

CARTER AND THE FIRST HUNDRED DAYS

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President Carter seems to have weathered the first hundred days of his administration's shakedown cruise in good fashion. His performance could almost be graded at B-minus. Nothing too much has been accomplished, and nothing too much has gotten out of hand. His battles with Congress have not yet materialized, although they may still lie ahead on the horizon.

The week he devoted to pushing his energy program was a calm one, and his proposals were generally accepted with a minimum of grousing. There was even some criticism that he did not go far enough. Most of his calls for "drastic sacrifices" were hedged with enough "ifs" and "buts" to make them adequately palatable to politicians, press and public. If the crisis ahead is as bad as he hints, or as serious as we think it will be, one might have hoped for personal leadership with more of the outspoken bluntness of a Goldwater, or even (forgive us) a Spiro Agnew, men who once spoke their minds forcefully and to hell with repercussions.

In fact, there is a touch of unreality about Carter that is hard to pinpoint. He is still not quite believable as a President, and his debts to those vague manipulative forces in his background remain unanswered. We refer here to the international group of David Rockefeller's Trilateral Commission, references to which cropped up repeatedly during the campaign and now surface again in back-page articles of newspapers and magazines.

President Jimmy Carter, U.S.A. may not be a creation of the Trilateral Commission, but as an invited member of the group ever since he left the Governor's office here in Georgia, he has certainly become surrounded in official Washington with a plentiful supply of cozy, fellow commission members—Mondale, Brown, Vance, Brezinski. And despite his homey, revivalist, plain folks appeal, one can be sure that the behind-the-scene efforts of these influential people contributed mightily both to his nomination and election.

This association, of course, may turn out to be exactly the type management our government has needed all along; a benign (we hope) quasi directorship of intelligence wedded to democracy, capitalism, business and the free enterprise system (even with a smiling front man as master of ceremonies). One should be thankful that the apparent ideology of the Commission is not that of a socialist McGovern, nor even that of the Kennedy clique, which had no firm direction and which concerned itself primarily with the acquisition and enjoyment of power, while expending most of its energies on public relations to maintain its gilded image.

So, we can continue to hope, even though he was not our choice, there is more to President Carter than meets the eye, that the Trilateral Commission is honestly intentioned and that the Carter administration will turn out well. Meanwhile, at least to some here in Georgia, it is a comfort to know that some down-to-earth people like Bert Lance and Griffin Bell are still around up there in Washington to give advice.

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