

Cold-War Warriors Anticommunist Group Lobbies to Keep U.S. A Military Superpower

American Security Council Is Well-Heeled and Influential, Wary of 'Extremist' Label

Praise From 3 Presidents

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CULPEPER, Va.—The Kremlin is keeping a wary eye on this small, quiet town in the Virginia farm and horse-breeding country.

In the eyes of Pravda, the Communist Party newspaper, nothing less sinister than "the sixth wing of the Pentagon" lurks here on quiet North Main Street, sandwiched between a savings and loan and a clothing store. It's the storefront headquarters of the American Security Council, a hawkish, fervently anti-Communist organization dedicated to U.S. "victory" in the cold war and to strengthening the nation's military defenses.

Pravda's displeasure is just fine with the council, which has parlayed its anticommunism into a thriving operation. Founded in 1955 as a small, business-financed research and education organization concerned primarily with the "internal Communist threat," it has mushroomed into a formidable national pressure group.

Today, the council claims 135,000 individual contributors and 1,500 corporate members (most of which, it says, don't build weapons). It estimates its annual income at \$1.4 million. It maintains close ties to certain congressional committees, and three retired chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff—Generals Nathan Twining, Lyman Lemnitzer and Earle Wheeler—serve as cochairmen of its national strategy committee.

Outgunned by Moscow?

Now, even as President Nixon reaches for detente with Moscow and Peking, the council is pursuing its most ambitious public-relations campaign yet. It aims to convince Americans that the U.S. has fallen dangerously behind the Soviet Union in nuclear weaponry. Convinced that peace is assured only if the U.S. regains—and then retains—"clear military superiority," the council's president, 50-year-old John M. Fisher, asserts:

"We no longer have the capacity to put a gun on them (the Soviets) because we find they have two guns on us."

While the council hailed the President's decision to mine North Vietnam's ports as "courageous," it takes a dark view of the strategic arms limitation agreement he brought back from the Moscow summit.

The council's national strategy committee is still making a formal, detailed analysis of the arms-control pact, but Mr. Fisher has already made up his mind. He sees the agreement as an "enormous victory for the McGoverns" in Congress, and he feels it freezes the U.S. in a position of nuclear inferiority.

Recently the council president wrote his members urging them, by implication, to work for the defeat of the agreement in the Senate through a letter-writing campaign. He calls the accord a triumph for "the powerful antidefense lobby" and warns that "America is in danger." As a realist, however, Mr. Fisher sees little prospect that the Senate will follow his advice; he would be satisfied if it would simply register "reservations" about the arms accord.

A Three-Pronged Campaign

To beam its controversial views to the public, the council works closely with an outfit called the Institute for American Strategy. The institute, also headed by Mr. Fisher, shares office space, mail facilities and many contributors with the council. On an isolated estate near here, the institute has started building a "Cold War College" to train leaders for the battle against communism. The three-pronged campaign of the council and the institute consists of:

—Production of a slickly professional, 27-minute television film that focuses on the Soviet strategic weapons buildup. Entitled "Only the Strong," the color film was written and directed by Harry Treleaven, President Nixon's TV adviser during the 1968 campaign. It is built around chilling footage of Russian weapons, and though the institute hasn't been able to get national network time to show it, the film has made about 30 local television appearances, including airings in Indianapolis and St. Louis. The institute hopes for five showings in each of 211 local television markets.

—Compilation of a national security voting index, rating all 535 members of Congress according to their stands on defense issues. The council bills itself as "nonpartisan," but it knows whom it doesn't like—mostly liberal Democrats. In a letter soliciting money to prepare and publicize the index, Mr. Fisher says: "Many voters aren't aware of how some Senators such as Kennedy, Muskie, Humphrey and McGovern and others have taken positions on national security matters which weaken America's defense against communism." Over three million of these letters have already gone into the mail, and the council plans to send out a million more. Thus far, well over \$500,000 has been collected, they say.

—Mail distribution of up to seven million brochures reprinting a statement by seven of 14 members of President Nixon's civilian blue-ribbon panel appointed to review national defense. The statement warns that the nuclear balance of power is "shifting . . . against the U.S. and in favor of the Soviet Union," declaring: "Among the great nations, only the strong survive." Recipients are also asked for donations.

The council started using direct-mail campaigns in 1969, when it distributed one million pieces of literature stating the case for building the antiballistic missile defense system, and also soliciting money. Today it uses an array of mailing lists to identify likely targets for its broadsides (the lists include Standard & Poor's register of directors, Epilepsy Foundation contributors, Fortune magazine subscribers and members of leading country and yachting clubs). Then it sends out the tracts to everyone from military officers to janitors and house-

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wives from an automated mailroom that can churn out 200,000 places a day.

The mail campaigns supplement the council's regular channels of communication. It publishes a twice-monthly Washington Report Newsletter (circulation 75,000) that analyzes national security issues; a recent copy warned that the President's China trip lengthened "the odds against the ultimate survival of free societies." It also produces a daily 3½-minute radio program carried by 350 stations in such diverse cities as Window Rock, Ariz., and Washington, D.C., as well as a daily Spanish-language radio program that reaches as far as Ecuador, Uruguay, Bolivia and Argentina.

All this activity upsets more than the Kremlin. It also riles many liberal organizations working to reduce military spending.

Sanford Persons, executive director of the Members of Congress for Peace Through Law, a group of 132 Democratic and Republican legislators that has been attacked by the council, views the council as a "holdover from the cold war." And Sanford Gottlieb, executive director of SANE, the antiwar group, believes the council represents the "institutionalized establishment hawks with very close ties to the military-industrial complex."

Recently, an article in *The Nation*, a liberal magazine of political comment, declared that if the American Security Council "doesn't constitute the heart of the military-industrial complex, it is unquestionably the soul."

"We're not warmongers," responds a council spokesman, accustomed to such criticism. "Our objective is to insure an adequate defense. We just don't want to get behind the Soviets." Mr. Fisher denies that the council is a front for the military-industrial complex. In fact, he wishes more defense contractors were members; as it is, he says, only \$29,000 of the council's \$1.4 million income comes from corporations involved in defense work.

(A partial list of active corporate members, supplied by Mr. Fisher, includes Lumbermens Mutual Casualty Co., McDonnell Douglas Corp., General Electric Co., Motorola Inc., Joseph E. Seagram & Sons Inc. and Southern California Edison Co.)

Mr. Fisher, the driving force and dominant personality in both the council and the institute, is keenly aware that both organizations could be badly damaged if they were labeled as "right-wing" or "extremist." To avoid this, both carefully refrain from engaging in personal attacks on public officials or impugning their patriotism and loyalty.

Mr. Fisher says he personally doesn't "support or endorse" the John Birch Society—which has questioned the loyalty of such public officials as the late President Eisenhower. Though he says he isn't aware of any John Birch members who belong to the council, he won't attack the society. "They're not the enemy," he says.

Responding in a Reasonable Way

Liberal legislators concerned about the rapid growth of the Pentagon budget disagree heartily with the council's positions, but few attack the organization itself.

"The council isn't really what you'd classically call extremist because they purport to have reasons for what they believe," says Rep. Robert Leggett, a liberal California Democrat who sits on the Armed Services Committee. "They have to be responded to in a reasonable way. The danger is that the material generated by organizations such as the council is used in our war colleges."

Sen. William Proxmire, the Wisconsin Democrat who is one of the Pentagon's sharpest critics, charges that the council's information campaigns on the strategic balance are "very misleading." The council, he says, has an "automatic blind spot that those who are critical of the Pentagon are in favor of enfeebling the nation." While declining to pin a "right or left" label on the council, Mr. Proxmire sees it as a "scare-the-hell-out-of-'em-the-Russians-are-coming" organization.

Officials say the image that both the council and the institute seek is that of a "progressive bank"—"moderate, rational, respectable." So it helps that the council can point to kind words from President Nixon (who thanked it for its "important work" in the 1969 legislative fight over the ABM) and President Eisenhower ("Your work will keep the lights of freedom burning brightly"). And in 1966 the institute was commended by President Johnson for its commitment to "defending freedom and promoting peace."

Library and Leather Chairs

Respectability was a big criterion when Mr. Fisher went shopping for a site for the Cold War College and the eventual headquarters for both the institute and the council. He found the perfect location in 1966—an estate of hundreds of acres, complete with 24-room English style manor house, nine miles west of here. Now Mr. Fisher proudly shows visitors through the elegant mansion, with its wood-paneled library, leather chairs and chess sets on display.

Mr. Fisher, a soft-spoken Ohioan who fre-

quently punctuates his attacks on communism with bursts of good-natured laughter, has devoted 17 years to council work. An ex-FBI agent, he went to work for Sears, Roebuck & Co. in 1953. In 1955, Sears assigned him the task of finding financial support from companies to acquire a private library on communism that had become available.

The result was formation that same year of the Mid-American Research Library Inc., later renamed the American Security Council, with the backing of such companies as Sears, Motorola Inc. and Stewart-Warner Corp. (Today, Robert Galvin, chairman of Motorola, is chairman of the council's senior advisory board.)

It was anticipated that the library would be used to publish papers on communism. But it also had a more controversial use—a place for companies to check the personal histories of speakers or employees who might need security clearances. Council officials vigorously deny, however, that the library was ever used to compile blacklists. The personnel checks "never amounted to much in the way of volume," Mr. Fisher insists, and now have been phased out entirely.

"If we didn't have the library, we'd be accused of just shooting from the hip" in making statements about communism, Mr. Fisher complains. "If we have a library, we're blacklists."

Over the years, the council has maintained close ties with the hawkish House Armed Services Committee and the House Committee on Internal Security, formerly known as the House Committee on Un-American Activities.

Not Without Problems

At the request of the House Armed Services Panel, the council prepared studies on "the changing strategic military balance" in 1967 and on the balance of naval power in 1968. The chairman of the Internal Security Committee, Democratic Rep. Richard Ichord of Missouri, is the legislative editor of the radio program and is heard on the air.

Mr. Fisher isn't without his problems. Plans for the \$12 million college are behind schedule because of insufficient funds. And the council's radio program is struggling to recover from a 1969 tailspin after Eversharp Inc. stopped footing the monthly \$20,000 bill for production and distribution. The number of stations carrying the program dropped to 300 from 1,100 but has since climbed back to 350.

But Mr. Fisher has big plans. He wants to put the radio show on a commercial basis (300 of the 350 stations now get it free) and envisions a nonaccredited college that could enroll about 400 students at a time. The idea is that after about a year of course work, many graduates (who would receive no degree) would become leaders in the network of "local security councils" Mr. Fisher wants to set up around the country. Among other things, the councils would promote area broadcasts of the TV film, "Only the Strong."

But for all his activity, Mr. Fisher insists that what he desires most is to work himself out of his \$27,500-a-year job. "I don't think anyone connected with the council is interested in the continuation of the cold war," he says. "In most cases we could make more doing something else."