

The Tar Heel

Focusing on the mammoth U.S. defense budget: Do you think we are well protected?



with
D.G. Martin

All of us worry about our national defense. Do we spend enough money on national defense? Too much? Or, a better question, do we get good national defense for all the money we spend?

Sadly, we could spend our entire gross national product — all of our money — on defense and still not be totally secure. Yet, every extra dollar we spend on defense is a dollar that will not be available for other needs.

Finding a balanced, prudent, and effective defense policy now is one of our country's greatest challenges.

How can you and I ever know for sure how we are doing? How do we really stand up in comparison to the real military capabilities of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact?

Statistics can prove just about whatever you want to prove. But a fair presentation of the facts shows that the United States and its NATO allies are ahead of the Soviet Union in some categories of military capability and behind them in other regards.

Senator Proxmire made some interesting comparisons on the Senate floor last month. I think his facts are worth sharing with you — whether or not you agree with his conclusions.

Gross National Product — The United States has a strong lead in this measure of overall economic strength: \$3.4 trillion to \$1.7 trillion. That is good, because underlying economic strength is about the best long term defense.

Population — The United States trails \$236 million to \$275 million for the Soviet Union.

Total Nuclear Weapons — The United States leads 30,000 to 23,000. The United States also leads in strategic nuclear weapons — 11,400 to 8,300. The importance of this advantage is questionable, since both countries have enough such weapons to blow the other off the face of the Earth many times over.

The United States has 324 bombers capable of delivering nuclear weapons, while the Soviet Union has only 170.

Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles. The United States trails the Soviet Union — 1030 to 1398. In the total nuclear weapons on these ICBM's, the United States is far behind — 2130 to 6012. However, only 18 percent of the United States' strategic weapons are in silos where they are highly vulnerable. The Soviet Union has 72 percent of its strategic weapons in this type of silo.

Submarines — The United States

has 37 compared to 62 for the Soviet Union. However, the United States has 5728 nuclear weapons on its submarines compared to 1964 for the Soviet Union.

The numbers which Senator Proxmire recites are so large that it is almost impossible to understand exactly what they mean. Both sides have an unbelievable number of nuclear weapons and a varied delivery capability.

What about conventional forces and the effect of the NATO and Warsaw Pact alliance?

Gross National Product — NATO has a tremendous edge — \$6.1 trillion to \$2.3 trillion. In annual military spending, NATO leads \$312 billion to \$300 billion for the Warsaw Pact.

Number of Soldiers and Nuclear Weapons — NATO also leads in military troops, 5.5 million to 4.8 million, and in total nuclear weapons, 31,000 to 23,000.

Tanks — Senator Proxmire reports that the Warsaw Pact has "a massive and serious advantage." The Warsaw Pact has 63,700 tanks to 29,400 for NATO.

Submarines — The Warsaw Pact also leads in the number of nuclear attack submarines, 126 to 110 and in diesel attack submarines, 163 to 136. But in major surface warships, NATO has a large advantage.

Combat Aircraft — NATO leads slightly 11,400 to 11,000.

Senator Proxmire believes that

these statistics and others show that while the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact lead in some categories, the United States and NATO are stronger, and that, "If there is any dominant military power in the world today, it is the United States."

He suggests that the military advantage that the free world has over the Soviet Union and its allies

makes it an appropriate time for us to negotiate a nuclear arms limitation agreement.

What do you think about these statistics? Do you agree that the United States has a strong military position compared to the Soviets? Is it a good time to negotiate for the limitation or reduction of nuclear weapons?

TELL ME WHAT YOU THINK

Your name and address _____

- I agree with Senator Proxmire. The United States enjoys a military advantage over the Soviet Union and should use its advantage to move towards negotiating an end to the arms race.
- I do not accept Senator Proxmire's statistics. The United States does not have a significant military advantage.
- I support efforts to negotiate with the Soviets to limit or reduce military weapons.
- I suppose efforts to negotiate with the Soviets.
- Other.

Your comments: _____

Please mail the form to: D.G. Martin
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Dear Susie,
I'm so glad I moved into the new KENSINGTON TRACE condominiums with the girls! Our new home is so big (1,167 sq. ft.), I couldn't imagine all four of us moving into one of the other student apartments.

I thought I would feel left out when I moved off campus—you know how we loved living in the dorm last year as freshmen—well, the party we had in the CLUBHOUSE last weekend changed my mind! What a blast! We are having a cookout this week—can't wait to see what's happening next week! I am meeting lots of people—played TENNIS with my neighbor last night.

Can you believe I haven't been late to class once? I ride the KT SHUTTLEBUS (it's free!) No more long walks or trying to find a park on campus for me. Ha, ha, I know you're thinking what if I miss the bus, right? Well, our bus driver knows us and our schedule, she has even checked up on us to make sure she doesn't leave us behind. (Besides, the city bus will extend its service out here in the fall, just in case.)

Everything is furnished in the condo—from desks to dishes to dustpan! Mom & Dad loved it too—no more moving, shopping, attic searching for us. I packed my bags and I was ready to go. With a shopping center a skip away, we can grocery shop and stop by the drugstore on the way home.

You just have to see this place to believe it—why don't you give the resident manager a call right now? She lives here with us in KT and is always there for us when we need her. She could fix you up with a place of your own or maybe you would like to move in with us (Great!) Let me know what you decide—gotta run, going to the POOL.

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