
Let Them Eat Cake!

"Why Pay for the Best and the Brightest?" by Terry W. Culler, in *Cato Policy Report* (May-June 1989), 224 Second St. S.E., Washington, D.C. 20077-0872.

In Washington, it is called the "quiet crisis." Low pay is demoralizing the federal work force and draining it of talent, warn such "inside-the-Beltway" luminaries as Paul Volcker, the former chairman of the Federal Reserve Board. Volcker now stumps for a big federal pay raise as head of a group called the National Commission on the Public Service.

Culler, a former official of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, finds it all a little hard to believe. If the three million civilian federal workers are so miserable, why do only 5.2 percent of them quit their jobs annually, as opposed to 10.9 percent of their private sector counterparts?

Culler suspects that Volcker and his allies (including former President Gerald Ford) are really most concerned about the upper-echelon bureaucrats who earn salaries of \$50,000 or more. But even among technical specialists who could easily find more lucrative work in the private sector

[a recent study put the overall public-private pay gap at 28.6 percent], "quit rates" are low. Only 2.3 percent of chemists and 3.3 percent of engineers leave the federal payroll annually. "There must be something about federal employment that makes it attractive to them," Culler observes.

It may well be that the government service fails to attract the "best and the brightest," he concedes. So much the better. After all, they serve the national interest more in the private sector, where they help create wealth. And why raise salaries, say \$15,000, to attract a few Wharton MBAs when it will also mean increasing the pay of thousands of employees who were content to work at the old rate?

We need competent government, Culler concludes, "but we should not be railroaded into paying higher wages—and higher taxes—than are necessary to achieve it."

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

Swords Unsheathed

"The Middle East in the Missile Age" by Gerald M. Steinberg, in *Issues in Science and Technology* (Summer 1989), 2101 Constitution Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20077-5576.

Even as the world cheers the progress of Soviet-American arms control, dangerous new weapons of mass destruction are spreading to the volatile Middle East.

Iraq used chemical weapons during the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war, and the two sides fired conventionally-armed ballistic missiles at each other. Iraq is also working on an atomic bomb and is stockpiling biological weapons (bacteria, toxins, viruses). Libya is building a chemical weapons plant, and Syria has obtained Soviet-made SS-21 missiles. Israel almost certainly possesses nuclear weapons.

More alarming than the quantity of

arms, writes Steinberg, a researcher at Israel's Hebrew University, is the ignorance of Middle Eastern leaders about their dangers. Over the years, the two superpowers have reduced the threat of war through deterrence—by, among other things, placing weapons in submarines and hardened silos to ensure that any surprise attack would be met by a deadly second strike. But few deterrents exist in the Middle East.

Geography and the new missiles heighten the temptation to strike first. Syria's capital, Damascus, is a mere 100 kilometers from Israel's Golan Heights.

It is too late to put the genie back in the

bottle, Steinberg says. Despite many non-proliferation pacts, advanced weapons have reached the Middle East from both

the Soviet Union and the West. Washington failed even to apply sanctions against Iraq after it used chemical weapons.

Instead, Steinberg believes that the two superpowers must now educate Middle Eastern leaders about the dangers of the weapons they have acquired. At the 1967 Soviet-American Glassboro summit conference, a seminar persuaded both sides not to deploy massive anti-ballistic-missile defenses. The United States should organize such meetings for top political and military leaders in the Middle East today. Both superpowers could act as intermediaries—for example, urging Saudi Arabia to keep its Chinese-made missiles unarmed, unfueled, and open to satellite surveillance to allay Israeli fears of a surprise attack. Satellite data should be made available to all, Steinberg adds. In short, he says, the Middle East must learn the lessons of the Cold War.

Words and War

From the American soldiers who fought during World War II we have inherited "snafu" ("situation normal, all f***** up") and many other words with unprintable definitions. Why this burst of sly verbal insubordination, asks Paul Fussell in *The Atlantic* (August 1989)?

It was not just the danger and fear, the boredom and uncertainty and loneliness and deprivation. It was the conviction that optimistic publicity and euphemism had rendered their experience so falsely that it would never be readily communicable . . . They knew that despite the advertising and publicity, where it counted their arms and equipment were worse than the Germans'. They knew that their automatic rifles (First World War vintage) were slower and clumsier, and they knew that the Germans had a much better light machine gun. They knew despite official assertions to the contrary, that the Germans had real smokeless powder for their small arms and that they did not. They knew that their own tanks, both Americans and British, were ridiculously underarmed and underarmored, so that they would inevitably be destroyed in an open encounter with an equal number of German panzers . . . And they knew that the single greatest weapon of the war, the atomic bomb excepted, was the German 88-mm flat-trajectory gun, which brought down thousands of bombers and tens of thousands of soldiers. The Allies had nothing as good, despite the fact that one of them had designated itself the world's greatest industrial power.

Clausewitz Redux

In the nation's military academies and journals, officers drop the name of Karl von Clausewitz (1780–1831) as frequently as journalists and scholars speak of Tocqueville. "The latest version of Field Manual 100-5, *Operations*, is practically oozing Clausewitzian terminology," notes Cannon, a major in the U.S. Army.

The Prussian-born strategist has been in vogue in the United States before, but never so dramatically as he has since the end of the Vietnam War. Clausewitz, like many of today's American officers, lived through a time of drastic change in the na-

"Clausewitz for Beginners" by Michael W. Cannon, in *Airpower Journal* (Summer 1989), U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

ture of war. When he joined Frederick the Great's Prussian army at about age 12, wars were limited in scope. By the time he became director of the Berlin War College in 1818, he had seen the emergence of "total war" in the campaigns of Napoleon, an experience that forced him to rethink the art of warfare. The result was *On War*, published after his death.

To Clausewitz we owe indirectly the dictum that "war is politics by other means." Much influenced by Hegelian philosophy, Clausewitz learned to think of war in somewhat dialectical terms. He viewed