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## Attacks on the Military

ONE need not be an arch-conservative or a "hawk" to be dismayed by the rising crescendo of criticism against almost anything related to the Military Establishment.

In this shrill tirade, a dragon called the "military-industrial complex" is being slain by an assortment of St. Georges on the intellectual left. Its sins are many, in their view. It has projected its power into every facet of American society; it drafts our young to fight an unending, immoral war in Viet Nam; it diverts American resources from important domestic programs into weaponry and war; it controls U.S. foreign policy and decision-making.

Two aspects of this new crusade against all things military give reason for deep concern. The first of these is its success in attaining some degree of credibility among Americans. The second is the nature of some of its specific targets—ROTC, the Draft, the ABM, defense-oriented research on college campuses—all of them critical elements in our defense structure, all of them aspects to one extent or another of some of the most fundamental tenets of American military policy.

What are those basic concepts? That civilian control shall prevail over the military. That every citizen shall have the duty and responsibility of defending the Nation, rather than depend on large professional forces to do the fighting. That we never will initiate a war but will defend ourselves if attacked.

Relate these concepts to the war of rhetoric being waged against our Military Establishment. Nothing exemplifies the "civilianization" of our military leadership better, perhaps, than the ROTC program. It seeks-out the very best of our young men, gives them training in military leadership while they educate themselves in civilian institutions, utilizes their talents for a brief period, then returns them to civilian life, to be available if needed. Their orientation is civilian, not military—and they make up the majority of the officers in our Armed Forces at any given time. How could we better insure against the rise of a powerful professional military clique?

One also is tempted to remind that only a few short years ago, Mr. McNamara and his civilian "whiz kids" were being castigated constantly for ignoring military advice, and making their own decisions, in the field of strategy, weaponry, force structure and even tactics. Are we now asked to believe that they, too—and the Presidents who backed them so strongly—were mere tools of the professional military leadership?

By means of the Draft, millions of young Americans are permitted a direct involvement in the defense of their Country. This, as well as the concept of a volunteer Militia (today's National Guard), is rooted in George Washington's thesis that all citizens of a free nation "owe not only a portion of their property but even of their personal services to the defense of it." Today, opponents of the Draft would eliminate this vital component of our democratic system and put in its place a force motivated largely by greater financial reward. Will they next set their sights on the Guard?

Some form of the anti-ballistic missile system has been sought by two Presidents. It is defensive in nature, providing some modicum of protection against nuclear attack, notifying our nuclear-armed foes that we still would possess a deadly sting even after an all-out surprise attack. Yet it is characterized as "provocative," and its proponents depicted as hard-liners rather than men of ordinary common sense.

ROTC needs improvement, to make it more responsive to current need, and the Services themselves are working to make such improvements. The Draft needs revision, to eliminate its numerous inequities. Further development, and deployment, of the ABM, should be monitored carefully, to insure close civilian control at every step. These improvements and safeguards can be provided without tearing the whole structure down.

Progress and improvement? Yes, but with prudence and realism. ◇



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