

The Star-Telegram is an independent Democratic newspaper, supporting what it believes to be right and opposing what it believes to be wrong, regardless of party politics, publishing the news fairly and impartially at all times.

Whose Leadership Should We Follow?

The House of Representatives, by its vote to slash \$6,000,000,000 from the federal budget for the fiscal year starting July 1, assumed a tremendous and awesome responsibility. By this action, the House ignored the protest of Chief of Staff General Eisenhower and repudiated the advice and warnings of other officials who were responsible for winning the war and who now are charged with the dual responsibility of winning the peace and protecting our national security.

More than a third of the contemplated reduction—\$2,250,000,000 to be exact—would be pared from the funds requested for the armed forces if the action of the House were approved by the Senate.

Real economy is an obligation which Congress owes to the nation. But meat-ax slashing of defense funds might well prove to be false economy. Certain it is that the apparent savings made after World War I at the expense of the War and Navy Departments proved to be false economy.

General Eisenhower has warned that such lump-sum cutting of Army funds would cripple the nation's defense plans. Similar warnings made a generation ago also went unheeded. The people at that time thought they were heavily burdened with a war debt of \$40,000,000,000. They were crying then, as now, for reduced taxes and a balanced budget. Taxes were reduced, the budget was balanced, and substantial payments were made on the war debt, but at tragic cost to the security of our country.

Surely some means of economizing can be found today without repeating that awful mistake.

The possibility of some economies being made in defense expenditures has not been ruled entirely out of the picture. On the contrary, General Eisenhower has indicated that some may be possible, and he has pledged himself to co-operate with Congress to that end. An opportunity for such co-operation will come in a few weeks or months when Congress begins consideration of specific appropriation bills.

The budget slash approved by the House was not made as a result of selective economies its advocates believe could be effected without jeopardizing the nation's safety. Instead, as Minority Leader Rayburn has said, the \$6,000,000,000 figure is "a blind one snatched out of thin air, reached without rhyme or reason."

When the appropriations committees of the House and Senate take up the War and Navy appropriation bills, and later when the bills come up for floor consideration, members of Congress will have an opportunity to scrutinize every item, and will be privileged to delete any which can not be justified by the proper officials.

No such item-by-item consideration of proposed defense expenditures was possible before the House voted in favor of the reduction. Its action came after a necessarily hasty and cursory study of the budget by one of its committees.

In addition to General Eisenhower's, warnings of the consequences of the slash have been sounded by President Truman, Secretary of State Marshall, Secretary of War Patterson, Secretary of the Navy Forrestal, Fleet Admiral Nimitz and General Spaatz, commanding general of the Army Air Forces. It should be remembered that it is these officials, and not Republican members of the House, upon whom rests responsibility for our national security.

It also should be remembered that the estimates for both the Army and the Navy were reduced voluntarily before they were submitted to the Budget Bureau, and that further reductions were made by that agency at the request of President Truman. Thus the \$2,250,000,000 slash contemplated by the House action would be in addition to two reductions already made.

Secretary Patterson obviously had that

in mind when he said the other day that "a further major slash in our funds can not be met by minor reductions, but will require major eliminations in the planned security structure of our country."

General Spaatz also was thinking of the same thing when he declared that "in three to five years we will have a second-rate Air Force largely equipped with obsolete planes."

In addition to our military leaders, the wholesale reduction in Army and Navy funds is opposed by Senator Vandenberg of Michigan and Senator Gurney of South Dakota.

Senator Vandenberg is chairman of the Senate foreign relations committee and has had a major part in shaping the nation's postwar foreign policy. He is in a most favored position to know intimately the true status of world affairs. He also is a conservative and economy-minded. He has taken the sensible position that "I shall vote for the maximum economy which is not at the expense of American prestige, authority and safety in an uneasy world."

Senator Gurney, chairman of the armed forces committee of the Senate, recalling the helplessness of France trying to defend itself with obsolete weapons, has warned his colleagues that failure of Congress to provide adequate appropriations for our armed forces is an invitation to national disaster.

Thus on one side of the debate we find President Truman, Secretaries Marshall, Patterson and Forrestal, General Eisenhower, General Spaatz and Admiral Nimitz and two Republican leaders who place the nation's welfare ahead of political considerations, Senators Vandenberg and Gurney.

Arrayed against them are certain members of Congress who placed themselves on the spot by rash campaign promises of economy and tax reductions.

Whose leadership should the nation follow in such a debate? The answer to that question should be obvious to all thinking persons.

Support of Churches

The marked rise in American spending for luxuries and the decline in support of churches and benevolent institutions during the last 13 years were viewed by misgiving by James Wright Brown, president of Editor and Publisher, in a recent address before a group of prominent citizens in Hartford, Conn.

Mr. Brown pointed out that in the 1933-45 period the American people enjoyed an increase of \$318,000,000,000 in national income, spent \$58,000,000,000 more for luxuries and paid \$81,000,000,000 more in taxes than for the preceding 13 years. Yet during the same (1933-45) period, contributions to churches and related benevolences declined more than \$1,000,000,000 below the total for the prior 13 years. This drop occurred despite a rise in church membership and population.

Although many members deplore church calls for money, Mr. Brown found that the average annual per capita donation among church members had declined from \$20.31 to \$13.90. In comparison, nearly twice as much was spent for tobacco, three times as much for recreation and movies, seven times as much for alcoholic beverages and almost 10 times as much for jewelry, furs and like luxuries.

These statistics reflect a national rise in materialism and decline in spirituality, a trend which long has been noted by historians and sociologists. The ultimate of this development is national decadence, in which all should have concern, for without an abiding faith and philosophy no culture can survive.