CENTER REVIEW

Vol. 1. No. 2. A Publication of the Center for Psychological Studies in the Nuclear Age Spring, 1987

Commentary

WHEN IDEOLOGY DRIVES

By John E. Mack, M.D.
Academic Director, CPSNA

As we try to discover in the Iran/Contra affair which laws were broken, who knew or did what when and with whose permission, we might profit from considering the psychological context in which this most recent foreign policy debacle took place.

Behind the scandal resides a seemingly bottomless fear and hatred of the Soviet Union which is intensified by the threat of nuclear weapons in Russian hands and by our own inescapable feeling of vulnerability. In response to the perceived challenge of the Soviet Union to American power, and its threat to our survival, we have been emotionally imprisoned by an ideology of enmity that obscures unwelcome realities, permits policies which aggravate the problem, and impedes the development of new or creative approaches that might lessen the danger.

One of the early roots of the concept of ideology is contained in philosopher Francis Bacon's term "idola," meaning "impediment to knowledge." In the political realm ideologies are over-simplified, polarized world views, ways of thinking that remove complexities and exclude information about other societies or our own which are not consistent with them. When ideology drives us, possibilities and fears become actualities, capabilities of another nation become intentions, and lying by government officials is fostered.

An ideology of enmity is held in the society through an unacknowledged compact between ideologically minded leaders and a citizenry that is manipulated through the mass media into accepting the perceptions and asssumptions about the political world which derive from this system of thought. Ideologies have deep psychological roots in the primitive mind of the

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Center Colloquium Review

CHAUTAUQUA GOES TO THE SOVIET UNION: A CASE STUDY IN TRACK II DIPLOMACY

The Center's December 1986 Colloquium was presented by Joseph V. Montville, Research Director, Center for the Study of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Service Institute, Department of State, Washington D. C., and took place at the Cambridge Hospital.

In 1985, Joseph Montville helped to organize a meeting of Americans and Soviets to examine US/Soviet relations. This meeting, sponsored by and held at the Chautauqua Institution, brought together for one week Soviet and American government leaders, scholars, and activists to explore possibilities for reducing tension and enhancing understanding between the two countries. In September of 1986, the Soviets hosted a second forum in Latvia. The Chautauqua meetings and other similar endeavors are sometimes referred to as "track II diplomacy." Mr. Montville began his presentation by defining this term.

Those who engage in track II diplomacy, he said, recognize that group psychological forces are at work which promote and sustain enmity through psychological distancing. Government leaders are often selected, particularly in stressful times, to play the role of "warrior defender." Such leaders are seen as betraying their supporters if they should display even intellectual curiosity about the enemy.

There are limits to the progress that such "track I" leaders and their official charges can make in reducing psychological distance. Track II diplomacy is compensatory. It often involves facilitated small group meetings in private and informal settings designed not to achieve binding negotiated settlements, but rather, to define fair and just areas of consensus. When progress is made, it can directly inform later track I efforts, or shape public opinion to ultimately legitimize further exploration of areas of consensus. Track II diplomacy may involve broad based efforts to "humanize the enemy," (e.g. through workshops for Arab and Jewish children) or professional collaboration across boundaries of enmity.

The first Chautauqua forum addressing the US/Soviet relationship was clearly a track II effort: a diverse group of individuals, including but not dominated by government officials, met in an informal atmosphere. Major topics of discusssion were the history of the US/Soviet relationship, the psychological roots of the US/Soviet conflict, bilateral relations, and strategic arms issues.

The second Chautaqua forum, held in Latvia in 1986, was a track II success in that it represented unprecedented recognition of the importance of "non-official"

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INSIDE

Old and New Trends in Soviet Education. A colloquium with Professor Urie Bronfenbrenner and Fred Hechinger March 20. See page 2 for details.

Upcoming Events

Center Colloquia

March 20, 1987—**Old and New Trends in Soviet Education,** a presentation by ***Dr. Urie Bronfenbrenner,*** Professor of Human Development, Cornell University, and ***Mr. Fred Hechinger,*** President, New York Times Company Foundation, consultant on Soviet education to the Carnegie Corporation, and former education editor, *The New York Times.* Professor Bronfenbrenner and Mr. Hechinger, leading experts on Soviet education for more than three decades, will speak on the evolution of Soviet schools from the 1950's to the current Gorbachev era of school reform and computer use. This event is being co-sponsored by the Center's International Children's Project and the Harvard Graduate School of Education and will be held at Longfellow Hall, Appian Way, Cambridge 7:30-9:30 pm with a reception to follow.

April 2, 1987—**Breaking the Silence: When Families Confront the Nuclear Taboo.** By ***Steven Zeitlin***, PhD, member of the Board of Directors of the Center. In interviews with families from a variety of ethnic and economic backgrounds, Dr. Zeitlin and his colleagues have explored the effects of the nuclear threat on family life. In a recently published book, *No Reason to Talk About It: Families Confront the Nuclear Taboo,* Dr. Zeitlin and Dr. David Greenwald present and analyze these findings. This colloquium will focus on processes that occur in families as they face this issue together and how that may inform our understanding of the processes that occur in any group (including decision-makers) that may consider this issue.

May 7, 1987—**War and Martial Sacrifice in America: From the Revolution through the Nuclear Age, a slide show and lecture by *Edward Tabor Linenthal,*** Associate Professor of History, University of Wisconsin, currently a Visiting Scholar at the Center for International Studies at MIT. Through an examination of martial art, literature, poetry, and ritual celebrations at battle-sites, this presentation will illustrate the evolution of symbols through which Americans have interpreted warfare and celebrated different types of warriors as cultural heroes. This lecture will convey the power and danger of adherence to traditional symbols of war as they are used to envision scenarios of nuclear war.

May 14, 1987—**What is it Really Like to Look into the Nuclear Abyss? The Adaptive Role of Fear in Looking into the Cuban Missile Crisis** by ***James G. Blight,*** PhD., Research Fellow and Director of the Project on Avoiding Nuclear War, Harvard Kennedy School of Government. Dr. Blight will discuss his interviews with individuals who played key roles in the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Center Colloquia are generally open to the public. They are usually audiotaped; copies of tapes are made available through the Center. Written reports and videotapes of some events are also made available. Audiotapes, videotapes and a written report are all available for our November panel, ***"Images of the Enemy in the Popular Media".*** *For more information about Center events and materials please call the Center office (617) 497-1553.* ■

Public Education Program

The Center is happy to announce that its public education program has grown dramatically in response to public requests for information. For a complete listing of reprints, videotapes and audiotapes available through the Center please write to:
Public Education Coordinator
Center for Psychological Studies
in the Nuclear Age
1493 Cambridge Street
Cambridge, MA 02139 or call
(617) 497-1553.

Center Workshops and Discussion Groups

Families Face the Nuclear Threat: Where Do We Go From Here?

This Spring the Center will sponsor a workshop for individuals who work with families responding to the nuclear threat, or who are considering doing so. The workshop, led by Dr. Steven Zeitlin, will assist participants to bring their particular talents and experiences to bear upon their work with this issue, whether that work is in the area of research, education, teaching or clinical intervention. Four sessions will be held at the Cambridge Hospital on Thursday evenings from 8:00 to 10:00. The dates and topics are as follows:

April 9:
Family coping strategies for dealing with vulnerability
April 23:
The influence of family history on the development of social responsibility
May 7:
Developing active/creative responses to the nuclear threat as a family
May 21:
The application of systems thinking to the nuclear dilemma

In order to provide a common background, participants will be asked to read *No Reason to Talk About It: Families Confront the Nuclear Taboo*, by Dr. David Greenwald and Dr. Steven Zeitlin, which will be made available through the Center.

The registration fee for the workshop will be $50.00. Registration will be limited to 20. Please contact Paula Gutlove at the Center [(617)497-1553] to register or for further information.

* * * * * * *

Dr. Petra Hesse, a Research Affiliate of the Center recently started a research group addressing the "Development of Images of the 'Enemy' in Children and Adolescents". The group meets biweekly. If you are interested in learning more about the group, please call Petra at 497-1090. ■

A REVIEW OF RECENT PUBLICATIONS

-"Perceptions of the Threat of Nuclear War: Research and Professional Implications" by William R. Beardslee

-"Children's and Adolescents' Fears of Nuclear War: Is our Sense of the Future Disappearing?" by Petra Hesse

Published in a special issue of the International Journal of Mental Health *entitled* Mental Health Implications of Life in the Nuclear Age, *vol. 15, No. 1-3, 1986.*

Nuclear weapons securely tucked in silos, subs, and aircraft may release a kind of fallout: a fallout of fear. Two recently published articles by Center researchers William R. Beardslee MD and Petra Hesse, PhD discuss the effects of this fallout on children, who may be most susceptible to it.

In his article "Perceptions of the Threat of Nuclear War: Research and Professional Implications," Dr. Beardslee cites evidence suggesting that a significant and increasing percentage of young people across the world are seriously troubled by the threat of a nuclear war. Most of them learn about the issue piecemeal from the media, and don't discuss it with parents or teachers; they are left alone with their fears. More research is needed to determine the effects of such fears on young people's mental health and life plans. Especially needed, Beardslee claims, is research on coping strategies. Preliminary studies suggest that children who are well-informed about nuclear issues function better then those who are less informed.

Yet is is difficult, Beardslee observes, for parents and educators to provide the necessary guidance on this subject, just as it is difficult for researchers to delve into it. Many adults find that discussing nuclear war with children raises their own fears of dreadful possibilities. Beardslee concludes that parents and professionals need to be supported in their efforts to come to terms with the threat of nuclear war; only then can the necessary full-scale educational and research efforts begin. For both children and adults, Beardslee reminds us, partial awareness can lead to feeling helpless and hopeless, but education can stimulate actions that return some feeling of control. Conscious awareness is in itself therapeutic, and is the prerequisite for change.

One consequence of youngsters' hidden fears may be a pervasive sense of hopelessness—but we don't yet know for sure. In recent years psychologists have been reporting that increasing numbers of young people feel they have no future, and so are reluctant to someday marry and have children. Yet as Petra Hesse reports in her article "Children's and Adolescents' Fears of Nuclear War: Is Our Sense of the Future Disappearing?", not enough is known for conclusions to be drawn. While up to 80% of young Americans claim that their fears about nuclear war have affected their plans for their personal lives, more research is needed to understand these fears. It remains to be determined whether or not they actually inhibit the young from "enjoying the present" and actualizing plans for the future, and whether they ever cause psychopathology.

Children in many countries list nuclear war among their three worst fears, along with their parents' death and future unemployment. Dr. Hesse suggests that the intensity of young people's fears may fluctuate little over generations but that fears may simply manifest themselves in different forms according to the circumstances of each generation. If the sense of futurelessness is peculiar to our times, as some researchers believe, it may be caused by other factors, such as family

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Chautauqua

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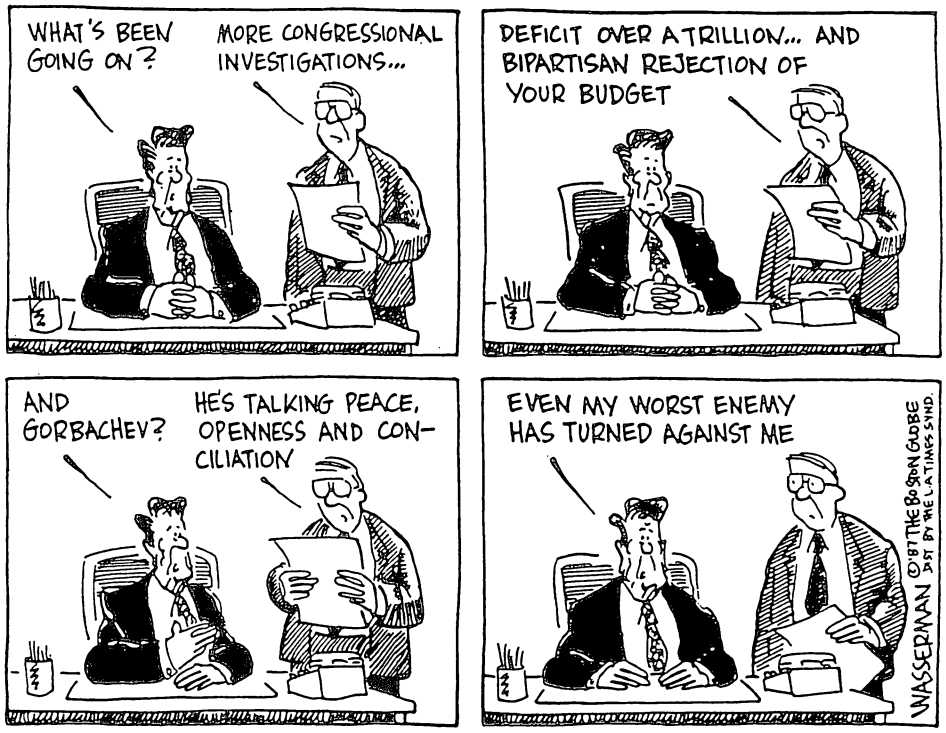
dialogue. However, it did not fully meet Mr. Montville's criteria for track II diplomacy. First, because the Soviets requested that as many high level government officials as possible attend, the US delegation included more government leaders than did the delegation to the first meeting. Second, intense media coverage made the meetings far from private and informal. Some speakers were constrained from being more open than they might have been in an off-the-record exchange.

Although the Soviets began the meetings with an address made "more in sorrow than in anger," the Americans responded with strongly stated positions critical of Soviet policies, and these statements recurred over the next four days. The Soviets retaliated in kind. It seemed that psychological distance was being widened, not narrowed.

Former governor Charles Robb of Virginia was the last high level speaker scheduled to present his prepared statement. He arrived late in the week and listened to reports of the deteriorating atmosphere and of Soviet grievances, including a feeling that Americans were unwilling to be self-critical and to recognize positive Soviet accomplishments and attitudes. Robb worked quickly to revise his speech to promote a sense of emotional mending before the adjournment of the meeting. In his speech, Robb made a very strong statement in support of human rights and American political values, and was openly critical of what he saw as Soviet violations of these values at home and abroad. However, he also admitted that both sides – Soviets and Americans – engage in stereotyping, and he said that he was not fully satisfied with the American record in addressing serious social problems. He mentioned the heroism of the firemen at Chernobyl who lost their lives putting out the fire in order to limit further loss of life. Thus, while not compromising his own political position, he managed to lend an air of honesty and openness and a sense of accomplishment to an atmosphere of hurt and hostility.



Also contributing to the success of the Latvian forum were the informal exchanges between American and Soviet audience participants (200 American citizens were in the Latvian audience) and artistic performances in the evening; both demonstrated a mutual commitment to harmony.

In the discussion period following Mr. Montville's talk, it was noted that the airing of grievances is part of a fruitful process, but only in a setting in which individuals in leadership roles can move the group process through to a more positive stage. At the Latvian Forum, some of that leadership role was played in the back room, e.g. in briefing sessions with former Governor Robb.

Mr. Montville discussed with members of the audience the vulnerability of the track II process. It is vulnerable for the same reasons that it is needed. Having political enemies seems to serve a stabilizing function for countries; thus, political leaders are often apprehensive about knowing and understanding enemies and track II efforts are often viewed with suspicion. Yet Mr. Montville finds hope in the level of support the Latvian Forum trip enjoyed from President Reagan (although some high officials in the administration refused to attend due to dissatisfaction with the resolution of the Daniloff affair). And while Mr. Montville does not idealize the track II process as capable of eradicating enmity, he is hopeful that it can make relations of political conflict manageable and prevent deterioration of these relationships into violence. ■

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Many thanks to our dedicated volunteers and work study students.

FORUM

Dear Editor:

After reading the first issue of *Center Review* I saw fit to share the experiences of the eleven-member delegation of the Cambridge Soviet Sister City Project which traveled to the Soviet Union in May of 1986. During our timely visit—one week after the Chernobyl accident—we extended our sympathies to the citizens of a country that had experienced a disasterous nuclear accident.

In the capital city of Yerevan, Republic of Armenia, I met a 90-year old Armenian woman, a survivor of the Armenian Genocide of 1915 in which 1.5 million were victimized by the Turkish Government and a veteran of WWII, which took 20 million Soviet lives. She embraced us and praised our mission of peace. "I don't want to see war. Let's pray to God we won't see a nuclear war," she said crying, "it isn't for me, it's for the children who still have a life to live."

Many times our delegation was treated to meals, beverages and cab rides when Soviets were made aware of our peace mission. In Baku, the capital city of Azerbaijan Republic, a man sitting by a Mosque expressed his fears of a nuclear war and Reagan's threats. In conveying his fears, he gave us a message to bring to the Americans. "Tell Americans we don't want war, we have a beautiful city," he said. "Reagan scares our children. We want our children to live not die in a nuclear war." In meeting people from all walks of life, the Soviets continuously extended the message of peace. They are determined not to build new war monuments.

Living in a nuclear age is psychologically crippling for citizens of both superpowers. With mutual determination, perhaps the dream of peace can become a reality.

Jackie Abramian
Member
Board of Directors
Cambridge-Yerevan Sister City
Association

The Forum is a regular feature of **Center Review**. *We invite readers to write to us in response to articles printed here, or to address other related topics of interest.*

Ideology

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child and the historical experience of a national group. Although we associate ideology with totalitarian societies and sadistic leaders, there is nothing to prevent ideological extremism from emerging in a democracy, even among personally genial or benign leaders.

Archibald Macleish, who was fully aware of what he called "Russian lies, Russian militarism [and] Russian imperialism," warned as early as 1949 of the danger of America's increasing ideological obsession with the Soviet Union. Even during the Stalinist era he cautioned that "none but the ignorant or the fanatic really believes even now that Communism is the origin of our ills or that the world suffers from the attentions of personal devils." How much more have we become obsessed with the Soviet threat as the source of our ills? How much greater has our ignorance and fanaticism become in the 1980's?

Although the network claims that the series is merely entertainment, "Amerika" is characteristic of the kind of political recruitment of our fears and hatred to which we have become accustomed in these times. But despite its vicious character the series may present an opportunity to think critically about the questions it raises and to strenghten our psychological immune system against the infection of this sort of ideological propaganda.

The current Iran/Contra scandal is the direct outgrowth of ideological anti-Sovietism on the part of American leaders. In the atmosphere created by this obsession, any action which is intended to protect us from the Soviet menace may seem justified and inconsistencies of policy are overlooked. Arms may be sold to totalitarian and terrorist Iran if a strategic advantage against the Soviet Union might be achieved in the Persian Gulf. Never mind that we have a contradicting policy against dealing with terrorists. When the President of the United States calls rebels in Nicaragua who have committed unspeakable atrocities "freedom fighters" and praises them as the "moral equal of our Founding Fathers," one can hardly blame a patriotic enthusiast like Oliver North for circumventing the Congress in order to get arms to the Contras. When ideological extremism is in command it should not surprise us that some officials will seize the opportunity to become superpatriots, and we should not be startled to hear them called national heroes.

Learning to resist the management of our perceptions and political attitudes by ideological authorities in the government and mass media may be the central educational task now before us. The ABC miniseries "Amerika," scheduled to be aired later this month, presents a unique challenge of this kind. Set a decade in the future, the series depicts a take-over of the United States by unscrupulous Soviet leaders. Although the network claims that the series is merely entertainment, "Amerika" is characteristic of the kind of political recruitment of our fears and hatred to which we have become accustomed in these times. But despite its vicious character the series may present an opportunity to think critically about the questions it raises and to strengthen our psychological immune system against the infection of this sort of ideological propaganda. If we can do this, perhaps the time may not be far off when the promotion in our culture of hatred toward another society will be as unacceptable as open racism or prejudice against women and minority groups has now become.

Nadezhda Mandelstam, whose poet husband Osip was one of the victims of Stalin's purges, wrote in her memoir *Hope Against Hope*, "What matters is the change in each individual and his way of thinking. The very need for permission from above is a hangover from the past, with its belief in authority and fear of punishment." In an age where the instruments of mass destruction may give us no second chance should a war begin, prophylaxis is the only sane approach. Critical thinking, especially a relentless questioning of ideological manipulation of our thoughts and feelings, is a vital aspect of this preventive undertaking. ■

Publication Review

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situations, or even, as Habermas speculates, a broader sociocultural phenomenon than the nuclear threat: an end of the era of faith in rationalism and technology, with no new alternatives to replace them.

The consequences of a widespread sense of futurelessness among the young could indeed be dire. Thus there is good reason to explore the problem through further research. Studies done to date have been hampered by sampling biases and leading questions. What is needed, Dr. Hesse writes, are longitudinal, cross-cultural studies exploring attitudes and fears in a broader context. As Beardslee's article implies, however, the fact that so little is known may be due to the widespread unwillingness to confront the subject. The general debate that would give impetus to such studies has barely begun.

– Judith Sanders ■

Research collaborator/co-author sought for study dealing with perception and attitude change concerning U.S. and U.S.S.R foreign policy. Neil Wollman, Ph.D., San Francisco University. For details, please contact Nonie Valentine at the Center.

Center Library

The Center is expanding its circulating library. We would appreciate donations of any books, journals, and other publications which pertain to psychological studies in the nuclear age. Furnishings, such as bookshelves, are also welcome.

Please call Charlotte at (617) 497-1553 (Center office) or 498-1727 (home).

Publication Announcement

A Symbolic Mountain Trek

Summit of Mount Elbrus
From left: David Kreger, Gale Warner, Martin Vosseler (holding capsule with declaration) Alexander Scherbakov, and Vladimir (Volodya) Nikoda.

During July 1986, a group of 24 physicians and medical students from the United States, the Soviet Union, and Switzerland spent three weeks backpacking together in the Caucasus mountains of the Soviet Union. The expedition, sponsored by the Nobel Peace Prize-winning International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW), was climaxed by a successful joint ascent of 18,481-foot Mount Elbrus, the highest peak in Europe. On the summit the physicians and medical students buried a "message to the world" co-signed by IPPNW co-presidents Dr. Bernard Lown and Dr. Evgyeny Chazov, which read:

"This message, buried beneath the snows of Mt. Elbrus by an international group of physicians and medical students, represents their struggle and commitment to prevent nuclear war and maintain life on earth.

"When climbers are roped together on a steep mountainside, their linked security depends upon their ability to cooperate. It is inconceivable that climbers would threaten one another by shaking the rope that binds them. In the nuclear age, the nations of the world are all climbers on a mountain, depending for their survival on the rope of tolerance. Either they co-exist or they cease to exist.

"The bonds of friendship forged in the wilderness are threads spanning the chasm between countries long separated by fear and ignorance. Each thread may itself be miniscule on the world scale, but thousands of threads together will weave a sturdy fabric that can resist forces leading to perilous confrontation and bind countries together in lasting stability.

"May all people learn to care for this beautiful planet with a love that is faithful and constant. May there be future generations to discover these words and know their meaning."

Gale Warner, a writer and activist, has written articles about her experiences on this expedition (available from the Center), and has co-authored with Michael Shuman a book entitled *Citizen Diplomats: Pathfinders in Soviet-American Relations*, available from Continuum Books this month. ■

Ongoing Projects of the Center for Psychological Studies in the Nuclear Age

International Children's Project:
International Questionnaire Survey
Project Director: Eric Chivian, MD

A survey is being conducted with more than 10,000 teenagers in the US, USSR, New Zealand, Sweden and Hungary to see how they view the future in light of the nuclear arms race, the East-West conflict, and other perceived threats.

International Children's Project:
Videotape Education Project
Project Co-Directors: Eric Chivian, MD, and Roberta Snow, MEd

Three videotapes produced to date focus on the lives, attitudes, beliefs, and fears of Soviet and American youth and challenge traditionally held "images of the enemy."

Exploring the Decision-Making Process
Research Director: John E. Mack, MD
Senior Research Fellow: Carol Cohn

Interviews are being conducted with high-level decision makers involved in the research, development, and deployment of nuclear weapons internationally. The project aims to document the individual and collective forces that shape nuclear weapons decision-making.

An Exploration of the Assumptions and Perceptions that Fuel the Nuclear Arms Race
Research Director: Richard Chasin, MD

A working group, including Soviet colleagues at the Academy of Sciences, has been formed to advance understanding of the ways in which beliefs, attitudes, expectations, and cultural habits sustain the threat of nuclear war.

Assessment of US/Soviet Congressional Exchange
Project Director: Richard Chasin, MD
Research Affiliate, Andrew Schmookler

In cooperation with the Federation of American Scientists, the project is assessing changes in attitudes and policy views of members of Congress who travel to the Soviet Union.

Images of the Enemy – Their Development During Childhood and Adolescence
Project Director: William Beardslee, MD
Research Affiliate, Petra Hesse PhD

Interviews are being conducted with children and adolescents to identify the childhood origins and development of images and feelings about personal and political enemies. Images of enemies in children's drawings are also being studied.

Family Coping Strategies and the Threat of Nuclear War
Project Director: Steven Zeitlin, PhD

Interviews are being conducted with families on stresses that affect them, including the threat of nuclear war and its impact on family structure and roles.

Media Task Force

A joint effort of the Center's Board of Directors, this task force is exploring psychological and political pressures that influence reporters, news broadcasters and media executives. A report on our recent panel, "Images of 'The Enemy' in the Popular Media" is now available at the Center.

The Center for Psychological Studies in the Nuclear Age (formerly the Nuclear Psychology Program) is a tax-exempt research and public education organization. It is an interdisciplinary center for research and public education on the psychosocial aspects of the nuclear age. For more information about the Center write to:
Center for Psychological Studies
in the Nuclear Age
1493 Cambridge Street
Cambridge, MA 02139 or call
(617) 497-1553

The Center for Psychological Studies in the Nuclear Age depends upon grants and contributions to finance its research and public education efforts.

We have been pleased with the response to our first issue of *Center Review* and we thank those who have made contributions. We ask those who have not yet contributed to do so if you would like to continue to receive *Center Review*. No minimum donation is required, although we urge those who can to become a friend of CPSNA with a donation of $50 or more.

Friends receive invitations to colloquia and other special events, and copies of newly released literature. Your tax-deductible contribution is greatly appreciated.

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WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Dr. Myron Belfer, Professor and Chairman, Department of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School at Cambridge Hospital.

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