

Military policy

The 'quick fix' method of military buildup

by Susan Welsh

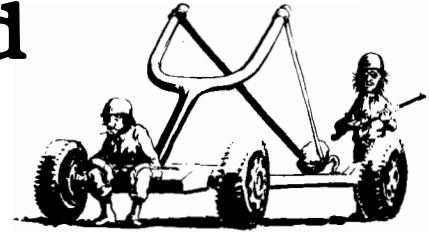


The GOP platform adopted in Detroit demands an immediate increase in defense spending to restore the sagging military power of the United States and "ultimately reach the position of military superiority that the American people demand." Although the platform is short on specific recommendations, Reagan has gathered a group of about 80 defense and foreign policy advisers to work out "quick fixes" for a military buildup.

Contrary to the illusions of some honest conservatives in the Reagan camp, the GOP's military policy is now under the full control of the same crew that brought about the destruction of the U.S. military in the first place. The collapse of our armed forces under Jimmy Carter was just the tail-end of a process for which Henry Kissinger and associates in the Nixon administration must take primary responsibility.

The nomination of George Bush for Vice-President—a member of such "Eastern Establishment" elite institutions as the Council on Foreign Relations, the Trilateral Commission, and the Skull and Bones Society—plus the nationally televised emergence of Henry Kissinger in the inner circle of the Reagan campaign, mean that a Reagan administration will do nothing to reverse the collapse of this nation. Instead, banking on Kissinger's "China card" policy as the "quick fix" *par excellence*, the Reagan group will do exactly what Carter is doing now. Hoping to use the "geopolitical" encirclement of the Soviet Union to buy time for the U.S. to remilitarize, and destroying the economy through "fiscal conservatism" in the meantime, they will increase the likelihood of a thermonuclear war that the United States would lose.

As Soviet President Brezhnev reportedly told a visiting French parliamentarian last year, if America takes the "China card" too far, so that the U.S.S.R. is faced with the imminent possibility of a two-front war, Moscow will be forced to destroy China's war-making capability preemptively. Then Washington will have perhaps twenty minutes to decide whether or not to come to the aid of its Peking ally, which would mean World War III.



Otherwise, the selective destruction of Peking's missile sites, occupation of Singkiang and Tibet, and the dismantling of Manchuria's industrial capabilities are the likely outcome of the "China card."

'Winding down' the armed forces

Under the Kissinger-Nixon administration, the "opening to China" provided the rationale for a shift in American strategic doctrine from preparedness to fight "2½ wars" to a "1½ war" outlook. Since World War II, our defense planners anticipated that we might simultaneously have to fight one war against the Soviet Union, one war against the PRC, and a "half" war against a small country like North Korea. But during 1969-70, Nixon's advisers persuaded him that war with China could now be discounted, so planning was scaled down to a "1½ war" contingency.

This facilitated major cuts in the defense budget (even from pre-Vietnam War levels), and particularly the attrition of the Navy—a process which accelerated under Carter. (See charts.) The 1980 GOP platform hails the FY 1974 \$139 billion defense budget as a "peace dividend" (a \$50 billion/year reduction from the high-point of the Vietnam War), neglecting to mention however that the pre-war 1960s budgets averaged around \$152 billion!

This "winding down of the war" brought with it the replacement of the draft by the All-Volunteer Force (AVF) in 1973—a scheme developed by two of Ronald Reagan's current advisers, Milton Friedman and Martin Anderson, and sold to Richard Nixon. Although the AVF today is widely recognized as an unmitigated disaster, the GOP platform opts to continue it, but to raise salaries to attract and retain better qualified people. A substantial portion of the proposed defense budget increase will have to go to making the AVF "competitive" with civilian employment, if Reagan's campaign promise is to be fulfilled.

The other hallmark of the Kissinger-Nixon years was the strategic arms limitation talks (SALT). Purporting to seek a sensible accommodation with the Soviet

Union in the national interests of both countries, Kissinger and his backers from the New York Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) instituted the "arms control process" with the actual objective of restraining Soviet military-technological development. The CFR declared that the Western world had entered a new age of "controlled disintegration," a "post-industrial society," which the Soviet Union must be induced to join.

Several of Ronald Reagan's current advisers played important roles in the early SALT effort, including William Van Cleave (a member of the first SALT negotiating team), and Fred Iklé (former director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency).

Now that it has become apparent that the Soviet Union will continue to develop and modernize its armed forces no matter what—and particularly that it will not relinquish its research and development in areas of high-energy physics that could revolutionize the international "correlation of forces"—Reagan's backers have changed their strategy and are opting for an arms buildup. Various "quick fix" proposals are currently circulating, including:

1. A report titled "A Program for Military Independence," authored by 25 Senate staffers and prepared for the GOP convention. This "draft alternative defense budget" reportedly was adopted by Reagan's defense and foreign policy advisory group, and several of its provisions are incorporated into the GOP platform.

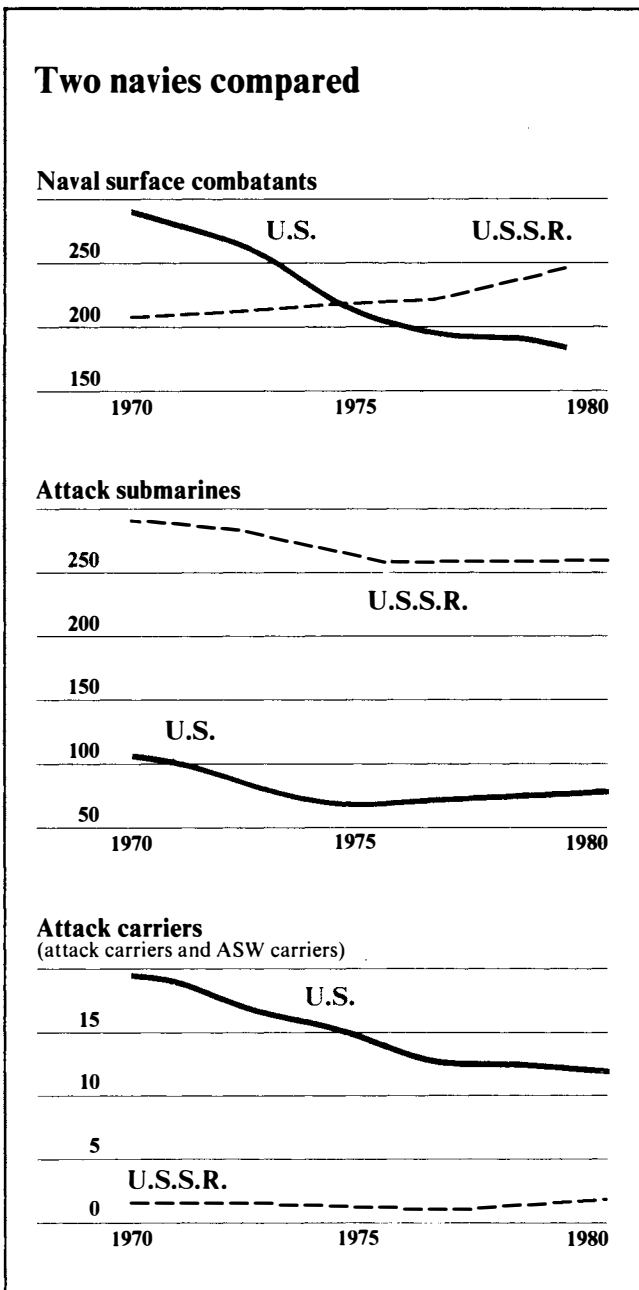
2. A newly-issued volume titled *National Security in the 1980s: From Weakness to Strength*, published by the Institute for Contemporary Studies (1980). The book contains the proceedings of a conference of defense experts held in December 1979; about half of the participants are advisers to the Reagan campaign, and the others are also "defense hard-liners."

3. "Quick fix" recommendations contained in the newly issued volume *Arms, Men, and Military Budgets: Issues for Fiscal Year 1981*, published by the National Strategy Information Center (Transaction Books, 1980). Frank Barnett, the NSIC director, is a Reagan adviser.

These documents, which we discuss in greater detail below, unanimously reject the Carter administration's defense budget as too low. The "draft alternative defense budget" calls for a 24 percent increase in defense expenditures, to \$200.89 billion in FY 1981! But several of Reagan's advisers openly admit that the American population will not accept such a "guns not butter" policy, given the present state of economic recession, and that therefore *a foreign policy crisis must be created which would make such a massive arms buildup politically possible.*

Thus Fred Iklé argues in the Institute for Contemporary Studies symposium that without a "triggering event" to mobilize public opinion around a long-term arms buildup, it will not be possible, leaving "quick fixes" as the only alternative. Therefore, Iklé argues:

What do we do in the event of a post-Tito Soviet invasion of Yugoslavia? . . . In the present situation we would scrupulously refrain from aiding the partisans. In a larger global context, as I was trying to explain, I think that would be the wrong decision. We should move in with assistance and be prepared to lose on that battlefield in order to trigger the larger reaction that is needed to halt the further deterioration in the correlation of forces. . . . We don't *want* a defeat. We want an engagement. It would be better to win in Yugo-



slavia. But you have to be prepared to lose locally.
[Emphasis in original.]

Tanks vs. food stamps

Since Reagan's backers—like the Carter administration—have rejected the program for global economic recovery that our European allies are demanding, the military buildup they will create will parallel the policies of Nazi Reichsmarshal Hermann Goering. The fact that the GOP platform opts for a tax cut—to the dismay of some of Reagan's "defense realist" advisers—means that defense budget increases will have to be gouged out of the declining civilian economy. This is precisely what the British government of Margaret Thatcher has done, and Great Britain's economy now undergoes the worst downward plunge since World War II.

Most of Reagan's advisers simply ignore the crucial question of the economic underpinnings for an arms buildup, asserting, as retired Admiral Thomas Moorer did in an interview with *EIR*, that there is "no problem." "What you've got to do is reorder priorities. There are other programs throughout the system that could be reduced to provide funds for what I consider to be critical requirements. . . . We've been closing down plants and so on, but we can revitalize production. We can do it quickly—we can do anything once we decide to do it, as we proved in World War II."

While an industrial revitalization is indeed still possible, the "fiscal conservative" policies of the Reagan platform will send this country's economy hurtling after Thatcher's Britain. The authors of the "draft alternative defense budget" insist that social programs in the FY 1981 budget must be frozen, to produce a \$50 billion surplus for funding of the arms buildup. The production of military hardware, they assert, will be *less inflationary* than social services, since "military investment produces tangible goods which have intrinsic value. . . . Production of weaponry . . . is comparable to production of other tangible goods. . . . Dollars spent to produce food stamps are dollars spent to produce another piece of paper. Dollars spent to produce tanks and airplanes are dollars spent to produce items with their own independent value as a produced durable. A tank can be used, upgraded, rebuilt, and resold over a significant usable life during which it has at any point an existing value. Moreover, the production, maintenance, and manning of a tank as a durable military product creates and stimulates economic activity to a degree far greater than that associated with, for example, a loaf of bread bought with food stamps. Arguably, the bread would be sold in any event."

In the never-never land of such Nazi economics, the fate of the food stamp recipient is also provided for: let him get a job in the All-Volunteer Army!

GOP proposals for 'in-width' buildup

The "quick fixes" Reagan's advisers are proposing are intended to implement a military buildup "in width," with an emphasis on first-line combat capabilities. The factors *in depth* which determine the outcome of war-fighting—principally the condition of the national industrial base—are left out of account.

Despite a new verbal commitment to the idea that the incompetent doctrine of strategic deterrence should be replaced by a nuclear war-winning strategy (the approach the Soviet Union has), for the Reagan-controllers, such "esoteric" doctrinal discussions are considered irrelevant. "Reagan needs programs that will sell to the grass roots," said one source close to the campaign.

This is taken to mean primarily "quick fixes" to bolster U.S. strategic deterrent—long-range missile and bomber forces. The main reason for this emphasis is *political*: if the vulnerability of the strategic forces increases, the United States will no longer be able to use the threat of nuclear escalation to secure political goals *short of* general war. This would force the abandonment of the "Schlesinger doctrine" of limited nuclear war bluff, since the U.S. would have no "big guns" to back up the political threat.

Manpower. The deficiency of the GOP approach is most clearly seen in the question of raising the quality and quantity of armed forces manpower. This problem has received wide public attention in the last six months—the fifth-grade average reading level of the All-Volunteer Force soldier, which necessitates the use of comic books as training manuals; the dangerous rates of narcotics use; the high attrition; the poor pay rates and living conditions; the exodus of skilled personnel from all branches of the service, but especially from the Navy, which has been forced to take ships out of commission due to a lack of qualified personnel.

There are simply no "quick fixes" that will solve these problems, and the GOP platform's pledge to raise military pay—while a necessary move—will alter nothing. (Although some of Reagan's defense advisers have called for a 10 percent military pay increase *above inflation*, it is noteworthy that the GOP platform does not name any specific amount. Given the current rates of inflation, the

GOP was evidently reluctant to make a promise that might prove impossible to deliver.

The manpower problems in America's armed forces will not be solved until a substantial majority of Americans are convinced that their government is pursuing a military, economic and foreign policy that is worth defending. An unemployed ghetto youth deployed to the Persian Gulf to secure the "geopolitical encirclement" of the Soviet Union, in alliance with Peking, will not be an effective soldier no matter how much Uncle Sam pays.

The refusal of the GOP to terminate the All-Volunteer Force—which was developed and sold to Richard Nixon by present Reagan advisers Milton Friedman and Martin Anderson—signifies that the basic ineffectiveness of Jimmy Carter's military policy will be continued.

Research and Development. Soviet advances in military R&D, especially in plasma physics, lasers and particle beam technology—advances which this magazine has been virtually alone in publicizing for the past four years—have finally shocked portions of the American defense community into the realization that revolutionary Soviet anti-ballistic missile (ABM) technologies are close at hand.

A directed energy beam weapon would focus intense energy (either laser energy or subatomic particles) in a beam traveling at or near the speed of light, capable of destroying an incoming missile or plane. Some sources expect deployment of such a Soviet weapon within a year's time.

The Pentagon has ignored these developments, and Defense Secretary Harold Brown states in his FY 1981 annual report that there is "no evidence" that the Soviets have found a way to eliminate the obstacles to developing an effective ABM system based on these technologies.

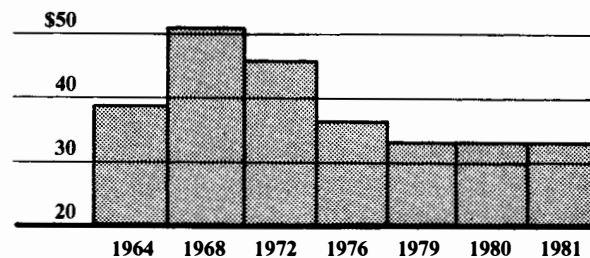
Reagan's advisers are calling for immediate U.S. moves to catch up, and the GOP platform demands "a vigorous R&D effort for an effective ABM system such as the Soviets have at hand, as well as developing more modern ABM technology." A "draft alternative defense budget" circulated in Washington before the GOP convention, and reportedly adopted by Reagan's defense and foreign policy advisory group, goes even further in sounding the alarm. "During FY 1982," the document states, "a decision should be made whether to begin mass ABM production and deployment."

But these breakthroughs in high-energy physics are not easily susceptible to the "quick fix" approach. The Soviets are estimated by knowledgeable sources to be three to five years ahead; they spend twice what we do on military R&D, and have more than double the number of scientists and engineers involved in research. Furthermore, since 1966 they have had an intensive program for raising the scientific-technical education levels of the

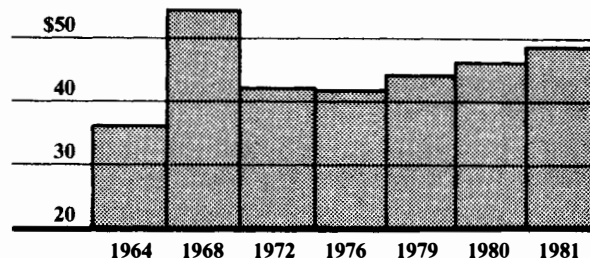
Department of Defense budget allocations

(billions of FY 1981 dollars; 1981 figures are for DOD budget request, not final authorization)

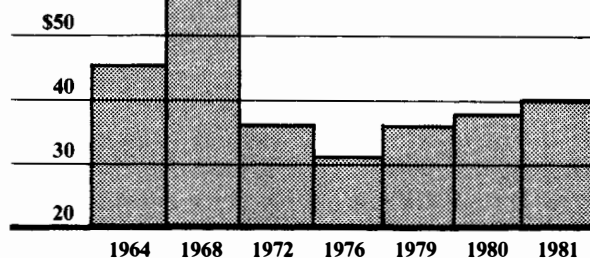
Military personnel



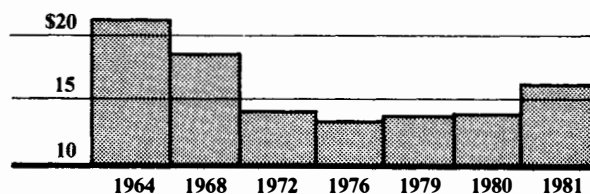
Operations and maintenance



Procurement



Research, development, testing and evaluation



population at large—while our education system has deteriorated sharply.

Reagan's advisers view advanced technology as the gimmick which will make possible U.S.-Soviet limited confrontation, short of general thermonuclear war. In this, they share the basic doctrines of the Carter administration—despite their preference for the term “war-fighting.”

Thus top Reagan aide William Van Cleave declared in his presentation to last December's Institute for Contemporary Studies symposium:

Technology, I believe, offers the possibility of basing strategic deterrence more on selective military targeting, damage limiting, escalation control, and defense than on massive destruction. I believe we should move in that direction, and I see no reason why quick fixes cannot be so oriented.

Strategic Forces. The Republican platform calls for the following “quick fixes” for U.S. strategic forces:

- the earliest possible deployment of the MX missile “in a prudent survival configuration”;
- accelerated development and deployment of a new manned strategic bomber that can penetrate Soviet defenses, exploiting the \$5.5 billion already invested in the B-1 [program cancelled by Carter], using the most advanced technology available;
- deployment of an air defense system;
- acceleration of development and deployment of strategic cruise missiles;
- modernization of military command and control.

These measures are intended to correct a situation in which—as Defense Secretary Brown admits—U.S. ICBMs are highly vulnerable, due to the improved reliability and accuracy of Soviet missiles. The U.S. strategic bomber force of B-52s is now in its third decade of service, and is incapable of penetrating Soviet air defenses. The Carter administration plans to equip the B-52 with cruise missiles that can fly below Soviet radar.

The Carter administration's planned new ICBM, the MX missile, is endorsed by Reagan's advisers, although many of them believe it to be “a monstrosity,” a program developed solely to get SALT II through the Senate. The missile is expected to far outrun current estimates of its cost, reaching perhaps \$100 billion instead of the \$30 billion planned. The racetrack basing scheme for the mobile missile is particularly criticized as outrageously expensive and unworkable.

Instead, Van Cleave and other Reagan advisers advocate deployment of the MX in multiple vertical silo protective shelters. Until this can be done, they want the old Minuteman III production lines reopened, and the

missiles deployed in multiple vertical silos to decrease their vulnerability to a Soviet strike.

The cruise missile—advocated by both Carter and Reagan—is likewise admitted by many defense analysts to be highly inadequate. Van Cleave declares that they are “worthless” unless deployed in large enough numbers to saturate Soviet defenses, since they are quite slow and hence easily defended against. Claims of the cruise missile's great accuracy are simply fraudulent: of the 14 missiles tested to date, half were unsuccessful. The complex electronic targeting system operates by correcting the missile's flight to match a computer-stored topological map of the terrain over which it flies. The system operates poorly over flat terrain, and can be fooled by high trees or even by seasonal changes in foliage!

Theater Nuclear Forces. As with the air and sea-launched cruise missiles, the GOP advocates the deployment of ground-launched cruise missiles and Pershing II medium-range missiles in Western Europe *even though these technologies are admitted to be ineffective*. While supporting these Carter administration programs, the GOP also wants deployment of the neutron bomb in Europe.

Van Cleave concedes that the Pershing II's are based on “very old technology” and constitute “no modernization whatsoever. . . . I think these are placebos.” The Pershings are not mobile and hence not survivable unless used for a first strike against Soviet targets—a point which has not been lost on Soviet critics of NATO's decision last December to deploy the missiles.

Aside from their value as a first-strike weapon, the cruise and Pershing II missiles are seen as having largely *political* value. Paul Nitze, chairman of policy studies for the Committee on the Present Danger, commented at the Institute for Contemporary Studies symposium:

When one is throwing dust in the enemy's eyes, one may not want to be explicit about how these things are assessed. For example, in the case of European theater nuclear modernization, the political purposes alone are perhaps sufficient for going ahead despite the low priority it may deserve on purely military grounds. . . .

General Purpose Forces. GOP recommendations to bolster U.S. general purpose forces can be summed up by the word “more.” The platform pledges a “much-improved Navy,” including restoring our fleet to 600 ships (from the current low of 462). Army procurement programs in armor, firepower, air defense, and helicopters must be sped up, plus tactical aircraft for the Air Force, airlift capabilities, and stocks of ammunition, spare parts and supplies. While these are all worthy aims, the unanswered question remains: “Who pays?”