

# COURIER-JOURNAL

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## The Budget: Or Who Will Bleed from The Cutting?

By Liz S. Armstrong

Washington (NC) — While Reagan administration officials sharpened their budget-cutting knives, social justice organizations sharpened their pencils and drafted heated responses to the administration's proposals.

They weren't the only ones penning reactions, however. Defenders of the president's budget also publicized their views.

Critics claim the budget unfairly targets the disadvantaged.

Backers suggest that President Reagan is right in boosting military spending — while trying to trim the deficit — because defense involves the well-being of the whole nation, rich and poor alike.

At stake in the budget debate? Priorities, such as whether defense is the top priority and thus sacrosanct when it comes to the cost-cutting ax, or whether burdens of fighting the deficit ought to be shared by all federal programs because those that help the poor, too, are a priority.

Cardinal Joseph Bernardin of Chicago has warned that defense, like social programs, must accept its share of deficit-reduction sacrifices.

Proposed cuts or fiscal "freezes" to limit spending that cause particular concern to administration critics involve shelter, food and nutrition programs, and other basic services.

Ronald Kristemeyer, director of the U.S. Catholic Conference's domestic social development office, noted that "low-income housing is the single one they're almost destroying federally assisted housing, especially that for the handicapped and elderly — the type of housing some dioceses and other church groups have, with government support, established in recent years.

Then there are food and nutrition programs to consider. Funding for the food and nutrition programs, if the budget proposals were followed, would decline from the \$18.6 billion expected to be spent by the end of fiscal 1985 to \$18.2 billion in fiscal 1986.

According to Bard Shollenberger, a policy analyst for the ecumenical Christian anti-hunger group Bread for the World, "the administration's proposed newest cuts in programs that provide food to hungry people demonstrate a callousness that should embarrass the American people."

Shollenberger, Rep. Mickey Leland, D-Texas, a Catholic who chairs the House Select Committee on Hunger, and others point to cuts in the school lunch program as one indication of what the budget would do.

Ostensibly, according to the budget, removal of children from "non-needy" families from the subsidized program would save some \$613 million. But Shollenberger and Leland have claimed that by cutting these children the whole school lunch program is jeopardized because many schools will simply drop out of the program, denying the needed lunches to the low-income hungry students. Leland stated that 3,000 schools quit after earlier cuts.

Father Thomas Harvey, executive director of the National Conference of Catholic Charities, noted that Catholic social service agencies vastly increased their activities to fill the gap left by earlier Reagan administration cuts. The public-private sector relationship has changed, he added. "For 20 years the government told us we were partners. Now, in the last four years, we're the safety net," he said.

"We must recognize that the United States cannot stand by and watch poverty and hunger increase while increasing spending to fuel the military build-up," Shollenberger said. "It is a question of priorities."

Priorities is precisely the issue, said Jim Freck, analyst for the Republican Study Committee, an unofficial congressional panel. Arguing that even freezing spending levels for defense would entail some cuts and harm national security, Freck said that "those who support an across-the-board budget freeze are advocating the position that there are no priorities in the federal budget. To them it seems 'fair' that every program be treated the same as America's national security."

Another "essential measure" in the Reagan budget, tuition tax credits — passed Citizens for Educational Freedom, a proponent of parochial schools.

According to the budget, tuition tax credits would cost \$635 million in revenue loss. Marilya Lundy, CEF president, thinks it's worth it. While the tax credits might cost millions, they actually would save money since sending every parochial school student to public school would be even more expensive, she said.



## Agree to Disagree

The Rev. Jerry Falwell, Moral Majority president, shakes hands with Sen. Edward Kennedy prior to their speeches at the National Religious Broadcasters convention in Washington. They agreed on the value of discussing religious issues but disagreed over what to do about abortion legislation. (NC Photo)

## South Africa Backs Off Archbishop Hurley Acquitted Before Trial for 'Defamation'

Pretoria, South Africa (NC) — Archbishop Denis E. Hurley of Durban, South Africa, was acquitted Feb. 18 of defamation charges stemming from a 1983 press conference in which he reportedly said a police unit had committed atrocities in Namibia.

His trial had been scheduled to begin the same day.

The prosecution said that a tape recording of the press conference at which the archbishop was alleged to have made the remarks made clear that he had been misquoted.

Archbishop Hurley said he was relieved at the acquittal, but also felt regret because the "story of Namibia" could have come out in court.

The prosecution's case centered on a report by the South African Press Association quoting the churchman as saying a police counterinsurgency force called Koevoet (Crowbar) which operated in the northern region of South African-administered Namibia, had brutalized black Namibian civilians.

A similar accusation was included in a report prepared by the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference.

The archbishop is president of the SACBC.

He was charged under the Police Act which makes it a crime to publish "any untrue matter" about the police without "reasonable ground" to believe the statement is true. The archbishop had pleaded innocent to the charge.

Bishop Desmond Tutu, black Anglican bishop of Johannesburg, said that he believed the authorities had "beat a hasty retreat" when they realized that they would get "egg on the face."

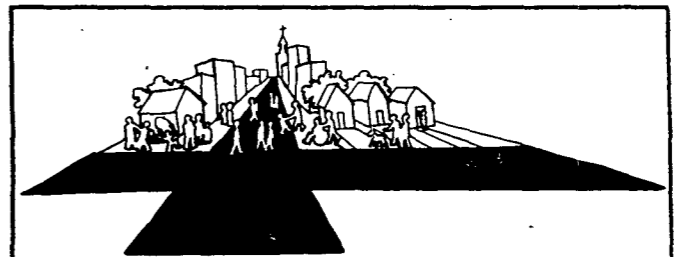
Bishop Tutu is an outspoken critic of South Africa's system of racial discrimination, called apartheid.

South African forces have battled Namibian guerrillas who have been fighting an 18-year war for independence.

Koevoet, an Afrikaans word, is the name of a

special police unit operating in Namibia under the command of South African police headquarters in Pretoria, said the London-based interchurch group Namibia Communications Centre.

The group said Koevoet units, which have both black and white members, are involved in "search and destroy" operations in the territory.



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## Lenten Disciplines

With the guidelines given in the 1983 Code of Canon Law, the following are the regulations for fast and abstinence during Lent.

1. All Fridays of Lent are days of abstinence.
2. Good Friday is a day of fasting.
3. All persons who are 14 years of age or older are bound by the law of abstinence.
4. All persons who are between the ages of 18 and 59, inclusive, are bound by the law of fasting.
5. Catholics are to be encouraged to perform acts of penance regularly, especially during the season of Lent.