

there is between East and West Germany. Similarly, Japan's foreign policy is so bound up with its economy that it will probably succumb to Soviet economic overtures. And many Western leaders are sure to allude to the "real" hawks lurking in the Kremlin, much as President Carter did last year to bolster support for SALT II, and as President Truman did in 1945. "It would be a real catastrophe if Stalin should die at the present time," Truman said that October, when the Soviets and Americans were already on a collision course, for he then considered Stalin a "moderating influence," a sentiment sure to reemerge in regard to Brezhnev later this year.

In the new Age of Normalcy, then, another round of Soviet adventurism will undoubtedly ensue, although probably not another Afghanistan. First of all, so brazen

an attack may not be necessary for the Russians; and second, there is a cost to an invasion like this, not in the hand-slapping at the UN or in the tough-talking at the White House, but in the way it galvanizes what *Pravda* calls the "reactionary elements" within the U.S. In this case, such "elements," parlaying Afghanistan and the Iranian crisis together, are at the front of a new pro-Americanism which will burn as the most important political force in the next several years. They have also helped the American public (if not leaders) to recognize that there is evil loose in the world which succumbs neither to the seduction of American goodness—Carter's government "as kind and good and moral as the American people"—nor, unlike the postwar days, to the fear of American might. Carter may not long remember that Afghanistan changed his ideas about the Soviets' love of peace (ideas of the type which prompted

Cyrus Vance to say that Carter and Brezhnev shared "similar dreams and aspirations" for the world), but the American people *will* remember. They will face the undeniable fact that Mr. Carter fears power and knows not how to use it. They will recognize that the Soviets no longer practice—if they ever did—restraint for the sake of world stability. Through SALT, the 1973 détente accord on superpower cooperation, and the 1979 Vienna summit, the U.S. bestowed the Soviet Union with superpower prestige with the understanding that it would behave responsibly like one. If South Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Angola, Ethiopia, and South Yemen—to name only those places where new Marxist regimes have come to power since 1975 with the help of Soviet arms and Cuban or Soviet combat troops—were not evidence enough, let us hope that, with the invasion of Afghanistan, such illusions are dead. □

Aram Bakshian, Jr.

## THE IMPERIAL CANDIDACY

John Connally understands power, but who will trust him with it?

Henry Kissinger once declared that power is the greatest aphrodisiac. Personally, I question his judgment. To the small degree that I have ever been exposed to the stuff, I've always found it something between an unpleasant distraction from the really worthwhile things in life and a mild soporific. But then writers are strange anyway. If one does take Kissinger at his word—which not everyone is willing to do these days—John Connally must be the randiest candidate in the race. The man exudes power and is a past master at accruing and wielding it. And Henry Kissinger, whatever his foibles, is a formidable connoisseur of power and ego. Thus his description of John Connally in his recently published memoirs merits consideration as expert testimony:

Highly intelligent, superbly endowed physically, he looked and acted as if he were born to

*Aram Bakshian, Jr., former aide to Presidents Nixon and Ford, writes frequently for The American Spectator. This essay is adapted from his new book, The Candidates—1980: A Professional Handicaps the Presidential Derby, published by Arlington House. Copyright © 1980 by Aram Bakshian, Jr.*

lead [Kissinger writes of Connally]. His build was matched by his ego. His amiable manner never obscured the reality that he would not hesitate to overcome any obstacle to his purposes. "You will be measured in this town," he said to me once, "by the enemies you destroy. The bigger they are, the bigger you will be." John Connally was never afraid of his opponents; he relished combat in defense of his convictions. Whatever one might think of his views, he was a leader.

Without differing from Kissinger's view of Connally as a leader, one can find serious reasons for questioning the current wisdom which rates the swaggering Texan as Ronald Reagan's leading challenger. Even the best leader is powerless without followers and, while Connally has managed to assemble a solid campaign command team at the top, and has raked in money from the fat cats, he has yet to prove his ability to attract Republican voters *en masse*. It's the old Benedict Arnold syndrome at work again. In 1780, Arnold, one of the most talented of George Washington's generals, switched sides in the Revolutionary War, abandoning his West Point command and joining the British. His defection caused quite a stir at the time, but the British, leary of trusting a turncoat, were afraid to give his talents full

play, and so Arnold never again commanded a major army.

Two hundred years later, John Connally, who defected from the Democrats in 1973, has applied for the job of 1980 Republican Commander-in-Chief. And so far, most grassroots Republicans seem to be treating him with the same mixture of awe and distrust that the British did Arnold. Yet the undeniable dynamism of the man is such that large segments of the press, the business community, and political professionals think he may be the only man capable of overcoming Ronald Reagan's lead and then beating the Democratic nominee in the general election.

How much of Connally's strength is real, and how much of it is just a product of the masterful Texan's tall talking? My own reading is that Connally is weaker than he looks and that the same bluster that initially won him headlines and big campaign contributions is starting to cost him votes and esteem—especially among cautious, slightly priggish Republican voters who, on top of everything else, find his speech and mannerisms unpleasantly reminiscent of Lyndon Johnson.

It's only right that they should, for LBJ was John Connally's political godfather. Connally cut his political teeth as a young Johnson staffer in the House of Representatives and the Senate in the 1930s and 1940s. It was also Johnson's patronage as Vice President that won Connally his appointment as Secretary of the Navy in 1961—the post that served as his springboard to the governorship of Texas. As governor, Connally proved his own mettle, winning re-election twice and serving three two-year terms from 1963-1967. Tough, articulate, and photogenic, Connally was one of the most popular, successful governors in the state's history. But the fact remains that, with the sole exception of George Bush—another Texan and probably Connally's nearest rival—his is the weakest elective record among Republican candidates for the nomination.

Since 1966 Connally has not been judged by American voters in any contest for public office. And he has *never* run in any general election as a Republican. In the ordinary course of events, Connally would still be practicing lucrative law in Houston, as he was in 1971 when Richard Nixon, casting about for a well-known Democrat to take on the thankless post of Secretary of the Treasury—and add a *suspicion* of bipartisanship to his administration's economic policy—decided on Connally.

In 1971, with the Democrats already beginning to set the suicidal course that ended with Nixon's 1972 landslide victory over George McGovern, it seemed as if a drastic political realignment was about to take place. The "Emerging Republican Majority" that Kevin Phillips had prophesied in 1969 seemed imminent, and John Connally decided that he wanted in on the action. So he came to Washington, was an impressive political success as Secretary of the Treasury, went on to head Democrats for Nixon in the 1972 campaign, and, in 1973, formally announced that he had turned Republican.

From then on it was downhill. If Connally had known in 1973 what he knows now, he would probably still be a Democrat. The "New Majority" died a-borning in the rubble of Watergate; and in the prosecution fever that followed, Connally was indicted and tried on charges of pocketing graft. Washington, which had recently seemed such a warm, promising place, turned grey around the edges for the high roller from Texas.

It all might have been too much for a weaker man, but Connally, to his credit, fought back. Exonerated of bribery charges by a full acquittal, he immediately plunged back into politics. Soon he was one of the most popular after-dinner speakers on the Republican and corporate lecture circuit. Connally rightly points out that, by being tried and acquitted, he is the only *provenly* innocent candidate in the race. However, like the man who had his head cut off to

cure a migraine, Connally may have lost more than he gained. Certainly, a residue of scandal still haunts him. The discredited milk-fund charges will be repeated, exaggerated, and distorted with increasing frequency if Connally moves up in the race. This isn't fair, but it's routine politics.

Besides his personal magnetism, the two related qualities most often mentioned by Connally's supporters are his pragmatism and his leadership. Unfortunately for Connally, both of these qualities cut two ways, especially among the people most likely to vote in Republican primaries. "Pragmatism"—where strongly ideological Republicans are concerned—smacks seriously of heresy and opportunism. And "leadership," when applied to a glib, somewhat overbearing Texan like Connally, summons up unpleasant memories of LBJ. So Connally's two biggest assets may also prove his two biggest liabilities on the road to the nomination.

And Lyndon Johnson isn't the only albatross hanging around John Connally's ruddy neck. In retrospect, he has been singularly unfortunate in his choice of patrons—first LBJ and then Richard Nixon. How well I remember the way Nixon, as President, used to rave about Connally's skill as a political "nutcutter," his powers as a speaker, and his ability to "get things done." Several years after Nixon's involuntary retirement, when I spent a few weeks in San Clemente editing portions of his memoirs, the former President was still keen on Connally, considering him head and shoulders above other potential Republican candidates. "John's got balls," Nixon declared, once more putting the matter in a nutshell.

In fact, it was an open secret back in 1972 that, if it hadn't been for grassroots GOP distrust of Connally and residual party loyalty to Spiro Agnew, Connally would have been Nixon's running mate

against George McGovern. Had that happened, Connally might be President today.

"Only three men in America understand the use of power," Nixon once told economist Arthur Burns. "I do. John Connally does. And I guess Nelson [Rockefeller] does."

That's quite a tribute until one recalls that "Nelson" understood power so well that he never succeeded in winning the one emblem of power he yearned for more than anything else in the world—the Presidency—and that Nixon, although a skilled power broker in international affairs, misread the domestic power balance so badly that he was, in his own words, hounded out of office because of "a third-rate burglary."

Maybe John Connally is different. He certainly understands the trappings—if not the underlying dynamics—of power. He deserves great credit, to cite but one example, for parlaying little more than his bravado and the dubious prestige of being a retired Democratic governor of Texas to coming within inches of being Nixon's successor ("Every cabinet should have a future President in it," Nixon told John Ehrlichman by way of explaining his appointment of Connally to Treasury—and he meant it).

Connally is definitely, in Arthur Burns' wonderful understatement, "a forceful, ambitious man." But will that be enough to win him the Republican nomination in 1980?

No one can accuse him of mincing words in the pursuit. John Connally has marked off friendly and enemy constituencies and boldly outlined policies most candidates are afraid to grapple with even in the vaguest terms. He seems to agree with the late General George Patton's approach to battle: "Take calculated risks. That is quite different from being rash." →



America—especially American leadership—has gone morally and materially flabby, Connally tells his audiences. We need an unapologetically strong man at the helm again, one who will, among other things:

- Strengthen the fleet, deploy the MX Missile and the Neutron Bomb, and go ahead with the B1 Bomber.
- Balance the budget (which Connally says he would do within two years if elected).
- Cut taxes by as much as \$100 billion in the next three to five years.
- Soften environmental regulations to permit greater use of coal ("The worst environment," he reminds working-class audiences, "is to be cold, hungry, and unemployed...it's time to stop taking scientific advice from Jane Fonda and Ralph Nader.").
- Speed up the construction of nuclear power plants.

This little bag of conservative goodies, while more emphatically pitched by Connally, isn't really that different from Reagan's or Bush's preliminary platforms, and perhaps for that reason, it has been widely ignored by press and public. Where Connally *is* different, and where he has received more publicity than even he may have wanted, is on the ticklish Middle East question. This is the biggest gamble of the biggest gambler in the race, and it seems to have done John Connally more harm than good.

I leave it to my readers to decide whether Connally's nine-point proposal for a peace settlement in the Middle East is what he claims, or the "total surrender to blackmail by oil-producing countries" that its critics claim. For the purposes of handicapping him as a Presidential contender, the real question is whether his position helped or hurt his chances. I be-

lieve that it has damaged his *present* prospects as a nominee and potential candidate—regardless of whether one happens to view him as a prophet without honor or an opportunist betrayed by poor sense of timing. But we can't be sure until well into the primaries, which makes his Mideast position one of Connally's biggest wild cards.

**S**trong, not to say pugnacious, Connally may appear to be too much of a leader in the autocratic sense for many voters. Early in the race, while most of his rivals were still struggling to boost their name recognition, Connally's problem was that quite a few people already recognized his name and decided that they didn't like it. My usually calm, scholarly friend, columnist George Will, who bitterly denounced Connally's Mideast plan, quipped that Connally "may have the support of 80 percent of the officers of the 'Fortune 500' corporations, but they are (to exaggerate just a bit) about 80 percent of his support."

George then illustrated his point with a Field poll taken in California in the spring of 1979 which revealed Connally as the only Republican candidate who "generated more negative than positive impressions," and a more current private poll targeted at Republican primary voters in the Northeast which showed a solid 30 percent "would not vote for Connally under any circumstances." He went on to address the matter of Connally's aggressive campaigning style:

Connally's veiled references to Reagan's age (Reagan is all of six years older than Connally) and Connally's not-at-all veiled references to Chappaquiddick ("I never drowned anybody")

are nasty. Perhaps nasty people deserve a candidate, and the nasty constituency is not negligible. Connally may even become "the thinking person's Agnew," which is, of course, a contradiction in terms....

It is this Connally abrasiveness—and the vindictiveness it generates in usually *blasé* commentators like George Will—that raises questions about Connally's leadership image. Some of those sparks of acrimony are bound to kindle voter discomfort—especially among Republican voters already dubious about Connally's party credentials. On the other hand, his tendency to take the clear, hard line where others waffle, also sets Connally apart for praise by Americans tired of the usual campaign blahs. John Connally is an obviously *strong* leader, but many voters are uncertain whether his is "good" strength or "bad" strength.

Connally is running a high-risk campaign and would prove to be a high-risk, high-yield President if nominated and elected. He is a true patriot but also a true autocrat in the LBJ mold—more polished than Lyndon but every bit as overbearing and egotistical. That is why so many voters fear him—and so many others see him as the only man strong enough to deal with the current national mess. From a writer's point of view, a Connally Presidency would be fascinating and fun. Watching him swing into action always is. But I believe that in 1980 the people he frightens—and the people in whom he inspires distrust or distaste—will outnumber his supporters in the GOP race.

If he could get through that, he would probably beat either Carter or Kennedy. But it just isn't in the cards for 1980—at least as I read them. □



Karl O'Lessker

## LE CARRÉ'S PEOPLE

With *Smiley's People*, John le Carré brings his brilliant spy trilogy to an end, along with any doubts about his being a serious novelist.

With the publication of *Smiley's People*\* John le Carré brings to a conclusion what has turned out to be a trilogy—a set of three spy novels, chronologically ordered, involving the conflict between George Smiley, sometime Chief of the British Secret Service, and “Karla,” head of the KGB’s Thirteenth Directorate. Though Smiley had appeared as the unprepossessing hero of le Carré’s first two books, one a spy story, the other a conventional murder mystery,† and as a walk-on in three later spy novels, beginning with the one that brought le Carré international fame, *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold* (1963),‡ it was not until *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy* (1974) that his creator moved him to or near the pinnacle of British Intelligence and invented Karla as his Soviet foil. This was followed by *The Honourable Schoolboy* (1977), populated by many of the same characters and ending with Smiley’s forced retirement as Chief. But he is back now, called once more to service by his successor: “. . . given, in late age, a chance to return to the rained-out contests of his life and play them after all.” And this, for reasons which I shall certainly not reveal here, is the last time we may hope to see him locked in combat with the extraordinary Karla.

Taken all in all, the Smiley trilogy is a grand achievement, beyond question the finest series of international intrigue fiction in our language. Whether it is also *literature* is another question, to which I shall want to return a bit later. For the moment let me only say that in my judgment *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy* is the best spy novel ever written, with the current *Smiley's People* not far behind. And if *The Honourable Schoolboy* doesn't quite

meet the standards of the other two, it is nevertheless a marvelous “read.” Each of the three stands by itself as a complete novel, but the rewards are richer if you read them consecutively.

*Smiley's People* begins, as I have said, with “the summons of Mr. George Smiley from his dubious retirement.” The attempted intimidation by a KGB thug of an otherwise nondescript Russian woman in Paris and the murder in London of an elderly Russian emigré leader, formerly of British Intelligence, are the “two seemingly unconnected events” that intertwine to pull Smiley out of the London Library in St. James’ Square, away from his research in German baroque poetry, and onto the trail, not of one of Karla’s agents, but of Karla himself. Along the way he reactivates many of his old associates from the earlier books—Peter Guillam, Connie Sachs, Toby Esterhase—and wearily drags himself across the face of Europe to a final climactic encounter at the Berlin Wall. The plot is intricate but not at all tricky, the characterizations superb, the evocation of place masterly, the technical detail impeccable. It is altogether a superlative performance by the former British civil servant, David Cornwell, turned peerless spy novelist, John le Carré.

Now that the trilogy is complete, it is worth asking two separate but important questions about the *genre* and le Carré’s place in it. The first has to do with politics. Specifically, can a spy novel embody any political ideas other than the most rudimentary? Once an author gets above the

good-guys-versus-bad-guys level (as in, say, Ian Fleming’s or Robert Ludlum’s books, which are as innocent of ideas as a Tom Swift story), it seems to me the writer can hardly avoid portraying the interplay of ideology and individual; and the manner of his portrayal can hardly avoid embodying a political idea. So it was that in this journal some months ago I wrote harshly about Graham Greene, who in his most recent novel, *The Human Factor*, contrasted through their respective intelligence agents a brutal, corrupt, racist, and incompetent West to a quietly efficient, even humanitarian, Soviet Union. Clearly Greene, a man of high intellectual and artistic ability, knew precisely what he was doing, politically, and why.

A rather more familiar approach—which probably owes its origins to le Carré’s own *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold*—claims a kind of ideological neutrality by simply portraying espionage as a dirty business no matter in which nation’s interest it is performed. Double-cross and triple-cross are the norm, with one’s own agents as much at hazard from one’s own acts as from the enemy’s. Spies, and especially spymasters, are moral basket-cases. To gain any worthwhile end they will resolutely sacrifice the innocent. Little wonder that the real-world spymaster Richard Helms found *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold* not only uncongenial but hateful:

It was not just the violence Helms minded, but the betrayal, the mood of defeat, the meanness, the numb loneliness of a man for whom loyalty has become a joke. . . . Le Carré was undermining the very bedrock of intelligence, the faith of men in the meaning of their work. . . . [Helms] didn’t just dislike le Carré’s book; he *detested* it.\*\*

Without passing judgment on Helms’ own morals or performance, one has to wonder whether there isn’t here an element of overreaction, of protesting too much. For as Helms’ biographer makes clear, such le Carré themes as the psychological destructiveness of a long career in

\*\* Thomas Powers, *The Man Who Kept the Secrets*, p. 55.



\* Knopf, \$10.95.

† *Call for the Dead* (1961) and *A Murder of Quality* (1962). Both have just been republished by Bantam Books.

‡ *The Looking Glass War* (1965) and *A Small Town in Germany* (1968).

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