

Elephants and Donkeys by Kathleen Klenetsky

Henry Kissinger's 'bipartisanship'

In an Oct. 6 interview with the *New York Post*, the ubiquitous Henry Kissinger made yet another "contribution" to the current debate over how the Reagan administration should conduct its strategic policy.

Kissinger advocated that President Reagan create a bipartisan commission immediately after the November election to embark on a "crash program" to develop new strategies for arms control and a new framework for U.S.-Soviet relations.

The aim of the commission, Kissinger said, would be to work on "new conceptual approaches" that would be acceptable to both the American public and the Soviet Union.

Although Kissinger's proposal is hardly new, its timing signifies that the liberal Eastern Establishment has hit upon the idea of "government by commission" as the vehicle for containing whatever patriotic impulses may still exist in a second Reagan administration.

Dead-set on preventing a repetition of March 23, 1983, when Reagan threatened to wreck the ongoing "New Yalta" negotiations between the Western and Eastern oligarchies with his beam-weapons announcement, Kissinger's backers are maneuvering to effectively remove all policy-making power out of the hands of Reagan and such advisers as Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, and place it in the hands of "advisory panels" stacked with Kissinger's pals.

In a recent discussion, Gerard K. Smith, chief SALT negotiator and founder of one of the most aggressively anti-beam organizations, the National Committee to Save [Henry Kissinger's] ABM Treaty, asserted that the only hope of derailing Reagan's

SDI program would be by changing the administration's entire approach to arms control, and insisted that this could be accomplished only through the creation of an "independent," "bipartisan" group to advise the President on all strategic policy matters.

The model which proponents of this particular kind of bipartisanship are advocating is the Scowcroft Commission, a bipartisan panel of defense "experts" established by President Reagan to rule on the MX missile and related strategic issues. Under the direction of chairman Brent Scowcroft, a longtime Kissinger collaborator and former head of the National Security Council, the commission produced a final report which not only raised what it called "grave questions" about the advisability of the SDI, but also effectively laid the basis for the subsequent White House-Congress compromise which has all but killed the MX program.

Bipartisanship vs. beam weapons

Judging by recent signals, Kissinger's "bipartisan commission" proposal enjoys significant backing from leading strata in the Democratic Party. Zbigniew Brzezinski, national security adviser in the Carter-Mondale administration, Rep. Albert Gore (D-Tenn.), and other Democrats have recently been making loud noises about the need for a "bipartisan foreign policy."

But the notion received a more official imprimatur last month, when the Sept. 2 *New York Times* published an op ed by Democratic Party elderstatesmen Averell Harriman, Clark Clifford, and Harriman protégé Marshall Shulman urging greater "bipartisanship" in foreign and defense policy, again for the explicit goal of per-

suading Reagan to abandon beam weapons.

The current impetus for "government by commission" can be traced back to the Trilateral Commission's semi-annual meeting in Washington last April. According to insider reports, the meeting was dominated by discussions of how to sell Reagan on the need for "bigger and better" Scowcroft Commissions, with Brzezinski and Kissinger being especially emphatic on this point.

The idea got a further boost in June at a behind-closed-doors conference on arms-control sponsored by the Aspen Institute at its Wye, Maryland, center. The meeting was attended by such Kissinger allies in the Reagan administration as NSC head Robert McFarlane, arms-negotiator Paul H. Nitze, and Max Kampelman, an adviser to Walter Mondale who also just happensto hold a Reagan appointment.

According to the *Washington Post*, the meeting focused on "bipartisanship," and one unnamed administration official announced that the President is likely to propose a permanent commission that would advise the administration on arms control. The commission would contain Democrats and Republicans appointed to staggered terms. One official at the Aspen meet likened the idea to a "permanent Scowcroft Commission."

Given that Reagan is far more likely to fall for this scam if he scores a less-than-landslide victory Nov. 6, it would not be at all surprising if the election were fixed in some way to ensure a close outcome. Among the evidence that some kind of fix is, indeed, in the works is the way the national media has seized upon the Oct 7. Reagan-Mondale debate to claim Mondale is making a comeback, and to predict that the race will be a lot closer than anyone thought possible.