

To Be Equal

by John E. Jacob

What Happened to the Peace Dividend?

Just a few months ago, in the heady days of the Malta Summit meeting and the eastern European revolt, all the talk was about the 'peace dividend'—the huge budget savings made available by the end of the Cold War.

Now all the talk is about how the peace dividend never existed, doesn't exist, and never will exist.

I don't buy that. Simple logic suggests that if the threat of imminent superpower war no longer exists, then the world realities should be reflected in national security plans and in the defense budget.

Those realities are that the defense budget can be cut drastically at no danger to national security interests.

It's not as if anyone is arguing to cut national strength to the bone—after the huge multi-trillion dollar Reagan arms build-up of the 1980s, the defense budget is so swollen with fat that even radical cuts won't begin to weaken us.

Defense Secretary Cheney has suggested some cuts in future defense spending, but they don't begin to represent reasonable post-Cold War levels.

They're just cuts from earlier projected estimated budgets, not real dollar cuts. But real dollar cuts are what the economy needs and the public expects.

A *New York Times*-CBS News poll in January found that three out of four Americans believe the warming U.S.-Soviet relations can result in cuts in military spending and two out of three want the peace dividend spent on resolving problems like drugs and homelessness.

An article by Jack Beatty in the February Atlantic Monthly says that the Stealth bomber, whose main mission is to "hunt Soviet mobile missiles" has already cost \$22 billion and the Air Force wants to buy 132 of the planes for \$79 billion—\$600 million per plane.

That alone is enough to fund an Urban Marshall Plan to revive our cities and prepare tomorrow's workforce to become competitive. It will take only \$3 billion to provide

enough funds to ensure remedial teaching for every eligible disadvantaged child in America.

And the government would actually make money on the program, since such education aid costs \$700 per child while it costs \$3,500 every time a child repeats a grade in school.

William Kaufmann, a defense policy expert at The Brookings Institution, says that we could save about \$23 billion a year on a reduced nuclear missile delivery program that would still leave us with the capability to launch 2,400 warheads after a Soviet first strike.

So the real question in defense policy is: how much is enough?

Do we really need to continue to produce expensive weapons systems long after the need for them has vanished? Do we really need to commit \$130 billion a year for the defense of Europe and Japan when those allies are richer than we are?

The real question isn't whether a peace dividend exists or not. It is whether we have the political will to act on changed world realities and construct a national security system that accords with the world as it is and not as it used to be.

Once we realize that there is a peace dividend, comes the question of what we do with it. And the answer to that is clear—use it to make America competitive in global markets where we are losing out because we have too many people locked into poverty and without the education and skills to enable us to compete successfully.

A third of our future workforce will be minority, and half of those young people are growing up in poverty today. A fourth drop out of school and perhaps another fourth graduate without the skills needed by a modern economy.

In the 1990s real national security is identical to economic strength, and we need to put the peace dividend to work in an Urban Marshall Plan that gets us on a permanent economic growth track.

VANTAGE POINT

Articles and Essays by Ron Daniels

The Vision, Courage and Wisdom of Nelson Mandela

On Friday, February 2, 1990, F.W. de Klerk, President of the White South African minority regime, lifted the ban on the African National Congress, the Pan-Africanist Congress, the Black Consciousness Movement and other previously banned anti-apartheid organizations. President de Klerk also announced that 71-year-old Nelson Mandela, who has been imprisoned for 27 years, would soon be released unconditionally. There was jubilation in the streets of South Africa as de Klerk's dramatic announcements seem to set the stage for negotiations on the future of a new South Africa.

The sweeping concessions by the South African regime were a direct result of the sustained struggle of the ANC and other anti-apartheid groups inside South Africa, the tightening vise of economic sanctions and the mounting pressure of growing international isolation. But in another sense these concessions were a testimony to the vision, courage and wisdom of the legendary symbol of the South African freedom struggle, Nelson R. Mandela.

Time and time again during his long period of incarceration, Mandela might have been released from the humiliation of harsh prison labor and isolation if only he would have agreed to renounce armed struggle or if he had abandoned the political goals of the outlawed African National Congress. Time after time Nelson Mandela refused to make even the slightest compromise in the interest of his own personal freedom, preferring instead to always keep the cherished goal of one person one vote within a non-racial society at the forefront of his considerations.

It is entirely possible that Mandela might have been released with his old friend and comrade Walter Sisulu and other political prisoners in October of 1989. But Mandela elected to remain in prison, even after 27 long, lonely years of suffering, until all of the conditions which he has laid down for his release are met. And even now, in the face of de Klerk's concessions, Mandela still refuses to leave prison until the hated state of emergency is totally lifted, all political prisoners are released and it completely clear that all exiles are free to return

home to South Africa. This is a rare and extraordinary act of principle and courage.

At every critical juncture in the unfolding of the liberation struggle, Mandela has also shown great patience and wisdom. Despite the rise to hegemony of the African National Congress within the liberation movement, Mandela, nonetheless, insisted on lifting the ban on all anti-apartheid groups including the rival Pan-Africanist Congress and the Black Consciousness Movement. Mandela seems to sense that only a united front of the majority of the anti-apartheid forces can overcome the obvious ploy of divide and conquer to successfully negotiate with the White minority regime. And over the protest of some within the ranks of ANC, Mandela has made it clear that even the conservative forces of Chief Gatsha Buthe-lezi should have a place at the negotiating table.

It is this kind of healing, reconciling leadership that will be required in the difficult months ahead, if the jubilation of the moment is to ultimately bear fruit in terms of the vision of a new South Africa. The path to success is certainly filled with enormous barriers, and tremendous danger. And yet it is precisely the principled, courageous and wise way that Mandela has handled himself over the years which gives him the stature and political capital necessary to guide the liberation movement through this perilous period.

The whole world awaits the release of Nelson Mandela. When he is released, it will be comforting to know that here is a man who did not compromise in order to gain his freedom. Freedom loving human beings everywhere must be determined to keep the pressure on the South African regime during this crucial period. Nelson Mandela, the ANC and all the forces within the liberation movement will need the leverage of continued sanctions, and strong international public opinion to consummate a just political and economic agreement for a new South Africa. The real struggle has just begun.

Long live Nelson Mandela! Victory for the people's struggle for freedom in South Africa!

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