

Washington Post Still Misleading Readers about Defense

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September 14, 2010

The Washington Post continued its [misinformation campaign](#) about defense spending this past weekend. It published a front-page article on how defense spending cuts will impact the Washington, DC area without pointing out that overall defense spending is rising.

As I noted [here](#) and in [a letter to the editor](#), which the *Post* recently published in reply to other articles making the same claim, the Pentagon is not asking for a lower budget. Instead it is trying to shift funding from administration to force structure (from tail to tooth) within a rising budget.

Saturday's article is particularly confused. It uses quotes from two experts predicting defense spending cuts in the future in a way that gives the impression that these cuts are underway. It describes last years cuts to procurement programs such as the F-22 and presidential helicopter an the opening salvo of in Secretary Gates' effort to cut defense spending even though those proposals came within a defense budget [request](#) that asked Congress to raise both procurement spending and total spending in real terms. And of course it implies that the cost shifting effort underway will produce savings for taxpayers rather than more military hardware.

What the *Post* should have said is that the ongoing effort to cut overhead spending will transfer wealth out of the Washington area (which has been enriched by the post 9/11 defense spending boom). The categories of spending going down—service contracts and military staff positions in the Pentagon—are more concentrated around Washington than what's being boosted—military hardware and personnel spending. Those dollars get distributed to production lines and bases in other parts of the country.

Whether the culprit is laziness or dishonesty, you have to conclude that the *Post* just does not care about getting this right.

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