

## RESEARCH REPORTS

*Reviews of new research by public agencies and private institutions*

### **"Is There An Economic Rationale for Subsidizing Sports Stadiums?"**

The Heartland Institute, 59 East Van Buren St., Ste. 810, Chicago, Ill. 60605. 27 pp. \$3.00.  
Author: Robert A. Baade

Twenty major U.S. cities are now planning to build new sports arenas and stadiums, some of which will cost more than \$200 million. Many city planners, contractors, and sports fans argue that the price is well worth it. The new arenas and stadiums, they say, will pay for themselves (through ticket sales), and prime local economies.

But Baade, an economist at Lake Forest College, argues that many of these new stadiums are neither necessary nor economical to build or operate. That is why private groups have, by and large, left the sports stadium business. Of the 29 stadiums constructed since 1960, only four have been built with private funds.

State and local governments, Baade says, have become "the key player[s] in stadium construction"—and not always to the taxpayers' benefit. In many cases, revenues have not kept pace with the rising cost of building and operating sports arenas. Louisiana residents, for example, pay \$3 million to \$5 million every year to operate the New Orleans Superdome.

Nevertheless, the stadium business is flourishing, thanks to generous (and sports-minded) state and local officials. Many of

the new, atmosphere-controlled domed stadiums come equipped with expensive panavision scoreboards and luxurious "sky-boxes." Baltimore, Phoenix, and San Antonio all plan to build football stadiums even before they have teams to play in them, hoping to lure new football franchises to their communities. There are "too many facilities," as Baade says, "chasing too few [sports] events."

Contrary to conventional wisdom, Baade argues that sports facilities and events do not necessarily stimulate local economies. They are more likely, he says, to divert dollars from manufacturing to service industries, or from one leisure activity to another. "A dollar spent at the Spectrum [Sports Arena] in Philadelphia," he found, "may well be a dollar less spent at a movie theatre in [suburban] Bucks County."

Why do public officials seem so eager to build new sports arenas? It is a matter of prestige, Baade suggests. "The Superdome is an exercise of optimism, a statement of faith," he writes, quoting former New Orleans mayor Moon Landrieu. "It is the very building of it that is important, not how much it is used or its economics."

### **"A Thoroughly Efficient Navy."**

Brookings Institution, 1775 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. 130 pp. \$8.95.

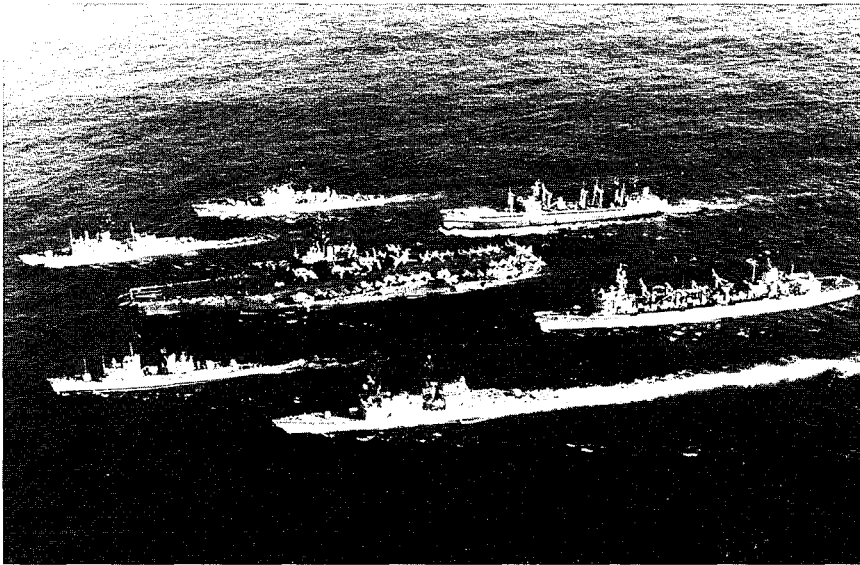
Author: William W. Kaufmann

Since 1974, the United States Navy has planned to build and maintain a fleet of at least 600 ships, which would include 15 aircraft carrier battle groups, 100 attack submarines, and ships to transport four Marine Corps brigades. The Navy now hopes to reach that goal by 1989.

Kaufmann, a professor at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government, believes that such a large fleet is not only too

costly, it is also unnecessary.

In today's world, Kaufmann says, the U.S. Navy must play a more modest role in deterring and fighting war. He takes issue with Admiral James D. Watkins, who, in *The Maritime Strategy* (1986), advocated a "forward strategy," according to which U.S. naval forces would be deployed immediately to fight their Soviet counterparts in the Mediterranean, the Indian Ocean, and



*Carrying 80 aircraft, the USS Midway patrols the Indian Ocean (1980) with a cruiser, two destroyers, a frigate, and two replenishment oilers.*

other distant seas.

Technological advances, Kaufmann says, have ended some of the U.S. Navy's operational advantages. Long-range bombers, which can be refueled in mid-air, can attack targets that once could be reached only by planes flying from nearby aircraft carriers. Moreover, ships have become far more vulnerable with the advent of sophisticated surveillance systems. As a result, an increasing proportion of a carrier group's weaponry is now designed simply to defend the carrier itself.

Thus, the Navy, he says, could not most effectively counter a Soviet attack against northern Norway or the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's Mediterranean flank. Nor would the Navy fare better than the Air Force in a major raid against Soviet bases on the Kola Peninsula near Murmansk. B-52 bombers, Kaufmann argues, could reach the peninsula and attack Soviet forces as effectively as U.S. carrier groups, and at a far lower cost.

What role, then, should the Navy play?

The Navy, he says, should continue to

provide the most mobile (and therefore most survivable) leg of the nation's strategic "triad" (composed of sea-based, land-based, and air-borne nuclear weapons): the 37 nuclear weapons-equipped submarines. Moreover, the Navy should be able to perform three tasks in a conventional war: "form the key barriers to submarines in the Atlantic and the Pacific; handle three simultaneous but limited contingencies with carrier battle groups and Marine amphibious brigades; and furnish the escorts for nine U.S. convoys a month to Europe, Northeast Asia . . . [or] the Persian Gulf."

For all this, Kaufmann says, an "efficient force," numbering 570 ships, and including only 12 carrier groups, would more than suffice. "Despite its somewhat smaller size," he says, "the efficient force would have no difficulty in exercising U.S. rights to the freedom of the seas, whether in the Gulf of Sidra, the Black Sea, the Arctic Ocean, or the Sea of Japan."

Kaufmann's navy has another attractive feature: It would save the U.S. taxpayer \$120 billion over the next 10 years.

## **“The Question of Pornography: Research Findings and Policy Implications.”**

The Free Press, 866 Third Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022. 267 pp. \$24.95.  
Authors: Edward Donnerstein, Daniel Linz, and Steven Penrod

Does pornography cause crime?

In 1970, the president's Commission on Obscenity and Pornography said that “it is not possible to conclude that erotic material is a significant cause of crime.” But, in 1986, the attorney general's Commission on Pornography (the “Meese Commission”) declared that there was a definite “causal relationship” between violent pornography and aggression against women.

Which commission was right? The answer, say the authors—professors of communications and psychology at the University of California, Santa Barbara, the University of California, Los Angeles, and the University of Wisconsin, Madison, respectively—is that both were, because violent pornography only became widely distributed after the first pornography commission had published its findings.

Evidence that nonviolent pornography causes violent crime such as rape is “inconsistent.” For example, researchers Larry Baron and Murray Straus have shown a correlation between rape rates in the United States and the circulation of such sex magazines as *Playboy*, *Penthouse*, and *Hustler*. But, Joseph Scott of Ohio State University discovered no relationship between the number of adult bookstores and theaters in particular states and the frequency of rape in those states. Moreover, studies of child molesters have found no relationship between molesters' use of pornography and the nature and number of their crimes.

Most pornography is nonviolent. Joseph Scott found that only four photographs out of 1,000 in *Playboy* were violent. T. S. Palys of Simon Fraser University in Canada determined that between 1979 and

1983, violence decreased in X-rated films and increased in R-rated films.

It is these R-rated “slasher” films—not considered obscene under current laws—that the authors find most dangerous, because of their easy availability in video stores. The authors showed one of these films (such as *I Spit on Your Grave* or *The Toolbox Murders*) to a test group of male college students each day for five days. By the fifth showing, the students perceived the films as being less violent and substantially less degrading to women than they had after the first showing. Because “slasher” films usually alternate “mildly erotic” scenes with violence against women, the films “may make viewers less sensitive to female victims of violence.”

This “desensitization” to violence also occurs in more conventional films. Neil Malamuth of the University of California, Los Angeles, and James Check of York University in Canada have shown that men who watched *The Getaway* (where Ali MacGraw is willingly raped) were more likely to accept “interpersonal violence” between men and women.

Since violence and sex are largely linked, not in obscene material, but in R-rated films, the authors suggest that the Meese Commission's belief that prosecution of pornographers “be treated as a matter of special urgency” is misguided. The authors suggest education as the best strategy for countering the effects of violent pornography. Combining public service announcements at home with lessons in school designed to “denounce myths about sexual violence,” the authors conclude, would be the wisest way to prevent the harm caused by films that show the torture of women.