

RESEARCH REPORTS

Reviews of new research by public agencies and private institutions

“United States National Interests in the Middle East: A New Approach for the 1980s.”

Prepared for the International Security Studies Program, The Wilson Center, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20560. 16 pp.

Author: Les Janka

In a controversial paper presented at the Wilson Center, Janka, U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense from 1976 to 1978, argues that American energy security and reduced Soviet influence in the Middle East can be achieved only when the United States recognizes the Palestinians' right to self-determination.

Many Arab leaders are convinced that Israel holds a veto over American Middle East policy, writes Janka. Their belief has been hardened by incidents such as the Carter administration's disavowal—under Israeli and domestic Jewish pressure—of its March 1980 UN vote condemning Israeli settlements in territories occupied after the 1967 war.

The author disputes Israel's claims to be a major American strategic asset; in fact, he says, the Arab-Israeli conflict has only sent Muslim governments [such as Syria, Iraq, and, until 1972, Egypt] scurrying to Moscow for arms and political support. Israel's powerful Army and excellent base facilities would indeed be useful to the United States in a crisis. But the most likely crisis is apt to be one resulting from the superpowers being dragged into an Arab-Israeli war.

Since Israel's occupation of the West Bank of the Jordan River and the Gaza Strip began in 1967, reconciling the Palestinians' right to self-determination with Israel's right to security has replaced negotiating an accord between Israel and its Arab

neighbors as the sine qua non of a Middle East peace, according to Janka. The Arab states' unanimous rejection of the Camp David treaties signals the priority they now give to the Palestinian cause.

The Palestine Liberation Organization (“the only spokesman the Palestinians have,” in Janka's view) has not endorsed UN Resolution 242—which recognizes Israel's right to exist. But Janka believes that the PLO is now ready to concede Israel's pre-1967 borders in exchange for Palestinian autonomy on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. A fledgling Palestinian state, busy building its economy and government, is unlikely to serve as a Soviet puppet, or as a base for terrorism and military operations against Israel, Janka believes. And pledges of economic aid from Western and conservative Arab governments would further inhibit Palestinian extremism—along with Israel's military supremacy and commanding geographic position.

Today, the Middle East supplies 30 percent of American, 67 percent of Western European, and 75 percent of Japanese oil imports. Continued access to Middle East oil is essential to a recovery of America's military strength and its economic health, writes Janka. He adds that adopting this “unfettered view” is also in the interests of Israel, whose security ultimately depends on a strong and prosperous America.

"A National Agenda for the Eighties."

Report of the President's Commission for a National Agenda for the Eighties, 744 Jackson Pl. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006. 214 pp.

When word leaked out in late 1980 that this presidential commission would urge Washington to let Midwestern and Eastern cities decay and encourage people and industry to move to the Sunbelt, many of the nation's mayors hit the ceiling. The final report has slightly modified the earlier approach and offers an unusual mix of domestic policy proposals of interest to both liberals and conservatives.

Arguing that "cities are not permanent," the authors observe that cheap energy, good weather, and low wage scales have drawn American business to the Sunbelt for 20 years. This has left older industrial cities such as New York, Detroit, and Cleveland with shrunken tax bases, deteriorating services, and rising joblessness.

Threatened with bankruptcy, mayors have begged Washington to "save" their cities. But, says the commission, massive aid may "sap the initiative of urban governments because of the expectation of continuing support." Washington should help people—not places—adapt to inexorable social and economic changes with expanded job training programs and grants to relocate.

Northern cities can still thrive, the authors claim. Losses of blue-collar jobs will be somewhat offset by expansion of white-collar employment in the financial and "knowledge" industries and in the professions.

The commission recommends replacing current welfare and food stamp programs with a guaranteed annual income set at between two-thirds and three-fourths of the official poverty line [currently \$8,400 for a nonfarm family of four]. While costing the federal government an extra \$15 or \$20 billion, this program would relieve state and local governments of most of their welfare burden.

The commission proposes a national health-insurance financing program. Washington would provide all Americans with a flat premium subsidy. Recipients would then purchase policies from private insurance agents. The resulting expansion of private sector competition would serve consumer interests. And the system would end the paradox under which 12.6 percent of the population lacks any health insurance at all, even though federal and state governments foot the bill for 40 percent of Americans' health-care expenses.

"The Washington Reporters."

The Brookings Institution, 1775 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. 168 pp. \$6.95

Author: Stephen Hess

The 1,250 men and women who report from the nation's capital for U.S. newspapers, wire services, newsmagazines, trade journals, and broadcast media are, essentially, an "elite covering an elite," who worry, from time to

time, about being out of touch with the rest of America.

Using questionnaires and interviews, Brookings political scientist Hess sketches a 1978 profile of the various segments of the Washington press

corps, their pecking order, their output, and the specialization that has come with the growth of Washington journalism.

Although faced with deadline pressures and erratic schedules, journalists in Washington average only 42-hour work weeks (45 for TV correspondents). They are well paid (the "top minimum" *Washington Post* reporter's salary was \$596 a week in 1979); tend to be in their 30s; are predominantly white and male; and, in the more prestigious media, are graduates of prestigious colleges. Fifty-three percent of black reporters are women, versus 20 percent of white reporters. Politically, 42 percent consider themselves "liberals," 39 percent "middle-of-the-road," and 19 percent "conservative." But 47 percent claim to be more conservative than their colleagues.

Their friends tend to be other journalists. They write for their peers, and if they work for out-of-town newspapers, they seldom get much direction (or reaction) from the home office. As always, they tend to write and think about "events" yesterday or today or last week; for data, they rely on

interviews, government publicists, and news clippings, not documents. Because they find politicians are lively, kindred souls, they tend to cover the "political government," not the plodding "permanent government" of the bureaucracy. Most old-time newsmen think the coverage, however uneven, is far less partisan than it was 50 years ago.

Who decides what is news? News-magazines and TV allow the reporter the least autonomy; but, by and large, the reporters decide. Reporters favor some subjects, e.g., diplomacy, and skimp on others, notably economics, that are of direct interest to the average American. Journalists' boredom, says Hess, has been neglected by scholars as a determinant of news coverage.

Overall, Washington now dominates the media's attention, eclipsing state and local affairs. In one sampling of 22 newspapers, Hess found, Washington news got 45 percent of the stories, state capitals 19 percent, and local 18 percent—even though state and local government activity has grown far faster than federal activity since 1960.

"The Decline of Service in the Regulated Industries."

American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1150 17th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. 73 pp. \$4.25

Authors: Andrew S. Carron and Paul W. McAvoy

Americans who think that their railroads are slower, their airlines are running fewer flights, and their electric power is "browning out" more often than it used to are right. Since 1965, service in many regulated industries has steadily declined. Carron and McAvoy, economists at the Brookings Institution and Yale, respectively, blame federal and state regulatory policies that have not adjusted to a deteriorating national economy.

Regulated businesses thrived during the high-growth, low-inflation years of the late 1950s and early '60s. In fact, regulatory policy helped utilities and transportation lines achieve higher growth and greater productivity than the rest of the economy. By requiring the reinvestment of profits to meet spreading markets, federal and state agencies forced these companies to capitalize on the then low prices of energy and raw materials. Expansion

RATES OF OUTPUT GROWTH
IN THE REGULATED INDUSTRIES, 1965-1977
(average annual rate of change, in percent)

Industry	1965-1969	1969-1973	1973-1977
Electric	7.1	6.3	-0.3
Natural gas	6.5	0.7	-1.6
Telephone	9.2	7.7	7.3
Airline	14.0	3.4	3.9
Railroad	2.4	2.8	-3.4
Unregulated services	4.0	3.9	2.4
Total U.S. economy	3.9	3.4	1.9

NOTE: Output growth is measured in terms of real gross national product.

SOURCES: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, unpublished data (1978); *Economic Report of the President* (January 1979).

permitted economies of scale, yielding higher profits.

While private companies boosted their overall productivity growth by a yearly average of 4 percent between 1961 and 1965, the regulated industries achieved 7.3 percent. These companies were even able to hold prices constant and accede to occasional state and federal requests for rate reductions. From 1961 to 1965, when prices in the economy as a whole edged up 1.8 percent annually, prices fell slightly in the electric, natural gas, railroad, and airlines industries.

From 1965 to 1969, however, annual real GNP growth averaged less than 4 percent, and inflation jumped to 3.9 percent. The regulatory system could not adjust. Slow economic growth prevented new equipment from being used to capacity and forced up unit costs.

The administrative procedures established by Congress and the states to control prices and profits relied mainly on pre-existing price and cost patterns. They were incapable of timely responses to continuously rising costs. New laws guaranteeing consumer

groups and industrial customers a voice at regulatory hearings put the utilities at a further disadvantage. Even when officials "split the difference" between consumers' unrealistically low capital-cost estimates and the utilities' more accurate projections, inadequate returns and prices resulted.

From 1973 to 1976, the regulated industries' average yearly output grew only 1.1 percent, compared with a 2.4 percent growth rate recorded by unregulated services. Output in electric and natural gas companies and railroads actually fell. And except in the telephone industry, productivity growth rates failed to match the sickly 0.8 percent average for the total U.S. economy.

These figures translated into a three-fold increase in power blackouts nationwide from 1969 to 1978, a 35 percent shortfall in interstate natural gas deliveries by the late 1970s, and curtailed rail and air service. According to Carron and McAvoy, further economic decline could produce serious disruptions and shortages unless the pace of deregulation quickens.

“Men and Family Planning.”

Worldwatch Institute, 1776 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.
48 pp. \$2.00 (Worldwatch Paper 41)
Author: Bruce Stokes

Birth control used to be viewed as a man's responsibility—until millions of women around the world went on the Pill or began using intrauterine devices (IUDs) in the 1960s. Now, with concern growing over the safety of female contraceptives, vasectomies, condoms, and even withdrawal are again gaining popularity.

In 1980, Stokes, a researcher at Worldwatch Institute, surveyed birth control practices from Newark, N.J., to rural China. He found that, worldwide, 65 million women had been sterilized, 58 million were taking oral contraceptives, and 52 million used IUDs. But male birth control was far from obsolete. Thirty-five million men had undergone vasectomies, and 37 million relied on condoms.

Stokes also noted intriguing national differences. Men were most likely to take responsibility for birth control in Japan, Italy, and Poland, where 85.5, 45, and 40 percent of males surveyed, respectively, used contraceptive methods. By contrast, only 22.7 percent of Frenchmen, 28 percent of Englishmen, and 19.7 percent of American men practiced contraception.

When men used birth control, the methods they preferred varied widely.

Seventeen percent of Frenchmen, 29 percent of Italians, and 30 percent of Polish men relied on withdrawal to limit family size. This method was favored by only 6 percent of Englishmen and 2 percent of American males.

The most popular forms of male contraception in England and America were condoms (used by 16 percent of Britons) and vasectomies (undergone by 10.5 percent of American men). Sterilization proved least acceptable in France and Japan, where only 0.1 and 6 percent of all men chose this option. Condoms, sold by door-to-door saleswomen, are used by nearly four out of five Japanese men.

Male birth control methods have yet to make much headway in the Third World. In many patriarchal Latin American, African, and Asian societies, large families still boost the male ego. Nonetheless, government attempts to increase male contraception—especially advertising campaigns for prophylactics—have worked in regions of India, Sri Lanka, Ghana, and Nigeria.

Men can no longer be treated as the “forgotten sexual partner,” Stokes maintains. The drive to stabilize Third World populations may well hinge on the spread of male contraceptives.

“Are Old People Conservative? How Much?”

Unpublished research paper presented to the 33rd annual meeting of the Gerontological Society, San Diego, Calif., November 21–25, 1980. 33 pp.
Authors: John Creighton Campbell and John Strate

The stereotype of America's elderly as rock-ribbed political conservatives is as common as the view that most college students are liberals and radicals. Today, it may be just as outmoded,

suggest Campbell, a University of Michigan political scientist and Wilson Center Fellow, and Strate, a Brandeis University economist.

The authors surveyed University of

Michigan national polling data from 1952 to 1978 and compared the responses of Americans aged 65 and over with those of persons aged 30 to 64. They found that, between 1972 and 1978, both groups described themselves as moderate conservatives when asked to characterize their political leanings on a scale of 1 (extremely liberal) to 4 (middle of the road) to 7 (extremely conservative). Senior citizens placed themselves only slightly to the right of the middle-aged—their scores ranged from roughly 4.4 to 4.7, while the 30-to-64 age group's responses hovered at between 4.3 and 4.4.

The elderly have voted more heavily Republican than the middle-aged in nearly every presidential election from 1952 to 1976 (the exception is the 1956 race, when middle-aged support for Republican President Eisenhower against the Democrat, Adlai Stevenson, exceeded elderly endorsement by a 60.4 to 56.1 margin). However, in 1968, Alabama Governor George Wallace did better among middle-aged Americans (11.5 percent) than among senior citizens (7.8 percent). Extreme conservatives do not attract the elderly, the authors speculate.

In fact, when it comes to bread-and-butter issues, the elderly are often

more liberal than the middle-aged. Their support for government-guaranteed health care averaged nearly 18 percent higher than middle-aged support did in 1956–78. And in 1978, senior citizens were 25 percent more apt to prefer maintaining “government services” over tax cuts.

However, the elderly are well to the right of the middle-aged on “law and order” issues—a stance that probably reflects their greater vulnerability to crime. They also seem more strongly opposed to social programs that do not benefit them directly, e.g., greater aid to education. And while both the elderly and the middle-aged have held increasingly liberal views on racial equality since 1956, the elderly tend to be more conservative on open housing and the integration of hotels and restaurants—issues likely to touch their daily lives.

The greatest generation gaps involve “lifestyle” issues, although few over age 65 view them as priority problems. Both the middle-aged and elderly took a dim view of abortion, the changing role of women, and drug abuse, for instance; but disapproval among the elderly was much sharper—by 28, 16, and 13 percentage points respectively.
