



tom thompson

'National security' needs rethinking

The term "national security" has become a commonplace expression, a concept regularly appealed to. It is used to justify the maintenance of armies, the development of new weapons systems, and the manufacture of armaments. A fourth of all federal taxes in the United States and at least an equivalent amount in the Soviet Union are levied in its name.

The concern for the security of a nation is undoubtedly as old as the nation-state itself, but since World War II the concept of national security has acquired an overwhelmingly military character. Commonly veiled in secrecy, considerations of military threats have become so dominant that other threats to the security of nations have often been ignored. Accumulating evidence indicates that new threats are emerging, threats with which military forces cannot cope.

The notion that countries everywhere should be prepared to defend themselves at all times from any conceivable external

threat is a relatively modern one. As recently as 1939, for example, the United States had a defense budget of only \$1.3 billion. Prior to World War II, countries mobilized troops in times of war instead of relying on a large permanent military establishment.

The policy of continual preparedness has led to the militarization of the world economy, with military expenditures now accounting for 6 percent of the global product. Worldwide, the military claims of national budgets exceed health-service appropriations. Most countries spend more on national security than they do educating their youth. The development of new, "more effective" weapons systems now engages fully a quarter of the world's scientific talent.

At the current rate of weapons procurement, two days of world expenditures on arms equal the annual budget of the United Nations and its specialized agencies. Thirty million men and women in their prime productive years are under arms today.

The overwhelmingly military approach to national security is based on the assumption that the principal threat to security comes from other nations. But the threats to security may now arise less from the relationship of nation to nation and more from the relationship of man to nature. Dwindling reserves of oil and the deterioration of the earth's biological systems now threaten the security of nations everywhere.

While the world's oil supply is threatened by eventual depletion, the productivity of the earth's principal biological systems—fisheries, forests, grasslands, and croplands—is threatened by excessive human claims. These biological systems provide all food and all the raw materials for industry except minerals and petrochemicals.

In fishery after fishery, the catch now exceeds the long-term, sustainable yield. The cutting of trees exceeds the regenerative capacity of forests almost everywhere. Grasslands are deteriorating on every continent as livestock populations increase along with human population. Croplands,

too, are being damaged by erosion as population pressures mount.

Failure to arrest this deterioration of biological systems threatens not only the security of individual nations but the survival of civilization as we know it.

The deterioration of the earth's biological systems is not a peripheral issue of concern only to environmentalists. The global economy depends on these biological systems. Anything that threatens their viability threatens the global economy. Any deterioration in these systems represents a deterioration in the human prospect.

The need for countries to confront these threats and to address them cooperatively suggests that the military's role in securing a nation's well-being and survival is becoming relatively less important than it once was. At the same time, protecting and securing the future of a nation by strengthening international cooperation, developing alternative energy sources and assuring the viability of key biological systems are escalating in importance.

yours

Reintroduce draft

The ODE of Feb. 12 again reports about University veterans and students resisting not only the military draft but even reinstitution of draft registration. I am well aware of all the arguments: the military-industrial complex and cost overruns, the loss of lives and money in Vietnam where we tried to defend democracy in a country not even interested in it. There is also some waste and featherbedding in the military.

Be all this as it may, unfortunately there are many Soviet divisions in Eastern Europe, well equipped and well disciplined. No matter how much we talk about our rights to privacy and whatever else is so dear to us, the Russians have a great number of men under arms. The United States is the only nation potentially capable of keeping them in check.

A neat little Army of well-paid volunteers

may work for a small nation, but not for a huge one such as ours. We need to reintroduce the military draft without favoritism. If not all capable young men are needed, a lottery would be a fair way to decide who will be called up. This way we could build up a stronger, less expensive Army and an adequate reserve force for emergencies.

I lived five years under Nazi occupation when human rights and the pursuit of happiness were concepts existing only in scholarly books. In order to preserve our way of life in the U.S. we need to be prepared militarily.

I was once forced to dig trenches for the German army on the Eastern Front (almost lost my life), was drafted in the Dutch army in 1948, and eight months after arrival in the United States in 1953 I was drafted once more (2 years active duty, six years reserve). No one can say I did not have my share.

Let's not stick our heads in the sand and

pretend that the Soviet threat is not there. The defense and safety of the United States is at stake. One or two years in uniform is really but a small price to pay for a lifetime of freedom.

Huibert Paul
assistant professor, library

A great catalog

The computer-produced catalog is the greatest thing Mr. Oxford has done during the past five years. It has made the card catalog accessible on all floors of the libraries and given a complete card catalog to the science and architecture libraries so that they can tell if the main library has a book.

All of the OSSHE schools also have a copy which greatly facilitates interlibrary loan and gets points before the state legislature for stretching the library dollar by

close library cooperation. On the third floor of the library we have provided the public with markers so they can easily replace the microfiche they used. We have also color coded the up-date supplements which contain books acquired since 1975. This makes this section easier to find. As it continues to grow the public will become aware of it. The COM catalog is not perfect, but not having it is something like saying I won't have a cabin at the coast unless I have an ocean view.

Jim Dwyer's study does provide some useful insights, but he says that the questionnaires were left out for the public to voluntarily fill out. Anyone who has done surveys knows that a sample of self-selected persons is bound to give biased results.

Also, please sign me: Senior Librarian for Service who does not see scholarship and service in direct opposition to one another.

Richard Heinzkill
librarian, humanities section

theirs

