

## RESEARCH REPORTS

*Reviews of new research at public agencies and private institutions*

### **"What Older Americans Think: Interest Groups and Aging Policy."**

Princeton Univ., 41 William St., Princeton, N.J., 08540. 164 pp. \$24.95.

Author: *Christine L. Day*

America is aging rapidly. During the past two decades, the number of people 65 and over has grown twice as fast as the rest of the population, reaching 28.5 million—12 percent of the total U.S. population.

During the same period, older Americans became a powerful political force. The American Association for Retired Persons (AARP), founded in 1958 and now claiming some 28 million members over age 50, and the 4.5-million member National Council of Senior Citizens (NCSC) are just two of the more than 1,000 advocacy groups that have sprung up to lobby in Washington on behalf of the elderly. "Old-age interest groups appear to be one of the great political success stories of the last two decades," writes Day, a University of New Orleans political scientist. Federal spending on programs for the elderly rose from less than 15 percent of the federal budget in 1960 to about 27 percent in 1986, cutting the poverty rate among the elderly from 33 percent in 1959 to 12.5 percent in 1987.

Politicians, fearful of a backlash from the "gray lobby," have virtually exempted Social Security and other programs

for the elderly—such as Medicare—from budget cuts. As a result, Day says, the old stereotype of the elderly as impoverished and ill-cared for has been replaced by a new one: that of affluent "greedy geezers," intent on milking the government for all they can get.

But surprisingly, she argues, the elderly are actually *less* likely to support increases in federal spending for the elderly than are younger people. According to one 1984 poll, 55 percent of people aged 18 to 35, and 53 percent of those 36 to 64 think spending on Social Security should be increased; but only 45 percent of people 65 and over think so. Similarly, while 78 percent of people in the youngest group believe that the government doesn't spend enough on the elderly in general, only 51 percent of the elderly agree. Among people 75 and over, that number drops to 41 percent. And a surprising 14 percent of those 75 and older think that *too* much is spent on the elderly. (One old-age advocacy group, the National Alliance of Senior Citizens, actually lobbies against increases in federal spending for old-age programs.)

So why are old-age political

organizations such as the AARP so successful? Day points out that while they may be divided on federal spending, a clear majority of the elderly oppose mandatory retirement and favor better long-term health-care benefits, both issues that the groups address. Moreover, many groups provide valuable non-political services and benefits. The AARP, for example, offers discounts on insurance and drugs. And most organizations have steered clear of openly partisan stands in order to attract members from across the political spectrum.

Recently, Day observes, the groups have shown signs of weakness, as public concerns about the federal deficit and the large share of the budget going to the elderly have fomented a political backlash. But public reaction against the organizations has only galvanized support for them among the elderly, she adds.

In any event, reactions against programs for the elderly probably won't last long. After all, it is a safe bet that in 2010, the year America's 78 million baby boomers begin to retire, being old suddenly will become hip.

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### **"The Machine That Changed the World."**

Rawson Associates, Macmillan Publishing Company, 866 Third Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022. 323 pp. \$29.95.

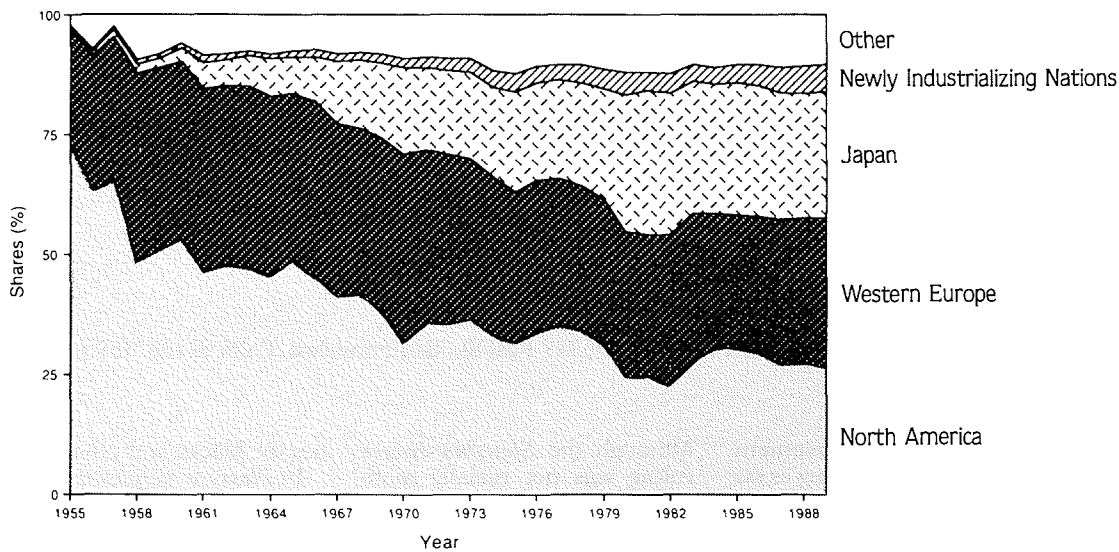
Authors: *James P. Womack, Daniel T. Jones, and Daniel Roos*

Twice in this century the automobile has revolutionized industrial manufacturing. Henry Ford's 1914 Model T set the first standard for factory mass production. Uniform, inter-

changeable components and moving assembly lines replaced individual craftsmen and hand-machined parts, reducing assembly time from more than 12 hours to less

than two. Consumer costs dropped by two-thirds. In 1923, Ford produced an astonishing 2.1 million Model T's. Following Ford's lead, factories across the world were

## Shares of World Motor Vehicle Production by Region, 1955–1989



mass-producing everything from toasters to tricycles by mid-century.

In 1950, a young Japanese engineer from the then-modest Toyota Motor Company named Eiji Toyoda visited Ford's Rouge plant in Detroit, and concluded that mass production wouldn't work in Japan. Among his reasons: the Japanese auto market required a wide variety of vehicles; auto workers demanded better working conditions and job security than their American counterparts; and businesses in the war-ravaged economy couldn't afford the expensive machinery and huge parts inventories needed for Ford-style mass production. Toyota set out to improve the system.

The "lean production" methods that the company evolved, write Womack and Jones of MIT's International Motor Vehicle Program, and Roos of the University of Sussex, are responsible for the remarkable success of Japanese automakers.

The Toyota engineers began by modifying the massive die machines used to stamp sheet metal into body parts. They designed machines with easily removable dies and changed them every few hours, keeping on hand only a one-half-day inventory of parts instead of the American companies' two weeks. That freed up large amounts of capital.

Workers were guaranteed lifetime employment with pay and promotions tied to seniority and given subsidized housing. Employee turnover all but ended, allowing assembly workers to be better trained. A Japanese auto worker today typically receives more than 380 hours of training, compared to 46 hours for his American counterpart. Organized in self-managed teams, workers are encouraged to stop the line anytime they spot a problem.

"Lean production" methods also extend to managers and engineers, who begin their careers with a three-month stint on the assembly line and are

frequently rotated to new tasks to alleviate boredom and "tunnel vision."

The results, say the authors, have been dramatic. Between 1982 and 1990 Japanese automakers doubled the number of models they produced, from 47 to nearly 84. Just half the size of General Motors, Toyota turns out as many models. Lead-time for the production of new prototypes has been shaved to six months—half that of American companies. Japanese companies can manufacture parts and assemble cars faster (16.8 hours versus 25.1 hours in Detroit) and with fewer defects (60 per 100 vehicles versus 82.3). The Japanese work ethic cannot explain the difference: Japanese-run plants in the United States outperform American-run ones. It takes them only 21.2 hours to produce an automobile, and their defect rate is only 65 per 100. (A small comfort: European automakers perform even worse than Detroit does.)

Ironically, the authors note,

Ford was the first of the American automakers to adopt "lean production" techniques, making it practically as efficient as the average Japanese transplant in the United States. General Motors and Chrysler are

following suit. In a near-saturated world auto market, keeping production costs down is the key to survival.

The authors happily predict a "lean" future for U.S. industry. "Lean production" is al-

ready spreading to other industries and could be the standard everywhere in the United States by the turn of the century. The likely effect, they say: lower prices, better quality, and more jobs.

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### "Unfinished Business: A Civil Rights Strategy for America's Third Century."

Pacific Research Institute For Public Policy, 177 Post St., San Francisco, Calif. 94108. 158 pp. \$12.95.

Author: *Clint Bolick*

"The civil rights movement, which served for so long as our nation's conscience, has lost sight of its mission and has drifted recklessly off course," contends Bolick, director of the Landmark Legal Foundation Center for Civil Rights. The original goal of the civil rights movement of the 1960s—equal rights under the law regardless of race—has been replaced by demands for special privileges on the *basis* of race.

But Bolick is also critical of conservatives. "Abstract invocations of a 'color-blind society' ring hollow," he warns, "unless accompanied by a demonstrated commitment to make good on the promise of civil rights."

How is that to be done? Bolick argues that two standing Supreme Court rulings that result in discrimination against the disadvantaged must be targeted for reversal.

In its 1873 *Slaughter-House* decision, the Supreme Court upheld a corrupt 1869 Louisiana statute granting to one company a monopoly on slaughterhouses in New Orleans and other parishes, and forced all others to shut down.

Although the *Slaughter-House* ruling was not racially motivated, by establishing a precedent for cities and states to retain wide regulatory control over businesses, it had the effect of discriminating against people at the bottom of the economic ladder, a disproportionate number of whom are black. In Washington, D.C., for example, a 1905 Jim Crow law outlawed street corner shoe-shine stands. Houston shut down independent taxi services in 1924. Many of the overtly discriminatory prohibitions have since been repealed, Bolick says. The disadvantaged today face subtler but equally discriminatory hurdles. In New York City, for example, city regulations have driven the price of a taxicab "medal-lion," or license, to \$100,000. In Missouri, prospective beauticians must pass a ridiculously difficult written licensing exam. It even includes an extensive section on the composition of bones. In California, licenses are required by the state government for more than 178 entry level occupations. All of these requirements, Bolick says, needlessly obstruct economic opportuni-

ties for blacks and others.

In *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), the Court established the notorious "separate but equal" doctrine, ruling that Adolph Plessy, who was one-eighth black, could not sit in a "whites only" train car. Although it is commonly believed that *Plessy* was overturned by *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), Bolick points out that *Brown* still permits "reasonable" racial classifications. And he believes that the *Plessy* precedent lives, even if it is not explicitly cited, in arguments for affirmative action and quotas. The resulting "race consciousness" is always indirectly harmful to minorities and sometimes is very directly so—as in the case of "integration maintenance" in some public-housing projects, which allows apartment "set asides" for whites. Toppling *Plessy* through litigation, Bolick contends, is essential.

Similarly, overturning the *Slaughter-House* precedent would eliminate economic barriers that remain in the way of blacks and all economically disadvantaged people.

"Freedom, not favoritism," might be Bolick's motto.

AMERICAN

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## COMMENTARY

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### *America, the Gloomy*

Ironically, despite the successful outcome of the Cold War, the mood in the United States is far from triumphant. On the contrary, some polls show public opinion nearly evenly divided between "declinists" and "revivalists." Richard Rosecrance's "Must America Decline?" [*WQ*, Autumn '90] continues a debate that began in 1988 after the publication of Paul Kennedy's *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*. Kennedy has labeled Rosecrance's work, as well as my book, *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (1990), "revivalist" and a challenge to the view that the United States will continue to decline. But despite my sympathy for Rosecrance's argument, I feel he gives away too much when he rests his case on the idea that "the challenge of international politics becomes economics and foreign trade." The post-Cold War world is not that simple.

Kennedy argues that the post Cold War drop in the importance of military power reduces "the significance of the one measure of national power in which the United States had a clear advantage over other countries." But not only does this ignore American economic, scientific, cultural, and ideological strengths, it also misses the past and present role of military power. As Saddam Hussein has demonstrated, the end of the Cold War reduces but does not eliminate the role of military force. Even a reduced American security guarantee remains of value to Europe and Japan as insurance against uncertainty. Ironically, if the allies value that insurance policy more than the United States does, it may do more for American bargaining power than much larger forces did at the height of the Cold War. One does not hear strong calls for removal of American forces from Europe and Asia, although this situation could change.

Rosecrance is right to reject declinist analogies to the stages of an individual human life. Collectivities are different. If concern about decline is proof of its presence, the United States was finished when it was started, for even the Founding Fathers worried about decline. The theme returned in the 1890s with the closing of the American frontier. More recently, the Soviet launch of Sputnik in the 1950s was seen as a sign of relative American decline, as was the oil crisis of 1973. A more plausible view is that American political moods swing more

rapidly than underlying reality would warrant.

It is also worth remembering Horace Walpole's 18th-century lament that Britain's loss of the American colonies would reduce it to "as insignificant a country as Denmark or Sardinia." That prediction of decline was followed by Britain's greatest century. External shocks and competition may contribute to American revival, but generational change may also help. Anyone who looked at American attitudes and leadership in the era of Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover might have concluded the country was in an irreversible decline, but they would have been wrong.

*Joseph S. Nye, Jr.*

*Director of the Center for International Affairs  
Harvard University*

### *'Venerable' Criticism*

Your articles on Japan ["Everyday Life in Japan," *WQ*, Autumn '90] came as a welcome relief. I've been living in Japan for almost three years, and much of what appears in English in newspapers and magazines here and back home has dismayed me on several counts. One is the bald inaccuracy of what is being said, especially by people who come here for a short time, and by those who, here longer, have not bothered to study the language or the culture. Most writers on the subject are arm-chair quarterbacks who've never left their living rooms, much less taken to the playing field. The second count is the poor level of writing, which shows up in the traveler's tales that visitors scribble down—these visitors and scribblers including, incidentally, many members of the press. In the case of many lobbyists "for" and "against" Japan, these two counts merge, which is why what they have to say has almost no use, except to inflame vulgar passions and revive the fires of racial animosity. This issue on Japan should do much to correct the imbalance on all counts.

I have only one small criticism, and that has to do with the overkill on the idea of veneration of farmers. They are said to be "venerated," "highly venerated," "respected," and so on. Let's not overdo this. I've also stayed with Japanese farm families, and I've had to "defend" the American rice growers from Japanese complaints. When I ask farmers if America should keep out Japanese

cars that are made in Japan, they are aghast at the idea. Apparently, heavy industry is "venerated" in the Japanese outback as much as the farmer is in the big cities. Fortunately, by asking such a question, even "highly venerated" Japanese farmers come to accept, grudgingly, the need to reexamine the question of trade restrictions.

However, the overall tenor of all the articles far outweighs this one minor quibble of mine, and I'm circulating the magazine here at school and telling my friends back home to find a copy and read it.

Monty Vierra  
Hiroshima, Japan

### *The News from Inside*

I'm teaching a course this year comparing Japan and Italy—economic structures, economic cultures, politics, etc. I have been struck by how much better—more vividly detailed, more comprehensive, less ridden by academic pretentiousness—is the literature on Japan available to the Anglophone American public as compared with that on Italy.

Perhaps that needs qualifying. I rather think that in the literary/travelogue, "My 20 years as a Tuscan potter" genre, Italy might still come out ahead. Gifted children of the affluent American middle class are not, on the whole, much drawn to settling down in Japan, except occasionally—and usually in a not-long-lasting euphoria of solipsistic incomprehension in a Buddhist temple. The superiority I refer to is rather in the literature produced by academics, of which this group of articles is a fine example: full of fascinating glimpses into still unknown corners of Japanese life, and full of news about the present which makes those of us who formed our stereotypes of Japan back in the 1950s think that maybe we *should* retire, anti-ageist legislation notwithstanding.

I suppose the fact is that there are just a lot *more* people in American universities who have made Japan their study. No other country has benefited (if, indeed, to be studied by Americans is a benefit) so much from a particular combination of importance in the American strategic scheme of things and capacity to generate baffling incomprehension. Nor, indeed has any other country graduated so rapidly from being a poor country where the research dollar went a long way, to being an affluent country keen to shower research funds on foreign scholars. (I wonder if Italy will ever have anything like its own Pat Choate and *Agents of Influence* [1990] listing large Italian grants to American scholars, pointing out the pro-Italian leanings of those scholars but insisting, of course, that the coincidence is incidental since

they are honorable people, those scholars, all, all honorable people.)

David Plath, whose capacity to catch the ironies of human relationships is unrivaled, has given a wonderfully wry and accurate assessment of the quarrel-dressed-up-as-friendship which is the Pacific alliance. The others demonstrate the strength of American scholarship in another way; by writing from *inside* Japanese culture, offering, for those who have any capacity at all for empathy, an authentic feel for what life in Japan is like for the Japanese. Thank heavens there are still Americans who want to do that, instead of adding to the noise generated by the battle between "revisionists" and "apologists"—noise which, these days, is about all people in Washington ever get to hear about Japan.

Ronald Dore  
Professor, Department of Political Science  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

### *Another Look West*

During the last few years historians of the West have engaged in a far-ranging self-examination, of themselves and of the field ["The Winning of the West Reconsidered," *WQ*, Summer '90]. In part this effort anticipated the centennial of the supposed closing of the frontier in 1890; to some extent it was occasioned by new social science research methods; and it was due also to a gradual emancipation from Turnerian dogma which had viewed the history of the West largely in terms of the frontier. But perhaps the most important reason for our changing views of the American West is the mere passage of time. It is the passage of time that leads to new perspectives, to new insights and new interpretations, and, I would add, also to new illusions and self-delusions.

Professor Dippie's suggestive piece is part of this current debate about the meaning of the West in American life. Let us make no mistake about it: This debate is not solely an academic issue, of interest only to historians or other students of the West. Rather, it has direct relevance to the self-image of all Americans. And, beyond our shores it has a worldwide significance because it determines how Americans are perceived by millions of people around the world who have a mental image of the West. The region has been—and still is—a central component of the broader image of America.

Professor Dippie provides an admirable brief survey of this search for the real West. What is implicit in his essay, and perhaps can be made more explicit, is that there is no real West. Every generation reads its own preconceptions into its view of the West. So Turner and his generation read their

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own doubts about the new industrialism into their celebration of the frontier West; so Franklin D. Roosevelt defended his expansion of the federal government against the background of a supposedly vanished frontier; and so Dwight D. Eisenhower explained his Cold War diplomacy by alluding to the establishment of law and order in Dodge City, Kansas. And so those of the generation of the 1960s who have written about the West in the last 20 years have been preoccupied with the role of women, racism, and environmental problems of the West. Above all, theirs has been a very negative and deprecatory view of the role of the West in America's past.

Does such a perspective reflect more about the pessimism of Americans in the last two decades than about the West? Are historians of our own generation excessively present-minded? Professor Dippie does well to examine the preconceptions of those who have written about the West in the past. But should we be more rigorous in examining our

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(signed) Kathy Read, *Publisher*

own assumptions and preconceptions? After all, some of the more recent writers he describes may be doing no more than foisting their own fears and prejudices on the history of another era.

Gerald D. Nash  
*Presidential Professor, Department of History  
The University of New Mexico*

### Correction

A caption on p. 32 of the *WQ* Autumn '90 identified items for sale in a Tokyo fish market as squid. That is how they were described by the photographer, but several readers have written to point out that they bear a very strong resemblance to octopi. We stand corrected.

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TIAA-CREF is building a sound financial future for more than 1,000,000 people still at work. And over 200,000 retirees are now reaping the benefits of their TIAA-CREF retirement annuities. Since 1918, we've been dedicated to making sure that people like you in education and research can count on a comfortable retirement.

#### THE FIRST CHOICE IN EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

TIAA-CREF is the retirement system against which others are measured. For over seventy years, we've been building a tradition of solid performance and timely innovation, specifically for people in the education and research communities.

We pioneered the portable pension. We invented the variable annuity. In 1988, we created the CREF Money Market Account to give you more flexibility. We are introducing two new Accounts: the CREF Bond Market Account and the CREF Social Choice Account.

#### SECURITY, GROWTH, AND DIVERSITY – THE KEYS TO RETIREMENT INVESTING

Good retirement investing requires both security and growth: security, so the resources are sure to be there when the time for retirement arrives; and growth, so your retirement income will be sufficient for the kind of retirement you want.

TIAA's traditional annuity provides maximum safety, by guaranteeing your principal and a specified interest rate. And it provides the opportunity for growth through dividends— which we've declared every year for 41 years.

CREF investments are widely diversified, to help protect you against the volatility of any particular market, and to allow you to benefit from the strengths of several different types of investments.

A large portion of the CREF Stock Account portfolio is designed to track the U.S. market as a whole. The portfolio also contains international investments and

stocks chosen specifically for their growth potential.

The CREF Money Market Account and the new CREF Bond Market and Social Choice Accounts will let you diversify further! All CREF Accounts are managed by investment experts who understand the long-term strategies of sound retirement planning.

#### A RETIREMENT SYSTEM DESIGNED FOR EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

Teaching, research, and administration are lifetime jobs. But you may move from one institution to another many times in your career. The TIAA-CREF system gives you:

**Portability**—You can take your annuity with you to any of over 4,200 institutions with TIAA-CREF retirement plans.

**Performance**—The CREF Stock Account has outperformed the mutual fund industry averages for the last one-, five-, and ten-year periods.<sup>2</sup> The CREF Money Market Account has shown excellent returns, outperforming the industry average since May of 1988.<sup>3</sup>

**Security**—The TIAA-CREF system is designed to provide retirement income you cannot outlive.

**Responsiveness**—Our experienced retirement counselors are ready to answer your questions. You can call our toll-free numbers for performance figures, or information about your personal annuity accumulations.

**Strength**—Your future is protected by the largest retirement system in the world. We have done so well, for so many, for so long, that we currently manage over \$80 billion in assets.

TIAA-CREF. There's no one like us: dedicated to one group of people and one purpose—you and your future.



**Ensuring the future  
for those who shape it.<sup>SM</sup>**

1. The two new Accounts may not be available under all institutional retirement plans, but will be available for all SRAs. 2. Lipper Analytical Services, Inc., Mutual Fund Performance Analysis Reports, Growth Funds and General Equities Funds Averages, ending 9/30/90. 3. Donoghue's Money Fund Averages.

For more complete information, including charges and expenses, call 1 800 842-2733, ext. 5509 for a prospectus. Read the prospectus carefully before you invest or send money.

# HE WASN'T A WRIGHT BROTHER. BUT HE HAD THE RIGHT IDEA.



*The Gallaudet Bullet of 1912 featured innovations like advanced streamlining and an incredible speed of 130 m.p.h.*

His stuffy faculty colleagues were offended: his tinkering with "foolish flying gimcracks" was "undignified."

But young professor Edson Gallaudet was willing to give up his dignity, and his job, for a new idea about warping the wings of flying machines.

In 1898, he tested a scale model which proved his idea right. And five years later, Wilbur and Orville Wright flew using that same principle.

In 1908, Edson Gallaudet started what many credit as the first aircraft factory in America. Gallaudet Engineering Company became the earliest aircraft ancestor of General Dynamics.

Over the next 82 years, our history of building aircraft has included some of America's famous planes. And famous people.

Eddie Stinson, barnstormer and "birdman," who designed aircraft for many of the pioneer pilots, merged his company with ours. As did Jerry Vultee, whose planes set many distance and speed records, including Jimmy Doolittle's 12-hour cross-country flight.



*The RB Racer, made by Dayton-Wright Airplane Company, was the first aircraft to have fully retractable landing gear. Dayton-Wright became an early part of General Dynamics.*



*F-16s of the USAF Thunderbirds.*

During WWII, the Consolidated B-24 Liberator became the most-produced American bomber. After the war, our B-36 Peacemaker became the backbone of America's Strategic Air Command.

Our innovative, delta-wing design made the F-102 the world's first supersonic interceptor. And the B-58 Hustler the world's first supersonic bomber.

Today our F-16 Fighting Falcon is rated the finest fighter in the world. It well represents our long tradition of craftsmanship and creativity.

Once again, that tradition is about to be tested. In a technology competition against groups from West Germany and Japan, General Dynamics is teaming with four top American companies to develop the National Aerospace Plane.

To fly from runway to orbit, at speeds up to 17,000 m.p.h., we must invent new science. We must also invent new ways for American competitors to work together. But we are confident.

Since the days of Gallaudet, our company has been inventing not only better airplanes, but better ways to make them.

**GENERAL DYNAMICS**  
*A Strong Company For A Strong Country*