

Letter to the Editor

## Murky arguments in defending the Pentagon's budget

Published: November 3

Robert J. Samuelson asserted [ [“The Pentagon vs. the welfare state,”](#) op-ed, Oct. 31] that advocates of cutting military spending are relying on “bogus arguments.” But his own arguments leave something to be desired.

Mr. Samuelson says cutting military spending would make us vulnerable to threats such as China. He observes that the Chinese military has more people in uniform than we do but ignores the fact that Chinese military personnel are heavily concentrated in the ground forces. Where exactly does Mr. Samuelson suggest fighting a land war with China?

And what is the reader to make of his assertion that “we should spend as much as needed, but that amount is never clear”? Especially when, as he admits, “our concept of national security has become expansive and murky”? It's this sort of thinking that has led us to spend nearly as much on our military as the rest of the world combined.

Mr. Samuelson hits the mark with his observation that cutting military spending would “limit [our] leaders' choices” about how to use the U.S. military. Given the way our newspaper columnists, foreign-policy establishment and elected officials have favored using the military over the past decade, would that really be a bad thing?

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