

The Butter That's Traded Off for Guns

By Seymour Melman

In a long national sleep, Americans have dreamed that the nation could have both guns and butter indefinitely — that military spending is an efficient device for spinning the wheels

Seymour Melman, professor of industrial engineering at Columbia University, is author, most recently, of "Profits Without Production."

of the economy. But President Reagan's military aid has shattered that happy illusion. Not only is it literally taking bread out of the mouths of children, it also is severely damaging the whole economy and imposing a wide range of punishing social costs.

Nowhere is the contradiction better shown than in the Administration's proposed fiscal 1986 budget, which would cut \$32 billion from civilian obligations and hand it over to the military — this at a time when diverse in-

dustries are toppling like dominoes, when the nation's epidemic of joblessness is spawning chances for productive livelihoods for millions of people. In other words, the budget offers more evidence that Pentagon spending still relentlessly loots the means of production. Even if Caprotti Hill negotiations with the White House manage to shave some dollars, the final figures are not likely to alter the basic pattern significantly.

All the while, the Government care-

fully avoids any discussion of its alternative in the arms race and military and economic decay: coupling a pain process of agreed arms reduction with conversion from a military to a civilian economy.

The gun-or-butter choice once couched to a timeless future can no longer be ignored, for the "long run" is now, and the nation cannot have it both ways. As the accompanying sample of trade-offs generated by the Administration's budget illustrates,

400 meals for the homeless in Grand Central Terminal	= \$420	One 156-mm. (conventional) high-explosive shell	= \$10 million	Proposed 1986 cut in Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) research and control activities	= \$10 million	5 Air-launched cruise missiles
The Senate Republicans' 1986 budget proposal for freezing the cost-of-living adjustments in Social Security and similar pension payments, which would push 42,000 people into poverty, plus suggested cuts in farm-income subsidies as well as in Federal funds for housing	= \$25 billion	The MX Peacekeeper missile program	= \$25 billion	Mayer Koch's 10-year plan for repairing New York City's infrastructure	= \$40.8 billion	The Stealth radar-evading bomber program
Proposed cut in funds for mass-transit systems	= \$2.8 billion	Navy (EA6B) airplane program for surveillance and communications jamming	= \$2.8 billion	Federal funds needed by Connecticut for rehabilitating bridges and roads	= \$3.7 billion	1986 planned research and development for the Strategic Defense Initiative ("Star Wars") program
Proposed 1986 cuts in paraprofessional funds and in campus-based financial aid for students	= \$2.3 billion	1986 budget for the B-1A cruise heavy tank	= \$2.3 billion	Annual additional funding needed to avert deterioration in Federal, state and local public facilities	= \$18 billion	35 nuclear-powered aircraft carriers with their planes and support ships, plus the Navy's anti-submarine airplane (F-35C) program
Proposed 1986 cuts in funds for veterans' medical care and housing	= \$336 million	220 Phoenix air-to-air missiles	= \$336 million	Annual additional funds needed to restore acceptable maintenance of New York City's public schools	= \$40 million	2 B-1B intercontinental bombers
Proposed 1986-87 cuts in Federal funding for subsidized lunches for New York City school-children	= \$8.7 million	800 Army multiple-launch rockets	= \$8.7 million	Governor Cuomo's plan for new low-income housing in New York City	= \$4 billion	Half of the 1986 funding for additions to the United States' stock of 37,000 nuclear warheads
Proposed 1986 cut in Medicare services	= \$4 billion	Proposed low-altitude anti-ballistic weapons program	= \$4 billion	Estimated cost of cleaning up 10,000 toxic-waste dumps that contribute to the nation's soil and water	= \$100 billion	The Navy's Trident II submarine and F-15 jet fighter programs
Proposed cuts in small-business loans and Job Corps services	= \$1.3 billion	The Department of Defense's Linn American program for 1986	= \$1.3 billion	Proposed 1986-88 cut in New York City Medicaid funding, reducing medical services to five percent	= \$1.2 billion	Half of the Air Force's 1986 heavy-transport (C-5B) airplane budget
Proposed Federal cuts in housing for the elderly and handicapped, and the cut in energy assistance for poor people	= \$1.3 billion	One projected (LHD-1) Marine amphibious assault ship	= \$1.3 billion	1983-85 cuts in Federal income and nutrition programs that left 20 million people hungry among the 30.2 million living in poverty	= \$12 billion	The Army's Patriot ground-to-air missile system
1982-85 cuts in Federal job-training and aid to public-service employment in New York City	= \$12.5 billion	18 Navy F-34 jet fighters in 1986	= \$12.5 billion	Estimated cost of re-opening an average two-room mid-income Manhattan West Side apartment	= \$43,287	One (F-14 jet fighter) aircraft-payload power loss; one antenna clamp alignment tool; one antenna pulser height gauge; one antenna bearing wiper
The proposed 1986 cut in Amtrak and in modernization of the Northeastern railway corridor	= \$741 million	26 Navy air-cushion landing craft	= \$741 million	What is needed to avert the growth of hunger: a one-third increase in funding for the Federal school-lunch program, food-stamp program, and Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program	= \$5.3 billion	The Army's single-channel ground and airborne radio system
Proposed 1986 cuts in natural-resources and in environmental controls, and in recreational facilities	= \$1.4 billion	The Army's 1986 funding for chemical-bacteriological weapons and research, and for rebuilding 48 (CH-47) heavy-lift helicopters	= \$1.4 billion	Proposed elimination of the Federal share of a 15-year national plan for sewage treatment to meet maximum Clean Water Act standards	= \$36 billion	The Army's Agria (CG-47) cruiser program

