

The Flint Voice

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Photo by Garrison Crenshaw

Flint's unemployed waiting in line

Bringing It All Back Home

By Michael Moore

The situation in Flint looks pretty bleak.

- Flint has the highest unemployment rate in the state—even higher than Detroit's—at 14%;
- 25% of Flint's auto workers are laid off and their unemployment and subchecks are running out;
- Inflation in Flint is almost 20%; interest rates are nearing the same with area banks refusing to loan any money;
- Over 200 city employees are being laid off because the city is out of money;
- Downtown Flint is like a ghost town—all 3 major department stores are closed, twelve other stores are boarded up and the financing of part of the riverfront project is in jeopardy;
- Over two million dollars will be cut from the Flint school system budget this year due to lack of funds.

Meanwhile, in Groton, Connecticut this month, an event will take place that seemingly will have little to do with the severe recession now occurring in Flint. In reality, however, the launching of America's second Trident submarine—the U.S.S. Michigan—has a great deal to do with why citizens of Flint and other American cities are struggling desperately to survive severe economic pressures.

The Pentagon tells us that one Trident submarine will carry enough first-strike nuclear missiles to destroy every major Russian city. Fourteen of the

Tridents will be built at a cost of *one billion dollars each*. The purpose? National security.

The working people of Flint, Michigan, though, aren't feeling too secure. There are no jobs here. There is, in reality, no future here. A dying automobile industry that refuses to see which way the winds are blowing seems strangely content to bury itself in the town where it was born.

And it is highly ironic that the submarine named after this state is actually another nail in its coffin.

How does a one billion dollar submarine affect the inflation rate and unemployment lines in Flint?

That one billion dollars, which was taken permanently out of our economy and placed in a weapon that will only be used in the Last War, could have created 24,000 jobs in Flint. It could have built an effective mass transit system throughout Genesee County. It could have cleaned up the Flint River, built a garbage recycling electrical plant, and installed passive solar systems in a half-million homes. It could have built new schools, lowered the teacher-student ratio to 15:1 and provided free health care to all of the people of Flint.

It could have but it didn't. It didn't because this country doesn't define "national security" as improving the deteriorating conditions of its own people. Rather, it seeks to arm itself against the "Russian threat," the "red menace" that has put us in such a paranoid state that we have spent over one and a half trillion dollars since 1960 on our military.

This year alone the Carter administration will spend a record \$228 billion on defense (three times the amount spent in any given year during the Vietnam War) while cutting every single other program. Cities like Flint will see further unemployment and inflation.

Cities like Flint will continue to rot. And instead of putting one billion dollars into Michigan it's put into a doomsday machine, the U.S.S. Michigan.

The *Flint Voice* has spent a great deal of time analyzing this situation and has come up with some fairly astounding revelations connecting military spending to the state of our local economy. We have talked to a number of organizations and experts who have spent years researching and studying the Pentagon. We have read their reports and are convinced that the Pentagon budget could be cut by at least one third without affecting the status of our national self-defense and at the same time provide jobs, reduce inflation and cut taxes.

The American people have been ripped-off by the Pentagon for too long. On page 12 and 13 of this issue we will show you how Flint has been hurt by increased military spending and what can be done about it. We hope that you will take the time to read this very important report.

And, on April 26, as the U.S.S. Michigan is being launched in Groton, Connecticut, stop and think of the one billion dollars of your money that's just been kissed away.