

1978

## Setting National Priorities-The 1978 Budget

Lawrence J. Korb

Joseph Pechman

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## PROFESSIONAL READING 107

- Ripping a full one-fourth of *Hesperus'* hull after ramming, and sinking U-357.

- Trying to sink submarines capable of 600-foot depths with depth charges bureaucratically set to explode at 350 feet.

- Development of the wolfpack tactics and the successes and failures of the Coastal Command's ASW aircraft.

The painstakingly slow evolution of tactics and equipment paralleled by the startling numbers of ships being sunk continues despite a production geared for war on both sides. For the Germans, the Lone Hunter became the centrally controlled wolfpack, the snorkel arrived, and depth capabilities increased. For the Allies, radar, H/F D/F equipment, use of aircraft, radio, hedgehogs and acoustic noisemakers finally helped to turn the tide of the war in 1943.

Students of World War II are undoubtedly already familiar with MacIntyre's series. However, for those who are not *U-Boat Killer* provides incisive analysis interestingly described and wholly enjoyable. For everyone, Chapter 15, "The Future," is the author's projection of tomorrow's naval dilemma. It is disarming to realize that these insights were conceived over 20 years ago, and for the most part, accurately describe the situation today. MacIntyre's story does not bore the reader with lengthy descriptions of the slate-blue sea, the young ASW officer's girlfriend, or the pedestrian life aboard a ship; MacIntyre has viciously cut his own repertoire of sea stories to a concise, interesting account which leaves one asking "is this fact or fiction?"

JOHN MORSE  
Lieutenant, U.S. Navy

Pechman, Joseph. *Setting National Priorities—The 1978 Budget*. Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1977. 435pp.

This year's edition of *The Brookings Institution's Setting National Priorities*

differs from its six predecessors in three respects. First, this is the first of the volumes which deals with a budget prepared by one Administration and revised by another. Second, this is the first volume which analyzes and criticizes the programs and policies of a Democratic administration. The previous reports, prepared during the Nixon-Ford years, earned the Institution the reputation of a Democratic government-in-exile. Indeed Charles Schultze, who directed the initial budgetary analyses, served as Director of the Bureau of the Budget under Lyndon Johnson and is now the Chairman of President Carter's Council of Economic Advisors. Third, this is the first volume in which substantial portions of the report were written by people not associated with Brookings. The chapter on Social Security was written by Alicia Munnell from the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, Welfare Reform by George Carcagno and Walter Carson from *Mathematica*, and Energy by Milton Russell from *Resources for the Future*.

The most interesting portions of the study deal with the authors' criticisms of the Carter economic and administrative initiatives. They find fault with the new Administration in five areas.

First, the study points out that it is extremely unlikely that President Carter can fulfill his campaign pledges to aid the cities, reform the welfare system, and achieve other social goals if he insists on balancing the budget in Fiscal Year (FY) 1981. According to the report, the budget margin available in FY 1981 will be no more than \$50 billion. This means that growth in the defense budget, real increases in existing domestic programs, and any new programs will have to be accommodated within that figure if the budget is to be balanced.

Second, the authors feel that President Carter's anti-inflation proposals really contain nothing new and are unlikely to be any more successful than

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those of his predecessors. According to the study: "Neither the scope of the individual policies nor the magnitude of the expected benefits offers a great deal of encouragement."

Third, the report concludes that the new energy program would add to the general inflationary pressures and would worsen rather than relieve the shortage of natural gas. According to the study, "... these energy proposals will not eliminate the gas shortage; they will partially disguise it and extend it to the markets that are now uncontrolled."

Fourth, the study argues that zero-based budgeting (ZBB) at the federal level has more drawbacks than merits. Theoretically, zero-based budgeting is supposed to eliminate the preference given to old programs in their competition for funds with new ones because all parts of the budget are treated comprehensively and equally. In practice, ZBB diverts large amounts of scarce managerial time for limited results and forces policymakers to focus on the upcoming year rather than multiyear budgeting. Moreover, ZBB is inappropriate for that large portion of the budget which is spent on indirect operations, such as grants and transfer payments.

Fifth, the study concludes that government reorganization will not lead to increased efficiency as the report notes: "... the real payoffs are not in efficiency but in redistributing political influence, altering public policies, and signalling the administration's intentions to the rest of the government and to the country."

Discussion of the defense budget is comparatively small. It consumes only 14 percent of the book. The analysis, written by Barry Blechman and others, is at once excellent and somewhat disappointing. The chapter is excellent because it contains a useful overview of nearly all of the major defense issues, but disappointing because it contains very little that is new or innovative.

Blechman and his colleagues have been presented in previous editions or in the Institution's "Studies in Defense Policy."

LAWRENCE J. KORB  
Naval War College

Ruse, Gary Alan. *A Game of Titans*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1976. 283pp.

The serious professional will sometimes disdain the novel as not being realistic and thus not worth his time. This shows a lack of appreciation for the unique place and role of the serious novel in literature as a stimulator for and vehicle of critical thinking about issues. *A Game of Titans*, ostensibly a story of a confrontation at sea between the Soviet air-capable cruiser, *Kiev*, and a hypothetical U.S. LTA rigid airship, *Grand Eagle*, touches on much of today's strategic thinking and serves up several conceivable future situations.

The author, a young former military journalist, has an important idea to convey: that the United States would be well-advised to redevelop and deploy the lighter-than-air dirigibles of a bygone era. Ruse makes large airships sound quite plausible. They have their limitations, but their strengths are more compelling. Perhaps he is right. Ruse's *Grand Eagle* is four times the size of *Macon* and *Akron* and is armed with defensive and offensive weapons (including the ubiquitous laser gun). It is nuclear-powered and equipped with multisensor and communications systems. Remotely piloted aircraft, eight V/STOL light fighters (advanced Harriers), and helicopters round out the combat/reconnaissance suite carried in *Grand Eagle*. Interestingly, the airship is built and operated by the U.S. Air Force and its latter-day antagonist is the Soviet Navy's princely capital ship, the sometime aircraft carrier *Kiev*.

The story takes place over the mid-Pacific and involves secret agents, a