

Election prompts reassessment of nation's priorities



MORAL PERSPECTIVES
As the November election draws close, there is an uneasiness among the American people. There are many good things we want to believe about our nation. These begin at home. We want to believe that the painful problems of our time will be addressed.

We are not a people who like to see persons unemployed, begging on the streets. We are not a people who want to see a widening gap separate rich and poor. We Americans are a people who would like to help other people upon this planet solve their pressing needs.

Most of us are not sure why we are so uneasy. Things are wrong and we are not exactly sure why. As Columbus Day and the November election near, we need to be clear about the cause of our discontent.

First, we are uneasy about leaders who lie to us. All kinds of leaders have lied to us, including presidents. We as Americans are not convinced that ethics and truth need to be sacrificed because someone believes we are threatened by some other power.

Sometimes leaders make promises they know they cannot fulfill. Yet deception has become a way of life in government. Religious people in particular are uneasy with lies. Yet we need to distinguish between personal issues and leadership policies that seek to deceive the people. Remember the "patriot missile" claims. Now we know that not 90 percent of them destroyed incoming missiles in the Gulf War, but 9 percent. There are hundreds of other such instances.

Second, political leaders speak about cutting government and government spending. No one gives us a plan to convert the nation from one with a primary focus upon the military. Almost two-thirds of the government works for the military and CIA. For two generations, our leaders have assumed that the Cold War would go on forever. The War in Vietnam was a child of the Cold War mentality. It destroyed the war on poverty and President Johnson. "See," people could claim, "the war on poverty doesn't work." Job training and poverty programs could not work because of the focus upon and the cost of a major war.

Americans are not sure why we are uneasy but we know it has something to do with massive expenditures on wars and getting ready for more wars. Americans do realize that there is work to be done at home. Our roads, bridges, schools, medical services and cities are in trouble. We know the money went somewhere.

No one has pointed out to us that we lost the Cold War. It is true that the Soviet Union collapsed. Yet we spent ourselves to exhaustion. We still do not have an adequate plan to cut the military and convert to a peacetime economy.

Germany is the only country that won the Cold War. They have a reunited nation. They have the most robust economy in Europe. They will dominate the largest unified market of 320 million people. One writer has called the European Community the new German Empire.

Third, we Americans are uneasy about the national debt. We

are not quite sure how this all happened. We are told by our national leaders that our government is too large. They fail to tell us that our military is the hungry animal eating everything else up. It is still hungry and it is still eating us up.

An American historian has likened the Cold War to a demolition derby. Russia and her satellites and the U.S. and our satellites wasted ourselves in this competition.

The prophets of old remind us that God will judge those who destroy others. The Soviet Union and the United States together spent \$1.5 billion a day on the arms race. Does this help explain the national debt? Does this explain how many tens of millions of people have died in the Third World because the rich would not and could not aid them?

Some historians doubt that our nation will ever recover from the costs of the Cold War. Now God

will make us pay the price. If we are willing to give up imperial notions of power over the entire world we may heal and recover. If we have a plan to convert our nation to a non-military based economy, we may heal and recover. If we demand truth from our leaders, we may heal and recover.

For some, Columbus Day is a celebration of a simplistic idea. This man is said to have discovered America. The truth is that the encounter of Europe with the

Americas was both a stimulating and a tragic event. Tens of millions of native people died, largely from European diseases. Slavery was expanded with terrible results for all. The carnage of the Civil War resulted. The Empire of Spain is gone. We must not rest easy with the idea of an American Empire, regardless of the reasoning.

Some suggest that the free trade agreements are truly pieces of a plan for American dominance

over Canada and Mexico. We the people do not desire or want an empire.

It has taken us 500 years to begin to understand the cost of the empire of Spain in the New World. Columbus was only the messenger of the ambitions of the king and queen.

Election time is a time for thought and perception. It is a time when we need to ask what is God's passionate desire for the nation and for the world?

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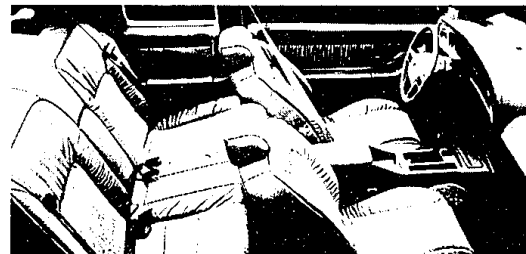
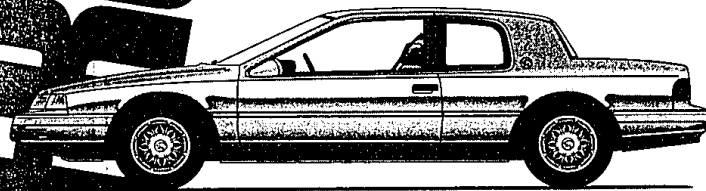
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State
job market
growing

Michigan's unemployment rate dropped in September for the second straight month, falling to a seasonally adjusted 8.8 percent, according to F. Robert Edwards, director of the Michigan Employment Security Commission.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimated the number of Michigan workers with jobs grew by 10,000 last month to 4,225,000.

Much of September's employment growth occurred in the manufacturing industry, which reported scattered job gains, and in government as school resumed for the fall term.

*Based on M.S.R.P. of 1993 Cougar XR7 with package 260A compared to 1992 Cougar LS with package 260B.
**Manufacturer's suggested retail price including destination, excluding title, taxes and license fee.