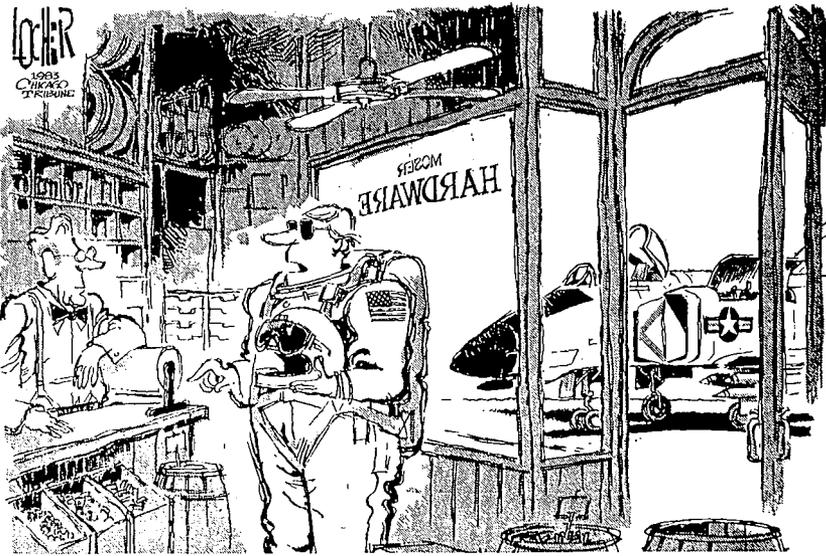


FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE



A 1983 cartoon: "I'm too far away from the Pentagon to purchase the \$2,970 washer I need. . . gimme those 3 for 69 cents replacements." The Pentagon now has "more rules, more people checking on the checkers."

plastic knob. The billing price equals the cost of the part, plus \$1,000.

A thorough Defense Contract Agency audit finally concluded that Gould had overcharged the government \$92,000—for reasons that had nothing to do with the hammer. Since then, the Pentagon has stopped using the equal allocation method.

Should the public therefore dismiss press accounts of \$435 hammers and \$7,600 coffee pots—and relax? Not at all, Fairhall says. In other ways—say, by awarding sole-source contracts or by refusing to punish inefficient defense contractors—the Pentagon can still waste the U.S. taxpayer's money.

A Pacifist Pentagon

"Pentagon Strategy 'WWNH'" by John F. Ahearne, in *The Washington Post* (March 4, 1987), 1150 15th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20071.

Since fiscal year 1981, the annual U.S. defense budget has increased from \$158 billion to \$282 billion—to pay for higher military salaries and new hardware. Surely, the Pentagon is now ready to fight if war comes.

Not really, contends Ahearne, a deputy assistant secretary of defense under President Jimmy Carter. "The real strategy," he says, seems to be based on a "WWNH" concept—War Will Never Happen, or at least not for the next few years.

How so? The author says that post-Vietnam Pentagon thinking has led

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to an emphasis on impressing foes and friends with expensive "symbols," notably a 600-ship "show-the-flag" Navy and an array of high-technology armor and aircraft. The WWNH philosophy makes it logical to underfund unit readiness, keep munitions stockpiles low, and "not be overly concerned whether a weapons system [e.g., the B-1 bomber] works before it is bought in large numbers."

Meanwhile, Pentagon tests (such as "Nifty Nugget" in 1978) have shown grave deficiencies in U.S. mobilization and deployment planning for a possible war in Europe. The 1983 invasion of Grenada revealed so many weaknesses in command and control that it helped spur last year's congressional overhaul of the U.S. military command system. The 1986 raid on Libya showed that two U.S. Sixth Fleet carrier task forces still needed help from 18 land-based Air Force F-111 bombers to strike targets defended by what Ahearne calls a "second-rank military power."

"Supporters of the current [defense] programs," says Ahearne, "argue that the reason war has not happened and won't, is [because the Soviet Bloc's leaders are deterred by] the strong and large forces of the United States. But our adversary is smart . . . the originator of the Potemkin Village, a façade. The USSR is not likely to be fooled. Real deterrence requires real capability."

Contadora Confusion

"Contadora: The Failure of Diplomacy" by Bruce Michael Bagley, in *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* (Fall 1986), Univ. of Miami North-South Center for the Institute of Interamerican Studies, P.O. Box 248134, Coral Gables, Fla. 33124.

The so-called Contadora nations have been trying to negotiate a peace pact in Central America for over four years. But their efforts are doomed, suggests Bagley, a Johns Hopkins University specialist in Latin American affairs, because the interests of the United States and Nicaragua are fundamentally at odds.

Representatives from Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela and Panama first met on Panama's Contadora Island in January 1983 to discuss how they could peacefully contain the revolutionaries in Nicaragua and El Salvador, and limit U.S., Soviet, and Cuban activity in the region. Their September 1983 "Document of Objectives" called for the expulsion of all foreign troops, bases, and advisers from Central America, and for the holding of (verifiably) democratic elections. In public, the Reagan administration applauded the "Contadora process," but supported the *contra* rebels against Nicaragua's Marxist regime. The Kissinger Commission's January 1984 report to President Reagan warned that the Contadora nations' interests "do not always comport with our own."

In September 1984, the Contadora group released its first draft treaty—the so-called Revised Act, which required Nicaragua to expel all Soviet Bloc military advisers, halt arms imports, reduce its 60,000-man army, and end all assistance to the Salvadoran guerrillas. It also instructed Washington to cease its support for the *contras* and end U.S. military maneuvers in the region within 30 days.