

HARPER'S

MAY 2 1988

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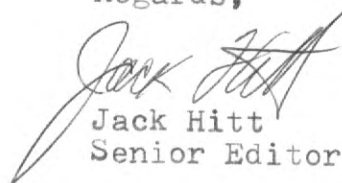
29 April 1988

Dear Admiral Zumwalt,

Thanks for the submission. It is excellent. In order to maintain some variety in the responses, I edited them so that each piece makes one or two essential points. I have also done some slight copy editing. I enclose a copy for your review to insure I have done no violence to your arguments. Since we are closing in on our deadline, I will call your office Monday afternoon to take over the telephone any changes you might have.

Also, at that time, may I get from you a brief biography. I want to properly identify each participant above his article. Thanks again for the response.

Regards,


Jack Hitt
Senior Editor

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Admiral Zumwalt

Admiral La Rocque's defense critique is pure nonsense. First, few Americans, including those who take a hard-line toward the Soviet Union, are opposed to even profound mutual reductions in superpower forces, provided equal security for the United States and its allies can be ensured. However, few would agree that a precipitous, unilateral cut in U.S. military capability is good, either for our security or for our allies'. La Rocque builds his case on the mistaken assumption that military spending has caused our record deficit and debt. But this country can easily afford to spend 6 percent of its annual GNP year on defense indefinitely. The fundamental causes of our growing debt are the huge tax cuts of 1981-82 and our inability to control federal spending.

La Rocque somehow believes that a large unilateral cut in U.S. defenses would do no lasting injury to our interests and those of our allies. Under his plan--even if it were phased in over the next decade--NATO might likely disintegrate once withdrawals were announced (let alone started). One can only speculate on the effect of isolating our major trading and investment partners, but it might precipitate an economic disaster.

Troop withdrawals in the Pacific might force Japan to rearm. Although I respect the Japanese and believe that they spend more on defense, I also fought in World War II in the Pacific. How far Japan's probable rearmament would go is unclear. But we would be foolish to assume that the emergence of a third military superpower, and one no longer our close ally, would automatically improve U.S. security.