

EDITORIAL

Jobs and Military Spending

FOR MANY YEARS, Bruce Russett, professor of political science at Yale, would feel uneasy every time he heard the argument that jobs would be lost if the United States government cut down on the manufacture of weapons and on military expenditures in general. He would read that congressmen and senators, including those who had strong anti-war positions in all other respects, would intercede with the Defense Department to prevent shut-downs or cutbacks in their own districts or states. Even people who recognized the danger and the absurdity of massive military budgets went along with the notion that the national economy, especially on the employment level, profited from the manufacture of armaments and the maintenance of large armed forces.

Was the notion true? Or was this entire country being taken in by an assumption? Professor Russett decided to dig for the facts. He undertook a study covering 30 years of military spending.

Some questions the study sought to answer:

- What is the difference in the effect on the national economy of a dollar spent under the military budget and a dollar spent in the civilian economy?
- What are the benefits to the civilian economy of military spending?
- What is the drain on the nation's renewable and non-renewable natural resources as the result of military versus civilian spending? What is the comparable cost to the American people of the depletion of these resources?

As the result of his probe, Professor Russett became convinced that both friends and foes of a high military budget are dealing with gross fallacies. He found striking evidence that jobs are actually being lost through defense expenditures.

How many jobs? Professor Russett's study didn't take him that far. It remained for Marion Anderson, an economist and researcher of East Lansing, Michigan, to supply some startling figures. Miss Anderson had previously been associated with Seymour Melman, professor of industrial engineering at Columbia University and one of the nation's most persistent and knowledgeable experts on wasteful and irre-

sponsible spending in the military program. She put her special training to work on what seemed to her to be the key questions about the economic effects and implications of a large military budget.

Marion Anderson's study both corroborated and extended the Russett research. She was able to establish that military labor is less productive and less economical than civilian labor. It takes more military money to produce the same quantity and quality of goods as is produced by non-military money.

Wouldn't this fact suggest that the effect of military spending would be to create and sustain more jobs, since more people are required to produce a similar output?

Not at all, says Miss Anderson. A great deal of military money never gets translated into employment, since it is spent on weapons maintenance and high-salaried supervisory personnel.

Miss Anderson analyzed the period from 1940 to 1974 and found that 3,106,000 jobs were directly attributable to military spending. But the economic displacement and preemption of resources and facilities produced a shrinkage in the civilian economy, with a consequent loss of 4,013,000 jobs. Net loss: 907,000 jobs. This translates to 11,600 workers without jobs for every billion dollars spent in the military budget.

Miss Anderson double-checked her figures and sent her complete analysis to Professor Melman and Senator Edward Kennedy. Both men analyzed the data and found no flaws. Senator Kennedy took the unusual step of giving the report the backing of his office.

The significance of the Russett-Anderson studies needs no underlining. Massive military spending by the United States has long since passed the point where it has anything to do with genuine national security. We have at least 100 times more explosive and deliverable power than would be required to destroy any potential enemy or combination of enemies. The weapons in the arsenal of the United States and the Soviet Union belong to what is known as the Mutually Assured Destructive system, the acronym for which is, appropriately, MAD. Each side is supposed to be so dominated by rationality and restraint that it would not dream of using its weapons because of the mu-

tually suicidal implications. Yet the first thing both the United States and the Soviet Union do in any tense or threatening situation, such as the dispute over West Berlin, is to put each other on notice that they are prepared to go all the way rather than to back down. Moreover, the same irrationality that regards the holocaust-making weapons as essential for security is poised over the doomsday push buttons.

Yet one of the main arguments for maintaining and enlarging the arsenals is that their reduction or limitation would trigger an unacceptable loss of jobs. Even if true, this is monstrously wicked reasoning; and the fact that the American Federation of Labor and some of our more lustrous names in Congress are identified with such reasoning makes it no less reprehensible.

Meanwhile, people tend to focus on jobs and to ignore the penalties of uneconomic government spending. The greatest single cause of inflation in the United States today is the government itself. The more it spends, the larger the debt and the greater the incentive to pay back in cheap dollars. And no form of government spending, as has been clearly established in multiple reports that began with the Hoover Commission, is more burdened by waste than are military expenditures both at home and abroad.

Some economists have held that the American people have to choose between controlling inflation and controlling unemployment and that we cannot expect to reduce the latter without increasing the former. They tend to associate a high rate of employment with an overheated economy and runaway inflation.

The Russett-Anderson papers are significant because they demonstrate that there need be no inflation penalty for high employment—so long as military spending is brought within reasonable limits. In short, once the American people come to understand that the national economy will be strengthened, not weakened, by eliminating extravagancies from the military budget, they will be in a better position to re-order their priorities.

It never made moral sense to look to suicidal weaponry as a source of employment. Now the evidence is mounting that it doesn't make economic sense either. —N.C.

TOP OF MY HEAD

Presenting Mother

by Goodman Ace

T WAS THE DAY before Mother's Day, and all through the house, not a creature was stirring. Except Peggy, mother of two little boys. What Peggy was stirring was her morning coffee, as she sat alone in the kitchen dialing her closest friend, Nancy, a fellow mother of two little boys, as she sat alone in her kitchen. Peggy and Nancy were alone because their respective husbands and broods had gone shopping for Mother's Day presents.

"Hi, Nan, and don't ask me how I feel."

"Okay, Peggy, I won't."

"I've had better mornings than this."

"I can tell from your voice. Near Mother's Day it always drops an octave lower than Anna Karenina's. Why are you so uptight about Mother's Day?"

"Because I think it's a dumb idea."

"Oh, come on, Peg; what's dumb about getting a few little presents from your kids? I enjoy it."

"Listen, Nan, as a woman and as a mother, I resent being commercialized. It's a conspiracy. They pick out one day a year, call it Mother's Day, and my kids are off to the department stores to buy me gifts. Unwitting accomplices in the conspiracy."

"There you go, Peg. Everything's a conspiracy. Can't you think of it as a sentimental tribute to mothers? Like the old song—it's corny, but it's beautiful." (She sings.) "M is for the million things she..."

"Please, Nan, no. I'm having enough trouble keeping my coffee down. Nobody can convince me that Mother's Day wasn't invented by Bloomingdale's."

"Not true, Peg. I was just reading a reference book called *Chases' Calendar of Annual Events*, and it says here that Mother's Day was first observed in 1907 at the instance of Anna Jarvis, of Philadelphia, who asked her church to hold a service in memory of all mothers on the anniversary of her mother's death. It wasn't till 1914 that Mother's Day became official by presidential proclamation, to be observed on the second Sunday in May."

"Yeah? Well, Nancy, I have here a little reference book called *The Holy Bible*. In Exodus, Chapter Twenty, it says, 'Honor thy father and thy mother.' That's it. It does not say honor

thy father on the third Sunday in June or thy mother on the second Sunday in May. And there's not one word about rushing off to Bloomingdale's to buy them gifts of myrrh, incense, or gold. No sir, I'll never believe that Mother's Day was not concocted and proclaimed by department stores, even if I live to be thirty-six."

Author's note: Peggy is thirty-five. So is Nancy. They met at college, and Peggy tacitly became the leader. Nancy has been her devoted follower on every important issue, from The Pill to the Equal Rights Amendment. However, Nancy backslid a little on the ERA because of a traumatic experience last winter in an elevator in Saks Fifth Ave. She was one of six women passengers there when the elevator stopped to take on a handsome young man. He surveyed the group and asked politely, "Would it offend any of you women if I took off my hat?" In the electrified hush that followed, Nancy suffered a quick series of cozily nostalgic flashbacks in which men kept lighting her cigarettes. She told Peggy of the incident and said she was quitting the ERA. Peg swiftly settled that: "That's silly, Nan. Just quit cigarettes." Nan listened, as usual. (Chalk up another win for Peggy, but not yet on the Mother's Day issue.)

"Last Mother's Day, Fred gave me a bottle of Oil of Olay. Don't you think my face looks much younger now, Peggy?"

"I will if you want me to."

"Peg, I can see my gang is coming back. I'm going to hang up."

"Oh, is it that late, Nan? I better pull myself together and get going."

"Where you off to?"

"Yesterday in a boutique at the Plaza Hotel, I saw a beautiful shawl my mother will love. I'm going to drop it off this afternoon."

"What? Peggy, you fink! You're going to commercialize Mother's Day? Making mothers co-conspirators!?"

"This is different, Nan. It's *my* mother. She's special."

Author's note: I'm sorry, Peg. I know I promised not to tell that part. But I couldn't leave you out on a limb by yourself—the Scrooge of this piece. Not today. Tomorrow's Mother's Day, for heaven's sake! ©

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