Because of the 1979 revolution in Iran, however, U.S. troops may now have trouble finding a friendly country to land in near the Persian Gulf. In discussing the practical difficulties of waging war in that region, Secretary of Defense Weinberger reminded a recent audience that the 86,000 Central Command soldiers have secondary commitments in other parts of the world as well. Perhaps they are more likely to see combat in Central America or the Philippines than in the Persian Gulf.

C. West Pacific Area. For the Western Pacific region, there are two Army divisions, one in Korea and one in Hawaii, major Air Force bases in Japan and the Philippines, a Marine division in Okinawa, and the Navy's 7th Fleet. According to the Department of Defense *Annual Report to the Congress*, the mission of these forces is "to deter the Soviet Union, North Korea, and Vietnam from interfering with the independence and stability of our friends and allies." They account for another 12% of the military budget.

D. Caribbean and Latin America. Despite the high visibility of U.S. military actions in Central America, no large land forces and few fighting ships are committed to the region on a day-to-day basis. However, the five Central Command divisions and much of the "non-deployed" 2nd Fleet in the Atlantic could be quickly reassigned to Central America.

E. Sub-Saharan Africa and the Rest of the World. The entire Southern Hemisphere is virtually free of United States troop and ship commitments, although that situation could change.

Altogether, some 37% of the 1985 military budget, or $115 billion, was spent on keeping Russian tanks out of West Germany, and another 45%, or $138 billion, went to Third World interventionary forces. Only 13% was used to protect the United States directly.

As far as U.S. national security is concerned, the main difference between intervening against Russia on German soil and intervening in the Third World, is that the second kind of intervention is less likely to be suicidal. After all, no two nuclear-armed adversaries have ever gone to war against each other, and many observers doubt it is possible without triggering a global holocaust.

But other kinds of war have been frequent in recent years. As long as at least one party to the conflict does not have nuclear weapons, it appears that the world can survive the experience. Until Third-World nations or insurgent groups learn how to smuggle nuclear weapons into American cities there will be a strong temptation to continue spending over a hundred billion dollars a year trying to impose our own kind of order on the Third World.

It is essential, however, that interventionary forces never be used against a well-armed enemy. The entire surface navy is vulnerable to instant sinking by nuclear-armed missiles, and it would have a hard time surviving a concerted attack by "smart" high-tech conventional missiles, like the Exocet missile the Argentines used against British ships in 1982. Any nation which is better-armed than North Vietnam was during the 1960's will be able to sink ships and destroy airfields and ports and prevent the resupply and reinforcement of overseas U.S. ground troops.

Even if the enemy is weak enough not to threaten the United States or its major overseas forces, intervention policy can still fail. The fall of the Saigon government and the overthrow of the Shah of Iran are two examples of U.S. intervention policy which failed despite overwhelming military superiority on the U.S. side. Any time foreign citizens face the barrel of an American gun on their own territory, lasting hatreds are created. Those hatreds can translate into politics which defeat whatever foreign policy objective the United States has.

Finally, the day is not far off when car bombs will contain nuclear explosives. When that day comes, shells from U.S. battleships overseas could trigger nuclear fireballs in Chicago. The national security risk of Third-World intervention will then approach the risk of Second-World intervention against the other superpower.

Reducing the Military Budget

Even though overseas military commitments consume the lion's share of the military budget, congressional attempts to reduce or limit military spending have rarely taken that fact into account.

People who wish to reduce the U.S. military budget have usually taken one of three approaches:

- budget ceilings which leave it up to the admirals and generals to figure out how to spend the money;
- military reform which attempts to reduce the cost of each combat soldier; and
- the single-weapon approach which says, for example, no money will be spent to buy MX missiles.

None of these approaches challenges more than a few percent of the budget. (Remember that 1% of the military budget is $3 billion.)

In 1985 MX missile procurement was less than 1% of the military budget, and the entire "Star Wars" program was less than half of 1%. Yet those two items were the public focus of the most visible efforts to reduce military spending, despite the fact that reducing spending was not the main reason either was opposed. By comparison, a miscellaneous category called "Other Procurement, Navy" contained 357 items of several million dollars each, ranging from submarine propellers and minesweep cables to practice bombs and parachute flares. "Other Procurement, Navy" was bigger than the MX and Star Wars put together.

Only when we calculate the full cost of various military missions, and then call for eliminating certain missions, do we begin to contest significant portions of the military budget.

Annual Cost of Conventional Land Forces

Army 1985 Costs
Total Force = 17.5 divisions

	Per Division	Per Soldier
Number of Soldiers	18,000	1
Cost to Army	$4.25 billion	$237,000
Cost to Air Force:		
Tactical Air	$2.45 billion	$136,000
Airlift	$1.10 billion	$ 61,000
Total Cost	**$7.80 billion**	**$434,000**

Marine Corps 1985 Costs
Total Force = 2.9 divisions

	Per Division	Per Soldier
Number of Soldiers	16,800	1
Cost to Marine Corps	$3.05 billion	$182,000
Cost to Navy:		
Amphibious Ships	$3.95 billion	$235,000
Total Cost	**$7.00 billion**	**$417,000**

Annual Cost of the Surface Navy

Surface Navy 1985 Costs
Total Force = 224 ships*
Cost per crew member = $428,000

	#	Total Cost	Average Cost per Ship
Aircraft Carriers	13	$31.47 billion	$2.42 billion
Battleships - Frigates	211	$27.01 billion	$ .13 billion

*Submarines, amphibious ships, and support ships excluded from count. Cost of support ships included as overhead cost.

Note: If all 211 surface combatants (2 battleships, 30 cruisers, 69 destroyers, and 110 frigates) are assigned to aircraft carrier task forces, the average annual cost of a carrier task force is $4.50 billion.

Conclusion

With the biggest budget deficits in history, the Reagan administration has shown its unwillingness to tax the American people enough to pay for NATO and Third World military operations, even in peacetime. (The costs in wartime would escalate astronomically.) The benefit to U.S. national security of this $250 billion annual expense is highly debatable, but serious debate on it has never taken place. By falsely calling it defense we make it all seem necessary. But it is not defense; it is foreign policy based on military force.

The military budget debate should address the full costs and the security risks of the U.S. interventionary forces in each region of the world. Defending West Germany against a Russian invasion is not the same as defending the United States, any more than defending the Saigon government was the same as defending the United States. It may be necessary, it may be unnecessary, it may be prudent, it may be foolhardy. But it is not defense.

To survive in the nuclear age, all nations must eventually base their foreign policies on international trade, diplomacy, and example. Their military forces must be confined to defense in the strictest sense of the word. That is what we ask from the rest of the world, and it is what the rest of the world has a right to expect from us.

Notes

Tower quote from Senate floor June 20, 1984.

Scowcroft Commission quote from *Report of the President's Commission on Strategic Forces*, April 6, 1983, Section III.

Navy policy on sinking submarines from *New York Times*, January 7, 1986, p. A1.

Weinberger quote on Pacific forces from *Annual Report to the Congress*, Secretary of Defense, February 4, 1985, p. 237.

Putting the Budget Numbers Together

A few simple principles are employed in estimating the foregoing cost figures. The active duty combat forces of the Army and Marine Corps are treated as the sole output of those two branches of service; i.e., all Army and Marine personnel not in active "maneuver" divisions, regiments, or brigades are treated as support personnel. In addition, 70% of the Air Force budget is treated as an overhead cost for the Army, because the mission of Air Force tactical air (fighter planes) is to protect Army positions on the ground and the mission of Air Force airlift is to transport the Army to the battlefield and keep it supplied. Likewise, the Navy budget for amphibious ships, 13% of the Navy budget, is treated as an overhead cost of Marine combat forces.

The number of active duty personnel directly involved in a combat activity (such as soldiers in a division, or crewmembers on a ship) determines the share of the service branch budget going to that activity. The primary sources for determining these activity ratios are: *DoD Manpower Requirements Report FY 1986, Volume III, Force Readiness Report; Jane's Fighting Ships;* and *U.S. Naval Ship Battle Forces—31 July 1985*. Various official and unofficial publications were used to determine the overseas missions of combat forces. The primary source is Part III of the *Annual Report to the Congress*, by Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger, February 4, 1985.

The $306.7 billion budget used here includes the entire $284.7 billion Department of Defense military budget authority, plus $7.3 billion for nuclear warheads and reactors (Department of Energy), $3.9 billion for the Coast Guard and Customs and Immigration Services, $9.6 billion for military foreign aid, and $1.3 billion for NASA research and other defense related activities. It does *not* include the very large unpaid cost of past wars: $27.4 billion for the Veterans Administration, and $113.6 billion for the military share of interest on the national debt.

For further information about these budget calculations contact the Coalition.

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