

The two are not the same. As Mowbray says, "The question of where to spend the public funds that are available for transportation should be answered on the merits of the various forms of transportation, not on the source of the funds."

Mowbray has provided a valuable critique of the interstate highway program, especially through his case histories of wilderness areas and city neighborhoods violated by the roads. But there are gaps in the book. For instance, he has barely touched on the operations of the road gang—the businessmen, engineers, and politicians who jealously guard the trust fund and keep the money and concrete flowing. This is the heart of America's transportation mess.

And Mowbray's unrelieved tone

of outrage tends to become tedious by the time one reaches the end of the book. After all, some highways, even in the cities, have been well-designed, efficient additions to the transportation system.

But in the main, things are as bad as he says and are likely to get worse. Mowbray puts his faith in "a voracious micro-organism that has been chomping through highways in Australia. The tiny bug, *Desulfovibrio desulfuricans*, consumes the oily substance in bituminous materials, leaving the highway dry and brittle and subject to quick destruction by the elements."

This "heroic bug" sounds too good to be true. (Is it a put-on? Would it survive the journey to America?) Besides, it would be nice to think that the people are still in charge. ■

# The Arms of Kuss

A review by Peggy Anderson

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## The War Business: The International Trade in Armaments

by George Thayer

Simon and Schuster, 383 pages, \$6.95.

Fifty-five wars have been fought in the 24 years since 1945, George Thayer tells us, and 95 per cent of them have been fought in the underdeveloped areas of the world—with imported weapons.

This book is about the sale of arms throughout the world and the effects of that arms trade on world tensions. Thayer states his case simply: the arms trade "encourages arms races and transforms political conflicts into wars." He scarcely raises his voice as he pains-

takingly explains that arms—sometimes by their presence alone—have precipitated almost all the wars, and many of the political crises, since the arms trade began to boom in 1945. He argues that Nasser would not have dared provoke war with Israel had he been forced to rely on what weaponry he could scrounge from within the U.A.R.'s borders, nor would Sukarno have taken on Malaysia. The Nigerian civil war, the Indian-Pakistani war over Kashmir, the Yemeni civil war, the Congo, Korea,

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Vietnam—none of these would have happened, Thayer believes, if the parties involved had not had access to huge supplies of modern arms.

Thayer is a meticulous researcher with an apparent fondness for out-of-the-way topics. His 1967 book, *The Farther Shores of Politics*, explored extreme political movements in the United States; the one before that, in 1965, was about *The British Political Fringe*. His new book ably carries forward his habit of lowered voice and ample documentation. He lets his facts largely speak for themselves.

Those facts will make uncomfortable reading for Americans. Although not all the weapons involved in the wars he cites came from the United States, this country is the largest purveyor of arms in the world. And the chief trafficker in the United States is not a private merchant, in business for profit, but the United States government, “perhaps the world’s most vocal proponent of disarmament.”

Thayer leaves the reader in no doubt that America’s reasons for getting into the arms trade in the first place made more sense than our reasons for staying in it. We began to give arms to our allies in 1940 because of the threat of a Nazi takeover in Europe. (Until then, most arms had been sold by private companies.) In furtherance of “containment” policy, the U.S. government continued to supply allies with surplus arms after the war ended. As Europe got back on its feet, it occurred to us to sell the arms, as a way of getting the gold flowing back in the right direction. When the surplus of arms ran out, we began to fill orders from abroad with up-to-date weapons off the assembly line.

In the 25 years since World War II, Thayer tells us, non-communist countries have given or sold \$59 billion worth of military aid to other countries. The United States accounts for

\$50 billion of that sum—in aid that has gone to some 80 nations in all, at the rate of about \$2 billion a year. And the rate is rising, although “containment” is no longer the rationale. Under the new names—“balance of power” and “balance of payments”—the U.S. will sell the most provocative matériel to non-communist countries, the only stipulation being that the recipient nation “promise” to use the purchase solely for defensive purposes.

Because the volume of our arms transactions exceeds that of any other nation, America is implicated more than any other nation in the results of those transactions. Among the achievements Thayer attributes to U.S. arms policy—and the high-pressure way it is conducted—are the Indian-Pakistani war of 1965; the fall of the Erhard government in Germany; Prime Minister Macmillan’s resignation; the stirring up of Latin America; the general build-up of weapons around the world; the sale to underdeveloped countries of arms they don’t need, can’t afford, and may not even want; and much of the responsibility for the arms race.

Who in the American government is to be held accountable for these developments? The answer to that is the strongest part of the book. In a chapter called “The Pentagon Drummers,” Thayer describes the government’s arms-selling mechanism as a merchandising system that makes Hertz look like Number Two. What is chilling about this system, as Thayer unveils it, is that the bureaucracy considers it so ordinary a part of the business day. Accountability is not limited to, say, McNamara, Kennedy, and Johnson. They take responsibility for the policy, but its vigorous implementation must be credited to the Defense bureaucracy, under the leadership of one Henry John Kuss, Jr., whom Thayer misidentifies as a “Deputy Under Secretary of Defense.” Kuss, whose correct title is

Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Logistics Negotiations, is America's chief arms salesman.

According to Thayer, Secretary McNamara set up Kuss's section to market abroad the five per cent of U.S.-manufactured military equipment that is not absorbed into the American military establishment. The stated objectives of ILN, however, are "to promote the defensive strength of our allies, consistent with our political-economic objectives, to promote the concept of cooperative logistics with our allies, and to offset the unfavorable balance of payments resulting from essential U.S. military deployment abroad." Kuss has a staff of 42 people, divided into teams with selling responsibility for different areas of the world. The staff, says Thayer, is loyal to a fault; perhaps that is because of Kuss's own enthusiasm for his job. "If we possibly can," Thayer quotes him as having said, "we want to sell, first, the whole airplane. If we can't, then we'll settle for selling major parts or for licensing. But to optimize sales, we've got to shoot first for the bigger package."

Supporting Kuss's efforts—the other part of the answer to the question of accountability—are people all over the nooks and crannies of government whose jobs are somehow related to our arms sales policy. They are to be found in the White House, the National Security Council, the State Department, overseas American embassies, the Treasury Department, the Department of Commerce, the Central Intelligence Agency, the Atomic Energy Commission, even the Department of Agriculture. And this is not a complete list. Thayer gives the complete list, elaborates, and then begins dropping his bombs:

As is evident, the machinery in operation to ensure the success of the arms sales program is vast.

Several knowledgeable experts estimate that the total number of people employed by the U.S. government whose jobs depend directly on the continuance of the [arms sales] policy exceeds 500,000. Not all of these departments or individuals push sales; most simply complement the policy in one way or another; some actually oppose it. But what they all have in common is a vested interest to see that the policy continues unchanged, for without it their jobs and/or departments have less, and in some cases no, reason for being. These facts in themselves do not make the arms sales policy right or wrong. What they do illustrate, however, is that there exists a built-in resistance in the U.S. government to any change in this policy.

By their very nature, bureaucrats—and they are not alone—promote their own careers by seeking to expand the programs and policies for which they are responsible. To a bureaucrat it is the only measure of success. Thus they are empire builders: they hire more people, request more authority, and seek larger appropriations. For instance, between 1966 and 1968 Kuss' staff increased from 28 to 42 and his office costs increased from \$564,000 to \$700,000. Any cutback in a program or policy is a cutback in a bureaucrat's career; therefore, his survival and success are based on the augmentation and expansion of his responsibilities. Often this leads to a situation where, in order to preserve a career, a program is continued along other avenues even in the face of an order from higher up ordering that the program be cut back....

As Thayer sees it, the checks and balances which operate with more or less success in other areas of American foreign or domestic policy, are almost impotent—those that exist—in the case of arms policy. The President and the

Secretaries of State, Defense, and Treasury make the most sensitive decisions on who can buy what weapons; but they never even know about the thousands of less sensitive decisions. Those are made—routinely—by Kuss and a very few other members of the arms fraternity. Individually, these decisions may seem minor, and often they are. Collectively, they form the arms policy of the most powerful country in the world.

Who can ride herd on the people who make these decisions? Almost no one, in Thayer's gloomy assessment. Arms vocabulary is arcane and can be made to seem even more so if Congress, for example, starts probing too deeply. Rubber stamps spelling "Confidential" and "Top Secret" can be applied to an inkpad and touched to paper in a twinkling of an eye. The Office of Munitions Control, set up to make sure arms go only where they're supposed to go (and not resold to a third party without approval), "has no control over the sale of grant of weapons carried out by the U.S. government itself" (emphasis added). Similarly, the job of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency is not to police Kuss' operation but to "participate in establishing policy." One high ACDA official told Thayer that it would not be realistic for that agency "to take an absolutist position against arms sales 'because no one would pay any attention to us.'" Perhaps the reason no one would pay any attention is that ACDA, like OMC, is under the State Department, which everyone knows is less powerful than the Pentagon. And the Pentagon

...is so large that it is almost impervious to outside influences. There are so many layers of leadership and bureaucracy in a place as big as the Pentagon that even a Secretary of Defense as astute as McNamara could be tuned into only so many of them. Significant "wars" are being fought at a lower level

that he never heard about. What bothers many people is that Defense Department employees are, on the whole, decent and competent people; they have no evil intent. But with 27,000 employees in the Pentagon itself, another 3.5 million men and women in uniform, plus all the ancillary groups (industries and private research companies, for example) that feed off the department, the operation becomes virtually impossible to control and can often veer off onto a course that no one intended it to take. It is so vast that it has a motion and life of its own.

There is much more to *The Arms Business* than the American government's involvement in it. The first two chapters on the arms trade in private hands are colorful and interesting, but they take up almost half the book and could have been a separate volume entirely. Their length and detail sap the drama of the real story Thayer has to tell.

Part of the problem is that Thayer tends to paint a whole picture when a sketch would suffice. Reading the book is like sitting from noon till midnight in a movie theater playing *Frankenstein*. The first time the distorted, discolored hands close around the white throat of the heroine, you're frozen with fear. The second time, you are less tense but still engrossed. Once around again, and you might go out for popcorn. By the time Thayer has delineated the involvement of private arms merchants in skirmishes all over the globe, the reader is sated with detail. His eyes tend to glaze when the same routine is followed in the case of the American government, and once again in the case of other free-world governments, and finally in the case of the communists.

That is unfortunate. The reader should not be allowed to become so

impatient with the medium that he loses the message or the outrage it occasions. Thayer's last chapter, in which he makes specific, sensible suggestions for curtailing activities of the monster which has been permitted to develop "a motion and life of its own," takes the glaze off the eyes by stating bluntly that this curtailment is an American responsibility.

"If America seeks a more peaceful world" Thayer warns, "it must first set its own house in order. If it does not, there is little hope that others will. Indeed, if America does not do it soon, it may be too late for everyone."

That is a dramatic conclusion. Thayer's readers will not think it overstated.■

# Up the Spleenwort

A review by Laurence I. Moss

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## America the Raped

by Gene Marine

Simon and Schuster, N.Y., 312 pages. \$5.95.

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*America the Raped* is a catalogue of horror stories about man's abuse of his environment. More significantly, it is an attempt by Gene Marine to give us an ecological conscience:

...we must save our ecosystems, not only because they may be pretty or because man may have a need to get away for recreation or meditation or the simple inhalation of fresh air, but because we may, someday, vitally need what they contain—and we cannot preserve even a single life form in its true manifestation if we take it from its natural home.

While it may be easier to mobilize public concern for the whooping crane, the California condor, the alligator, the cougar, and the gray whale than for the ebony spleenwort or the epiphytic algae, the genetic information

preserved in these latter forms of life may be no less vital to us. And since we have no way of knowing which may be important to us in the future, Marine argues, we must preserve them all.

The villains of this book are the "Engineers." This is the term Marine uses to describe people (not exclusively engineers) with an "engineering mentality"—a predilection to approach a problem in the narrowest of terms and to make a critical policy decision without being aware of its environmental consequences.

In Marine's view, the most serious of an Engineer's assumptions is that there is some sort of determinism about the way things grow:

The American assumption—that growth is somehow built into the system, that "automatic forces"

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