion. This section examines the CPD's perception of a series of crises over 1979 as Soviet-inspired and indicative of a Kremlin orchestrated victory strategy. To the CPD, the SALT II debate was superseded in light of this alarming activity, as the necessity of the

⁵⁵⁴ Nitze, "Considerations Bearing on the Merits of the SALT II Agreements as Signed at Vienna", 142.

⁵⁵⁵ Richard Pipes, "Why the Soviet Union Wants SALT II", in *Alerting America: The Papers of the Committee on the Present Danger*, ed. Charles Tyroler II (New York: Pergamon Press, 1984), 166–167.

⁵⁵⁶ Nitze, "Considerations Bearing on the Merits of the SALT II Agreements as Signed at Vienna", 142.

⁵⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

treaty's rejection by late 1979 seemed obvious. The Committee pointed out that in the face of the Kremlin's strategy of Third World expansion American military capabilities needed to be strengthened and not restricted by an arms control agreement.

The need to reject SALT II and strengthen military capabilities was indisputable, the Committee argued, as 'the Soviet drive for dominance' was underway.⁵⁵⁸ A series of crises seemed to corroborate the Committee's hypothesis that the Soviet Union was implementing a strategy of expansion. The Horn of Africa Crisis in 1977-1978, the Iranian Revolution of January 1979, crises in North Yemen, Grenada, and Nicaragua were all perceived by the Committee as components of a meticulously planned Soviet expansion strategy.⁵⁵⁹ Next, Rostow speculated, 'I see the Soviets taking over Saudi Arabia and the rest of the Gulf.'⁵⁶⁰

'[T]he United States faces a world crisis', the Committee explained, 'caused by the Soviet Union's lunge for dominance, and by our country's inadequate response'.⁵⁶¹ The Soviet Union, the CPD argued, was seeking victory by targeting an expansion of influence into the Middle East in order to control oil exports. Soviet ascendancy in the region would enable the Kremlin to restrict oil supplies, which would constitute an encirclement of import-dependent Western Europe. This situation would compel European leaders, the Executive Committee hypothesised, to improve relations with the Kremlin and abandon NATO. The result would be effective Cold War defeat for the United States. Nitze wrote on the Executive Committee's behalf in *Is SALT II a Fair Deal for the United States?*:

⁵⁵⁸ CPD Executive Committee, "Common Sense and the Common Danger: Policy Statement of the Committee on the Present Danger", 3.

⁵⁵⁹ For details on these crises see Chapter 7, "The Prospects of Socialism: Ethiopia and the Horn", Westad, *The Global Cold War*.

⁵⁶⁰ 'Memorandum to Senator Jackson from Eugene V. Rostow', 26 November, 1979, Box 69 Folder 2, Nitze Papers, 1.

⁵⁶¹ CPD Executive Committee, "The 1980 Crisis and What We Should Do About It.", 171.

[T]he focus of Soviet strategy has been on Western Europe. By achieving dominance over the Middle East, they aim to outflank Europe. They propose to outflank the Middle East by achieving controlling positions in Afghanistan, Iran, and Iraq on one side, South and North Yemen, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Mozambique on the other ... In seeking each specific objective within their global policy, the Soviet rulers use the lowest level of pressure or of violence necessary and sufficient to achieve that objective. The purpose of their capabilities at the higher levels of potential violence, all the way up to intercontinental nuclear war, is to deter, and if necessary control, escalation by us to such higher levels.⁵⁶²

This ‘outflanking’ of the Middle East seemed well underway by the end of 1979. The CPD’s pamphlet argued that American strategic vulnerability and the limited strength of its conventional forces in Third World nations were permitting Kremlin planners to extend Soviet influence. The African and Middle East crises of the past two years were of vital importance to this Soviet strategy, and the ability to project American power – in order to be in ‘a better position to raise the stakes’ – in these regions was therefore critical.⁵⁶³ In *Is SALT II a Fair Deal for the United States?*, Nitze, as he had recommended in 1950, called for additional strategic and conventional military strength in order to repair the ‘military shield’ and deter Soviet ambitions.⁵⁶⁴

Rostow repeated this Soviet victory strategy theory to Henry Jackson in late November: ‘The events of the last two years in Iran constitute a Pearl Harbor for the United States and its allies and friends.’⁵⁶⁵ Soviet activity in Iran, Rostow explained, constituted ‘a volcanic change in the map of world politics, deeply and directly threatening our national security’.⁵⁶⁶ Because the Executive Committee assessed that Kremlin planners had devised a grand strategy aimed at outflanking Europe, any political development that conceivably matched the hypothesis was regarded as a

⁵⁶² Nitze, “Is SALT II a Fair Deal for the United States?”, 160.

⁵⁶³ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid., 164.

⁵⁶⁵ ‘Memorandum to Senator Jackson from Eugene V. Rostow’, 26 November, 1979, Box 69 Folder 2, Nitze Papers.

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid.

validation of this interpretation. Thus every Soviet action – real or perceived – represented a stage in the CPD’s nightmare scenario of encirclement, and became a ‘Pearl Harbor’ moment that the Executive Committee hoped would finally spark a meaningful response from the president. John Mueller, a political scientist, agrees with this interpretation, suggesting that ‘shocking events were frequently taken to confirm previously alarmist warnings (whether they did so or not), and then were wildly and incorrectly extrapolated’.⁵⁶⁷

The possibility that the Iranian revolution was an event independent of the superpower confrontation did not occur to CPD members: ‘The violent movements of social and religious protest of the last few years in Iran were actively promoted by the Soviet Union from the beginning.’⁵⁶⁸ The same was true of South American revolutionary movements. A January 1980 CPD pamphlet warned of a ‘steadily improving position’ for the U.S.S.R. in Cuba, Nicaragua, and El Salvador, which directly threatened ‘Atlantic sea-lanes’ and ‘the territory of the United States itself’.⁵⁶⁹ In the Executive Committee’s judgment, South America, Africa and the Middle East were all areas of vital interest to the United States. As each region appeared vulnerable to expanding Soviet influence, America’s reputation as a reliable ally suffered. The CPD suggested that by permitting Soviet gains through its own weakness American credibility to deter Soviet power had diminished. As Soviet gains gathered pace, foreign leaders would note American reluctance to confront Soviet power and would pursue accommodation with the U.S.S.R. in order to obtain political favour from the rising power. Thus without the military strength and political determination to resist Kremlin ambitions across the globe, Rostow explained to Vance in May, the U.S. would be perceived as having accepted its position of inferiority. The immediate result of

⁵⁶⁷ Mueller, *Overblown*, 70.

⁵⁶⁸ CPD Executive Committee, “The 1980 Crisis and What We Should Do About It.”, 172.

⁵⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

‘[r]atifying SALT’, he told the Secretary of State, would be to ‘weaken the [NATO] Alliance’.⁵⁷⁰

The Committee was convinced that the underlying cause of Soviet expansion was American weakness. This situation was by 1979 a far more dangerous prospect than direct nuclear conflict, which ACEWA continued to argue, because military weakness permitted the Soviet Union freedom of action in areas of the world vital to U.S. national security. As Soviet strategic forces reached parity, the American nuclear umbrella no longer deterred Soviet conventional forces, as the U.S. could no longer threaten to launch a successful disarming strike, which would now invite a devastating retaliation. This explained the CPD's dissatisfaction with the SALT II treaty, which if ratified made it ‘difficult, if not impossible, to see how we can reverse recent adverse trends’ towards Soviet strategic superiority.⁵⁷¹ The Committee assessed that American planners needed all options in order quickly to redress the military imbalance that was permitting Soviet expansion.

Soviet activity in the Third World convinced the CPD that it was vital to restore American strength promptly before the Cold War ended in a Soviet victory. The CPD was no longer offering predictions of an abstract arithmetical military imbalance – in 1979 they perceived that the threat was real and no longer hypothetical. Soviet behaviour over the past year demonstrated to CPD board members that the USSR possessed superior strength and had adopted a victory strategy. ‘At any given moment ... retreat will become a rout’, Rostow wrote to Newsweek journalist Arnaud de Borchgrave on 21 February.⁵⁷² Committee members were convinced that only immediate and decisive steps to restore American military strength would give time for the necessary defence programmes to deploy and restore deterrent capabilities. SALT II,

⁵⁷⁰ Eugene Rostow to Cyrus Vance, 14 May, 1979, Box 157 Folder 10, Nitze Papers.

⁵⁷¹ Nitze, “Considerations Bearing on the Merits of the SALT II Agreements as Signed at Vienna”, 138.

⁵⁷² Eugene Rostow to Arnaud de Borchgrave, 21 February, 1979, Box 180, CPD Papers.

Rostow argued in a July 1978 speech, constituted ‘an act of appeasement which can only invite more Soviet pressure’.⁵⁷³ In the same way that appeasement in the 1930s had only encouraged Hitler's ambition, so SALT II ‘would be a step toward war, not peace’.⁵⁷⁴ Only an unequivocal restoration of military parity would dissuade Kremlin leaders from their ambitions for expansion.

In an October address that alarmed the Committee, President Carter rejected its assessment of the limitations of the American military shield. He reaffirmed his support of SALT II and assured Americans that ‘Our national defenses are unsurpassed in the world.’⁵⁷⁵ The Committee disagreed and charged that the president's claim that America possessed sufficient strength was ‘an Alice in Wonderland approach to meeting the Soviet threat’.⁵⁷⁶ American military strength was not unsurpassed, the CPD maintained, as the U.S.S.R. clearly considered that it possessed superior strength.⁵⁷⁷ The fact that it was already expanding its influence in the Third World without fear of an American response proved that the American military shield was deficient. Put simply, it was obvious to the Executive Committee that American forces no longer possessed the military strength that deterred Kremlin leaders from adventurism.⁵⁷⁸

American nuclear strategy in 1979 rested on the concept of Mutually Assured Destruction to deter the Soviet Union from an all-out nuclear strike.⁵⁷⁹ Yet the end of unequivocal American nuclear superiority seemed to make MAD redundant. For the

⁵⁷³ Eugene Rostow, ‘SALT II - A Soft Bargain, A Hard Sell. An Assessment of SALT in Historical Perspective.’, 25 July, 1978, Box 273, CPD Papers, 26.

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁵ Jimmy Carter: ‘Peace and National Security Address to the Nation on Soviet Combat Troops in Cuba and the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty.’, 1 October, 1979. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=31458>. (accessed 22 December 2014)

⁵⁷⁶ Nitze, ‘Is SALT II a Fair Deal for the United States?’, 164.

⁵⁷⁷ Pipes, ‘Why the Soviet Union Wants SALT II’, 169.

⁵⁷⁸ Pipes argued that Soviet ‘military programs [are] already operating at or close to peak capacity’, which meant that it would be difficult to regain American strength with or without a SALT II agreement. Pipes, ‘Why the Soviet Union Wants SALT II’, 169.

⁵⁷⁹ Kaplan, *The Wizards of Armageddon*, 383.

CPD, the notion that U.S. strategic forces targeting Soviet cities deterred Kremlin leaders from Third World expansion was no longer credible. ‘Mutual destruction is poppycock’, Pipes told the CPD board in 1977.⁵⁸⁰ The Executive Committee considered MAD an all or nothing strategy that gave the president few options besides a full nuclear response to Soviet aggression.⁵⁸¹ In practice this meant that the American nuclear umbrella, for example, would not deter Soviet involvement in El Salvador. However, multiple Soviet gains in similar circumstances would soon amount to a ‘strangulation’ of the ‘non-Communist world’.⁵⁸² This, as was argued in *Is SALT II a Fair Deal for the United States?*, ‘could result in forced accommodation to the Soviet Union leading to a situation of global retreat and Finlandization’.⁵⁸³ The Cold War would be lost, and MAD was therefore an ineffective strategy to thwart Soviet Third World adventurism. The solution, as the Committee had argued in its first statement in 1976, was to ‘restore an allied defense posture capable of deterrence at each significant level and in those areas vital to our interests’.⁵⁸⁴ Ensuring the sufficient deterrent strength of conventional as well as strategic forces was the only certain approach that would block Soviet activity.

The Committee’s judgment of Soviet ambitions resonated in the spring of 1979 as many Americans reflected on the apparent deterioration of their country's status and considered the merits of the SALT II agreement. *Business Week*, in one example, published a special issue on the erosion of American power in March 1979. An introductory editorial identified an ‘unnerving series of shocks’ that presented ‘far more

⁵⁸⁰ Pipes in ‘The Committee on the Present Danger, First Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors, Washington D.C.’, 11 November, 1977, Box 166, CPD Papers, 81.

⁵⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 52.

⁵⁸² CPD Executive Committee, “The 1980 Crisis and What We Should Do About It.”, 172.

⁵⁸³ Nitze, “Is SALT II a Fair Deal for the United States?”, 162.

⁵⁸⁴ CPD Executive Committee, “Common Sense and the Common Danger: Policy Statement of the Committee on the Present Danger”, 4.

evidence of retreat than of advance'.⁵⁸⁵ 'If the decline in U.S. power is to be arrested', the magazine concluded, 'the trend toward spending a smaller share of the federal budget on defense must be reversed'.⁵⁸⁶ This echoed the Committee's own analysis and demonstrates that the CPD, through its SALT II campaign and analysis of a Soviet victory strategy, 'articulated and amplified the fears of the time', as historian Robert Johnson has argued.⁵⁸⁷ The Committee offered an explanation for American decline with the necessary response incorporated within the analysis: with the advent of strategic parity the weakness of America's conventional capabilities invited Soviet adventurism, therefore defence spending needed to rise to give American forces credible deterrent strength.

The SALT II ratification debate was thus a crucial issue for the Committee as it gave a national platform to share their interpretation of Soviet actions. Involvement in the ratification process was, Rostow judged, 'a turning point'.⁵⁸⁸ It permitted the CPD 'to dramatize the significance of these problems [of defence] and the way in which we think they should be approached'.⁵⁸⁹ The Committee was able to link its call for a return to the principles of containment to a growing sense of decline among Americans. *Is SALT II a Fair Deal for the United States?* suggested that the longstanding American strategy of MAD was ineffective in deterring this Soviet adventurism. It was unlikely that the U.S. would risk a nuclear war over Afghanistan, Iran, or Nicaragua. However, if the Soviet Union controlled these areas then America would become increasingly isolated and the Cold War would soon be lost.

⁵⁸⁵ "The Decline of U.S. Power: The New Debate Over Guns and Butter", *Business Week*, March 12, 1979, 2-3.

⁵⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁵⁸⁷ Johnson, *Improbable Dangers*, 44.

⁵⁸⁸ Rostow in 'Committee on the Present Danger: Third Annual Meeting, Cassette 1', 8-9 November, 1979, Box 166, CPD Papers, 21.

⁵⁸⁹ Rostow in *ibid.*

Rejection of Carter's Conversion

Committee members were certain that President Carter did not grasp the immediate nature of the Soviet victory strategy and instead prioritised the ratification of the SALT II treaty above the strengthening of American deterrent capabilities. Carter's insistence on extolling the benefits of SALT II, despite the evident weakness of the military shield, deeply troubled the CPD. Carter, the Executive Committee assessed, was unable to countenance the Soviet Union's aspirations to capitalise on its current comparative strength and spread its influence. 'The difficulty at the moment is not with Congress or the people', Rostow told CPD board members in November, 'but with the President, who refuses to ask for the military appropriations and the diplomatic programs needed to assure the safety of the nation'.⁵⁹⁰ The danger of Soviet expansion would not subside while the president refused even to recognise the validity of the Committee's analysis, let alone enact a package of defence programmes consummate to the threat, Rostow despaired. While the administration did authorise a number of new defence policies over 1979, the Executive Committee thought that the administration's actions were motivated solely to assist SALT II ratification and did not reflect recognition of the Soviet expansion strategy. Carter raised defence spending, the Committee noted, but still did not explain the alarming nature of the Soviet threat to the American public.

While preparing to sign the SALT II agreement with Brezhnev in Geneva, Carter made a number of announcements to assist the ratification process. The administration's FY1980 budget was announced on 22 January 1979, and totalled

⁵⁹⁰ Rostow, 'The Taste of SALT: Remarks before the Annual Dinner of the Board of Directors of the Committee on the Present Danger, Washington D.C.', 8 November, 1979, Box 163, CPD Papers, 11.

\$135.5 billion.⁵⁹¹ A decision on Long-Range Theatre Nuclear Forces (LRTNF) on 18 May indicated that Pershing II missiles and Ground Launched Cruise Missiles (GLCMs) would be stationed in Europe.⁵⁹² On 8 June, 10 days before the SALT II signing ceremony in Vienna, Carter also indicated that a 'full scale' MX missile system would be reactivated.⁵⁹³ These measures were designed to address the concerns that SALT II increased the risk of first strike vulnerability.

Carter authorised these initiatives, the historian Fred Kaplan argues, 'to buy off conservative senators' wary of SALT II.⁵⁹⁴ The CPD also perceived the administration's defence policies of 1979 as a response to the demands of uncommitted senators in the ratification debate. This meant that the administration enacted only the minimum policies acceptable to treaty critics instead of explaining the necessity of a response to Soviet adventurism. For the Executive Committee, Carter was moving in the right direction but for the wrong reasons. He 'sounded more Trumanesque', Rostow wrote in an article for *Commentary* magazine, but did not provide the policy substance: 'his actions have remained McGovernite'.⁵⁹⁵ Executive Committee members were concerned that Carter was paying lip service to the danger of Soviet Third World activity to assuage the concerns of uncommitted senators, but in practice offered an entirely inadequate response to block Soviet expansion.

The CPD's raison d'être was to publicise its conviction that the Soviet Union was gaining comparative strength and that American defence spending should rise before military capabilities became 'inadequate to assure peace with security'.⁵⁹⁶ This concern had steadily gained sympathy since 1976, and by late 1979 a clear majority of

⁵⁹¹ Auten, "Carter's Conversion: An Analysis of Defence Policy Transformation Administration (1977-1979)", 279.

⁵⁹² Walsh, *The Military Balance in the Cold War*, 97.

⁵⁹³ Smith, *Morality, Reason, and Power*, 83.

⁵⁹⁴ Kaplan, *The Wizards of Armageddon*, 381.

⁵⁹⁵ Eugene V Rostow, "The Case Against SALT II", *Commentary* 76, no. 2 (1979): 32.

⁵⁹⁶ CPD Executive Committee, "Common Sense and the Common Danger: Policy Statement of the Committee on the Present Danger", 3.

Americans favoured an increase in defence spending. In December 1976, 25 percent of respondents to one poll favoured an increase and 27 percent favoured a decrease in spending. By October 1979, 58 per cent of respondents favoured an increase in defence spending and just 9 per cent favoured a decrease.⁵⁹⁷ The Committee noted that ordinary Americans supported its pleas for higher defence spending and that it was only the administration that still questioned the necessity of informing Americans of the urgent need to strengthen American armed forces. Rostow told the *New York Times* that the administration, because it announced new defence programmes yet continued its support of SALT II, 'specializes in paradox'.⁵⁹⁸ He argued that increased spending was incompatible with SALT II ratification, but even without the treaty the administration's proposals were woefully inadequate.

Despite Americans' growing desire for a more assertive policy towards the Soviet Union in general, including defence spending higher than the administration's proposals, attaining an arms control agreement remained a key objective for the president. Carter cautioned on 1 October 1979 that 'We must not play politics with SALT II. It is much too important for that—too vital to our country, to our allies, and to the cause of peace.'⁵⁹⁹ The Committee rejected this view: SALT II was not vital to U.S. interests but just the opposite as the treaty preserved the current military imbalance and limited the options that could restore deterrent strength to the military shield.⁶⁰⁰

This disagreement over the desirability of SALT II was reflected even within the Carter Administration. Vance regarded the treaty as critically important. He did not

⁵⁹⁷ Louis Harris, "Americans Concerned That United States' Military Strength Slipping Behind The USSR's", *ABC News-Harris Survey I*, no. 133 (29 October, 1979), <http://www.harrisinteractive.com/vault/Harris-Interactive-Poll-Research-AMERICANS-CONCERNED-THAT-UNITED-STATES-MILITARY-ST-1979-10.pdf> (accessed 16/06/2015).

⁵⁹⁸ Eugene Rostow to Max Frankel, 22 February, 1979, Box 207, CPD Papers.

⁵⁹⁹ Jimmy Carter: 'Peace and National Security Address to the Nation on Soviet Combat Troops in Cuba and the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty.', 1 October, 1979. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=31458> (accessed 22 December 2014).

⁶⁰⁰ Nitze, "Considerations Bearing on the Merits of the SALT II Agreements as Signed at Vienna", 142.

believe that Soviet activity in the Horn of Africa, for example, should affect SALT II negotiations.⁶⁰¹ Limiting the production of nuclear weapons was necessary to reduce the risk of an apocalyptic nuclear war, he believed, and SALT II was an important step in this process. Brzezinski, in contrast, advocated 'linkage'. Soviet behaviour, he judged, should influence the arms control process.⁶⁰² The treaty benefitted the U.S.S.R. as much as the U.S., and could therefore be used as a tool of diplomacy.⁶⁰³ These differing approaches to arms control at the heart of the administration were not resolved until 1980 when Vance resigned prior to the attempted hostage rescue in Iran. These disagreements made administration policy, Rostow told Vance, 'a mass of contradictions'.⁶⁰⁴ Even though Brzezinski's approach seemed more palatable to Committee members, and there was a chance that Carter might eventually adopt it, Rostow explained to a CPD board member that 'it doesn't make any difference'.⁶⁰⁵ The administration, the Committee charged, was endangering national security.

Determined presidential leadership was necessary to focus rising American discontent into support for defence programmes. The Committee was uninterested in the internal dynamics of Carter's White House, and was only concerned with the president's public statements and policy announcements. Despite Brzezinski's influence, none of Carter's addresses sufficiently conveyed a resolution to confront the Soviet Union, and the Committee accused the president of becoming a 'SALT Seller'.⁶⁰⁶ Carter continued to state his support of SALT II without addressing the Committee's concerns of the threat posed by Soviet action in Africa, the Middle East, and South America. The administration's announced increases in defence spending were not carefully assessed

⁶⁰¹ Cyrus Vance, *Hard Choices: Critical Years in America's Foreign Policy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), 350.

⁶⁰² Glad, *An Outsider in the White House*, 80–81.

⁶⁰³ Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 85–86.

⁶⁰⁴ Eugene Rostow to Cyrus Vance, 14 May, 1979, Box 157 Folder 10, Nitze Papers.

⁶⁰⁵ Eugene Rostow to John McCloy, 8 September, 1977, Box 109, CPD Papers, 2.

⁶⁰⁶ Nitze, "Is SALT II a Fair Deal for the United States?", 165.

measures to restore deterrent capabilities and block Soviet Third World adventurism but, the Executive Committee believed, were required to persuade uncommitted senators to support SALT II ratification. By refusing to accept the Committee's estimations of Soviet strength and expansionist intent the administration was not trusted by the Executive Committee to maintain defence programmes beyond the resolution of SALT II ratification.

In order to convince Committee members that the administration was in fact sympathetic to its analysis, Russell Murray II, Assistant Secretary of Defense, was sent by Carter to attend the Committee's annual meeting on 8 November 1979. Murray told CPD members that he agreed that the key issue in assessing the military balance was whether Soviet and American leaders 'perceive essential equivalence' in each side's nuclear strategic forces.⁶⁰⁷ If this was not the case, he continued, then '[t]he major issue is at what point does the [strategic] balance become such that the Soviets are emboldened to threaten us and we back down?'⁶⁰⁸ 'That's exactly the question', Rostow agreed.⁶⁰⁹ This was the central issue in the disagreement over the military balance. By late 1979 how close to superiority did the U.S.S.R. think it was? Committee members believed that Soviet action clearly demonstrated that Kremlin leaders already perceived superiority, and were actively expanding. There seemed to be no explanation other than a current assessment of superiority for the U.S.S.R. aggressively to extend its influence in the Middle East, Africa, and South America.

While the Executive Committee judged the administration's inability to perceive American weakness as inexplicable, Murray attempted to downplay the disagreement. He claimed that the difference between the administration and the CPD was merely over

⁶⁰⁷ Murray in 'Committee on the Present Danger: Third Annual Meeting, Cassette 4', 8-9 November, 1979, Box 166, CPD Papers, 8.

⁶⁰⁸ Murray in *ibid.*, 12.

⁶⁰⁹ Rostow in *ibid.*

timing and not over principle. Altering the administration's position from previous meetings with the Executive Committee, he conceded that 'the balance has indeed been declining' but tried to persuade the Committee that 'by about 1981 ... the balance should begin to improve again'.⁶¹⁰ Murray explained that the administration assessed the military imbalance as a short-term problem that would be resolved following the completion of its enhanced FY1980 budget. Rather than ask the CPD to limit its criticism and support the administration as in previous years Murray now wanted to 'encourage the committee in its efforts to alert the American people'.⁶¹¹ Even though he supported SALT II ratification, it would be 'a very serious error', Murray conceded, if the American public regarded the problem of growing Soviet military strength as resolved.⁶¹²

In 1976, Carter had dismissed Nitze's analysis of Soviet strength as representing a 'doomsday approach'.⁶¹³ In 1979, Murray told Nitze and his CPD colleagues that their concerns were recognised by the administration and would be resolved in the next 18 months. Committee members were unsurprisingly sceptical of Murray's newfound acceptance of their analysis. Executive Committee member William Van Cleave accused the president of creating the 'illusion of awareness and action'.⁶¹⁴ If the administration recognised the alarming reality of Soviet superiority, Zumwalt asked Murray, 'Why isn't [Secretary of Defense] Harold Brown candid with the congress and the President candid with the public, as you have just been with us?'.⁶¹⁵ Pressing for SALT II ratification while recognising military inferiority in no way conveyed the severity of the Soviet threat to ordinary Americans, CPD board members pointed out.

⁶¹⁰ Murray in *ibid.*, 7–8.

⁶¹¹ Murray in *ibid.*, 8.

⁶¹² Murray in *ibid.*, 22.

⁶¹³ Carter quoted in Thompson, *The Hawk and the Dove*, 253.

⁶¹⁴ Van Cleave in 'Committee on the Present Danger: Third Annual Meeting, Cassette 3', 8-9 November, 1979, Box 166, CPD Papers, 10.

⁶¹⁵ Zumwalt in 'Committee on the Present Danger: Third Annual Meeting, Cassette 4', 8-9 November, 1979, Box 166, CPD Papers, 9.

Agreeing with the CPD's recommendations for increased military power to end the strategic imbalance in a private meeting was an entirely inadequate response given the potential consequences should the Soviet expansion strategy remain unchecked. The delivery of this warning to ordinary Americans should not be left to the CPD, board members judged. The president, as Rostow had personally requested as early as 1977, needed to tell Americans directly of the crisis situation himself 'in a major speech'.⁶¹⁶

After three years of attempts to silence the Committee, members assumed the administration's change of direction would not outlast the ratification process. '[W]hether or not those [spending increases] will stick once SALT is ratified, if it is ratified, is wholly dubious', Nitze told fellow board members, 'because many of the people who are behind these increases are behind them only for the purpose of assisting SALT through the ratification process'.⁶¹⁷ The Executive Committee did not trust Carter to sustain the higher defence budget and the more assertive posture required to thwart the Soviet victory strategy. Rostow was convinced that the president was still 'marching to an entirely different drummer'.⁶¹⁸ The fulfilment of CPD goals in defence policy, Rostow concluded, 'requires Presidential leadership' that Carter was unable to provide.⁶¹⁹

Brzezinski, who also recognised the president's image of weakness, brought the Committee's criticism of Carter's leadership of foreign affairs to the president's attention. Brzezinski told Carter in a September memorandum: 'I believe that for international reasons as well as domestic political reasons you ought to deliberately toughen both the tone and substance of our foreign policy. The country associates

⁶¹⁶ Eugene Rostow to Jimmy Carter, 12 September, 1977, Box 109, CPD Papers.

⁶¹⁷ Nitze in 'Committee on the Present Danger: Third Annual Meeting, Cassette 2', 8-9 November, 1979, Box 166, CPD Papers, 6.

⁶¹⁸ Rostow in *ibid.*, 14.

⁶¹⁹ Rostow in *ibid.*, 15.

assertiveness with leadership.’⁶²⁰ Carter’s reaction to the series of crises over 1979, Brzezinski recognised, was perceived as more troubling than reassuring. On 3 July, for example, the president cancelled a major speech on the energy crisis in favour of a retreat at Camp David.⁶²¹ He hoped the retreat would provide an opportunity to reassess the direction of his administration and arrest the worrying decline in his approval rating. The result of the retreat was that Carter symbolically asked for the resignation of his entire cabinet, and subsequently accepted five.⁶²² This strange act served only to raise more doubt of Carter’s presidency. As the historian Laura Kalman asks of Carter’s retreat, ‘What would the president accomplish by self-criticism, except to provide his opponents with fodder?’⁶²³ Rather than re-establishing any authority, Carter’s actions attracted further criticism of his leadership abilities. A poll in late July revealed the lowest recorded approval rating of a president; only 25 per cent of respondents expressed a positive approval rating.⁶²⁴

From the Committee’s perspective it was not only a concern that the president was indecisive, it was his alarming inability to grasp the reality of increasing Soviet military strength and its pursuit of aggressive expansion that seemed particularly dangerous. Carter ignored CPD warnings of potential Soviet aggression and exhibited ‘dishonesty’ in pushing for SALT II ratification.⁶²⁵ The Kremlin’s expansionist designs, the CPD pointed out in its pamphlet *Why the Soviet Union Wants SALT II* were assisted and not deterred by the agreement, which was ‘a device to inhibit the United States

⁶²⁰ Brzezinski quoted in Dominic Sandbrook, *Mad as Hell: The Crisis of the 1970s and the Rise of the Populist Right* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010), 320.

⁶²¹ Kalman, *Right Star Rising*, 323.

⁶²² Glad, *An Outsider in the White House*, 189.

⁶²³ Kalman, *Right Star Rising*, 326.

⁶²⁴ Louis Harris, “Carter’s Ratings Drop To Lowest Yet After Speech And Cabinet Shake-Up”, *ABC News-Harris Survey I*, no. 93 (31 July, 1979), <http://www.harrisinteractive.com/vault/Harris-Interactive-Poll-Research-CARTERS-RATINGS-DROP-TO-LOWEST-YET-AFTER-SPEECH-AND-SHAKE-UP-1979-07.pdf> (accessed 29/01/2014).

⁶²⁵ Zumwalt in ‘Committee on the Present Danger: Third Annual Meeting, Cassette 1’, 8-9 November, 1979, Box 166, CPD Papers, 17.

response'.⁶²⁶ Rostow urged the president to 'give up the delusions' that motivated his administration's support of SALT II.⁶²⁷ Events over the previous two years, CPD members believed, demonstrated even to the casual observer of international affairs that a Soviet expansion was underway. The fact that Carter intended to ratify SALT II even though it was 'inherently beneficial to the Soviet Union', jeopardised the ability of American armed forces to deter further expansion.⁶²⁸

The Committee did not consider the Carter Administration to have addressed American military weakness. The defence programmes enacted over 1979 were attempts to secure the passage of SALT II through the Senate, and were not capable of deterring continued Soviet adventurism. Carter's failure to perceive danger, the Committee assessed, wasted precious time to rebuild American strength, extended the window of vulnerability, and permitted Soviet expansion to continue unchecked.

Conclusion

The CPD's role in the SALT II debate was to brief senators, highlight the risks of the treaty, and demonstrate that Americans would not punish opposition to the treaty. These were important functions and undoubtedly contributed substantially to the treaty's lack of support by the end of the summer. Through its participation in the treaty ratification debate, the Committee was also able to publicise its hypothesis of a Soviet strategy of expansion.

The chapter also argues that by the summer of 1979 the Committee perceived that its worst-case prediction of U.S.S.R. victory strategy was correct and a programme of global expansion was underway. MAD was no longer sufficient as Kremlin planners

⁶²⁶ Pipes, "Why the Soviet Union Wants SALT II", 168.

⁶²⁷ Rostow, 'The Taste of SALT: Remarks before the Annual Dinner of the Board of Directors of the Committee on the Present Danger, Washington D.C.', 8 November, 1979, Box 163, CPD Papers, 12.

⁶²⁸ Pipes, "Why the Soviet Union Wants SALT II", 168.

expanded Soviet influence into areas that the U.S. could not credibly protect under its nuclear umbrella. New York would not be sacrificed for Afghanistan, the CPD reasoned. Unless credible deterrent strength was restored in the Third World the U.S. would gradually be outflanked and, in effect, defeated.

The CPD assessed that the administration's defence policies were an attempt to mollify SALT II critics and not a strategy aimed at deterring further Soviet Third World expansion. The Executive Committee had little faith that the Carter Administration would honour its defence spending promises after the SALT II ratification process. After all, CPD members considered, they had tried since 1976 to convince the administration to adopt their analysis without success. They suspected that only the political necessities of SALT II prompted the policy changes and not the necessary fundamental reassessment of Soviet intentions and capabilities.

By the end of 1979, it was difficult for groups such as the ACEWA to dismiss the CPD's warnings of the threat from the Soviet Union as alarmist. Polls demonstrated that Americans increasingly supported the CPD's call for higher defence spending. This was because the Committee's analysis of Kremlin ambitions to extend its global influence appeared justified after the Iranian Revolution, Cuban Combat Brigade discovery, and, in the last days of the year, the invasion of Afghanistan. The CPD attributed these incidents to American weakness and Soviet opportunism. The apparent losses in Africa, the Middle East, and South America would not cease, the Committee predicted, until American strategic and conventional forces once again possessed the capabilities to deter Kremlin leaders. This would require presidential leadership that the CPD judged Carter incapable of providing.

As a result of perceived Soviet activity over 1979, the Committee made a significant shift in its warning of danger. In its first two years of operation, the CPD had

devised and publicised metrics that suggested a worrying trend in military capabilities that might soon result in Soviet superiority. This was a 'present danger' but not yet a current threat. At the end of 1979, before the Afghanistan invasion and even more so afterwards, the Committee was convinced that it was now warning of an escalating Soviet lunge for victory. This was obviously a dangerous situation to CPD board members, but even more worrying was that the leader of the nation refused to acknowledge their assessment. The CPD had not just lost faith in Carter, by late 1979 they judged him a dangerous man.

1980 – Anyone But Carter

‘The reason I don’t trust Carter, why I feel he is a dangerous man, is he has rejected the policies of containment.’⁶²⁹

Rostow told Senator Edward Kennedy in late January 1980 that ‘The Soviet move into Afghanistan is like Hitler's move into the Rhineland. It offers us our last clear chance to protect our interests without general war.’⁶³⁰ The Executive Committee assessed that an aggressive Soviet expansion strategy was underway, and that only prompt and decisive action would prevent its continued success. This chapter argues that the CPD's role in 1980 was to ensure that this urgent warning was repeated throughout the presidential election campaign. This message, from the majority Democrat CPD, directly benefitted the Reagan campaign as it prevented Carter from positioning himself as a 'peace' candidate in opposition to the 'aggressive' Republican candidate.

A first section examines the Committee's reaction to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, which dominated American politics in early 1980. The president's State of the Union address on 23 January announced a number of measures that he argued would demonstrate American resolve to punish the invasion and deter further Soviet aggression. On 25 July he also signed Presidential Directive 59 – the document was leaked on 15 August – which attempted to address concerns about the inadequacies of MAD.⁶³¹ The section concludes that none of these measures convinced Committee members that Carter grasped the existential threat of the Soviet expansion strategy, nor that he was prepared to take decisive steps to counter the threat. The Executive Committee warned American voters that Carter was blind to Soviet aggression, was

⁶²⁹ Rostow quoted in Alan Abbey, “Scorn For Carter’s Policies Drives LBJ Aide to Reagan”, *Burlington Free Press*, August 1980, sec. 1A.

⁶³⁰ Eugene Rostow, ‘Memorandum for Senator Kennedy’, 23 January, 1980, Box 177, CPD Papers, 3.

⁶³¹ William W. Newmann, *Managing National Security Policy: The President and the Process* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2003), 97.

incapable of mounting an adequate response, and was jeopardising America's position in the Cold War.

The result, the second section demonstrates, was that the CPD was determined that Carter be defeated in the November presidential election. Accordingly, over 1980, the Committee assisted a number of presidential candidates including the Democratic challenger to Carter, Edward Kennedy. In effect, the Committee had an anyone but Carter agenda in 1980, supporting any candidate who had a realistic chance to supplant the sitting president. In addition to advising presidential hopefuls, CPD members also continued to contribute to media discussions on national security issues in order to highlight the ominous Soviet threat and the urgent need for enhanced military capabilities to restore the military shield and block Soviet expansion.

The final section argues that the severity of the danger facing the U.S. meant that the Committee, after Carter secured the Democratic Party nomination in the summer, felt obligated to support the Republican nominee. Between the two candidates only Reagan, who had joined the CPD in March 1977, recognised the enormity of the threat from the U.S.S.R..⁶³² He permitted the Committee to advise his campaign on issues of Soviet relations and defence and used the group's material during his campaign to justify his arguments for increased military spending and confronting the Soviet Union. Committee members, while ostensibly remaining neutral in the election, also addressed the Republican Platform Committee in July, and in October held a joint SALT II press conference with the Reagan campaign. The section concludes that these activities prevented Reagan's defence policies from being dismissed as reckless and hostile, as his critics charged.

⁶³² Eugene Rostow to Ronald Reagan, 31 March, 1977, Box 168, CPD Papers.

Overall, 32 Committee members advised the Reagan campaign and, following his defeat of Carter, received appointments in the new administration. CPD board members intended to bring an appropriate sense of urgency to the Reagan Administration that they felt had been lacking in the Carter Administration. With luck and determination, CPD members contemplated at their annual meeting days after the election, the U.S.S.R.'s victory strategy might now be challenged by developing CPD analysis into 'a program for action both in general and in connection with particular theatres [sic] of crisis'.⁶³³ The Executive Committee expected that containment would at last be restored as the basis of national security policy.

The chapter concludes that the CPD's influence in the 1980 election was to ensure that Reagan's 'Peace Through Strength' platform was more difficult to dismiss as unnecessary and provocative than it might otherwise have been. The Committee's continued appeals to recognise the threat of Soviet military power activities blunted Carter's attempt to portray himself to voters as the 'peace' candidate.

Carter's Failure

In his 1980 State of the Union address, President Carter recognised that 'the Soviet Union has taken a radical and an aggressive new step ... The implications of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan could pose the most serious threat to the peace since the Second World War.'⁶³⁴ Carter finally adopted the strong language the Committee expected of an American president. In response to the invasion the president revised defence spending upwards, announcing a 4.5 per cent increase to the defence budget in

⁶³³ 'Remarks at the Annual Dinner of the Board of Directors of the Committee on the Present Danger by Eugene Rostow', 6 November, 1980, Box 207, CPD Papers, 7.

⁶³⁴ Jimmy Carter: 'The State of the Union Address Delivered Before a Joint Session of the Congress.', 23 January, 1980. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=33079>, (accessed 22 December 2014).

each of the next five years.⁶³⁵ He also outlined the Carter Doctrine: ‘An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force.’⁶³⁶ In addition to this warning an embargo of grain exports to the Soviet Union was enacted and Carter announced a boycott of the Moscow Olympic Games.⁶³⁷ It appeared that the president finally accepted the Committee’s analysis of an expansionist U.S.S.R. and the need for confrontation, and was willing to discuss these national security issues in public.

Yet Carter's conversion left the Committee unimpressed. The president admitted in *Time* magazine that 'My opinion of the Russians has changed most drastically in the last week [more] than even in the previous two and a half years before that.'⁶³⁸ Ronald Reagan, even though his CPD membership was suspended while campaigning for political office, reflected the view of the Executive Committee when he pointed out that the only person surprised by Soviet actions was Carter himself:

Our President’s admission the other day that he at last believes that the Soviets are not to be trusted would be laughable if it were not so tragic. Even as he said it, he acknowledged that he would probably be willing to trust them in the near future when he will once again take up the SALT II treaty.⁶³⁹

The Afghanistan crisis was clearly a turning point for Carter in his approach to U.S.-Soviet relations, but not for the Committee. His reaction to the invasion seemed to validate the CPD’s criticism of him. In conceding the legitimacy of the Committee's assessment of a Soviet victory strategy, Carter in effect admitted that his own approach

⁶³⁵ Zelizer, “Conservatives, Carter, and the Politics of National Security”, 282.

⁶³⁶ Jimmy Carter: ‘The State of the Union Address Delivered Before a Joint Session of the Congress.’, 23 January, 1980. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=33079>, (accessed 22 December 2014).

⁶³⁷ See Chapter 5 “The American Response” in Nicholas Evan Sarantakes, *Dropping the Torch: Jimmy Carter, the Olympic Boycott, and the Cold War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 75.

⁶³⁸ “My Opinion of the Russians Has Changed Most Drastically...”, *Time Magazine*, 14 January, 1980.

⁶³⁹ Reagan quoted in Zelizer, “Conservatives, Carter, and the Politics of National Security”, 286.

to Soviet relations had been in error for his entire first term.⁶⁴⁰ This misjudgement, the Committee believed, jeopardised American national security, and was unforgivable for an American president: Carter had demonstrated that he was incapable of directing national security policy.

On behalf of the CPD, Nitze authored an unenthusiastic response to Carter's State of the Union address. The president's actions, he charged, merely 'indicate our displeasure' at the Afghanistan invasion.⁶⁴¹ Nitze questioned 'whether the other actions he proposes are equal to the crisis he has described'.⁶⁴² If the president did recognise that the Soviet Union possessed ambitions to expand its influence into the Persian Gulf, then an Olympic Boycott and grain embargo were unlikely to deter Kremlin leaders from pursuing this objective. In order to confront and block further Soviet activity, Nitze advocated strengthening 'naval, air, and ground' forces, updating the nuclear posture, and improving relations with allies.⁶⁴³ These were regarded as the minimum requirements to re-establish an effective deterrent. Nitze concluded that Carter's speech announced the intention to intervene and block Soviet expansion but that it was 'wholly doubtful, however, that the U.S. has the capabilities' required to repel Soviet forces in practice.⁶⁴⁴

Rostow also regarded Carter's response to the Afghanistan invasion as entirely inadequate, and he assessed the State of the Union Address as consistent with the president's record on Soviet relations. Rostow argued that 'Carter's actions are neither inconsistent nor incoherent. They constitute a clear pattern — that of illusion,

⁶⁴⁰ Wolfe, *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Threat*, 49.

⁶⁴¹ Nitze, "The President's 1980 State of the Union Address: A Response", February 1980, Box 20 Folder 7, Nitze Papers, 3.

⁶⁴² *Ibid.*

⁶⁴³ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁶⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

appeasement, withdrawal to isolation, and impotence.⁶⁴⁵ Rostow still did not trust that Carter, despite his State of the Union Address, recognised the Soviet threat. He believed that the tone of the president's speech was confrontational only because Carter was responding to popular opinion and would not sustain this confrontational approach for long. The Executive Committee, after years of having its analysis ignored by the administration, had no faith that Carter was capable of leading the American response to Soviet aggression. Rostow believed that once outrage over the Afghanistan invasion and the Iranian Hostage crisis subsided Carter would back down from his hostile stance.

In a March 1980 letter to David Packard Rostow contended that ‘Carter will be tempted to retreat from his post-Afghanistan position once the threat from his left is eliminated, and his nomination is sewed up. Then he would campaign on the tried and true slogan, "He kept us out of war.”’⁶⁴⁶ The Executive Committee worried that Carter, to assist his re-election campaign, would attempt to diffuse the sense of crisis by appeasing Kremlin leaders. They feared that he would again push for SALT II ratification, leave the Afghanistan invasion unpunished, and fail to enact the programmes necessary to restore military strength. In attempting to secure re-election, Carter's actions would serve only to encourage further Soviet expansion.

Executive Committee members were so concerned at the administration's inability to perceive the threat of Soviet expansion that they decided to plan independently for a potential U.S.-Soviet conflict. Rostow wrote to Nitze on 12 May 1980 to suggest that the Committee ‘bring together a small planning group’ to consider preparations for the next Soviet invasion. ‘[T]he odds favor a Soviet lunge for decisive, strategic, nearly irreversible gain in the Middle East, in Yugoslavia or Greece, or perhaps

⁶⁴⁵ Eugene Rostow, “Why Democrats Should -- And Will -- Vote For Reagan”, 1980, Box 207, CPD Papers, 6.

⁶⁴⁶ Eugene Rostow to David Packard, 14 March, 1980, Box 186, CPD Papers.

in the Far East', Rostow predicted.⁶⁴⁷ The Committee should therefore 'come up with ideas about how to forestall such a Soviet move, and how to deal with it if it occurs'.⁶⁴⁸ Executive Committee members were certain that the Carter Administration was not undertaking such prudent planning. Kremlin planners would consider continuing their expansion a costless strategy in the absence of credible plans for an American response. After all, the Executive Committee reasoned, the Afghanistan invasion had not provoked a meaningful improvement in American defence capabilities; therefore there was no reason that Kremlin leaders would fear an American response to the next step in their expansion programme.

The administration's failure to plan for another Soviet invasion meant that the CPD considered the Carter Administration negligent. 'The President's question whether the Soviets will use their power for colonial conquest is incorrectly phrased', Nitze believed.⁶⁴⁹ 'There can be no doubt but that the Soviet Union proposes to use its increasing military power in support of what they call "wars of national liberation." By that term they mean wars of conquest by themselves or wars of subversion supported by proxy communist regimes such as Cuba.'⁶⁵⁰ The Executive Committee assessed that Carter was incapable of conceiving of the Kremlin revolutionary mentality that informed its strategy of expansion and also 'refuses to acknowledge that the United States has been becoming Number Two'.⁶⁵¹ This was the only explanation, the CPD judged, for his lack of urgency in restoring military strength that would enable a containment of the Soviet expansion programme.

⁶⁴⁷ Eugene Rostow to Paul Nitze, 12 May, 1980, Box 73 Folder 2, Nitze Papers.

⁶⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁹ Nitze, "The President's 1980 State of the Union Address: A Response", February 1980, Box 20 Folder 7, Nitze Papers, 2.

⁶⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁵¹ CPD Executive Committee, "The 1980 Crisis and What We Should Do About It.", 171.

This perception of Carter's inability to perceive and prepare for challenges facing America was not unique to the Committee. Gerald Rafshoon, Carter's Communications Director, wrote to the president during the campaign warning that 'Leadership is the single biggest weakness in the public perception of you. You are seen to be weak, providing no sense of direction, unsure yourself about where you want to lead the country and unable to lead if you do discover where you want to go.'⁶⁵² The president, addressing Rafshoon's assessment, attempted to convey strength and decisiveness in the final months of the election campaign. On 25 July 1980, Carter signed Presidential Directive 59 (PD-59), which superseded MAD as the basis for U.S. nuclear doctrine.⁶⁵³ The new targeting strategy allowed for more strike options in an American nuclear response to Soviet aggression. Missiles would no longer target population centres, but would instead target military installations. Counterforce theory proponents suggested that a precision nuclear strike on military targets would not immediately invite an apocalyptic retaliatory response on American cities.⁶⁵⁴ This targeting shift was intended to provide a more credible threat of an American strike in response to Soviet aggression.

Following a leak of the decision on 15 August – it remained a classified document – the Committee welcomed the new 'countervailing strategy' but did not believe Carter would ensure American forces had the capabilities necessary to carry out the strategy. 'Has the leopard changed its spots or has it merely camouflaged itself for the duration of the political campaign?', Executive Committee member Edward Rowny questioned in a CPD memorandum.⁶⁵⁵ 'If the latter is the case, and Presidential

⁶⁵² Rafshoon quoted in Kalman, *Right Star Rising*, 354.

⁶⁵³ Walsh, *The Military Balance in the Cold War*, 27.

⁶⁵⁴ It was not explained how, if command and control installations had been destroyed, a limited Soviet response would be coordinated that avoided American population centres.

⁶⁵⁵ Edward L. Rowny, "Carter's 'New' Nuclear Strategy", 12 August, 1980, Box 77, CPD Papers, 2.

Directive Number 59 falls by the wayside, the nation will be the loser.’⁶⁵⁶ Rowny suggested that PD-59 amounted to another empty promise from Carter and that it was doubtful whether the announcement would alter the effective deterrent capabilities of American forces. Nor did it alter the Executive Committee’s assessment of the administration. By the summer of 1980 the Committee was convinced of Carter’s inadequacies; Rostow viewed the president’s State of the Union address and the leaked PD-59 targeting strategy as constituting ‘fraud and deception’.⁶⁵⁷ The president, CPD members charged, was making election-year promises that would not be fulfilled. They judged that Carter was playing politics with national security.

For the Executive Committee, Carter’s inadequacies were not just lamentable but also potentially catastrophic. Rostow argued that ‘there is no evidence that the Administration is aware that the United States is being nibbled to death, and is preparing an alternative doctrine or strategy. Punch-drunk, numb, groggy, it sinks towards oblivion without a word, and without even the impulse to fight back.’⁶⁵⁸ For Rostow, the administration was content with the status quo, did not recognise the danger of Soviet expansion, and had no intention of restoring containment. As a result, the CPD sought to ensure that Carter would be replaced in the White House by a leader who genuinely recognised the severity of the Soviet threat and was dedicated to attaining the capabilities to confront further Soviet activity. Since 1976, the Executive Committee noted, Carter had done neither. His lack of leadership meant that the Committee sought to offer their advice, expertise, and support to any candidate who might defeat the sitting president and pursue these goals. This represented a complete rejection of Carter,

⁶⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁷ Rostow quoted in Abbey, “Scorn For Carter’s Policies Drives LBJ Aide to Reagan”, *Burlington Free Press*, August 1980, sec. 1A.

⁶⁵⁸ Rostow, ‘Why Democrats Should -- And Will -- Vote For Reagan’, 1980[?], Box 207, CPD Papers, 8.

who, for Rostow, 'demonstrated in nearly four years of responsibility that his view of the world is indistinguishable from George McGovern's', a cardinal sin.⁶⁵⁹

The CPD's relationship with the Carter Administration had deteriorated to the point where Executive Committee members, most of whom were Democrats, believed that the only solution to America's weakness was to campaign against the sitting president of their own party. The CPD leadership were never convinced that Carter understood the challenges facing America from the Soviet Union, and, even though he adopted more confrontational language in 1980, doubted 'whether the newly-enlightened Administration can be counted on to act out of character'.⁶⁶⁰ CPD members asked themselves 'Can the Carter Administration be counted upon to put its money where its mouth is?'⁶⁶¹ Their assessment was that it could not. As a result, the Executive Committee was determined that anyone other than Jimmy Carter should lead the country's response to Soviet aggression.

Anyone but Carter

By offering to advise all the major candidates, as well as continuing to publish its analytical pamphlets, the CPD remained an important source of intellectual leadership for national security issues in the 1980 election year. In addition to two CPD pamphlets published in 1980, the Executive Committee also delivered 244 speeches and debates, and contributed 141 articles to the press between November 1979 and November 1980.⁶⁶² As an organisation, the Committee did not publicly endorse any candidate in the lead up to the November election. Instead the CPD's approach was to

⁶⁵⁹ Eugene Rostow, "Preliminary Remarks of Eugene V. Rostow, Former Undersecretary of State (1966-1969) at Press Conference.", 24 October, 1980, Box 289, CPD Papers.

⁶⁶⁰ Rowny, 'Carter's 'New' Nuclear Strategy', 12 August, 1980, Box 77, CPD Papers, 3.

⁶⁶¹ Ibid., 4.

⁶⁶² 'Table of Executive Committee Member Activities, November 1979 - November 1980', November 1980, Box 289, CPD Papers.

contribute to the discourse on defence issues and ensure their assessment was addressed by the media and, most significantly, by all the presidential candidates.

Rostow wrote to the CPD board in July 1980 explaining that Executive Committee members ‘have been equally available to all candidates and their staffs, to members of Congress of all persuasions, to the Administration, and to the press. We have continued to provide information, opinions, and evaluations of foreign and defense policy issues in response to requests from every quarter.’⁶⁶³ This activity meant a direct contribution to a number of presidential candidates, including Democrats Henry Jackson and Edward Kennedy, as well as Republicans John Connolly and Ronald Reagan.⁶⁶⁴ This supporting function was an extension of the Committee's SALT II campaign tactics; the CPD raised national security issues in ostensibly well-evidenced pamphlets and ensured that these analyses were available to all interested parties.

The CPD's major publication of 1980 was *Countering the Soviet Threat*, released in May.⁶⁶⁵ The pamphlet listed the defence programmes that the Executive Committee decided were needed to ensure the capability of ‘arresting and containing the Soviet drive’.⁶⁶⁶ Its plan sought ‘to reverse negative trends in this country's defenses and to enable the nation to look forward with confidence to a more secure and peaceful world’.⁶⁶⁷ While acknowledging the need to ‘stabilize the economy’, a major election topic, the Executive Committee recommended significant expenditures.⁶⁶⁸ The programme would include ‘industrial mobilization’, increased arms transfers to allies, higher military pay, and enhanced equipment maintenance. To restore deterrent strength,

⁶⁶³ Eugene Rostow to The Directors of the Committee on the Present Danger, 7 July, 1980, Box 207, CPD Papers.

⁶⁶⁴ For details on these candidates, see Kalman, *Right Star Rising*, 342–348.

⁶⁶⁵ CPD Executive Committee, “Countering the Soviet Threat: U.S. Defense Strategy in the 1980s”, in *Alerting America: The Papers of the Committee on the Present Danger*, ed. Charles Tyroler II (New York: Pergamon Press, 1984).

⁶⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 179.

⁶⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 178.

⁶⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

the Committee assessed, American conventional forces needed five additional Army divisions, nine tactical air wings, ten airlift squadrons, and a 650-ship navy.⁶⁶⁹ Nuclear forces required two additional Trident submarines, 100 B-1A bombers, 300 enhanced Minuteman ICBMs, and the implementation of a meaningful civil defence programme.⁶⁷⁰ The Committee estimated the costs all these initiatives at \$260 billion dollars, and warned that additional measures would be needed to 'avoid worsening the rate of inflation', though it was not specified how this would be achieved.⁶⁷¹

The purpose of *Countering the Soviet Threat* was to demonstrate the extent of the programmes that were required to challenge Soviet expansion. Whoever was in the White House, the pamphlet emphasised, would need to address American military weakness. *Countering the Soviet Threat* was sent to 13,350 mailing list recipients and, the Executive Committee intended, would put pressure on the Carter Administration to explain how it intended to meet the commitments of the Carter Doctrine given that the CPD assessed that current American forces were unable to do so.⁶⁷²

Executive Committee members assessed a risk of Cold War defeat, and as such were unconcerned by party politics. They believed that a Soviet invasion of the Persian Gulf was imminent and continuing the CPD's penchant for chess analogies, would 'give them checkmate'.⁶⁷³ Given this danger, the CPD decided at its 1979 annual conference that it would support any candidate who signalled interest in 'one basic program' of a pro-containment manifesto.⁶⁷⁴ The CPD was convinced that Carter's inadequate response to the Afghanistan invasion would not deter, but would invite further Soviet aggression. 'The Administration is simply not being serious', Rostow charged, and he

⁶⁶⁹ Ibid., 182.

⁶⁷⁰ Ibid., 183.

⁶⁷¹ Ibid., 179.

⁶⁷² 'Mailing List Numbers', 17 September, 1980, Box 163, CPD Papers; CPD Executive Committee, "Countering the Soviet Threat: U.S. Defense Strategy in the 1980s", 179.

⁶⁷³ Rostow, 'Memorandum for Senator Kennedy', 23 January, 1980, Box 177, CPD Papers, 2.

⁶⁷⁴ Kampelman in 'Committee on the Present Danger: Third Annual Meeting, Cassette 9', 8-9 November, 1979, Box 166, CPD Papers, 16.

and the Executive Committee were determined to ensure the importance of the issue was recognised and taken seriously by the other candidates during the election campaign, whatever their party affiliation.⁶⁷⁵

There was no mention of candidates in *Countering the Soviet Threat*, only an 'alternative program' to that of the Carter Administration.⁶⁷⁶ The Executive Committee undoubtedly favoured the candidacy of Ronald Reagan in the November presidential election as only he gave resolute support to the Committee's proposal, but members attempted to influence all viable candidates before each party's nomination had been confirmed. CPD board members wanted to avoid the situation of the past four years when they had effectively been frozen out of White House decision-making. Nitze recalled that in the 1980 election 'Rather than take sides with one candidate or another, I decided to make myself available to any and all who wished my advice.'⁶⁷⁷ CPD members did not want to find themselves excluded from White House influence once again.

The Committee recognised the election as the most important opportunity to correct the military imbalance in 1980. 'Everything depends on what our political leaders say and do in an election year', Rostow told presidential hopeful Senator Edward Kennedy.⁶⁷⁸ The CPD understood that the candidates set the political agenda and therefore intended to contribute to each campaign in order to influence how the issues of defence and national security were approached. Kampelman urged that 'the influential people in our Committee do their best to attach themselves to each of the Presidential candidates' to ensure that CPD analysis would be incorporated in the

⁶⁷⁵ Rostow, 'Memorandum for Senator Kennedy', 23 January, 1980, Box 177, CPD Papers, 4.

⁶⁷⁶ CPD Executive Committee, "Countering the Soviet Threat: U.S. Defense Strategy in the 1980s", 180.

⁶⁷⁷ Nitze, Rearden, and Smith, *From Hiroshima to Glasnost*, 364.

⁶⁷⁸ Rostow, 'Memorandum for Senator Kennedy', 23 January, 1980, Box 177, CPD Papers, 1.

campaign debate.⁶⁷⁹ Adhering to its own restrictions, the Committee did not officially endorse a candidate in the 1980 election, and the CPD instead provided its updated analyses of the military imbalance and Soviet expansion strategy to anyone who asked, discussed its findings with journalists, and accepted invitations to appear on television programmes.⁶⁸⁰ If the threat was understood, the Executive Committee remained convinced, then a return to containment would be supported. Rostow had 'no doubt that the people will respond and will rally and will vote and will support' increased defence expenditures, he told board members in late 1979.⁶⁸¹

The CPD's public relations strategy was once again successful as its analysis of the Soviet threat gained considerable publicity in the election year. The result was that Americans increasingly accepted the idea of a Soviet expansion strategy. One poll revealed that 78 per cent of respondents assessed a 'major reason' for the Russian invasion of Afghanistan was to attain 'more influence over the oil-producing countries of the Middle East'.⁶⁸² Pointing out Soviet aggression was no longer controversial. The principal campaign narrative surrounding foreign policy was no longer *whether* the Soviet Union was expanding aggressively, but how best to address the crisis.

The Committee was concerned that Carter intended to turn his muted response to Soviet aggression into a campaign advantage by claiming to have kept the U.S. out of a Middle Eastern war. Despite public support for increased defence spending, the Committee worried that Carter's suggestion that he was the peace candidate would

⁶⁷⁹ Kampelman in 'Committee on the Present Danger: Third Annual Meeting, Cassette 9', 8-9 November, 1979, Box 166, CPD Papers, 16.

⁶⁸⁰ "Table of Executive Committee Member Activities, November 1979 - November 1980", November 1980, Box 166, CPD Papers.

⁶⁸¹ Rostow in 'Committee on the Present Danger: Third Annual Meeting, Cassette 2', 8-9 November, Box 166, CPD Papers, 15.

⁶⁸² Louis Harris, "Soviet Invasion Of Afghanistan Angers Americans", *ABC News-Harris Survey II*, no. 10 (22 January, 1980): <http://www.harrisinteractive.com/vault/Harris-Interactive-Poll-Research-SOVIET-INVASION-OF-AFGHANISTAN-ANGERS-AMERICANS-1980-01.pdf> (accessed 29/01/2014), 2.

prove popular.⁶⁸³ Under a second Carter Administration, the Executive Committee had no doubt, America would be ill-prepared for further Soviet expansion, a scenario that Rostow considered 'would greatly increase the risk of general war'.⁶⁸⁴ The Committee therefore focused their efforts on discrediting Carter's approach, and suggested that his lack of leadership was an unacceptable risk to national security. For the Committee, Carter had to be defeated in order to avert war.

As a result of their close relationship during the SALT II ratification debate, the Executive Committee encouraged Senator Jackson to challenge Carter for the Democratic Party nomination. Rostow wrote to Jackson in April 1980 predicting 'a revolt against Carter at the convention. It can happen. It should happen. It must happen. Be prepared.'⁶⁸⁵ For Rostow and the Executive Committee, Jackson had an impeccable record on defence issues, especially after leading the opposition to SALT II in the Senate, which he had labelled 'appeasement in its purest form'.⁶⁸⁶ A Jackson Administration would immediately solve the CPD's national security concerns: decisive leadership, adequate defence programmes, and a determination to confront the Soviet Union. Jackson's candidacy, however, was a non-starter. He chose not to lead a revolt against Carter and did not support Reagan's campaign, despite their shared backing of 'Peace Through Strength'. Jackson, his biographer argues, was too 'loyal a Democrat'.⁶⁸⁷

Another challenger to Carter was Edward Kennedy, the Democratic senator from Massachusetts, who announced his candidacy for the Democratic nomination three days after the Iran Hostage Crisis began in November 1979.⁶⁸⁸ Committee members noted Kennedy's popularity and met with him to discuss 'the critical national security

⁶⁸³ Eugene Rostow to David Packard, March 14, 1980, Box 186, CPD Papers.

⁶⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁵ Eugene Rostow to Henry M. Jackson, 21 April, 1980, Box 207, CPD Papers.

⁶⁸⁶ Jackson quoted in Kaufman, *Henry M. Jackson: A Life in Politics*, 385.

⁶⁸⁷ Ibid., 404–5.

⁶⁸⁸ See Chapter 4 "The Kennedy Moment" in Timothy Stanley, *Kennedy vs. Carter: The 1980 Battle for the Democratic Party's Soul*, 1st ed. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2010), 92.

issues ahead of us' on 23 January 1980.⁶⁸⁹ On behalf of the Executive Committee Rostow wrote Kennedy a memorandum on foreign policy as the basis of discussion for the meeting indicating that the CPD wanted the Carter Doctrine extended from defending the Middle East to rolling back the Soviet expansion worldwide. Rostow suggested that 'we could respond to Afghanistan not only by supporting Pakistan and Iran, but by liberating Cuba and taking over Libya, some of the Soviet bases in Africa, etc'.⁶⁹⁰ He continued, 'we should be rearming, and pulling together our Allies and China in a program of military solidarity based on the principles of the Truman Doctrine'.⁶⁹¹ The Middle East was not the only region in which the U.S. should confront the U.S.S.R.: '[N]o country or region', Rostow stressed, 'can be excluded from the area of our concern'.⁶⁹² Rostow's memorandum was accompanied by a draft speech in which he expressed his hope that Kennedy would unambiguously explain the Soviet expansion strategy to American voters. Rostow wanted Kennedy to tell Americans, as Carter was reluctant to do, that 'it was beyond question' that the U.S.S.R. sought to 'seize control' of the Middle East.⁶⁹³ If Kennedy were to incorporate these principles as the basis of his campaign's approach to U.S.-Soviet relations, CPD members would enthusiastically support his candidacy.

The Massachusetts senator, however, quickly dispelled the CPD's hope that his candidacy would incorporate their interpretation of the Soviet threat. In a speech at Georgetown University on 28 January, just days after their initial meeting, Kennedy seemed to repudiate the Committee's views by calling Carter's response to the

⁶⁸⁹ Edward M. Kennedy to Paul Nitze, 23 January, 1980, Folder 1, Box 144, Nitze Papers.

⁶⁹⁰ Rostow, 'Memorandum for Senator Kennedy', 23 January, 1980, Box 177, CPD Papers, 5.

⁶⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁶⁹² *Ibid.*

⁶⁹³ Eugene Rostow, 'Draft of Basic Foreign Policy Speech for Senator Edward M. Kennedy', 23 January, 1980, Box 177, CPD Papers.

Afghanistan Invasion an overreaction.⁶⁹⁴ By July, the Executive Committee regarded Kennedy as no better than Carter. While Kennedy agreed with CPD board members in private he would not explain the magnitude of the crisis in public. 'I hope that your speeches and those of your campaign associates will soon reflect these views', Rostow implored.⁶⁹⁵ If he were to ask for public support later in the campaign, Rostow told Kennedy, 'you may be sure I shall consider it then carefully and sympathetically'.⁶⁹⁶ Even though the Kennedy campaign was 'actively in touch' with the Committee as late as July, Rostow and the rest of the Executive Committee refused publicly to support Kennedy.⁶⁹⁷ The Democratic Party, the Committee acknowledged by the summer, would not nominate a candidate who proposed the necessary changes to national security policy in the 1980 election.

The Reagan Campaign

Carter accepted his nomination as the Democratic presidential candidate on 14 August. He explained to convention delegates that 'experience is the best guide to the right decisions' and suggested that 'I'm wiser tonight than I was 4 years ago'.⁶⁹⁸ Anticipating Carter's nomination, and unconvinced that Kennedy would advocate containment even if he had secured nomination, Executive Committee members flocked to the Reagan Campaign over the summer of 1980. They did not take seriously Carter's appeal for support based on his experience in office; his performance had even caused Executive Committee member Clare Boothe Luce to question her 'faith in

⁶⁹⁴ Glad, *An Outsider in the White House*, 207.

⁶⁹⁵ Eugene V. Rostow to Edward M. Kennedy, 2 July, 1980, Box 207, CPD Papers.

⁶⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁷ Eugene Rostow to David Packard, 3 July, 1980, Box 186, CPD Papers.

⁶⁹⁸ Jimmy Carter: 'Remarks Accepting the Presidential Nomination at the 1980 Democratic National Convention in New York', 14 August, 1980. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=44909>, (accessed 15 June 2015).

Democracy'.⁶⁹⁹ The prospect of another four years under Carter was anathema to Committee board members, as it would prevent the U.S. from attaining the capabilities necessary to oppose the expansion of the Soviet Union. In a two party race — the CPD did not consider the independent candidate John Anderson a viable candidate — Committee members felt that they had little choice but to oppose Carter and support the Republican frontrunner, Ronald Reagan.

In accordance with the CPD's policy of offering advice to all who requested it, Nitze and Pipes addressed the Republican Platform Committee on 8 July. They urged that the Republican platform should 'take a firm and unequivocal position on the two basic points, that there is a danger to United States security from the Soviet drive for hegemony and that the adverse trends in the military balance must be reversed'.⁷⁰⁰ These were the principles that had guided the CPD since 1976 and that the Carter Administration had failed to acknowledge. Nitze and Pipes' plea was incorporated into the Republican platform and enthusiastically backed by the presumed Republican candidate, Ronald Reagan.⁷⁰¹

Reagan was confirmed as the candidate on 17 July at the Republican National Convention in Detroit. Throughout his campaign, Reagan used the kind of confrontational language when discussing Soviet relations that the CPD thought consummate with the nature of the Soviet threat. While Reagan's acceptance speech focused predominately on domestic issues, he also announced: 'We know only too well that war comes not when the forces of freedom are strong, but when they are weak. It is then that tyrants are tempted. We simply cannot learn these lessons the hard way again

⁶⁹⁹ Clare Boothe Luce to Paul Green, 3 March, 1980, Box 182, CPD Papers.

⁷⁰⁰ Paul H. Nitze, 'Statement of Paul H. Nitze Chairman, Policy Studies Committee on the Present Danger Before the Republican Platform Committee Detroit, Michigan', 8 July, 1980, Box 186, CPD Papers, 2.

⁷⁰¹ John Kenneth White, *Still Seeing Red: How the Cold War Shapes the New American Politics* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1998), 186.

without risking our destruction.'⁷⁰² When compared to Carter's response to Soviet aggression it was no surprise that Committee members, in a two-way race, backed the Reagan Campaign.

Executive Committee members, however, were not only admiring supporters. Richard Allen, himself an Executive Committee member and national security advisor to the Reagan campaign, assured CPD supporter Mrs. St John Garwood that Reagan was a keen recipient of Committee material, and looked 'very closely at Committee publications'.⁷⁰³ 'The Committee is a valuable national resource', Allen told Garwood, 'and we intend to make good use of it during the campaign.'⁷⁰⁴ The Reagan campaign did not just read CPD pamphlets. With Allen's encouragement the Republican nominee also consulted the Executive Committee directly. On 29 July, the Executive Committee met with the Reagan Campaign to discuss foreign policy and national security issues.⁷⁰⁵

Given the differences in opinion between Reagan and Executive Committee Democrats on a number of domestic issues, the influence of Richard Allen was crucial in building the relationship between Reagan and his CPD colleagues.⁷⁰⁶ Allen was a key Reagan aide as well as an Executive Committee member. It was he who had encouraged Reagan to join the CPD, and also for Reagan to make use of Committee material on the campaign trail for the 1980 election. Allen was the national security advisor in the Reagan campaign and, as a result, the most prominent Republican in the CPD Executive Committee. These dual roles facilitated a direct link between the Committee and the Reagan campaign. Allen later explained:

⁷⁰² Ronald Reagan: 'Address Accepting the Presidential Nomination at the Republican National Convention in Detroit', 17 July, 1980. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=25970>, (accessed 15 June 2015).

⁷⁰³ Richard V. Allen to Mrs. St. John Garwood, 24 June, 1980, Box 337, CPD Papers.

⁷⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁵ 'Reagan-Bush Campaign Committee Press Release', 29 July, 1980, Box 168, CPD Papers.

⁷⁰⁶ Vaisse, *Neoliberalism*, 182.

It was not immediately that I thought of taking them [the Executive Committee] to Reagan, but I wanted to take them slowly towards Reagan, because knowing Reagan's thoughts and his views which were identical with theirs, but without the detail and experience that they had, people who were basically embracing the same goals ... they ought to be talking.⁷⁰⁷

Allen's efforts were successful. On 1 August, CPD Director Charles Tyroler noted that 32 of Reagan's 100 foreign policy and defence advisors were CPD members.⁷⁰⁸ In particular, Executive Committee members Van Cleave, Pipes and Rowny had been appointed as defence advisors to the Reagan campaign.⁷⁰⁹

Carter's presidency no longer inspired confidence among voters, and leadership was a major issue in the election. In contrast, Reagan, by wide margins in polls, was perceived as a decisive leader who could get things done and rejected suggestions of decline and limitations.⁷¹⁰ The Republican candidate expressed his enduring faith in the American people to overcome any short-term limitations:

I don't believe the people in this country lack the will and the stamina. What we lack is the truth and the information that our government owes us about our situation. I believe a president of the United States should go over the heads of the Congress to the people of the country, tell them what our situation is, and I believe the people in this country will make whatever sacrifice is necessary to keep this country strong.⁷¹¹

This was exactly the type of inspirational leader that CPD board members regarded as necessary to rally support to rebuild American military strength before it was too late. Reagan's involvement in the Panama Canal debate and opposition to SALT II were important in creating a perception of resolve and determination in national security

⁷⁰⁷ Allen quoted in *ibid.*

⁷⁰⁸ Charles Tyroler II to Lyn Nofziger, 1 August, 1980, Box 168, CPD Papers.

⁷⁰⁹ Van Cleave was introduced as a Reagan-Bush Campaign "Defense Advisor", 'Press Conference on SALT II: National Press Club', 24 October, 1980, Box 289, CPD Papers.; See also Sanders, *Peddlers of Crisis*, 282–3.

⁷¹⁰ See Louis Harris, "Reagan Leading On Confidence Dimension," *ABC News-Harris Survey II*, no. 127 (15 October, 1980), <http://www.harrisinteractive.com/vault/Harris-Interactive-Poll-Research-REAGAN-LEADING-ON-CONFIDENCE-DIMENSION-1980-10.pdf> (accessed 29/01/2014).

⁷¹¹ Reagan quoted in White, *Still Seeing Red*, 181.

issues.⁷¹² His candidacy appealed to the Democratic Executive Committee members exclusively on the basis that he perceived the Soviet Union as the central threat facing the country. In the 1980 election CPD members were essentially single-issue voters; they assessed an existential threat that necessitated urgent action. Put simply, Reagan recognised the seriousness of the threat, and Carter did not.

Rostow explained why he would be voting for Reagan in *Why Democrats Should — And Will — Vote For Reagan*.⁷¹³ ‘The Republican platform says we should rebuild our deterrent and strategic forces’, Rostow pointed out, which was a pledge that could be trusted because ‘In Reagan's case, unlike that of his rivals, his campaign promises correspond to the positions he has taken throughout his public career.’⁷¹⁴ This was a deliberate rebuke to Carter's claim of experience. Rostow rejected the perception of Reagan as reckless and instead claimed that the candidate was ‘prudent, astute and farsighted’.⁷¹⁵ This was because Reagan echoed the CPD's views in stark contrast to the confrontational meetings with Carter over the past four years.

Rostow conceded that he did not agree with Reagan's social and economic policies, but did not believe Reagan would ‘dismantle social services’.⁷¹⁶ This again demonstrates the primacy of national security to Rostow's support of Reagan. Of the two main candidates only Reagan was unequivocal in his support of containment and the need to raise defence spending. The Committee wanted the American president to point out the existential nature of the threat from Soviet expansion, because without containing the Soviet Union no other national ambition – aspirations for a human rights

⁷¹² Zelizer, “Conservatives, Carter, and the Politics of National Security”, 285-287

⁷¹³ Rostow, ‘Why Democrats Should -- And Will -- Vote For Reagan’, 1980, Box 207, CPD Papers.

⁷¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁷¹⁵ Rostow quoted in Abbey, “Scorn For Carter's Policies Drives LBJ Aide to Reagan.”

⁷¹⁶ Rostow quoted in *ibid.*

based foreign policy or domestic economic reform, for example – could be realised.⁷¹⁷ In this context, the CPD hoped for a Reagan victory because without the restoration of American military power Cold War defeat seemed a worrying possibility.

The CPD's support for Reagan's defence policy was unmistakable at a joint press conference with the campaign on 24 October on SALT II. Carter had begun referring to the SALT II treaty again in the final weeks of the campaign, after suggesting on 7 March that he intended to seek ratification if re-elected.⁷¹⁸ The joint conference featured Rostow and Nitze who were introduced to the press as registered Democrats and CPD Executive Committee members.⁷¹⁹ Rostow told the press that Carter was 'raising SALT now only as electoral theatre. There is no conceivable chance of ratification by a lame duck Senate.'⁷²⁰ He accused Carter of 'contempt of the process of democratic dialogue' by reviving a debate that the CPD considered already lost.⁷²¹ Nitze was also furious, and regarded the revival of SALT II as 'the cornerstone of the political effort to associate one candidate with "war" and the other with "peace"'.⁷²² By reviving SALT II, Nitze suggested, Carter was attempting to create a false distinction between himself and Reagan. Rostow explained that only the Republican candidate was being honest to voters about 'the risks of war'.⁷²³ It is impossible to gauge the effect of the CPD's defence of Reagan on the election outcome, but the press conference

⁷¹⁷ CPD Executive Committee, "Common Sense and the Common Danger: Policy Statement of the Committee on the Present Danger", 4.

⁷¹⁸ Jimmy Carter: 'United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report', 7 March, 1980. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=33114>, (accessed 17 August, 2015).

⁷¹⁹ 'Press Conference on SALT II: National Press Club', 24 October, 1980, Box 289, CPD Papers, 1.

⁷²⁰ Eugene Rostow, 'Statement by Eugene V. Rostow, October 24, 1980.', 24 October, 1980, Box 289, CPD Papers, 1.

⁷²¹ Ibid.

⁷²² Paul H. Nitze, 'Statement by Paul H. Nitze on the SALT II Issue', 24 October, 1980, Box 289, CPD Papers, 1.

⁷²³ Rostow, 'Preliminary Remarks of Eugene V. Rostow, Former Undersecretary of State (1966-1969) at Press Conference.', 24 October, 1980, Box 289, CPD Papers, 1.

encapsulates the rationale for the Executive Committee's support of Reagan and their function of tempering Carter's attacks on the Republican candidate.

The successful 'peace offensive' by the Carter campaign that the CPD feared did not materialise. Instead, on 4 November 1980, a board member of the Committee on the Present Danger was elected president of the United States. Days later Reagan wrote to the CPD and its supporters: 'The work of the Committee on the Present Danger has certainly helped to shape the national debate on important problems ... it is the embodiment of a truly bipartisan approach to the formulation of national security policy.'⁷²⁴ Yet despite this important victory, the CPD's 1980 annual meeting was not as celebratory as might be expected. Rostow, as Executive Committee chairman, chose to exercise caution. The Committee's work, he told board members, would continue 'on a crash basis'.⁷²⁵ The danger had not diminished and therefore the CPD would continue its efforts to warn of the Soviet expansion strategy. After the election Rostow hoped to persuade the Reagan transition team to adopt the Executive Committee's plans on how to deal with the on going crisis of weakness.

On 10 November, Rostow wrote a letter to Richard Allen cautioning that 'It is highly probable that President Reagan will have to order our armed forces into combat.'⁷²⁶ In the following month, on 8 December, Rostow wrote a detailed memorandum to CPD board member William Casey, the Reagan Campaign manager and soon to be appointed CIA director, explaining the Executive Committee's analysis: '[T]he process of Soviet imperial expansion', he cautioned, 'will be the central problem

⁷²⁴ Ronald Reagan to Board Members and Friends of the Committee on the Present Danger, 7 November, 1980, Box 162, CPD Papers.

⁷²⁵ 'Remarks at the Annual Dinner of the Board of Directors of the Committee on the Present Danger by Eugene Rostow', 6 November, 1980, Box 207, CPD Papers, 7.

⁷²⁶ Eugene Rostow to Richard V. Allen, 10 November, 1980, Box 207, CPD Papers.

of our foreign and defense policy for the indefinite future'.⁷²⁷ There was no reassessment of the CPD's concerns of impending setbacks even though Carter had been defeated and their own board member had won the election; the danger remained and the continuity of containment needed to be guaranteed. This demonstrates how dangerous CPD members perceived America's strategic situation at the end of 1980. Rostow summarised the state of affairs: 'We are at a turning point in the history of civilization. What the United States does and fails to do during the next few years will determine whether barbarism or enlightenment will prevail for the next half century or more.'⁷²⁸ Reagan's election, though a step in the right direction, did not allay the Executive Committee's fears of an imminent Soviet drive for Cold War victory.

Over thirty CPD board members joined the Reagan Administration.⁷²⁹ Sally Sherman, who had worked at the CPD's office, wrote to her friend in early December 1980 that 'it sometimes seems as if CPD has taken over DOD!'⁷³⁰ The Executive Committee received important positions in the Reagan Administration.⁷³¹ Rostow became Director of Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, the highest ranking Democrat in the administration. Nitze was appointed Chief Negotiator for the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. Richard Allen became Reagan's National Security Advisor. Richard Pipes became Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs.⁷³² Rowny was given the rank of Ambassador, and was appointed as the Chief Negotiator for the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START). Van Cleave was Director of the Department of Defense Transition Team, and subsequently became a senior

⁷²⁷ Eugene Rostow, 'Memorandum from E. V. Rostow to William J. Casey: Soviet- American Relations', 8 December, 1980, Box 37 Folder 15, Nitze Papers, 2.

⁷²⁸ Eugene Rostow, 'Appendix B: E.V.R. Memorandum of December 8, 1980. Peace as the Goal of American Foreign Policy. Draft Speech for President Reagan.', 8 December, 1980, Box 37 Folder 15, Nitze Papers, 11.

⁷²⁹ A precise number depends on how part-time appointments are counted.

⁷³⁰ 'Memorandum from Sally Sherman to Agnes Kavanagh', 8 December, 1980, Box 172, CPD Papers.

⁷³¹ See 'Committee on the Present Danger Appointees in the New Administration' in 'The Fifth Year and the New Administration', 1981[?], Box 177, CPD Papers.

⁷³² Pipes, *Vixi: Memoirs of a Non-Belonger*, 148.

consultant to the Department as well as to the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA). Max Kampelman was appointed Ambassador to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. Numerous CPD board members were also given important administration appointments. William Casey, Jeane Kirkpatrick, John Lehman, and Richard Perle, for example, were prominent members of the new administration.⁷³³

Executive Committee members' ambition for their involvement in the Reagan Administration was to continue to pursue the goals held since 1976: to restore containment and block the perceived Soviet victory strategy. Their intention in government was not to rebuild strength in order to attain American Cold War victory, but to prevent American Cold War defeat. 'As a result of the election, the United States has a real chance to head off the appalling war towards which the world has been sliding', Rostow wrote to Casey.⁷³⁴ The CPD hoped that as members of the Reagan Administration, they could finally ensure that its warnings would be acted on and American military strength restored.

Conclusion

In January 1980 Committee members were bewildered at the Carter Administration's response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Nitze charged that the president's State of the Union address was underwhelming, and his proposals to confront the issue ineffective. As the CPD had already identified the U.S.S.R.'s strategy of expansion, the Soviet invasion was just another indicator that their analysis of aggressive expansion during a period of American military weakness was correct. A revision of nuclear targeting strategy, PD-59, was another Carter initiative that appeared

⁷³³ See Appendix III, Committee on the Present Danger Appointments to the Reagan Administration in 1981.

⁷³⁴ Rostow, 'Memorandum from E. V. Rostow to William J. Casey: Soviet- American Relations', 8 December, 1980, Box 37 Folder 15, Nitze Papers, 9.

an important step towards containment, but which the Committee perceived as having no real substance. CPD board members reasoned that Carter's approach constituted absurd behaviour as the Red Army expanded into the Middle East while the president made only symbolic gestures of resistance. Carter, the Executive Committee decided, was incapable of addressing fundamental national security problems and therefore a more able leader was required to lead the American response.

To this end, Committee members offered their assistance to all the viable alternative presidential candidates. This included Senator Jackson, who they hoped would challenge Carter, and Senator Kennedy, who eventually did. The Committee also continued their public relations programme, and Executive Committee members were active in the media during the summer of 1980. When Carter eventually secured the Democratic nomination, the Executive Committee felt that they had no choice but to support the Republican candidate.

The Committee's support of Reagan was based on a single issue: he recognised the Soviet threat and was prepared to do something about it. The Reagan campaign made use of the Committee's material and personnel and several meetings were held with CPD board members, a number of whom joined the campaign's national security team. The Committee's most important role, however, was to remain ostensibly bipartisan and defend Reagan's position on national security issues against accusations of unwarranted hostility towards the Soviet Union.

Even after Reagan's victory Committee board members' fears of Cold War defeat as the Soviet military threat remained. Over 30 CPD board members were appointed to the Reagan Administration eager to restore American military power in sufficient time to prevent Cold War defeat. The Committee on the Present Danger's 1976 warning of the limitations of détente had by 1980 become a desperate attempt to

strengthen American military power to forestall an apparent Soviet drive for victory.

Reagan's victory was not a cause for celebration. Despite their role in advising the successful Republican candidate, Committee board members were not jubilant on 6 November when they convened for their annual conference. For four years they had warned of Soviet military strength and the need to strengthen the American military shield, but vindication at their warning being recognised as valid was of little comfort. They believed their role within Reagan's new Administration would be to attempt to forestall the Soviet lunge for victory that they assumed was in progress.

The Committee on the Present Danger in Perspective

‘It is good to think that we have had a part in the big push which has turned our foreign and defense policy around, thwarted the ratification of SALT II, and given the nation a chance to save itself. Our function now is to help define and clarify the new policy, and to rally support for it. Let’s hope it is not too late.’⁷³⁵

This final chapter assesses how the CPD's analysis between 1976 and 1980 evolved from warning of the dangers of détente to warning of potential Cold War defeat. Executive Committee members joined the group to criticise détente. They believed that the policy obscured the necessity of maintaining sufficient military power to deter the U.S.S.R. from ordinary Americans. Board members’ driving ambition was to disabuse any notion that the Cold War had subsided, especially given the growth of Soviet military power during a period of 'drift' in the early 1970s, as the CPD labelled détente.⁷³⁶ By 1980, this message of potential risk had morphed into an assessment of dangerous inferiority and the imminent prospect of Soviet expansion across the globe. The chapter concludes that between 1976 and 1980 the CPD's initial goal to compile National Intelligence Estimates on a worst-case basis evolved from a recommended strategic planning methodology into the lens through which the group assessed Soviet capabilities and intentions. The CPD was not guilty of deliberate and cynical threat inflation but rather the group came to assess that its worst-case projection, instead of a method to ensure a margin of safety over expanding Soviet military power, was an accurate estimate of Soviet strength and intentions.

A first section establishes that the CPD's success in influencing the public perception of national security issues, meant that the Executive Committee decided on 3 July 1980 that the group 'should remain active and indeed enlarge its program'

⁷³⁵ Eugene Rostow to George Mitchell, 21 November, 1980, Box 69 Folder 3, Nitze Papers.

⁷³⁶ CPD Executive Committee, “Common Sense and the Common Danger: Policy Statement of the Committee on the Present Danger”, 5.

regardless of whether or not Reagan was elected.⁷³⁷ The effect of this decision was to ossify the Committee's warning of the 'present danger'. After assessing its own influential role in alerting Americans of danger over the past four years, the Executive Committee intended to continue its efforts in order to ensure that détente would not be revived. Despite Reagan's election there was no assurance that popular support for the defence expenditures required to reinstate containment would be sustained. The Executive Committee no longer based this assessment on estimates of comparative military strength, but considered their continued warning of danger as a requirement of American domestic politics: they feared that the U.S. might not survive a resurgence of détente.

A second section examines the Committee's difficulty in advocating specific policies to redress the military imbalance, which the group found much more challenging than simply highlighting potential dangers. Specifically, CPD members could not agree on which of its metrics was most important to rectify in order to end the disparity. The CPD was a private citizens' group and under no obligation to propose coherent policy recommendations, and therefore these disagreements did not have to be reconciled. At the CPD's third annual meeting, for example, a debate on where the group should focus its attention after the SALT II ratification debate ended was left unresolved. Instead, all suggestions from board members were incorporated into the group's analysis. Its 1980 pamphlet *Countering the Soviet Threat* listed numerous military programmes but did not provide a clear priority for restoring an effective deterrent.⁷³⁸ By encompassing the concerns of all its expert members, the CPD created not just a worst-case assessment, but a collection of its members' fears.

⁷³⁷ Eugene Rostow to David Packard, 3 July, 1980, Box 186, CPD Papers.

⁷³⁸ CPD Executive Committee, "Countering the Soviet Threat: U.S. Defense Strategy in the 1980s", 178-183.

A final section argues that the CPD's assessment of American military inferiority was based solely on this flawed analysis of comparative military strength and preparedness. The CPD did not argue that American leaders insufficiently trumpeted the morality of the Cold War cause, as some scholars have argued. The metrics that the Executive Committee created became the only meaningful indicator of Cold War success for strategic planners. In effect, their metrics of the military balance became the Executive Committee's proxy Cold War struggle; a competition that they did not believe America could afford to lose. This infatuation with estimated metrics of military power explains why the CPD became so fearful of America's prospects in the Cold War.

The chapter concludes that the CPD's four-year campaign between 1976 and 1980 was not based on disingenuous and manipulative threat inflation. The group's membership was adamant that their quantified assessment of the Soviet threat, based on the collective wisdom of its board members, was valid. Its Executive Committee was comprised of strategic planners and military commanders who conceived of the Cold War purely in military terms and who each contributed their assessment of Soviet military power. The composite result – the sum of their fears – was a projection of the most powerful and aggressive Soviet Union that the groups' board members could justifiably conceive. Between 1976 and 1980 the CPD came to believe its own worst-case assessment and therefore entrenched the belief that higher defence spending and a commitment to intervention would always result in greater security when faced by a relentless Soviet foe.

Always a Present Danger

The CPD's 'emergency' campaign to highlight the present danger of Soviet military power was made permanent in 1980.⁷³⁹ The Executive Committee regarded their mission as incomplete – and the emergency unresolved – even though Reagan, a CPD board member, had been elected president. The CPD's public engagement efforts were still required, its members considered, to ensure continued support for the new administration's defence programmes.⁷⁴⁰ The group would therefore continue to warn of the present danger so that the necessity of maintaining military strength would never again be questioned. This choice ossified its thesis that the Soviet Union was opportunistically pursuing a victory strategy, an assessment based on the Executive Committee's own metrics and the dogma that every setback to American interests was orchestrated from Moscow.

In 1976, the Committee, dismissing 'an illusory détente', was determined to 'help promote a better understanding of the main problems confronting our foreign policy'.⁷⁴¹ After the CPD had revealed its facts over the following years, Rostow judged in the days following Reagan's victory in 1980, 'The American people dislike what they saw on looking around, and started on a new course.'⁷⁴² For Rostow, the role of the CPD in this change was to have 'raised and reiterated these questions' of national security.⁷⁴³ Executive Committee members had little doubt that their efforts had

⁷³⁹ The CPD, it had been agreed in April 1976, was "A Citizens" Emergency Committee', 'Memorandum from Eugene Rostow to Members of the Planning Group, Committee on Foreign and Defense Policy', 26 April, 1976, Box 68 Folder 2, Nitze Papers, 1.

⁷⁴⁰ The threat was still growing and the new Administration was yet to address the problems, the CPD pointed out in an application for funding. 'A Grand Strategy for the Free World: A Project Proposal Submitted to the Trustees of The Smith Richardson Foundation', 25 July, 1981, Box 76, CPD Papers, 1.

⁷⁴¹ CPD Executive Committee, "Common Sense and the Common Danger: Policy Statement of the Committee on the Present Danger", 3 & 5.

⁷⁴² 'Remarks at the Annual Dinner of the Board of Directors of the Committee on the Present Danger by Eugene Rostow', 6 November, 1980, Box 207, CPD Papers, 2.

⁷⁴³ *Ibid.*, 3.

contributed to the shift towards support of increased military strength.⁷⁴⁴ Green, the Committee's public relations officer, wrote to a CPD supporter after the SALT II debate had ended favourably in November 1979, explaining that the group's

strategy has produced significant dividends. The Committee has received a tremendous amount of media coverage, and our spokesmen have appeared frequently on national and local television and on public platforms. As a result, we believe our strategy has been reasonably successful, and we claim at least some credit for the change in public opinion polls toward a greater awareness of the Soviet threat.⁷⁴⁵

Writing in *Alerting America* in 1984, Kampelman agreed with Green's view: 'To what extent this [change] was due to the efforts of the Committee is impossible to gauge. It could be merely a coincidence but our presumption is that it is not.'⁷⁴⁶ The CPD undeniably achieved a high profile among the groups that raised defence issues, though, as Kampelman notes, it is difficult to assess its direct influence on opinion and policymaking. However, the Committee's numerous Senate testimonies, meetings with politicians, and wide distribution of its publications among Washington opinion-makers all suggest that its activities were at the very least one important factor in restoring the respectability of containment as a guiding principle of U.S.-Soviet relations at the beginning of the 1980s.

Over the four years between 1976 and 1980 there was a clear and significant shift in popular opinion on defence spending.⁷⁴⁷ In 1976, a majority of Americans were concerned with 'abuse of power' in government rather than defence issues and voted for Carter, who was regarded as a man of high integrity.⁷⁴⁸ By 1980, a sense of global crisis

⁷⁴⁴ One poll revealed that 'By 83-13 percent, a lopsided majority reacted favorably to the Republican call for "increased defense spending so the United States can regain military superiority over the Russians."' Louis Harris, "Reagan Strikes A Chord Of Populism In His Appeal For Votes", *ABC News-Harris Survey II*, no. 93 (31 July, 1980): 1, <http://www.harrisinteractive.com/vault/Harris-Interactive-Poll-Research-REAGAN-STRIKES-A-CHORD-OF-POPULISM-IN-HIS-APPEAL-FOR-VOTES-1980-07.pdf> (accessed 29/01/2014).

⁷⁴⁵ Paul Green to M. H. Nelson, 15 November, 1979, Box 186, CPD Papers.

⁷⁴⁶ Kampelman, "Introduction", xx.

⁷⁴⁷ For a detailed analysis see Yankelovich and Kaagan, "Assertive America", 706.

⁷⁴⁸ Harris, "Top Concerns: Abuses Of Power", 1.

meant that Reagan's ability to 'inspire confidence' and 'stand up most firmly' to the Soviet Union ensured that he was the favoured candidate.⁷⁴⁹ This shift in voter priorities, even if the Committee's campaign was just one factor in prompting the shift, demonstrates that the CPD message increasingly appealed to Americans at the beginning of the 1980s. The CPD, in short, both reflected and contributed to the changing public mood.

In 1976, the CPD judged that it was American leaders who had been seduced by détente and not ordinary Americans. The Executive Committee expressed 'faith in the maturity, good sense and fortitude' of the American people.⁷⁵⁰ As the contradictions of peaceful coexistence were repeatedly and forcefully highlighted in CPD and Coalition for Peace Through Strength materials, voters viewed détente less favourably. The Soviet Union, the CPD stressed, continued to support revolutionary movements and, most alarmingly, continued to improve its military capabilities. Highlighting this message reaffirmed to the public the centrality of U.S.-Soviet relations in national security.⁷⁵¹ After these developments Carter abandoned his attempts to reform the basis of foreign policy and returned to confrontation.⁷⁵² Rather than favouring a reduction of military spending, as had been the case in 1976, by July 1980 an 84-13 per cent majority of respondents to one poll were favourable towards the Republican call for 'increased defense spending so the United States can regain military superiority over the Russians'.⁷⁵³ This shift towards supporting higher defence budgets reflected the

⁷⁴⁹ Harris, "Reagan Leading On Confidence Dimension", 2.

⁷⁵⁰ CPD Executive Committee, "Common Sense and the Common Danger: Policy Statement of the Committee on the Present Danger", 5.

⁷⁵¹ Halliday, *The Making of the Second Cold War*, 113.

⁷⁵² Skidmore, *Reversing Course*, xvi.

⁷⁵³ Harris, "Reagan Strikes A Chord Of Populism In His Appeal For Votes", 1.

persistence of containment thinking: the CPD's analyses repeatedly emphasised the reasonableness and common sense of demands to raise defence spending.⁷⁵⁴

Even as CPD board member Ronald Reagan prepared to enter the White House the problem of insufficient defence spending remained. Rostow told board members in November 1980 that America's key national security problem was that 'we lack a doctrine, a strategy, an agreed position on tactics ... we recite the liturgy of the Truman Doctrine without conviction, energy, or faith'.⁷⁵⁵ The inadequacies of defence policy had, for Rostow, turned 'what had been a situation of danger' into 'a world crisis'.⁷⁵⁶ The Committee's chief aim after Reagan's victory was to assist the new leadership in explaining the danger and regaining sufficient strength for American military power to deter Soviet expansion. The Executive Committee wanted containment decisively reaffirmed by the Reagan Administration, and, because the policy was not yet rehabilitated or backed by adequate military strength, 'the need for the Committee still exists strongly'.⁷⁵⁷ For Rostow, the CPD still had a role to play because the danger from the Soviet Union remained imminent and U.S. countermeasures were unrealised. Rostow declared that 'we cannot afford even a day of holiday after the election', demonstrating the urgency that the CPD perceived even after Reagan's electoral success.⁷⁵⁸

Reagan's victory, the Executive Committee recognised, did not indicate that Americans now readily and permanently accepted the necessity of containment. Polls taken immediately after the 1980 election revealed that Americans, despite supporting additional defence expenditures, still had little appetite for involvement in foreign

⁷⁵⁴ Dalby, *Creating the Second Cold War*, 51.

⁷⁵⁵ 'Remarks at the Annual Dinner of the Board of Directors of the Committee on the Present Danger by Eugene Rostow', 6 November, 1980, Box 207, CPD Papers, 6.

⁷⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁷⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁷⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 7.

conflicts.⁷⁵⁹ Poll respondents expressed concerns over Soviet superiority and desired a restoration of military parity, but were not necessarily prepared to commit American forces overseas. Rostow understood that this attitude undermined the credibility of containment, which required that American troops be committed to block potential Soviet adventurism across the globe. 'No region of the world can be excluded in advance from the agenda of our concern', Rostow told Casey in late 1980, but this was a strategy that would have troubled a majority of Americans.⁷⁶⁰ Polls revealed a somewhat contradictory stance. Respondents indicated a strong preference to equal the Soviet Union in military strength as a matter of principle, and were prepared to meet the costs of doing so, but when considering the deployment of this military power there was a considerable lack of support.⁷⁶¹ In short, Americans desired equal military strength but were reluctant to see it used.

The Executive Committee considered, therefore, that there was still a need for the CPD because the necessity of global intervention to block Soviet expansion was still not acknowledged. Rostow told Casey that it was 'likely' that American troops would have to be deployed during the Reagan Administration's term.⁷⁶² As a result, Rostow wrote, 'it can be said with confidence that for present purposes nothing less than the May, 1980 estimates of the Committee on the Present Danger should be proposed to Congress for immediate correction of the Carter military budget'.⁷⁶³ Without additional military power to confront the Red Army alongside renewed determination to use it when required, the credibility of the American deterrent remained in doubt. The

⁷⁵⁹ Louis Harris, "Public Tells Reagan: 'Use Military Force Only As Last Resort'", *ABC News-Harris Survey II*, no. 146 (20 November, 1980), <http://www.harrisinteractive.com/vault/Harris-Interactive-Poll-Research-PUBLIC-TELLS-REAGAN-USE-MILITARY-FORCE-ONLY-AS-LAST-RESORT-1980-11.pdf> (accessed 29/01/2014).

⁷⁶⁰ Rostow, 'Memorandum from E. V. Rostow to William J. Casey: Soviet- American Relations', 8 December, 1980, Box 37 Folder 15, Nitze Papers, 15.

⁷⁶¹ Harris, "Public Tells Reagan: 'Use Military Force Only As Last Resort,'" 2.

⁷⁶² Rostow, 'Memorandum from E. V. Rostow to William J. Casey: Soviet- American Relations', 8 December, 1980, Box 37 Folder 15, Nitze Papers, 22.

⁷⁶³ *Ibid.*

Committee's updated purpose was to assist the Reagan Administration in making the case for the build up of American strength and to ensure support for intervention against Soviet expansion should the need arise.⁷⁶⁴

Thus, even after Carter's defeat in November 1980, the CPD's public relations strategy remained to warn of Soviet strength and their pursuit of a victory strategy. The CPD would make sure that support for détente would not be revived by ensuring that Americans continued to appreciate the danger they faced. The CPD was the ideal organisation to fulfil this function, Rostow told board members at the group's 1980 annual meeting, because it had 'become the acknowledged hair shirt of the foreign and defense policy community' by raising uncomfortable policy issues.⁷⁶⁵ The strength of the Committee after four years of operation, Rostow boasted, was that '[r]espectable people cannot dismiss us as cranks ... After all, we write sedate federal prose, and wear the old school tie.'⁷⁶⁶ The ability of the Committee to make a credible case for confronting the Soviet Union meant that despite the rejection of the SALT II treaty and the election of a CPD member 'our work must move, on a crash basis, into new areas ... [as] [t]he noose is being tightened'.⁷⁶⁷

The decision to continue the CPD after the 1980 election, even as over 30 Committee members joined the Reagan Administration, was intended to ensure that a strong, independent voice in favour of containment remained to influence national security debates. This also meant that the Committee would not reconsider its analysis of comparative American weakness. After considering that its worst-case predictions had proven to be accurate, the CPD's process became dogma: there was every chance that the next worst-case assessment would also prove to be correct. Having created a

⁷⁶⁴ 'Remarks at the Annual Dinner of the Board of Directors of the Committee on the Present Danger by Eugene Rostow', 6 November, 1980, Box 207, CPD Papers, 7.

⁷⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁶⁷ Ibid.

respected platform, the Executive Committee decided it would continue to offer its analysis and therefore act as 'prophets who proclaim what comfortable people don't want to hear, but know they cannot ignore'.⁷⁶⁸

This attitude is demonstrated by the Executive Committee's application to charitable foundations to fund a yearly update to its *Is America Becoming Number Two?* pamphlet, first published in 1978.⁷⁶⁹ This project would have assessed comparative military strength each year in a similar process to Team B, essentially updating the Executive Committee's worst-case estimates each year. The Executive Committee believed that this project would facilitate an independent and objective analysis of American strength that could be used to influence defence policymaking.⁷⁷⁰ This epitomised the CPD's contribution to the politicisation of intelligence in the era; the CPD intended to make the Team B adversarial format a permanent feature of threat analysis, ensuring that the worst-case analysis would always be available to those policymakers sympathetic to the CPD's assessment of inherent Soviet malevolence. In late 1980, Rostow told Casey of the need to counter-balance 'our habits of "mirror-imaging" [which] are tenacious' and it was clear that Rostow wanted the CPD to perform this function.⁷⁷¹ Team B had warned of mirror-imaging in 1976, arguing that intelligence estimates could not assume that Kremlin leaders thought like American leaders as Soviet military planners were focused on expansion, and not defence. In 1980, to counteract the effect of mirror-imaging, the Executive Committee intended to warn of

⁷⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁶⁹ 'The U.S.-Soviet Military Balance: A Proposal to the Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation for a Continuing Study', 14 February, 1980, Box 219, CPD Papers.

⁷⁷⁰ It is noteworthy that the Smith Richardson Foundation, who part funded a CPD project on U.S.-Soviet technology transfers, expressed the opinion that the report's scope over-emphasised the military dimension of the relationship, and judged that it would be 'wise to orient the study toward our export and trade policies in general rather than the study of technology transfers with specifically military uses'. By 1980 even the Committee's backers thought it over-emphasised the military balance. See, Roger F. Kaplan to Charles Tyroler II, 6 May, 1980, Box 382, CPD Papers.

⁷⁷¹ Rostow, 'Memorandum from E. V. Rostow to William J. Casey: Soviet- American Relations', 8 December, 1980, Box 37 Folder 15, Nitze Papers, 6.

the dangers of Soviet military power indefinitely because if they did not, Rostow considered, it was not clear who would.⁷⁷² Without this pressure détente might yet be revived, which the Committee thought would invite disaster.

After a four-year campaign advocating higher defence spending and a return to containment, the Committee had institutionalised its message of present danger. What had begun as an emergency Committee to warn of the current dangers of détente was now a message that there would always be a present danger, and the Executive Committee intended to make its campaign to highlight this danger permanent. Rostow told the *Boston Globe* that the CPD would 'make sure to keep plenty of strength on the barricades'.⁷⁷³ The CPD's decision to remain active even after Reagan's victory shows that after 1980 its campaign was no longer to ensure that détente would not hamper the American Cold War effort, but was to ensure that Americans continued to fear the hypothetical threat of Soviet military expansion. The CPD initially used the risk and uncertainty of military estimates to warn of potential global intervention by Soviet forces. Once the Committee's analysis of these metrics seemed to have been confirmed over 1978 and 1979, the Committee no longer felt the need to update its assessment of the Soviet Union's inherently expansionist posture. The CPD's role after November 1980 was to ensure that Americans would not forget this fact; despite what devious Soviet leaders – or naive American politicians – might claim; the U.S.S.R was determined to expand and only U.S. military power could stop this.

⁷⁷² 'Remarks at the Annual Dinner of the Board of Directors of the Committee on the Present Danger by Eugene Rostow', 6 November, 1980, Box 207, CPD Papers, 7.

⁷⁷³ Rostow quoted in Curtis Wilkie, "Their Mission Is to Keep Strength on the Barricades", *Boston Globe*, 28 April, 1981.

Disagreement within the CPD

It was easier for the Committee to continue warning of danger than it was to propose a detailed defence procurement programme capable of guaranteeing deterrent strength. This section argues that the CPD's expert membership, unchecked by the pragmatism of governing between 1976 and 1980, facilitated the increasingly pessimistic worst-case assessments of Soviet military strength and intentions. The Executive Committee respected the views of its expert board members on numerous aspects of national security, but by incorporating all of these concerns into their assessments, the CPD's analysis came to outline an oversized Soviet threat and an exaggerated American weakness. However, this assessment of severe threat also meant that adequate solutions to match Soviet strength could not be agreed even within the CPD's Executive Committee. The CPD never explained in detail which programmes would satisfy its calls for strengthened American military power. The only function the Committee could perform without undermining group consensus - critical to its public image - was to repeat warnings of the various dangers that Soviet military power presented.

Board members joined the CPD because of their concern at increasing Soviet military strength and of inadequate American response. In 1976, CPD board members accepted membership in the group after Rostow asked if they felt 'an obligation to speak out' on the issue.⁷⁷⁴ Given their concerns over the policy of détente and the need to match the Soviet military build-up, it was straightforward to establish board membership consensus around the need to highlight this danger to the American people. Pointing out the present danger did not necessitate a detailed articulation of remedial

⁷⁷⁴ CPD Executive Committee, "How the Committee on the Present Danger Will Operate- What It Will Do, and What It Will Not Do", 2.

defence programmes, as it was initially more important for the threat simply to be acknowledged rather than for new defence policies to be proposed. This shared sense of purpose over highlighting the Soviet threat ensured that disagreements among Committee members over policy before 1979 were relatively minor and did not adversely affect the group's functioning or reputation. On joining the CPD, board members were assured that 'There is no obligation on your part beyond a general endorsement of our effort.'⁷⁷⁵ A small number of board members, however, did not approve of the Committee's activities and left the group.

William Colby, for example, left the CPD in April 1977 after he questioned the Executive Committee's emphasis on the military balance above all other elements in U.S.-Soviet relations.⁷⁷⁶ Colby told Rostow that while he still believed 'that there is a present danger' he did not believe 'that my views and those of the committee as a whole are fully compatible'.⁷⁷⁷ He considered that the Committee's alarmist style and focus on nuclear forces distracted Americans from the more important fields of political and economic competition.⁷⁷⁸ George McGhee also disagreed with the Executive Committee's approach, and left the CPD in February 1979.⁷⁷⁹ 'Since you and Paul [Nitze] and Professor Pipes are very much in the public eye with your own views', he wrote to Rostow, 'the general impression is of course that they represent the views of the Committee'.⁷⁸⁰ The Executive Committee were the voice of the CPD and had to take care to represent the board of directors. Another board member, John Claya, a Michigan attorney, also registered his displeasure that the Executive Committee dominated CPD

⁷⁷⁵ 'Untitled Letter Template by Eugene Rostow for Potential Board Members', 27 October, 1976, Box 109, CPD Papers.

⁷⁷⁶ William Colby served as Director of the CIA from 1973 to 1975 in the Nixon and Ford Administrations.

⁷⁷⁷ William Colby to Eugene Rostow, 4 April, 1977, Box 283, CPD Papers.

⁷⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁹ George McGhee, a career diplomat, served as Ambassador to West Germany from 1961 to 1968 in the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations.

⁷⁸⁰ George C. McGhee to Eugene Rostow, 8 February, 1979, Box 290, CPD Papers.

messaging and noted a ‘lack of effort being made to increase regional input. Is the Committee not in danger of becoming a Central Committee?’, he asked Tyroler.⁷⁸¹ Colby, McGhee, and Claya, it should be stressed, were in the minority. The Committee’s membership increased year on year and resignations were infrequent. Their cases do show, however, that there was no guarantee of consensus within the group on what were the most significant of problems within the military imbalance as highlighted in CPD publications.

In 1976, the Committee advocated ‘decisive steps’ along with ‘a conscious effort of political will’ in order to ‘restore the strength and coherence of our foreign policy’.⁷⁸² The SALT II ratification debate over 1978 and 1979 focused the Committee's efforts on a single issue, which helped maintain the group's sense of purpose. During the debate the CPD focused on the risks of the agreement rather than offering recommendations for remedial policies that would redress the military imbalance. Even in private meetings the Executive Committee refrained from discussing specific programmes that would restore strength. This lack of policy specificity was because CPD leaders could not agree on the policies that would most effectively diminish the threat. Rostow admitted at the CPD’s 1978 annual meeting that the group 'would be deeply divided as to what to do in the event of a [Federal] budget surplus, the happy event of a budget surplus'.⁷⁸³ As late as October 1979 Nitze, on behalf of the CPD, advocated ‘appropriate steps to correct the problems’, but did not set out the specific measures that would satisfy his demand to match Soviet strength.⁷⁸⁴

⁷⁸¹ John C. Claya to Charles Tyroler II, 16 September, 1977, Box 333, CPD Papers.

⁷⁸² CPD Executive Committee, “Common Sense and the Common Danger: Policy Statement of the Committee on the Present Danger”, 3.

⁷⁸³ Rostow in ‘Committee on the Present Danger: Second Annual Meeting, Cassette One’, 10 November, 1978, Box 164, CPD Papers, 19.

⁷⁸⁴ Nitze, “Considerations Bearing on the Merits of the SALT II Agreements as Signed at Vienna”, 142.

At the end of 1979, following supplemental Congressional appropriations, a surplus in defence appropriations could be foreseen. Both Rostow and Nitze recognised that the Committee was in a period of transition after its successful SALT II campaign. '[T]he whole purpose of the [SALT II] debate', Nitze told board members, 'should be toward building a consensus which will give a platform from which you can act thereafter'.⁷⁸⁵ It had not been decided, however, how the group should proceed at the conclusion of the SALT II campaign: what policies did Executive Committee members want the administration to enact? Tyroler, the CPD's director, recognised in November 1979 that the Committee 'could do a great deal more in the coming year in trying to identify what this committee believes are some of the specific elements in the reorientation of national policy'.⁷⁸⁶ With polls indicating support for higher defence spending, it was increasingly appropriate for the Committee to shift the focus of its efforts away from highlighting the threat of the U.S.S.R. and towards advocating the specific defence programmes necessary to end the strategic imbalance. The Committee, whose membership included scientists, policy advisors, and former military commanders, clearly possessed the necessary expertise to recommend such specific elements.

The historian Skidmore argues that 'the CPD acted as a foreign policy establishment in exile', and indeed the group did seem to perform the role of an independent State Department Policy Planning Staff.⁷⁸⁷ This was no surprise as many Executive Committee members had worked in that office, most notably Nitze, who was its director when he authored NSC-68 in 1949. However, the CPD operated without the responsibilities of a government department. They had no oversight committee to report

⁷⁸⁵ Nitze in 'Committee on the Present Danger: Third Annual Meeting, Cassette 2', 8-9 November, 1979, Box 166, CPD Papers, 12.

⁷⁸⁶ Tyroler II in 'Committee on the Present Danger: Third Annual Meeting, Cassette 6', 8-9 November, 1979, Box 166, CPD Papers, 19.

⁷⁸⁷ Skidmore, *Reversing Course*, 138.

to or wider administration political objectives to consider. As a private citizens' group Committee members shared their professional fears of Soviet strength and strategy with their colleagues; after all, the group had been created as a forum to create analyses and publicise such concerns. The result was that the CPD's analyses came to incorporate these fears, which were readily included because not only were they expressed by subject experts but *in toto* emphatically made the case that more defence spending was urgently required.

The nature of the CPD as a private group seeking to highlight danger without the essential oversight that might be expected of a legitimate government department meant that the group felt no obligation to submit detailed cost projections for the specific measures that would address its warnings. Rather than deliberate which was the most significant aspect of military weakness and carefully consider how this might be rectified, the Executive Committee instead took a scattergun approach and incorporated *all* its members' fears into CPD studies to add further credence to its claims of danger.

Authoring the specific requirements to allay the fears of its members thus proved far more difficult than agreeing on the multiple threats the Soviet Union presented. As the political scientist Richard Betts points out, in the 1970s groups such as the CPD 'proclaimed the advantages that accrued to Moscow from the shift in the nuclear balance', but these voices 'developed no significant means ... to rectify materially the situation they had characterised as so dangerous'.⁷⁸⁸ Within the boundaries of realistic defence budget constraints – which the CPD, as a private group, did not have to consider in any significant detail – it was impossible to guarantee, as the Committee advocated, 'credible deterrence at the significant levels of potential conflict',

⁷⁸⁸ Richard K Betts, *Nuclear Blackmail and Nuclear Balance* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1987), 210.

and match Red Army capabilities in all categories of military power across the globe.⁷⁸⁹ Yet the Committee seemed to suggest it was only with these capabilities that American national security could be assured.

At the CPD's third annual meeting in November 1979, board members debated which policies should be recommended to redress the military imbalance the group had highlighted for the past three years. While a number of solutions to American inferiority were proposed, no consensus on the CPD's next programme could be attained. Board members all agreed that the U.S. was in danger of reaching military inferiority but could not agree on how best to address this situation.

Edward Teller, the noted nuclear physicist and CPD board member, suggested at the meeting that the Committee should advocate substantial investment in civil defence.⁷⁹⁰ He argued that this was the most cost effective measure to redress the strategic imbalance, as it was a relatively cheap solution to the first strike problem; civil defence measures would reduce the potential damage of a Soviet strike and permit a president greater bargaining strength in a pre-launch crisis. Donald Brennan, another board member, shared this view.⁷⁹¹ 'Civil defense', he agreed, 'has more leverage ... than anything else you can do with strategic forces'.⁷⁹² Teller believed that the relative simplicity of the programme – building shelters, hardening strategic assets – was well within American capabilities and budget constraints given the immediate need to redress the overall military balance.⁷⁹³ Nitze disagreed, and thought a large-scale civil

⁷⁸⁹ CPD Executive Committee, "What Is the Soviet Union Up To?", 15.

⁷⁹⁰ Teller in 'Committee on the Present Danger: Third Annual Meeting, Cassette 7', 8-9 November, 1979, Box 166, CPD Papers, 14.

⁷⁹¹ Donald Brennan co-founded the Hudson Institute, a defence think-tank, with Herman Kahn in 1961.

⁷⁹² Brennan in 'Committee on the Present Danger: Third Annual Meeting, Cassette 7', 8-9 November, 1979, Box 166, CPD Papers, 20.

⁷⁹³ Civil Defence was expensive and ineffective the Eisenhower Administration had concluded in the 1950s. Teller thought the situation so severe in the late 1970s that he wanted this conclusion reconsidered. See Dee Garrison, *Bracing for Armageddon: Why Civil Defense Never Worked*, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2006).

defence programme 'not yet appropriate'.⁷⁹⁴ Hobart Taylor Jr., a board member, sided with Nitze.⁷⁹⁵ '[T]o turn to a defensive program that is related to preparing shelters at home', he pointed out, 'might confuse our image'.⁷⁹⁶ Nitze instead proposed that research and development in electronics should receive substantial additional funding, as improvements in microelectronics would represent the greatest challenge for the U.S.S.R. to maintain parity in an increasingly important area of the military balance.⁷⁹⁷

The Committee's focus on nuclear strategic forces, other board members argued, was misplaced, as it was not the most important factor in restoring the military balance. Instead, American forces should diminish its comparative disadvantage in conventional forces. In 1977, General Matthew Ridgway first suggested that the CPD did not sufficiently highlight the importance of conventional forces in its publications.⁷⁹⁸ As future programmes were contemplated over 1979, Ridgway again passionately advocated expanding the Army: 'Our situation in conventional war-making is perilous NOW.'⁷⁹⁹ He advocated substantial investment in the military production base and the manpower of the Army in particular. Zumwalt, in November 1979, prioritised an expansion of the Navy to ensure a capability of defending the Atlantic, the Persian Gulf, and the western Pacific, because 'it seems clear to me that anything less than a three-front capability carries immense risks'.⁸⁰⁰ Zumwalt and Ridgway believed that disparity in their own respective arms of the U.S. conventional force, not in strategic forces, was causing the most harm in the overall military balance.

⁷⁹⁴ Nitze in *ibid.*, 22.

⁷⁹⁵ Hobart Taylor Jr. held office in both the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations.

⁷⁹⁶ Taylor Jr. in 'Committee on the Present Danger: Third Annual Meeting, Cassette 8', 8-9 November, 1979, Box 166, CPD Papers, 5.

⁷⁹⁷ 'Committee on the Present Danger: Third Annual Meeting, Cassette 7', 8-9 November, 1979, Box 166, CPD Papers, 16.

⁷⁹⁸ Ridgway, a noted Army general who commanded UN forces during the Korean War, had joined the CPD board in 1976; General M. B. Ridgway to Charles Tyroler II, 18 April, 1977, Box 184, CPD Papers.

⁷⁹⁹ General M. B. Ridgway to Charles Tyroler II, 23 July, 1979, Box 184, CPD Papers.

⁸⁰⁰ Zumwalt in 'Committee on the Present Danger: Third Annual Meeting, Cassette 1', 8-9 November, 1979, Box 166, CPD Papers, 8.

These were substantial disagreements over national security options, and show that by the end of 1979 the CPD had become straitjacketed by its own worst-case thinking. Between 1976 and 1979, board members shared their fears of Soviet strength, which had been incorporated into CPD publications. The sum of these fears was a dire assessment of Soviet military strength. As the CPD's view that Soviet forces out-matched those of the U.S. gained acceptance, board members could not agree on which particular vulnerability should be addressed first. Pointing out multiple areas of Soviet strength rallied support for expanding U.S. military capabilities in general, as a number of polls revealed, but it was unclear how this warning should be addressed in specific policy terms. The Executive Committee found that advocating deterrent strength 'beyond the shadow of a doubt', as the Committee argued in *Is America Becoming Number Two?*, was not the basis of a precise programme to enhance national security now that the political climate favoured higher defence spending.⁸⁰¹

Why did the CPD struggle to define the requirements for national security? At Executive Committee meetings its military strategists conceived of potential threats and the countermeasures required to confront them. The strategists – Nitze, Burton-Marshall, and Rostow, for example – wanted to provide a range of credible military options for those responsible for national security, thus performing the same function as they had in the State Department Policy Planning Department in the 1950s. The former military commanders in the Committee's board membership corroborated the need for enhanced capabilities. As it could not be foreseen whether the U.S.S.R. would continue its military growth and territorial expansion, the Executive Committee projected the worst-case for Soviet strength in each military category and planned to deter Soviet strength

⁸⁰¹ CPD Executive Committee, "Is America Becoming Number 2? Current Trends in the U.S.-Soviet Military Balance", 45.

on that basis. In *Looking for Eggs in a Cuckoo Clock*, a January 1979 pamphlet, the CPD stated that,

The present obligation is to make provident resource allocations so as to ensure for those to be responsible for national security later on in face of events not now foreseeable adequate means to protect the territorial base, to fend off forcible intimidation from without, and to assure access to external sources of materials necessary for national well-being.⁸⁰²

In a rather intelligible manner, the pamphlet made the point that current procurement decisions would affect future military capabilities, and the obligation of contemporary leaders was to provide future leaders with sufficient deterrent strength. But this confusing prescription was not precise; what allocations were 'provident'? By focusing on the potential threat and formulating an analysis incorporating all Executive Committee members' concerns, the CPD made a realistic plan for remedial actions near impossible. *Countering the Soviet Threat*, the CPD's May 1980 pamphlet, was not a carefully considered procurement plan, but a wish list of Committee board members who were convinced that without each of the military programmes they mentioned American forces would be woefully incapable of deterring a Soviet expansion strategy.⁸⁰³

Any negative foreign policy issue that could be attributed to the Soviet Union was incorporated into the Executive Committee's assessment of Soviet strength. This was justified in the Committee's initial statement, which allowed for any aspect of the Soviet threat to add to its analysis of danger. The statement proposed that 'The threats we face are more subtle and indirect than was once the case ... [The U.S.S.R.] continues, with notable persistence, to take advantage of every opportunity to expand its political and military influence throughout the world: in Europe; in the Middle East and Africa;

⁸⁰² Burton Marshall, "Looking For Eggs in a Cuckoo Clock: Observations on SALT II", 94.

⁸⁰³ CPD Executive Committee, "Countering the Soviet Threat: U.S. Defense Strategy in the 1980s".

in Asia; even in Latin America; in all the seas.’⁸⁰⁴ This suggested the U.S. needed to deter every Soviet opportunistic action throughout the world to ensure national security, and the Committee, to emphasise this warning, would point out as many of these ‘opportunities’ that its members’ expertise would allow. The result was the creation of composite threat assessments that over time convinced Committee members themselves that the threat was truly ominous.

‘In an age of deterrence’, historian Nancy Mitchell argues, ‘perception was reality’.⁸⁰⁵ For CPD members, perception indeed became reality after setting wide parameters for detecting Soviet subterfuge. In planning to meet scenarios of Soviet expansion that *could* happen, Committee members soon believed that these scenarios *would* happen or had already happened. This progression in Executive Committee members’ thinking is epitomised by Zumwalt, who in 1970 was dismayed at Kissinger’s pessimism in suggesting that the U.S. ‘has passed its historic high-point’.⁸⁰⁶ By 1979, however, Zumwalt expressed similar despair: ‘[W]e’re not going even to begin to regain capability strategically and conventionally in competition with the Russians, but [we’re] merely analyzing how does one best spent [sic] inadequate funds to maintain some doubt in the Soviet Union as to how well they could do.’⁸⁰⁷ After adopting a worst-case methodology, Soviet capabilities seemed dangerous and getting worse to the CPD.

This warning had been extremely effective in attracting attention to the CPD, but by 1979 the Executive Committee had come to believe its own projections reflected not a risk but reality itself. The CPD criticised détente as ‘mirror-imaging’, but the

⁸⁰⁴ CPD Executive Committee, “Common Sense and the Common Danger: Policy Statement of the Committee on the Present Danger”, 3.

⁸⁰⁵ Mitchell, “The Cold War and Jimmy Carter”, 67.

⁸⁰⁶ Kissinger quoted in Friedman, *The Neoconservative Revolution*, 138.

⁸⁰⁷ Zumwalt in ‘Committee on the Present Danger: Third Annual Meeting, Cassette 1’, 8-9 November, 1979, Box 166, CPD Papers, 13.

Committee was 'mirror-imaging' its own pessimistic projections by the end of 1979.⁸⁰⁸ The CPD's accusation of mirror-imaging in 1976, which suggested advocates of détente projected their own optimistic intentions onto their Soviet counterparts, could now be levied against the Committee itself - board members mirrored their own pessimistic approach onto Kremlin leaders. At the Committee's 1979 annual meeting Rostow pleaded for the Carter Administration to 'emerge from the cocoon of our dreams, and deal with the world as it is'.⁸⁰⁹ The Executive Committee had, however, strayed in the opposite direction: they did not see the world as it was but as they feared it to be.

In summary, the CPD was a group of strategic planners and military commanders who shared a fear of American weakness in face of growing Soviet strength. After joining a group dedicated to publicising analyses of threat, the CPD's members' fears were soon incorporated in the group's studies. As a result these studies presented estimates of an opponent with alarming strength. Committee members perceived any setback as Soviet opportunism, and thus grew ever more certain that their assessment was correct: perception became reality. As a result, the CPD's attempt to correct the 'rosy picture' of the U.S.S.R.'s capabilities and intentions that détente encouraged morphed into the Committee's terrifying conclusion that America was on the brink of Cold War defeat.⁸¹⁰

Strategists not Moralists

The CPD's worst-case thinking considered only comparative military capabilities and the effect on Cold War grand strategy. It was not particularly concerned with the ideological component of the Cold War or of distinguishing between

⁸⁰⁸ CPD Executive Committee, "What Is the Soviet Union Up To?", 10.

⁸⁰⁹ Rostow, 'The Taste of SALT: Remarks before the Annual Dinner of the Board of Directors of the Committee on the Present Danger, Washington D.C.', 8 November, 1979, Box 163, CPD Papers, 12.

⁸¹⁰ Nitze, Rearden, and Smith, *From Hiroshima to Glasnost*, 349.

authoritarian and totalitarian regimes.⁸¹¹ Because the Executive Committee believed that the Soviets were pursuing expansion they based their analysis on the assumption that Soviet forces either already possessed or aspired to possess the capabilities necessary to achieve this goal. In this context the CPD attempted to compile their assessments of comparative military balance on what they considered to be a risk-averse and prudent basis as it was American military strength alone that could block Soviet aggression. This approach was justified, the Committee considered, because the risk of underestimating the strength necessary to deter the U.S.S.R. would be calamitous -- Soviet Cold War victory.

The Executive Committee were convinced that a return to containment was a pragmatic strategy that would ensure national security based on the conviction that the Soviet Union was 'a different society', inherently expansionist, and restrained only by military power.⁸¹² Therefore, the Committee concluded, 'the key to our quest for peace and our survival as a free society' was to ensure sufficient American military strength.⁸¹³ The CPD attracted to its board those who agreed with the assessment that the trend of global geopolitics was moving against the United States in favour of the U.S.S.R.. Committee board members joined to lend their personal credibility to the CPD mission to highlight the 'indirect aggression' of the Soviet Union, a serious threat to 'the world balance of forces on which the survival of freedom depends'.⁸¹⁴ This was not a morally based argument pitting the merits of capitalism against the evils of communism, but an attempt to generate lasting support for the necessary 'military strength' and 'commitment

⁸¹¹ Jeanne Kirkpatrick's careful distinction between authoritarian and totalitarian regimes was not an important influence on the CPD before 1981. For more on Kirkpatrick see Ehrman, *The Rise of Neoconservatism*, 177.

⁸¹² CPD Executive Committee, "What Is the Soviet Union Up To?", 10.

⁸¹³ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁸¹⁴ CPD Executive Committee, "Common Sense and the Common Danger: Policy Statement of the Committee on the Present Danger", 4.

to leadership' that would deter Soviet expansion.⁸¹⁵ The Committee judged that without being made aware of the military threat there was no reason for Americans to support the level of defence spending necessary to deter the U.S.S.R..

A number of scholars have suggested that the CPD campaign was motivated primarily by a concern for American moral decay at home. Craig and Logevall, for example, charge that the CPD's activities amounted to an effort 'to develop a thoroughgoing, moralistic attack on the Carter Administration's foreign policy'.⁸¹⁶ They argue further that 'The committee accused the White House of ... insufficiently trumpeting the superiority of the American system.'⁸¹⁷ The historian Linenthal also suggests that

The CPD saw itself as a significant actor in the great cosmic battle between good and evil in the nuclear age. It was motivated by an apocalyptic view of history and sought to awaken Americans from their spiritual bondage caused by the degenerative processes at work in the nation.⁸¹⁸

In this interpretation it is argued that the Committee believed that it had to emphasise the moral struggle between good and evil in order to rally American society to the Cold War challenge.⁸¹⁹ Yet such a moralising rallying call did not underpin the CPD's analysis. No Committee pamphlet disparaged American morality. The CPD's activities were based on producing materials to inform the people of the Soviet military threat; no Executive Committee member attempted 'to sound the alarm about the inner disorder the nation faced', as Linenthal argues.⁸²⁰

The CPD was not focused on 'trumpeting' American moral superiority, as they were instead fixated on estimating the military balance and publicising the need to catch

⁸¹⁵ Ibid.

⁸¹⁶ Craig and Logevall, *America's Cold War*, 306.

⁸¹⁷ Ibid., 307.

⁸¹⁸ Linenthal, "War and Sacrifice in the Nuclear Age", 22.

⁸¹⁹ See also Peter Scoblic, *U.S. vs Them: Conservatism in the Age of Nuclear Terror*, (New York: Penguin Books, 2009), 110.

⁸²⁰ Linenthal, "War and Sacrifice in the Nuclear Age", 24.

up to the Soviet Union militarily. The CPD criticism of détente, in fact, was much more pragmatic than highlighting 'cosmic battle[s]'.⁸²¹ The Committee existed to make certain that Americans would be told about the existential threat that they faced; inherent Soviet expansionism coupled with a period of military superiority meant that the U.S. required greater deterrent strength. Failure to contain Soviet aggression would lead to defeat and therefore increased military strength was a reasonable and practical response to Soviet growth in military power.

The CPD, rather than seeking to reaffirm moral clarity in the Cold War, were more concerned at the loss of control over national security after the apparent emergence of overall strategic parity. As the historian Johnson argues,

U.S. fears about the consequences of supposed Soviet nuclear superiority in the late 1970s and early 1980s were probably more significant as a delayed reaction to the U.S. loss of control over its own survival than they were as reflections of new specific threats to U.S. security.⁸²²

Strategic parity and the perceived risk that the Soviet Union was seeking 'irreversible change while we are still behind militarily' meant that for CPD board members the threat would remain until American strength was restored.⁸²³ This explains why there were not distinct Soviet capabilities that the Committee was determined to match. It was the uncertainty of what rough strategic parity meant that prompted the CPD's wish to re-establish American superiority.

However, despite the Committee's insistence that higher defence spending would result in a more effective deterrent, the U.S. would no longer be able to prepare for every hypothetical 'Pearl Harbor' scenario that Executive Committee members could devise. By the late-1970s the U.S.S.R. had attained the capacity to launch a first strike,

⁸²¹ Ibid., 22.

⁸²² Johnson, *Improbable Dangers*, 100.

⁸²³ Rostow, 'Memorandum for Senator Kennedy', 23 January, 1980, Box 177, CPD Papers, 6.

and no amount of planning or warning would negate that capability.⁸²⁴ In formulating its fears of potential Cold War defeat, the CPD misinterpreted Soviet activity. Its Third World 'adventurism' was not part of an opportunistic drive for Cold War victory strategy, as the CPD suspected.⁸²⁵ Rather than opportunism encouraged from a position of strength, Soviet activities were more often conducted from a position of weakness. As the historian Zubok argues, the Afghanistan Invasion was, for example, 'the first sign of Soviet imperial overstretch', and a situation that Brezhnev was unable to control.⁸²⁶

The CPD's calls for higher defence spending were not entirely without reason, however, and its members were not alone in fearing Soviet intentions. An important question to consider is not whether Committee members deviously inflated their concerns, which were genuinely held, but *why* they were so fearful. In this way Vaïsse's charge of exaggeration is less convincing:

Sincere worry is one thing, deliberate exaggeration another, and it is clear that the CPD exaggerated in its public statements and publications. The logic was simple: fear was the best ally of those who favored a stronger defense posture and larger military budget. The CPD was able to move the debate in its direction precisely because it exaggerated the threat and painted a frightening picture.⁸²⁷

The central issue is not that the CPD fabricated the evidence that underpinned its material but whether its worst-case projections of military balance were warranted. Many analysts shared the CPD's assumptions in 1980 after the events of the previous year in Afghanistan and because of Soviet activity throughout the Third World in the 1970s. *The Economist*, for example, argued that America had indeed 'gone soft' in a January 1980 article.⁸²⁸ Vaïsse argues that it was unlikely American military leaders would have exchanged equipment with their Soviet counterparts, but the CPD were not

⁸²⁴ See Chapter 1 "The Demise of Free Security" in Craig and Logevall, *America's Cold War*, 13.

⁸²⁵ Zubok, *A Failed Empire*, 228.

⁸²⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸²⁷ Vaïsse, *Neoconservatism*, 168.

⁸²⁸ "America Gone Soft", *The Economist*, January 5, 1980.

exclusively concerned with the current military balance.⁸²⁹ They were unconvinced that the Soviets would restrain their military procurement programmes even after attaining rough parity.

The CPD's worst-case scenario thinking was not cynical threat inflation, but structural threat inflation. Each CPD board member, drawing on their own professional assessment, believed they were rationally explaining what would happen if current trends in Soviet defence spending continued. They identified 'dangerous shifts in the world balance of power achieved by the Soviet Union', and did not see why Kremlin leaders would restrain their 'push for military superiority' given the gains 'in Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and the Caribbean' that had been 'made feasible by that buildup'.⁸³⁰ After the Afghanistan invasion, board members considered that their worst-case assessment as no longer merely a projection but as a correct assessment of a process that was underway. Kremlin leaders evidently could not be trusted to restrain their expansionist ambitions, which meant that increased American military strength was urgently required. At stake, therefore, was 'the political independence and territorial integrity of the United States', or, in other words, Cold War defeat.⁸³¹

Vaïsse points out correctly that 'it is possible to be both sincerely worried and sincerely mistaken', which accurately characterises the CPD.⁸³² However, we can only assess that the Committee was mistaken in hindsight. In late 1980 it was not at all clear what the Kremlin's intentions in Afghanistan were, nor whether they would continue to invest in military capabilities. It was not fanciful to hypothesise continued expansion. The CPD did not act as 'propagandists and alarmists' who 'trumpeted' the findings of

⁸²⁹ Vaïsse, *Neoconservatism*, 167.

⁸³⁰ CPD Executive Committee, "Countering the Soviet Threat: U.S. Defense Strategy in the 1980s", 179.

⁸³¹ Rostow, 'Appendix B: E.V.R. Memorandum of December 8, 1980. Peace as the Goal of American Foreign Policy. Draft Speech for President Reagan.', 8 December, 1980, Box 37 Folder 15, Nitze Papers, 7.

⁸³² Vaïsse, *Neoconservatism*, 168.

Team B, as the historian Walter Uhler argues, but rather it drew on its members' expertise to form an opinion on what U.S.S.R. strategy might be.⁸³³ As the historian Garthoff observes, 'Worst-case analysis was thereby transformed from a device for predicting and understanding potential dangers into a device for articulating the policymaker's alarms.'⁸³⁴ Their estimated metrics of imbalance – first calculated in 1977 – seemed superfluous evidence for Executive Committee members by 1980; the Soviet Union had demonstrated its resolve to send troops into battle. They considered that their worst-case thinking was indeed prudent given the Afghanistan invasion, and perhaps marked the first step in a period of Soviet superiority.⁸³⁵

There is no clear juncture where warning of a potentially existential danger becomes threat inflation. Garthoff accuses the CPD of asserting Soviet superiority 'with much hue and cry' and 'sounded the alarm to gain support' though he concedes that 'the concern was often genuine'.⁸³⁶ But from the Committee's perspective how else were they to draw attention to a situation that they perceived as existentially threatening? 'The period immediately ahead is the period of greatest danger', Rostow told Kennedy in January 1980. 'The Soviets are trying to achieve irreversible change while we are still behind militarily.'⁸³⁷ The Executive Committee's concerns demonstrate that they assumed that without their work there would soon be an 'irreversible' setback. They therefore set out to draw attention to the threat of the Soviet Union.

The historian Robert Johnson suggests it was 'understandable that nuclear strategists should have been concerned with anchoring deterrence by ensuring the survivability of U.S. deterrent forces'.⁸³⁸ But he stresses that what 'has been less

⁸³³ Uhler, "Misreading the Soviet Threat", *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 14, no. 1 (2001), 174–5.

⁸³⁴ Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation*, 30.

⁸³⁵ CPD Executive Committee, "The 1980 Crisis and What We Should Do About It.", 170.

⁸³⁶ Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation*, 58.

⁸³⁷ Rostow, 'Memorandum for Senator Kennedy', 23 January, 1980, Box 177, CPD Papers, 6.

⁸³⁸ Johnson, *Improbable Dangers*, 126.

justifiable has been the elaboration by the strategists of complex theories based upon highly implausible scenarios that forecast the possibility of general breakdowns of the deterrence order and a frightening loss of control by the United States of its international environment'.⁸³⁹ Can the CPD's 'complex' assessments be justified? To them, effective deterrence was the only strategic calculation that mattered, so the group – led in this effort by Nitze – attempted to calculate it.

Executive Committee members' fears – implausible scenarios, for Johnson – became a method to determine the variables for these calculations because of the existential nature of the threat. In the absence of accurate intelligence of Soviet military strength, the Committee's estimated metrics of strength became a measure of which side was ahead in the Cold War.⁸⁴⁰ Comparing estimates, therefore, was how the CPD Executive Committee - strategic planners and military commanders - fought their proxy Cold War. Rostow, Nitze, and Zumwalt were sincere when they articulated their vision of a Soviet plan to expand its influence by opportunistic involvement in Third World politics because, it could be assumed, that is what they would themselves have done if in the place of their Soviet counterparts. Thus the Executive Committee's logical strategic thinking, supposedly based on meticulously prepared statistics of military strength, was essentially 'bean counting' rather than rational national security planning.⁸⁴¹

Such bean counting was the most effective tool a strategic planner had to assess national security requirements, despite its inherent inaccuracies. Nitze wrote to Rostow on 18 July 1980 to concede the difficulty of assessing probabilities of Soviet actions. 'The most difficult judgment concerns what evidence, if any, can be found which would

⁸³⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁴⁰ Leebaert, *The Fifty-Year Wound*, 461.

⁸⁴¹ Fred Kaplan, *Dubious Specter: A Skeptical Look at the Soviet Nuclear Threat*, (Washington D.C.: Institute for Policy Studies, 1982), 32.

persuasively argue for one estimate or another.⁸⁴² Nitze reasoned that it was therefore prudent to opt for the least favourable estimate, especially as the potential risk of underestimation was catastrophic. Committee board members did not feel they had to explain this methodology; to them it was self-evident that the U.S.S.R. was expansionist, and self-evident that American forces did not, in 1980, possess the strength to deter this threat.

Despite the CPD's insistence that their approach was prudent, their exclusive focus on military metrics did impose significant costs. At the group's launch in 1976 Lane Kirkland characterised the CPD's desire for higher defence spending as 'fire insurance' against the U.S.S.R., which he described as 'a pyromaniac', but by overestimating the threat the Committee advocated an excessively expensive premium.⁸⁴³ Their insistence that higher defence spending resulted in greater security took away national resources from other deserving areas of American society. The CPD's approach to U.S.-Soviet relations underestimated the importance of economic strength in the Cold War confrontation and over-estimated the importance of indicators of military strength. As Johnson points out

At some point, obviously, probabilities become so low that focusing, and spending massively, on seeking to prevent the great disasters one can imagine becomes an exquisite self-indulgence and profoundly foolish policy.⁸⁴⁴

By overestimating the threat of the U.S.S.R., the CPD encouraged unnecessary defence spending that would have benefited American domestic life.⁸⁴⁵ CPD emphasis on military capabilities neglected alternative but equally important measures of assessing strength. Defence expenditures, for example, placed insurmountable burdens on the

⁸⁴² Paul Nitze to Eugene Rostow, 18 July, 1980, Box 73 Folder 2, Nitze Papers, 3.

⁸⁴³ Kirkland quoted in 'Press Conference of the Committee on the Present Danger', 11 November, 1976, Box 288, CPD Papers, 23.

⁸⁴⁴ Mueller, *Overblown*, 86.

⁸⁴⁵ Johnson, *Improbable Dangers*, 210.

Soviet economy, an assessment the CIA offered but was dismissed by CPD board members reluctant to undermine their own call for higher defence spending.⁸⁴⁶ It might be argued that this was a foresighted attitude and an approach designed to hasten the demise of the USSR, but the CPD never made such an argument. They simply believed that American forces were of inferior strength, which risked defeat. In stressing the significance of Soviet military strength and arguing that it presented an existential danger, the CPD itself disguised the Soviet economic slump that had been unfolding since the early 1970s.⁸⁴⁷ The Soviet expansion into the Third World was not cost effective: the apparent expansion of influence was in fact a burden to the Kremlin and not a prelude to Cold War victory.⁸⁴⁸ Overstating Soviet strength and misinterpreting its intentions obscured this hypothesis of Cold War advancement in the 1980s.

The CPD did not justify its case on moral grounds but on the arithmetic of comparative military assessment. But this myopic focus on the military balance, it has been suggested, was misplaced. By attempting to create metrics on which they could base 'prudent' strategic plans, and using worst-case assumptions to do so, the CPD proved to itself that its fears were substantiated. Assuming that the Soviet Union possessed such formidable strength also meant that indicators of weakness in its economy were overlooked or dismissed. The Committee's methodology for assessing threat was not prudent, as the Executive Committee claimed, but fuelled hostility and placed unnecessary costs on the American federal budget in the 1980s.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the CPD's worst-case thinking led to the assessment

⁸⁴⁶ Cahn, *Killing Detente*, 191.

⁸⁴⁷ Stephen Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted: The Soviet Collapse Since 1970* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 15.

⁸⁴⁸ See Chapter 8 "Detente's Decline and Soviet Overreach, 1973-1979" in Zubok, *A Failed Empire*, 227.

of a threat that was ever more alarmist over the 1976 to 1980 period. The CPD decided to continue to warn Americans that the U.S.S.R. pursued a victory strategy that would be assisted if American forces let their guard down, even after board member Ronald Reagan was elected president.

The CPD had been able to establish its credibility by attracting board members to support the group's primary objective of pointing out the enduring Soviet threat while détente formed the basis of national security policy. However, as the group's warning gained acceptance board members found it difficult to agree on the specific requirements to contain the threat. Because the group was a private citizens' organisation there was no government oversight and therefore no requirement to reconcile these differences of opinion over defence priorities. Instead, all the fears of board members were amalgamated into CPD assessments thus providing evidence of an overwhelming threat from the Soviet Union.

It should be noted that the CPD based these concerns purely on assessments of the military balance, and not on concerns of American moral shortcomings. Their self-styled 'prudent' assessments of Soviet capabilities became the abstracted battleground for their Cold War struggle as national security planners. For four years the Executive Committee compiled metrics, formulated scenarios of Soviet expansion, and publicly presented their findings. By the end of 1979 CPD members believed they had accurately assessed Soviet aims. It is important to note that the Committee was not alone in reaching this conclusion regarding aggressive Soviet expansion. Soviet Third World adventurism appeared ominous to many observers outside the CPD, and in this way the group reflected and amplified existing unease at Soviet conduct.

The chapter concludes that the CPD cannot be dismissed as disingenuous threat inflators. Board members conceived of the Cold War exclusively in military terms, used

their expertise to demonstrate an imbalance, and then continued to warn of the need to keep the balance in check. As they assumed that the U.S.S.R. was committed to spreading socialism, a strong American deterrent that kept pace with any Soviet military growth was required. While the CPD judged this a prudent approach to ensure national security, the group failed to appreciate other factors such as how reduced economic strength and leadership changes might prompt a change in the assessment of the Soviet threat. Instead, the Committee on the Present Danger judged that its worst-case assessments of Soviet capabilities and intentions had been proven correct. Therefore the Committee permanently adopted this worst-case approach; there would be a present danger to the United States as long as the Soviet Union remained in existence.

Conclusion

A critical reassessment of the Committee on the Present Danger has presented the group in a different light than most existing studies. The CPD has attracted significant attention from scholars since its establishment in 1976, but few scholars have attempted a study of the group without political agenda. Warning of the dangers of détente was not a particularly controversial objective in 1976, as the recruitment of a politically diverse board of directors demonstrates. It was the group's structure over the following years that facilitated an evolution of its message from a warning of risk to a prediction of defeat. The shift towards this alarmist prediction was caused by the composition of the group's Executive Committee, the pursuit of estimating the military balance on a worst-case basis, and confirmation bias as the CPD believed that they were observing a Kremlin victory strategy.

The evidence suggests that the CPD was not a disingenuous propaganda group, composed predominately of neoconservatives deliberately seeking methods to stoke fear among Americans. Instead, it was a group led by national security experts who sincerely came to believe that the Cold War was at a tipping point; America was close to defeat after being lulled into a false sense of security through détente, and by permitting the U.S.S.R overall military superiority as a consequence. Committee materials were developed to explain this analysis in what the Executive Committee perceived as a logical manner based on hard evidence. This evidence, however, was in turn based on estimates that incorporated professional fears and rejected optimistic interpretations. As Kennan and Nitze's 1978 joint feature in the *New York Times* demonstrated, basing national security policy on pessimistic rather than optimistic assumptions, especially when quantified, seemed the more credible method to many Americans.

The CPD's principal objective in 1976 was to instigate a national discussion in order to restore a consensus behind containment, but in promoting this discussion the group's board members came to believe their own worst-case predictions were accurate. This was especially true once they considered that this prediction had been confirmed by the events of 1979, a crisis year. Committee materials considered that optimistic assessments of future military developments – extending the American advantage in cruise missile technology, for example – should be rejected as risky and even reckless assumptions. Instead, the CPD argued, assumptions that informed national security requirements should be informed by the least optimistic view. It was axiomatic for career national security apparatchiks that this should be the case; they wanted to provide a range of options for future American leaders to deter the Soviet threat. They reasoned that it was better to be prudent than to give the U.S.S.R. a lead in an aspect of the military equilibrium that could potentially tip that equilibrium and permit overall Soviet superiority.

This esoteric debate over the basis of intelligence assessments was made public first by Team B and then on a more permanent basis by the CPD through its involvement in the most important national security debates of the late 1970s. Participation in the SALT II ratification debate secured the CPD's status as an influential group, as it provided a focal point for its members' increasingly alarming critique of national security. The Committee's role was to function as expert witnesses for the Peace Through Strength movement, successfully providing credibility to their message of danger, which was needed to restrict senate support for SALT II ratification and to facilitate a more assertive approach to national security planning.

The evidence in the CPD's archive does not support a conclusion that the group undertook an insincere and manipulative propaganda effort during its involvement in

these debates. The Executive Committee worked hard to create and maintain an image of expertise and credibility, and the role of national security advisers was one that former bureaucrats and military commanders were well qualified to perform. Authoring pamphlets, attending televised debates on national security issues, meeting newspaper editorial boards, and briefing politicians were familiar functions for the CPD's Executive Committee. They were able to influence the discussion of national security issues through their abilities, expertise, and credibility in such venues. Their appeal to prudence when considering national security requirements proved increasingly popular in an uncertain global environment.

Where the CPD fell short was in its efforts to 'democratise' debates over national security. Its materials did not make clear that the metrics they introduced were estimates, and not facts. In informing the readers of its pamphlets that the Soviet Union was gaining superiority, the Committee felt that it was justified to exclude the rarefied debates over parity. This omission was not necessarily manipulative. Executive Committee members believed that worst-case planning was justified but that détente had numbed Americans to the risks of the Soviet adversary – after years of being presented with the rosy picture, they felt it was time to correct the narrative.

However, it is clear that this was not a disingenuous appeal to recognise the Soviet threat, as by 1979 Committee members themselves believed their underlying fear of a concerted push for Soviet Cold War victory to be fact. Prompted by perceived Soviet adventurism in Ethiopia, a hand in the Iranian Revolution, involvement in Central America, and, most alarming, an invasion of Afghanistan, Committee board members believed that their estimates of strength and predictions of a victory strategy had been confirmed by events.

Their opposition to Carter was over his perceived inability to grasp the seriousness of this situation that the CPD had identified and repeatedly warned against. After an initial attempt at cooperation in 1977, the Executive Committee deemed the Carter Administration unfit for the task of overseeing national security requirements. As with Nixon and Ford before him, Carter was blind to the Soviet threat due to his mirror-imaging of Kremlin leaders: The Committee was adamant that Soviet leaders would not hesitate to make use of their military superiority and attempt Cold War victory. Whereas the danger under Nixon and Ford had been the *potential* manipulation of the Soviet Union to improve its military capabilities and strive for superiority, under Carter the CPD perceived that the threat had increased. In the CPD's view, the U.S.S.R. had reached the point of superiority by the late 1970s – yet the president inexplicably neglected to reduce this existential risk.

The conviction that its assessment had been confirmed meant that the Committee felt entirely vindicated in its rejection of détente and its approach to threat assessment. While the Soviet Union remained there would always be a present danger, and this assumption was an important legacy of the CPD's activity in the late-1970s. The effects of the politicisation of intelligence estimation would prevent the demise of the Soviet Union from being perceived in the 1980s, even though such predictions had been made by the CIA in the late 1970s, and dismissed by the CPD.

It is therefore not sufficient to label the Committee on the Present Danger as another example of a threat inflation group, repeating a feature of the American post-Second World War political landscape. Its members were national security experts who sensed a turning point in history. Domestic politics are critical to understanding American foreign policy, as the case of the Committee on the Present Danger once again makes clear. In this way, the fact that the group created an assessment of the

Soviet Union based on the sum of all their fears is as important as the fact the group was able to popularise this view. Threat assessment, the case of the CPD emphasises, can never be truly objective. This is especially true in a democracy where consensus is required to pursue one strategy over another. The basis of estimating enemy strength and intentions is ultimately another tool of persuasion, and more often than not in American Cold War history – and certainly in the example of the Committee on the Present Danger - the worst-case basis underpinned the most persuasive argument.

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Appendix I

Founding Board Members of the Committee on the Present Danger

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>
Achilles, Theodore C.	Vice Chairman, Atlantic Council of the U.S.; former Counselor of the Department of State
Allen, Richard V.	President, Potomac International Corp.; former Deputy Assistant to the President for International Economic Affairs
Allison, John M.	Former Ambassador to Japan, Indonesia and Czechoslovakia
Anderson, Eugenie	Former Ambassador to Denmark
Bardach, Eugene	Associate Professor of Public Policy, University of California
Barnett, Frank R.	President, National Strategy Information Center, Inc.
Baroody, Joseph D.	Public Affairs Consultant
Beam, Jacob D.	Former Ambassador to Poland, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union
Bellow, Saul	Author (Nobel Prize 1976 in Literature)
Bendetsen, Karl R.	Former Under Secretary of the Army
Bishop, Joseph W., JR.	Professor of Law, Yale Law School
Bozeman, Adda B.	Professor of International Relations, Sarah Lawrence College
Brennan, Donald G.	Director of National Security Studies, Hudson Institute
Browne, Vincent J.	Professor of Political Science, Howard University
Burgess, W. Randolph	Former Under Secretary of the Treasury and Ambassador to NATO
Cabot, John M.	Former Ambassador to Sudan, Colombia, Brazil and Poland
Campbell, W. Glenn	Director, Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, Stanford University
Casey, William J,	Former Chairman, SEC, Under Secretary of State, and President, Export-Import Bank
Chaikin, Sol C.	President, International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union
Clark, Peter B.	President, The Evening News Association

Cline, Ray S.	Director of Studies, Georgetown University Center for Strategic and International Studies
Cohen, Edwin S.	Former Under Secretary of the Treasury
Colby, William E.	Former Director of Central Intelligence
Connally, John B.	Former Secretary of the Treasury
Connell, William	President, Concept Associates, Inc.; Executive Assistant to Vice President Humphrey
Connor, John T.	President, Allied Chemical Corp.; former Secretary of Commerce
Darden, Colgate W. JR.	President Emeritus, University of Virginia
Dean, Arthur H.	Former Chairman, U.S. Delegations on Nuclear Test Ban and Disarmament
Dillon, C. Douglas	Former Secretary of the Treasury
Dogole, S. Harrison	Chairman, Globe Security Systems Inc.
Dominick, Peter H.	Former U.S. Senator
Dowling, Walter	Former Ambassador to Germany
DuBrow, Evelyn	Legislative Director, International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union
DuChessi, William	Executive Vice President, Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers' Union
Earle, Valerie	Professor of Government, Georgetown University
Farrell, James T.	Author
Fellman, David	Vilas Professor of Political Science, University of Wisconsin
Fowler, Henry H.	Partner, Goldman, Sachs & Co.; former Secretary of the Treasury
Franklin, William H.	Chairman of the Board (Ret.), Caterpillar Tractor Co.
Frelinghuysen, Peter H. B.	Former Member of Congress
Friedman, Martin L.	Assistant to President Truman

Ginsburgh, Robert N.	Major General, USAF (Ret.); Editor, Strategic Review
Glazer, Nathan	Professor of Education and Sociology, Harvard University
Goodpaster, Andrew J.	General, U.S. Army (Ret.); former NATO Supreme Allied Commander, Europe
Grace, J. Peter	President, W. R. Grace & Co.
Gray, Gordon	Former President, University of North Carolina, and Secretary of the Army
Gullion, Edmund A.	Dean, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy
Gunderson, Barbara Bates	Former Civil Service Commissioner
Handlin, Oscar	University Professor, Harvard University
Hannah, John A.	Executive Director, United Nations World Food Council; former Chairman, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, and Administrator for International Development
Harper, David B.	Gateway National Bank of St. Louis
Harris, Huntington	Trustee, The Brookings Institution
Hauser, Rita E.	Attorney, Stroock, Stroock & Lavan; former Representative to the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations
Hellmann, Donald C.	Professor of Political Science and Asian Studies, University of Washington
Herrera, Alfred C.	Research Associate, Johns Hopkins University, Washington Center of Foreign Policy Research
Horowitz, Rachelle	Director, Committee on Political Education, American Federation of Teachers
Hurewitz, J. C.	Director, The Middle East Institute, Columbia University
Johnson, Belton K.	Chairman, Chaparrosa Agri-Services, Inc.
Johnson, Chalmers	Professor & Chairman, Department of Political Science, University of California
Johnston, Whittle	Professor of Government and Foreign Affairs, University of Virginia

Jordan, David C.	Professor & Chairman, Woodrow Wilson Department of Government and Foreign Affairs, University of Virginia
Kampelman, Max M.	Attorney, Freid, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Kampelman
Kemp, Geoffrey	Professor of International Politics, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy
Keyserling, Leon H.	President, Conference on Economic Progress; Chairman, Council of Economic Advisors under President Truman
Kirkland, Lane	Secretary-Treasurer, AFL-CIO
Kirkpatrick, Jeanne J.	Professor of Government, Georgetown University
Kohler Foy D.	Professor of International Studies, University of Miami (Florida); former Ambassador to the Soviet Union
Krogh, Peter	Dean, School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University
Lefever, Ernest W.	Professor of International Relations and Director, Ethics and Public Policy Program, Georgetown University
Lemnitzer, Lyman L.	General U.S. Army (Ret.); former Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe
Lewis, Hobart	Chairman, Reader's Digest
Libby, W. F.	Former AEC Commissioner (Nobel Prize 1960 in Chemistry)
Liebler, Sarason D.	President, Digital Recording Corp.
Linen, James A.	Director and former President, Time Inc.
Lipset, Seymour Martin	Professor of Political Science and Sociology, Stanford University
Lord, Mary P.	Former Representative to the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations
Lovestone, Jay	Consultant to AFL-CIO and ILGWU on International Affairs
Luce, Clare Boothe	Author; former Member of Congress, Ambassador to Italy
Lyons, John H.	General President, Ironworkers International Union
MacNaughton, Donald S.	Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, The Prudential Insurance Company of America
Marks, Leonard H.	Former Director, United States Information Agency

Marshall, Charles Burton	School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University; former Member, Policy Planning Staff, Department of State
Martin, William McChesney, Jr.	Former Chairman, Federal Reserve Board
McCabe, Edward A.	Counsel to President Eisenhower
McCraken, Samuel	Author
McGhee, George C.	Former Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Ambassador to Turkey and Germany
McNair, Robert E.	Former Governor of South Carolina
Miller, John	President, National Planning Association
Mitchell, George C.	Executive Director, World Affairs Council of Pittsburgh
Morse, Joshua M.	Dean, College of Law, Florida State University
Muller, Steven	President, The John Hopkins University
Mulliken, Robert S.	Professor of Chemistry and Physics, University of Chicago (Nobel Prize 1966 in Chemistry)
Myerson, Bess	Consumer Affairs Consultant, New York City; former Commissioner of Consumer Affairs for the City of New York
Nichols, Thomas S.	President, Nichols Co.; former Chairman, Executive Committee, Olin Corp.
Nitze, Paul H.	Chairman, Advisory Council, School of Advanced International Studies, John Hopkins University; former Deputy Secretary of Defense
O'Brien, William V.	Chairman, Department of Government, Georgetown University
Olmsted, George	Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, International Bank, Washington
Packard, David	Chairman of the Board, Hewlett-Packard Co.; former Deputy Secretary of Defense
Payne, James L.	Professor of Political Science, Texas A&M University
Pfaltzgraff, Robert L., Jr.	Professor, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy

Podhoretz, Midge Dector	Author and Editor
Podhoretz, Norman	Editor, Commentary
Ra'anana, Uri	Professor of International Politics & Chairman of the International Security Studies Program, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy
Ramey, Estelle R.	Professor, Department of Physiology, Georgetown University School of Medicine
Ramsey, Paul	Professor of Religion, Princeton University
Ridgway, Matthew B.	General, U.S. Army (Ret.); former Chief of Staff, U.S. Army
Roche, John P.	Professor, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy; Special Consultant to President Johnson
Rose, H. Chapman	Former Under Secretary of the Treasury
Rosenblatt, Peter R.	Attorney
Rostow, Eugene V.	Professor of Law, Yale Law School; former Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs
Rowe, James H., Jr.	Administrative Assistant to President Roosevelt
Rusk, Dean	Professor, School of Law, The University of Georgia; former Secretary of State
Rustin, Bayard	President, A. Phillip Randolph Institute
Saltzman, Charles E.	Partner, Goldman, Sachs & Co.; former Under Secretary of State for Administration
Scaife, Richard M.	Publisher, Tribune-Review
Schifter, Richard	Attorney, Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Kampelman
Seabury, Paul	Professor of Political Science, University of California
Shanker, Albert	President, American Federation of Teachers
Skacel, Milan B.	President, Chamber of Commerce of Latin America in the U.S.A.
Smith, Fred	Chairman, Board of Trustees, National Planning Association; former Assistant to the Secretary of the Treasury
Smith, Lloyd H.	President, Paraffine Oil Corporation

Spang, Kenneth	International Business Advisor – Citibank
Straus, Ralph I.	Director, Atlantic Council of the United States
Sweatt, Harold W.	Former Chairman of the Board, Honeywell, Inc.
Tanham, George K.	Vice President and Trustee, The Rand Corporation
Taylor, Hobart, Jr.	Former Director, Export-Import Bank
Taylor, Maxwell D.	General, U.S. Army (Ret.); former Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff and Chief of Staff, U.S. Army
Teller, Edward	Professor Emeritus, University of California
Temple, Arthur	Chairman of the Board, President and Chief Executive Officer, Temple-Eastex, Inc.
Turner, J. C.	General President, International Union of Operating Engineers
Tyroler, Charles, II.	President, Quadri-Science, Inc.; former Director of Manpower Supply, Department of Defense
Van Cleave, William R.	Professor of International Relations, University of Southern California
Walker, Charls E.	Charls E. Walker Associates, Inc.; former Deputy Secretary of the Treasury
Ward, Martin J.	President, Plumbers’ and Pipe Fitters’ International Union
Ward, Robert E.	Director, Center for Research in International Studies, Stanford University
Weaver, Paul S.	President, Lake Erie College
Whalen, Richard J.	Author and Journalist
Wigner, Eugene P.	Theoretical Physicist, Princeton University (Nobel Prize 1963 in Physics)
Wilcox, Francis O.	Director General, Atlantic Council of the U.S.; former Assistant Secretary of State, Chief of Staff, Senate Foreign Relations Committee
Wolfe, Bertram D.	Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Russian History, University of California; Senior Research Fellow, Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, Stanford University

Zumwalt, Elmo R.

Admiral, U.S.N. (Ret.); former Chief of Naval Operations

Source: Tyroler II, Charles, ed *Alerting America: The Papers of the Committee on the Present Danger*, (New York: Pergamon Press, 1984), 5-9

Appendix II

CPD Publications 1976 - 1980

<u>Date of Publication</u>	<u>Title</u>
8 September 1976	<i>How the Committee on the Present Danger Will Operate – What It Will Do and What It Will Not Do</i>
11 November 1976	<i>Common Sense and the Common Danger. A Policy Statement by The Committee on the Present Danger... Citizens devoted to the Peace, Security and Liberty of the Nation"</i>
11 February 1977	<i>The Nation's Editors Speak Up On 'The Present Danger,' with a Section on Soviet Reaction</i>
4 April 1977	<i>What Is the Soviet Union Up To ?</i>
26 August 1977	<i>What the Media said about What Is the Soviet Union Up to ?</i>
6 July 1977	<i>Where We Stand on SALT</i>
1 November 1977	<i>Current Salt II Negotiating Posture</i> [This publication received numerous revisions over the next two years]
February 1978	<i>Where We Stand... Summaries of Policy Statements 1976 – 1977</i>
14 March 1978	<i>Peace With Freedom – A Discussion by the Committee on the present Danger Before the Foreign Policy Association</i>
August 1978	<i>SALT II – A Soft Bargain, A Hard Sell. An Assessment of SALT in Historical Perspective</i> by Eugene Rostow
29 September 1978	<i>An Evaluation of "US and Soviet Strategic Capability Through the Mid-1980s : A Comparative Analysis"</i>
5 October 1978	<i>Is America Becoming Number 2? Current Trends In the US - Soviet Military Balance</i>
14 November 1978	<i>The Second Year as Reflected in the Media</i>
5 December 1978	<i>SALT II – The Objectives vs. The Results</i> by Paul Nitze
22 January 1979	<i>Looking For Eggs in a Cuckoo Clock – Observations on SALT II</i> par Charles Burton Marshall
14 March 1979	<i>Does the Official Case For the SALT II Treaty Hold Up Under Analysis ? – An Evaluation of "SALT and American Security" as issued by the Department of State and the ACDA</i>

15 March 1979	<i>Public Attitudes on SALT II</i>
16 May 1979	<i>Is SALT II a Fair Deal for the United States ?</i> by Paul H. Nitze
17 September 1979	<i>Why the Soviet Union Wants SALT II</i> by Richard Pipes
1 October 1979	<i>Considerations Bearing on the Merits of the SALT II Agreements as Signed at Vienna – Assuming that Currently Projected US and USSR Defense Programs Are Continued in a Manner Consistent with SALT II</i> , by Paul H. Nitze
8 November 1979	<i>The Third Year as Reflected in the Media</i>
22 January 1980	<i>The 1980 Crisis and What We Should Do About It</i>
6 February 1980	<i>The President's 1980 State of the Union Address – A Response by Paul H. Nitze</i>
9 May 1980	<i>Countering the Soviet Threat – US Defense Strategy in the 1980s</i>
6 November 1980	<i>The Fourth Year – What We Have Said, 1976 – 1980, and... What Has Been Said About Us</i>

Source: Vaisse, *The Publications of the CPD 1976-1992*, Neoconservatism: The Biography of a Movement Companion Website, http://neoconservatism.vaissenet/doku.php?id=the_publications_of_the_cpd_1976-1992, (accessed 24 July 2011)

Appendix III

Committee on the Present Danger Appointments to the Reagan Administration in 1981

Name	Title	Date of Appointment
Ronald Reagan	<i>President of the United States</i>	20 January 1981
Kenneth L. Adelman	<i>Deputy United States Representative to the United Nations</i>	4 August 1981
Richard V. Allen	<i>Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs</i>	20 January 1981
Martin Anderson	<i>Assistant to the President for Policy Development</i>	20 January 1981
James L. Buckley	<i>Under Secretary for Security Assistance, Science and Technology</i>	7 February 1981
W. Glen Campbell	<i>Chairman, President's Intelligence Oversight Board</i>	20 October 1981
	<i>Member, President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board</i>	20 October 1981
William J. Casey	<i>Director, Central Intelligence Agency</i>	January 1981
John B. Connally	<i>Member, President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board</i>	20 October 1981
John S. Foster	<i>Member, President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board</i>	20 October 1981
Amoretta M. Hoeber	<i>Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Development and Research</i>	30 March 1981
Fred Charles Iklé	<i>Under Secretary of Defense for Policy</i>	2 April 1981
Max M. Kampelman	<i>Chairman, U.S. Delegation to Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe</i>	September 1980
Geoffrey Kemp	<i>Director for Near East and South Asian Affairs, National Security Council</i>	February 1981
Jeane J. Kirkpatrick	<i>U.S. Representative to the United Nations</i>	22 January 1981
John F. Lehman Jr.	<i>Secretary of the Navy</i>	5 February 1981

Clare Boothe Luce	<i>Member, President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board</i>	20 October 1981
Edward A. McCabe	<i>Chairman, Board of Directors, Student Loan Marketing Association</i>	December 1981
Paul W. McCracken	<i>Member, President's Economic Policy Advisory Board</i>	March 1981
Paul H. Nitze	<i>Chief Negotiator to Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Talks</i>	20 November 1981
Edward F. Noble	<i>Chairman, U.S. Synthetic Fuels Corporation</i>	14 May 1981
Peter O'Donnell Jr.	<i>Member, President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board</i>	20 October 1981
Richard N. Perle	<i>Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy</i>	4 August 1981
Eugene V. Rostow	<i>Director, Arms Control and Disarmament Agency</i>	7 May 1981
Richard M. Scaife	<i>Member, President's Commission on Broadcasting to Cuba</i>	22 September 1981
Paul Seabury	<i>Member, President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board</i>	20 October 1981
Herbert Stein	<i>Member, President's Economic Policy Advisory Board</i>	20 March 1981
R. G. Stilwell	<i>Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy</i>	February 1981
Richard B. Stone	<i>President's Commission on Broadcasting to Cuba</i>	November 1981
Robert Strausz-Hupe	<i>Ambassador to Turkey</i>	24 July 1981
Charles Tyroler II	<i>Member, President's Intelligence Oversight Board</i>	20 October 1981
Joe D. Waggoner	<i>Commissioner, National Commission on Social Security Reform</i>	16 December 1981
Charls E. Walker	<i>Member, President's Economic Policy Advisory Board</i>	20 March 1981

Seymour Weiss	<i>Member, President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board</i>	20 October 1981
Edward Bennett Williams	<i>Member, President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board</i>	20 October 1981

Source: Tyroler II, Charles, ed *Alerting America: The Papers of the Committee on the Present Danger*, (New York: Pergamon Press, 1984), ix-xi