

**Are We Pounding Plow Shears Into Swords?**  
(An excerpt from Guilty of No Wrongdoing, Robbie L. Rogers)  
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For thousands of years mankind dreamed of pounding its swords of war into plow shears of production and peace. We now have the opportunity to make that dream a reality; but alas, the reverse is evident. It seems the powers that be only placate the general population with such a myth. President Bush while crying peace also vows not to reduce this nations allotted GNP toward defense. America often perpetrates the myth that war is good for the economy; however, the reverse is true. Effectively, wars slow growth for most of the confused participators; when it is over, society trudges home to gradually amass another surplus, only to do it all over and over again.

The bloody masses historically vow, "never again." Still, those eager for wealth manage to affect general opinions by generating anger through many prearranged catastrophes such as the sinking of the Maine, Pearl Harbor, or the assassination of Vietnam President Ngo Dinh Diem, the Gulf of Tonkin incident and countless others suspected by renegade historians. Over the last five centuries of world history, such cycling international wars have drained global economies, destroyed hundreds of thousands of lives and ravaged entire continents. These wars effectively helped utilize excess goods thereby financing an expansive economy. The rising and falling of such an economic cycle is called a "Kondratieff Wave." The long-time cycles last about 50 years, or through an entire inflation and deflationary cycle.

War ravages areas where they are fought, such as Europe during WWI and WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, and even our own hemisphere in El Salvador, Nicaragua, and recently Panama. By way of death and destruction war rapes the economy and its people, taking generations to rebuild and heal the wounds. In a stark contrast we in America greatly expanded our GNP as a result of wars; in effect we were the plunderers, progressing virtually unscathed economically, reaping huge financial rewards while other nations suffered adversity. Our European and South American brothers were often devastated; but we prospered, and supplied goods to help their economies come back. We survived economically by perpetuating inflation through deficit spending and import/export trade balances. However, this is contrary to economic laws! Military buildup and its brothers deficit and inflationary spending caused a counterproductive erosion of our standards of living and morals. Our economy consequently suffered from the lack of enhanced growth that other nations were experiencing; yet, things are rapidly changing.

Historically Americans eagerly shouldered the massive defense burden. We were told, no other western nation was economically strong enough to share the load. This is no longer true and a significant portion of the recent expansion period, which much of the world was enjoying, was partially brought about by a decrease in war machineries. Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, West Germany-soon to become unified Germany and the European countries created healthy, sustainable economies that are now fully capable of paying for their own defense burden.

While our national economic expansion is considered slow, we need only apply a change in defense related military spending to easily surpass the GNP growth rate of others. A reduction of our military expenditures to that comparable to Japan's 1% GNP military expenditure vs. our giant 6% GNP allocation to the defense budget would remove our economic shackles. This scenario depends on significant super power "aggressor demobilization".

Perestroika and the general attitude of the superpowers have given America and the world an invitation for which it supposedly dreamt about for hundreds of years. If done properly new security agreements with the Soviets, China and our European partners, could possibly reduce or eliminate the oft experienced Kondratieff Wave burden. "Mutual Destruction" of the bulk of the war machinery or the ability to be a formidable aggressor should not be a dream but a demanded reality. Given the catastrophic potential of the current economic expansion, or the pushed inflation down-side, we must remove the defense shackles from America's economy or face a different kind of lasting devastation.

Inflation, the government's "hidden taxation" greatly supplies the funds for a continual war machinery buildup. The deficit spirals created from inflation pose great problems in this nation just as they have in the other so-called military giants. In an effort to raise their nation's backward standard of living the Soviet Union and China had no choice but to reduce their military growth.

We who have known no international war on our shores have recently also faced a steady decline in our standard of living. Vigorous economic competition from industrial giants and emerging ones have this nation limping toward a new defeat. Our living standards have fallen, according to how you judge the yard stick, in a direct proportion to inflation. Economic laws state that goods should depreciate not appreciate. Equity should be a direct result of the supply and demand, and how much is owed, not according to an artificially pushed inflation value.

The average home on the market in this nation exceeds \$90,000 and actually can reach \$170,000 depending upon the geographic location. Conversely, the per capita income for an individual in this nation is far less than qualifying for such a home. Juggling numbers and percentages seems to be the governments way of alleviating social problems. Poverty was often located at \$13,000 while middle income was classified as starting at \$20,000. There are practically no homes being built for such low incomes; the average monthly mortgage payment is almost \$600, practically a 50 percent increase since 1980.

Currently worldwide military spending stands at \$1 trillion. All economies worldwide would benefit enormously from any large scale defense spending reduction. A simple reduction in the \$500 billion this nation spends on European defenses alone would substantially effect world economic growth. A simple redirection of our military expenditures toward research, development and a modernization of our aging industrial base would allow us to regain and outstrip the world's high growth economies. The ensuing change in our GNP direction would create hundreds of thousands of new jobs and a healthier economy.

International treaties formed to reduce the war threat hanging over the world could remove the shackles from the total economic growth outlook. Consequently peace could become reality not a dream. At a risk of seeming facetious, I say we should pass laws requiring war to be fought by only generals against generals, with politicians sent in as replacements and to pick up the dead. If such laws were in force worldwide we would have no military buildup, deficits or inflation. We would finally find true peace and prosperity, instead of dreaming. This is our desire is it not, or is it just a charade and are we truly in the grips of a mythical worldwide military Triad, wanting war not peace as some so called radicals suspect?