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Autor: Lenzin, René

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The Swiss airforce: a military jet.
(Photo: Prisma)

IMPRESSUM

Swiss Review, the magazine for the Swiss Abroad, is in its 20th year of issue and is published in German, French, Italian, English and Spanish in more than 20 regional editions. It has a total circulation of over 298,000. Regional news appear four times a year.

Editors: René Lenzin (RL), Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad, Berne (chairman); Heidi Willumat (WIL), Service for the Swiss Abroad, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Berne; Pierre-André Tschanz (PAT), Swiss Radio International, Berne; Giuseppe Rusconi (RUS), parliamentary correspondent; Jacques Matthey-Doret (JMD), Radio-Télévision Suisse Romande. Editor of Official News: Paul Andermatt (ANP), Service for the Swiss Abroad, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, CH-3003 Berne. Translator: Ian Tickle.

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KK The recession strikes everywhere. In the last issue of the Swiss Review we told you about the miserable unemployment situation. And everything indicates that it is going to be even worse in 1993. In parliament discussions have been going on about whether "anti-cyclical measures" – by which they mean government intervention in times of recession – can improve the picture. There is one thing that all political parties and groups agree on: the government must tighten its belt. But where should it make economies? Where should the heaviest burden fall? Officials and parliamentarians in Berne are apparently quite happy to start with the Swiss Review. At any rate this is the only way we can explain the fact that our 1993 budget has now been cut three times, amounting to a total of around 30%. The result is simple. Instead of the 8 numbers planned for this year there will be only 5. Period.

In the eyes of the editorial team and the Organisation for the Swiss Abroad – which is our publisher – this drastic cut is not for financial reasons only. It must have political overtones. The fact is that with only five issues the Swiss Review cannot really carry out the extended information mandate which we have received from the federal government in view of the extension of the vote by correspondence to the Swiss Abroad. So the cuts in our budget contradict the expressed intentions, indeed the promises, of the authorities. We have stated our opinion on this very strongly to those in high

places, but it seems we have not been persuasive enough. We are not claiming that we ought to be totally excluded from the economy drive. We are quite prepared to play our fair part in filling the federal coffers, and we had in fact planned to reduce the number of issues. But not as drastically as this.

The June 6 referendum will also be about money – a great deal of money. But only on the surface. About 500,000 Swiss citizens signed the initiative to block all purchases of fighter aircraft up to the year 2000 – and this in the record time of one month. But the

controversy over the aircraft, as also the initiative against extending army property, hides profound differences about our national defence. The surprisingly high Yes vote for the 1989 initiative to abolish the army gave strong support to its sponsors, the Group for Switzerland without an Army. But there are varied opinions even amongst those who support the basic idea of an army. How wide, for example, should the security net be spread? How far should the 1995 army reforms go? Could not aircraft procurement simply be abolished or at least postponed indefinitely? These are the sort of issues which are now at stake. They will be the main subject of this number of the Swiss Review.



René Lenzin