Relevance of Air Superiority

The relevance of air superiority in the modern world is vastly overstated. The USAF has faced no air superiority force since the Korean War. Nor have our ground troops faced an enemy air-to-surface threat. US air superiority fighters are aimed at enemy fighters—the irrelevant half of the problem. Our real enemies are our enemies, not create them artificially to sustain armed forces. About 90 percent of the program connected interests. We should not being to or controlled by any special interests.

Within the last few days, he has written two very important pieces which I would like to write to the attention of my colleagues and other readers of the RECORD.

The first is an insightful editorial on the history, current situation, and what needs to be done now to settle the Cyprus issue. He points out that the Turkish invasion in 1974 resulted in 200,000 Greek Cypriots being expelled from their homes and almost that many Turks and Turkish Cypriots living illegally on land and in homes that are not theirs.

The second article is one that was distributed by the Scripps-Howard News-Service and reprinted in the Washington Times and other newspapers. It deals with the situation in Kosovo and the continuing cycle of violence, ethnic cleansing and retribution.

The eastern Mediterranean sovereign state of Cyprus has been forcibly divided in two since the invasion of the island republic in 1974 by Turkey. Now, however, the issue of Cyprus remains one of the world’s thorniest international problems awaiting resolution.

Reflecting the position of President Clinton, Secretary of Defense William Cohen has stressed that the status quo in Cyprus is not acceptable. Since the invasion, the Cypriot government controls the south of the island while the north is under Turkish occupation with more than 35,000 troops from mainland Turkey stationed there in violation of numerous United Nations Security Council resolutions. In fact, most of the Turks now living in the occupied areas of the island are not Turkish Cypriots but are Turkish settlers.

About 200,000 Greek Cypriots, expelled from their homes in the north, are still prevented from returning.

Historically, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots lived in comparative harmony until recent time. The Turkish invasion further increased the tension—an invasion in which some believe then-United States Secretary of State Henry Kissinger played a direct role by working behind the scenes with Greece’s then-military junta to successfully oust Archbishop Makarios as Cypriot president. Turkey used the coup against Makarios as a pretext to invade Cyprus.

SPECIAL INTEREST DEFENSE

For a while, it looked as if Congress might do the right thing: kill an unneeded weapons program, saving $50 billion and increasing security. But this gave us a higher priority to the interests of Lockheed Martin, providing $1 billion in this year’s budget to buy up to six F-22 fighters—and keeping alive the possibility of buying more than 300 at a cost of at least $187 million each.

The F-22 is an example of how the military budget is driven more by the desire of members of Congress to get re-elected than by security. The program is used for nothing, and no longer works. The military-industrial complex who in 1996 contributed an average of $18,000 to every member of Congress, almost three times the level of tobacco-industry influence peddling.

Why is the F-22 an unneeded weapon? The American F-15 and F-16 fighters are the best in the world and, if more fighters are needed, these can be bought for less than one-quarter the cost of an F-22. The F-22 may be outdated soon by the Joint Strike Fighter, an even better plane on which the Pentagon is spending billions for development.

We spend more than $30 billion a year to maintain more than 5,000 nuclear warheads. A 1,000-warhead force with the destructive power of 40,000 Hiroshima explosions would be more than enough—and save about $17 billion a year.

How political pork supersedes military needs is demonstrated by the appropriation in last year’s budget of $435 million for seven C-130 cargo transport planes. The Pentagon requested only one. They got seven because manufacture of these planes provided jobs in New Gingrich’s district.

Huge expenditures for unneeded weapons is one reason that U.S. military spending is more than twice as much as all potential adversaries combined, including Russia, China, Iraq, Iran and North Korea. While polls indicate that 72 percent of Americans believe it better to have too much defense than too little, 83 percent think that spending should be no greater than that of all potential adversaries combined.

America’s unreasonable military spending also results from the policy that the United States can do it all by itself. We have two nuclear superpowers and have won two major regional wars without the help of allies. This two-war doctrine is rooted in the idea that the United States should be able to exercise unilateralism in international matters.

But having this capability and then using it to act alone or with little military support from allies—as we did in Kosovo and continue to do in the skies over Iraq—decreases our security. We make bitter enemies of people who have nothing to lose militarily, but can be a serious threat if in anger and frustration resort to terrorism.

Our security also is decreased because our huge military spending consumes money that otherwise could be spent on education. With the economic success of nations becoming increasingly more dependent on a well-educated work force, shortchanging educational needs is a threat to the economic security of Americans in the 21st century.

Security is the most important function of government. But we should not—in the name of security—needlessly spend tens of billions of dollars a year for the benefit of politically connected interests.