

## Non-POM and The Military

I was born just a few months before the United States formally entered World War II. Some of my earliest memories include watching the troop trains and military equipment on the trains across the street in the switching yard. This and the stories my father told of his brother's service in both wars gave me an early interest in military history. I have read avidly such works as the complete Navy history of destroyer operations in World War II. I enjoyed reading Xenophon's "Anabasis," a history of the Greek military unit that rented itself as mercenaries to the Persian Empire in the time before the Greek wars with Persia. When I was in college, I used to spend the idle hours between classes reading the manuals in the ROTC offices. I loved military games and built a huge map of eastern Europe so I could simulate WWII on the Eastern front. So although I was never in the service (ROTC discovered I was 4F), I do have considerable knowledge of military history and requirements.

Wars are fought by military organizations. Those organizations must be bureaucratic or be so inefficient that they are ineffective against the coordinated actions of bureaucratic armies. The American Plains Indians were some of the best light cavalry in the world. They were fast, brave, they could subsist without a supply train, their tactics were excellent, they even had better weapons in some cases. But they had no chance against the U.S. army even though the army was quite outnumbered.

In a non-POM economy, what good *is* a military? It's no good at all if there is no organized, armed threat to the society. *If all the world adopted the non-POM economic system, there would be no need for military.* But in the meantime, until that happy day, there are nations and organizations in the world which constitute threats which can only be countered by military organizations. Therefore, participating in and supplying the military of a non-POM nation would be paid by the Payers. How much that pay would be depends on the perceived threat, of course. If the only threat is pirates off the coast of Somalia then the total pay for military might be relatively little. If the threat is from nuclear war with Russia and China, then the pay would be a quite large proportion of the nation's money.

It's pretty obvious that soldiers would be paid. Those guys carrying rifles into harm's way would earn every penny they were paid. But remember that the military is a *bureaucracy*. Those secretaries and office boys would also be paid. The people who donated land for military bases would be paid. The producers who gave weapons, food, clothes, and built buildings would be paid. In short, the military "budget" would automatically adjust to the perceived threat and that threat's requirements. As soon as the information indicating a threat was known to producers, some would decide to take the risk of providing arms, supplies and so forth. (Of course the necessities

provided to the military would be paid for as even soldiers need to live.) There would be no need for any Congressional actions or bills to be passed to increase supplies. The response would be immediate and would not have to await debate and such in the Government.

But what about things like aircraft carriers or jet fighters? They are very expensive and represent the contributions of a considerable number of people. It will take making a pretty good case to convince a large number of people to cooperate in the production of something which might not ever actually participate in any kind of war. One could work for a couple of years on a new plane or huge ship and never get any pay at all for it. This is good in a number of ways. For one thing, it prevents a lot of waste in the production of military goods. But for another, it means that the producers are much more likely to provide ships that are useful not only as military vessels but also as civilian craft. An aircraft carrier can serve as a hospital, for example. It can also carry considerable cargo given its huge internal spaces. Therefore, there is a good chance that most military equipment produced would be designed so that it was not purely military in functionality. Sure, a rifle designed for war is not likely to be useful for hunting deer but most military gear isn't the weapons themselves.

So now we have paid for the soldiers and other personnel, we have arranged for supplies, what about command? Who's in charge here?

There is no reason to believe that the President would lose his status as Commander-in-Chief. The Pentagon would probably remain the predominant office building for the military. The chain of command should remain the same. But that "Declaration of War" business would likely be considered irrelevant. Everybody, from the President on down, would be paid based on results, on the consequences of their actions so the actions of Congress would be rather unimportant.

Also, let's assume that a commander gives an order which his soldiers think should *not* be carried out. They know that the Payers will not accept "I was just following orders" as any kind of excuse if things go badly. They will make their own judgments. The "Charge of the Light Brigade" would never have happened with a non-POM economy. This same factor will make it all the more important for commanders to keep their subordinates fully informed of the situation and the plan so that their actions can be appropriate. Units will share information with neighboring units. The various services will share information with each other because that's just the way things are done in the non-POM bureaucracies. It's more *efficient*. The centralized computer system also makes such sharing easier. Coordination and control will be much easier.

**Soldiers will all be volunteers because the *Payers will not pay to enforce any kind of draft*. On the other hand, the pay for those who enlist in time of war might be huge depending upon what they accomplish. The pay will be the free market lure to meet the nation's demand for soldiers. AWOL and desertion will be almost impossible to get away with but since such escapes from service do harm, such acts will cost the deserter future income.**

**The biggest difference in the military will be the tactics employed. What is the least expensive way to win a war? Prevent it. What is the least expensive way to stop a tyrant from invading a nearby nation? Take him out by kidnapping or killing him. There is no need to damage or destroy anything else. Knowing that starting a war will result in your own death is something to make even the most cruel dictator pause. Therefore, there will be considerable attention paid to seeing trouble coming and preventing it.**

**This will be helped by the fact that all international trade will be through barter. This means that all our trading partners will value that trade and want it to continue. If they didn't like them, the trades would never happen in the first place. This means that the business communities of all nations would not want war with us. That is a powerful deterrent to war.**

**Technology improvements give advantages to the side which is quickest and most successful at adopting and integrating the changes in gear and techniques. As you may have noticed, it takes *months* to get a government to choose a new weapons system, years to produce and test it, and still more years for the military to learn to use it. The higher-ranking officers were always brought up in and trained in the previous war, not the one to come. There are all sorts of reasons why people can make more money by slowing down the process of creating and deploying new weapons in a POM economy. There are no such reasons in a non-POM economy. There are many reasons to provide defective weapons to the military (see the sorry history of fraud and defects in the military supply chain in the U.S. in WWII. It's sickening. Thousands of American service men and women died needlessly because someone wanted a quick profit from selling defective goods to the government.) There are many profit-related reasons to delay the stopping of production of the old weapons. In a non-POM economy, the better the weapons, the more money you make. Defective weapons will cost you and all those who helped produce them money. Everyone involved becomes very careful about making sure every weapon works well. The testing of new weapons is eagerly shared not only by the original producers, but by anyone who is willing to participate. Finding a major flaw in design before the weapon fails when most needed is worth a lot of money.**

Training will be innovative and thorough because poor training results in needless deaths and failure to complete the mission. Innovative, because the trainer is personally responsible for the results so he will do what works rather than follow some "book" by rote. He will also spread the word about what works for him because he can gain income that way. He will want the ideas of others because that can also improve his own pay. You may know about the "Peter Principle" in which people are promoted until they can't do the job and then they stay at that level or better. That doesn't work in a non-POM bureaucracy. If you aren't doing the job people will no longer pay attention to you and you are out whether you are sitting in the big chair or not. This also applies to the military. A high-ranking officer will generally have a staff that has an excellent idea whether that officer is good at his job or not. There will also be frequent training and tests of those officers. The weakest part of any military organization is the commander. If the commander is weak, stupid, indecisive, foolish, or pig-headed, the unit will perform badly. Therefore, this single point of failure will be the most frequently tested part. This is the consequence of feedback based on consequences with no excuses being acceptable. It doesn't matter what you were trying to do, it only matters what the result was.

There was a time when close order drill was very important to military organizations. There was a time when instant, mindless obedience was key to the success of a military formation in time of war. But the modern war is not like that any more. The military of a non-POM economy nation will adapt and change to meet changing conditions and circumstances just as the economy itself quickly adapts and changes to meet new conditions and circumstances. The rewards for successful adaptation are quick and go to everyone involved. The lack of rewards, the consequences of failure, are similarly felt by everyone involved. This means that the whole organization and its suppliers react immediately to success and failure. The whole organization learns quickly what will work. It is another triumph of the free market.

But what about the interaction of the military and the civilian? In some nations the military takes over. Could that happen in a non-POM economy? Of course not. Pay to the soldiers who participated would cease immediately. People would not give them food except at the point of a gun. The best they could do would be to become wandering bandits. They would almost immediately start to suffer the consequences of using POM. (You may remember them.) Also, think what the reward would be for stopping such a coup attempt. Think of how many thousands of people would have to be in on the attempt. All those privates and corporals would have to agree and go along with it. They would not be subject to mindless obedience, remember? Their pay is not controlled by their officers. They aren't all armed robbers in disguise. Most would be patriots loyal to the nation. They would never allow such a thing to come to pass. Such an

**attempt would fail even without the all-pervasive computer system that, whether we remain a POM society or switch to non-POM, is coming.**