WEAPONS BROKERS AND POLICY ENTREPRENEURS:
CONGRESS AND THE STRATEGIC POLICY COMMUNITY
DURING THE REAGAN ERA

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ABSTRACT

During much of the 1980s, the breadth and intensity of congressional involvement in nuclear weapons issues was noticeably greater than in the three preceding Cold War decades. As U.S. arms control and weapons acquisition policies moved to the forefront of the congressional agenda, the existing system of congressional decision-making was challenged, and frequently superseded, by a new system. The dominant mode of congressional involvement during the post World War II era can be characterized as a "closed" system. A relatively more "open" system evolved during the 1980s.

This dissertation explores the features of the open system, and presents a political theory which relates the emergence of this new mode of congressional involvement to the loss of political authority of an elite policy group, called the "strategic policy community."

The strategic policy community is composed of officials in the executive and legislative branches, as well as former and aspiring officials working for law firms, government contractors, universities or national media outlets. The membership of the strategic policy community is a subset of the many individuals who comprise a diverse network of nuclear weapons experts and activists. This elite group has a role in both shaping policy -- within the constraints imposed by other interests -- and legitimizing policy. By the 1980s, the strategic policy community encountered difficulty in performing its usual political function of forming and promulgating "consensus" positions. As the community lost control over the debating and decision-making process, conflicts over nuclear weapons issues spilled over into the congressional arena, where policy making "opened up."

To develop and test this theory, I analyze the debates concerning four major nuclear weapons issues: the nuclear weapons freeze proposal, plans to modernize land-based intercontinental missiles, initiatives to limit nuclear explosive testing, and the Strategic Defense Initiative.

Thesis Committee: Harvey Sapolsky (chair), George Rathjens, Carl Kaysen
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Glossary of terms and acronyms

**ABM (system):** Anti-ballistic missile system
A defense system to intercept strategic ballistic missiles in flight.

**ACDA:** Arms Control and Disarmament Agency
The independent agency that deals with arms control matters.

**ALCM:** Air Launch Cruise Missile
A air-launched pilotless, jet-propelled guided missile, armed with conventional or nuclear warhead.

**ALPS:** Accidental Launch Protection System
Limited ABM system designed to protect against the accidental or unauthorized launch of nuclear missiles.

**AOA:** Airborne Optical Adjunct
A sensor aircraft under development for SDI.

**Area Defense**
Defense of a large geographic area against missiles or aircraft.

**ASAT:** Anti-satellite system
Weapon system designed to destroy or disable enemy satellites in orbit.

**BMD:** Ballistic missile defense

**Break-out**
A sudden abrogation or massive violation of an arms control treaty designed to alter the military balance.

**Brilliant Pebbles**
A concept for small, individually orbiting space rockets, designed to home in on ballistic missiles in the boost and post-boost phase.

**Broad Interpretation**
The "reinterpretation" of the ABM treaty proposed by the Reagan administration which holds that the treaty's limits on development and testing apply only to traditional ABM components.

**Build-down**
A proposal to require withdrawal of one or more warheads for every new one deployed, offered in the early 1980s.

**CBO:** Congressional Budget Office
A nonpartisan congressional agency which researches budgetary issues.

**CEP:** Circular Area Probable
A measure of missile accuracy. A missile's CEP is the radius of a circle around the target in which 50 percent of the warheads aimed at that target will land.

**CIA:** Central Intelligence Agency

**Compliance**
Adherence to the terms and limitations of an arms control agreement or treaty.
Conference Committee
House-Senate conference to resolve different versions of a bill.

Continuing Resolution
A stop-gap funding measure used by Congress if it has not passed an appropriations bill by the start of the fiscal year.

CORRTEX: Continuous Reflectometry for Radius Versus Time Experiment
A non-seismic technique for measuring the yield of nuclear weapons test.

Counterforce
Military strategies, attacks, or weapons directed against an opponent’s military forces, command posts, and other war-fighting targets.

CPD: Committee on the Present Danger

Crisis Stability
A situation in which incentives are minimal to launch a strategic nuclear attack first during a crisis.

CTB (Treaty): Comprehensive Test Ban
A proposed agreement to ban all nuclear testing.

Damage Limitation
The capacity to reduce the damage from a nuclear attack. Such strategies include passive and active defenses and pre-emptive strikes.

DARPA: Defense Advanced Research Project Agency
A Pentagon agency which manages many high-technology research projects.

Declaratory policy
The stated nuclear weapons policy of a country, as opposed to the targeting policy or procurement policy.

Delivery vehicle
A device which carries one or more warheads through its flight.

Deterrence
Dissuasion of a potential adversary from initiating an attack or conflict by the threat of retaliation.

Directed Energy weapons
Weapons which use beams of energy, such as lasers or particle beams, to destroy or disable targets.

DoD: Department of Defense

DoD Appropriations Bill
The annual funding bill for DoD "marked up" by the Appropriations Committee. Usually the appropriation bill is based on the authorization bill which precedes it.

DoD Authorization Bill
The annual funding bill for DoD and DOE’s weapons activities, "marked up" by the Armed Services Committee.

DOE: Department of Energy
Early Deployment
A proposed plan of the Reagan administration to deploy a limited ballistic missile defense in the mid- to late-1990s.

Fallout
The spread of radioactive particles from clouds of debris produced by nuclear blasts.

FAS: Federation of American Scientists

First strike
A surprise attack on an opponent's strategic nuclear forces in an attempt to destroy his retaliatory capability.

First use
The introduction of nuclear weapons into a conflict at any level. A "no-first-use" pledge by a nation obliges it not to be the first to use nuclear weapons.

Flexible Response
A NATO strategy of responding to a Warsaw Pact attack with a similar or higher level of force, beginning with conventional forces and escalating to tactical or strategic nuclear forces if necessary.

Fratricide
The destruction of an attacking nuclear weapons by the detonation of other attacking weapons.

FY: Fiscal Year
The government's fiscal year beginning Oct. 1.

GAO: Government Accounting Office
A nonpartisan congressional watchdog agency which investigates issues at the request of legislators.

GLCM: Ground launched cruise missiles

Gramm-Rudman-Hollings reduction law
Formally known as the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985. Required Congress to balance the Federal budget over a five-year period by reducing the deficit by $36 billion per year. Automatic across-the-board spending cuts would go into effect if Congress failed to meet deficit ceilings.

Hardening
Making a potential target more difficult to destroy. Hardening is usually measured by the number of pounds per square inch of blast over-pressure which a target can withstand.

Hard Target Kill Capability
The capacity of a weapons system, related to its accuracy and yield, to destroy a hardened target such as a missile silo.

ICBM: Intercontinental ballistic missile
A ballistic missile with a range of 5,500 kilometers or more. Usually the term ICBM is used only for land-based systems.
INF: Intermediate-range nuclear forces
Ballistic or cause missiles with ranges between 500 and 5,500 kilometers.

Interceptors
Missile that seek and destroy boosters or incoming warheads.

JCAE: Joint Committee on Atomic Energy
JCS: Joint Chiefs of Staff
JVE: Joint Verification Experiment
Agreement between the U.S. and Soviet Union reached in September, 1987, to jointly conduct measurement of tests at both nation’s test sites.

Kill Probability
The probability that a warhead will destroy its target.

Kinetic Energy Weapon
A weapon from force derives from a collision with its target, as opposed to the detonation of a nuclear or conventional warhead.

kt: Kiloton
A measure of the yield of a nuclear weapons equivalent to 1,000 tons of TNT.

Launcher
A platform from which the weapon is fired.

Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory
A federally funded laboratory under the control of University of California involved in nuclear weapons design.

LoADS: Low Altitude Defense System
A U.S. ABM concept of the 1970s, primarily designed to defend MX missiles in a multiple protective shelter basing mode.

Los Alamos National Laboratory
A federally funded laboratory in New Mexico involved in nuclear weapons design.

LTBT: Limited Test Ban Treaty
1963 Treaty banning testing in the atmosphere, under water and in outer space.

MAD: Mutual Assured Destruction

MIRV: Multiple independently targetable reentry vehicle
A package of two or more warheads which can be carried by a single ballistic missile but are deliverable to separate targets.

Midgetman missile: Small single-warhead missile

MPS: Multiple Protective Shelters
Carter administration proposed MX basing mode

MX: Missile Experimental
A US ICBM with 10 highly accurate MIRVed warheads.

NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
A security alliance formed in 1949 to defend against possible Soviet aggression.

NPT: Non-proliferation Treaty
1968 Treaty designed to control the spread of nuclear
weapons to other nations.

**Nuclear Freeze Proposal**
The proposal for a halt to the testing, production and deployment of all nuclear weapons and delivery systems.

**NSC:** National Security Council

**NRDC:** Natural Resources Defense Council

**OTA:** Office of Technology Assessment
Nonpartisan congressional agency which examines scientific and technological issues.

**PNE:** Peaceful Nuclear Explosions (Treaty)

**Point Defense**
Defense of an individual target, usually a missile silo or other military target.

**Proliferation**
The spread of nuclear weapons to states not previously possessing them.

**R&D:** Research and Development

**Rule**
The ground rules for congressional consideration of a bill.

**RV:** Reentry vehicle
A container holding nuclear warheads released during post-boost phase.

**SAC:** Strategic Air Command
The branch of the U.S. Air Force that oversees land-based nuclear missiles and long-range bombers.

**Sageguard**
A U.S. defense for ICBMs deployed in the mid-1970s and abandoned a year later.

**SALT:** Strategic Arms Limitation Talks
Negotiations between the U.S. and the USSR between 1969 and 1979 which sought to limit the strategic nuclear forces of both sides. These talks produced the 1972 SALT I agreement, the 1972 ABM treaty, and the unratified 1979 SALT II Treaty.

**SBXKV:** Space based kinetic kill vehicle

**SCC:** Standing Consultative Commission
A U.S.-Soviet committee established in accordance with SALT provisions to address matters of treaty implementation and compliance concerns.

**SDI(O):** Strategic Defense Initiative (Organization)

**SIOP:** Single Integrated Operational Plan
U.S. targeting and strike plan for waging nuclear war with the Soviet Union.

**SLBM:** Submarine Launched Ballistic Missile

**SLCM:** Sea-launched Cruise Missile

**START:** Strategic Arms Reduction Talks
Negotiations between the U.S. and the Soviet Union started in June 1982, to seek reductions in strategic offensive forces.
Star Wars
The colloquial name for the Strategic Defense Initiative.

Stockpile
The total supply of weapons, including those deployed and those in storage.

Throwweight
The lifting power of a missile.

Triad
The traditional nomenclature for the three components of U.S. and Soviet strategic nuclear forces -- land-based ICBM, SLBMs, and strategic bombers.

TTBT: Threshold Test Ban Treaty

UCS: Union of Concerned Scientists

Verification
Monitoring the party to a treaty's compliance with treaty provisions.

War-fighting strategy
A nuclear strategy focused on fighting wars with nuclear weapons rather than on preventing their occurrence.

Yield
The force of a nuclear explosion expressed as the equivalent of energy produced by tons of TNT.
Chapter I: Introduction

During much of the 1980s, the breadth and intensity of congressional involvement in nuclear weapons issues was noticeably greater than in the three preceding Cold War decades. As U.S. arms control and weapons acquisition policies moved to the forefront of the congressional agenda, the existing system of congressional decision-making was challenged, and frequently superseded, by a new system. The dominant mode of congressional involvement during the post World War II era can be characterized as a "closed" system. A relatively more "open" system evolved during the 1980s. This dissertation explores the features of the open system, and identifies the political and institutional factors that prompted the emergence of this new mode of congressional involvement.

To explain this political evolution, I analyze the debates concerning four major nuclear weapons issues: the nuclear weapons freeze proposal, plans to modernize land-based intercontinental missiles, initiatives to limit nuclear explosive testing, and the Strategic Defense Initiative. These debates were not necessarily characteristic of all congressional involvement in nuclear weapons issues during this period.\(^1\) However, each of these particular policy questions caused considerable controversy in Congress. The four episodes spanned

\(^1\) Other major nuclear weapons debates in Congress concerned SALT II policy, the START negotiations, anti-satellite weapons, and the intermediate nuclear forces (INF) treaty. There were also less central issues of considerable concern to some members including weapons procurement reforms and joint centers to reduce the risk of nuclear war.
President Ronald Reagan's eight years in office and involved a wide range of topics. Each featured different participants who employed a variety of political strategies, and each has had a different impact on U.S. policy.\(^2\) Taken together, these cases establish an overall picture of extensive congressional involvement in nuclear weapons policy during the 1980s.

My central argument is that changes in the form and extent of congressional involvement in nuclear weapons policy-making are closely related to the success or failure of a small elite policy group to broker and promote enduring political compromises which gain broad popular acceptance. This group, which I have labeled the "strategic policy community," is composed of officials in the executive branch and the Congress, as well as former executive branch officials working for law firms, defense department contractors, universities or national media outlets. The membership of the strategic policy community is a subset of the many individuals who comprise a diverse network of nuclear weapons experts and activists. However, the strategic policy community has a political identity and function distinct from this broad nuclear weapons policy network.

This elite group determines the parameters of the national debate on nuclear weapons policy by defining political compromises which accommodate the competing interests of the U.S. military establishment as well as dominant

\(^2\) The same overall questions would be relevant had I chosen to analyze other major policy debates, and there is no reason to suspect that I would reach conflicting conclusions.
political, economic and ideological interests. The strategic policy community supports this compromise with a theoretical rationale for stable nuclear deterrence and promotes it to policy makers and the public as a consensus position. Thus, the community has a role in both shaping policy -- within the constraints imposed by other interests -- and legitimizing policy. Key to both functions is the political authority commanded by the community. In the past, the existence of an operational consensus, backed by the authority of the strategic policy community, meant that nuclear weapons policy did not become a partisan or ideological issue in the mass electorate, or even an issue open for extensive public debate.³

By the 1980s, as the individual studies illustrate, the strategic policy community suffered a loss of political authority. As a result, it encountered difficulty in performing its usual political function of forming and promulgating "consensus" positions. The loss of authority had multiple, related causes. First, contradictions between the theoretical tenets of the strategic policy community and its policy prescriptions eroded the community's credibility with other high-level politicians and opinion-makers. Second, major elements of the "consensus" produced by the community were effectively attacked from several directions: by

³ For example, the American public was not involved in deliberations over policy innovations including "massive retaliation" in the 1950s, "flexible response" in the early 1960s, or "enhanced options" in the early 1970s. The 1963 Limited Test Ban Treaty, the 1968 Non-proliferation Treaty, and the 1972 SALT I agreement did not become partisan issues for the electorate. Nor did the public demonstrate strong feelings about the development of most of the weapons systems developed during these decades.
conservative politicians who were edged out of, or never included in, the strategic policy community; organized anti-nuclear activists; and by the "attentive public" responding to trends in public opinion.\(^4\)

As a consequence of the strategic policy community's loss of authority, the congressional role in nuclear weapons policy-making was enhanced and the mode of congressional involvement shifted from a mostly "closed" system to a relatively "open" system. Closely related to the changes in congressional involvement was an increase in the involvement of nuclear weapons experts who were not included in the strategic policy community and an intensification of partisan conflict in nuclear weapons debates.

My argument and analysis pertain to the period beginning around 1979 and running through the end of Ronald Reagan's second term in 1988. In the history of nuclear weapons politics, this is a discrete era characterized by on-going national debates over U.S. policy, involving organized sectors of the public and a wide range of political actors. Three particular features of this period stand out: the surge in popular concern about the nuclear arms race, the central role of Ronald Reagan and other "New Right" political leaders, and the declining

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\(^4\) The "attentive public" is that part of the population -- 25 percent at most -- which is relatively informed and interested in foreign policy. Gabriel Almond first developed the concept in 1950. There is not agreement in the literature whether the concept of the "attentive public" is best defined by levels of knowledge, levels of interest, socio-economic characteristics or types of behavior. See Gabriel Almond, *American People and Foreign Policy* (Harcourt, 1950); and for a review of the literature see, Bruce Russett and Thomas W. Graham, "Public Opinion and National Security Policy: Relationship and Impacts," in Midlarsky, ed. *Handbook of War Studies* (London: Unwin & Hyman, 1989).
importance of the strategic policy community. These features originated during the 1970s, but did not fully develop until the 1980s. Most of this dissertation recounts and analyzes events during Reagan's eight year presidency, due to the timing of the four policy debates. The end of Reagan's tenure neatly coincided with the beginning of the end of the cold war, the end of major congressional fights over strategic weapons, and the end of public concern with the arms race.\(^5\)

The American debates over nuclear weapons during this unusual time period exposed some of the underlying factors controlling policy making during the preceding decades. Thus, one of my objectives in scrutinizing congressional involvement in nuclear weapons policy during this time period is to draw some general conclusions about the politics of nuclear weapons in the United States. In addition, this study provides a window on congressional behavior which is interesting in and of itself, and might also illuminate congressional policy debates on other issues.

My over-arching argument, that nuclear weapons politics should be interpreted as a function of an elite community's ability to maintain control over a political "consensus," is best understood as the product of several disparate theoretical concepts and a analytic approach distinct from the dominant approach in studies of congressional behavior. I introduce and develop these analytic

\(^5\) The B-2 bomber and missile defenses, or the SDI, continued to be contentious in the early 1990s. However, Congress now treats both more like public works programs for the military than as matters of strategic policy or political ideology.
building-blocks in this introductory chapter, beginning with a presentation of an alternative to the prevailing approach for studying congressional policy-making in the scholarly literature.

The literature on Congress and foreign and military policy generally approaches its subject from an institutional perspective: that is, it analyzes the powers, functions, and role of Congress as an independent institution in a competition for influence with the executive branch. My first section presents a different analytical approach that more accurately reveals how the political system functions. The next section of this chapter provides an overview of congressional involvement in nuclear weapons policy. Contrary to much of the scholarly literature, Congress always has been intimately involved in U.S. nuclear weapons policy. What changed in the late 1970s and 1980s was the form of involvement. I characterize the dominant mode of congressional involvement during the post World War II era as a "closed" system. This "closed" system was challenged, and frequently superseded, by an "open" system in the 1980s.

In the third section, I explore the relationship between the forms of congressional involvement noted above and the influence of the strategic policy community. The following fourth section provides a definition of the strategic policy community and a description of its political function. In the fifth section, I explore what sorts of political opportunities might be available to legislators as a result of the difficulties experienced by the strategic policy community in maintaining a policy consensus. I identify two different policy roles assumed by
legislators: "policy entrepreneurs" and "consensus rebuilders."

**Studying Congress and Defense Policy**

There are few studies that address directly the role of Congress in shaping nuclear weapons policy, although there is an extensive literature on the general issue of Congress's role in foreign policy.⁶ Most of this work examines the limits of congressional capacities to exercise authority in foreign policy within the context of a zero-sum competition between the legislative and executive branches.⁷ This perspective stresses the formal separation of powers between the

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⁷ James Sundquist's, *The Decline and Resurgence of Congress* (The Brookings Institution, 1981), exemplifies this approach to the study of Congress. His work is comprehensive, covering congressional involvement in all policy areas from the nation’s early days. The prevalent conclusion of the work on Congress and foreign policy is that the policy-making role of the post-World War II Congress has been, and inevitably will be, greatly circumscribed by a dominant executive branch. While not challenging this conclusion, many analysts examine the development of internal congressional capacities and incentives which serve to enhance Congress's influence given its disadvantages vis-a-vis the executive branch. See page 22 for a brief discussion of the development of congressional resources in the early 1970s. See the essays in Thomas E. Mann, ed., *A Question of Balance: The President, The Congress and Foreign Policy* (The Brookings Institution, 1990); Cecil B. Crabb, Jr., and Pat M. Holt, *Invitation to Struggle: Congress, the President, and Foreign Policy* third ed., (Congressional Quarterly Press, 1989; Louis Fisher, *The Politics of Shared Power* (Congressional Quarterly Press, 1987). Aaron Wildavsky argues that there are really "two presidencies," one for foreign policy in which the president is unquestionably dominant and the other in domestic policy. See Aaron Wildavsky, "The Two Presidencies," *Trans-Action*, vol. 4 (December, 1966), reprinted in Wildavsky, ed., *Perspectives on the Presidency* (Little, Brown, 1975),
executive and legislative branches provided by the American Constitution, which "legitimizes conflict between Congress and the president" by issuing, in Edward Corwin's famous phrase, "an invitation to struggle." The preponderance of this literature takes a dim view of congressional involvement -- often labeling it "interference." Congress is widely characterized as parochial, incoherent, and inconsistent, although all too often the final judgement reflects the analyst's degree of satisfaction with prevailing executive branch policies.

Such an institutional perspective distorts reality by treating the executive and legislative branches as unitary and competing institutions. The Senate and

p. 448.


9 This view became prevalent after the New Deal period. Samuel Huntington, for example, argues that since 1933, Congress's authority and effectiveness has dramatically waned. In view of Congress's inability to effectively legislate national policy, Huntington suggests that the functions of Congress should be redefined to minimize legislating and expand constituent service and administrative oversight. Samuel Huntington, "Congressional Responses to the Twentieth Century," in The Congress and America's Future, ed., David B. Truman, (Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965), pp. 5-32. For a more recent work that directly addresses defense policy, see, for example, David Robertson, "Congress and Foreign Policy: Noise and Politics in the Reagan Second Term," in Reagan's Leadership and the Atlantic Alliance ed. Walter Goldstein, (Pergamon-Brassey's, 1986).

10 In an argument similar to that presented here, Mark A. Peterson argues a "presidency-centered perspective" dominates the popular and scholarly interpretation of American politics and executive-legislative relations. One characteristic of this perspective is the belief that the president should be the undisputed leader in foreign policy. Consequently, there is a bias against any and every congressional challenge to the president. Peterson, Legislating Together (Harvard University Press, 1990), pp. 3-6.
the House should not be treated as one actor. Even when they are controlled by the same political party, their outlooks and structures can differ greatly. Nor should the executive branch be considered a unitary actor. Departments, agencies, offices, and bureaus whose jurisdictions overlap sometimes pursue conflicting policy objectives.

It is true that there are significant differences in the capabilities and patterns of behavior in the two governing bodies. The general tenor of the congressional response to the executive is often influenced by a perception of the latter's popular standing. Partisan affiliations are also important factors in structuring a conflict, as in the 1980s when a Democratic House often challenged the Republican White House. Yet, giving Congress a collective identity overlooks the fact that congressional actions are acts of individuals or coalitions of individuals. These individuals usually are motivated more by desire to increase their personal power and status than desire to enhance the power of the institution. For example, the "resurgent Congress" following Watergate is commonly portrayed by academics and political commentators as an attempt by legislators to increase their collective power at the expense of the White House. A more accurate picture of the events of the time would focus on the efforts of individuals, such as Edward Muskie in the Senate and Richard Bolling in the House, to capitalize -- for personal reasons -- on the general sense, on Capitol Hill and in broader political circles, that the aggressive cold war foreign policy identified with the executive branch had become widely unpopular. As the British
scholar J.P. Cornford wrote, "[t]he lesson to be drawn from any study of high politics is that the central concern of practitioners is with their position relative to one another."\textsuperscript{11}

The notion of a "resurgent" Congress implies that the president and Congress are competing in a zero-sum game of power in which one body advances at the expense of the other.\textsuperscript{12} This is not necessarily true. The Constitution did provide for intra-institutional conflict, but it more expressly, as Richard Neustadt wrote, "created a government of separated institutions sharing powers."\textsuperscript{13} Fights over policy only rarely can be reduced to battles between the "president" and "the Congress," although that is how journalists and academics often characterize them. A more accurate portrayal of debates over nuclear weapons issues would show that coalitions composed of groups and individuals from the relevant executive branch departments and agencies and congressional bodies, \textit{along with} members of the strategic policy community, are arrayed against similar cross-institutional coalitions. Political scientist David Truman concisely argued this point four decades ago:

\begin{quote}
The political process rarely, if ever, involves a conflict between the
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{12} The idea of a "resurgent" Congress is associated with the "cycle theory of presidential-congressional relations." This theory has the weaknesses stated above. For elaboration of the "cycle theory" see Thomas Cronin, \textit{The State of the Presidency} 2nd ed., (Little, Brown, 1980), p. 139.

legislature and the executive viewed as two monolithic and unified institutions. The actual competing structures on each side are made up of elements in the legislature and in the executive, reflecting and supported by organized and unorganized interests.\(^{14}\)

Taking Truman's observation one step further, I have noted that legislators rarely are able to force policy changes in foreign and military policy without allies in the executive branch.\(^{15}\)

Keeping both Truman's and Cornfield's lessons in mind, I explore the "resurgence" of the 1980s' Congress in the area of nuclear arms control and weapons policy by examining how individual members used nuclear weapons debates to enhance their power and status within Congress or within the strategic policy community. Rather than interpret legislators' behavior as indicators of what Congress as an institution can and cannot accomplish, I seek to explain why so many legislators found involvement in nuclear arms issues politically rewarding and what they sought to accomplish.

My perspective on congressional behavior differs slightly from that of many


\(^{15}\) A glance at the historical record provides substantiation. Eisenhower's congressional opposition was closely allied with such executive branch "wise-men" as Dean Acheson, Averell Harriman and Adlai Stevenson. During Nixon's and Ford's presidency, congressional critics to the political right of the administration, such as Sen. Henry Jackson, worked through a network of well-placed individuals scattered throughout the Executive Branch. President Carter's congressional opposition had crucial help from establishment figures such as those on the Committee on the Present Danger. Finally, as I will argue below, the effectiveness of congressional opposition to Reagan's foreign policy tracked closely with emerging criticism from prominent Democrats and Republicans shut out of government, and with emerging factiousness within the Reagan administration.
prominent scholars. Perhaps the most influential political science work on Congress is David Mayhew's Congress: The Electoral Connection. Mayhew describes legislators as "single-minded reelection seekers" for whom all other objectives are secondary. This parsimonious theory of congressional behavior has achieved a dominant position in conventional political science, partially obscuring the nature of the institution. It fails to explain much of what a legislator does in Washington and why Congress makes the decisions it does because it does not address how the congressional agenda is shaped. In general, theories about congressional behavior, based on the behavior of the "typical" legislator, do not shed light on how issues become controversial and they assign too much weight to the individual legislator's influence in the decision-making process.

In the area of nuclear weapons policy, both the House and Senate typically have divided into three groups -- a group of legislators who, when presented with

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16 David Mayhew, Congress: The Electoral Connection (Yale University Press, 1974).

17 For example, a recently published study, James M. Lindsay, Congress and Nuclear Weapons (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), argues that the best explanation for congressional decisions is found in the personal policy preferences of individual members. However, quite apart from policy views, a legislator's general ideological orientation -- hawk or dove -- is the best indicator of how that legislator will vote on any given controversial weapons system. This then begs the question of how a particular system become controversial. Moreover, the avowed "hawk" and "dove" members do not usually determine the outcomes of votes since they tend to cancel each other out. The "swing" voters in the middle often determine the outcome. These "swing" voters are most swayed by the group of "centrist" legislators with recognized influence in nuclear weapons policy.
the opportunity, nearly always votes against a controversial nuclear weapons program; a group who nearly always vote for a nuclear weapons program; and a "swing" group that is up for grabs. Usually a small number of influential legislators -- acting not as reelection seekers but power seekers and power brokers -- has disproportionate influence in determining which programs become controversial items on the congressional agenda and how the "swing" group will vote.

**Congressional Involvement in Nuclear Weapons Policy: From a "Closed" System to an "Open" System**

As noted earlier, during most of the nuclear weapons era relatively few nuclear weapons issues did, in fact, become controversial within Congress. During the 1980s, however, Congress repeatedly was engrossed in controversies concerning nuclear weapons programs and arms control, and the privileged position of traditionally influential legislators was successfully challenged by other legislators. Congressional involvement in nuclear weapons policy during this period can be characterized as an "open" system, in contrast to the "closed system of the preceding era. Both systems are described below.

**The "Closed" System** Many analysts of Congress and U.S. defense policy argue that the pre-1970s Congress "largely relinquished oversight responsibility on national security issues to the executive, particularly on arms control matters."\(^{18}\)

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The congressional role on foreign and military policy during the first three decades after World War Two is commonly described in scholarly literature as a "rubber-stamping silent partner" which "seldom challenged administration policy."\(^{19}\)

This characterization is belied by the intimate involvement of some legislators throughout the post-war period in all facets of nuclear weapons policy. In some respects, Congress was better informed about and exercised greater oversight over the production of nuclear weapons during the 1950s and 1960s than today. In the earlier period, the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy (JCAE) required regular detailed reports from the Department of Defense and Atomic Energy Commission on all facets of the U.S. nuclear weapons program, including monthly production rates, a full inventory of the stockpile, and the purpose of each nuclear test. Today, the Armed Services Committees do not routinely receive, or even request, this information. When committee staff does request such detailed information, the Department of Energy often resists or delays granting the request.

In contrast to recent years, the most aggressive challenges to executive branch officials during the 1950s and 1960s came from legislators who wanted the

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and 1969 Congress was "generally content with pro forma evaluation of the executive's annual defense requests, save for an occasional increase in appropriations for a particular weapons system and a still more occasional marginal cut in the Pentagon's annual budget in the name of fiscal prudence."

\(^{19}\) James M. Lindsay, p. xi.

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U.S. to intensify its military efforts. The JCAE, the House Appropriations Committee and House Armed Services Committee, in particular, routinely teamed up with military officials and scientists worked for defense contractors to press the White House to increase the pace of weapons development, force size and force diversity. For example, congressional committees pressed the Department of Defense (DoD) to accelerate the Polaris submarine program, adding funds in the fiscal year 1959 budget for this program far beyond the administration request. In the early 1960s, House Armed Services Committee Chairman Carl Vinson and Defense Secretary McNamara got into an open and bitter fight over the B-70 supersonic bomber program when the Secretary of Defense sought to stop the program against the wishes of the Chairman.

During this earlier period, however, senior members of the defense and foreign relations committees in addition to a few other legislators with specialized knowledge and long-standing involvement in defense policy monopolized strategic policy decision-making, although other members sometimes voiced criticism of their decisions. The committee staffs and personal staffs of a few members were also deeply involved in policy making. This congressional decision-making style of most of the post-World War II era can be described as a "closed" system, in contrast to the "open" system which emerged in the 1980s.\footnote{This line of thought was inspired by a suggestion from veteran congressional defense policy staffer Larry K. Smith, who described an "inside game" and an "outside game" in congressional policy making. Smith has worked for Senators McIntyre (D-NH) and Hart (D-CO), and currently is a senior staff of the House Armed Services Committee. A similar concept was developed by James Lindsay,
During this period, most of the activity occurred in committees, frequently in closed sessions or in behind-the-scenes negotiations among a few key legislators and executive branch officials. Challenges on the floor to the Armed Services Committees' and the Defense Appropriations Subcommittees' decisions were rare, and successful challenges even more so.\textsuperscript{21} There were major controversies, but the policy fights occurred mostly outside of the public view between the contending sides of an issue. Each side included individuals from both governing branches, the military services and "think tanks."\textsuperscript{22} Senator Henry Jackson, a Democrat from Washington, is perhaps the best example of a legislator whose formal positions of authority were greatly enhanced by a network of allies he cultivated throughout the executive branch and the military services. Sen. Jackson was chairman of the JCAE and a ranking Democrat on the Senate Armed Services Committee. He was at the hub of a government-wide network of individuals brought together by shared views on the gravity of the Soviet threat,

\textbf{Congress and Nuclear Weapons}, also with credits to Smith.

\textsuperscript{21} None of the four defense committees lost a floor fight during the 1960s on any amendments to the annual authorization and appropriations bills. "Defense Subcommittees: Profiles of two Key Groups," \textit{Congressional Quarterly Weekly}, May 20, 1982, p. 1141.

\textsuperscript{22} For example, U.S. negotiations on a comprehensive test ban in the late 1950s divided key law makers, just as it divided the nuclear weapons expert community of that era. Much of the vigorous debate which ensued was on the public record, but the breadth of participation in this debate was very narrow. Only a few years earlier, many segments of the American public expressed concern about fall-out from atmospheric testing.

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the need for increased U.S. military might, and the dangers of negotiated arms control.²³

At the outset of institutionalized arms control negotiations with the Soviet Union in the late 1960s, the new Nixon administration took care to protect its freedom of action, reinforcing the closed decision making system. For example, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and President Nixon abruptly canceled chief arms control negotiator Gerard Smith's first scheduled congressional appearance the week before the opening of the SALT negotiations in 1969. Consequently, Congress was not consulted, or even informed of, the administration's position going into arms talks with the Soviet Union.²⁴ Administration officials denied all

²³ As the U.S. prepared to follow SALT I with a second treaty in the early 1970s, Sen. Jackson effectively used his formal and informal positions of influence to obstruct arms control progress. The Senator and his aide, Richard Perle, pushed from the outside while their close associate on the NSC staff, John Lehman, pushed from the inside to "purge" ACDA of nearly everyone involved in SALT I. Another close ally, Fred Ikle, took over as ACDA director and Lehman became his deputy. Another close associate, Paul Wolfowitz, also moved over to ACDA. Jackson and his allies selected a replacement for the Joint Chiefs of Staff representative to the negotiations. Countering the Chief's own choice, they put into place Edward Rowny, a friend who shared their antipathy to arms control. This group subsequently worked closely with the Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger, negotiator Paul Nitze, and chief of naval operations Elmo Zumwalt, to insure that SALT II required the Soviet Union to give up some of their missile "throw-weight" advantage. (For details on the ACDA purge see, Duncan L. Clarke, The Politics of Arms Control: The Role and Effectiveness of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (The Free Press, 1979).

²⁴ Not until the opening of the second round of talks in the spring of 1970 did the White House inform Congress of the U.S. position, and then only to a select group of Senators invited to come to the White House for a briefing. John Newhouse, Cold Dawn: The Story of SALT (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973), p. 182.
requests to include senators officially in the U.S. delegation as observers.\textsuperscript{25}

Although the administration formally excluded Congress, key "insiders" such as Foreign Relations Committee Chairman William Fulbright, Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman John Stennis and Sen. Henry Jackson were fully informed of events by colleagues in the administration and strategic policy community. They exerted considerable influence over U.S. policy since these legislators collectively commanded the support of a solid majority of the Senate on defense issues. They had the power to establish the overall boundaries within which the President was likely to obtain the approval of two-thirds of the Senate required for ratification of a prospective treaty. By the time SALT II negotiations were underway, Senator Jackson and his aide, Richard Perle had won the reputation of unseen participants -- and saboteurs -- at the negotiating table.\textsuperscript{26}

The closed mode of decision-making did not preclude the emergence of major debates over fundamental issues in U.S. nuclear weapons policy. For example, in the early and mid-1970s, two subcommittee chairs of the Senate Armed Services Committee waged serious, but ultimately unsuccessful, campaigns

\textsuperscript{25} Alan Platt, "U.S. Senate and Strategic Arms Policy," in Alan Platt and Lawrence D. Weiler, eds., pp. 19-20.

\textsuperscript{26} Senator Jackson laid the groundwork for his role in SALT II during the SALT I ratification debate with his successful amendment instructing the president "to seek a future treaty that, inter alia, would not limit the United States to levels of intercontinental strategic forces inferior to limits provided for the Soviet Union." For Jackson's role in SALT II, see Strobe Talbott, \textit{Endgame: The Inside Story of SALT II}, (New York: Harper and Row, 1980), p. 55, 102-103. Also see footnote 9.
to restrain the development of counterforce capabilities and multiple warheads for intercontinental missiles.\textsuperscript{27} The congressional debate over counterforce was conducted almost entirely in committee hearings among committee members, key administration officials, and nuclear weapons strategists affiliated with the government. Participation was limited whether or not the hearings were classified. Of course, the development of counterforce capability was also debated in private conferences and seminars outside of government.

On one notable occasion, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Congress demonstrated its capacity to become more extensively involved in nuclear weapons policy and in a more open manner than its typical closed mode of behavior. A broader group of Congressmen and nuclear weapons experts became protagonists in a debate over plans to deploy a nation-wide anti-ballistic missile (ABM) system. As expected in major controversies which engage Congress and nuclear weapons experts, the executive branch also was deeply divided on the feasibility and desirability of deployment of a ABM system.\textsuperscript{28} Scientists who had formerly worked on nuclear weapons development in the DoD or weapons laboratories spoke out against deployment of an ABM system. They were joined by other scientists and political activists in urban areas slated to

\textsuperscript{27} For an account of this debate, see Alton Frye, pp. 47-95.

\textsuperscript{28} The major fissure was between the Joint Chiefs of Staff who lobbied for a thick nationwide defense and the civilian leadership of the Defense Department, including Sec. McNamara, who felt an ABM system would be ineffective and intensify the arms race. The weapons scientists and officials who fought the ABM formed the core of a nascent arms control constituency.
receive anti-missile systems. Anti-ABM scientists and nuclear weapons experts engaged in open and heated debate with their pro-ABM counterparts.

A significant minority of the Senate Armed Services Committee and the Senate leadership opposed the ABM. A relatively large number of Senators became involved in the fight, and Congress invited testimony from non-government witnesses for the first time. Senate involvement in the ABM debate encouraged greater public participation. The heated discussion on the Senate floor and in the committee room alerted and informed activists of the dispute. The Senate approved ABM deployment by a one-vote margin in 1971. However, the ongoing fierce opposition to U.S. deployment within Congress and the strategic policy community led the Nixon administration to pursue a treaty prohibiting all but very limited deployments of defense systems.

29 Anne Cahn, Eggheads and Warheads: Scientists and the ABM (M.I.T. Center for International Studies, 1971).

30 Public awareness of and involvement in the ABM debate was exceeded only by the debate over atmospheric nuclear testing in the late 1950s and the debates of the 1980s. Even so, participation in the campaign against ABM deployment almost entirely was limited to scientists and long-time political activists. In contrast, a broad segment of the public, and countless civic and public interest organizations, actively supported the nuclear freeze campaign. As Jerome Weisner, a leader of the anti-ABM campaign, acknowledged in 1967, "there seems to be little public concern about the ABM issue, either pro or con." Jerome Weisner, Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, June 1967.

31 Henry Kissinger has since acknowledged that congressional opposition to ABM was responsible for the 1972 ABM treaty. Faced with a choice between a likely congressionally-imposed unilateral restraint on ABM deployment and an agreement by both superpowers to forego ABM deployment, the Nixon administration sensibly chose the latter and received credit for an arms control achievement. See for example the interview with Kissinger in Michael Charlton, From Deterrence to Defense: The Inside Story of Strategic Policy (Harvard
Senate involvement in the debate over an ABM system was extensive, overt, and effectual. The main features of the open system of decision making which was to develop further in the 1980s were present in this debate. After the ABM debate was settled, nuclear weapons policy-making reverted to its earlier closed mode until a decade later, when the Congress once again demonstrated its capacity to engage in and, even foment, public controversies in nuclear weapons policy.

A decentralized closed system in the 1970s

Legislators dramatically asserted congressional prerogatives in foreign and military policy making during the early to mid-1970s. For two decades, most legislators had been willing to defer to the leadership of the bi-partisan experts in the executive branch and the legislative branch. In the early 1970s, a "new Congress" reasserted the right of the institution -- and therefore, the rank and file -- to have a formally prescribed role in overseeing and shaping foreign policy.

Two factors instigated the "revolution" in congressional policy-making. The most apparent factor was that the Vietnam War and Watergate scandals gave the "Imperial Presidency" a bad name. Legislators who were disillusioned with the content of U.S. foreign policy used the crisis in the executive branch to persuade their colleagues that they had not taken full advantage of the Constitution's standing invitation to Congress "to struggle over the privilege of directing

American foreign policy." They insisted on a greater oversight role of U.S. intelligence and military activities. Over the course of the decade, Congress created a durable legislative legacy which set a precedent and a legal basis for its continued involvement as a consequential player in American foreign policy making. 34

The second catalyst of the congressional resurgence was a rebellion of "Vietnam-generation" legislators against a structure which concentrated power in the hands of a few senior legislators. Congress adopted a range of internal reforms which greatly decentralized power by increasing and redistributing resources. 35 The first set of reforms -- creation of new subcommittees, diminution of the power of committee chairmen and the rise of the party caucuses -- significantly increased the opportunities and rewards for legislators to become involved in foreign and military policy. The second set of reforms -- increased


33 By the time the Congress began restricting funds for military operations in Vietnam, the war was winding down.

34 Congress passed such measures as the 1973 War Powers Resolution (overriding President Nixon's veto); the 1974 embargo of arms sales to Turkey; the 1976 ban on use of CIA funds to provide covert assistance to anti-Marxist forces in Angola; the 1976 and 1977 establishment of intelligence oversight committees; and the 1978 Nuclear Nonproliferation Act.

35 For a thorough discussion of reforms, see James Sundquist, pp.238-315, 367-415. For their effect on foreign policy making in particular, see Thomas Franck and Edward Weisband, Foreign Policy by Congress (Oxford University Press, 1979); and Crabb and Holt, pp. 39-59.
staff, creation of specialized "information and support agencies," and legislated
assurance of access to information and analysis available to the executive branch -
- enhanced Congress's structural and political capacity for involvement.\textsuperscript{36}

These reforms did not necessarily strengthen the capacity or incentive of the Congress as a whole to offer new initiatives or challenge existing policy.\textsuperscript{37}

One of Congress's structural disadvantages as a policy-making body is fragmentation of both power and responsibility. The reforms exacerbated this problem by further undermining party structures and discipline. As Charles Jones has noted, the nature of the 1970s reforms were not integrative but representative. "This greater fragmentation and participation can result in diverse policy innovation but very limited institutional response to presidential initiative."\textsuperscript{38}

In addition to the decentralizing effects of the 1970s reforms, the post-Vietnam atmosphere permitted Members of Congress to question the development of new major weapons systems without appearing subversive.

\textsuperscript{36} The explosion of staff increased legislators' capacity to be involved in foreign policy and increased the defense committees' ability to oversee the defense budget. The staffs of the Senate and House Armed Services Committees respectively grew from ten and ten in 1947 to 30 and 28 in 1975. Harrison W. Fox, Jr., and Susan Webb Hammond, Congressional Staffs: The Invisible Force in American Lawmaking (The Free Press, 1977), p. 169.

\textsuperscript{37} Providing more information to members of the newly created intelligence committees did not necessarily lead to more public challenges to U.S. policy; rather, in some cases, it helped to contain debates by making members passive participants in covert activities.

During the 1970s, legislators waged major floor fights over funding for the B-1 bomber, C-5A transport plane, and the Navy Condor missile. As the practice of annual congressional authorization of discrete portions of the defense budget gradually expanded in scope, the defense committees became deeply involved in the details of the budget. Defense analyst Robert Art found that by the end of the 1970s each chamber was changing well over 60 percent of Pentagon line items requests.\textsuperscript{39}

In fact, the steady increase of congressional involvement has prompted many defense analysts to bemoan congressional "interference" and "micro-management" of the defense budget and procurement process.\textsuperscript{40} However, as Art argues, congressional objectives were limited. Overt congressional challenges to the defense budget were overwhelmingly motivated by fiscal or programmatic concerns, not policy concerns.\textsuperscript{41} Leading legislators sought to exercise


\textsuperscript{40} See, for example, Zbigniew Brzezinski, "The Three Requirements for a Bipartisan Foreign Policy," \textit{The Washington Quarterly: Forging Bipartisanship} (Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University, 1984).

\textsuperscript{41} "Financial and programmatic oversight deal, respectively, with the efficiency with which funds are being spent and with how effective particular programs are being managed. Policy oversight deals with the larger questions of whether particular programs are needed, how they serve the specific missions the Pentagon has delineated, and whether those missions and the strategies that they in turn serve are sensible." Art, p. 227. No doubt, some legislators who initiated criticism of fiscal and programmatic management of programs were actually motivated by policy disagreements, but decided it would be politically disadvantageous to reveal, or emphasize, the policy disagreements.
managerial oversight of the Pentagon by raising questions about cost-effectiveness or technical feasibility of selected major programs. Occasionally, they sought to reorder priorities. Major policy differences were still battled-out quietly or suppressed. Not until Congress deleted the procurement funds for the MX missile from the fiscal year 1982 budget in December 1982, had a post-World War II Congress ever refused to fund a major weapons system requested by the president.42

The expansion of congressional involvement in nuclear weapons and arms control policy did not initially keep pace with the growth in congressional oversight of foreign policy. Nuclear weapons policy making was still largely a closed system during most of the 1970s. However, it was a more decentralized system, and the unwritten rules clearly were shaken by the controversies over U.S. foreign policy, both factors which may have facilitated the emergence of the "open" system a decade later.

Toward the end of the 1970s, a new system began to emerge in response to greater politicization of arms control. The Senate leadership formed a SALT advisors group during the Carter administration which was allowed to attend plenary sessions of the negotiations as observers and to examine the joint draft treaty text. Many of these Senators were still dissatisfied with their ability to influence the talks, and House members were not invited to join the advisors

42 Congress narrowly voted not to fund the B-1 bomber in 1977, but this was after President Carter's controversial decision to cancel the program.
group. However, the executive branch began formal sessions to brief large numbers of legislators. By the late 1970s, the SALT II treaty was no longer a matter for debate within a small strategic policy community but had become a deeply politicized issue involving the whole Congress.

An "open" system in the 1980s The changes initiated in the late 1970s evolved into a partially "open" system of congressional decision making on nuclear weapons matters during the 1980s. The Senate and House Armed Services Committees and Defense Appropriations Subcommittees, unaccustomed to sharing their jurisdiction over nuclear weapons policy matters, now had to defend their work on the floor. Dissident members of the committees and other interested legislators mounted challenges to the committee bills, often resulting in lengthy battles and sometimes in overturning the committee position. Congress's "power of the purse," until then infrequently used as a blunt arms control tool, was embraced by legislators promoting arms control. Within the committees, some junior members became influential "players" early in their careers. Unusual coalitions sprang up stressing new types of arguments, blurring the well-worn battle-lines of debates over strategic policy. The House, traditionally the junior partner in these matters, took the lead.

Congressional activity off the floor and outside of the committee room exploded. Individual members became active in the public arena, giving speeches

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43 Platt, pp. 116-117.
at conferences, appearing on television news shows, and writing articles for newspapers. Some became self-appointed deal-makers and entered into private, but publicized, negotiations with Reagan administration officials. As one nuclear weapons issue after another reached a stalemate, new members tried to play dealmaker.

Even those legislators who were not acknowledged leaders on Capitol Hill and who held views far to the right or left of the political center found interested audiences inside and outside the congressional arena. Formal and informal groups of members also became more involved in nuclear weapons issues. The House Democratic Caucus provided one striking example of an organized, sustained effort to influence nuclear weapons policy. For several years in the early 1980s, a group of liberal House Democrats turned their party caucus into a pro-arms control committee to coordinate and develop common strategies.

On many important nuclear weapons issues, the closed system of decision-making prevailed. Yet, Congress's involvement in nuclear weapons policy assumed a new character during the 1980s. The situation was considerably changed from the days in 1971 when House Armed Services Committee Chairman Mendel Rivers commented: "Congressmen don't understand these military things. My members rely on me, and I know who to rely on. I'd rather have one general who knows this business than a hundred senators who don't."\textsuperscript{44} This essay explores the implications of the transition from a closed mode of congressional

\textsuperscript{44} Quoted by Alton Frye, p. 5.
decision making to a partially open one.

The Widening "Scope of Conflict"

My main objective in studying the emergence of a new mode of congressional involvement in nuclear weapons policy -- from a closed system to an open one -- is to investigate the political process which determines the range of acceptable policy options and objectives. As I have suggested, Congress is intimately involved with this process. In the closed mode of congressional behavior, involvement in policy decisions is limited to a small number of legislators and the public is largely unaware of the fundamental issues at stake in the policy debate. When legislators -- either members of this select group or "outsiders" -- use the forum provided by Congress to criticize and propose alternative policy options in an open and noisy manner, then the nature of the decision-making process changes. Participation widens beyond the relatively closed circles of experts and executive branch officials. As participation widens, national media coverage further stimulates the pace and intensity of controversy. The media are attuned to signs, typically issued from Congress, of serious inter-governmental conflict, and is eager to report the unfolding political battle.45 As

45 See Daniel C. Hallin, The Uncensored War: The Media and Vietnam (Oxford University Press, 1986), for the argument that American journalists only report on issues in the "sphere of legitimate controversy." The limits of this sphere are defined by the official Washington debate. Also see Walter Karp, "All the Congressmen's Men: How Capitol Hill Controls the Press," Harper's Magazine, (July, 1989), for the similar argument that the media pursues only those stories which demonstrates clear inter-governmental conflict. Since conflict is
controversies become public, the possibilities increase for ever wider participation in the debate and this, in turn, can change the terms of the conflict. In effect, widening the scope of the conflict carries with it the possibility of widening the original agenda.

The insights of political scientist E.E. Schattschneider contained in his seminal work, *The Semi-Sovereign People*, advance this line of reasoning. Schattschneider observed that the scope of conflict can be a crucial determinant of the outcome of a fight. Those in control of policy-making typically restrict access to information and channels of authority in order to minimize the numbers of people involved. Policy-making circles may widen if the original participants are unable to resolve conflicts among themselves. If all else fails and the stakes are perceived to be high, those on the losing side may try to widen the circle in an effort to gain support for their preferred position. As the audience grows and the circle is widened, control of the terms of debate shifts, the conflict spreads, and the very nature of the conflict can change. In addition, individuals on the periphery, whose views would otherwise have been marginalized, may be able to capitalize on the internal weaknesses of the "inner circle." By successfully inserting themselves in the debate, they will have widened the scope of the

expressed by Congress, Karp concludes that Congress controls the press.

conflict and perhaps have caused a qualitative change in its content. This dissertation applies the concept of the "scope of conflict" to the politics of nuclear weapons policy. There has long been an "inner circle" which helps shapes American nuclear weapons policies and presents a convincing rationale for the policies to a wider public. I have labeled this group the "strategic policy community." The community strives to be regarded as a body of non-ideological, competent experts which deserves public trust and political authority. When this policy community succeeds in containing disagreements among its members by reaching internal compromises, it is in a strong position to prevent the scope of conflict from widening beyond its ranks. More generally, if it is able to maintain its political authority and appearance of unity, it is able to fend off challenges to the prevailing policies assuming these correspond to those endorsed by the community.

The internal compromises reached by the community over time helped to impart an appearance of general public consensus about nuclear weapons policy. This appearance was more an illusion than an accurate representation of reality.

47 Schattschneider cited the Harlem race riot of 1943 which began as a fist-fight between a black soldier and white policeman. When the crowd was invited to participate, the nature and consequences of the fight changed. Starting as an insignificant private fight, it mushroomed into a mob scene with looting, hundreds of injuries, and millions of dollars in property damage. An example more relevant to this dissertation concerns the debate over the SALT II Treaty in the late 1970s. Opponents of the treaty with close ties to government developed a program to recruit conservative opinion leaders at the state and local level in a campaign against the treaty. In the process, the debate over SALT II became a broader debate over the inadequacy of U.S. military strength. See Jerry Sanders, Peddlers of Crisis, (South End Press, 1983).
Most of the public was not sufficiently well-informed about U.S. policy to hold a meaningful independent opinion, and this in turn, provided policy-makers with wide latitude in policy making. A vast collection of public opinion surveys over time demonstrated the American people's pervasive ignorance of -- and mistaken beliefs about - U.S. nuclear weapons policies. Notwithstanding this widespread ignorance, public sentiment about the arms race was consistent over the past several decades. The virtually unanimous conclusions drawn from public opinion data are that the public was firmly supportive of arms control negotiations with the Soviet Union and also mistrustful and fearful of the Soviet Union. This structure of public knowledge and beliefs provided policy-makers with wide latitude in policy making. In the words of one public opinion analyst, the U.S. public was "permissive" concerning nuclear weapons policy.

In a complex, pluralist society, consensus does not mean a total absence of

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48 For example, a June, 1979, poll found that only 30% of the U.S. public knew what SALT II was, even though the negotiations had been a front-page story for years and the U.S. was preparing to sign an agreement. In 1984, a staggering 81% of the public believed that U.S. policy upholds a principle of "no-first-use" of nuclear weapons, and about 75% of the public believed that the U.S. had an effective defense against nuclear weapons. Voter Opinions on Nuclear Arms Policy (New York: Public Agenda Foundation, 1984), table 19, p. 34; Jay Rosen, "Democracy Overwhelmed: Press and Public in the Nuclear Age," (Occasional Paper no.4, Center for War, Peace, and the News Media, New York University, 1988); Thomas W. Graham, "Public Attitudes Towards Active Defense; ABM and Star Wars, 1945-1985," (Working paper published by Center for International Studies, MIT, May 1986), pp. 1-3.

49 Not surprisingly, public fear of the Soviet Union has subsided dramatically since Gorbachev's foreign policy reforms effectively ended the Cold War.

dissent. But when virtually all the leading political figures and authorities accept a set of assumptions and policy positions, dissenters are greatly handicapped.

During the nuclear age, there have been many challenges to the status quo. Since these have been defeated or coopted, generally without causing domestic strife, both the legitimacy of the status quo and of the strategic policy community as the guardian of U.S. nuclear policy was continually reinforced.

The Strategic Policy Community

The importance of the strategic policy community raises several questions. Who are the participants and what are their defining characteristics? How do the members of this group influence policy and the policy-making process? This community defies simple definition because it does not have formal criteria for membership, rules of behavior, or an explicit political role. Nor is it composed of a stable group of members.

My definition of the strategic policy community builds on the insights of political scientist Hugh Heclo's work on "issue networks." Heclo argues that large, unofficial, groups of policy experts dominate policy making in many issue areas.\(^{52}\)

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\(^{51}\) I refer to the community in the present tense, although it is currently in a state of flux as a result of the transformation of the political world over the past few years. It is possible that the community will dissolve if the U.S. nuclear arms program ceases.

These "shared knowledge groups," or issue networks, are composed of executive agency officials, legislative aides, lobbyists, and "think tank" experts who specialize in one particular issue area and have earned reputations for their expertise and involvement in their respective chosen areas. Unlike "subgovernments" or "iron triangles," issue networks are not made up of a stable set of participants who have coalesced to control public programs in their direct economic or political interest. Participants move in and out of the network. Their "direct material interest is often secondary to intellectual or emotional commitment" and they compete among themselves in a chaotic micro-pluralist environment to promote their personal policy recommendations. The networks' role in making policy is to provide a "common framework for political debate and decision in the two [legislative and executive] branches."^54

An issue network such as Heclo describes exists in the area of nuclear weapons policy making. The nuclear weapons network is probably more cohesive than most because of the extensive government program of classification and secrecy, the use by those in the field of a particularly abstract and acronymic language, and an aura of extreme importance surrounding nuclear weapons policy. The intellectual output of the nuclear weapons strategists and theorists in this network is the subject of a large body of work, but its political role and social

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^53 Ibid., p. 117.

^54 Ibid. 
behavior has received little scholarly attention.\textsuperscript{55}

The concept of the strategic policy community further develops Heclo's ideas. The strategic policy community is an elite subset of -- or an inner circle within -- this large network of individuals working on nuclear weapons issues. Individuals who become members of the strategic policy community, or aspire to do so, are already part of the policy network.

Unlike the policy network, the strategic policy community actively discourages the emergence of a micro-pluralist environment and divisive decision-making. Although there were significant and enduring differences of opinion among members of the community in the 1980s, the differences were overshadowed by a set of fundamental assumptions and beliefs held in common by those in this strategic elite. Moreover, the community self-consciously tries to strike political compromises which accommodate the institutional interests of different parts of the U.S. military establishment as well as dominant political,

economic and ideological interests. The individual member of the strategic policy community may be personally motivated to strike these compromises in order to remain valued by the various dominant interests. The community, as a whole, is motivated by its mission to contain potential conflicts and promote its contribution to policy making.

The intellectual product of the community, per se, does not necessarily determine specific weapons acquisition or employment policies. Strategic rationales are often afterthoughts for weapons programs, and declaratory nuclear policy is often quite divorced from operational policy. As arms race analyst Desmond Ball writes:

Both the actual levels of U.S. strategic forces and the characteristics of the particular weapons systems -- the Polaris, Poseidon and Trident FBM systems, the Minuteman ICBMs, the B-52 fleet, and the long-range cruise missiles -- have been more determined by bureaucratic/political outcomes than by any rational analysis of U.S. strategic requirements.56

However, the community influences the reception by the political system of bureaucratic/political outcomes by establishing a "climate of opinion." In addition, the community provides an over-arching structure for making decisions about arms acquisition and arms control by framing the options for such decisions in terms of a persuasive and accepted strategic logic. Thus, the community helps to set policy within the constraints imposed by other dominant interests, including the military and nuclear weapons production and research industries.

56 Desmond Ball, Developments in U.S. Strategic Nuclear Policy Under the Carter Administration ACIS working paper no. 21, (Los Angeles, Calif.: Center for International and Strategic Affairs, University of California, 1980), p. 16.
In addition to helping shape policy, the strategic policy community uses its political authority to rationalize, and thereby, legitimize policy in the eyes of the rest of the government and the broader public. Its legitimization function is more apparent than its policy making function. The strategic policy community provides the policy compromises it crafts with a strategic rationale and promotes it to policy makers and the public as a consensus position. At the most general level, the intellectual output of this community -- which is accorded great respect -- has provided legitimation for an on-going -- and by many accounts, totally absurd -- arms race.

In comparison to the policy analysts' network, the strategic policy community is a closed group. It is largely self-replicating as existing members designate other members by including them in the strategic policy community's activities and building their reputation as someone who is influential in policy making. By definition, the community is non-partisan. It contains Democrats and Republicans who identify at least as much with the strategic policy community as they do with their own political parties. They prefer incremental, consensus policy-making and have an instinct for the political "center." Consequently, they try to steer a middle course between the ideologically explicit positions of the political "right" and "left."

There is a fluid set of participants in the strategic policy community. Moreover, the demarcation between the strategic policy community and the larger network is fuzzy. Even the status of specific individuals -- "in" or "out" -- is
sometimes ambiguous, because the criteria for membership are subjective. There are two defining characteristics: one; access to the levers of government power and perceived influence, and two; the conviction and expertise to be an effective advocate of the policy stance of the strategic policy community.

Access and influence are typically functions of past, current, or anticipated government positions, coupled with extensive working relationships with other influential actors. One visible manifestation of access is involvement in activities which provide individuals with opportunities to present their views to policy makers and to each other. The principal activities of the strategic policy community are: testifying before Congress, serving on governmental commissions and standing advisory boards, serving on defense policy committees sponsored by industry or non-profit organizations, hosting conferences for the community, attending private seminars and meetings, writing newspaper and journal articles, and providing commentary for television news shows.

The criterion of involvement in these types of endeavors can be used to operationalize the concept of the strategic policy community. In order to provide empirical support for the concept of a strategic policy community and an illustration of its composition, I derived an approximate list of its members based on extensive participation in key activities. (See Appendix A for the list of membership and a discussion of the methodology.) I recorded the participants in 25 key congressional hearings, seven government commissions tasked with producing studies on a major defense policy issue, seven defense policy advisory
boards, and the activities of two non-governmental standing committees. Of the resulting list of over 500 individuals, a group of 51 stood apart from the rest as the most active in the different activities.

This exercise suggests that the strategic policy community is something more than merely a creation of the study. The overall high level of participation of the 51 individuals supports the theory of a coherent group. The list is generally consistent with subjective judgments of which individuals epitomize the strategic policy community. In particular, the individuals with the highest rates of participation -- Brent Scowcroft, William Perry, John Deutch, James Woolsey, Henry Rowen, Michael May -- exhibited clearly the traits associated with the defense policy community: strong support for the status quo and a proclivity for centrist and incrementalist politics; concern with establishing "consensus" on the basis of established nuclear weapons concepts; lack of strong identification with one political party; reputation for influence and reasonableness.57

This method of selection produced an approximate membership list for illustrative purposes, not a definitive list. It is unsuitable for the purposes of producing a definitive membership list -- if one even existed -- for several reasons, as discussed in the Appendix.

57 I did not test whether my approximate membership all shared these attributes, although I believe this would be an important task for future research on the strategic policy community. Particularly useful would be a study of reputations to determine who are the "perceived influentials" in this field. This could be done by asking a large number of government officials and individuals in the nuclear weapons policy network for their opinion of which individuals are the most influential.
The second defining characteristic of the strategic policy community is a set of common fundamental assumptions and policy views, a common language for discussing the issues, and a mutually familiar rhetoric of argumentation.\textsuperscript{58} In the 1980s and earlier, the common assumptions and policy views basically supported the status quo arms race as a basis for U.S. security policy. Every member adhered to most, or all, of the common positions, and each possessed the expertise to present and promote these beliefs convincingly. Rejection of the beliefs and rhetoric of argumentation was grounds for loss of membership in this elite community.\textsuperscript{59} The following four points were the principal common views of the community. (This body of thought may no longer represent the consensus of the strategic policy community since the end of the cold war has forced reconsideration of American policy.)

1. They believed in the policy of extended nuclear deterrence -- that is, the threat to use nuclear weapons to deter military attacks (or political blackmail) by the Soviet Union against U.S. allies and interests.

2. They supported continued U.S. participation in a technological arms race which was aimed at developing a force which had the characteristics of a first-strike capability. This was held to be necessary to maintain the credibility of U.S. policy, although there was not a uniform opinion on the necessary pace of "modernization." Most believed it was sufficient periodically to "modernize" U.S.

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., p. 117.

\textsuperscript{59} Senate hearings in 1977 on President Carter's nomination of Paul Warnke to be Director of ACDA demonstrated what happens when a community member rejects a fundamental community belief. Warnke was attacked in a highly personal manner by former colleagues in the defense policy community for his portrayal of the arms race as akin to "Two Apes on a Treadmill" -- the title of a Foreign Affairs article -- and his rejection of the community's emphasis on arms modernization over arms control.
nuclear weapons systems to offset Soviet deployments and to maintain the "link" between Soviet conventional military actions in Europe and American nuclear retaliation.

3. They accepted arms control as an integral element of national security policy even if it deprived the U.S. of some desirable policy options. The community held different views on the value of arms control agreements -- ranging from a public relations tool, to a way to impose limits on Soviet forces, to a means of "channelling arms modernization in stabilizing directions." At the level of strategic theory, they believed the goal of arms control -- and some forms of unilateral restraint -- should be to enhance "stability".\(^6\) However, there was a range of views on what priority should be given to "stabilizing" the nuclear balance.

4. They opposed unilateral or negotiated specific prohibitions on weapons "research."

However, there were major differences of opinion during the 1980s among members of the community. The outlines of the orthodoxy they produced does not so much represent a consensual view, as it does a political compromise, which assigned different, and shifting, weights to conflicting elements. One potential source of internal conflict and doctrinal weakness was the incompatibility between the substantive and political goals of the arms control process, on the one hand, and the institutional needs and military requirements of U.S. extended nuclear deterrence policy, on the other. The policy community, which contained both "arms racers" and "arms controllers," crafted and promulgated a political and

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substantive compromise between these parts. The relative weight given to the
different components of the community's belief system shifted according to
changes in the world and U.S. political developments. A shift in relative emphasis
caused a shift in the boundaries of the strategic policy community within the
larger policy network. People hovering at the periphery of the strategic policy
community were included or excluded, depending upon the direction of the shift.

For example, by the early 1970s, the community largely rejected the view
that sustaining the credibility of America's extended nuclear deterrent required a
full-blown "damage-limiting capability," and accorded increased importance to the
pursuit of "strategic stability" through arms control. The membership of the
community shifted in accordance with this evolution of ideas. The defense
strategists who remained adherents of a damage-limiting capability were in
disfavor within the strategic policy community when they succeeded in "taking
over" the White House in 1981. Men such as Eugene Rostow, Edward Rowny,
and Richard Perle were no longer part of the "pragmatic center." These men won
high level positions in the Reagan administration, while many of their former
colleagues in the strategic policy community were initially ousted from
administration positions and/or excluded from administration circles.

The views of the strategic policy community -- and those of Richard Perle
on the one hand, and Paul Warnke on the other -- represented different points
along a familiar continuum of views in domestic debates over nuclear weapon
programs and arms control agreements. Several scholars have developed an
intellectual taxonomy of all the participants in the nuclear policy network. For example, authors Michael Krepon and Adam Garfinkle posit a central cleavage in the network between those who advocate increased U.S. reliance on nuclear weapons in realizing foreign policy goals, and those who advocate minimal reliance on nuclear weapons and increased importance of achieving bi-lateral arms control measures.61 Michael Krepon labels these camps "nuclear weapons strategists" and "arms control and disarmament strategists." Krepon suggests that each of these camps have operationally- and ideologically-inclined wings. Arms control and disarmament strategists include "operationalists" who accept the existence of "nuclear weapons in modern arsenals" and are content with "managing the arms race" in the name of "strategic stability," and "ideologues" who seek to end the arms competition all together. In a comparable manner, the nuclear weapons strategists include "operationalists" who are prepared to work out limited rules for the nuclear arms competition with the Soviet Union as a management tool in the geopolitical struggle, and "ideologues" who placed heavy emphasis on the futility of arms control in a zero-sum contest with a Soviet enemy motivated by fundamental ideological antagonism to the West. The operationally-inclined strategists from the two camps sometimes overlap. Krepon argues that the operationally-inclined strategists have the most to contribute to "good" U.S. policy.

making, particularly when they work together.

Adam Garfinkle's taxonomy is roughly parallel. Garfinkle identifies five different groups representing different schools of thought: the Professional Left, the Left-Liberal Establishment, the Pragmatic Center, the Conservative Mainstream, and the Far Right. The two ends of Garfinkle's spectrum roughly correspond to Krepon's two groups of ideologues.

The strategic policy community sounds much like Garfinkle's pragmatic center and overlaps with Krepon's "operationally minded" wings of the two camps. The terminology used by both Krepon and Garfinkle reveals their common view that those closest to the political center are the most pragmatic and constructive in the policy making process. It is indicative of the prevailing positive view of the strategic policy community that both scholars designate individuals who sound much like members of the strategic policy community to a separate category described as particularly worthy and valuable for U.S. policy-making.

New Opportunities for Legislators:
"Policy Entrepreneurs" and "Consensus Rebuilders"

Legislators seek power within their chamber and power to influence government policy. They also seek recognition of their political powers. Much the same is true of professional staff. As explained by a House Armed Services Committee staff: a staffer must "be perceived as being an important player in the
defense authorization process to continue to be effective.\(^\text{62}\) His statement is not as tautological as it appears: being "perceived" as "important" is a distinct objective.

The strategic policy community plays a large role in making (and breaking) reputations for legislators and staff. The community members recognize and praise those legislators and top staff who are most like them; that is, those who demonstrate command of the accepted concepts and technical features of nuclear weapons, and are agreeable to maintaining the consensus shaped by the community. Legislators prize recognition from the community because it leads to inclusion in high-level policy-making circles, notice by the national media with ties to the strategic policy community, and a reputation for influence. Of course, legislators also have independent means of acquiring influence through committee and party positions. However, formal positions of power often are reinforced by the informal positions of power.

The strategic policy community's members also have the capacity to damage a legislator's reputation as an expert or an influential policy maker.\(^\text{63}\) Those legislators who do try to expand the national security debate beyond its


\(^{63}\) For example, Rep. Ron Dellums is knowledgeable about nuclear weapons and is a senior member of the House Armed Services Committee who invests a lot of office time in nuclear weapons debates. However, his views always have been far to the left of the center and consequently, he is never invited to speak before or write for an audience of nuclear weapons experts.
established limits are often discouraged and disadvantaged by the negative
reputation their actions earn them. Promoting battles that have little chance of
success does not increase legislators's influence, unless they receive substantial
support from a constituency outside of Congress. Beyond that, active promotion
of controversial initiatives in nuclear weapons policies -- as opposed to mere
rhetorical statements of conviction -- can damage one's relations with the
Committee Chairman and other influential members who are in a position to
extend or withhold favors.

Without an undeniable display of dissension from within the strategic
policy community, or persistent challenges from the public to existing policies,
legislators will find little incentive or support for investing significant political
capital in promoting policies outside the accepted boundaries of debate. The
calculus of this situation changes when the "consensus" promulgated by the
strategic policy community shows signs of cracking. Members of Congress are
presented with new political opportunities. This dissertation considers two
different sorts of political opportunity.

First, a weakened orthodoxy invites challenges. "Policy entrepreneurs" -- or to use a negative characterization, "consensus destroyers" -- exploit the
weakened orthodoxy to promote alternative policies from the political left or
right. The entrepreneurs are so named because they try to create new definitions,
and offer new solutions to a problem. In the process, they must exercise
managerial and organizational capacity and assume risks. In his work on setting
political agendas, John Kingdon ascribes a central role to the policy entrepreneur.\textsuperscript{64} Legislators often have the resources Kingdon says a policy entrepreneur needs: a claim to a hearing, political connections, negotiating skills, and sheer persistence.

Policy entrepreneurs are also opportunists because they take advantage of a "window of opportunity" to gain visibility for themselves and for a personal concern. The successful entrepreneur opens that window wider by highlighting the lack of consensus on a given policy and by helping to generate demands for a new policy among the public. They play to an ideological constituency. Policy entrepreneurs further disrupt the arranged political compromise, discrediting those identified with it, and drawing attention to themselves and their preferred policies. The entrepreneur exploits the divisions by bringing other actors into the policy debate, thereby widening the political arena in which it takes place.

Policy entrepreneurs in the 1980s helped to stimulate a second type of political opening. They created an opportunity for certain legislators to reforge the "consensus" on nuclear weapons policy -- or, more accurately stated, to reconstruct the substantive and rhetorical political compromises which give shape to U.S. nuclear weapons policy. "Consensus rebuilders" also recreated and re-legitimized the institutional authority of those who normally maintain a national consensus. In doing so, they won appreciation from the strategic policy

community, and the increased political influence that resulted from such appreciation. The consensus rebuilder's constituency was composed primarily of "insiders" concerned with protecting the procedures and institutions associated with the status quo. Although they were certainly ideological, they sought to blunt the ideological content of their political positions with procedural concerns.

The following studies of four policy debates feature legislators in both of these political roles. This typology suggests a number of intriguing questions which will be examined as well: Does one role typically bring legislators greater success? What is the relationship between the institutional position and political background of members and the type of role -- rebuilders or entrepreneurs -- they seek to establish in the debate?

Organization and methodology of dissertation

The argument and analysis in subsequent chapters on individual nuclear weapons debates in Congress, substantiate my argument that the politics of nuclear weapons policy in the United States is greatly influenced by the functioning of an elite policy group. In each of the four policy debates studied, I identify the critical factors which prompted congressional activism, and evaluate the implications of that activism. For the sake of a coherent essay, these policy debates are presented in discrete chapters, but, in fact, they overlapped temporally and were affected by one another. I arranged the four chapters in chronological order, based on when the particular policy debate reached its
zenith. Cross references between the chapters are intended to help present a complete, comprehensible picture. Each chapter also includes a discussion of the content and development of U.S. nuclear strategy as it relates to the particular policy debate discussed in that chapter.

My data include interviews with members of Congress, congressional staff, and members of the arms control community. With the exception of a few congressional committee staff who preferred to remain anonymous, all interviewees agreed to speak for attribution. The study also draws extensively on a rich public record of congressional activity composed of internal memos, congressional hearings, journalists' accounts, committee publications, and the record of House and Senate floor proceedings. In addition, I used information and documentary materials that I have as a result of first-hand involvement in the policy debates studied. Wherever possible, I supported my personal knowledge with information from a second source. I have not footnoted information obtained through personal involvement.
Chapter II: The Nuclear Weapons Freeze Debate

In the early evening on May 4, 1983, a weary U.S. House of Representatives overwhelming passed the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Resolution calling on President Ronald Reagan to negotiate a mutual halt to the nuclear arms race with the Soviet Union. Floor debate on the resolution had set a new record for hours elapsed and amendments proposed. Coming in the midst of a busy congressional schedule, the freeze resolution consumed nearly 50 hours of debate, spanning a period of nearly 50 days. Thirty amendments to the original resolution were adopted, another thirty had been printed in the Congressional Record but were never considered.

House Speaker Thomas ("Tip") O'Neill, assuming the Speaker's customary privilege of having the last word before a vote, declared that the debate would "go down in the annals as one of the great debates in the history of this House." The Speaker's concluding statement was eloquent, if hyperbolic.

We are ready to choose a historic course, whether to continue the policies of the past, which have been inconclusive at best, or to chart a new path. The freeze supporters all across this country spoke clearly last November and will now speak again through their representatives. They want an end to the arms race...

Let the members of this House claim victory. The darker the night, the more beautiful and bright the stars. What we have before us is a resolution calling for an immediate, mutual, verifiable freeze, followed by substantial, equitable, verifiable reductions... This is a unique instance in the history of arms control.

Speaker O'Neill was correct in asserting that the debate over the freeze resolution represented a unique instance in the history of arms control. It was not the form of the legislation which was remarkable. Members of Congress have often used non-binding resolutions which "urge the president" to negotiate with the Soviet Union, as vehicles of support for arms control. However, the intense and widespread congressional interest, the leaders of the effort, and the range of the policy initiatives discussed were unusual. This debate heralded the open system of congressional involvement in nuclear weapons policy. The House of Representatives, traditionally the subordinate chamber on arms control matters, immersed itself in debate over a controversial proposal. New political personalities and coalitions emerged in the field of nuclear weapons policy. The House issued specific, albeit non-binding, negotiating instructions to a president who vigorously rejected the freeze proposal.

The scope of conflict over nuclear weapons policy did not merely expand to include additional individuals and coalitions within Congress, it exploded to include a broad section of the general population. The congressional debate was an outgrowth of a large citizens' campaign. The "American people" -- at least, large numbers of Americans -- held small and large public demonstrations and events, placed referenda on the ballot, and conducted lobbying and electoral campaigns in order to achieve an end to the arms race between the superpowers.

In contrast, the strategic policy community and much of the broader policy network concerned with nuclear weapons and arms control policy distanced
themselves from the specific proposal. For a brief time, new voices in the debate over nuclear weapons policies seemed to have brushed aside many of the former voices of authority.

O'Neill's prediction that the debate over the freeze resolution will be recorded in history as one of the "great debates" was wrong. Even while the proposal was before the House, The New York Times and The Washington Post editorialized that the debate was "sterile" and that it "pandered to the public." Once the resolution passed, few legislators were interested in pursuing the freeze approach, despite the earlier display of enthusiasm by many. Shortly thereafter, the level of popular interest in a nuclear weapons issues started to wane and the formal organization behind the nuclear freeze proposal began to shrink. The scope of conflict slowly contracted. This chapter examines the political factors which prompted this remarkable episode in Congress's involvement in the history of American nuclear weapons and its consequences for the content and politics of nuclear weapons policy.

Background

The nuclear weapons freeze movement developed in the shadow of the political failure of SALT II (Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty). SALT II was signed by President Carter and Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev in June 1979, after years of laborious negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union. Although the treaty embodied the policies of three American administrations, by

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the time it was completed it had a range of powerful opponents, but lacked enthusiastic supporters or powerful brokers. In January 1980, after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, President Jimmy Carter bowed to political reality and asked the Senate to "delay consideration" of the treaty.

The political fortunes of nuclear arms control in the United States continued to plummet with the Republican presidential nomination, and subsequent national election, of Ronald Reagan. Reagan's campaign rhetoric and his advisers on national security and defense -- and subsequently his administration -- borrowed heavily from an organization called the Committee on the Present Danger (CPD). Begun by a group of conservative former government officials and hawkish intellectuals immediately after President Carter took office, the CPD believed Americans were "living in a prewar and not a postwar period." The CPD organized a multimillion dollar public campaign for a redirection of American foreign policy away from arms control and coexistence with the Soviet Union and toward an arms buildup and confrontation with the Soviet Union. A central argument of the CPD's campaign was that the Soviet Union was acquiring the capability to destroy U.S. land-based forces, opening a "window-of-

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vulnerability" on the United States. Ronald Reagan led the CPD's charge on the campaign trail. Reagan campaigned on a platform which called for "overall military and technological superiority over the Soviet Union." He blamed SALT II, and all preceding arms control agreements, for codifying supposed U.S. inferiority. He pledged he would accelerate the arms race and force the Soviet Union to knuckle under to the U.S.

Once in office, President Reagan filled the administration with virulent critics of the concept of negotiated arms control agreements and enthusiastic promoters of war-fighting strategies, many from the ranks of the CPD. Reagan's first Secretary of State, Alexander Haig, declared, "[w]e consider SALT II to be dead." His Secretary of Defense, Casper Weinberger, declared that U.S. defense

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5 See Chapter III for a discussion of the window-of-vulnerability, pp. 154-158.

6 This was the position formally endorsed in the 1980 Republican National Platform. It was written by Richard Allen, Reagan's transition manager and his first National Security Advisor. Allen was a key conduit of information between the Committee on the Present Danger and the Reagan campaign.


8 The list of CPD members in high positions includes Richard Allen, the first National Security Advisor; Eugene Rostow, Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency; Edward Rowny, chief arms control negotiator; Paul Nitze, head of the INF negotiations, Richard Perle, Assistant Secretary of defense for international security affairs; T.K. Jones, Deputy Under Secretary of defense for research and engineering; Richard Pipes, Soviet specialist on the National Security Council; William Casey, director of the CIA; John Lehman, Secretary of the Navy; Fred Ikle, Under Secretary of defense for policy. For a profile of these men and their extreme positions see Robert Scheer, With Enough Shovels; Reagan, Bush and Nuclear War (Random House, 1982). Scheer also provides a complete list of CPD Directors who have held positions in the Reagan administration. pp. 145-146. (Endnote 1).
programs conformed to SALT I and II restraints as a matter of coincidence rather than design. A striking feature of the administration was its attempt to achieve ideological purity. Anyone associated with the SALT II enterprise, whether in the Foreign Service or the civil service, was removed from positions concerned with arms control.  

Contrary to the impression generated by the media and many analysts, the positions taken by the Reagan administration hawks did not represent a dramatic break in U.S. nuclear policy. A proclaimed willingness to fight a nuclear war, to climb the nuclear ladder of escalation -- and support for the weapons and doctrines that make these threats "credible" -- did not separate the CPD strategists from those that guided recent administrations and Congresses. These officials, however, did represent the far right position on a continuum of establishment opinion that has always endorsed, at a minimum, using the threat to initiate nuclear war to deter the Soviet Union and other potential challengers to U.S. global interests. Two of their convictions did separate them from many of their counterparts in the administrations of the 1970s: their belief that the U.S. extended nuclear-deterrent must encompass a full-blown "damage-limiting capability" in order to be credible, and their hostility to the achievements and tradition of negotiated arms control.

Nor were these individuals new to U.S. military and foreign policy. Eugene Rostow, Edward Rowny, Paul Nitze, Fred Ikle, Richard Perle, and others, were

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either "present at the creation," to use Dean Acheson memorable phrase, or had played a large role in U.S. policy debates over the course of the Cold War.¹⁰ During the 1970s, these men had become identified with the wing of the policy community that was increasingly unhappy with the U.S. policies of detente and arms control. Many were key figures in the network of analysts and officials associated with Sen. Jackson who were edged out of strategic policy community because they did not accept the community's accommodation of arms control objectives. From the perspective of many members of the strategic policy community and those close to the community, when Ronald Reagan was elected president these extremists "took over" the executive branch. "What's going on right now is that the crazier analysts have risen to higher positions than is normally the case," commented Herb York, the chief SALT negotiator for President Carter, and a former director of the Livermore Weapons Laboratory.¹¹

Out of this political climate of rising American belligerency and elite conflict was born the nuclear weapons freeze movement, unquestionably the largest popular movement concerned with nuclear weapons in U.S. history. On only a few other occasions have large numbers of citizens demonstrated concern about the dangers of a nuclear war or organized support for a specific policy

¹⁰ See footnote 9 for their positions in the Reagan administration. See Sanders for an account of their previous positions.

¹¹ Robert Scheer, p. 269.
proposal. Although public opinion polls always revealed public support for superpower negotiations, the freeze movement marked the first time ever that nuclear arms control had an active public constituency.\textsuperscript{13}

The freeze proposal originated within the scattered political organizations which comprise the "American Peace Movement."\textsuperscript{14} In the summer of 1980, several of the most established of these organizations, including the American Friends Service Committee, Fellowship of Reconciliation, and Clergy and Laity Concerned, adopted a policy proposal written by nuclear arms analyst Randall Forsberg a year earlier. Forsberg's "Call to Halt the Arms Race" became the movement's manifesto. The document argued for a comprehensive Soviet and U.S. freeze on the testing, production and deployment of nuclear weapons and of missiles and new aircraft designed

\textsuperscript{12} One other large citizen movement for nuclear arms control in America arose in the late 1950s in response to concerns about adverse health and environmental effects of radioactive fallout from above-ground nuclear weapons testing. Plans in the late 1960s to base anti-ballistic missile systems outside of six major cities stimulated a second, less widespread, demonstration of public concern. Scientists from the affected regions led the movement with a "not in my backyard" theme.


\textsuperscript{14} This collection of organizations is called a "movement" because it endures through good times and bad, sustained by a fairly constant core of organizations and activists. This so-called movement should not be considered a cohesive, organized effort at any given time.
primarily to deliver nuclear weapons.15

A central tenet of the proposal was that further additions and improvements to the nuclear arsenals would confer no military advantage to either side, given the inherent destructiveness of the existing nuclear armaments. The United States and Soviet Union had already amassed enough nuclear forces to destroy human civilization as we know it many times over. Nor was further weapons modernization likely to yield weapons that would reduce the risk of nuclear war. However, on-going modernization would fuel new threat projections and fears of vulnerability on both sides, and perpetuate the arms race which was itself a prime source of instability and tension in the relations between the two superpowers. The SALT process had failed to control, let alone end, the nuclear arms race, Forsberg argued. As the superpowers prepared for yet another, potentially more dangerous, round of arms escalation, the U.S. urgently needed a new approach which would be capable of redressing the defects in the traditional approach to arms control as well as generating popular support. As O'Neill eloquently stated, the freeze proposal intended to "chart a new path," away from the "policies of the past, which have been inconclusive at best..."

Independently of Forsberg's efforts to promote her proposal among major peace organizations, long-time community activist Randall Kehler launched a contemporaneous campaign to place a referendum on the ballots in three state

districts in Western Massachusetts. The referendum instructed their local representative to introduce a resolution in their State Senate calling upon the president to propose to the Soviet Union that both countries adopt an immediate nuclear weapons freeze and transfer the funds saved to civilian use.

Other local "peace" groups around the country initiated ballot referendum drives similar to Kehler's. The national peace organizations soon established an umbrella organization to coordinate the activities of the local groups, plan long-term strategy, and produce written materials and campaign resources for the local groups. In December 1981, the National Freeze Campaign opened a "Clearinghouse" in St. Louis. The campaign's initial strategy was to demonstrate local support for a nuclear weapons freeze. Hundreds of town meetings, city councils and state legislatures endorsed the freeze proposal. The culmination of this strategy came in November 1982, in the drive to place the freeze resolution on a handful of state and city-wide ballots, including California. In what amounted to the nation's first nation wide referendum on a policy initiative, voters approved the freeze resolution in eight states, the District of Columbia, 12 counties, and 17 cities nationwide. With the introduction of congressional legislation in March 1982, the focus of the national campaign shifted increasingly away from local efforts and public outreach to direct lobbying of Congress.

Why did the freeze proposal excite the public and generate such

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widespread support? First, people could easily understand the call for a mutual standstill in the arms competition because it was a simple, eminently reasonable demand. Second, the Reagan administration’s emphasis on increasing American military might to roll back Soviet foreign policy gains of the previous decade, coupled with cavalier references to “fighting and winning” nuclear wars, scared some people into action. Some analysts argue that blunt talk about nuclear war from President Reagan and other senior officials tore off the psychic bandage that covers public fears and anxieties over nuclear weapons.17

However true both of these observations are, they only reveal part of the story. The Reagan administration was guilty of cavalier and enthusiastic talk about acquiring and using nuclear weapons. Yet, previous American administrations had given the American public ample cause to be concerned about the risks of a foreign policy which relied on the threat of initiating use of nuclear weapons and which countenanced fighting a nuclear war. Moreover, according to public survey data, the freeze movement did not arise out of a shift in public opinion, nor did it cause one.18 In fact, survey data shows that over the

17 See Edward C. Luck, "The Reagan Administration’s Nuclear Strategy," Current History 82, no. 484 (May, 1983), pp. 194-195. Luck says that America’s nuclear policies have evolved on three separate levels: weapons procurement and research, targeting and employment doctrines, and the public explanations and rationales the national leadership provides to the public. Reagan’s policies differed greatly from previous administrations on the last level, but not on the first two levels.

course of the cold war, American public opinion was consistent and deeply ambivalent. Large majorities of the public consistently were concerned with the threat posed by the nuclear arms race and supportive of arms control. At the same time, large majorities were mistrustful of the Soviet Union and legalistic solutions to national security problems.

There are large obstacles to the development of large protest movements in America. Observations about the nature of the freeze proposal and the public's reaction to Ronald Reagan's loose talk, do not adequately address how these barriers were overcome. "Social movements require not only some element of public opposition to a particular policy, but, more important, the spread of a belief that dissident mobilization may be legitimate, necessary, and at least potentially effective."\(^{19}\) What caused this belief to take hold is the story of the freeze.

The Freeze Comes to Washington and Washington Comes to the Freeze

On March 10, 1982, Senator Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts, the standard bearer of the liberal Democrats, and the dovish Republican Senator Mark O. Hatfield of Oregon, along with Representatives Edward Markey (D-MA), Jonathan Bingham (D-NY) and Silvio Conte (R-MA), announced to a packed press conference that they had introduced a Joint (House-Senate) Freeze

Resolution. Their resolution instructed President Reagan that: "as an immediate strategic arms control objective, the United States and the Soviet Union should ... pursue a complete halt to the nuclear arms race." 21

The wording of the resolution was a compromise between key activists in the nascent freeze movement and staff from a few interested congressional offices. The activists pushed for an unequivocal pledge of an immediate and complete freeze, while their congressional allies wanted the resolution to provide flexibility in terms of the freeze's implementation and scope. The congressional staff argued that greater ambiguity would help attract broad-based support. Furthermore, it would protect the proposal from charges that a freeze was not feasible or verifiable, and that the Congress was overstepping its role. The parties settled on a compromise formulation which stated that the U.S. and Soviet Union should "decide when and how to achieve a mutual and verifiable freeze on the testing, production, and further deployment of nuclear warheads, missiles, and other delivery systems."

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20 These legislators sponsored the measure as a Joint Resolution rather than a Concurrent Resolution, the more commonly used form. A Concurrent Resolution does not require presidential signature and merely expresses the sense of Congress. A Joint Resolution, while advisory in nature, has more legislative bite since it requires a presidential signature -- or veto -- and does have the force of law.

Congressional staff and some of the arms control specialists among the
freeze leadership wanted the resolution's objectives to include some traditional
arms control goals. The originators of the freeze proposal, on the other hand,
fared that including other objectives would dilute the call for a nuclear freeze.
The compromise language called for a bi-lateral freeze, to be "followed by deep
reductions," and which gave "special attention to destabilizing weapons." Sen.
Kennedy's staff was pleased with the final language because they felt it would
facilitate their search for prominent sponsors. They believed that the language
made the resolution seem like "a political initiative, not an actual policy
prescription."22

The selection of lead sponsors in the House was also a matter for
negotiation. Rep. Ed Markey had spearheaded the effort in the House and was
eager to be publicly identified as its leader. At 36, Markey was a three-term
representative with a reputation as a brash, liberal maverick, unafraid to espouse
unconventional positions. He was already closely identified with a related popular
movement, the campaign against nuclear power.23 Both Rep. Bingham and Sen.
Kennedy's offices persuaded Markey to yield the lead sponsor position to

22 Personal interview, Katherine Magraw with Jan Kalicki, Chief foreign policy

23 Personal interview, Katherine Magraw with Peter Franchot, former Chief of
someone "with a more moderate image," capable of attracting wider support.\(^{24}\)

Markey enlisted Congressman Silvio Conte, a liberal Republican colleague from Western Massachusetts, the birthplace of the freeze. Conte's involvement provided the resolution with an influential co-sponsor and gave the initiative a useful bipartisan sheen, mirroring that provided by Sen. Hatfield in the Senate. Although both Conte and Hatfield's positions on foreign and defense policy placed them on the margins of their party, their committee positions brought them considerable influence: Conte was the ranking minority member on the House Appropriations Committee and Hatfield the Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee. Moreover, Conte was one of the most senior Republican members who managed to retain the respect and affection of his party even though his views had always been to the left of most Republicans.

The press conference to introduce the resolution was more akin to a major campaign rally. In an obvious attempt to draw upon his family's legacy, Sen. Kennedy held the conference at American University, the site of John F. Kennedy's famous 1963 speech calling for a nuclear test ban treaty. Sen. Kennedy's office worked hard to create "good theater" and generate a lot of

\(^{24}\) Jonathan Bingham, although also very liberal, would have been an acceptable lead sponsor since his 18 year career and long-time membership on the House Foreign Affairs Committee had established him as a thoughtful and accommodating legislator. He declined the honor and resigned the following year when redistricting would have forced him to go up against a fellow liberal incumbent Representative.
media coverage of the event.\textsuperscript{25} Days on the telephone and access to the Kennedy family rolodexes produced a list of endorsements which read like a "who's who" from every walk of American life, including George Kennan, Coretta Scott King, Clark Clifford, General James Gavin, Paul Newman, Carl Sagan, Lester Thurow, and Billy Graham. The standing-room only crowd, stage full of stars, and heavy media coverage were a testament to the meticulous preparation by Sen. Kennedy's staff and to Kennedy's status as a prospective presidential candidate. The success of the press conference also seemed to be evidence of an idea "whose time had come."

Following the introduction of the Kennedy-Hatfield resolution, media coverage exploded. \textit{The New York Times} put the story on the front page; the \textit{Washington Post}, on page three; and for the next several weeks newspaper readers were inundated by stories about the movement and its potential political implications. Within two weeks, the freeze movement had made the cover of \textit{Time} magazine. Up until then, \textit{Time} had given scant coverage to the Reagan administration's nuclear policies, despite the fact that spending on nuclear weapons had increased two-fold, all superpowers arms control talks were suspended, and West European populations were in an uproar over the impending deployment of new American nuclear weapons. In March and April 1982, CBS Nightly News ran a total of 35 stories on the freeze, the same total of stories on nuclear policy it had run in the previous thirty-eight months. This pattern

\textsuperscript{25} Interview with Jan Kalicki.
prevailed for national newspapers and magazines. National Coordinator Randy Kehler told a New York Times reporter five days after the March 10th media extravaganza, "I feel like I'm on a comet, but I don't know whether I'm leading it or on its tail."27

Some leaders of the barely two-year old campaign were apprehensive that the high profile, Kennedy-Hatfield initiative was premature given the political immaturity of the campaign.28 The campaign's national office had opened just a few months earlier and only rudimentary intellectual and political ground-work for the movement had been laid. In January 1982, both Reps. Markey and Bingham had floated their own, slightly different freeze resolutions. Neither generated significant interest or support. Nor had the freeze movement's activities received much national coverage up until this point, with the exception of a few light-hearted human-interest stories.29

Along with the sudden media attention, the organizational structure of the

26 David Meyer, A Winter of Discontent, pp.121-128.


28 For a sample of this view see Pam Solo, From Protest to Policy (Ballinger Publishing Co., 1988), p. 74.

29 The three networks, The New York Times and the Washington Post all ran short pieces when 155 towns in Vermont passed a freeze referendum. The stories did not explain or analyze the freeze proposal; rather, they focused on the incongruity of local town meetings trying to decide American nuclear weapons policy in between votes on radios for school buses and garbage collection. However, the activities of pro-freeze organizations were covered more extensively by the local press.
freeze campaign and the number of activists grew rapidly. Existing local "peace organizations" joined the freeze campaign, and new state and city campaign offices opened around the country. The Freeze Campaign National Clearinghouse estimated in May 1982 that the freeze campaign had organizations in 279 congressional districts, staffed by 17,000 to 20,000 unpaid volunteers. At the same time, the issue of the nuclear arms race attained an unprecedented level of public prominence. The media reported daily on new manifestations of public concern, books on the arms race became best sellers, and in June, three-quarters of a million people assembled for a freeze rally in Central Park.

Two weeks after the freeze resolution was introduced, Senators Henry Jackson (D-WA) and John Warner (R-VA) introduced a competing resolution. This resolution also had companion legislation in the House and a growing list of co-sponsors. The Jackson-Warner resolution called on the United States to "propose to the Soviet Union a long-term, mutual, and verifiable nuclear forces freeze." At first glance, it seemed to parallel the Kennedy-Hatfield freeze resolution. But the logic and program behind this proposal were the antitheses of those behind the Kennedy-Hatfield resolution. Jackson-Warner reiterated the

30 "Update" from National Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign, St. Louis, to the local activists. (June 18, 1982).

31 Jonathan Schell, Fate of the Earth (Alfred A. Knopf, 1982) and Edward M. Kennedy and Mark O. Hatfield, Freeze! How You Can Help Prevent Nuclear War (Bantam Books, 1982), were both best-sellers.

view of the Reagan administration, namely, that there were quantitative
imbalance in nuclear forces that disadvantaged the U.S. and that these should be
redressed through new U.S. programs. According to this view, arms control
agreements were in the U.S. interest only if they required larger Soviet reductions
than American ones. Once arms control and modernization had achieved "equal"
levels in these weapons areas, then, and only then, should the U.S. agree to a
nuclear freeze.

Jackson-Warner quickly generated 56 Senate cosponsors -- far-outstripping
Kennedy-Hatfield's 25 co-sponsors -- and won Ronald Reagan's endorsement.33
Richard Perle, a former staff aide for Sen. Jackson, was suspected of having
written the resolution for his former boss. The resolution complemented the
administration's emphasis on purported Soviet superiority and on nuclear
reductions coupled with modernization. Even so, Secretary of State Alexander
Haig and National Security Adviser William Clark reportedly opposed endorsing
anything containing the word "freeze." But President Reagan's political advisers
who kept track of the public opinion polls successfully argued that President
Reagan should sponsor the Jackson-Warner resolution precisely because it did
contain the word "freeze."34

The efforts by Senators Jackson and Warner to capture the freeze concept

33 See Bernard Gwertzman, "Reagan Calls for a Dramatic Slash in Nuclear

did not prevent the freeze from becoming closely identified with the Democratic party. The party's mid-term convention in June, 1982 endorsed the freeze as the party's top arms control priority.\textsuperscript{35} The early presidential contenders and various prominent politicians -- most notably Sen. Kennedy -- unequivocally declared their support for a bilateral nuclear freeze.

Liberal, pro arms control legislators introduced a succession of resolutions, in addition to the freeze resolution, which resurrected long-standing, elusive arms control objectives. The list included resolutions to ratify SALT II, to reduce and eliminate first strike weapons, to ban nuclear weapons testing, and to renounce first use of nuclear weapons. The appearance of all these resolutions indicated that arms control was once again good politics. In addition, conservative legislators who adamantly opposed the freeze introduced a "peace through strength" resolution in 1983 which called for, among other things, "overall military and technological superiority over the Soviet Union." More than 200 representatives cosponsored this anti-freeze resolution, including about a dozen freeze cosponsors. In both chambers, and particularly in the Senate, many members supported the Kennedy-Hatfield freeze resolution in addition to one of the competing resolutions.

In response to the surge of constituent letters, calls, and visits concerning the arms race and the freeze proposal, virtually every member was forced to

develop a position on arms control, the freeze proposal, certain weapons programs, and the administration's policies. Some of the communications with legislators were spontaneous, but most were organized by local "peace" groups and national organizations. Legislators filled pages of the Congressional Record with speeches, held constituent meetings in Washington and in the district, and expended considerable staff resources on nuclear weapons issues.

Response from the Policy Network and the Strategic Policy Community

The impression conveyed by the mass media and the organs of the freeze campaign was that the movement was "sweeping the country." According to often-cited public opinion polls, 70 to 85 percent of the public consistently registered their support for a bilateral nuclear freeze. If a poll of those in the broad nuclear weapons policy network had been conducted, it would have revealed the existence of a gulf between mass and elite views. The responses to the proposal from most recognized nuclear weapons and arms control experts ranged from skeptical to hostile.\textsuperscript{36} Analysts and activists within the large policy network on nuclear weapons who were ardent arms control proponents, such as the leadership of the Washington-based Arms Control Association, were mostly skeptical.\textsuperscript{37} Those in

\textsuperscript{36} There were a few exceptions such as former CIA director William Colby, who actively supported the freeze proposal.

\textsuperscript{37} For example, see Joseph Nye, "A Freeze Could Hurt Arms Control," \textit{Washington Post}, October 24, 1982, p. B5. Joseph Nye, a Harvard University professor and former Deputy Under Secretary of State under the Carter Administration, was an active proponent of SALT II and other arms control efforts whose negative response to the freeze typified the view of many. Nye
the heart of the strategic policy community were hostile.  

The most liberal of the arms controllers did welcome and encourage the movement for the pressure that it would put on the Reagan administration to return to traditional arms control. The rise of the New Right was a serious setback to the fortunes of traditional arms control and the immediate job prospects of those who championed it. Arms controllers viewed the great show of popular concern about the arms race -- and the potential for increased public involvement in this issue -- as means to check the advance of the conservative political activists associated with Mr. Reagan.

Most arms control proponents in the nuclear weapons policy network -- and virtually all of the strategic policy community -- did not regard the freeze as a responsible arms control initiative. They favored SALT II over the freeze proposal. From the editorial boards of the New York Times and Washington Post, to the academics at Harvard, MIT, and Stanford, to the arms control experts of the think-tank Brookings Institution, and the non-profit Arms Control Association; the policy preference was a return to SALT II. Ironically, their praised the freeze for mobilizing public concern over nuclear arms, but rejected it wholesale as impractical and cautioned that it will hurt the cause of real arms control.

defense of the treaty was five years too late. No spirited counter-attack was mounted in the late 1970s when SALT II was fatally attacked by a resurgent political "right." The comprehensiveness and simplicity of the freeze was an explicit rejection of the incremental arms control which they had championed for years. The reasoning behind the freeze proposal implied that their abstract arguments and theories, and detailed technical knowledge -- what distinguished them as experts -- were irrelevant. And the unprecedented popularity of the proposal overshadowed their own contributions to the field.

Members of the strategic policy community were even less sympathetic to the freeze movement. The community generally accepted the notion of overall nuclear "parity" and rejected the claim of the Reagan administration and other conservative analysts that a freeze at existing levels would codify U.S. "inferiority." However, most of the strategic policy community was concerned with the foreign policy implications of particular force imbalances -- specifically the Soviet preponderance in heavy ICBMs and total ICBM warheads, and the lack of U.S. land-based, intermediate range missiles in Europe. Therefore, they opposed the freeze because it would prohibit U.S. deployments which might redress these imbalances.

At a more fundamental level, most of the strategic policy community rejected the premise of the freeze proposal that U.S. security or "strategic stability" would not benefit from new additions of any sort to the nuclear arsenal. As defense consultant and Carter administration official Jan Lodal stated, "In
many cases, new deployments would enhance prospects for peace and stability, not reduce them. Freezing these would reduce our security." Belief in the intrinsic value of "technological progress" has been a central belief of most nuclear weapons experts since the beginning of the nuclear age.

The most effective criticism of the freeze proposal (and its proponents) made by establishment arms control proponents was that the proposal was "simplistic" and "naive." National media echoed this view repeatedly in both editorials and news analyses. "The freeze remains a simplistic, sloganeering response to a complex issue," opined a New York Times editorial. Many influential public figures suggested that the public enthusiasm for the freeze was not only naive, but dangerous. William Hyland, a close associate of Henry Kissinger and then-editor of Foreign Affairs, the journal of the Council on Foreign Relations, said that he was "kind of appalled by the popularization of these subjects."

I don’t like the idea of a lot of people screaming and yelling that these warmongers in Washington need to be brought under control. What happens in these Ground Zero-type operations is you get a lot of emotion stirred up, but there’s no alternative program. Since it’s an issue between us and the Russians, it doesn’t lend itself to constant massaging.


Some long-time arms control proponents professed to be worried that in its pursuit of unrealizable goals, the freeze movement would undermine the constituency for more attainable, if also more modest, arms control objectives. For example, Albert Carnesale, a Harvard dean and former SALT I negotiator commented: "The arms controllers who have been working on all of this complicated stuff are afraid that they might ultimately lose support for arms control rather than gain it. The freeze is nirvana, and when it's not achieved nobody will want to bother with this boring, complicated stuff."\(^{42}\) This argument was undermined by the failure of establishment arms control proponents, with very few exceptions, to try to capitalize on the popularity of the freeze movement to advance the cause of arms control.\(^{43}\) Very few arms control proponents undertook a serious analysis of the arms control merits of the proposal and even fewer helped to define those parts of a freeze which were more readily negotiable.

\(^{42}\) Verbatim account of comment made during a symposium, "The Nuclear Weapons Freeze and Arms Control," held at the American Academy of Arts & Sciences, January 13-15, 1983. (Comment was taken from notes acquired by Katherine Magraw of participant in conference.)

\(^{43}\) A notable exception was a three-day symposium sponsored by Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government in January 1983. Prominent arms control experts from Harvard and MIT had the opportunity to discuss the freeze with the movement's leading theorists, including Randall Forsberg, Jeremy Stone, and Christopher Paine. According to personal interviews with participants and the statements of some of the speakers, the arms control experts generally became more sympathetic to the freeze proposal over the course of the three days. See The Nuclear Weapons Freeze and Arms Control, Proceedings of a Symposium held at the American Academy of Arts & Sciences (Center for Science & International Affairs, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, 1983).
and verifiable. Those analysts closer to, or part of, the strategic policy community devoted what little attention they paid to the freeze proposal to describing how difficult -- or impossible -- it would be to negotiate the terms of a bilateral nuclear freeze and adequate verification provisions.

Response from the Reagan Administration

Leaders of the freeze movement and their congressional allies feared that President Reagan, "the Great Communicator," would defuse the popular groundswell by communicating that he appreciated and shared American's concern about nuclear war. Their fears were not initially realized. In fact, the administration, which had virtually ignored the freeze campaign until Congress became involved, further fueled the movement with its uncompromising opposition and Ronald Reagan's alarmist rhetoric. The president told a televised

44 There were some exceptions such as former CIA director William Colby and nuclear weapons scientist Richard Garwin. Possibly the most thorough investigation of the arms control merits of the freeze were hearings sponsored by the Federation of American Scientists, a Washington arms control organization. See Seeds of Promise: The First Real Hearings on the Nuclear Freeze Organized by the Federation of American Scientists, September 21, and 22, 1982. (Brickhouse Publishing Company, 1983).

45 For example, the Harvard Study Group wrote: "Unless the arms control budgets of the superpowers were raised a hundredfold or more and many teams negotiated simultaneously and were convinced that both nations wanted this kind of agreement, one cannot imagine such agreements being negotiated in a few years." The Harvard Study Group: A. Carnesale, P. Doty, S. Hoffmann, S. Huntington, J. Nye, and S. Sagan, Living With Nuclear Weapons (Harvard University Press, 1983), p. 208.

46 Douglas C. Waller, Congress and the Nuclear Freeze, (University of Massachusetts Press, 1987), p. 64.
press conference two weeks after the introduction of the Kennedy-Hatfield resolution that a freeze would be disadvantageous because it would freeze the U.S. into a position of inferiority. His declaration that "the truth of the matter is that on balance the Soviet Union does have a definite margin of superiority," was the bleakest assessment any top official had ever offered on the balance of nuclear armaments. This assessment had few supporters among government officials. The Secretary of Defense, in fact, in his annual report issued only a few months earlier, had contradicted this assertion.

As the freeze movement gained visibility, many legislators levied more criticism against the administration's defense policies. Fearing congressional opposition to its Pentagon budget requests and nuclear weapons build-up, the administration countered the freeze by trying to convey its commitment to achieve reductions in overall numbers of nuclear weapons, as opposed to a freeze. In May 1982, the White House announced that it was ready to resume strategic arms


48 The fiscal year 1982 annual report reads as follows: "The United States and Soviet Union are roughly equal in strategic nuclear power." Casper Weinberger, Department of Defense Annual Report, FY82, (Government Printing Office, 1981), p. 43. Most military analysts agreed that, although each side had strengths and weaknesses, neither had an overall position of superiority.

49 Robert McFarlane interviewed by WGBH TV, Boston, for "War and Peace in the Nuclear Age" series. Transcript of interview conducted by Chris Koch, Tape 11060, p. 7. 1987. Reporter James Reston wrote much the same thing shortly after Kennedy-Hatfield was introduced: "The Republican leaders in Congress are telling the Administration that they cannot pass the Pentagon budget during the present economic crisis against the rising opposition to Mr. Reagan's military budget, with its emphasis on new nuclear weapons." "Reagan's Forgotten Issue," The New York Times, March 23, 1982.
talks with the Soviet Union to achieve large arms reductions, on the order of 50 percent in ballistic missile warheads. Speaking at his alma mater, Eureka College, President Reagan presented outlined what would become the U.S. Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) proposal. The administration also launched a public relations campaign to bolster the START proposal and to recast President Reagan's image as a sincere, yet tough, arms control negotiator. According to Robert McFarlane, who as Deputy to the National Security Advisor, oversaw the public relations operation, by the end of 1982 senior-level officials had put in about six hundred appearances at editorial boards, radio talk shows, and civic clubs, in fourteen designated major media markets.\(^{50}\)

However, neither the announcement of an arms control proposal nor the public relations campaign succeeded in reasserting the authority of the White House. In fact, the announcement was following by a rising interest in ratification of the SALT II Treaty by influential public figures and lawmakers. Sen. Nunn, the most influential Democrat on the Armed Services Committee commented that he thought President Reagan should work off of the SALT Treaty and propose "any amendments he thinks necessary."\(^{51}\) A few days later, former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger called for ratification of SALT in a speech in the


\(^{51}\) Quoted by Strobe Talbott, *Endgame*, p. 273-274.
Neither Nunn nor Kissinger supported the treaty when Senate ratification was considered in the late 1970s.

The START proposal was particularly vulnerable to criticism, because intense bureaucratic infighting and ideological conflicts had produced a jumble of inconsistent parts and contradictory strategic rationales which failed to satisfy either the "hardliners" or the more traditional arms controllers concerned with strategic stability.\(^5\) As elaborated over the course of the summer, START called for a reduction in ballistic missile warheads to 5,000 from around 7,500 warheads, deployed on a maximum of 850 ICBMs and SLBMs combined. Within the ceiling of 5,000, no more than 2,500 warheads could be based on ICBM's. This provision aimed at severely cutting the Soviet force of ICBMs while not inhibiting the U.S. plans to increase its land-based ICBM force. The proposed areas of reduction did not include cruise missiles and bombers -- areas of decisive U.S. advantage.

The proposed low limit on launchers provoked opposition from nuclear weapons experts across the political spectrum. Because both sides' forces were heavily MIRVed, a low limit on missile launchers would increase the ratio of


\(^5\) See Strobe Talbott, Deadly Gambits: The Reagan Administration and the Stalemate in Nuclear Arms Control, (Alfred A. Knopf, 1984) for a detailed account of the internecine battles that accompanied the Administration's efforts to develop an arms control proposal. Talbott shows that the political process of accommodating opposing viewpoints produced an incoherent proposal. Chapters 12, 13, 14.
warheads to launchers. According to the logic of conventional nuclear strategy, a high ratio would increase the "temptation" to either side to launch a preemptive strike in times of heightened tension, thereby decreasing strategic stability.

Herbert Scoville, the president of the Arms Control Association, forcefully made this argument.54 Other more influential experts, including former Secretary of Defense Harold Brown and even Paul Nitze, the administration's own advisor, agreed with Scoville.55 From the other side of the political spectrum, Colin Gray, a controversial proponent of war-fighting strategies publicly argued the same point: the START's proposed low launcher limit would open the window-of-vulnerability even wider.

Many of Reagan's conservative allies were disappointed that the proposal relegated measures to equalize throwweight capacity -- an area of Soviet advantage -- to a second phase.56 Lastly, the START proposal made very disproportionate demands on the two superpowers and therefore was widely


55 See Talbott, Endgame, p. 272. The administration dropped the launcher limit in 1984 at the urging of influential public figures and lawmakers.

56 Throwweight is the lifting power of missiles. For elaboration of these criticisms of the START proposal, see U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Nuclear Arms Reduction Proposals, 97th Cong., 2nd sess., April 29-May 13, 1982; and U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Hearings and Markup of the Nuclear Arms Control Proposals, 97th Cong., 2nd sess, April 2-June 23, 1982.
considered unnegotiable.\textsuperscript{57}

In this political environment, members of Congress from across the political spectrum also were critical of the START proposal. Even those who knew little about nuclear weapons issues, or who simply had reservations about the nuclear weapons freeze proposal, seized the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge of and concern about the arms race. Members of the strategic policy community took the opportunity to appear judicious and knowledgeable by criticizing both the president's proposal and the freeze proposal. In contrast to the emotional, simple arguments of freeze supporters, the analysis provided by these strategists was both theoretical and factual.

President Reagan's efforts to quell criticism were further undermined by the seeming intransigence of his Secretary of Defense Casper Weinberger and the on-going controversy over the MX missile. Weinberger insisted to Congress that the Pentagon needed every penny of the $258 billion it had requested for fiscal year 1983 -- a 20 percent increase over the previous fiscal year. This request ran into a buzzsaw of bipartisan congressional criticism, even though Congress ultimately approved the budget with only minor edge trimming. The MX missile was not similarly spared. In December 1982, Congress refused procurement funds for the MX missile, the first time Congress had rejected a major nuclear weapons

\textsuperscript{57} Then Secretary of State Alexander Haig conceded in his memoirs, published a little over a little later, that the Reagan position required "such drastic reductions in the Soviet inventory as to suggest that they were unnegotiable." Quoted by \textit{The Washington Post}, May 16, 1984.
system desired by a president and the Department of Defense. Many people credited the freeze movement for the defeat of the MX, and this belief in the political power of the movement bolstered the freeze effort in Congress. For example, McFarlane later concluded that the freeze's "immediate impact on the administration's program was to defeat the centerpiece of the strategic modernization, the MX."  

The Great Congressional Freeze Debates  

The political strategy of the pro-freeze lobby organizations was to force votes -- even if they were expected to fail. Freeze activists needed a "yes" or "no" vote from all legislators in order to use support for the freeze as the key criteria for endorsement of candidates in the 1982 elections. Although this strategy involved both chambers, the freeze movement focused its lobbying efforts on the House. Not only are House offices more accessible than Senate ones, but the House offered more hospitable territory. Democrats outnumbered Republicans, 269-166, in the House, whereas the Republicans gained control of the Senate after winning a slim majority in the 1980 elections. Moreover, the Senate Democrat leadership and relevant committee chairmen were appreciably more conservative on military policy than their House counterparts.

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58 Congress did not actually terminate the missile program, but it did deny the Pentagon funds to procure the initial batch of missiles, and it "fenced off" approved funds for further development of the program until Congress approved a new basing mode for the missile. See Chapter Two for a complete history.  

59 McFarlane WGBH interview, op cit. Transcript, p. 6.
Despite the rhetorical support for the freeze resolution from a majority of House Democrats, including the leadership, the road to its final passage was long and tortuous. In order to win, and sustain, support from the most influential Democrats, the freeze leadership had to engage in repeated bargaining. Throughout this bargaining process, they tried to keep the resolution as "clean" as possible. A "clean" resolution was one without caveats, which could dilute the original freeze concept or additional provisions, which could bury the proposal among other arms control measures.

The first hurdle for the freeze leadership -- Reps. Markey, Bingham, Downey, AuCoin -- was to win the endorsement of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. The chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee was Clement Zablocki from Milwaukee, a moderate to conservative on defense policy. Zablocki introduced his own arms control resolution which endorsed the START proposal because it indicated U.S. willingness to engage in superpower arms control negotiations. The balance of power on the committee was held by several liberal-to-centrist Democrats, including Stephen Solarz (NY), Dante Fascell (FL) and Lee Hamilton (IN). These three legislators had reputations for being knowledgeable and influential on foreign policy and all three advocated a resolution endorsing the unratified SALT II treaty. On defense and arms control policy, they stayed just left of the centrist line of the strategic policy community.

To win the support of the group of liberal Democrats discussed above, committee member Jonathan Bingham had cobbled together another resolution.
It stated that an immediate objective of President Reagan's strategic arms reductions talks (START) should be a "mutual and verifiable" nuclear weapons freeze, and also included a call for the prompt "approval" of the SALT II treaty.\textsuperscript{60} When it became clear that this formulation would easily carry in committee, Zablocki negotiated some last minute cosmetic changes and gave the measure his approval. Although not particularly sympathetic to the freeze proposal or its grassroots constituency, Zablocki was a pragmatic politician and a party loyalist who sought to fairly represent his Committee members and party.\textsuperscript{61} As Chairman of the relevant House committee, he recognized that this was a time to follow the wisdom in the old saying: "if you can't beat 'em, join 'em."\textsuperscript{62} The resolution took Zablocki's name as lead sponsor and he became the floor manager of the bill in 1982 and again in 1983.

The next influential member to have his demands met was Les Aspin, a liberal Democrat from Wisconsin who came to Congress at the high point of

\textsuperscript{60} Ironically, the resolution's endorsement of SALT II -- a far less radical arms control approach than the freeze proposal -- cost it support from conservative Democrats and moderate Republicans because conservatives found it politically easy to attack SALT II. Consequently, the SALT II clause was subsequently weakened by Zablocki and Bingham to read that the U.S. must continue adhering to the agreement as long as the Soviets reciprocated -- what President Reagan had already pledged to do.

\textsuperscript{61} These are the traditional characteristics of old-time, ethnic, big-city, machine Democrats. The leaders of the freeze resolution represented a new breed of ideological, independent Democrat.

national opposition to the Vietnam War. Having served as a Pentagon economist for Robert McNamara and a legislative aide to Sen. William Proxmire, Aspin won a seat on the Armed Services Committee and he quickly set out to establish himself as a Democrat who was both knowledgeable and influential on military policy. Aspin was a dedicated promoter of arms control. He also favored traditional arms control, like SALT II, which sought overall quantitative ceilings and restraints on selective weapons development. Like many prominent arms control supporters, Aspin was critical of the sweeping nature of the freeze proposal and its exclusion of traditional arms control. In addition, Aspin was often critical of Pentagon management. Despite his left-of-center views and his sometimes confrontational style in his relations with the Department of Defense, Aspin was allied with the strategic policy community. He shared the community's intellectual framework for discussing defense policy, he participated in the community's activities, and he had developed credibility and ties from his work in the Pentagon. Aspin's role in nuclear weapons policy making grew steadily over the course of the decade, evolving from a pivotal role in the House freeze debate to a dominant Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee by the end of the decade.

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63 Further elaboration of Aspin's political views and profile is provided in Chapter Two, in a discussion of the pivotal role he played in the debate over the MX.


65 Aspin is profiled in Chapter Two on the MX missile debate.
Aspin enlisted three other key House Democrats to press collectively for changes to the Committee-passed resolution in exchange for their support. They were majority whip Thomas Foley, a moderate from Washington and number three man in the House leadership; and two young, moderate, up-and-coming politicians, Richard Gephardt of Missouri and Albert Gore of Tennessee. Foley and Gephardt had not played significant roles in previous congressional deliberations on nuclear weapons issues. They were concerned with giving themselves political protection from the conservative's charge that a bi-lateral nuclear freeze would "lock in" dangerous asymmetries in the U.S.-Soviet nuclear balance. For their support, they demanded the first "resolve clause" be revised to read that freeze negotiators would produce a treaty resulting in U.S.-Soviet "parity." The concept of parity gained political acceptability during the SALT decade as a way of bridging the disagreement between those who argued that the U.S. must redress areas of Soviet advantage and those who felt that the two side's forces were equal in their military capabilities.

In contrast to Foley and Gephardt's party-based influence, Albert Gore's influence stemmed from his efforts to master the intricacies of nuclear weapons policy and play an independent role. Like Les Aspin, Gore's influence continued to grow. In 1982, Gore presented his own arms control proposal for retiring MIRVed ICBMs, which he argued were the most "destabilizing" and dangerous

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66 Foley has since become the House Speaker; Gephardt the Majority Leader and a presidential aspirant; and Gore a Senator and presidential aspirant.

67 Gore is also profiled in Chapter Two on the MX.
weapons systems.\textsuperscript{68} The price of Gore's support for the freeze resolution was inclusion of a clause directing a freeze to give priority to destabilizing weapons.

Aspin's contribution to this proposed amendment package was language endorsing reductions in nuclear weapons. He won agreement from the resolution's sponsors to include the following clause: "Consistent with pursuing an immediate freeze, nothing in this resolution shall be construed to require, in the START negotiations, any delay in the exploitation of opportunities for reductions."

Markey, Bingham, and the grassroots freeze movement protested that the proposed additions obscured the meaning of the freeze, but they accepted them because they felt they needed Aspin and his allies.\textsuperscript{69} However, Sen. Kennedy and his staff opposed some of Markey and Bingham's "concessions" and successfully negotiated further modifications. Aspin's language was changed to delete any reference to reductions and START. Instead, the resolution stated that it "did not prevent the United States from taking advantage of concurrent and complementary arms control proposals." And the phrase which read: "consistent with the maintenance of overall parity" was replaced with the phrase: "consistent with the maintenance of essential equivalence" -- a formula which deemphasized the importance of specific asymmetries between the two nuclear forces, implicit in


\textsuperscript{69} See Waller for detailed account of this bargaining process, pp. 128-135.
the term "parity."

Despite these improvements, the changes in the resolution still clouded the substantive meaning of the legislation. "Paying special attention to destabilizing" weapons conflicted with one of the freeze's underlying principle's, namely, that such distinctions were unhelpful and that all weapons development should be halted. The goal of "achieving essential equivalence" still ceded intellectual ground to those concerned by the details of the strategic balance, but the freeze proposal's logic argued that equality or "essential equivalence" was not relevant given such enormous potential destructive capability on both sides. Lastly, the resolution's arms control priorities were confusing: as an opponent of the resolution asked during floor debate: "How do you call for a freeze first, but allow for concurrent arms control negotiations?" 70

Rep. Zablocki offered the freeze resolution on the House floor on August 5, 1982. After a day-long debate, a recorded vote was taken on a substitute amendment offered by the ranking minority member of the Committee, Rep. William Broomfield. Broomfield's substitute -- which mirrored the Jackson-Warner resolution in the Senate -- was approved by a narrow margin of 204-202. Although the freeze resolution did not pass, the freeze leadership won a large victory. The narrow defeat demonstrated the success of this young initiative and its divisive nature, which is often a measure of importance. Moreover, the closeness of the vote energized the grassroots lobbying movement whose rallying

cry became: "change one vote and the freeze wins."\textsuperscript{71}

The Freeze Resolution: Round II

Chairman Clement Zablocki reintroduced the freeze resolution at the start of the new session in January 1983. The general expectation was that the resolution would speed through committee to a sure victory on the House floor. The November elections brought 26 new Democratic members into the House, at least 20 of whom had avowed their support for the bilateral freeze proposal, and the popular movement for a nuclear freeze continued to grow.\textsuperscript{72} However, the resolution once again became entangled in negotiations among key pro-arms control Democrats. Each additional modification had the effect of reaffirming the symbolic meaning and obscuring the novelty of the freeze concept as a new approach to nuclear arms control.\textsuperscript{73}

Two hundred House members were co-sponsors of the nuclear freeze resolution which the House began debating on March 16, 1983. Many additional representatives had indicated their intention to vote for the resolution. Thus, its passage was all but assured. The leaders of National Freeze Campaign and its

\textsuperscript{71} A change of one vote would have resulted in a tie-vote, defeating the substitute amendment.

\textsuperscript{72} Council for a Livable World, "Election Wrap-up," December 15, 1982. This publication was distributed on Capitol Hill.

\textsuperscript{73} For example, Rep. Gore demanded an additional clause for his continued support, which emphasized that the freeze should give special attention to destabilizing weapons, "especially those which give either nation capabilities which confer upon it even the hypothetical advantages of a first strike."
chief congressional allies planned victory press conferences for the end of the day. However, their plans were upset by a few Republican members from the far right-wing of their party who decided to try to weaken the resolution, rather than to concede defeat from the outset. These opponents of the freeze proposed offered many amendments, some of which sought to controvert the resolution's meaning directly, and some of which sought to undermine it. An example of the latter was an amendment offered by Mark Siljander, a young, first-term representative from Michigan. Siljander's amendment replaced the word "freeze" whenever it appeared, with the phrase "freeze and/or reductions." By placing "reductions" on a par with a "freeze," the amendment endorsed the Reagan administration's objective of decreasing overall numbers of nuclear weapons, especially in categories of Soviet advantage, while deploying new advanced weapons.\(^{74}\) An amendment offered by Democrat Sam Stratton of New York was a more overt effort to endorse President Reagan's planned buildup of nuclear forces and controvert the freeze proposal. Stratton's amendment read that:

Nothing in this resolution shall be construed to prevent such modernization and deployment of United States weapons as may be required to maintain the credibility of the United States nuclear deterrent.\(^{75}\)

The resolution's floor manager, Chairman Zablocki, and the other leaders of the resolution were surprised by the counter-offensive. They managed to rally the votes to defeat all the amendments offered by freeze opponents, but a few


narrow victories revealed the shallowness of support for the freeze. Furthermore, the debate revealed a lack of common understanding of the resolution among the freeze leaders. Rep. Zablocki, in particular, embarrassed himself by giving contradictory and confused answers to the question of what weapons "modernization" would be allowed and what forbidden under a freeze.

Another problem emerged as Rep. Zablocki tried to bring the debate to an end in order to proceed to a final vote on the freeze that evening, before Congress recessed for St. Patrick's Day celebrations the following day. The near-success of the first "anti-freeze" amendments inspired a small group of freeze opponents to pursue their offensive advantage. In the space of time it took to debate and vote on one amendment, three new ones were written and recorded by the House clerk. The resolution was to be debated under an "open rule," meaning that there would not be limits on time for debate or the number of amendments which could be offered.\footnote{The "rule" for a bill allots time for debate on bills and establishes ground rules for the debate. The House Rules Committee sets the rule before a bill is considered by the full House.} Under this rule, if there are amendments pending, then a time for a final vote on the resolution can not be set without the unanimous consent of the House.

After three hours of general debate and eight hours of debate on four amendments, Zablocki sought unanimous consent to limit debate on all other amendments. Speaker O'Neill and Zablocki obtained agreement to end the debate from their counterparts, Minority Leader Robert Michel and Broomfield.
Usually the approval of both parties' leadership would be sufficient to guarantee that Zablocki's motion would be uncontested. However, that night marked the beginning of an insurrection by a small band of very conservative Republicans against the majority Democrats and their own leadership. A two-term Republican representative from New Jersey, Jim Courter, unexpectedly and against the wishes of his party leadership, objected to Zablocki's request. Further efforts to reach agreement on an end to debate were similarly blocked. After two more hours of unproductive discussion, the House agreed to adjourn and resume consideration of the freeze resolution another day.

The House did not return to the freeze resolution until mid-April. Over a month had elapsed since the first day of debate and this time the freeze leadership was ready with precise definitions of a freeze and rebuttals to the opposition's arguments. The opposition was also ready, however, with a strategy of delaying a final vote through what amounted to a filibuster by amendment. Thanks to this strategy, the debate on the resolution consumed another three full days, spaced out over a month and a half.

The opposition -- led by Newt Gingrich (GA), Jack Kemp (NY), Henry Hyde (IL), Trent Lott (MS), and Bob Walker (PA) -- hoped to hit upon a successful "gutting" amendment which would allow them to claim a victory when the freeze passed. At best, they hoped to turn the debate into an endurance contest, providing them with a chance at victory if the weary sponsors could be compelled to withdraw their resolution. Short of that outcome, they hoped to put
the resolution's sponsors on the defensive, exposing differences of opinions and confusion among them, and forcing them to accept diluting amendments.

The freeze leadership successfully defeated most of the opponent's amendments, not by directly opposing them, but by amending them. According to the rules of parliamentary debate, the amendment to the amendment -- the "pro-freeze" position -- was voted on first. Given the tactical advantage of the first vote, the freeze leadership position carried every time save one on the last day of debate. Opposition amendments which did not change the meaning of the resolution -- such as a Hyde amendment calling on freeze negotiators to "make every effort" to ensure that the Soviet Union complied with past agreements -- were accepted even though they cluttered the resolution with unnecessary words.

To prepare for the tough floor debate, the freeze leadership group of Markey, Downey, Aspin, Zablocki, AuCoin and their staff, started meeting regularly along with representatives from the arms control and freeze organizations. Just prior to debate, they met as often as once a day. They enlisted the help of other liberal members, such as Howard Wolpe (D-MI), Martin Sabo (D-MN), and Marty Russo (D-IL), who were staunch freeze supporters but had not taken active roles in nuclear weapons debates in the past. Representatives elected just that past November with help from the freeze constituency, such as Bob Mrazek (D-NY) and Tim Penny (D-MN), were also included, giving them a welcome opportunity to join a high-powered coalition

77 Interview with Ivo Spalatin.
After the freeze debate had dragged on for over a month, in early May 1983, Rep. Zablocki and Speaker O'Neill took the unprecedented step of asking the Rules Committee to change the rule. The committee complied and issued a new rule limiting the remaining time for consideration of amendments to the resolution. The House accepted the new rule by majority vote on May 4, thereby shutting down the filibuster. After an additional thirteen hours of debate, the House proceeded to overwhelmingly approve the measure -- as everyone knew it would -- by a vote of 278-149. Despite the wide margin of victory, the political edge of the resolution had been dulled by the extraneous amendments and tedious debate. The resolution was now 1251 words, tremendously changed from the original succinct resolution of 202 words.

The Senate. The story was different in the Republican-controlled Senate. It was evident to everyone involved that the Senate sponsors and the Freeze Campaign lobbyists could not muster the votes to pass the resolution. Consequently, conservative senators had no opportunity or need to mount a concerted attack on the freeze and politically centrist senators or particularly influential senators were not compelled to enter into negotiations with the resolution's sponsors.

However, given that arms control had moved to the forefront of the congressional agenda, various senators and committees did devote their attention to arms control, and indirectly to the freeze. The Senate Foreign Relations
Committee considered 12 different legislative arms control proposals during 1982, including a freeze proposal. This once powerful committee had been rendered ineffectual in the 1980s by a polarized membership and weak leadership by the new Republican Chairman Charles Percy. After much irresolute action, the committee approved by a wide margin a vague resolution composed of endorsements of several disparate arms control initiatives, including the president's START proposal, the SALT I and II Treaties. The resolution omitted any reference, positive or negative, to a nuclear freeze.\(^78\)

The committee resolution was never referred to a floor vote. The administration and conservative senators objected strongly to its implicit endorsement of SALT II and Chairman Percy and the Republican leadership were not eager for votes on either the committee resolution or the freeze resolution. Ultimately, Sen. Kennedy forced a vote on the resolution in October 1983.\(^79\)

He brought the resolution before the Senate with little warning or preparation. After a relatively brief debate the resolution was defeated by a vote of 55-40. The following year, the Foreign Relations Committee again kept freeze related resolutions off the Senate schedule. Sen. Kennedy again forced a floor vote in order to have members on record shortly before the 1984 elections and once


\(^{79}\) Kennedy offered the resolution as an amendment to a bill requiring immediate Senate action -- a bill to raise the debt ceiling -- and thereby assured Senate consideration of the freeze. Senate rules, unlike House rules, allow any legislator to offer non-germane amendments to most bills.
again the debate was cursory. The resolution picked up two votes from the previous year.

In early 1983, two senators on the Armed Services Committee -- William Cohen, a moderate Republican from Maine, and Sam Nunn, a conservative Democrat from Georgia -- introduced a third resolution. The new resolution called for a "nuclear build-down" and was intended to be a compromise position. The proposal was for a "mutual guaranteed build-down of nuclear forces" by the elimination of "two nuclear warheads for each newly deployed nuclear warhead." In other words, the U.S. and the Soviet Union would have to pay for deploying new additional nuclear warheads by withdrawing existing ones.

Forty-four senators co-sponsored the Cohen-Nunn resolution, including Foreign Relations Chairman Charles Percy. It was particularly appealing to members who were wary of the freeze but critical of the administration's intransigence in arms control negotiations in Geneva. In the House, the build-down proposal was tagged as simply a means to defeat the freeze resolution. Efforts to amend the House freeze resolution with the build-down proposal were narrowly defeated. In the Senate, on the other hand, The proposal offered the Senate leadership and many moderate senators a safe haven during the freeze debate. It was never voted on or debated on the floor. The build-down proposal was subsequently invoked during the debate over modernization of land-based forces and the administration's position in the START talks.
The Precipitous Decline of the Freeze Movement in Congress

Once the House of Representatives concluded its historic debate and approved the freeze resolution, the concept of a nuclear freeze ceased to be considered through legislation or congressional debate. This was so despite the fact that all arms control negotiations with the Soviet Union had come to a halt and the popular freeze movement had not subsided.

Massachusetts legislators working with the freeze movement did introduce several new pieces of "freeze" legislation during the next two years, but none generated much interest. In the Senate, Edward Kennedy continued in his role as primary sponsor, and in the House, Ed Markey was joined by a fellow Democratic Massachusetts congressman, Nicholas Mavroules, who had a very active freeze constituency in his district. Mavroules was also a members of the Armed Services Committee. By the beginning of 1984, the National Freeze Campaign felt strongly that they needed legislation that went beyond a symbolic "sense of the Congress" resolution. The Campaign approached its closest friends in Congress and entreated them to offer legislation which sought funding restrictions for U.S. weapons activities but preserved the bilateral nature of the freeze proposal.

The legislation of this type which fared the best in 1984 was called the "Arms Race Moratorium Act." It sought to withhold funds from the fiscal year 1985 military budget for the most readily monitored aspects of the arms race -- flight testing and deployment of ballistic missiles, explosive testing of nuclear warheads, and operational testing of anti-satellite weapons in space -- provided
that the Soviet Union also refrained from these activities. Legislation which made funding explicitly contingent on Soviet actions was unorthodox and creative. In essence, the measure sought to go above the head of the president, to implement a joint moratorium with the Soviet Union on central nuclear weapons activities. Obtaining the approval of the House and Senate parliamentarians for this unorthodox legislation was a victory for the Freeze Campaign. Yet, the House leadership politely, but firmly, shunned the bill. Its congressional sponsors -- who privately belittled the bill -- and lobbyists from the Freeze Campaign -- were unable to enlist more than 100 House co-sponsors.\footnote{There were 80 to 100 legislators who always supported any arms control measure and always voted against major nuclear weapons systems. There were about the same number on the opposite side of the issue. To have any strength, arms control legislation must attract significant support from the 300 or so legislators in the middle area.} In the Senate, only four Democrats and one Republican joined Kennedy in sponsoring the bill.\footnote{The four included Minnesota Republican Senator Durenberger. Durenberger had opposed the far less radical freeze resolution, but cynically endorsed onto this bill in order to counter the opposition of a well-organized home-state freeze organization during a tough reelection campaign.} The bill never came to a vote in either the House or Senate. Despite the measure's lack of success, its unusual approach provided a model for more successful arms control legislation later in the decade. The freeze's progress was halted by two congressional initiatives: the "build-down" proposal and an initiative to proceed with the MX missile. Just 20 days after passage of the freeze resolution in May 1983, the House voted to release the funds for the MX missile that it had restricted the previous December. Because one objective of the freeze proposal
was to halt the deployment of missiles like the MX, the back-to-back votes revealed that the pro-freeze sentiment in the House was shallow. Just as congressional rejection of the MX missile a year earlier had reinforced the potential political power of the freeze, congressional approval of the missile in the spring of 1983 gravely undercut the freeze's message and momentum. Not only were many freeze supporters now voting for the MX missile, but some of the legislators who had shepherded the freeze resolution to victory -- notably Reps. Les Aspin, Al Gore, and Norm Dicks -- were also responsible for producing the MX victory. Aspin, Gore and Dicks had teamed up with the newly created President's Commission on Strategic Forces (or Scowcroft Commission), to win congressional support for the MX missile and end the fight over arms control.82

The second legislative initiative which deflected the freeze proposal's progress was the "build-down" proposal. The resolution was consciously crafted, Sen. Cohen wrote in an article in the Washington Post, "to lay the seeds for a broad consensus" between freeze proponents and advocates of modernization.83 In a detailed "Dear Colleague" letter, Senators Cohen and Nunn argued that "Build-down" would meet the concerns of advocates of both the nuclear freeze and modernization. Their proposal would be "stabilizing," leading to a reduction

82 The Scowcroft Commission was composed of former government officials and well-known strategic experts from the defense policy community. Its mission was to devise a proposal for the MX which could win majority support in Congress. A complete account of the Commission's work is provided in Chapter Two.

in the number of weapons deployed and "a net increase in the survivability and reliability of deployed systems."  

The nuclear build-down proposal was the brainchild of Alton Frye, the Washington director of the Council on Foreign Relations and a former Senate staff member in the early 1970s. Frye believes that the debate over nuclear weapons policy is inaccurately characterized as a debate between liberal and conservatives, Democrats and Republicans. The important distinction is between "destructive" people -- who insist on "extreme" positions such as "no modernization at all" or "no arms control or restraint" -- and "constructive" people who accept a little of both in the name of "making the system work." Frye wrote the build-down with the intention of providing the "constructive" participants in the debate with their own proposal. Frye's understanding of the dynamics of the nuclear weapons debate is characteristic of the views of members of the strategic policy community. Not surprisingly, Frye's idea of "constructive" people also sounds like Michael Krepon's operationally-minded strategists.

The proposal attracted enthusiastic support from members of the strategic policy community. It is ironic that those who criticized the freeze proposal as "simplistic" found a solution in the build-down proposal. The idea of trading in

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84 "Dear Colleague" letter from Senators Cohen and Nunn, February 8, 1983.


86 See pp. 38-39, Chapter One, for a discussion of Krepon's "operationalists" and "ideologues."
two old weapons for one new one in the name of "stability" was so simplistic that it did not make sense. The proposal did not take into account that the new warheads might be in weapons that were more "destabilizing" than the ones that were being removed. In an attempt to address this problem, the proposal was subsequently elaborated to provide for varying deployment to withdrawal ratios, depending upon the type of weapon to be deployed. The proposal did not suggest how warheads on MIRVed missiles would be counted or verified, an even tougher task than verifying many aspects of a comprehensive freeze.

Despite conceptual flaws, the concept made good political sense. It would allow the U.S. to add virtually unlimited numbers of new, more advanced, weapons to the arsenal, while also to claim progress in controlling the arms race through compensatory reductions. This general formula was not too different from the arms control compromise of the 1970s, only it substituted reductions in weapons for limits on numbers of weapons. As discussed in the following chapter on the MX missile, the strategic policy community eventually won grudging support for the concept from Ronald Reagan and other administration officials.

In the midst of the debate over the MX missile, the Reagan White House developed its own effective response to the freeze movement. On March 23, 1983, President Reagan announced on national TV that the U.S. would begin a large research program to develop a defensive shield to protect the country from
a Soviet nuclear attack.\textsuperscript{87} Reagan found common ground with the burgeoning nuclear weapons freeze movement by questioning the morality of the U.S. policy of planning massive nuclear retaliation against aggressors in order to deter attacks against the U.S. His stated goal of making "nuclear weapons impotent and obsolete" even went a step further than the freeze proposal. As intended by Reagan strategists, the initiative to develop comprehensive ballistic missile defenses confused the nuclear weapons freeze movement and deflected the public's anxiety that the government was not responsive to its concerns.

Although subsequent freeze legislation did not make progress, a sizable majority of legislators continued to avow their support for the freeze proposal for overt political reasons. The 1984 elections were approaching and the freeze movement was capable of drawing volunteers and money for pro-freeze candidates in certain areas of the country. In particular, the candidates for the Democratic presidential nominee sought the support of the freeze constituency. Senator Hart and former Vice President Mondale fought over the distinction of being the first to endorse the freeze. Senator Alan Cranston's strategy to win the Democratic nomination was based on an all-out bid to become "the freeze candidate."\textsuperscript{88}

\textsuperscript{87} Reagan initiative become known as the Strategic Defense Initiative. See Chapter V for further discussion.

\textsuperscript{88} The freeze campaign endorsed Mondale based on the judgement that he had the best chance to win the nomination and beat Reagan. Mondale's campaign foreign policy staff was not enthusiastic about a freeze, however. Cranston, although a respected and committed arms control proponent, had not been very helpful to the freeze campaign in the Senate. And Hart's support for
Once the Democratic nomination was secured by Walter Mondale in late spring 1984, the freeze movement lost much of its leverage over the candidates and its visibility within the presidential campaign. As the November election drew nearer, polls showed that President Reagan had succeeded in neutralizing the negative impression voters once held of his position on the nuclear arms race. Although several "pro-arms control" Senate candidates won their elections with help from the freeze movement, Reagan's landslide victory over the candidate endorsed by the Freeze Campaign was a crushing blow for the movement.\textsuperscript{89}

By 1985, the freeze movement was most notable for its disappearance from national politics. As media analyst Mark Hertsgaard observed, "the movement had dropped off the media map shortly after a congressional resolution endorsing a freeze with the Soviets had passed the House of Representatives in May 1983."\textsuperscript{90} The occasional story that did appear was pegged to the theme that the movement had disappeared. Congressional interest flagged in proportion to the movement's decline as a political force. The freeze movement began to look like the political equivalent of the hula-hoop: a fad which swept the country, only to

\textsuperscript{89} Paul Simon of Illinois and Tom Harkin of Iowa were two Senate candidates who credited the freeze movement with playing significant roles in their campaign victories.

\textsuperscript{90} Mark Hertsgaard, \textit{On Bended Knee}, p. 290.
be discarded a few months later. Not only was the freeze seen as a historic footnote, but one-time support of it became a political liability. During the 1988 presidential campaign, Michael Dukakis's former support of the freeze was offered as proof of his unsuitability to be Commander-in-Chief. No political leaders defended the memory of the freeze, even though most national Democratic politicians and a large majority of the population once claimed to be ardent supporters.

The Players, Their Resolutions and Their Objectives

There were four different groups with distinct policy agendas and profiles on defense issues involved in the congressional freeze debate. The "hard-core" freeze leadership who advocated as "pure" a freeze resolution as possible; their allies among the Democratic leadership and influential senior members who supported the resolution as a means of opposing the administration defense policies and supporting traditional, and sometimes personal, arms control objectives; the "constructive" compromisers who championed the "build-down" proposal and the Scowcroft Commission Report; and lastly, the "hard-core" freeze opposition who supported the Jackson-Warner resolution and fought the freeze resolution on the House and Senate floor.

91 Scholars have noted that American politics is often plagued by the "hula-hoop" syndrome, meaning that an issue which is "hot" one day may disappear the next. See Anthony Downs, "Up and down With Ecology -- the "Issue-Attention Cycle," The Public Interest 28 (Summer 1972), pp. 38-50.
The Pro-Freeze "Hard-Core" The initial sponsors and primary leaders of the freeze resolution -- Edward Kennedy in the Senate, and Ed Markey, Tom Downey (D-NY), Les AuCoin (D-OR) in the House -- were not among the most influential members on military matters, although their interest in nuclear weapons issues was generally recognized. They did not base their prominent role in the debate on committee positions or on their intellectual mastery of the issue. In fact, their form of argumentation was in sharp contrast to the kind of reasoning and language typically used in national debates over nuclear weapons policy. The "hard-core" freeze leadership used the emotional and graphic language of the anti-nuclear movements to describe the horrors of a nuclear attack and the obscene overkill of the superpowers arsenals to make their case for a nuclear weapons freeze.

The freeze leadership acted as policy entrepreneurs. (Although Sen. Mark Hatfield's name was on the legislation he did not assume a leadership role, nor does he fit the description of a policy entrepreneur.)

92 Sen. Kennedy had just been appointed to the Armed Services Committee and Rep. AuCoin was a junior member of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee.

93 As defined in Chapter One, a "policy entrepreneur" is one who seizes an opening to advance a new idea or proposal.

94 Sen. Hatfield’s commitment to the concept of a nuclear freeze was unequivocal -- in fact, Hatfield had floated a very similar proposal in the late 1970s. But he and his staff were not key figures in developing and promoting the proposal. Nor did Hatfield seek recognition to the extent of the other leaders. Hatfield was somewhat immune to Republican party pressure on "war and peace" issues because he has an unwavering independent stance on these issues that is a product of deeply felt religious convictions.
epitomizes the policy entrepreneur who places himself in front of emerging popular demands with legislation. The freeze is only one of many issues he has championed in a very visible, very effective manner. Time and time again, on issues as diverse as health care, industry deregulation, immigration, and civil rights, Kennedy has leapt into the limelight with legislative initiatives.95 When he launched the freeze resolution in early 1982, Kennedy was seriously considering another run at the Presidency and this was surely a factor in his decision.96

Although the other leaders of the congressional freeze movement did not have Kennedy's legislative clout, they shared his penchant for taking on the big social issues. For Ed Markey, as a new, young and ambitious representative in the late 1970s, the issue was nuclear power. Nuclear power was then the subject of a raging public controversy and one of the most visible issues on the agenda of the national progressive organizations and funders. By 1981, the debate over nuclear power had subsided and Markey moved into the area of nuclear weapons policy, quickly establishing himself in the public's mind as the congressional

95 The Kennedy legacy and Sen. Kennedy's role as standard-bearer for liberals are partly responsible for the Senators' legislative activism and success. His seniority and key committee positions are also important sources of power. Lastly, Kennedy consistently attracts a top-flight staff for whom service in his office is a stepping stone to other prominent positions in Democratic party politics.

96 See Waller, p. 59. As Kennedy's presidential prospects have dimmed over time, he has made it his goal to leave his mark in the major social legislation of the past quarter-century. For a profile of Kennedy's political persona see Rick Atkinson, "The Once and Future Kennedy," Washington Post Magazine, April 29, 1990.
spokesman for the freeze. He became a favorite of leftist organizations and wealthy liberal donors as he toured the country giving speeches and pep-talks and raising money.97

Tom Downey and Les AuCoin were also aggressive, partisan legislators. The two are frequently cited as representative of the famous 1974 "Watergate class," known for its anti-establishment idealism. Many of the legislators elected in 1974 entered politics as ideologically motivated local activists. They clashed with the older generation of politicians whose careers were rooted in the traditions of party and Congress, and interest group advocacy.98 Both Downey and Aucoin felt comfortable with the Freeze Campaign's grass-roots politics. Moreover, the freeze movement presented them with the opportunity to advance their brand of progressive politics and personally contribute to the effort to halt the political rise of the New Right.

The success of Kennedy and his House colleagues's entrepreneurship was not only, or primarily, due to the emerging popular concern over nuclear weapons. Rather, they were successful because they were able to capitalize on the conflicts within and between the strategic policy community and those in positions of power in the new administration over U.S. nuclear weapons policy.

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98 See William Schneider, "JFK'S Children: The Class of '74," The Atlantic Monthly, March 1989, for a profile of this congressional "class."
The Arms Control Establishment and Party Leadership: Most of the prominent arms control proponents in the House and Senate -- such as Senators Gary Hart, Carl Levin and Paul Tsongas, and Representatives Aspin and Steven Solarz (D-NY) -- were initially unenthusiastic about the freeze proposal. This group had close ties with both members of the strategic policy community and liberal arms control proponents of the broader policy network. Like the liberal arms control experts in the larger policy community, their preferred policy option was to ratify the SALT II Treaty and to follow that treaty with another traditional arms control agreement.99 They shared the arms control experts view that the freeze was simplistic. They were not, as O'Neill said he was, interested in condemning past arms control efforts and charting a new course for the United States. They were interested in returning to the policies of the 1970s and earlier which sought agreements with the Soviet Union on ways for both sides to limit and constrain their nuclear weapons programs.

These legislators supported the resolution after extensive negotiations with the "hard core" supporters. They were indispensable allies because they had the knowledge to present effectively the case for the freeze and the influence to sway most centrist Democratic and Republican legislators. The "liberal arms controllers" were in a rewarding position as they assumed the two roles of policy entrepreneur and consensus-rebuilder. Their leadership role endeared them to

the many freeze supporters among their constituencies and nationwide, and placed them at the front of one of their party's principal issues in Congress. However, their advocacy of the freeze did not alienate establishment arms controllers who were suspicious of the freeze or even members of the strategic policy community who were hostile. These members unambiguously indicated that their support for the freeze was based on the "politics" of the situation, not the substance of the proposal. The modifications to the proposal they sought brought it more in line with traditional arms control and they argued for the freeze as a symbolic gesture intended to put pressure on the hawkish Reagan administration to attend to the nuclear "problem" through the traditional means of arms control negotiations with the Soviet Union. As Les Aspin said during the first vote on the freeze: "If we had a president who was genuinely interested in arms control ... who would negotiate in good faith ... we would need no [freeze] resolution at all."\textsuperscript{100}

Some of the "liberal arms controllers" also tried to piggy-back their own proposals on the freeze resolution. Al Gore, for example, was at that time seeking to draw attention to the threat to strategic stability posed by the counterforce capabilities of heavily MIRVed ICBMs. He reasoned that his approach would appeal to both "hawks" and freeze supporters because both worried about first strike capabilities -- the hawks because they feared the Soviet Union could successfully launch a first strike and the freeze supporters because

they thought the arms race was making one more tempting to both sides. Gore formulated an intricate plan for eliminating MIRVed ICBMs which he put in the form of a congressional resolution. Rather than working exclusively on his own resolution, Gore joined the freeze effort once he was ensured that the freeze resolution was modified to reflect his perspective.\textsuperscript{101}

The leadership of the Democratic party in Congress had an additional reason to champion the freeze: It provided a good vehicle to stage a party comeback. The Democrats in Congress were weakened by President Reagan's victory and popularity. Following the liberal rout in the 1980 elections and attacks against the House leadership under Tip O'Neill, House Democrats felt especially weakened. They were not even able to prevent members of their own party -- nicknamed "the boll-weevils" -- from joining the Republicans' crusade to reorder U.S. budget priorities and reverse social welfare legislation. The freeze movement, and the coalition of members which formed around it, was an important factor in the House Democrats' resurgence. This coalition was also to have enduring consequences for other battles over nuclear weapons.

\textbf{The Constructive Compromisers:} The champions of the build-down proposal and the Scowcroft Commission recommendations comprised a third group of interested legislators. Some legislators operated in both this camp and the camp

of those sympathetic to the freeze for its symbolism, most notably Les Aspin. Senators Nunn and Cohen and the House members involved with the Scowcroft Commission self-consciously tried to be the architects of a political compromise. The ingredients of the two initiatives were basically the same although the proportions differed slightly. They rejected a nuclear freeze and any suggestion that strategic modernization was unwise. But they accepted arms control as a valuable part of national security policy, particularly arms control that achieved reductions and focused on "destabilizing" weapons such as the Soviet Union's heavy ICBMs. They accepted all the new weapons systems that were proposed by the White House, Defense Department and their congressional allies, but affirmed the notion of strategic parity.

The build-down and Scowcroft Commission advocates tried to craft a political compromise which would apply the brakes on politics and bring the policy debate back from the so-called extremes represented by the hard-core freeze supporters and hard-core Reagan administration hawks. Their efforts had some effect on the freeze debate, but it is difficult to know how much because by the time these compromises were taking shape, the freeze proposal had nearly run its course with its "liberal arms control" supporters. However, as the debate over the MX missile became deadlocked -- spreading just as much disarray in policy making processes as the freeze proposal -- the "constructive compromisers" effectively pursued these initiatives.

Senator Nunn's political rise owes a lot to his effectiveness as a "consensus
builder." At this writing in the early 1990s, Sen. Nunn is Chairman of the Armed Services Committee and is widely acknowledged to be the most influential senator on military policy.\(^{102}\) He built a reputation for being fair-minded, as well as knowledgeable, on military issues because he did not articulate a strong ideological viewpoint. However, a glance at his voting record reveals a consistent conservative on both foreign and domestic issues.\(^{103}\) Nunn's particular skill lies in identifying and fortifying the centrist compromise position in any given policy debate. He champions the centrist position and provides it with a persuasive intellectual rationale. (Nunn became the Chairman of the Armed Services Committee when the Democrats regained the Senate in 1986, greatly enhancing his power.)

The contrast in style between Senators Nunn and both Senator Kennedy and Jackson is instructive. In contrast to Sen. Nunn, Sen. Kennedy's influence is based on a willingness and ability to pass ideologically driven legislation on the big issues of the day, often exploiting opportunities created by mass politics. Sen. Jackson was also motivated by ideological commitments. Jackson concentrated primarily on defense issues, working both behind the scenes as Sen. Nunn does and leading controversial fights in the open like Sen. Kennedy does.

\(^{102}\) Sen. Nunn is also profiled in Chapter V on the Strategic Defense Initiative, the issue with which he was most involved.

\(^{103}\) Nunn's rating in 1982 on the National Security Index of the right-wing American Security Council was 90 out of a possible 100.
The "Hard-Core" Opposition  The most vigorous opposition to the freeze proposal came from a cohesive group of House and Senate members identified with the "New Right." Just as the issue stimulated the formation of a pro-freeze coalition, it also stimulated the coalition of an anti-freeze coalition. Within the House, the group included prominent representatives such as Jack Kemp (R-NY) and Newt Gingrich (R-GE), who hoped to use Ronald Reagan's victory to strengthen the conservative wing of the Republicans in the House. They recruited several junior members who shared their ideological fervor. Within the Senate, Henry "Scoop" Jackson -- not a member of the "New Right" -- took the lead in presenting the case against the freeze and in support of the resolution he offered. Jackson was joined by several freshman senators whose 1980 victory over liberal Democratic senators turned the Senate over to Republican control.

Sen. Jackson exercised as much influence as any Member of Congress on the direction of strategic policy during the 1960s and 1970s thanks to his pivotal role within the nexus of conservative activists which spread through the executive branch, Congress and the policy community.\textsuperscript{104} However, by the 1980s, his consistent advocacy for increased weapons spending and programs, coupled with extreme skepticism about the value of arms control agreements with the Soviet

\textsuperscript{104} Jackson led congressional efforts to extract concessions from the Nixon administration on SALT I, disrupt negotiations on SALT II, oppose the signed SALT II treaty, and link most-favored-nation trade status for the Soviet Union to free emigration of Jews. See Chapter One for description of nexus of conservative activists.
Union, increasingly placed him outside the majority view of his party and even of the strategic policy community.105

Other than Jackson, the "hard-core" opponents -- like the "hard-core" freeze supporters -- were not known for extensive involvement in or knowledge about nuclear weapons. They were known as right-wing ideologues. These members were not interested in re-building a moderate consensus. Their objective was to promote the right-wing policy agenda and try to tilt the balance of power in the Republican party in their direction.

Representatives Kemp, Gingrich, Henry Hyde, Jim Courter, and others used the freeze to galvanize like-minded colleagues to challenge their colleagues on a range of issues. After developing techniques and working relationships to oppose the nuclear freeze, this band of very conservative House members turned their attention to waging other battles on the "New Right" political agenda. In retrospect, the campaign marked the first volley in a larger battle waged by a group of young, conservative Republicans against the power structure House Democrats had built over the years -- a structure to which the long-suffering minority Republicans had largely acquiesced.

105 By the 1980s, Jackson had little political company from fellow Democrats. He was such a strong figure that his name is used to define a type of Democrat. A "Scoop Jackson Democrat" is one who is a "hard-liner" on defense issues and supportive of social welfare programs. Sen. Jackson died in September, 1983.
The Meaning of the Great Freeze Debate

What fueled the rapid ascent of the freeze proposal on the congressional agenda and its equally abrupt descent? Supporters claimed that the appearance and rise of the freeze movement on the national agenda represented Jeffersonian democracy in action. This explanation for the freeze movement is simple and appealing because of the role it ascribes to the American citizenry in a democracy. A majority of legislators declared their support for the freeze resolution -- and a minority expended considerable energy explaining (or obfuscating) their opposition -- for a reason that Rep. Conte said "should be very near and dear to everyone in this Congress." Reiterating the message of countless public opinion polls and lobbying campaigns, Conte declared that legislators support the freeze "because our constituents want it." As Clement Zablocki declared: "The people have spoken. We, as their representatives, have a duty to carry out their will." Liberal Iowa Republican Rep. Jim Leach narrowed the notion of "the people": "Middle-class America is taking a stand," Leach said.

The leaders and the rank and file activists of the National Freeze Campaign shared a deep philosophical faith in the capacity of an aroused citizenry in a democracy to effect positive changes in national policy. The Campaign's devotion to the classic definition of democracy as "government by the people," was


expressed in both its tactics and its internal operating style. Its political strategy was to mobilize American citizens to "bring overwhelming pressure" to bear on their elected representatives by communicating with them their views and promising rewards or punishments at the ballot box. As Randall Kehler, the National Coordinator wrote:

The only force capable of stopping [the arms race] is the force of an aroused, informed and determined citizenry....Our focus is on the lawmakers in Washington. Because they are the ones who have the power to pass and implement a bilateral nuclear freeze. We are making it clear to them that they cannot, they dare not, ignore the demands of such an overwhelming majority of the people who put them into office.110

Many freeze activists recognized, at least implicitly, that even the appearance of the potential for an aroused citizenry, was an effective way to build a movement, at least in the short term. Politicians are always attuned to signs of new trends, particularly in an election year. The action of a few can bring others along, setting off a band-wagoning effect.111

Pundits and politicians, always eager to be in front of the curve and prone

109 The Campaign was committed to governing itself as a participatory democracy which emphasized consensual decision-making and the supreme importance of the "grassroots." However, its structure ultimately failed to provide democratic decision making because the many self-appointed leaders often were not accountable to or representative of the "grass roots." Moreover, its structure did not provide effective management and leadership.

110 Letter to supporters from Randall Kehler from the Freeze Campaign National Clearinghouse, St. Louis, Missouri. Spring 1984.

111 Although nearly 99 percent of incumbents seeking reelection to the House have been successful in recent elections, "members of Congress always find reason to feel insecure." Richard Fenno, Jr. Home Style: House Members in Their Districts (Boston: Little, Brown, 1978), p. 14.
to speculation, wondered aloud whether the freeze would become the decisive issue in the upcoming 1982 elections. Democratic politicians and their consultants, still reeling from the overwhelming defeat they suffered in the 1980 elections, may have deliberately fueled this speculation in order to encourage a potential Republican vulnerability. "I can’t remember any issue, including Watergate, that has moved so many people so quickly," commented Democratic media consultant Robert Squier.\footnote{Judith Miller, "Democrats Seize Weapons Issue for Fall," The New York Times, June 20, 1982, p. A1.} Democratic candidates hoped Squier was right and even those with misgivings about the freeze did what they could to encourage the movement.\footnote{For example, the Democratic Presidential conventional Platform strongly advocated an immediate bi-lateral and comprehensive nuclear freeze along with a host of other far-reaching and traditional arms control objectives. Privately, Democratic nominee Walter Mondale and his staff were unenthusiastic about the nuclear freeze.} The more the pundits discussed the potential power of the freeze, and the more the national media ran with and elaborated upon the story, the more likely it was to be realized. As Doug Waller, an aide to Representative Markey wrote, "It was important to Markey that the freeze be perceived as having overwhelming political momentum. Whether it actually did was another matter."\footnote{Waller, p. 162. Emphasis in original.}

The freeze movement's political strategy of enlisting more and more people to join the call for a nuclear weapons freeze did compel legislators to be
responsive to pressure from the freeze constituency. Yet the National Freeze Campaign never came close to realizing its goal of enacting a bi-lateral nuclear freeze. As indicated earlier, the hard-core freeze leadership in Congress did not expect their efforts to result in a temporary or permanent halt to the arms race. Their key allies among the liberal establishment, such as Representatives Aspin, Gore, Solarz and Zablocki and Senators Hart, Levin and Sarbanes, were not even seeking that goal. They supported the freeze resolution in order to pressure the hawkish administration to attend to the nuclear "problem" through traditional arms control negotiations with the Soviet Union.

The overriding importance of the symbolic meaning of the freeze resolution -- as opposed to its literal meaning -- was underscored by the fact that many legislators supported the freeze resolution in addition to one of the competing resolutions. Of the 34 co-sponsors of Kennedy-Hatfield in 1983, nearly half of them, or 15, also co-sponsored the "Build-Down" proposal or the Jackson-Warner resolution. These resolutions were mutually contradictory. Legislators believed, however, that the symbolic meanings of the various resolutions were not incompatible since all of them endorsed arms control negotiations. The literal meanings of the resolutions were less important. As freeze supporter Leon

\[115\] A particularly striking example was that a local Massachusetts freeze organization persuaded Rep. Mavroules to offer binding legislation in 1984 that went beyond the "Arms Race Moratorium Act," already offered by Rep. Markey. Mavroules became the hero of his freeze constituents. However, he did virtually nothing to advance his own legislation in order not to jeopardize the leadership role he had assumed in the fight against the MX, and because he knew the measure had little support.
Panetta (D-CA) declared: "Whether you are a hawk or dove or something in between, you can interpret anything you want in this resolution. When you go back home, you can say anything you want about this resolution."  

The insistence of many of the freeze resolution's key supporters in Congress that their resolution was a relatively harmless symbolic message assured that it remained just that. Consequently, the mass-based popular campaign for a nuclear freeze -- which was closely identified with the resolution -- became an expression of popular anxiety about the nuclear arms race and lack of progress in arms control negotiations. Journalists and academic commentators unanimously corroborated, and reinforced, this interpretation of the citizens movement.  

Retrospective accounts of the freeze movement by its leaders and originators of the proposal, not surprisingly and not unfairly, have decried the cooptation and outright capture of their initiative by political leaders.\textsuperscript{117} However, these accounts have failed to recognize the extent to which the freeze movement owed its success to its adoption (and cooptation) by members of Congress, the Democratic leadership, the media, and the arms control establishment. Congressional involvement, in particular, not only defined the meaning of the freeze proposal, but it was largely responsible for the remarkable eruption of a mass-based movement.  

\textsuperscript{116} Margot Hornblower, "Freeze Debate Founders as House Bickers," Washington Post, April 24, 1983. Panetta was not praising the freeze for this quality but trying to persuade the freeze's opponents to end their filibuster-by-amendment which delayed a vote for weeks on end).  

\textsuperscript{117} For example, see Solo, From Protest to Policy.
The Public, Elites and the Media in the "Conflict System"

E.E. Schattschneider believed that Americans are very confused about the meaning of democracy.\textsuperscript{118} Popular ideology and political language would have it that democracy in America means "the people actually govern." Schattschneider argued that this notion of democracy places a wholly impossible burden on the citizenry and misconstrues the role and dynamic of public involvement in politics. "The people are involved in public affairs by the conflict system," he wrote. "Conflicts open up questions for public intervention."\textsuperscript{119}

Schattschneider was not thinking about nuclear weapons policy when he wrote this, but his ideas shed light on how the freeze movement fit into the broader debate over nuclear weapons policy at the time. The rejection of the accepted political compromise incorporating both arms control and strategic modernization by the president and many of top administration officials created massive conflict. Actually, it exacerbated conflict sparked in the late 1970s when the CPD and its associates turned to the public to help settle an elite-level conflict over the policies of detente and the SALT II treaty. The CPD effectively mobilized a segment of the population to push for a more bellicose U.S. foreign posture. By the early 1980s, a different segment of the population was brought into the spreading conflict through the freeze movement. Arms control proponents on the periphery of the strategic policy community encouraged the

\textsuperscript{118} E.E. Schattschneider, \textit{The Semisovereign People}, (Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1960), Ch. VIII.

\textsuperscript{119} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 138.
movement while those in the inner circle were in no position to stem the conflict. The national media, ever attuned to brewing conflicts among political elites, gave this process a big boost.

The extensive media coverage of the public interest in the nuclear arms race contributed significantly to the growth of the freeze movement, although it is impossible to quantify this relationship. The U.S. political system is characterized by an extremely low degree of political mobilization, and lack of a strong party system capable of channelling and aggregating public demands. The national media sometimes fills the political vacuum left by these system weaknesses by encouraging political mobilization, and when it happens, interpreting it and determining its strength. In this case, the effect of the extensive media coverage was to inflate artificially the movement's numerical and organizational strength, thereby creating the image of a profound mass movement. Not only did the coverage create the movement in some sense; it also helped to define it. The media defined the freeze movement as an expression of popular anxiety about the nuclear arms race, not as support for a specific proposal. This is not surprising given the media's reliance on government officials and "objective" influential analysts (i.e. members of the strategic policy community.)²⁰ The few activists in

²⁰ For example, after the November 20, 1983 airing of the ABC TV movie, The Day After, the network ran a videotape of Secretary of State George Shultz saying that the Reagan administration was working to avert nuclear war. Schultz was followed by a panel discussion led by Ted Koppel, featuring Henry Kissinger, Robert McNamara, Carl Sagan and Elie Wiesel. Sagan was the one among them to support a nuclear freeze, and he was directed by host Koppel to speak mostly about the issue of nuclear winter. Wiesel acknowledged on the air that he knew
the movement who could present a compelling intellectual case for the freeze were largely ignored by the media.\textsuperscript{121}

As the amount of coverage exploded, the media's angle changed from treating the freeze as a human interest story to covering it as a political movement. Sociologist Frank Riessman notes that grassroots movements do not interest the press "until those with real power begin to take notice."\textsuperscript{122} In the words of reporters themselves, the freeze movement gained "political legitimacy" when prominent members of Congress sponsored a resolution.\textsuperscript{123} Sen. Kennedy's decision to embrace the freeze proposal and his successful efforts to collect the endorsements of many prominent former government officials were crucial to the popularity of the freeze. Indeed, without Sen. Kennedy and the coterie of prominent supporters he attracted, it is unlikely that the base of support for the freeze proposal would have widened significantly from the "usual list of suspects" who traditionally gather around major peace movement initiatives. Neither of the freeze initiatives introduced by Ed Markey and Jonathan Bingham, in the months before Kennedy entered the scene generated significant support or

\textsuperscript{121} The movement's inability to convey a more substantive message was also a product of its own intellectual confusion, paucity of knowledgeable and thoughtful activists, and an undeveloped media and outreach strategy.


media coverage.\textsuperscript{124}

These observations are not intended to suggest that the personage of Sen. Kennedy is so powerful that he is able to single-handedly propel a popular movement forward. Rather, his involvement, and the media's extensive coverage of the movement, were both responses to the strategic policy community's loss of control over nuclear weapons policy debates.

Until early 1982, there was only subdued dissent to President Reagan's nuclear weapons policies and military budget increases from former or current government officials. Most leading establishment voices in Congress and the wider policy network did not vigorously refute the conservative's condemnation of President Carter's 1970's style detente policies. Nor did the major national media outlets scrutinize the military budget or Reagan administration nuclear weapons policies.\textsuperscript{125} The American national media does not usually present critical stories in the absence of elite dissent.\textsuperscript{126}

Suddenly, Sen. Kennedy, accompanied by a collection of former members of the foreign policy establishment, burst on the scene with urgent calls for a new

\textsuperscript{124} Markey, a notorious press hound, was disappointed by the lack of response. His press secretary grumbled "that the freeze resolution might as well be classified top secret for all the media attention it was receiving." Waller, p. 59.

\textsuperscript{125} A notable exception was a five-part CBS series called "The Defense of the United States" which attracted national attention for its spectacular evocation of what would happen if a nuclear missile hit Omaha, Nebraska.

\textsuperscript{126} See Walter Karp, "All the Congressmen's Men: How Capitol Hill Controls the Press," Harper's Magazine, (July 1989) pp. 55-63, for elaboration and examples of how the content of news coverage is controlled by the government, particularly by Congress.
direction in U.S. nuclear weapons policy. His entourage included former CIA chief William Colby; former "Wise Men" to Democratic presidents, Averell Harriman and George Ball; "super-lawyer" and former Secretary of Defense, Clark Clifford; Nixon's SALT negotiator, Gerard Smith; former Senate Foreign Relations Chairman Frank Church; and former Carter SALT II negotiation and ACDA Director Paul Warnke.\textsuperscript{127} Before making a decision to adopt the freeze proposal, Sen. Kennedy consulted with these people and many other arms control experts, including those considerably less liberal. Sen. Kennedy proceeded only after concluding that a broad range of nuclear weapons experts and former high-level government officials would support, or at least would not mobilize against, the proposal.\textsuperscript{128}

Roger Molander, a former National Security Council staff member for arms control under Presidents Carter and Ford, also encouraged and exploited the political conflict. Molander initiated a project called "Ground Zero" to educate the public about the threat of nuclear war through a week-long series of community-based meetings and activities. Molander had ties to the Washington media and policy community and great timing. Ground Zero piggy-backed onto the burgeoning freeze movement from whose organized and mobilized ranks, it recruited its participants. The organization did not have the structure, resources or know-how to be a viable national organization, although one would never have

\textsuperscript{127} Of these seven, four were Democrats and three were Republicans.

\textsuperscript{128} Interview with Jan Kalicki.
known this from the picture presented by the national media. Molander attracted enormous press attention for a designated "Ground Zero" week in April. Moreover, although Molander repeatedly and clearly avowed that he did not support the freeze proposal, he was continually identified in the national media as a "freeze proponent" and was one of the most frequently quoted "movement" representatives.¹²⁹

Another demonstration of elite-level dissent showed up on the pages of the journal Foreign Affairs in April, 1982. Four prestigious national security analysts and former policy-makers -- George Kennan, McGeorge Bundy, Robert McNamara and Gerard Smith -- published an article which criticized the cornerstone of U.S. and NATO nuclear policy.¹³⁰ The "gang of four," as they were quickly dubbed, questioned the wisdom and feasibility of the policy of reliance upon a first use of nuclear weapons to counter a Soviet attack on Western Europe. The Foreign Affairs article was an unprecedented coordinated, public questioning of U.S. policy by respected former high-level officials. Speaking with a reporter shortly after the article was published, McNamara suggested that he had an ulterior motive for "recommending a complete reversal

¹²⁹ A Time magazine feature story on the freeze movement went so far as to call Molander "the single most visible (and thoughtful) leader in the nebulous movement, but there is no individual or organization in command." Not only did Molander have nothing to do with the movement, but there was a tightly structured organization in command -- the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign. Time, June 28, 1982, p. 37.

of U.S. and NATO nuclear strategy." By issuing this statement, along with three other prominent figures, McNamara said he was "trying to trigger a change in the environment."\textsuperscript{131}

There has always been a nuclear hard-line group...But in the past, it didn't have the influence that it does today....Today there is not an effective counter. There should be.

McNamara's co-author, George Kennan, noted that among his colleagues,

There was a certain feeling of urgency and almost desperation to get the administration to realize that they simply cannot go on with this madness and that they must have the courage and the imagination to bring the nuclear question under control.\textsuperscript{132}

By early 1984, arms control was officially rehabilitated. The United States and the Soviet Union resumed arms control negotiations and the ideologues in the Reagan administration had retreated somewhat while the centrists of the strategic policy community were once again included in decision making at the highest levels.\textsuperscript{133} The liberal arms controllers no longer needed the freeze movement, the Congress stopped considering the freeze proposal. And the media stopped covering the freeze movement.

Media coverage is implicated in both the rapid growth of the movement


\textsuperscript{132} Quoted by Robert Leavitt, case study for Harvard Kennedy School.

\textsuperscript{133} Secretary of State George Schultz wrestled control of arms control policy from Richard Perle and his allies in the Pentagon and National Security Council and appointed a new team of negotiators. Jim Woolsey was even included on the START negotiating team at the insistence of the Scowcroft Commission members.
and its rapid fall. Without discounting the importance of leadership and organizational difficulties faced by the Nuclear Weapons freeze campaign, a confident judgement can be made concerning the harmful effects to the "movement" posed by both the glut of media attention and its subsequent, and sudden, dearth.\textsuperscript{134} The extravagant media coverage lavished on the freeze was disorienting to activists and led to escalating expectations that could not possibly be realized. When the media deserted the freeze, the expectations appeared ridiculous, reinforcing pundits' and politicians's belief of the freeze's demise. This had a devastating effect on the morale of the activists and the support of the foundations and individuals who bankrolled the movement.\textsuperscript{135}

In fact, the press was premature in its assumption that the freeze movement had died. As a popular movement, it reached its peak of organization and expenditure during the 1984 election season, just as most of the media had lost interest. In December of 1984, over 800 activists representing 44 states gathered in St. Louis for the fifth national conference. In 1985, freeze activists gathered 1.2 million signatures to present to Reagan and Gorbachev at the Geneva summit in November. However, just as the National Freeze Campaign had reached its maximum staff level at the end of 1984 -- not including those working for the electoral arm of the freeze campaign -- a contracting budget

\textsuperscript{134} Personal interview, Katherine Magraw with Randall Kehler, Director of the National Freeze Campaign, June 25, 1990. For a personal account of the Freeze Campaign's internal problems see Solo, op. cit.

\textsuperscript{135} Personal interviews, Katherine Magraw with Randy Kehler and Christopher Paine, op. cit.
forced a rapid decrease in staff levels.

The former president of the Associated Press, Wes Gallagher, once commented that thanks to the character of the American national media, "The Washington politician's view of what is going on in the United States has been substituted for what is actually happening in the country."\textsuperscript{136} The "Washington politician" decided the freeze movement was over because it was no longer useful as a symbolic weapon in an inter-elite fight.

**Conclusion**

What prompted the surge of congressional involvement in the debate over U.S. nuclear weapons policy in the early 1980s? Representative Les Aspin has noted that "Congress is essentially a political institution and responds primarily to political stimuli."\textsuperscript{137} The nuclear weapons freeze movement and the precipitous increase of public interest in the nuclear arms race were powerful stimuli for legislators to become involved in nuclear weapons policy. But congressional involvement was more than the sum product of individual legislators chasing votes and responding to constituent pressure.

I have argued in this chapter that the popular freeze movement, and Congress's consideration of the freeze proposal, were caught up in a struggle over nuclear weapons policy that escaped the control of the strategic policy community.

\textsuperscript{136} Quoted by Walter Karp. op. cit.

The freeze did not cause a split within the community since few, if any, of its members supported the proposal. Although some individuals had more sympathy for the public show of support for arms control than others. Rather, the community's authority to arbitrate disputes had been eroded by the failure of traditional arms control and the rise of public concern and involvement. As James Woolsey, an influential member of the strategic policy community, acknowledged, "political chaos ... on strategic arms control questions" reigned in the early 1980s.\(^{138}\) The popularity of the freeze movement contributed to the "chaos," but it was also a consequence of the "chaos." The leaders of the different factions within Congress used the opportunities presented by the freeze movement -- and the political chaos -- to form policy coalitions, promote a general political orientation, and to increase personal influence and stature on the defense policy. These small groups, who were responding to different political and institutional motivations, determined the congressional response.

The real contest was not between Congress and the Reagan administration, as presented by many journalists and commentators. Rather, it was a contest between the four different groups and their allies outside of Congress over who would bring order to chaos. The "Arms Controllers" and Democratic Party Leadership viewed the freeze proposal as a means to pull U.S. policy back onto the arms control course it had staked out in the 1970s. They wanted to return to

SALT II, and to follow that treaty with a more far-reaching SALT III. The Arms Controllers were sometimes allied with the "Constructive Compromisers," who were likewise concerned with dragging policy back from the extremes it was pushed to by the conservatives affiliated with the Reagan administration. The Compromisers, not surprisingly, were most closely allied with the strategic policy community.

Unlike the Compromisers, the Arms Controllers were eager to broaden and politicize the debate over U.S. policy because they were on the defensive since the late 1970s and they acted as E.E. Schattschneider theorized those in a disadvantaged position might act. They successfully used the freeze proposal to change the political balance by widening the scope of conflict. Congress is particularly well-suited for airing dissent which escapes the control of the strategic policy community and involves other elites such as prominent politicians and prominent, former members of the strategic policy community. The disputes are amplified further by media coverage.

Each of the other three groups in Congress also realized some success in achieving their objectives. The "Hard-Core" supporters and opponents of the freeze proposal both advanced the political power of their coalitions. The consensus rebuilders partially succeeded in re-containing the scope of conflict.

The freeze debate heralded a new "open" system of congressional debate over nuclear weapons policy which contrasted greatly with the system of the preceding decade. It politicized nuclear weapons policy, thereby inviting more
legislators to join the debate. It also opened up new channels to legislators to exert influence on policy-making, outside the committee structures and informal hierarchy of influential legislators on defense matters. In both chambers, but particularly the House, a relatively large number of legislators from all ideological orientations took a high-profile role in the debate over the freeze resolution. Moreover, the legislative fights over the freeze -- and the MX missile whose story is intertwined with the freeze -- stimulated the organization of loose coalitions of legislators, staff, and lobbyists whose existence and influence outlived the debate over a freeze.

The freeze debate within Congress had a significant effect on the content of U.S. policy. However, there is not a simple answer to the question of whether the increased activity resulted in substantial revision of existing policy or reaffirmation of previously established policies. The freeze movement, and the House’s endorsement of the proposal, brought about the political rehabilitation of arms control. In essence, the freeze debate helped to reaffirm policies established during the 1970s. This was manifested by a change in the Reagan administration's attitude towards arms control. Reagan and other administration officials softened their distaste for arms control and muzzled their strident rhetoric toward the Soviet Union. The administration revised its originally unnegotiable proposals at the Geneva arms talks. However, the administration did not modify its principal plans for weapons procurement, research and use.

The debate over the freeze proposal had another subtle effect as well. It
contributed to the discrediting of the assumptions and modes of thinking underlying U.S. nuclear doctrine by opening the debate up to greater participation. As the scope of conflict spread, the very nature of the conflict was changed. Individuals on the periphery of a national political debate, whose views would otherwise have been marginalized, successfully inserted themselves in the debate at the expense of the strategic policy community's authority. Once the issue had demonstrated its potential for arousing large segments of the population, nuclear weapons policy making would never be quite the same. The arguments of the nuclear freeze movement and their supporters in government, that nuclear weapons served no good purpose and that the arms race was absurd, were given a national hearing. This message would be reiterated over the course of the decade by President Reagan himself, and towards the end of the decade, by the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.
Chapter III: The Debate over ICBM Modernization: MX, Midgetman or Bust

The most divisive, convoluted and long-lasting congressional debate over nuclear weapons during the 1980s was over "modernization" of the U.S. land-based ICBM force.¹ A turning point in this debate occurred in December 1982, when Congress conditionally refused any money during the coming fiscal year for the MX missile system, marking the first time that Congress had denied all funds for a major nuclear weapons system desired by the White House and the Pentagon. Deputy National Security Advisor Robert McFarlane suggested that the popular freeze movement was responsible for Congress's unusual defiance of the administration's proposals on how to base the new MX missile, the centerpiece of the Reagan administration's strategic modernization program.²

The freeze movement influenced the course of the controversy over the MX, although the missile debate began before and continued after the debate on the nuclear weapons freeze proposal. Commentators, as well as those directly involved, generally viewed this debate more seriously because it concerned actual expenditure of funds and directly affected a major weapons system. However, as

¹ The term strategic "modernization" is misleading. It refers to the process of replacing or supplementing existing nuclear systems with more advanced ones, but it usually has little to do with a technical need for renovation or redesign of existing systems.

² Interview, Deputy National Security Advisor Robert McFarlane with WGBH TV, Boston, for "War and Peace in the Nuclear Age" series. Transcript of interview conducted by Chris Koch, Tape 11060, p. 6.

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occurred in the freeze debate, this debate also became a struggle over different approaches to arms control. And to an even greater degree than in the freeze debate, the on-going controversy over the MX highlighted the intellectual and political chaos within the ranks of those who shape both the private and public justifications for U.S. nuclear weapons policy. The controversy over the MX went far beyond a fight between the executive branch and the Congress.

Members of the strategic policy community forcefully intervened in the controversy in an effort to reassert order. They worked closely with their associates in the Congress who adeptly assumed the role of "consensus rebuilders," and with executive branch officials. The strategic policy community was only partly successful in re-establishing the former consensus on the appropriate balance between nuclear force modernization and arms restraint. The more discredited and confused the intellectual rationalizations for U.S. strategic modernization became, the less compelling were the unwritten rules governing debates over funding new weapons systems. Consequently, the "open" mode of congressional decision making that developed during the debate over the nuclear weapons freeze resolution evolved further in this debate. The major avenues for congressional efforts to influence policy became separated from committee and party structures. The number of members in both House and Senate who offered floor amendments related to the MX over the course of the decade was unusually high. Rare coalitions of members formed to battle one-another and deals were made and remade.
This chapter examines why and how this debate engaged so many legislators. It also compares the net effect with the intended effect of the actions undertaken by legislators.

**Background**

As early as June 1960, in "Project Big Star," the Air Force unveiled plans for a rail-mobile ICBM to match the virtues of the Navy's virtually invulnerable Polaris SLBM. This effort was deferred by the incoming Kennedy administration, but in 1963, the Air Force began research on an "Improved Capability Missile," that evolved by 1970 into a concept known as ICBM-X. In 1974, the Air Force began advanced development of a heavier throw-weight, more accurate, potentially mobile ICBM. The eventual result was the MX missile -- a 10-warhead, highly accurate missile -- with a planned initial operating capability in 1986. The new missile had two stated rationales -- first, to provide the Strategic Air Command with heavier missiles carrying greater numbers of accurate warheads capable of enhanced hard target kill-capability; and second, to deploy the missile in such a way that the Soviets would be unable to destroy a large percentage of the force in an all-out attack. These program objectives -- enhanced counterforce capability and increased survivability -- were not inherently incompatible, but their differing political connotations brought them into conflict.

From the earliest days of America's nuclear arsenal, the Pentagon has argued for missiles with increased accuracy to meet targeting requirements.
Changes in U.S. targeting doctrine in the early 1970s emphasized the need for increased U.S. attack options and counterforce capability. These changes reinforced the argument that the U.S. needed missiles with greater accuracy and counterforce capability. In 1974, Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger publicly outlined the new targeting doctrine and its implications for weapons requirements. He stated that U.S. "response options would be enhanced by increased accuracy and a greater flexibility in the yields of nuclear weapons available to us."\(^4\)

The "increased options" strategy announced by Secretary Schlesinger proceeded logically from prior U.S. targeting doctrine.\(^5\) Its intellectual heritage was derived from the thinking of such pioneering nuclear weapons strategists as Albert Wohlstetter and Paul Nitze who were associated with the "war-fighting" school of thought. They argued that nuclear warfare should not be regarded as mutual annihilation, but rather as an exchange between winners and losers. The


\(^5\) President Nixon, Sec. Schlesinger and other officials often presented the revised targeting doctrine as a departure from the previous policy which they characterized as only targeting cities. Of course, this was a gross distortion of U.S. assured-destruction strategy.
outcome would be determined by the relative amount of damage suffered and forces remaining after the war. Nuclear weapons, according to this view, should be designed for use in controlled, graduated ways so that nuclear warfare need not be a spasm of destruction.

The acquisition of, and increased doctrinal emphasis on, counterforce capability in the early 1970s provoked controversy in the nuclear policy community. Within Congress, the debate was mostly conducted in the hearings and bill mark-ups of the Senate Armed Services Committee -- in both closed and open sessions. Sen. Thomas McIntyre (D-NH) was the most vocal critic of counterforce capability. He used his chairmanship of the Research and Development Subcommittee to engage military officials, administration officials, and fellow senators in a debate over the wisdom of pursuing counterforce capability.⁶

Sen. Henry Jackson was one of the most influential legislators arguing for the development of increased counterforce capability. The campaign against the on-going negotiations on a follow-on agreement to SALT I -- led by Sen. Jackson and Paul Nitze -- bolstered the arguments in favor of proceeding with a new

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⁶ For an account of McIntyre's efforts to restrain the development of counterforce capabilities, see Alton Frye, A Responsible Congress, the Politics of National Security (McGraw-Hill Book Company, published for the Council on Foreign Relations, 1975), esp. chapters 3 and 4. And see the hearings of the Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Research and Development, conducted during 1971-1974.
A large missile, it was argued, would redress the failure of SALT I to achieve parity in missile throwweight. Although Sen. McIntyre lost his battle to curtail the development of counterforce, he did succeed in tying the new missile to the objective of increased survivability.  

The original impetus to search for a mobile basing mode came from a Pentagon study conducted in the late 1960s -- the Strat-X study -- which warned that the U.S. land-based ICBMs would become vulnerable to attack due to increases in Soviet missile capability, accuracy, and force size. Various possible basing schemes were considered by the Air Force, but since none seemed immediately promising, the Pentagon's response to the study was to harden further the Minuteman silos.

7 Paul Nitze resigned from the SALT delegation in the summer of 1974 and teamed up with Sen. Jackson. In testimony developed by the two of them, Nitze told the Senate Armed Services Committee that President Nixon and Secretary of State Kissinger were promoting a "myth of detente." The New York Times, August 1, 1974, p. 5.

8 Ironically, Sen. McIntyre consistently supported R&D funds for the MX missile. He opposed upgrading the Minuteman III missiles and the development of specific counterforce capabilities like the Mk12A warhead, advanced inertial reference sphere and the advanced reentry vehicle program.

9 The Air Force had an additional parochial reason to be concerned about survivability. Its preeminent position in ICBMs was threatened by the Navy's submarine-based, and hence highly survivable, Poseidon and ULMS, later called the Trident, missile programs.

10 Aviation Week & Space Technology, July 20, 1970 reported that the Navy's proposed ULMS system, "Poses a potential threat to the Air Force's present monopoly on the ICBM arsenal, a fact of which USAF is well aware. But according to independent Pentagon and industry observers... that service's planners and those of its contractors have been unable to produce a tenable
As the new missile proceeded through the research and development phase, the Pentagon still was unable to develop a feasible survivable basing mode. The Air Force was eager to get a counterforce weapon into full-scale development, and so in the last years of the Ford administration, it requested money from Congress for a new missile to be deployed in silos. The Air Force argued that a silo-based missile was adequate until a visible, rather than a projected, Soviet threat became clear.

Sen. McIntyre used the opening created by the Air Force's failure to devise a basing mode to emphasize his concerns about the Air Force's pursuit of extensive new counterforce capability.\(^{11}\) The Committee members had heard extensive testimony from Air Force officials about the need for a new survivable system. Sen. McIntyre inserted language into the Defense Authorization Conference Report for fiscal year 1977 that stated: "Providing for a survivable system should be the only purpose of [the MX] effort, that the design of this system should not be constrained for silo basing; that none of this program's funds shall be expended in fixed or silo basing for M-X."\(^{12}\) Two events reinforced the solution for deployment of a mobile land-based ICBM.

\(^{11}\) According to McIntyre's defense aide Larry Smith, the Senator and his staff concluded that the fight to constrain the development of counterforce capability was lost. They shifted their strategy to one of holding up the missile's development and trying to limit the numbers produced. Personal interview, Katherine Magraw with Larry Smith, May 18, 1990.

\(^{12}\) U.S. Congress, House Committee of Conference, Authorizing Appropriations for Fiscal Year 1977 for Military Procurement, Research and Development, Active Duty Reserve and Civilian Personnel Strength Levels, Military Training Student Loads, and for Other Purposes, 94th Cong., 2nd sess.,
conviction that the new MX missile must solve the problem of U.S. land-based force vulnerability. In 1977, the CIA concluded that Soviet improvements in accuracy and the overall growth in the missile force had been more rapid than expected and that in the coming years over 90 percent of U.S. land-based forces theoretically could be successfully attacked by Soviet forces.\textsuperscript{13} Also during the second half of the 1970s, a Washington-based public interest organization, the Committee on the Present Danger, made the theoretical vulnerability of American land-based missiles a central feature of its crusade to strengthen U.S. military power.\textsuperscript{14}

The anticipated vulnerability of U.S. land-based forces -- what became known as the "window of vulnerability" -- was cited as the most potent manifestation of the "present danger." The window-of-vulnerability theory held that when the Soviet Union had deployed enough accurate warheads on their large modern ICBMs to have the theoretical capability of destroying the U.S. ICBM force of 1,000 Minuteman missiles in one large surprise attack, the Soviet Union could "blackmail" the U.S. with the threat of an attack that would destroy the U.S. ability for controlled strategic nuclear escalation. The U.S. could not dare to respond because its cities would still be held hostage to further Soviet

\textsuperscript{13} For an account of the CIA assessments of Soviet missile accuracy see R. Jeffrey Smith, "An Upheaval in U.S. Strategic Thought," \textit{Science} (April 2, 1982), pp. 30-34.

\textsuperscript{14} See pp. 53-54, Chapter II, for a discussion of the Committee on the Present Danger.
attacks. This "window" was supposed to open in the early 1980s and to close only when U.S. deployment of substantial MX missiles was underway. While the "window" was open, however, the alleged Soviet advantage in ICBM power would encourage Moscow to undertake aggressive adventures around the world, without fear of a U.S. response.

The window-of-vulnerability scare is reminiscent of earlier controversies in U.S. strategic history such as the bomber gap of the mid-1950s and the missile gap later in the same decade. This latest scare was based on the same theories developed and elaborated upon by the "war-fighting" school throughout the nuclear age. In a 1956 article in Foreign Affairs, Paul Nitze explained that it was not necessary to believe that the Soviet Union would actually launch a war once it had determined it could "win." All that is required to shift the balance of international power is the mutual recognition of what would happen if a war would break out:

The situation is analogous to a game of chess. The atomic queens may never be brought into play; they may never actually take one of the opponent's pieces. But the position of the atomic queens may still have a decisive bearing on which side can safely advance a limited war bishop or even a cold-war pawn. The advance of a cold-war pawn may even disclose a check of the opponent's king by a well-positioned atomic queen.15

While the "window" was open on the U.S., it would be in the grip of the nuclear checkmate Nitze described. If the U.S. attempted too daring a defense of our interests in the face of Soviet encroachments, the Soviet Union would point

silently to its "atomic queen," and we would prepare our pawns for retreat. On the other hand, if the U.S. had MX missiles, deployed in a survivable mode, the situation would be reversed. The MX missile would provide the U.S. with the means, through controlled escalation, to compel a Soviet surrender at some point short of unrestrained attacks on population and civilian industry, and on terms favorable to the United States and its allies.

For several years there was general disagreement among members of the strategic policy community over the nature and importance of the threat to the Minuteman missile force. Senior Carter administration officials rejected the theory. In his annual report for fiscal year 1979, Defense Secretary Harold Brown wrote that even if the U.S. took no action to increase the survivability of its land-based force,

it would not be synonymous with the vulnerability of the United States, or even of the strategic deterrent. It would not mean that we could not satisfy our strategic objectives. It would not by itself even mean that the United States would lack a survivable hard target kill capability or that we would necessarily be in a worse post exchange position in terms of numbers of weapons, payload, or destructiveness. ¹⁶

Weapons scientists and engineers from RAND, industry, and academia also challenged Pentagon and CIA's claims about Soviet missile accuracy. These analysts argued that a range of "bias" errors and other potential unexpected

factors invalidated the Pentagon’s calculations of Soviet missile accuracy.\textsuperscript{17} A highly technical debate raged in congressional hearings, journal articles and meetings for several years.\textsuperscript{18}

At a more fundamental level, the debate over the "window-of-vulnerability" scenario rejoined the decade-old debate over the political utility of threats to use nuclear weapons. Those analysts who had never fully subscribed to "war-fighting" theories, were skeptical of scenarios based on threats to use nuclear forces in selective ways for political purposes. After all, many analysts argued, even if the Soviet leadership felt confident of its ability to destroy the U.S. Minuteman force, it could not feel confident that the U.S. would not respond to a large scale attack that killed tens of millions of Americans by retaliating with its surviving nuclear forces. Seventy-five percent of U.S. forces are based at sea or on bombers, and these forces are capable of totally destroying the Soviet Union. How could the Soviet Union reap political benefits from a threat that so obviously lacked military

\textsuperscript{17} A "bias" error is a systematic error due to arguable assumptions about unknowns. For example, in the absence of actual experience, it is impossible to know the effect of the earth's gravitational field on a missile's trajectory or the "drag" on a missile when it reenters the atmosphere. Unexpected factors include the weather over the target, fratricide effects, electronic or computer malfunction.

credibility. Although the technical debate over the extent of U.S. silo vulnerability continued unabated, the "window of vulnerability" achieved widespread political acceptance. Secretary Brown's comments to a meeting of the Council on Foreign Relations in early 1979, illustrates the political shift.

The growing vulnerability of our land-based missile forces could, if not corrected, contribute to a perception of U.S. strategic inferiority that would have severely adverse political -- and could have potentially destabilizing military -- consequences.¹⁹

Lawrence Freedman concluded in a chronicle of U.S. assessments of the Soviet threat that by 1977, Minuteman vulnerability "was accepted by all as the most serious potential source of instability in the strategic balance."²⁰ Even nuclear weapons experts who opposed the MX missile system agreed that missile vulnerability was a problem. For example, weapons scientists Richard Garwin and Sidney Drell, part-time members of the strategic policy community identified with pro-arms control positions, put their efforts behind a proposal to base the MX on small submarines. As Drell said in congressional testimony advocating the submarine deployment plan: "The issue before the nation is not whether -- but how -- to respond to the growing Soviet ICBM threat to the U.S. land-based ICBM force."²¹


As concerns mounted about U.S. missile vulnerability, the Air Force intensified its search for a feasible basing mode. The service came up with thirty-four different basing plans, ranging from the ingeniously impractical, to the ridiculous, to the financially exorbitant. In June 1979, President Carter approved a plan with varying degrees of each characteristic. The plan called for two-hundred MX missiles to be constantly shuttled among 4,600 shelters in large transporters in the deserts of Nevada and Utah. The locations of the missiles would be unknown at any given time, so the Soviet Union would be need to target all 4,600 shelters in order to destroy 200 missiles. This basing mode was called the Multiple Protective Shelter (MPS) mode.

According to his memoirs and later commentary by aides, President Carter had strong reservations about proceeding with this particular missile in this particular basing mode, but was warned by the Joint Chiefs of Staff that if he did not move ahead with a "survivable" MX, they would not support the SALT II treaty then under negotiation. With or without the Chiefs' support, the treaty was under attack by the Committee on the Present Danger and other conservative political leaders. They faulted the treaty for, among other things, failing to close the "window of vulnerability." To advance the political fortunes of the SALT II

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22 For a thorough evaluation of basing modes considered by DoD, see Office of Technology Assessment study, MX Missile Basing (Washington DC: Congress of the United States, Office of Technology Assessment, 1981).

treaty, President Carter and his Secretary of Defense proceeded with plans for the large MX missile in an elaborate and costly configuration.

Carter's capitulation to political pressure did not succeed in pacifying his critics, but appeared only to encourage their future exploits. Ronald Reagan's campaign for the presidency provided a forum to advance the argument that America was military weak and vulnerable.\footnote{The fact that 52 Americans were being held hostage by Iranian radicals appeared to provide evidence of America's weakness. The hostages became an American obsession and had a large impact on popular opinion.} For Ronald Reagan -- as a candidate and then as President -- and for his many advisors from the Committee on the Present Danger, deployment of the 10-warhead MX missile was a crucial first step to redressing America's weakness.

However, candidate Ronald Reagan expressed doubts about the Carter administration's MPS basing mode, ridiculing it as a "Rube Goldberg-like" contraption. Several of his aides felt that the design of the system had been compromised by the Carter administration's desire to accommodate SALT II.\footnote{William J. Perry, Under Secretary for defense for research and engineering, charged that his major problem of selling the MPS system was "the lack of conservative support because they saw that it must be bad because it is compatible with SALT and SALT's bad." Interview, William J. Perry with WGBH, UBIT A12142, p. 12 of 20, 1987.} Moreover, Reagan had a close friendship with Nevada Senator Paul Laxalt, his 1980 campaign Chairman, and strong ties to Western political interests, all of which were unenthusiastic about basing the missile on federal range land in Nevada and Utah.
The Great Basin Rebellion

Not long after President Carter announced that the MX would be based in Nevada and Utah, residents of the states began to organize opposition to the plan. Ranchers, environmentalists, miners and local legislators from the states were concerned that the system would consume enormous parcels of public land; be a drain on resources, particularly water; and require a long period of construction which would disrupt communities.\(^{26}\) Public visits from Air Force and Pentagon officials intended to reassure the local residents had the opposite effect of intensifying public opposition. The states' Republican governors, Robert List of Nevada and Scott Mattheson of Utah, originally supported the plan. Over time, they became increasingly skeptical and outspoken. The Mormon Church publicly spoke against the missile system in May 1981, marking the high point of opposition.\(^{27}\)

As the local opposition mounted, some congressional leaders expressed reservations about the basing mode. To register its concern about the situation, in November 1979, the Senate unanimously passed (89-0) an amendment offered by Defense Appropriations subcommittee Chairman Senator Stevens providing that the MX funds "may not be used in a fashion which would commit the U.S. to


only one basing mode for the MX missile system." In May 1980, Senators Paul Laxalt of Nevada and Jake Garn of Utah jointly organized hearings before the Defense and Military Construction Subcommittees of the Appropriations Committee to investigate alternatives to the MPS basing system. In deference to local concerns, the administration slightly modified the plan and agreed to consider moving half of the system elsewhere. Despite qualms about the basing mode, throughout Carter's presidency, Congress always approved the funds requested for MX research and development (R&D) with minimal challenge.

October 1981: The Beginning of the End for the MX

In early October 1981, President Reagan unveiled his six-year $180 billion modernization program for strategic nuclear forces. The administration proposed improvements to virtually every element of the strategic force posture, which the President later claimed had deteriorated to the point that the Soviet Union held a "definite margin of superiority."

The Reagan administration rejected the Carter administration MPS scheme for the MX missile. Also rejected was the recommendation of a presidential

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panel of non-governmental defense scientists and strategists, appointed earlier that year, to proceed with a modified, smaller version of the multiple-shelter plan which could be expanded if no other solution was found.\textsuperscript{30} The commission was headed by Nobel Laureate Charles Townes, a professor of physics at University of California at Berkeley and former director of the Pentagon's Institute for Defense Analyses in the 1960s and included leading weapons scientists and engineers.\textsuperscript{31} The panel conducted a highly technical evaluation of a number of proposed basing modes. They concluded that the MPS mode was unsatisfactory because it could be overwhelmed by Soviet warheads in the absence of SALT II. However, the group found that no other proposed basing mode ensured missile survivability and that it was important to proceed immediately with the MX in order to provide the U.S. with increased counterforce capability as a component of a believable war-fighting capacity. A majority of the panel recommended proceeding with a modified MPS scheme in Utah and Nevada, which could be expanded later if needed.

The administration proposed instead a two-part solution. The first 100 missiles would be placed in "superhardened" existing Minuteman and Titan silos on a temporary basis while the administration would continue to study three

\textsuperscript{30} See John Edwards, pp. 228-241.

alternative permanent basing modes which seemed promising: anti-ballistic missile defense of the deployment sites, deployment in aircraft on continuous airborne patrol, and deep underground basing.

This announcement brought cheers from MX opponents in Nevada and Utah, Washington-based "peace" and arms control organizations, environmental organizations, and from the handful of liberal legislators who opposed the missile in any basing mode. It caused dismay and confusion, however, for the congressional leaders on nuclear weapons who were persuaded by the strategic argument for a survivable missile force. Reagan's announcement struck at the conceptual foundation of the program. As one Washington observer wrote, "Force exchange charts are the tarot cards of the strategic priesthood, and the Reagan administration has suddenly shuffled the deck." 32 "New Right" political leaders were also irritated and disappointed by the policy reversal. As William Van Cleave, top foreign policy adviser to Reagan's 1980 campaign and transition team, later complained bitterly: "The candidate who campaigned on the window-of-vulnerability not only did not proceed to close that window-of-vulnerability, but opened it wider." 33

Sen. John Tower, then Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, along with the ranking Minority member of the House Armed

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32 Christopher Paine, "Going in Circles with the MX," Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, December, 1981. Force exchange charters show the hypothetical drawdown in forces on both sides under different attack scenarios.

33 Interview with WGBH in 1986. Transcript of tape UBIT A12126, p. 5 of 5.
Services Committee, Representative William Dickinson, reportedly tried to
dissuade the administration from announcing its "interim" plan. The very
hawkish Sen. Tower, complained that:

by stuffing the MX's into fixed silos, we're creating just so many more
sitting ducks for the Russians to shoot at...True, the MX missile itself will
be more powerful, more accurate -- and we need that kind of weapon. But
it's of little use to us unless the Soviets are convinced that it can survive an
attack. Rep. Dickinson struck a more personal note: "They [the administration] pretty
well negated all the experts we've heard from for the last five years testifying
before our committee." Rep. Dickinson's frustration was a common response.

When Secretary of Defense Casper Weinberger appeared before the Senate
Armed Services Committee to explain the Reagan strategic modernization
program, usually friendly senators pummelled him with complaints. Sen. Gordon
Humphrey from New Hampshire -- a staunch Reagan ally -- told Weinberger how
"unsettling" it was for him "in the space of ten months to hear completely
contradictory testimony from the most respected and expert defense officials on
the basing mode." And Senator Exon, a conservative Democrat from

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34 Personal interview, Katherine Magraw with Alton Frye, Washington, D.C.,
June 13, 1991. Interview, WGBH with Gen. Kelly Burke, Senior Planner at the


36 Ibid.

37 U.S. Congress, Senate, Armed Services Committee, Modernization of the
U.S. Strategic Deterrent, 97th Cong., 1st sess., October 5, 1981.
Nebraska, angrily told Weinberger:

I came here two and a half years ago and I was not convinced at that time...that we needed or could afford an MX system. Since that time I have been barraged as a member of this Committee with testimony from previous administrations, with testimony from the highest officials of our defense establishment, from innumerable closed door sessions with the CIA, that lead me to believe that indeed here was a window of vulnerability that likely we could not have a chance of closing unless we went to the MPS-MX. Do you believe I was misled by all these gentlemen?\(^{38}\)

Accompanying Weinberger at the witness table was General Jones, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. "In my own view," Jones testified, "I considered the MX in a very survivable mode to be extremely important to the security of the nation. I remain to be convinced that there is a survivable mode other than MPS."\(^{39}\)

General Jones's sentiment was immediately reinforced by influential defense policy analysts. For example, William Perry, who had been a point-man for the MX as Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering in the Carter administration, told the Senate Armed Services Committee that he was concerned:

... that if we had this very accurate, very threatening missile in unprotected silos, and if they do not go to a survivable system themselves...that simply increases the hair trigger on both sides ... I agonized over that and said on balance I would not go ahead with that [MX in silos] because I don't believe we will come up with a survivable basing mode that is acceptable."\(^{40}\)

On December 2, 1981, the Senate approved by a 90-4 margin an

\(^{38}\) Ibid.

\(^{39}\) Ibid., p. 19.

\(^{40}\) Ibid., November 13, 1981, p.441 and 447.
amendment to the fiscal year 1982 Defense Appropriations Bill sponsored by a bi-partisan, moderate and conservative group consisting of William Cohen, Dan Quayle, Mark Mattingly, Warren Rudman and Sam Nunn, that redirected the use of MX research and development funds, away from the plan of deploying the MX in existing silos toward a permanent solution. The purpose of the amendment, according to its mostly Republican and conservative sponsors, was to "send a strong signal to DOD that deployment of the MX in Minuteman silos was the wrong direction to go in."\(^{41}\)

In 1982, the Senate reinforced this message. The administration dropped two options -- Deep Underground Missile Basing, and basing on continuous patrol aircraft -- after the Defense Department conceded their technical deficiencies.\(^{42}\)

The Senate Armed Services Committee unanimously refused to approve the first $1.5 billion for MX missile procurement on the ground that interim deployment in Minuteman silos could "jeopardize, rather than enhance" strategic deterrence and crisis-stability.\(^{43}\) The full Senate approved the Committee language, although a later compromise with the House Armed Services Committee restored the funds


and required the administration to present a new basing plan by the coming December.

At the time of Reagan's announcement of October 1981, a few observers predicted that Reagan's action would have far-reaching consequences for the shape of the debate over strategic policy. A senior Senate staffer predicted that "the point of view represented by the war-fighters will be like Humpty Dumpty." The administration, its ranks filled by members of the Committee on the Present Danger, had pushed Humpty Dumpty off the wall. "All the king's horses and all the king's men won't be able to put it together again. Whether or not the theory itself ever made sense, practical realities will have overturned it." The reaction to Reagan's October 1981 announcement was an indication that the scope of conflict over nuclear weapons policy was widening out of the control of the strategic policy community. Even prior to this announcement, the MX had generated opposition from unlikely places. The Sierra Club and Audubon Society, the Nevada-Utah Cattleman's Association, the National Taxpayers Union, and Common Cause, joined with traditional "peace"

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45 Ibid.
organizations to oppose the MX.\textsuperscript{46} Although this unusual activity had certainly attracted legislators' attention, Congress still maintained its distance from the MX debate. Following the October announcement, the inhibitors of congressional involvement faded. Congressional involvement in the debate intensified, as legislators used the "open" mode to challenge and protect established policies.

**The "Dense Pack" Basing Debacle**

The next chapter in the history of the ill-fated MX missile did nothing to arrest Humpty Dumpty's fall or contract the scope of the conflict. The administration submitted its latest plan for the MX to the lame-duck session of Congress following the 1982 election -- which added 26 new Democratic seats in the House of Representatives. The "Closely Spaced Basing" mode, immediately christened Dense Pack, called for deploying 100 MX missiles in underground shelters, closely spaced in a single north-south rectangular array. Dense Pack, was based on the counter-intuitive and complicated theory that placing the MX missiles close together would protect them due to the "fratricide" effect among attacking warheads. The principle of fratricide is that the blast and debris from early arriving warheads would destroy or divert others following close behind with their enormous blast and debris, thereby leaving a significant fraction of the

\textsuperscript{46} The large, environmental organizations, the National Taxpayers Union, and Common Cause -- all of whose constituencies differ from the "peace" organizations -- had not taken an active role in controversies over weapons systems before the MX missile. The National Taxpayers Union is a fiscally conservative organizations which lobbies on the federal budget.
Dense Pack missiles surviving in their hardened silos.

By this time, critiquing basing modes had become something of a sport for the technical defense community, and Dense Pack invited questions about its technical validity. The administration did not have convincing answers to questions and shortly after the announcement three of the five members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff -- all but the Air Force chief and Chairman of the JCS -- revealed to Congress they had severe reservations about the proposal. Their testimony was reinforced by the revelation that the Townes panel also expressed doubts about the feasibility of Dense Pack. In addition to an onslaught of criticism of the weakness of the concept, Dense Pack was ridiculed for its silly name and counter-intuitive principles.

Three weeks later, the House voted 245 to 176 to deny the Air Force money in the fiscal year 1983 budget to procure the first MX missiles. After extensive negotiations between House and Senate and administration representatives running right up against the Christmas holidays, Congress backed down and approved money to continue research and development (R&D) of the missile and a basing mode, but stipulated that this money could not be spent until Congress approved a basing system.47 The administration was required to submit a proposal for a permanent basing mode to Congress after March 1, 1983,

47 Sen. Jackson and Sen. Nunn were the architects of this plan which gave the administration another chance. See Margot Hornblower and George C. Wilson, "Reagan Reports Compromise on MX But Key Members Deny Agreement," The Washington Post, December 15, 1982.
after which Congress would vote on the release of R&D funds for the basing mode within 45 days. No funds for missile procurement were authorized.

The frustration level of the "hawks" within Congress reached a new peak and concern mounted among members of the strategic policy community that U.S. strategic policy was in crisis. In addition to the inability of MX missile proponents to present an acceptable basing mode for the missile, the nuclear weapons freeze movement was causing the public to question the wisdom, and even the sanity, of the nuclear arms race. "I sit here in frustration. I really do," the ranking minority member of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee and faithful Pentagon supporter Rep. Jack Edwards told the Defense Department officials appearing before his committee. "I am supposed to be one of the hawks on the committee I guess, but I swear the more I sit here and listen to this, the more I wonder what in the world we are up to."48

Those legislators who never supported the case for a new missile, particularly one with the characteristics of the MX -- such as Representatives Tom Downey, Paul Simon, Les Aucoin and Senators Gary Hart, Alan Cranston, and Carl Levin -- now found audiences more receptive to their arguments and were presented with more opportunities to voice them. The longer the fate of the MX missile remained unresolved, the greater the relevance of the arguments against the MX.

Once the missile program had crossed some undefinable threshold of controversy, many additional legislators began to express reservations about the missile, apart from the merits of Dense Pack. At the same time, many legislators were influenced by the nuclear weapons freeze movement and began to adopt the movement's arguments and rhetoric. In the course of professing support for the freeze, legislators identified the MX as precisely the kind of weapon that should not be developed. Even those who did not support the freeze proposal, questioned whether the MX was the right missile for the U.S., because such a large and heavy missile was difficult to base in a mobile configuration. Others questioned whether the problem of land-based missile vulnerability was beyond a technical solution. Still others began to suspect the integrity of the strategic arguments used to justify weapons programs.

The Strategic Policy Community and its Congressional Associates to the Rescue

On January 3, 1983, reportedly at the urging of moderate Republican leaders in Congress, President Reagan empaneled yet another Commission to determine how to proceed with the MX missile. The new panel was composed almost exclusively of former high-level government officials who were well known

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49 The Administration's experience with the blue-ribbon bi-partisan commission on Social Security already demonstrated the value of such commissions. For an account of the origins of the Scowcroft Commission see Lou Cannon, "Duberstein Helped President Show He Could Work With Hill," Washington Post, Dec. 5, 1983, p. 3. Also see Elizabeth Drew, "A Political Journal," The New Yorker, June 20, 1983, for an engaging and perceptive account of the Commission's activities.
and respected political figures. Officially called the President's Commission on
Strategic Forces, it became better known as the Scowcroft Commission, named for
its Chairman, General Brent Scowcroft. Scowcroft had served under Henry
Kissinger, and then succeeded him as National Security Advisor in the Ford White
House. He had also served on ACDA's General Advisory Committee on Arms
Control during the Carter administration.

Scowcroft's colleagues on this bipartisan, blue-ribbon panel were the sort of
"Establishment" national security experts and former officials whom the Reagan
administration had previously scorned. Scowcroft's lieutenant, and the principal
drafter of the Commission's report, was James Woolsey. Woolsey had been an
adviser to the U.S. SALT delegation, among other government positions, and was
representative of center-right supporters of SALT. In the early 1980s, Woolsey
was beginning to craft an image for himself as a conservative with publications
and speeches on the inadequacy of past arms control agreements and the need for
stronger U.S. defenses. Scowcroft and Woolsey worked with Robert
McFarlane to assemble the Commission. McFarlane was Chief Deputy to
National Security Advisor William Clark, and had formerly served in the same
position for Scowcroft. He was a pragmatic conservative with authority to make
decisions for the administration.

The Commission members included four ex-Secretaries of Defense: Harold

50 Woolsey was also a former General Counsel to the Senate Armed Services
Committee, a member of the NSC staff under Nixon, and undersecretary of the
Navy in the Carter Administration.
Brown, Melvin Laird, James Schlesinger, and Donald Rumsfeld; two ex-Secretaries of State: Alexander Haig and Henry Kissinger; and two ex-CIA Directors Richard Helms John McCon. Other members included William J. Perry, Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Development in the Carter administration; John Deutch, an MIT professor and Carter administration Under Secretary in the Department of Energy; Lloyd Cutler, special counsel to the Carter White House and prominent Washington lawyer.  

Although the Commission was formally charged with conducting a "review of the strategic modernization program," it was understood at the time, and freely acknowledged by the participants later, that the Commission's mandate precluded a recommendation to cancel the MX. The Commission members, all of whom had supported the MX in the past, were aware that the Commission's objective was to conceive of a way to make the MX acceptable to a majority of Congress. 

Commission Chairman Brent Scowcroft, James Woolsey and Congressman Les Aspin, then an influential member of the House Armed Services Committee, started working together. Woolsey and Aspin were close friends and tennis partners from their days together in Robert McNamara's Pentagon. According to Les Aspin, he and Woolsey started talking even before the Commission had been

51 The other members of the Commission were: Thomas Reed, a senior staff on the NSC and former Secretary of the Air Force; AFL-CIO Vice President John Lyons; retired Vice Admiral Levering Smith; Texas Governor William Clements and former Deputy Secretary of Defense; and Nicolas Brady. This list includes both Commission members and "senior counselors" to the Commission because the formal distinction drawn between these roles dissolved in practice.

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announced. "Woolsey and I thought of two things: one was you ought to start with the politics -- what's possible to pass -- and then, two, among the possible things to pass, what makes sense militarily."52 Over the past several years, the MX had become associated with the absurdity of the quantitative arms race and the dangers of the qualitative arms race. The goal was to redefine the missile as a key component in a "package" which would be supported by the "hawks" in the administration and enough influential legislators to build a majority in Congress.

Aspin helped to determine what would sell to Congress by conferring with the House Democratic leadership and arranging meetings on Capitol Hill for General Scowcroft and Woolsey with key representatives. Rep. Al Gore, a liberal Democrat from Tennessee, joined Woolsey and Aspin in developing and selling the report's recommendations. As the Commission's deadline drew near, Members of the Commission invited select House Members to breakfast at the White House.

The Scowcroft Commission Report was sent to the president on April 6, 1983. It received extensive attention from politicians and the national media, generating mostly lavish praise but also some harsh criticism. General Scowcroft claimed that the report recommended "an important new departure... to integrate strategic force programs with arms control, and to move both in the direction of

52 Elizabeth Drew, p. 49.
stability."⁵³ Actually, the report contained very little that was new. It was a
restatement of the orthodoxy.

The Commission report recommended prompt deployment of 100 MX
missiles in existing Minuteman silos. This was to "demonstrate national will and
cohesion" and to deploy the "prompt hard-target kill-capability" needed to sustain
United States extended deterrence policy.⁵⁴ Deployment in "vulnerable" silos
would be acceptable after all, because the "window of vulnerability" was closed for
the time being, due to the continued viability of the U.S. submarine missile and
bomber forces. However, the authors concluded that the window could open
sometime in the future. Consequently, they recommended that the immediate
development of a small, mobile, single-warhead missile should be a top national
priority. This missile became known as the Midgetman missile. In addition to
providing a "hedge" against future threats to the submarine force, the Midgetman
missile should also have counterforce capabilities. It "should have sufficient
accuracy and yield to put Soviet hardened military targets at risk."⁵⁵

The report also argued that deployment of single-warhead missiles would
also help to undo the "destabilizing" consequences of a decision taken a decade
earlier by many of these same men to develop MIRVs. MIRVed missiles, such as

⁵³ U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations. President's

⁵⁴ U.S. President's Commission on Strategic Forces, Report of the President's
Commission on Strategic Forces, April 6, 1983, p. 16. (Hereafter referred to as
Scowcroft Commission report).

the MX, are "destabilizing" because they "tempt" the Soviet Union to attack by offering a reward of ten U.S. warheads for the price of attacking one target. Proceeding with the 10-warhead MX -- clearly inconsistent with the goal of de-MIRVing land-based forces -- was nevertheless reconciled with this objective because it would "induce" the Soviet Union to accept limitations and "encourage [it] "to move [their force structure] in a stabilizing direction."

Lastly, the report recommended a "new departure in arms control." The U.S. should seek to shift the counting rules of strategic arms control from launchers to warheads in order to remove the incentive under existing arms control agreements to build large multiple-warhead missiles. In a gesture to "build-down" supporters, the report contained a general statement of support for "proposals in Congress ... on warhead limitations in which reductions are forced in warheads numbers as a price of modernization...."

Newspaper stories often portrayed the Scowcroft Commission as serving as a mediator between the Congress and the White House. However, the conflict between the institutions was merely the most visible manifestation of deeper conflicts involving both institutions and the larger policy community. Moreover, the quest for an acceptable solution to the MX basing problem was not a narrow technical problem, but a political problem stemming from confusion in U.S. nuclear weapons policy and a popular loss of confidence in its policy makers. The freeze movement was both a contributing factor and a result of these political

\[56\] Ibid., p. 23.
conditions. As James Woolsey said, the Commission was "formed in response to the political chaos of the previous two years on strategic and arms control questions."\textsuperscript{57} The chaos had three sources, Woolsey wrote a few years after the fact. A new administration was "making major changes in its predecessor's strategic modernization programs and its approaches to arms control," conservatives and liberals had gotten in the "habit of organizing mass movements," and disarray in Washington had deprived both strategic modernization and arms control from "being able to muster the congressional consensus needed."\textsuperscript{58}

Aspin and Gore's stated intention in their negotiations with the Scowcroft Commission was to rebuild a congressional consensus. As self-appointed representatives of Congress, they proposed to trade congressional support for the MX missile for an administration commitment to produce a small single-warhead missile and to pursue arms control agreements with the Soviet Union. Several senators who peddled the Scowcroft Commission's work within the Senate expressed similar hopes of pressuring the administration to change its positions and attitude toward arms control. Specifically, Senators William Cohen and Sam Nunn insisted that the Commission endorse their "build down" proposal. As described in the previous chapter, the "build-down" proposal was originally crafted as a compromise between a nuclear freeze and an unrestrained arms race. The


\textsuperscript{58} \textit{Ibid.}
original idea of build-down was that for every new warhead deployed, two existing ones would have to be eliminated, thereby permitting modernization while also requiring reductions in overall numbers.

This group of House and Senate members viewed their activities with the Scowcroft Commission as a way to amplify some voices within the administration and subdue others. As one House member said:

We saw ourselves as trying to make ourselves a counterweight to people like Richard Perle, and allow people like Scowcroft and some of the folks over in the State Department to have a greater hand in this. We'd be a counterbalance to the real hawks, and allow the more moderates to actually try and pursue an agreement... There was a distinct battle going on in the administration. We knew it...And basically what you do is you find a group of congressmen who suddenly decide, well, we're going to take part in this battle in the administration. Seeing as how the thing was so close on the MX, it was, I guess you could say, a window of opportunity for some congressmen to jump in and take advantage of.59

Aspin and Gore, in particular, jumped through the "window of opportunity" and reaped substantial benefits as a result.

Aspin was a Yale graduate, Rhodes scholar, and MIT-trained economist, who came to Washington to work for Wisconsin Senator William Proxmire. From Proxmire's office, he had joined Secretary of Defense McNamara's "Whiz Kids" as a cost-effectiveness expert for the Pentagon. After a brief time in academia, Aspin was elected to Congress in 1970, at the age of 32, as an anti-Vietnam War Democrat from Beloit, Wisconsin. Aspin won a seat on the House Armed

Services Committee and quickly made a reputation for himself as a gadfly by issuing frequent and stinging weekend press releases that caught the attention of the media. For example, he revealed that the Pentagon was flying Col. Alexander Haig's poodle around Europe at taxpayers' expense and that Pentagon scientists were gassing beagle puppies in chemical-warfare tests.

Within several years, Aspin made the transition from gadfly to influential and knowledgeable Pentagon critic. He helped establish his credibility, within the strategic policy community and Congress, by writing articles in serious arms control and defense journals and participating in prestigious conferences of the strategic policy community. Although Aspin was pro-arms control and often leery of certain military expenditures, he was not considered a "knee-jerk" liberal. His voting record was mixed and his opposition to programs was more often than not based on cost-effectiveness and mismanagement arguments, rather than opposition to the content of Pentagon or U.S. military policy. Yet, he supported his criticism of Pentagon policy with sophisticated arguments based on established precepts of nuclear doctrines. As the nuclear weapons freeze movement gathered steam, Aspin became a sometimes half-hearted, but indispensable, leader of the effort to pass a freeze resolution in the House. As discussed in the previous chapter, Aspin did not hide his preference for arms control in the mode of the SALT II Treaty over the nuclear weapons freeze proposal. Even so, his expertise, stature and considerable debating skill were crucial to the freeze resolution's victory. However, at the same time Aspin was directing the passage of a resolution
demanding an end to all new nuclear weapons programs, he was crafting a proposal intended to rescue the foundering MX missile program.

Aspin explained frankly in interviews and talks that even if Congress did halt the MX this time, it would only be a temporary resolution because the Air Force and others were sure to do battle until they reversed the decision. He cited the phoenix-like existence of the B-1 bomber as evidence of the effective perseverance of weapons proponents. He also argued that if the MX program was terminated, Democrats would have difficulty refuting the Republican's charge that they prevented President Reagan from achieving progress in arms control.

To refute this charge, Aspin advocated development of a new small missile. Leading a chorus of Democratic moderates and hawks, Aspin argued that the party must adopt a more "muscular approach" to foreign policy and defense issues in preparation for the next elections. To counter the impression that the party was full of "Dr.Nos" on defense, they should say "yes" to this missile. "The Midgetman is perfect," Aspin told the Wall Street Journal. "Every time the press calls it the Democratic missile my heart goes pitter-patter." Aspin was given dinners and awards by groups of moderate and conservative Democrats promoting

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60 In fact, the Air Force ultimately got only 50 MX missiles, a far cry from the 200 missile, hard-target force they originally requested.

61 Of course, most of the congressional Democrats were in favor of the Trident submarine and Trident missile programs, the Pershing II and GLCM programs, a new bomber force, and several new types of warheads and artillery shells, and increases in military spending.

a more "hawkish" position and image for the party.\textsuperscript{63}

Al Gore also became a favorite of the "Defense Democrats." With the conviction of a born salesman -- or entrepreneurial politician -- Gore tirelessly promoted the Midgetman missile. He argued for the missile with reference to the central tenets of strategic doctrine and the dominant idiom of the field -- exchange calculations. Gore reiterated a well-known argument that vulnerable multi-warhead missiles could be "destabilizing" in a crisis, because the knowledge that it would only require one or two attacking warheads to destroy ten warheads sitting on a missile might tempt one side to launch a first strike, either to gain an advantage or to preempt an anticipated first strike by the other side.

Gore's well-timed and well-argued case for a single warhead missile advanced the concept's political fortunes as well as Gore's. The belief that MIRVed missiles are destabilizing date back to the early 1970s when they were first deployed, and over the course of the next two decades, this belief became widely accepted among the strategic policy community. Even Henry Kissinger lamented the lost opportunity to prevent the introduction of MIRV technology into the superpowers' arsenals. The proposed solution of a single-warhead missile did not originate with Rep. Gore. In fact, General Scowcroft and Jim Woolsey

\textsuperscript{63} For example, the "neoconservatives" at The New Republic magazine and the Coalition for a Democratic Majority held dinners for Aspin. The Coalition for a Democratic Majority was co-chaired by Rep. Dave McCurdy and James Woolsey. Its board included a few "hawks" such as Eugene Rostow. But most of the board members were conservative establishment-type Democrats who had served in high positions in the Carter administration, such as Jan Lodal and Walter Slocombe, and academics such as John Silber, Robert Scalapino and Samuel Huntington.
proposed it to the first Townes Commission in 1981, and Paul Nitze advanced the proposal in the late 1970s. Although Gore was not on the defense committees, he established himself as an nuclear weapons expert by demonstrating familiarity with the concepts and theories of the strategic policy community. His advocacy of a single-warhead missile was an opportunity for him to showcase his competence and his influence on policy-making. Focusing on one prominent issue is also one of the surer ways for a junior member, as Rep. Gore was at the time, to get attention.\(^6\)

The single-warhead missile became as fashionable in strategic circles as the window-of-vulnerability once was, and Al Gore more than anybody else in public life, was identified with it. *Washington Post* columnist Stephen S. Rosenfeld enthused

> starting from scratch, and in a brief period of time, through personal exertion, Gore can fairly claim to have had a major role in, as he puts it, moving a central set of ideas from the perimeter of the debate to the center.\(^6\)

A New Republic editorial on the Scowcroft Commission read: "We congratulate Representative Gore; rarely has a member of Congress made so creative a

\(^6\) Gore moved from the House to the Senate in 1986 and made an unsuccessful bid to be the Democratic presidential nominee two years later. As nuclear arms issues lost their glamour toward the end of the decade, Gore quickly moved on to the next hot issue: he became an expert on ozone depletion and Global Warming.

contribution to the structure and strategy of the American military.\footnote{66} 

\textbf{Wheeling and Dealing for the March 1983 Vote}

The resolution which had passed in December, 1982 required Congress to vote up or down on releasing the fiscal year 1983 funds for the MX within 45 days of the President's submission of a new proposal. The approval of both House and Senate was needed to release the funds.

Although the Scowcroft Report was essentially completed by February, it was not issued until April, at which time the House was still embroiled in its marathon debate over the nuclear weapons freeze resolution. The vote on the MX funds, therefore, would not occur until after the final vote on passage of the freeze resolution. The timing was planned by Aspin who calculated that some members who had voted for the freeze would be looking for a way to soften that vote, without having to vote against arms control. Aspin confided to Drew that, "[T]he usual pattern of this place is that people begin to get a little uncomfortable if they've gone too far one way and start looking for a way to pop back the other way."\footnote{67}

Aspin and Gore's leverage over their colleagues was enhanced by extensive media coverage of the Scowcroft Report and their own involvement. The two congressmen recruited a group of moderate Democrats, influential in the House

\footnote{66}{"The Scowcroft Revolution," \textit{The New Republic}, May 9, 1983.}

\footnote{67}{Drew, "Political Journal," p. 55.}
party structure, to help broker a deal between the House and the administration. The key recruits were Thomas Foley of Washington, Norman Dicks of Washington, Victor Fazio of California, and Richard Gephardt of Missouri. The collective influence of these House members was sufficient to enlist the support of nearly the entire Democratic leadership. House Majority Leader Jim Wright, Chief Deputy Whip William Alexander and Democratic Caucus chairman Gillis Long, all were persuaded to support the Commission's recommendations. This meant they supported proceeding with the MX, and reversing their recent opposition to the missile's on-going development. Speaker Thomas O'Neill was the only member of the House Democratic leadership to continue to oppose the MX.

Aspin, Gore, Dicks and their allies endeavored to cast the vote on the resolution as one on the Scowcroft Commission "package," and not on the MX missile or the specific proposal to base 100 MX in existing silos. They unsuccessfully sought approval from the House parliamentarian to offer an amendment to the resolution so that it would read as "an endorsement of the Scowcroft Commission [which] incidentally frees up the $500 million or whatever from the previous year." Since the terms of the resolution forbade amendments in its wording, Aspin and his allies tried to impose their preferred interpretation of the upcoming vote by insistently and constantly repeating it. As,

one staff recounted, "When someone talked about the very weak case for MX, the members of Aspin's group answered by talking about the Scowcroft Commission recommendation and how great this was for arms control."  

The congressmen and the members of the Scowcroft Commission were aware that the perception of the "package" as a centrist position would be strengthened if both extremes on the political spectrum vigorously opposed it. Les Aspin confided to Drew: "I said to Cap [Weinberger] and others, 'Don't crow when this comes out; we need you to grouse.'"  

Later on, when the mood in Congress shifted against the MX, Aspin complained in a Washington Post op-ed that the administration had embraced the "compromise" too closely and lamented that the "right-wing fringe" did not attack the deal because they were too busy with their social agenda. 

The report drew mixed reviews. Certain influential voices praised it effusively. The New Republic, for example, declared that, "The Scowcroft Report is one of the most serious and sophisticated official documents of the nuclear era."

69 Personal Interview, Katherine Magraw with House staff member who preferred to remain anonymous.

70 Drew, p. 55.

71 Les Aspin, "It's a Good Deal -- And It's In Trouble," The Washington Post, July 17, 1983, p. C8. Aspin's unabashed cynicism was too much for some. Representative Patricia Schroeder angrily replied in a Post op-ed printed three days after Aspin's that she deeply resented Aspin's assumptions about how positions are determined. "Those of us who oppose the MX do so because it is an expensive and destabilizing system" -- not because the right wing supports it." Patricia Schroeder, "Kill the MX," The Washington Post, July 20, 1983.
It is also one of the most candid official documents of any era. Virtually all commentary from the nuclear weapons policy network and the mainstream national media praised the report's deemphasis -- some said dismissal -- of the window-of-vulnerability scenario and most also praised the idea of developing a single warhead missile. However, most of these same voices decried the recommendation to proceed with the MX and worried that the report contributed to the confusion wrought by shifting rationales for ICBM modernization. Most criticism focused on the apparent incompatibility of the two prongs of the Scowcroft package -- developing the Midgetman missile in order to deMIRV U.S. forces and deploying the 10-warhead MX missile anyway.

Politicians and activists who had most strongly opposed President Reagan's policies in the past questioned a deal which traded the MX for a mere declaration of sincerity from an administration which included several long-time implacable foes of arms control. In addition, several of Aspin's colleagues who had worked closely with him in the past to promote arms control and the nuclear freeze felt betrayed by Aspin's close alliance with the MX advocates and the administration. One leader of this group of arms control supporters in the House, Les AuCoin, was openly bitter about the "deal" Aspin was offering his colleagues:


And what [we're] bitter about is the presumption on the part of members [we] had respected that somehow they could give Ronald Reagan religion on arms control. It's preposterous. And even more, the idea that an administration has to be bargained into sincerity about arms control -- what kind of administration is that, and what kind of bargain is it that relatively junior members of Congress can get them to say, 'Now we will be good?'

AuCoin's complaints were well founded. Despite the efforts of McFarlane and others to portray the administration as willing to change its hostile attitude toward arms control, the administration continued to speak with more than one voice. The newly confirmed Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency Kenneth Adelman continued to project the image of an uninformed and "unconverted" opponent of arms control that had nearly doomed his confirmation. START negotiator Edward Rowny's appearances on Capitol Hill were a disaster because he showed no interest in modifying the START proposal, in line with White House promises to congressmen.

Aspin, Woolsey and McFarlane engineered an exchange of letters intended to assuage concerns about the administration's sincerity. The first letter was sent at the end of April from Senators Cohen, Nunn and Percy to the President asking that the President propose the "build-down" concept to the Soviet Union. The letter also asked that the Scowcroft recommendations be incorporated into the START proposal; that a small, single-warhead missile receive "highest priority" and that a bipartisan commission like the Scowcroft Commission continue to

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advise the President on arms control.\textsuperscript{75}

A few days later, nine congressmen, led by Aspin, Gore and Dicks, sent a similar letter to President Reagan. The representatives expressed concern that "there are some in the administration who embrace the Scowcroft report, not in its entirety, but only as a means to the end of securing Congress' approval for the deployment of the MX," In order to allay these fears, they asked for assurances from the Reagan White House. Their demands were similar to those voiced by the senators in their letter, except that instead of requesting that "build-down" be part of the U.S. policy position, they asked that the total number of MX missiles to be deployed be reviewed in the context of negotiating stabilizing arms control.\textsuperscript{76}

The President's response to these letters was a product of much negotiation among his own administration and the "gang of six," as the six key representatives and senators were called. Both letters stated that the START proposal was under review to determine what changes could be made to bring it in line with the Scowcroft recommendations. To the senators, Reagan devoted seven paragraphs to a favorable review of the "build-down" proposal. It was under examination, Reagan said, and "if formulated and implemented flexibly" might be a productive way to accomplish arms reductions." The letters assured the congressmen that the

\textsuperscript{75} The Senators' letter (and President's response) are reprinted in U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, \textit{United States-Soviet Relations}, part 2, 98th Cong., 1st sess., June 21, 22, and 23, 1983, pp. 41.44.

\textsuperscript{76} \textit{Congressional Record}, May 3, 1983, p. E2049.
small missile would be pursued "on a high priority basis" and that he saw "merit" in the idea of a continuing bipartisan panel on arms control.\textsuperscript{77}

After receipt of the letters -- both of which dramatically arrived just as the Defense Appropriations Committees were considering the MX resolution -- the "gang of six" proclaimed their satisfaction with the administration's meaningful "concessions." Reagan's letter, however, was too general to contain actual concessions. The President did acknowledge -- as the "gang of six" pointed out repeatedly -- that his START proposal was not compatible with the future deployment of a large number of single-warhead missile, but he did not say how he would modify it. The "gang of six" claimed the letter indicated the administration's willingness to hold the number of MX missiles to under 100, but the text said only that deployment "will be influenced by Soviet strategic programs and arms reduction agreements." Several House members angrily denounced the letters and what they considered to be a charade. As one of the leaders of the anti-MX faction, Rep. Tom Downey, wrote in the \textit{Washington Post}:

Some of my best friends support the MX ... President Reagan gets a go-ahead on the MX testing and production. That's real. My friends get a letter making nebulous statements of intent to do something about arms control. What's that worth?\textsuperscript{78}

The purpose of the letters was undercut, moreover, by Casper

\textsuperscript{77} The exchange of letters are printed in the \textit{Congressional Record}, May 12, 1983, pp. E2229-30.

\textsuperscript{78} Thomas Downey, "Why I'm Not Switching on MX," \textit{Washington Post}, May 20, 1983.
Weinberger's comments on "Good Morning America" that the letters did not signal any new bargaining position. "I don't really understand, and never have understood, what it is additionally that is wanted from the President." In order to recoup from Weinberger's unhelpful bluntness, Reps. Aspin, Gore, and Dicks, Woolsey, Scowcroft, and McFarlane arranged Capitol Hill meetings with Richard Perle, office visits from Scowcroft Commission members, dinner at the White House for wavering House members, and even a trip to Camp David for select legislators.

The House took up the MX resolution on May 24, 1983. In the course of debate, Rep. Howard Wolpe, a liberal Democrat from Michigan, pleaded with his colleagues who were casting themselves as moderates desirous of finding this national consensus, that you do a disservice. You do a disservice to this country and you do a disservice to this body when you try to resurrect a national consensus on a policy that is politically motivated, that has no justification from the standpoint of national security.

However, the promise of reforging a national consensus appealed to legislators. The House approved the MX resolution by a margin of 239-186. Aspin and his allies succeeded in swaying 32 out of the targeted 66 "swing" votes, about 10 more than they had expected. The following day the Senate followed suit by a vote of 59-39.

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79 Good Morning America interview with Casper Weinberger on May 16, 1983. Interviewed by ABC's Steve Bell.

80 Congressional Record, May 24, 1983.
The May vote did not end the debate over the MX missile. In fact, the terms of the "Scowcroft deal" guaranteed an on-going process of wrangling over the MX and the U.S. arms control position since one of its strong selling points was the assurance that annual authorization and appropriation requests for the MX would provide continual leverage to press for arms control progress. In order to demonstrate the validity of this claim, nineteen Republican senators sent President Reagan a warning the day after the vote. They told Reagan that the Senate vote to release fiscal year 1983 funds did not represent a consensus on the need to deploy 100 MX missiles in Minuteman silo launchers. Rather, yesterday we effected our part of an agreement with your administration to proceed with a militarily controversial program in exchange for a strong commitment to proceed seriously and immediately with a reformulation of the U.S. START proposal, a meaningful guaranteed build-down proposal, development of a more survivable, small single-warhead ICBM, and creation of a bipartisan, durable arms control panel.\(^81\)

**Consensus Recovered?**

The most commonly cited virtue of the Scowcroft Commission Report was that it offered hope of rebuilding the "consensus" that had been shattered in the previous years. The strategic policy community and others considered the continued controversy over the MX missile an obstacle to this end. As Commission member Lloyd Cutler said: "The continuity of 10 years or more on

\(^81\) Senate Foreign Relations Committee, *United States-Soviet Relations*, op. cit. pp. 44-45. The signatories were: Senators Cohen, Percy, Mattingly, Rudman, Gorton, Boschwitz, Specter, Simpson, D'Amato, Murkowski, Quayle, Kassebaum, Stevens, Lugar, Kasten, Domenici, Heinz, Pressler, and Danforth.
weapons and arms control programs will be endangered if Congress votes down MX missiles without offering a policy to replace them. Lloyd Cutler was a strong proponent of SALT II, loyal Democrat, and opponent of the Reagan administration. Yet the Scowcroft Commission, on which he served, amounted to a rescue operation for the Reagan administration. Cutler and other like-minded members of the Commission, put aside their opposition to the Reagan administration in the name of ending divisive debate. As Robert McFarlane, Deputy Director of the National Security Council staff responsible for assembling the Commission, said:

I believed there was a bipartisan consensus within the community -- the family -- that we had to have the MX or it would demonstrate an inability on the part of the United States to solve problems. Consequently, the supporters of the Commission report repeated constantly and with reverence that the Commission could and would re-create "consensus."

At the same time, the authors of the report acknowledged that their work did not re-create agreement on the fundamental questions of U.S. policy. The report was a carefully contrived political arrangement, as Scowcroft explained in a 1987 interview.

The first [part of the solution was] to deploy an MX for those who felt it essential that we have that sort of thing. To recommend the development of a small single warhead missile for those who felt that the MX was, was a mistake, that instead our strategic forces ought to move clearly in the

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83 Elizabeth Drew, "Political Journal," p. 44.
direction of clear survivable systems. And lastly as I said, to integrate arms control with, with the modernization of our strategic forces, so that we got in a political sense people who supported the MX, [people who] would accept the small missile as a way to get the MX, people who didn't like the MX but [did] like the small missile, but would accept the MX because of the small missile. And people who perhaps didn't feel any modernization was necessary but in order to get the Reagan administration active in arms control would support a strategic modernization. So that from a purely political sense it was that kind of a combination which got a variety of different coalitions together.  

In other words, the Commission, in its report, cynically bought off policy-makers of different perspectives by seeming to address their particular issue, even though this meant that the Report contained conflicting recommendations. The Commission and its supporters' purpose in stressing that they had re-created "consensus," was to end debate. According to the Report's formula, policy-makers could continue to emphasize various accepted aspects of U.S. policy -- traditional arms control, strategic modernization, the search for "stability" and "survivability", and counterforce capability -- without arguing for exclusion of other accepted aspects. Furthermore, according to the Report, there should be an end to the divisive, confused national debate over a major nuclear weapons system which had come to be a potent symbol of U.S. willingness to compete in the nuclear arms race.

The Commission members and their allies in the strategic policy community justified their self-appointed role as "guardians of the consensus" as necessary to uphold a strategic objective shared by all. Failure to proceed with

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the MX would undermine the U.S. policy of extended deterrence by demonstrating a lack of "national will and cohesion." Scowcroft and his colleagues emphasized on numerous occasions that the U.S. has "had four Presidents who have said that the MX is important, if not essential, to our national security." Rejecting that accumulated wisdom would demonstrate that doubts exist about U.S. strategic policy and this would weaken "deterrence." The further elaboration of this argument was that virtually all nuclear modernization was justified as a means of preventing any 'misperception' by opponents, or wavering allies, that the U.S. might lose its resolve to resort to nuclear weapons in a crisis. Whatever their policy differences, the Commission members were all adherents of a policy of extended deterrence. The Commission's report contained all of the central tenets of the strategic policy community which were described in Chapter I. The ambiguity of this doctrinal statement is a result of the differing strategic priorities -- one stressing the need to intensify nuclear war-fighting capabilities and doctrines, and the other stressing the need to maintain a "stable" nuclear balance -- suggested by the different tenets. On balance, the report tilts toward the war-fighters in this continuum of establishment opinion.

The Report was candid, as The New Republic claimed. It endorsed and explained U.S. extended nuclear deterrence policy in an unusually forthright

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85 U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, President's Commission on Strategic Forces, Ninety-eight Cong., 1st sess., May 11, 1983.

86 See pp. 41-42 of Chapter I.
manner for a widely disseminated document.

The Soviets must continue to believe what has been NATO's doctrine for three decades: that if we or our allies should be attacked -- by massive conventional means or otherwise -- the United States has the will and the means to defense with the full range of American power...

...we must have a credible capability for controlled, prompt, limited attack on hard targets ourselves. This capability casts a shadow over the calculus of Soviet risk-taking at any level of confrontation with the West.\(^{87}\)

With the exception of a few articles in "left-wing" magazines, there was no criticism -- or even analysis -- of the Report's explicit endorsement of a counter-force and war-fighting policy.\(^{88}\) There was considerable commentary on the report's emphasis on the importance of arms control and of a stable balance of forces. The far-right strategists associated with Ronald Reagan had largely discarded stability as a criterion for force planning or for arms control. The Commission Report explicitly reinstated stability as a key criterion for composing U.S. forces and as the key yardstick for arms control.

Elaborately orchestrated negotiations among legislators, administration officials, and the Scowcroft Commission continued throughout the year. The impression left by these negotiations was that a gradual consensus was taking hold that the U.S. should re-dedicate itself to achieving arms control agreements. By

\(^{87}\) Scowcroft Commission Report, pp. 5-6, 16-17.

this time in mid-1983, the Congress was no longer paying as much attention to the freeze proposal and the Reagan administration had restrained the rhetoric of some of its more provocative members, including the president himself.

The House and Senate once again considered funds for initial procurement of the MX missiles in mid-July, 1983. This time Congress decided to proceed with the missile. A narrow majority of the House and a solid majority in the Senate approved procurement funds for 21 missiles. After deciding the vote on procurement funds, both chambers overwhelmingly supported an amendment offered in the House by the aging Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, Mel Price, and Les Aspin, to bolster the "deal" between the administration and Congress. The amendment directed the Pentagon to keep the small missile small -- 33,000 pounds or less -- and it conditioned deployment of the MX upon various milestones in Midgetman's development.

The next floor battle over MX funds occurred in the fall during consideration of the fiscal year 1984 Defense Appropriations bill. During the summer, the Senate champions of the build-down idea actively promoted their proposal, drawing the focus of attention away from their House colleagues. Until this point, there had been little evidence of change in the administration's START proposal. White House officials and Senators Cohen, Nunn, and Percy and their staffs worked closely to turn the build-down idea into a viable arms control
proposal before the START talks resumed and before the next MX votes.  

On October 4th, President Reagan announced a revised arms control proposal which offered a general endorsement of the build-down proposal and took some small steps to accommodate a future U.S. force of many single warhead missiles. When the White House released the proposal, it acknowledged the contributions of the Scowcroft Commission and Members of Congress, singling out Senators Cohen, Nunn, and Percy, and Reps. Aspin, Gore and Dicks. "Their views served as the basis for a productive dialogue between the executive and legislative branches and have been incorporated within the new U.S. initiative," stated a White House Fact Sheet.  

The Fact Sheet describes the terms of the build-down proposal to be included in the U.S. official position in START negotiations. This position was developed in deliberations with the senators and White House staff, with help from retired Air Force General Glenn Kent, an analyst from the RAND corporation, and Alton Frye, the director of the Washington office of the Council on Foreign Relations. The major change was a modification of the original simple formula that called for two warheads to be withdrawn for every new one deployed. The deployment to withdrawal ratio would vary with the type of  

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90 U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Congress and Foreign Policy: 1983, 98th Cong., 2nd sess., 1984. This report is an annual review conducted by committee staff.
weapon to be deployed. Differentiating among types weapons was intended to encourage both sides to make heavier use in the future of more "stabilizing" weapons -- single-warhead missiles or submarine-based missiles for example -- while discouraging reliance on multiple-warhead land-based missiles which were thought to be the most threatening. The variable ratios were also intended to equalize trade-offs between asymmetrical forces. The proposal also called for a guaranteed annual percentage reduction of five percent in case the Soviet Union avoided the necessity of withdrawing weapons by declining to add any. In this case, the percentage reductions were likely to set the pace of reductions, apart from any modernization effort. Thus the original concept of making reductions the price of modernization had disappeared.

The reductions proposed under the label of the build-down generated far more opposition than support within the administration. As the Washington Post’s veteran national security reporters wrote during the week of the announcement:

Administration officials say that virtually every agency of the government was opposed to a build-down proposal based solely on this modernization concept because it would be difficult if not

91 The new formula called for a 1:1 withdrawal for single-warhead missiles; 1:2 for MIRVed ICBM; and 2:3 for MIRVed SLBMs. Retired Lt. Gen. Glenn Kent suggested a further elaboration. Kent devised a method for measuring the nuclear destructive power of all types of missiles and bombers in one universal unit. Kent’s "destructive units" would make trade offs between bombers and missiles possible.

92 For the fullest explanation of the build-down concept, see Alton Frye, "The Strategic Build-Down: A Context for Restraint," Foreign Affairs (Winter 1983-84).
impossible to work out and verify.\textsuperscript{93}

In addition to the difficulty of defining "modernization," a build-down would leave the U.S. with a very lopsided, hollowed out force. Deployment of 100 MX missiles would require the retirement of 2,000 warheads -- that would amount to all the 450 single-warhead Minuteman II ICBMs, and most of the three-warhead Minuteman IIIIs. Furthermore, the Soviet Union clearly rejected the proposal because it would significantly disadvantage the Soviet Union, just as the original START proposal had, despite the elaboration of the original concept with variable weights given to different types of weapons. Soviet land-based missiles, the heart of their force, would "cost" more than roughly corresponding American weapons, because of the Soviet missile's large throw-weight.\textsuperscript{94}

Despite abundant indication that the build-down proposal was unlikely to be seriously considered in arms controls negotiations, the "gang of six" said they were very gratified that Ronald Reagan professed his intention to incorporate the build-down concept in START negotiations. His new proposal was hailed as a significant achievement of the "gang". Alton Frye wrote that "Mr. Reagan's acceptance of the build-down concept modifies the U.S. position dramatically."\textsuperscript{95}


\textsuperscript{94} For example, under the formula devised by Glenn Kent -- and favored by the Scowcroft Commission and Aspin's "gang" -- the Soviet SS-18 heavy ICBM would be "counted" as having more than twice the number of units of destructive capability as the MX missile, with the same number of warheads.

\textsuperscript{95} Frye, op. cit., p. 156.
The Congress voted on MX procurement funds again in November, 1983 when it debated the Defense Appropriations Bill. Once again the funds were challenged by the established Democratic opposition to the missile. The challenges were easily rebuffed. Rep. Gore led the fight in the House to retain the MX funds. He said that despite his qualms about the MX missile, he would keep his end of the bargain because the President was living up to his end of this "unprecedented agreement."96

Members of the Scowcroft Commission paid lavish compliments to the key Members of Congress involved in saving the MX for their help in finally "putting the MX debate behind us." The "gang" also praised themselves. Sen. Cohen spoke for all of them when he commented that "this is the first time in recent history, if not recorded history, when a President of the United States has accepted Members of Congress as a working partner in formulating an arms control policy."97

Consensus Lost and Controversy Continues

The "unprecedented agreement" proved to be short-lived. By the spring of 1984, the tide turned against the MX as anti-MX coalitions in each chamber grew increasingly strong in terms of numbers and clout. In a series of cliffhanger votes,


some during midnight sessions, in May and June, the House imposed new controls on MX production.\textsuperscript{98} The House authorized funding for 15 more MX missiles, but stipulated that none of the funds could be spent before April 1, 1985. They would become available after this date only if \textbf{both} chambers voted to release the funds. The clear intention of the provision was to maintain congressional control over the MX program and to reenforce the view that the administration was not sincere about reaching arms control agreements with the Soviet Union. On July 16, 1984, two weeks after the House's final action, Vice President George Bush had to cast a tie-breaking vote to defeat a Senate proposal barring funding of additional MX production in 1985.\textsuperscript{99} The final settlement of the fiscal year 1985 defense budget in September 1984 preserved the House condition that no funds could be used for production of MX missiles before April 1 and only then, if both houses of Congress vote to approve that course.

This successful House measure was sponsored by the established leaders of the anti-MX effort -- Reps. Nicholas Mavroules, Tom Downey and Les AuCoin -- as well as a newcomer to the cause -- Charles Bennett of Florida, the second ranking Democrat on the Armed Services Committee. Up until this point, Bennett had been deferential to, and consistently voted with, the military services.


Now he developed a skeptical attitude toward strategic theory. "The triad is not the trinity," Bennett declared on the House floor in a witty demonstration of his new-found liberation from strategic theory.\textsuperscript{100}

On the Senate side, an equally unlikely legislator joined the anti-MX forces. Sen. Lawton Chiles, also of Florida, was a moderate to conservative Democrat who previously had supported the MX and other controversial nuclear weapons programs. As a senior Democrat on the Budget Committee, Chiles became engaged in a fight with the administration over the military budget. A request to his staff to find candidates for specific reductions led to Chiles taking a look at the MX.

Chiles decided that many centrist senators, such as himself, were unhappy with the positions of both the Armed Services Committee and the administration. He was welcomed by Senators Cranston and Levin, who had assumed the anti-MX leadership, to offer an amendment to bar any production of MX missiles beyond the 21 authorized in fiscal 1984. The Chiles amendment would maintain the MX production line on a stand-by basis, in order to provide the bargaining leverage on Moscow which the administration claimed it needed. The vote for Chiles's amendment was surprisingly strong, resulting in a tie vote, broken by Vice President George Bush. An earlier vote on an amendment to delete all funding

\textsuperscript{100} The "triad" refers to the U.S. nuclear force structure of air-breathing, land-based and sea-based weapons. The argument that the U.S. must maintain the triad had been invoked repeatedly during the debate on land-based ICBM modernization.
for the program -- procurement and development funds -- lost by a wide margin.

The different positions on the MX held by the two chambers created an impasse in the House-Senate conference on the fiscal year 1985 defense authorization Bill. After several months of fruitless negotiations among the ranking members of the House and Senate Armed Services Committees, House Speaker Tip O'Neill and Senate Majority leader Howard Baker intervened. The eventual agreement was that a final decision on MX production would be deferred until after the November election. Two votes in each chamber the following spring would be required before Congress released procurement funds for another 21 missiles.

The extensive involvement of the members of the Scowcroft Commission with prominent Members of Congress on defense issues had not resolved this debate. Moreover, there was broad participation in the debate over the MX, extending beyond the small circle of legislators who were knowledgeable about the established precepts of nuclear weapons. Thus, over time there had come to be less discussion about missile vulnerability, counterforce, extended deterrence, and stability in the MX debate. Rather, common-sense arguments were heard with increasing frequency, such as whether the administration needed the missile as a bargaining chip in negotiations with the Soviet Union. The MX as a symbol of a pointless, out-of-control arms race became a central feature of the debate. Controversy begot more controversy, as additional "respected" voices found different reasons to question or oppose the MX. The New York Times editorial
page opposed the MX, ostensibly as part of the newspaper's new-found conviction on deMIRVing. In contrast, the Trident II submarine launched missile, also a MIRVed, highly accurate, and very expensive system, never generated any conflict.

Over the course of the MX and freeze campaigns, the Washington-based coalition of pro-freeze and pro-arms control organizations developed into a cohesive and disciplined lobbying coalition. These organizations had a more receptive audience in Congress once the strategic case for the MX became perceived as weak. The coalition made termination of the MX program its top priority. It focused its lobbying on legislators who supported the freeze resolution and then backed the MX missile -- the so-called freeze phonies.

Just as the arms control organizations created an institutionalized lobbying coalition over the course of the freeze movement, a group of pro-arms control representatives in the House formed an informal, yet durable, coalition capable of commanding respect from the leadership. It is difficult to sustain cohesive issue-oriented member coalitions because legislators must cover such a range of issues and tend to work in several, temporary, constantly shifting, coalitions at any one time.

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101 The coalition included long-time "left-wing" national arms control groups like SANE and Council for a Livable World; citizen lobbies, like the powerful mass-based Common Cause and League of Women Voters; and a large number of new organizations created in the course of the freeze movement, such as the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign and Women's Action for Nuclear Disarmament.

102 The irony is that a single-party enduring coalition has a lot of potential to exert influence over the party leadership, since the latter, elected by the party
Speaker O'Neill had reason to be particularly receptive to the pressure of this coalition of pro-arms legislators. First, he had never accepted Aspin's argument that Democratic opposition to the MX would contribute to the party's electoral weakness. Like most non-expert liberals, O'Neill was not attached to a strategic argument for the MX. Second, O'Neill, and his party, had been attacked mercilessly for several years by Ronald Reagan and the Republican party within the House. By 1984, O'Neill was fighting back.

With help from the more junior legislators of the anti-MX coalition, O'Neill tried to rouse his party to challenge the popular President. The freeze movement initially energized legislators to challenge President Reagan, and the MX missile debate prompted further development of the pro-arms control coalition within the party. The House Democratic Caucus was an important vehicle for this development. The Caucus provided an arena for legislators with different political orientations to present their arguments and compete for the allegiance of the Democratic membership of the House. 103

The Democratic leadership in the House turned against the MX and mounted a full-bore attack. This development was critical to the defeat of the MX on the House floor. Except for Speaker O'Neill, most senior House caucus, must try to be responsive to the rank and file.

103 The Democratic Caucus had only recently been reinvigorated as a meaningful instrument for forging Democratic policy, thanks to the leadership of Gillis Long. Long instituted such party-strengthening reforms as closing the meetings to the public and the press.
Democrats had backed the Aspin-led effort to rescue the wounded MX in the spring and summer of 1983. Over the course of 1984, Majority Leader Jim Wright and several others backed away from the deal. By early spring, party leaders, including eight of the nine announced Democratic presidential contenders, made opposition to the MX a key party stand.

The party leadership expended significant political resources on the MX fight in hopes that Democratic opposition to the MX could be a plus in the upcoming fall elections. The freeze issue was still prominent on the political landscape. Speaker O'Neill "assigned" two of his most skilled political operators to assist with anti-MX legislation: Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Chairman Tony Coehlo and Missouri Democrat Richard Gephardt. Coehlo and Gephardt brought considerable political strength to the coalition of Members already working against the MX. The week of the vote, Gephardt chaired a task force which met daily to formulate legislative tactics and give out lobbying assignments.

The anti-MX coalition emerged as the legacy of the freeze movement. After the passage of the freeze resolution, many of the Members who had joined the regular meetings organized by lobbyists agreed to continue meeting, rather than disbanding with the conclusion of legislation.104 Following the model

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104 The source for much of the following is personal interviews with Michael Mawby, Common Cause staff member, May 30, 1990; John Isaacs, Legislative Director of the Council for a Livable World, May 25, 1990; Nancy Donaldson, former Washington director of Women's Action for Nuclear Disarmament, May 25, 1990; and Betsy Taylor, co-organizer of the Moffett member meetings and a
developed by the lobbying community, a group of five to 15 House Members started meeting weekly with a small number of lobbyists for public interest. organizations to plan upcoming arms control battles.105 During the course of the MX fight, these meetings were incorporated into the Democratic leadership meetings. The personal standing within the party ranks of the leaders of the anti-MX effort -- Tom Downey, Nick Mavroules, and Les AuCoin -- was enhanced by their role in the leadership's efforts to move the party in the liberals' direction -- and away from the party's "boll-weevils" and more conservative members.

The coalition demonstrated its power within the Democratic Caucus in January, 1985, by marshalling the votes to remove the aging Mel Price from the Chairmanship of the House Armed Services Committee and to help Les Aspin leap-frog over five members with more seniority than he on the Committee to win the Chairmanship. Despite Aspin's position on the MX, he was still the most pro-arms control candidate for the position. Two years later in January 1987, this group again played a decisive role in temporarily removing Aspin from the position when he continued to defect from the party's positions.106 Thanks to

former staff member of SANE, May 30, 1990.

105 The meetings were initially organized by Toby Moffett, a former Representative from Connecticut, looking for a way of remaining involved in Congressional affairs after his unsuccessful bid for a Senate seat in 1982. After a year or so, one of the lobbyists from a public interest organizations took over the task of organizing the meetings and they became known as the "Downey" meetings, named for Tom Downey's host office.

their capacity to elect and un-elect Aspin, for several years the group exerted considerable leverage over the Chairman.

These House coalition meetings were the first time Members had met on a regular basis with representatives of the arms control lobbying community. The growth and institutionalization of the arms control lobby community had provided both an incentive and a resource for Members to continue to assume a public role in a fight against the administration and "anti-arms controllers" in the House.

The arms control lobby also held well-attended weekly meetings for pro-arms control staff. These meetings were important in much the same way as the Member meetings. Even after the surge of public interest in the MX or arms race issues generally had passed, the meetings created the impression that there was a lot of activity in this area and thus a lot of personal incentive for involvement. Activity then generated more activity. Issue oriented coalitions are harder to create and sustain in the Senate than in the House. In the Senate, monthly breakfast meetings of defense staff commenced in 1985, but were largely informational in nature. Like the House meetings, these were organized by a lobbying organization, the Council for a Livable World.

The persistent efforts, and even the mere existence of an "arms control" coalition in the House, helped to reverse a long-standing pattern of Senate dominance over the House in shaping debates over nuclear weapons issues. The freeze debate initiated the shift in roles, but the involvement of House members in the MX fight was perhaps even more decisive in reversing this pattern.
The explanation put forth by several members of the Scowcroft Commission members for its failure to reassert "consensus" involves President Reagan's announcement of the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) in March, 1983. Reagan's dramatic announcement of a program which assumed that the U.S. could cast off the existing state of mutual vulnerability to a nuclear attack, threw the strategic policy community and the broader community of strategic experts and activists into an uproar.\textsuperscript{107} SDI reaffirmed that important elements within the administration were still operating well outside conventional wisdom. At one level, this meant the administration could not be trusted to pursue meaningful arms control. At another level, SDI introduced into the public discourse a novel idea -- that nuclear weapons were immoral and should be abolished -- which made it difficult to proceed with business-as-usual.\textsuperscript{108} Government leaders and members of the strategic policy community had often referred to nuclear weapons as horrible perhaps, but viewed nuclear deterrence as inevitable and beneficial. Now, for the first time an American president was seriously proposing that nuclear weapons and nuclear deterrence be abolished.

\textsuperscript{107} See Chapter Five on SDI.

\textsuperscript{108} President Reagan's proposals at the Reykjavik summit meeting with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in October, 1986 reinforced this message about nuclear weapons.
Another Compromise, but No Consensus

U.S.-Soviet arms control talks resumed on March 12, 1985, more than a year after the Soviet walk-out in response to the deployment of Pershing II and Cruise missiles in Europe. A few weeks later, Congress was scheduled to vote on whether to release the MX funds. Administration and congressional supporters of the MX waged an-all out campaign to drive home the message that an MX defeat would undermine the negotiations. U.S. negotiator Max Kampelman flew from Geneva to Washington for a day of intense lobbying. President Reagan did much personal lobbying. The vote to release the funds reflected their efforts. The Senate vote was not particularly close, as many had predicted, but in the House the two sides were divided by only six votes. In retrospect, this was a watershed vote.

Soon after the March vote, a new compromise solution began shaping up among the major players on the issue on the overall size of the MX force. At this point, the legislators originally involved in crafting compromise positions, as well as several other prominent opponents or proponents of the program who had avoided compromising their position in the past such as Downey and Mavroules were involved. Driven by fatigue with the repetitive battles, many legislators agreed to hold MX deployment to a ceiling of 40 or 50 missiles. By May 1985, the original "gang of six," and most of the missile's leading opponents supported some variant of the compromise. Ultimately, Congress agreed that no more than 50 missiles could be deployed in Minuteman ICBM silos and no additional
deployment could take place unless Congress authorized a new basing mode. Congress also agreed to authorize money to procure 12 missiles, in line with the agreement to continue authorizing money for a small number of additional missiles for several more years for test purposes.

In November, the compromise almost came unhinging again. Liberal Democrat Barney Frank, a consistent vote against the MX but not a usual participant in strategic policy debates, offered an amendment to delete all MX funds without any advance warning. Frank argued his amendment was a way to reduce the federal deficit, which had become a major concern. The Gramm-Rudman Deficit Reduction Act was soon to be the law of the land. For the first time since 1978, when the military budget started a steep climb upward, the House voted to freeze the budget at the current level. "You can kill the $1.7 billion [for the 12 new missiles] and no one is going to tell you that you have damaged our national security," Frank assured his House colleagues. Frank's amendment passed by a vote of 211-208. After the White House, Republican leadership, and architects of the previous compromise recovered from their state of shock, they began to lean on the House membership. A second vote reversed the first, 214-210.

Then in October 1985, the administration took a step which led Sen. Gore to cry "foul." The administration proposed to the Soviet Union a ban on all

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mobile missiles. Gore plaintively, if not credibly, complained that the "strategic consensus so carefully and deliberately constructed over the past three years was carelessly tossed aside."\(^{110}\) Scowcroft agreed, and warned the Senate Armed Services Committee that American nuclear policy was in a state of strategic confusion and disarray.\(^{111}\) Aspin complained that now that "we are working on a missile that will slam shut that window of vulnerability that has caused Mr. Reagan to lose so much sleep... The President's reaction is to propose to the Soviets a ban on such weapons."\(^{112}\)

**Midgetman Comes up Short**

Rep. Aspin apparently had forgotten that the Scowcroft Commission report was widely interpreted as telling the President and everyone else that they need lose no more sleep from frightening visions of a threatened Soviet first strike. Midgetman's claim to strategic "stability" was accepted and expounded upon by most of the strategic policy community. Even so, the reasoning was suspect to those who had been through the MX debate because it presumed a scenario similar to the one which gave rise to the now rejected "window of vulnerability." Even Al Gore, principal sponsor of Midgetman acknowledged that his definition

\(^{110}\) *Congressional Record*, November 5, 1985, p. S30499.


of "strategic stability" was derived from a "wildly unrealistic" scenario:

The scenario which generates that [which justifies Midgetman] is, of course, wildly unrealistic, but many, including prominently President Reagan, have cited a theoretical Soviet first strike against our land-based missiles as the principal reason for instability in our strategic relationship with the Soviet Union.\(^{113}\)

Moreover, Gore acknowledged that Midgetman only made sense, according to his strategic logic, in the context of a ban on all land-based, MIRVed missiles, constraints on the development of counterforce capabilities, and overall limits on nuclear forces.

The administration's proposal to ban all mobile missiles was a source of conflict within the administration. Just a few days before the announcement, Secretary of State George Schultz reiterated the theory that mobility equals stability, at the same time that factions within the Pentagon and National Security Council were crafting a mobile ban.\(^{114}\) The reasons cited in press accounts for the mobile ban were that the Soviets have more territory available to them in which the mobile missiles could disperse and the Soviet mobile systems, the SS-24 and SS-25 were further along than the Midgetman.\(^ {115}\) Robert McFarlane, one of the handmaidens of the Scowcroft Commission "package" was widely reported to support the mobile ban. Gore interpreted this break in terms of the classic schism within the strategic policy community. In an angry floor statement, Gore

\(^{113}\) Ibid., p. 30498.


stated that:

he [McFarlane] has been obliged to choose between the priorities of nuclear war fighters on the one hand, and arms controllers on the other. For the war fighters, the first and only priority is to know where the targets are and to have the means for attacking them. For arms controllers, there comes a point where you are prepared to allow one side to have security from a first strike, if you can get the same for yourself.116

Despite the administration's proposed mobile ban and clear lack of enthusiasm for Midgetman by the Air Force, the program was kept on track for a number of years thanks to unusually explicit legislation by which Congress tied the development of the Midgetman to that of the MX. Before the 11th MX was to be put into the ground, tests of Midgetman's guidance and propulsion sub-systems and various basing mode sub-systems had to be completed. And before the 40th MX could be deployed, the Midgetman had to have undergone its first flight test.

The agreement to develop the Midgetman missile -- or at least not to block it -- began to crumble as soon as the military budget came under pressure. The fiscal year 1985 military budget put a stop to years of rapid budget growth. Once the budget reached a plateau, and a decline was expected, existing programs started to feel the squeeze. The Midgetman's cost-effectiveness and opportunity cost began to attract opposition from some Members of Congress and Pentagon officials with other priorities. Richard Perle, the Assistant Secretary Of Defense for International Security Policy, was one of the first to complain publicly that Midgetman "was a very expensive way to get 500 warheads," and that "the $1.4

billion earmarked for Midgetman could better be spent on SDI."\textsuperscript{117} Newspaper stories included unattributed quotes from senior Air Force officials who stated flatly they did not want the Midgetman.\textsuperscript{118}

Sen. Pete Wilson, a conservative Republican from California and Rep. Ken Kramer, both of whom made the Strategic Defense Initiative a personal crusade, echoed Perle's argument in the Congress. Wilson pledged to "derail" the fiscal year 1987 request for full-scale engineering development funds which he believed would "commit us irreversibly to this blunder and to an out-year competition for too-scarce funding with the advanced technology bomber, Trident II and SDI."\textsuperscript{119} Wilson's efforts to trim Midgetman funds made headway in the Senate because they had the quiet support of Sen. Nunn, then Chairman of the Armed Services Committee, whose preference was still a mobile MX force.

Sen. Nunn still hoped for a mobile MX force, so he successfully insisted upon qualifying the congressional-imposed limit of 50 MX missiles so that it would apply only to silo-based MXs. As a result, the Pentagon remained undaunted in its pursuit of 100 missiles and a basing mode that could pass political and military muster. After two false starts, the President approved a plan

\textsuperscript{117} Richard Perle speech at London School of Economics, quoted in \textit{Defense News}, February 24, 1986.

\textsuperscript{118} For example, "A senior Pentagon official said privately, "I don't know of anyone in this building who wants that thing." Quoted by Richard Halloran, "White House Seeks Funds for Basing MX on Train Cars," \textit{The New York Times}, December 20, 1986.

\textsuperscript{119} \textit{Congressional Record}, February 18, 1986, p. S1240.
in December 1986, to put all the missiles on trains — "rail garrison" basing. The rail garrison plan envisioned a force of 25 specially-designed trains, each carrying two MX missiles, parked in above-ground shelters on Air Force bases. Neither the trains nor the shelters were expected to withstand the effect of a nuclear blast. Instead, the trains were expected to elude attack by dispersing onto the public rail network in times of crisis.\textsuperscript{120}

The political compromise between supporters of the MX missile and supporters of the Midgetman missile continued to be highly unstable. Many Republicans and defense conservatives favored the MX missile, while Aspin-style Democrats favored the Midgetman, and liberal Democrats were against both missiles. In general, the Senate was more supportive of the MX and the House was more supportive of the Midgetman. For several years running, the Senate and House compromised halfway on their respective budgets for the two programs. Thus, both programs proceeded, albeit at a slow pace.

When George Bush became president in 1989, his Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney recommended that President Bush fund only rail-MX because the Pentagon could not afford both systems. National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft, however, was a leading Midgetman supporter. President Bush embraced both systems.

In summer of 1989, the two-missile deal almost collapsed in the House

\textsuperscript{120} After nearly three decades, the MX debate had come full circle, back to where it began in the summer of 1960, when the Air Force approved plans for 30 trains with three missiles each as the "first phase" of a larger deployment.
when both missile programs were nearly terminated. Liberal Democrats, led by Barney Frank of Massachusetts, tried to forge an alliance with conservatives in the House who preferred the MX. The first time, Frank offered an amendment to terminate the Midgetman program, he was soundly defeated by a 168-254 vote. The House also defeated an amendment to terminate the MX program by an identical vote. Following these votes, leading Midgetman backers unexpectedly tried to limit the rail-MX program. They promoted a surprise amendment by John Spratt to eliminate MX production and military construction funds, but retained most of the funds requested for research. Spratt's amendment passed unexpectedly 224-197, leaving Republicans and conservative Democrats furious since they had only reluctantly supported Bush's two-missile deal as a way to ensure passage of the MX funds. In response, the ranking Republican on the House Armed Services Committee, Rep. William Dickinson (R-AL) joined Rep. Frank in a renewed anti-Midgetman offensive which succeeded in eliminating all Midgetman money. Consequently, the House had decided to fund neither missile. Ultimately, the conferees from the Armed Services Committees restored full funding for both programs in conference. The episode demonstrated the unstable, and illogical, character of the political agreement on the missile programs.

Congress and the executive branch continued for the duration of the 1980s to argue over how many missiles should be deployed and at what pace. The

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supposed solution to the controversy -- the Midgetman missile -- became part of the on-going problem when it became clear that many members of Congress, administration officials, and Pentagon officers did not support the program. Midgetman missile research continued to be funded through the 1980s, but there was little commitment to produce or deploy Midgetman and a marked lack of interest in the program within the Pentagon.122 The MX force was held to 50 missiles, housed in silos as "vulnerable" to Soviet SS-18 missiles as they ever were. The Air Force continued to propose and study the rail-garrison mode, but administration officials and legislators were skeptical about the value.

The epilogue of MX and Midgetman stories is but a footnote to the story of the end of the arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union -- and indeed, the end of the Soviet Union. In September 1991, President Bush announced several unilateral initiatives to defuse the nuclear confrontation, including the termination of the MX rail-garrison program.123 Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev responded with several initiatives to down-size the Soviet arsenal. Several months later, during the State of the Union address on January 28, 1992, Bush canceled the Midgetman missile program along with several other programs. He also suggested that both sides should pursue the elimination of all

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122 Midgetman funding was only $202.2 million in fiscal year 1991 and $549 million in fiscal year 1992. In 1990, the Air Force considered retaining Minuteman III missiles and "downloading" two warheads from many of them to make them single-warhead missiles.

multiple-warhead land-based missiles. If Russia agrees to this proposal, the U.S. would have to eliminate the 50 10-warhead MX missiles it deployed just a few years earlier after a decade of political struggle, and download the 500 Minuteman II missiles from three warheads to one warhead each.

Conclusion

Strobe Talbott characterized congressional involvement in the debate over the MX missile as follows:

The legislative branch of the government had, in effect, fired the executive branch for gross incompetence in arms control; then the legislators had dictated the substitution of their own proposal for the administration's; then they had conspired with the administration to put the best possible face on what had happened, covering up the nature and depth of the factiousness that remained.\textsuperscript{124}

Talbott's summation provides a sense of the extent of congressional involvement in this issue. In contrast to congressional endorsement of the nuclear weapons freeze proposal, Congress's involvement in the debate over land-based ICBMs had unambiguous effects on policy. Legislation capped the MX force at 50 missiles, considerably fewer than the 200 mobile missiles originally planned by the Air Force or the 100 requested by the Reagan administration. A series of congressional measures initiated the new Midgetman missile program, determined the characteristics of this new missile, and the pace of its development. Lastly, Congress used its "power of the purse" in a very deliberate manner to influence

the content of arms control proposals made to the Soviet Union. Talbott’s quote also conveys a sense of the divisiveness surrounding the debate over the MX. This characterization, however, overemphasizes the extent to which this controversy was a struggle between the two governing branches. Extensive cross-branch alliances, with help from prominent members of the strategic policy community tried to formulate a position that could win support from a majority of the Congress and from the executive branch. The Scowcroft Commission Report was the first and principal attempt to fashion such a position, although subsequent "deals" strengthened or modified parts of the Report.

Many members of the strategic policy community, with help from congressional colleagues who assumed the role of "consensus rebuilders," tried to align Congress and the executive branch behind a position of support for nuclear counter-force modernization and negotiated restraints in the name of strategic stability. The Scowcroft Commission Report presented the intellectual justification for the particular balance struck between nuclear arms modernization and restraint. Affirmation of these principles would check the MX debate and thereby diminish the scope of the conflict. Ending the stalemate over the MX missile would also allow nuclear weapons politics to return to a predictable and controllable struggle among legislators for defense contracts for their constituencies.

To some extent, the Scowcroft Commission, the nuclear "build-down" supporters, the champions of deMIRVing, were successful in settling the
controversy. The MX missile was deployed, albeit in curtailed form. As the *Washington Post* editorialized, President Reagan won the release of MX funds using the Scowcroft Commission Report because "he drew on a spreading feeling that the country had excessively politicized a critical aspect of defense."

Coming on the heels of the freeze movement, a debate over the MX could have been expected to develop into a debate over the fundamentals of U.S. nuclear weapons policy. Instead, in the end, the arguments about the MX and Midgetman missiles primarily concerned the weakness and costs of these particular weapons systems.

However, as this chapter demonstrates, these efforts to return policy making to normal worked only partially. De facto compromises were struck, but the strategic policy community and the "consensus rebuilders" did not reestablish consensus on the overall outlines of U.S. strategic policy. Even the specific recommendations proposed by the Report -- a Midgetman missile and 100 MX missiles in silos -- were contested by influential officials in the Pentagon, the White House, and the Congress. The intellectual pastiche of the Scowcroft Commission package could neither conceal the confusion in U.S. strategic doctrine nor present a consistent rationale for the MX that also was compatible with fiscal responsibility and common sense. Antonia Chayes, an Under Secretary

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125 "The MX Package Wins" editorial, *The Washington Post*, May 26, 1983. The editorial continues: "It was fitting that he [President Reagan] should come to appreciate the virtues of consensus in this field, since no one had done more than he in the late 1970s to block it."
of the Air Force in the Carter Administration, lamented:

The legacy of the Scowcroft Commission report has been confusion, and an exposure of the weakness and inconsistencies that have characterized the shifting rationale for ICBM modernization from the late 1960s.\textsuperscript{126}

As Chayes notes, this episode in the decline of the strategic policy community began before Reagan assumed office. The MX debate exposed contradictions between the community's theoretical tenets of a stable deterrent policy and endorsement of seemingly "unstable" weapons -- such as the MX -- and it held the community up to public ridicule. First the community and the Defense Department endorsed the view that U.S. national security was so gravely threatened by the so-called window-of-vulnerability that vast tracts of public land should be sacrificed to solve the problem. Two years later, after losing the political debate to an unlikely coalition of ranchers, Mormons, environmentalists and disarmament activists, many members of the community walked away from the problem. Others in the community proclaimed that deMIRVing was the preferred solution to strategic instability, yet endorsed the 10-warhead MX missile anyway. Still others in the community believed deMIRVing was low priority and that procurement of the MX was important for psychological reasons, to demonstrate "national will."

The more discredited and confused the intellectual rationalizations became, the less compelling were the unwritten rules limiting debates over new weapons

systems to a few committee "experts." Congressional deliberations over the MX missile exemplify the "open" style of decision making. The bizarre coalitions and extensive deal-making reflected the new openings that legislators perceived. Unlike many nuclear weapons debates, the interactions between legislators, administration officials and members of the strategic policy community were played out in the open. Many of the actors benefited from this public involvement because they appeared to be important "players" who influenced policy outcomes. Once the MX became politicized, it also became a symbol that was useful in partisan political fights.

A decade of debate over the MX failed to reaffirm existing policy concerning modernization or establish new policy objectives. Congress and the executive branch did not develop new criteria for judging the general need for, or the specific merits of, additional land-based nuclear weapons. But the end result of Congress's deliberation -- 50 MX missiles deployed in Minuteman III silos and a Midgetman missile in development -- represented a defeat for the Air Force and a stalemate among policy makers.
Chapter IV: Nuclear Testing Restrictions

During the second half of the 1980s, several of the leading congressional advocates of the freeze resolution embraced the cause of one of the most sought after, and elusive, goals on the international arms control agenda -- a complete ban or severe restrictions on nuclear warhead explosive testing. These legislators were successful in the House of Representatives with innovative legislation. In 1986, and the following two years, the House voted by large margins to prohibit the use of funds for all but the smallest of nuclear tests, provided that the Soviet Union demonstrated reciprocal restraint and cooperated with the United States to provide adequate seismic verification. This measure represented a virtually unprecedented attempt to use Congress's power of the purse to sidestep the administration and initiate a defacto bi-lateral arms control measure. Comparable legislation was offered in the Senate where it won substantial support, but consistently fell short of a majority.

The congressional attempt to limit nuclear testing has some of the same striking features observed in congressional debates over the nuclear weapons freeze resolution and the MX missile system. Once again, the major avenues used by legislators to influence policy were outside the defense committees. The leaders of the effort included legislators who were not typically involved in nuclear weapons policy and their legislative approach was more confrontational than that of prior initiatives on this subject. Lastly, as was true in the other nuclear weapons debates, the testing issue became embroiled in partisan politics. However, there were major differences between this debate and the preceding two debates. Despite the repeated success of this controversial measure in the House, U.S. policy on
testing limitations never became a particularly divisive, or preoccupying issue, within the Congress. The leaders of the testing legislation in the House were able to translate their victories into only the most modest gains in terms of policy and their role in the decision-making process.

I advanced the theory that congressional involvement in nuclear weapons issues is related to the difficulties experienced by the strategic policy community in brokering and promoting an enduring compromise on arms control and weapons modernization. At first glance, the case of the test moratorium legislation strains this theory. Nontraditional leadership in the House of Representatives was involved to an unusual degree, but contrary to what my hypothesis suggests, the issue of nuclear testing restraints had not become divisive in the strategic policy community. Several analysts who were close to, or arguably part of, the strategic policy community, such as Wolfgang Panofsky, Herbert York, and Harold Brown, did offer support for testing restraints.¹ However, their support was lukewarm and they did not challenge the adamant opposition to testing restrictions from other

¹ During the 1970s, Sidney Drell, a defense consultant and former head of the Stanford Linear Accelerator, consistently voiced support for a test ban. By the 1980s, he had qualified his position and in 1990, Drell became the Chairman of a study on warhead safety which was guaranteed to undercut the political argument for a CTB. See Appendix I for notes on Drell's membership in the strategic policy community. Harold Brown told Sen. Kennedy's office he supported a one-kiloton test moratorium, but would not do so publicly. Herbert York was the chief U.S. negotiator at the CTB talks (1979-1981) and a former director of the Livermore Weapons Laboratory, however York was not really a member of the strategic policy community. For his views on a test ban, see below. See Appendix 1. Harold Brown is a member of community. Of course, there were well known nuclear weapons experts who fully supported a CTB -- most notably, Jerome Weisner, Carl Kaysen, Paul Warnke, and George Rathjens -- but these experts were no longer part of the strategic policy community.
segments in the strategic policy community, most notably the heads of the nuclear weapons laboratories and military leaders. The political compromise of the strategic policy community on this issue was acceptance or even support for on-going negotiations on testing issues and rhetorical support for an eventual agreement to end testing, but opposition to any actual agreement in the present or near future that achieved or advanced the goal of a comprehensive test ban.

Ultimately, my theory on the strategic policy community's political role accommodates the case of the test ban legislation. Conflict or weakness within the strategic policy community did not spur congressional involvement. Rather, its strength on this particular issue helped constrain congressional involvement. Although partly successful congressional legislation tried to influence nuclear weapons testing policy to an unprecedented degree, there were acknowledged, definite limits to what Congress actually could accomplish in this area. These understood limits explain why Congress was not preoccupied with this issue. The sponsors of the test moratorium ran up against a solid wall of opposition within the Senate, the executive branch, and segments of the strategic policy community. This chapter will discuss how these constraints operated and question how and why the sponsors of the legislation succeeded to the extent they did.

Background

Formal international negotiations on nuclear testing have taken place nearly
continuously since 1958.\textsuperscript{2} The idea of a test ban commands more active and enduring international support than any other prominent arms control objective.\textsuperscript{3} It also has an enduring domestic constituency. But "of all the mainstream arms control ideas," as a former director of the Livermore Weapons Laboratory and chief U.S. negotiator on testing has noted, a comprehensive test ban (CTB) also "arouses more opposition in the [U.S.] defense establishment than any other."\textsuperscript{4}

Although arms control negotiators for the U.S.S.R. and the United States have never agreed on a comprehensive test ban, the two countries have agreed to three treaties to limit nuclear testing. The 1963 Limited Test Ban Treaty (LTBT), was negotiated by President Kennedy, and prohibits nuclear weapons testing in the atmosphere, outerspace and underwater. (After 1963, the U.S., Soviet and British test programs moved underground without significantly impeding the rate of testing or technical innovation in nuclear weaponry.) Eleven years later, President Nixon concluded the Threshold Test Ban Treaty (TTBT) with the Soviet Union to prohibit underground nuclear tests with yields greater than

\begin{itemize}
\item The international pressure for a CTB was expressed through the United Nations General Assembly; the UN Conference on Disarmament in Geneva; the five-year Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conferences; and a private international association of legislators, the Parliamentarians for Global Action.
\item Private communication from Herbert York to Frank von Hippel, Christopher Paine, and Harold Feiveson. March 30, 1987. Provided to the author by Christopher Paine, Washington, D.C.
\end{itemize}
150 kilotons. A companion treaty, the Peaceful Nuclear Explosions (PNE) Treaty, was signed by President Ford in 1976. It similarly banned underground explosions for "peaceful" purposes at yields greater than 150 kilotons. The PNE and TTB treaties were ratified by the Senate in September, 1990, sixteen years after they were signed by the heads of state. The Ford administration did not want the Senate to consider them in the midst of a Presidential election, and the Carter administration did not seek the treaties' ratification because it hoped to reach agreement on a comprehensive treaty ban treaty.

President Carter revived President Kennedy's effort to negotiate a ban on all nuclear testing. Two years of negotiation resolved many of the outstanding technical and verification issues. Soon after a draft treaty was written, however, test ban negotiations were down-graded in importance, partly because the SALT II treaty was given priority. Moreover, as Herb York writes, "In retrospect it is clear that the failure of the Carter round of CTB negotiations was very over-determined." The most important problem he cites was the continuing "total opposition to any CTB" by senior officials in the Department of Defense, Department of Energy and the weapons laboratories.

The principal longstanding argument for a test ban is that an end to testing would

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5 Test ban negotiations began in October 1977 between Great Britain, the Soviet Union and the United States. They formally concluded in November, 1980, but had slowed down considerably by the end of 1979. For a description of the progress made in the first two years, see York, Making Weapons, Talking Peace, pp. 302-304. In July, 1980, the three parties issued a report to the UN Committee on Disarmament which summarized their considerable progress in implementing verification procedures. Tripartite Report to the Committee on Disarmament, CD/130, July 30, 1980, p. 9.

6 Ibid., pp. 294-295, 317.
preclude the development of more advanced nuclear explosive designs and thereby be the single most effective way to stop the arms race.\textsuperscript{7} This argument was most compelling in the early days of the nuclear age when the arms competition between the two superpowers was most intense in the area of warhead development. However, during the Reagan years, the technical impact of test restrictions on the ability of either side to improve its strategic arsenals as far more limited. This is true because most weapons systems advances today, such as improved accuracy and system survivability, do not require new warhead development and testing, which has in any event reached a point of diminishing returns. Nevertheless, the argument is still made that testing is both a potent symbol and an essential technical component of a defense strategy based on the threat to use nuclear weapons. A ban on testing, therefore, would reinforce the appreciation that nuclear weapons cannot be used for military or political purposes. Moreover, a ban could alleviate mutual fears, fueled by development of new weapons, that the other side is both prepared and willing to use nuclear weapons to achieve limited political or military goals. Lastly, many test ban proponents have argued that a multi-lateral ban would greatly aid efforts to halt nuclear weapons proliferation to other nations.

For most of the past three and a half decades, both the United States and the Soviet Union have stated that a comprehensive test ban is a goal of national policy. Despite the official rhetoric, three decades of test-ban diplomacy failed to achieve an end to, or even significant restrictions on, nuclear testing. Throughout the long negotiating history, the

\textsuperscript{7} For a good overview of the arguments in favor and against a test ban see, Steve Fetter, \textit{Toward a Comprehensive Test Ban}, (Ballinger Publishing Company, a subsidiary of Harper & Row, 1988).
question of how to verify the parties' compliance with a treaty was the most visible stumbling block to reaching agreement. U.S. opponents of a ban historically have argued that without very intrusive means of verification, the United States could not be confident of the Soviet Union's compliance. If the Soviet Union was able to conduct undetected tests, it would be able to make significant advances in warhead design, while the U.S. would be denied comparable opportunities.

Although verification difficulties assumed the central role in the debate over a test ban, this issue was not the fundamental reason many nuclear weapons experts and policymakers opposed a test ban. In the early 1980s as verification capabilities improved, and the Soviet Union became increasingly willing to accept intrusive forms of verification, opponents of a test ban raised a more fundamental objection to a test ban. They argued that continued testing was necessary as long as the U.S. national security policy was based on nuclear deterrence. The official U.S. deterrent posture of "flexible response" required the United States to have the ability to conduct limited nuclear attacks and to deny victory to the adversary at every level of nuclear violence. To maintain the credibility of this policy, continued testing was essential in order to continue developing sophisticated weapons and to demonstrate the psychological willingness to use nuclear weapons.\footnote{By the late 1980s, the claims made by test ban opponents that U.S. deterrent policy requires very exacting technical warhead performance were undermined by political events and technical arguments. Consequently, opponents of a test ban began to stress that weapons testing was also needed to insure the safety of U.S. weapons.} As Former Secretary of Defense and Energy James Schlesinger explained:
To a large extent since the Partial Test Ban Treaty of 1963, the verification issue has been used as an excuse. I say that and will confess that I am one who has used it as an excuse. Why? Because the United States, dependent on a nuclear deterrent, in my judgement can never have a total test ban, a comprehensive test ban.... Now because it has been a U.S. goal for a comprehensive test ban under various presidents and various parties since 1963, we have frequently fiddled around the with verification issue when that is not really what concerned us.  

Dr. Robert Barker, a former weapons designer who served as Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Atomic Energy and chief nuclear testing negotiator in the second Reagan administration, elaborated on Schlesinger's interpretation.

While successive administrations have known full well that testing plays a critical role as far as maintaining a safe, reliable, effective and survivable deterrent, they have publicly taken the position that allowed the public to believe that as soon as adequate verification methods were available, this country would sign up to a comprehensive test ban.

"The internal record of government over the bulk of that period is very different. The[se] people realized full well that there were other, more pressing requirements for nuclear testing but chose to put forward, as the only public reason, the issue of verification."

Dr. Barker suggests that the Reagan administration's hostility to a test ban maintained the real position held by past administrations. The historical record lends credence to Barker's contention. Even if the Carter administration had not shelved the draft treaty produced in an initial burst of enthusiasm, the treaty's future was not promising. The Joints Chiefs of Staff, Energy Secretary James Schlesinger, and National Security Advisor Zbigniew

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Brzezinski openly opposed a CTB. Brzezinski wrote in his memoirs that he "went through the motions of holding meetings, discussing options, and developing negotiating positions," out of "deference to the President's zeal" for a CTB. However, he notes, he insured that the proposals "would not jeopardize our ability to continue the minimum number of tests necessary for our weapons programs."

When the negotiating teams made progress, despite the sabotage efforts, senior military officials, respected nuclear weapons experts, and directors of the nuclear weapons laboratories -- whose formal mission clearly excludes attempts to influence government policy -- tried to dissuade President Carter from pursuing a CTB. According to Herb York, the U.S. Ambassador to the CTB Negotiations from 1979-1981, when President Carter "finally became aware of the extent and nature of the opposition to a CTB," he "adjusted his priorities," by putting test restrictions at the bottom of the list. York himself now believes that a CTB should be at or near the bottom of the list of arms control priorities precisely


12 Laboratory Directors have even boasted of their successful lobbying campaign. For example, Michael May, Associate Director of the Lawrence Livermore Lab has said that during the Carter Administration's CTB negotiations: "We worked against it, we did it quite openly." R.J. Smith, "Weapons labs Influence Test Ban Debate," Science, vol. 229 (September 13, 1985), pp. 1067-9.

13 York also says Carter changed his goal from a permanent ban to one which would be "for five years (later changed to three years)." Herb York, "Historical Footnote" in the report by the Scientific and Academic Advisory Committee (SAAC) to the President of the University of California on the management of the weapons laboratories, July, 1987.
because of the opposition it engenders. He notes that opposition is no longer just centered in the nuclear weapons laboratories, but that

the DNA (Defense Nuclear Agency), the DOE, the office of the Special Assistant for Atomic Energy, the missile industry, the defense press, and, nowadays especially the whole collection of for-profit "think tanks" all have their own in-house experts who, almost to a man, oppose a CTB.14

The Clash Between Reagan and Gorbachev Policies

At a National Security Council meeting in July, 1982, the Reagan administration formally decided to end U.S. participation in international efforts to ban all nuclear tests.15 This internal decision was leaked to The New York Times.16 In the following weeks, administration officials explained that a CTB was unverifiable and that in any case, ongoing testing was needed in order to maintain the credibility of the U.S. deterrent. As concerns the TTBT and PNE treaties, the Reagan administration decided not to submit them for ratification until their verification provisions could be "strengthened" in light of the administration's strong suspicion that the Soviet Union had tested above the threshold at least fourteen times. The administration claimed that it could not effectively verify Soviet


15 In addition to the suspended trilateral talks with the Soviet Union and Great Britain, the U.N. Committee on Disarmament for years has conducted talks on a multilateral comprehensive test ban.

compliance with the 150-kiloton threshold with the remote seismic techniques then available.\textsuperscript{17}

Some administration officials indicated that the objections to the innocuous TTBT went beyond verification concerns.\textsuperscript{18} Two months earlier, the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency Director Eugene Rostow told a congressional committee that plans to submit the TTBT for ratification had "run into a profound stone wall" in the form of "whole phalanxes and battalions" of government officials who believe that "given the uncertainties of the nuclear situation and the need for new weapons and modernization, we are going to need testing, and perhaps even testing above the 150-kt limit.\textsuperscript{19}

The administration's announcement that it was renouncing comprehensive test ban negotiations came in the midst of mounting criticism of the Reagan administration's nuclear weapons policies. It was widely cited as further evidence that the administration was systematically repudiating the arms control tradition as a part of U.S. defense policy.\textsuperscript{20} A CTB was a stated national security objective of the previous six administrations, both

\textsuperscript{17} For summary of U.S. position see United States Department of State, \textit{U.S. Policy Regarding Limitations on Nuclear Testing}, Special Report No. 150, August, 1986.


\textsuperscript{19} \textit{Ibid}.

\textsuperscript{20} For example, see Committee for National Security, "We Cannot Support President Reagan's Decision on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty," Statement from former ACDA Directors and Chief Negotiators, Washington, D.C., August 10, 1982.
Democratic and Republican. Of course, not everyone was alarmed. The editorial page of The Wall Street Journal wrote approvingly that the administration's announcement clearly represented, "a first hesitant step away from the whole notion of negotiating arms agreements with the Soviet Union."21

The administration's decision to link progress on a CTB to strengthening the TTBT's verification provisions further provoked critical commentary. The verification tasks involved in monitoring a comprehensive ban are different from what is required to monitor compliance with a 150-kiloton threshold. Furthermore, failure to ratify the TTBT had deprived the U.S. of data which would have been exchanged under the terms of the treaty and would have facilitated more precise measurement of Soviet tests.

Given the political popularity of the "whole notion" of arms control as demonstrated by the success of the freeze movement, the administration soon modified its position. Energy Department officials announced that the CTB "remains a long-term objective of the United States," but indicated "long-term" might mean the next millennium.

We believe such a ban must be viewed in the context of a time when we do not need to depend on nuclear deterrence to ensure international security and stability and when we have achieved broad, deep, and verifiable arms reductions, substantially improved verification capabilities, expanded confidence building measures, and greater balance of conventional forces.22


After the Reagan administration revealed its unambiguous opposition to a test ban, the Soviet leadership in August, 1985, made a dramatic move in the opposite direction. The new leader of the Soviet Union, General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev, initiated a six-month unilateral moratorium on underground nuclear explosions and began pressing for negotiations on a comprehensive test ban. Administration officials and most defense experts dismissed the action as a propaganda ploy. The national media followed their cue, and barely remarked on the initiative which they described as an empty public relations gimmick.\textsuperscript{23}

General Secretary Gorbachev extended the moratorium three times, to a duration of 19 months, all the while inviting the Reagan administration to join the testing halt and begin CTB negotiations. The Reagan administration remained unmoved and reiterated its charge of "likely" Soviet violations of the TTB treaty. Gorbachev's actions, however, were enthusiastically applauded by domestic advocates of a nuclear freeze and the international constituency for a test ban. A group of respected world leaders launched the "Five Continent Peace Initiative" to urge an end to all nuclear testing and production.\textsuperscript{24}


\textsuperscript{24} "Six Nations Urge Halt in Nuclear Testing," \textit{The New York Times}, August 8, 1986; and "An Appeal to Reagan and Gorbachev," \textit{The New York Times}, December 31, 1986. The world leaders issued their call in October 1985, in August 1986 and in December, 1986. The group was composed of Argentinean President Alfonsin; Mexican President de la Madrid; Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi; Greek Prime Minister Papandreou; Swedish Prime Minister Palme; and Tanzanian President Nyerere.
Although the national media did not cover domestic lobbying for a test ban, it did report on the positive international, particularly European, reaction to Gorbachev's unilateral moratorium.

In late May of 1986, the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), a national environmental organization, concluded an agreement with the Soviet Academy of Science to establish a network of seismic stations in each country adjacent to the nuclear weapons test site. The project's purpose, as carefully explained by both NRDC and the Soviet Academy, was to demonstrate the mutual acceptability and feasibility of a verification system for a comprehensive test ban composed of in-country seismic monitoring stations.\(^{25}\) The NRDC enlisted the help of leading American seismologists.\(^{26}\) The Soviet Academy, as a quasi-governmental organization, had prestige, authority and access to government resources. The agreement was widely reported as a path-breaking event because it was the first time that the Soviet Union had allowed non-Soviet nationals to undertake nuclear test verification on Soviet territory.\(^{27}\)

**Genesis of Binding Arms Control Legislation**

In response to the Reagan administration's announcement that it was deferring both


\(^{26}\) The seismologists included Charles Archambeau, John Berger, Jack Evernden.

\(^{27}\) In retrospect, the NRDC project may be considered the first sign of military glasnost.
CTB negotiations and ratification of the TTB and PNE treaties, a few members of Congress turned to a commonly used legislative device. Senators Kennedy and Charles (Mac) Mathias, a moderate Republican from Maryland, introduced a resolution in 1983 calling on the President to resume negotiations on a comprehensive test ban and to ratify the TTB and PNE treaties. An identical resolution was introduced in the House by Reps. Markey, Berkley Bedell, a liberal Democrat from Iowa, and Jim Leach, a liberal Republican from Iowa. "Sense of the Congress" resolutions promoting test ban negotiations and moratoria have been a staple of arms control legislation over the past twenty years.\footnote{28}

For Sen. Kennedy, whose freeze resolution was still awaiting Senate action, a CTB had merit on its own and as one component of a nuclear weapons freeze. Sen. Mathias, who did not support a freeze, did actively support a resolution calling for CTB negotiations because it reaffirmed, in principle, a long-standing stated U.S. and international arms control goal.

In June 1984, the Senate adopted the Kennedy-Mathias resolution by the overwhelming margin of 77 to 22. Many moderate and conservative Senators who staunchly opposed the freeze resolution, voted for the resolution.\footnote{29} The House in early 1986 passed

\footnote{28} For example, in 1973, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee approved a resolution calling on the President to propose a joint testing moratorium.

\footnote{29} Senators who had opposed the freeze resolution but voted for the Kennedy-Mathias resolution on testing included Sam Nunn, John Stennis (D-MI), Lloyd Bentsen (D-TX), Warren Rudman (R-NH) and Bob Kasten (R-WI).
the resolution by a similarly lopsided margin of 268-148.\textsuperscript{30} Despite the apparent show of support, legislation concerning nuclear weapons testing was a low visibility effort and a low priority for most of the congressional arms control leaders.\textsuperscript{31}

By 1984, most legislators and congressional staff viewed the freeze as yesterday's issue. However, the National Freeze Campaign continued to develop legislation which went beyond the non-binding freeze resolution and to recruit congressional sponsors. For example, Senators Kennedy and Hatfield and Rep. Markey offered the Arms Race Moratorium Act, which sought to "freeze" those activities the cessation of which could most readily be confirmed by both sides without the need for complex negotiations on additional verification provisions.\textsuperscript{32} The bill covered nuclear testing as well as the testing and deployment of intercontinental ballistic missiles and the testing of anti-satellite weapons (ASAT) in space. This legislation failed to garner much support, but two of its subcomponents -- moratoria on testing anti-satellite weapons and on nuclear explosive testing -- achieved success as independent initiatives.

Legislation on ASATs came first. Late in 1984, the House easily accepted an amendment offered by Representatives George Brown (D-CA) and Norman Dicks (D-WA)

\textsuperscript{30} A scheduled vote the previous October was postponed in deference to the Administration's complaint that it would "complicate" Reagan's upcoming first summit with Soviet leader Gorbachev in Geneva.

\textsuperscript{31} Personal interview, Katherine Magraw with John Isaacs. Washington, D.C., May 25, 1990. Nor was testing a high priority for the non-governmental arms control community at this time. Each year the arms control lobby community held a weekend retreat to assign priorities for the coming year and to evaluate their work during the past year. In 1984, 1985, and 1986, nuclear testing legislation was not among the top three priorities of the community.

\textsuperscript{32} See page 97, Chapter Two, for details on the Arms Race Moratorium Act.
to the fiscal year 1985 Defense Authorization bill to ban any tests of the U.S. ASAT system then in development, as long as the Soviet Union continued a pre-existing unilateral moratorium on testing.\textsuperscript{33} The Air Force was then making plans to conduct operational tests of an ASAT launched from an F-15 aircraft.\textsuperscript{34} The Soviet Union already had deployed an ASAT of limited capabilities, but had declared a unilateral moratorium on testing the existing system or more advanced systems.\textsuperscript{35} The Senate Defense Authorization bill did not contain any ASAT provisions and the moratorium was struck from the bill in House-Senate conference. The following year the House again easily passed the Brown-Dicks amendment imposing an ASAT moratorium. This time, after much resistance, the Senate ultimately agreed to the House position and a one-year moratorium on testing the American ASAT program against objects in space was enacted into law. This pattern was repeated in the following two years, until the Air Force cancelled the ASAT program in 1987.

Once before, a legislator had tried to use Congress's appropriations powers to direct

\textsuperscript{33} Rep. George Brown is a liberal Democrat from California with an engineering degree, and a member of the Science, Space and Technology Committee. Brown had always demonstrated an interest in and knowledge of space issues. Following President Reagan's March 1983 speech on space-based defenses, Brown and others became increasingly concerned about space weaponry.

\textsuperscript{34} For background on the U.S. ASAT program see, Paul B. Stares, \textit{Space and National Security}, (The Brookings Institution, 1987).

\textsuperscript{35} The Soviet Union stopped testing its new ASAT system in the early 1980s and proposed talks on a ban of anti-satellite weapons. The Reagan administration was not interested and forged ahead with its program to develop an ASAT launched from an F-15 fighter plane.
arms control policy. In 1971, Senator Humphrey tried to compel the U.S. to include a ban on MIRVs in the ongoing SALT negotiations. He offered an amendment to the Defense Authorization bill that would have placed funds for MIRV development in escrow until the president and Congress jointly determined that the USSR had tested and deployed such weapons. Humphrey's effort was denounced as a radical encroachment on executive privilege and easily defeated.\textsuperscript{36}

The ASAT amendment was the first successful use of this innovative legislative technique, yet it was not lambasted by conservative Representatives as an encroachment on executive power. Congressional action effectively forced the cancellation of the F-15 ASAT, demonstrating Congress's capacity to contribute to policy making. In this instance, as in most others, Congress was able to shape policy by amplifying some voices and muting others within the military services and executive branch. The Air Force itself was internally divided over the wisdom of a U.S. ASAT program, and the utility of this particular system.\textsuperscript{37} The Air Force and conservative legislators did not mount a lobbying campaign to save the program. Even many of the Washington-based arms control lobby organizations were not actively pushing for the amendment, and in fact, were surprised by its success.\textsuperscript{38}


\textsuperscript{37} Gen. Charles A. Gabriel, chief of staff of the Air Force, told Congress he would rather not build this particular system "[I]n fact, I would like to be able to agree with the Soviets that we not have any ASATs if we could verify it properly." U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Appropriations, Department of Defense Appropriations for 1985: Part 2, 98th Cong., 2nd sess., 1984, p. 190.

\textsuperscript{38} Two organizations -- the Federation of American Scientists and the Union of Concerned Scientists -- helped to draft the amendment and persuade Rep. Brown and Dicks to introduce it. They were concerned about ASAT's
The legislative approach developed for the Arms Race Moratorium Act was next used in legislation on nuclear testing. The Soviet nuclear test moratorium and the lack of progress in advancing the nuclear weapons freeze led many activists to focus on nuclear testing. Once the non-binding resolution passed by a large margin in the House, a few members advocated more far-reaching legislation "with teeth." Representative Pat Schroeder, a Democrat from Colorado with strong ties to the leadership of the Freeze Campaign, started to work on legislation enforcing a six-month halt to all testing. The former spokesman for the freeze, Ed Markey, adopted a slightly different tack. Rep. Markey's office drafted legislation which would establish a year-long moratorium on nuclear testing over a one-kiloton (1-kt) yield. The ban on U.S. tests would be enforced only if the Soviet Union conducted no nuclear tests of greater than 1 kiloton, or conducted a test anywhere than at its Semiplatinsk testing site in Siberia. The ban was to be effective between January 1 and September 30, 1987.

The amendment took the concept of "legislating arms control" one step further than the ASAT provision by including reciprocal verification measures. An additional condition of the suspension of U.S. testing would be agreement by both governments to the on-site emplacement of seismic stations near the test sites to help verify compliance with the one-kiloton limit. Thus, in addition to not doing something -- i.e. testing -- both sides also would have to do something. The NRDC experiment, in the news at the time, was an indication

implications for nuclear command and control and the peaceful uses of outer space. However, they were virtually alone among the arms control lobby. Personal interview, Katherine Magraw with John Pike, Space analyst for the Federation of American Scientists, Washington, D.C., September 30, 1990.
of Soviet willingness to engage in such verification measures. The authors of the measure settled on a one-kiloton threshold, as a limitation that could be verified with a high degree of confidence but would severely curtail the U.S. and Soviet testing programs.\textsuperscript{39} The amendment provided that its provisions would be supplanted by any agreement reached on further limitations. The legislatively-imposed moratorium was intended to facilitate, not substitute for, negotiations on a comprehensive ban.

Markey recruited Tom Downey, with whom he had worked closely on the freeze resolution, to help lead the effort to promote the bill. They determined that their success depended upon gaining support from three overlapping groups of members: the leadership, the politically moderate Democrats, and members of the Armed Services Committee. Due in part to a fortuitous confluence of events, they unexpectedly realized their game plan, "succeeding beyond their wildest dreams."\textsuperscript{40}

A Winning Coalition

Only a little more than a year after Les Aspin became Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee in a stunning coup against the sitting Chairman, he was in deep

\textsuperscript{39} This information and much of what follows on how the amendment attracted support comes from personal interviews, Katherine Magraw with Christopher Paine, staff aide for Rep. Markey, Washington, D.C. August 5, 1990; and Katherine Magraw with Jeffrey Duncan, staff aide for Rep. Markey, Washington, D.C. July 25, 1990; and two interviews with other congressional staff who preferred to remain anonymous.

\textsuperscript{40} Jeff Duncan interview, op. cit.
trouble with many of the Democratic liberals who had helped put him there. When first running for the position, Aspin had promised -- or at least had led others to believe -- that he would abandon his support for the MX missile. But when the issue came to a vote several months later, Aspin again worked closely with the administration to keep the missile program alive. House liberals were further disappointed by Aspin's performance in his first House-Senate conference in 1985 when he acceded to the Senate position on a series of arms control, procurement reform, and military spending measures. In mid-June 1986, Aspin switched his position and supported military aid to the Nicaraguan contras by voting to defeat a compromise bill restricting military aid.

Liberal and centrist Democrats who had formerly supported Aspin were outraged and began plotting a revolt. Two committee members, Marvin Leath of Texas and Charles Bennett of Florida, indicated their intention to challenge Aspin for the chairmanship when the House Democratic Caucus convened at the start of the next session in January 1987. Although Leath had a very conservative record on all military and arms control issues, arms control liberals such as Barbara Boxer and Ron Dellums declared their support for him because, they said, "at least he keeps his word."


As the rumors grew, Downey, a friend of Aspin's and past collaborator, and Markey decided to enlist Aspin's support for the 1-kt testing moratorium. At a meeting for House arms control activists to discuss the upcoming Defense Authorization Bill, Markey told Aspin that "if he wants a get well card from the 'libs', he'll get on the testing amendment." Markey and Downey did not just want his support, they wanted his name on the amendment. Aspin was not enthusiastic. His top arms control priority was to pass a law requiring continued U.S. compliance with SALT II's sublimits on multiple-warhead strategic weapons. This legislative objective was characterized by some of his fellow Democrats as "blue chip establishment stuff," in contrast to the "peacenik" image of the testing issue. Despite his lack of enthusiasm, Aspin agreed to his friends and supporters' request to sponsor the testing amendment.

At about the same time that congressional political pressures led Les Aspin to approve the amendment, national political consideration led Democratic Caucus Chairman Richard Gephardt to sign up. The previous year Gephardt had helped "whip" the MX votes, but that was the extent of his arms control credentials. As he prepared to enter the Democratic presidential primary contests, Gephardt needed some way to appeal to the "peace constituency" in the key early states. The fight to preserve the SALT treaty or the ABM treaty already had very prominent figures in the high profile roles, and more importantly, those issues did not have much of a grassroots constituency. Nuclear testing did. The very feature of the testing issue which discouraged some pro-arms control

44 Interview with Jeff Duncan.
legislators from becoming involved, encouraged Gephardt's involvement. With active
encouragement from Downey, Markey, and Schroeder and some arms control lobby
organizations, Gephardt signed on to the testing legislation. The legislation became known
as the Aspin-Gephardt-Schroeder testing moratorium.

Although Markey's staff had initiated and done most of the work on the amendment,
they knew that its prospects would be enhanced without Markey's name on it. Markey's
easy acceptance of the name change represented an evolution of his role in the House from
"outside politics" to "inside politics." In the days of the nuclear freeze, Markey saw himself
as "bashing the system from the outside." And, as such, he was building a national
constituency with his high profile role, great attention to media coverage, and full schedule
of speeches and appearances around the country. By the time of the testing debate, Markey
was no longer contemplating higher office or leading movement politics, but was pursuing
advancement within the House of Representatives. According to those close to him, that
shift in strategy meant "working to be perceived as effective and not a hotdog."\(^{45}\) The
politics of the arms control issue evolved in a parallel manner. In contrast to the early
1980s, by mid-decade arms control had won a secure spot on the congressional agenda and
was given priority by House Democrats. Moreover, the Armed Services Committee was no

\(^{45}\) In 1983, Massachusetts Senator Paul Tsongas announced he was leaving the
Senate and Markey launched a vigorous campaign to succeed him. He dropped
out of the race the following May, the day before the filing deadline for House
races, leaving many supporters disenchanted with his late-in-the-game withdrawal.
This episode was partly responsible for Markey's different approach to politics.
Interview with Jeff Duncan. Today, Markey has nearly totally shed his maverick
image and is working toward one day assuming the powerful Chairmanship of the
Energy and Commerce Committee.
longer a closed and conservative monolith, hostile to arms control. These changes meant that Markey could now play more of an "insider" game, and thus reap benefits from his work without his name on a bill.

With Aspin and Gephardt signed on by the beginning of July, Markey and his allies accelerated their search for moderates. They found John Spratt of South Carolina. Rep. Spratt was elected in 1982 and is an example of the new breed of Southern Democrats. Unlike most of his Southern colleagues before him who were reflexively "pro-defense," Spratt approaches defense problems from a somewhat skeptical, intellectual stance. He was intrigued by the progress being made in the area of testing verification and the Soviet's new forthcoming behavior and apparent interest in testing limitations. And, he was dismayed by the Reagan administration's lack of a response to both these developments. Thus, although he was uncomfortable with the amendment's low threshold -- he would have preferred a 5, 10, or even 50-kiloton threshold to a 1-kiloton threshold -- Spratt thought the amendment was a good idea in order to pressure the U.S. government to put testing negotiations back on the agenda. In addition, according to his principal staff member

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46 Les Aspin was far more willing to challenge the defense department than previous Chairman of the Armed Services Committee and was particularly responsive, in his first years, to the House rank and file Democrats. Moreover, the committee membership was no longer uniformly hawkish. There were three very liberal members of the committee at this time: Ron Dellums, Pat Schroeder, and Barbara Boxer; and some liberal to moderate members like Nick Mavroules.

47 Information on Rep. Spratt's position is primarily from personal interview, Katherine Magraw with Bob DeGrasse, Spratt's Legislative Assistant for Defense, July 29, 1990, Washington, D.C. This information is corroborated and amplified by interviews with congressional staff who prefer to remain anonymous and the written record of Spratt's comments.
responsible for covering the issue, he felt confident that even if it passed the House, it would be modified in conference with the Senate. Spratt signed on after the key sponsors agreed to a few modifications, the most significant of which was to delay the test moratorium's effective date until January 1, 1987 in order to give the administration time to conduct any last minute tests it deemed essential. Although this was not a major change, the fact that Spratt, "the intellectual moderate," had modified the amendment before giving it his support, was helpful to the effort to gather support for the amendment.\footnote{A story went around congressional offices that Spratt even drafted the changes himself on his home computer.}

As the day approached for consideration of the Defense Authorization Bill by the full House in early August, the ingredients for a victory on "Aspin-Gephardt-Schroeder" came together in piecemeal fashion. The Democratic leadership did not make a deliberate decision to adopt the amendment, and yet virtually the whole leadership agreed to the amendment as one name pulled in another. The effort was not a priority of the arms control lobby community which doubted it would win, and which was preoccupied with other issues.\footnote{Personal interview, Katherine Magraw with Michelle Robinson, staff member for Council for a Livable World. Washington, D.C., July 25, 1990.} About a week before the vote, the amendment started to attract some notice, but the administration and conservatives in Congress also were preoccupied with other fights and not fully aware of the testing amendment's strength. There was no concerted lobbying effort against the amendment, beyond leaking the news that the White House had sent a high-level team to Moscow to talk about nuclear issues.
The House debated the testing amendment on August 8, 1986.\textsuperscript{50} It was the first of several controversial, far-reaching arms control amendments scheduled for consideration. The day before, the Senate once again approved by a large margin the Mathias-Kennedy nonbinding resolution calling on the president to propose immediate negotiations with the Soviet Union on a CTB. Opponents of the amendment expressed the official White House and Pentagon contention that "nuclear testing is indispensable to a credible, safe nuclear deterrent." They also argued that the amendment would undercut the U.S. bargaining position in arms reduction talks with the Soviet Union. "For God's sake," Rep. Henry Hyde, one of the principal opponents of the freeze resolution, exclaimed "let our negotiators negotiate."\textsuperscript{51} He denounced members as "cosmic kibitzers" who would "tell brain surgeons what instruments to use." Rep. Hyde also criticized Rep. Aspin's motives, courting a formal reprimand with his blunt talk. "This is an effort by the chairman, for whom it is not enough that he is chairman, to become chief arms negotiator, too. Ambition knows no bounds. But this is the chairman's effort to rehabilitate himself with the Sister Boom-Boom wing of the Democratic Party."\textsuperscript{52}

For their part, the amendment's sponsors displayed large seismograms from NRDC

\textsuperscript{50} For a news summary of amendment, see Edward Walsh and Helen Dewar, "Nuclear Test Ban Approved by House," \textit{The Washington Post}, August 9, 1986, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{51} \textit{Congressional Record}, August 8, 1986, p. H5754.

\textsuperscript{52} \textit{Ibid}. Sister Boom-Boom was a reference to a transvestite who made it onto the evening news when s/he demonstrated at the 1984 San Francisco Democratic convention.
monitoring equipment which was stationed around the main Soviet test site, stressed the administration's unwillingness to consider testing negotiations, and reiterated the common sense case for a test ban. The eloquent Majority Leader of the House, Jim Wright closed the debate with a stirring speech in favor of the amendment.\footnote{53} "Surely nobody could question my personal credentials as a supporter of national defense" or my record of supporting "our President, whoever he be," Wright declared. However, he concluded, "after 40 years of the nuclear arms race [it] is vitally important for Congress to take a stand.\footnote{54} The amendment was approved by a stunning vote of 234-155.

**The Reykjavik Card**

The House version of the fiscal year 1987 Defense Authorization Bill contained several far-reaching arms control provisions that directly challenged administration policy and assured confrontation with the more conservative Senate. The vote on final passage followed bizarre partisan lines: all but 23 House Republicans voted against the bill, and nearly all moderate and liberal Democrats voted for it, some for the first time in their careers.\footnote{55} In addition to the one-kiloton testing moratorium, the House voted to compel Reagan administration compliance with the SALT II limits; to continue the moratorium on the testing of anti-satellite weapons; to freeze SDI spending at the previous year's level plus

\footnote{53}{For text of speech, see \textit{Congressional Record}, August 8, 1986, p. H5755.}

\footnote{54}{\textit{Ibid.}}

\footnote{55}{For roll call, see \textit{Congressional Record}, August 13, 1986. Up until then, only the most liberal members opposed DoD funding bills. When roll call votes are taken, DoD bills almost always pass with overwhelmingly support.}
inflation; and to bar production of new binary chemical weapons. All these House measures limiting authorization of funds for weapons programs were passed in the name of promoting arms control with the Soviet Union. The day after the House adopted the bill, President Reagan called the House bill "a reckless assault upon the national defense of the United States. It threatens our hopes for arms control."  

The Senate version of the Defense Authorization Bill contained nonbinding resolutions endorsing a comprehensive test ban and urging the United States to remain within the SALT II limits. It also gave the go-ahead to chemical weapons production -- an effort to delete chemical weapons funds failed by one vote -- and the ASAT program, and approved funding for SDI at a level closer to the administration's request. The House leadership and the informal arms control coalition, which had developed over the course of the freeze and MX debates, were determined to preserve some of the provisions passed by the House. Speaker O'Neill took the unusual step of appointing non-Armed Service Committee members as "special" conferees to the bicameral conference to resolve the differences between the two versions of the annual funding bill. Much to the dismay of many Senate conferees and Senate Armed Services Committee staff, the "stacked" conference contained Representatives Markey, Downey, AuCoin, Brown, and Gephardt, among others. Senate Armed Services Chairman Barry Goldwater was so incensed that he refused for a time to begin the conference. "Who are these Hottentots? Who are these

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56 President Reagan, transcript of the president's weekly radio address. The White House, August 16, 1986.
animals?" he is reported to have said.\(^{57}\) The conference began in late summer and quickly deadlocked over the testing and SALT II compliance provisions.

In early October, Sen. Gary Hart, a Senate Democratic conferee sympathetic to testing restraints, floated a possible compromise -- a limitation on testing to an annual quota of four shots. House conferees promptly accepted the suggestion; indeed this would have represented a considerable victory from their perspective.\(^{58}\) Sen. Warner, a senior Republican conferee, said he would check with the administration. Hart's proposal was overtaken by events. The administration unexpectedly announced that President Reagan and Soviet leader Gorbachev had decided to meet a few weeks hence in Reykjavik, Iceland. The charge leveled against the arms control activists of undermining the President in his negotiations with the Soviet Union suddenly acquired new weight.

With the summit approaching and national elections less than a month away, the House Democratic leadership stepped in to determine the fate of the House position on arms control. Despite persistent and impassioned pleas from liberal arms control advocates in the House, Speaker O'Neill and other members of the leadership decided that the House had to abandon its positions. The leadership argued that if the House persevered, the administration would be able to blame the "Democrats" for a summit failure in the upcoming elections. The general outlook for Democratic prospects in November was very promising, and many politicians believed this was because the elections had retained a local


\(^{58}\) Interview with Jeff Duncan. Hart's proposal is also cited by Barry Blechman, p. 103.
focus, specific to the individual races. O'Neill argued that a confrontation on arms control risked transforming the elections into referendum on national issues which would disadvantage the Democrats.⁵⁹

The House agreed to substitute non-binding for binding provisions on both nuclear testing limitations and compliance with SALT. The less objectionable, and almost institutionalized, House position on an ASAT test moratorium would once again become law. For its part, the administration offered a small gesture. In a deal brokered by Sen. Nunn, the White House committed itself to seek Senate approval of the TTBT and PNET as the first order of business in the next session.⁶⁰ If the Soviet Union had not yet agreed to the additional verification provisions the administration originally required, it would still request ratification, but with "an appropriate reservation to the treaties that would ensure they would not take effect until they are effectively verifiable." In addition, the administration promised that once these verification concerns were dealt with, it would propose immediate negotiations on "ways to implement a step-by-step parallel program -- in association with a program to reduce and ultimately eliminate all nuclear weapons -- of limiting and ultimately ending nuclear testing." The "deal" allowed Members of Congress to say -- and perhaps believe -- that they had nudged U.S. policy toward negotiating additional limits on testing. And it gave the administration the appearance of

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⁶⁰ Letter from President Reagan in Reykjavik to Senate Armed Services Chairman Barry Goldwater. October 10, 1986.
responsiveness to the testing issue without altering its opposition to a test ban.

With all the House conferees and staff crowded into the Speaker's office, O'Neill reached Reagan enroute to Reykjavik by phone to assure him that the "Democrats" are behind him.\textsuperscript{61} In announcing that the House would retreat from its arms control positions, O'Neill explained that:

\begin{quote}
We in the Congress can legislate arms control up to a point. We can use public statements in support of arms control, up to a point. But we cannot sit at the bargaining table in Iceland.\textsuperscript{62}
\end{quote}

The Reykjavik summit has already won a place in the history of Cold War summits as the most quixotic and bizarre.\textsuperscript{63} The Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff were largely excluded from what little preparation was done for the summit. Secretary of State George Schultz and Defense Under Secretary Richard Perle, as well as a few political intimates from the White House, were Reagan's principal staff during the summit. Neither Schultz nor Perle were full-fledged members of the strategic policy community -- nuclear weapons policy was not Schultz's main area of expertise and Perle's very hawkish views placed him outside the boundaries of the community's viewpoints.

General Secretary Gorbachev came with a proposal to reduce strategic nuclear weapons by 50 percent, to eliminate all intermediate range nuclear weapons from Europe,


and to preserve the ABM Treaty over the next ten years. After considering this far-reaching and unexpected proposal, Reagan proposed eliminating all offensive ballistic missiles in the next ten years. Gorbachev countered with a proposal to eliminate all strategic offensive forces in ten years. Progress toward a meeting of the minds of these two unusual leaders -- both apparently willing to overrule half a century of strategic theology -- came to an abrupt halt over Reagan's refusal to agree to any restrictions on testing of future defensive systems, already banned by treaty.

The reaction from the media and from politicians in Washington to the Reykjavik summit was swift and negative. While some of the national media initially expressed disappointment that the administration had passed up a chance at genuine disarmament because of Reagan's child-like faith in a Star Wars fantasy, members of the strategic policy community were deeply disturbed by the sweeping nature of the discussion and Reagan's purported zero-ballistic missile proposal.64 Senator Nunn immediately urged the President to withdraw his proposal before the Soviets accepted it because a world without ballistic missiles would advantage the Soviet Union and make war "more likely, not less likely."65 James Woolsey spoke for much of the strategic policy community when he called the summit one of the worst performances in foreign policy by an administration that this country has

64 John Newhouse relates an exchange between Reagan and his national security advisor, Vice Admiral John Poindexter during a briefing for Senators in which Poindexter told Reagan that he has to clear up "this business about agreeing to getting rid of all nuclear weapons," and that he "couldn't have" agreed to that. Reagan reportedly replied: "I was there and I did." John Newhouse, "The Abolitionist, II," op. cit., p. 62.

65 Congressional Record, October 17, 1986, p. S16575-16577.
seen in the nuclear age. In Woolsey’s view, "[I]t held up for the world a completely unrealistic view of the possibility of doing away...with all ballistic missiles" and "deflected attention away from more useful steps to make nuclear weapons more survivable, to have reasonable arms control connected with them."66 White House Chief of Staff Don Regan imprudently compared the White House officials’ damage-control efforts following the summit to a "shovel brigade that follows a parade down Maine Street cleaning up."67

One "spin" not available to the White House was to "blame the Democrats." However, after the summit, House Democrats had some misgivings about the House’s decision to surrender their positions to those of the Senate and the administration. In November and December, the Defense Policy Panel of the House Armed Services Committee, headed by Aspin, held a series of hearings on the Iceland Summit. Among other conclusions, the panel report said that:

the issues that had been at the center of the congressional debate were largely irrelevant at Reykjavik.... This suggests that had the House held firm to its positions, the summit at Reykjavik would have been no different.68

Subsequent history also suggests that a possible opportunity to make progress on bilateral test restrictions was lost. During the following two years, the history of test ban

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66 Transcript from filmed interview conducted by WGBH for use in their series "War and Peace in the Nuclear Age." 1987. UBIT #A12010, page 11 of 11.


amendments partially repeated itself. The House passed a one-kiloton threshold testing moratorium contingent on Soviet reciprocation, and Senators attempted and failed to pass similar legislation in the Senate. However, for reasons discussed below, the prospects for the House "holding firm" to its position -- or obtaining significant compromise measures -- were slight. In the end, test ban supporters were left with little to show for their decisive House victories after confrontations with the administration and their Senate counterparts in conference.

Blowing Smoke with the TTB and PNE Treaties

Richard Perle and his deputy, Frank Gaffney, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear Forces and Arms Control Policy, orchestrated the administration's response to the NRDC-Soviet Academy of Sciences seismic verification project and the congressional display of interest in testing restrictions. Their principal response was to promote a technique known as CORRTEX (Continuous Reflectometry for Radius Versus Time Experiment) to verify Soviet compliance with the TTB.\textsuperscript{69} This technique uses a coaxial cable emplaced in a "satellite" hole within 10 meters of the nuclear device test hole. The cable measures the speed of the strong shock wave through the ground which is used to compute the yield of the explosion. CORRTEX advocates claim it is more accurate than seismic verification because it measures the shock waves so close to their source. However,

credible scientists have debated this claim and subsequent experiments conducted by the Department of Energy (DOE) with the Soviet Union do not support the Department’s own claim that on-site hydrodynamic methods must be used in order to obtain an improved yield estimation capability.\footnote{See p. 257 for description of DOE experiment.}

Unlike seismic verification, CORRTEX is only appropriate for monitoring an ongoing testing program in which tests are declared in advance. It is of limited use in monitoring a comprehensive test ban or a very low-threshold ban.\footnote{CORRTEX can not be used to monitor unannounced, off-site, or clandestine tests and therefore would not have been appropriate for monitoring a comprehensive test ban. Nor is it useful for monitoring a low-threshold ban for the above reasons. Moreover, CORRTEX would not even be a promising means of recording known very low-yield tests because the shock wave is weaker and therefore the CORRTEX cable would have to be placed so close to the explosive that the technicians from the two sides would have to work virtually as one team.} Moreover, it is a very intrusive means of verification, requiring extensive and costly advance preparations.\footnote{For a thorough discussion, see Dr. Gregory E. Van der Vink, Director of Planning, the IRIS Consortium, statement in U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, \textit{Verification of the 1974 TTBT and the 1976 PNET}, 101st Cong., 2nd sess., July 31, 1990.} Given these undisputed facts, the participants in the debate over U.S. policy on test limitations understood that the Administration’s insistence on this technology was not based on the need to achieve a certain level of accuracy in yield estimation, whatever the official explanation, but its resistance to further testing restrictions.\footnote{Although test ban proponents openly made this accusation, test ban opponents did not acknowledge its accuracy for several years.} Once out of office, Frank Gaffney openly acknowledged as much:
The inherent limitations of CORRTEX are regarded as virtues by those in the U.S. government who hope to slow the rush toward additional constraints on or the complete banning of nuclear testing... The more time wasted on discussions and experimentation of monitoring techniques irrelevant to the verification of an environment in which there are no legal tests, the easier it will be to stave off demands for the more constraining comprehensive test ban.\textsuperscript{74}

Even as the administration continued to insist on new technology to verify the TTBT, its charges that the Soviet Union had not complied with the 150 kiloton threshold were widely refuted.\textsuperscript{75} In April 1986, the CIA announced that it had systematically overestimated the yields of Soviet tests.\textsuperscript{76} Many seismologists -- inside and outside of government -- who had reached a similar conclusion to the CIA's some time earlier, grew emboldened by what they perceived as the misuse of their science and publicly contradicted the administration.\textsuperscript{77}

The charge of Soviet non-compliance steadily lost credibility, but top officials from the Defense and Energy Departments and conservative Senators such as Jesse Helms and James McClure continued to issue it. The charge functioned as "smoke," intended to


\textsuperscript{75} See, for example, R.J. Smith, "Scientists Challenge Claims of Soviet Treaty Violation," \textit{Science} vol. 220, June 17, 1983, p. 1254.


\textsuperscript{77} Personal interview, Katherine Magraw with Charles Archambeau, by phone, August 9, 1990. Assistant Secretary of Defense Richard Perle tried to stifle the dissent from scientists and members of the intelligence community. In a April 15, 1985 letter to the Air Force assistant chief of staff for intelligence, Perle wrote that the scientific community was undermining the administration's position and that his department would henceforth control the question of Soviet test violations. See Len Ackland, "Testing -- Who is Cheating Whom?" \textit{Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists}, October, 1986, pp. 9-11.
confuse the issues and provide a screen for politicians who did not want to confront the testing issue, according to a staff member. 78 Influential and knowledgeable Senators such as Sam Nunn and John Warner, and administration officials such as Secretary of State Schultz, Paul Nitze, and respected defense analysts did not denounce the transparently misleading charge. They did not because they accepted it as a "legitimate smoke screen" tactic that served their purpose of forestalling testing limitations. In this way, the charge was typical of much of the discourse in nuclear weapons policy making. There is a sub-text concealed underneath the actual words which is understood by the participants but not explicitly acknowledged.

The "agreement" reached on the eve of the Reykjavik summit, between the defense conferees and the White House, unraveled almost immediately. When Congress reconvened in January 1987, the Senate was returned to Democratic control, and some Democratic leaders in both chambers indicated their intention to give high priority to the nuclear testing issue. Both Foreign Relations Chairman Claiborne Pell and the new Senate Majority leader, Robert Byrd, decided to call for prompt ratification of the TTBT and PNET in order to assert Democratic leadership and the importance of progress on arms control. The administration demanded that Senate approval of the two treaties be contingent on negotiation of a verification protocol providing for the extensive use of CORRTEX. To do this would require a second Senate vote. Senate Democrats could not agree among themselves how to respond.

Liberal Democrats charged that the President was reneging on his agreement. They did not want the Senate to endorse Reagan's dubious claim that the relatively insignificant treaties could not be verified in their existing form, or to provide implicit endorsement of the CORRTEX verification method. Both of these were seen as ingredients of a transparent strategy to ward off additional testing restrictions. The options for these Senators were to insist on a single vote, or to leave the treaties in their unratified state of the past 13 years. Senators Byrd and Nunn, on the other hand, took the position that the Senate should be as hard-line as Reagan on the need for additional verification. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee could not reach an agreement on which of these paths to follow.\textsuperscript{79} Consequently, the treaties slipped off the Senate agenda with the same lack of resoluteness and clarity of purpose that characterized their brief elevation to prominence.

\textbf{Opposition in the Senate and Lack of Interest in the Soviet Union}  

Sen. Kennedy sponsored the test moratorium amendment in the Senate. The effort was led by a member of his staff who was deeply involved in the victorious House amendment in 1986 and who joined Sen. Kennedy with the purpose of repeating the success in the Senate.\textsuperscript{80} Although the Senate, in contrast to the House, during the first part of the 1980s consistently rebuffed attempts to promote the achievement of arms control agreements or to curtail weapons

\textsuperscript{79} The chairman of the committee, Claiborne Pell, was a notoriously weak chairman. If Pell had been more forceful, he perhaps could have forced the Committee to take some action.

\textsuperscript{80} Interview with Christopher Paine, August 5, 1990.
programs, there was still reason to believe that testing restrictions could generate substantial support. The non-binding resolution expressing support for a comprehensive test ban had fared very well in the past when the Senate was under Republican control. Under Democratic control, the Senate presumably would be even more sympathetic to a test ban. Congressional staff members working on this issue hoped that even if they were not able to generate a majority vote in the Senate, their amendment would be popular enough to enable them to get a compromise through the House-Senate conference which imposed severe test restrictions short of a one-kiloton threshold ban.

Sen. Kennedy added two provisions to his amendment to accommodate concerns about verification and the need for reliability testing. The amendment allowed for two exceptions to the one kiloton threshold for warhead "reliability" tests, the yield of which could not exceed 15 kilotons. Secondly, the amendment specified that the Soviet Union must accept mutual on-site inspections; the installation of an in-country seismic monitoring network; the calibration of its designated test site; and mutual commitment to announce all tests thirty days in advance and to confine them to one small designated testing area. Kennedy teamed up with Mark Hatfield, his partner on the nuclear weapons freeze resolution. Despite the modifications to the amendment, Sen. Kennedy was unable to assemble co-sponsors comparable to those on the House provision. One difficulty they encountered in their efforts was that the Soviet Union had largely ceased to be a source of pressure for progress on testing. In February 1987, the Soviets Union broke its unilateral moratorium. By September 1987, it was clear that the Soviet Union had abandoned the test-ban as a near-term objective and acquiesced to the U.S. agenda. A Soviet delegation
headed by Foreign Minister Shevardnadze visiting the U.S. in September, issued a joint statement with U.S. Secretary of State Schultz on a range of arms control issues. The portion dealing with nuclear testing announced both side's agreement to begin negotiations on "effective verification measures which will make it possible for the United States to ratify the TTBT and PNET," and to link further undefined restraints to future unspecified reductions in nuclear weapons. For this purpose, the sides agreed to design and conduct a joint verification experiment (JVE) at each other's test site, which would include measurement of tests with both CORRTEX and seismic techniques.

From the perspective of the sponsors of the Senate amendment on a low-threshold testing moratorium, the timing and content of the Soviet announcement could not have been worse. Support for the legislation was directly related to the perception that the Reagan administration had departed from traditional U.S. sympathies, however insincere, for negotiations on testing restrictions, while the Soviet Union moved out in front of the U.S. on this symbolic issue. This perception markedly faded when the administration declared it wanted to proceed with ratification of the TTB and PNE treaties, and the Soviet Union agreed to the American agenda. A few days later, the Kennedy-Hatfield amendment was handily defeated by a vote of 61-36.

Why the Soviet Union abruptly shifted course, undermining the efforts within the U.S. to force progress on testing restrictions, is a matter of conjecture. One Congressional aide reported that a senior Soviet embassy official told him that the Soviet Union "did not

have a very high regard for the political skills of 'Congressional liberals,' and that he was sure his government had obtained 'important concessions in other areas of the negotiations' in return for its collapse on the testing issue.\(^{82}\) It is also possible that elements of the Soviet military, as opposed to negotiated testing restrictions as the U.S. military and reportedly unhappy with the extended testing moratorium, forced a change in policy.

The JVE eventually resulted in the additional verification provisions for the TTB and PNET that the U.S. government had insisted upon.\(^{83}\) One JVE experiment also inadvertently highlighted the weakness of the U.S. position on verification of the treaties. In the fall of 1988, Soviet military scientists went to the Nevada Test Site to witness the CORRTEX method for measuring the yield of a U.S. underground nuclear explosion. Much to the embarrassment of the U.S. government, the CORRTEX system measured the yield of the explosion at 155 to 163 kilotons, an apparent violation of the 150 kiloton threshold. The Soviet teleseismic monitoring means showed that the yield was 140 kilotons as intended by the U.S.\(^{84}\)


\(^{83}\) The treaties were finally ratified in October 1990 after the U.S. and Soviet Union reached agreement on new verification protocols desired by the U.S. wanted to insure that the Soviet Union was not cheating on the treaty. The Senate ratified the treaties with no debate or dissension. Sen. Kennedy said at the time that the only reason to ratify these anachronistic treaties was to "have done with them."

In May 1988, the Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) issued a thorough report on the capabilities of seismic verification of nuclear tests. OTA reported an expert "consensus" that the current identification threshold for an in-country seismic network was about five kilotons. The OTA report was very well received in the scientific community, but it did not measurably boost the fortunes of the testing moratorium. The amendment was again defeated easily by a vote of 57-39.

The Strategic Policy Community and Prominent Arms Controllers

Legislators and members of the public interest community working on the test moratorium legislation were unable to mobilize significant support for their initiative from prominent arms control supporters from the nuclear weapons policy network or the arms controllers within the strategic policy community. For example, Harold Brown, former Secretary of Defense, told congressional staff that he supported a one-to-ten kiloton threshold under different conditions, but he was unwilling to officially or unofficially testify to that effect for the Congress. Even arms control supporters who had expressed support for a test ban in the past also were unwilling to lobby for the test moratorium. Stanford physicists Sidney Drell and Arms Control Association Director Spurgeon Keeney both said they believed that testing restrictions were a distraction from the more important, contentious issues of SDI and reduction treaties.

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85 See Paine, "Nuclear Test Restriction Fails to Pass Senate."

86 Interview with Christopher Paine.

87 Ibid., personal conversation, Katherine Magraw with Spurgeon Keeney, October, 1987.
Most members of the strategic policy community, or those on the periphery of the community, did not become involved in the debate. They did not publicly voice an opinion in favor or against tests restrictions, nor did they comment on the administration's position on CORRTEX and the PNE and TTB treaties. One major exception was senior officials of both Department of Energy nuclear weapons laboratories. In fact, the laboratories' lobbying campaign against the legislation was so extensive it provoked an investigation by the General Accounting Office (GAO) of the propriety and legality of the laboratories officials involvement in policy.  

The GAO found that the "DOE extensively used national laboratory employees to prepare material for, initiate contacts with, and participate in briefings for Members of the Congress and staff." In addition, GAO documents the involvement of laboratory officials in developing and implementing a strategy for targeting and lobbying legislators who could be swayed.  

During the three years that the House passed the moratorium language, laboratory officials resisted any compromise.

The Contrasting Politics of the House and the Senate

After its initial victory in 1986, the testing moratorium amendment in the House

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89 GAO concluded that these "lobbying efforts" did not violate the letter of the law prohibiting the use of federal contract funds for lobbying "because such contractor activities were ordered and approved by DOE." However, GAO declared, "the use of national laboratory contractor staff in the briefing process was not in accordance with prohibitions [imposed by the Office of Management and Budget] against DOE's use of consulting services to aid in influencing legislation pending before Congress."
acquired a life of its own. At Richard Gephardt's behest, the House Democratic Caucus unanimously endorsed the testing moratorium in early 1987. This Democratic caucus position was never reversed. Furthermore, once a solid majority of individual members established a track record of support, they were unlikely to reverse themselves without a good reason. In May 1987, the House voted 234-187 to adopt an amendment virtually identical to the previous year's testing moratorium.\(^{90}\) The amendment was "whipped" by the leadership. Its passage was fully expected. The following year, once again the amendment passed by a comfortable margin (214-186), although it lost twenty votes from the previous year. One of the lost votes was that of Rep. Spratt, who since his initial key sponsorship of the amendment had continued to rise in stature as one of the "defense intellectuals" of Congress. He said he voted against the amendment because it had served its purpose of goading the executive branch into serious efforts to determine how low a nuclear threshold could be verified.\(^{91}\)

But while the testing amendment proceeded through the House like "a well oiled machine,"\(^{92}\) it ran into a brick wall when it reached conference with the Senate. For three years running, nuclear testing was a contentious issue when the Senate and House met to agree on a final funding bill for the Defense Department.\(^{93}\)

\(^{90}\) For debate and final vote, see Congressional Record, May 19, 1987.


\(^{92}\) Interview with Jeff Duncan.

\(^{93}\) During much of the 1980s, the deadlines of the Congressional budget process were not met and as a result, authorization bill were folded into appropriations bills and in several instances, omnibus spending bills or continuing resolutions
When House and Senate conferees met in the fall of 1987 to resolve differences in the fiscal year 1988 Defense Authorization bill, a Reagan-Gorbachev summit again was in the offing. In 1987, however, the House amendment was killed without recourse to high-level drama about undercutting the President's summitry or an exchange of letters. Test ban supporters could not even win the conferees' approval for additional funds for seismic verification research. There was no support for testing restrictions among the top three Senate negotiators -- Chairman Sam Nunn, ranking Democrat on the Committee Jim Exon, and the ranking Republican John Warner. Nunn asserted that the Senate had not adopted a position in that year's bill on test restrictions and therefore the House conferees should negotiate directly with the White House. Nunn actually knew little about the pros and cons of testing restrictions because he did not consider it sufficiently important to warrant his attention. The other Democratic Senate conferees, some of whom supported a test ban, did not intervene, demonstrating a lack of "Democratic solidarity" between Senate and House Members on defense issues.

The effect of Nunn's actions was to make the Senate a partner of the White House on this issue. Not surprisingly, the White House adopted an uncompromising position against any initiative that favored testing restrictions, pledging to veto any bill which contained such initiatives. The individual most responsible for upholding the House position -- Les Aspin -- was also unenthusiastic about testing restrictions. Aspin thought testing was

were used as the legislative vehicles to appropriate funds.

94 Personal interview, Katherine Magraw with Senate Armed Services Committee staff who prefers to remain anonymous.
not "serious" arms control because, regardless of the merits of the issue, it engendered too much opposition from the nuclear weapons research community and the Pentagon to be "serious" arms control.\footnote{Personal interview, Katherine Magraw with Herb Lin, House Armed Services Committee staff, Washington, D.C. July 25, 1990.} Although the amendment represented a firm House Democratic position, Aspin's policy positions have often owed more to his extensive network within the strategic policy community and the defense policy network than to the party caucus.

In addition, there were other arms control measures on the bill which were important to Aspin and Nunn, as well as to the strategic policy community. Both House and Senate bills contained provisions which mandated U.S. compliance with SALT II limits and forbade certain SDI tests which might violate the ABM Treaty. (The House amendments were more inclusive in both cases.) The conferees' primary objective was to include a version of these provisions which would not produce a White House veto. Consequently, the House and Senate conferees agreed with little dissent to drop the House testing language as they sought to preserve other arms control measures.

The following year, in 1988, House conferees once again brought their one-kiloton testing moratorium to conference. There was now a two-year precedent of the House yielding to the Senate position. Test ban supporters decided to advocate something less than the moratorium. Rep. Spratt volunteered to offer the Senate conferees a compromise proposal -- the "Nuclear Test Ban Readiness" program. The program was crafted by Rep. Markey and Sen. Kennedy's offices. It directed the Secretary of Energy to take steps to assure that the United States is in a position to maintain the reliability and safety of its
nuclear stockpile in the event that the United States and the Soviet Union conclude a low-threshold or comprehensive nuclear test ban agreement.

The authors designed the program to have two purposes. First, it would defuse the arguments made against a testing ban that continued testing is necessary to ensure safety and reliability of weapons. Second, by involving the weapons laboratories in this program, it would lay the bureaucratic groundwork for an eventual test ban agreement. Rep. Spratt, to whom the responsibility fell for getting the program through the conference, was not motivated by such a political agenda. He felt the program was "prudent" and "reasonable." Moreover, although Spratt no longer supported the moratorium initiative which he had helped to launch, he still felt some responsibility for continuing to work on the issue.96

The Readiness Program would not restrict or interfere with the on-going work of the weapons laboratories to research, develop and test new weapons and weapons concepts. The form of the legislation was typical of Congressional action on controversial issues -- it did not stop or radically change an existing program, rather it created a new program in the hopes of "reforming" or "enhancing" the work of an existing agency. Moreover, it placed the action back in Congressional committees. The Department of Energy would properly implement the program only if the Armed Services Committees effectively monitored it.

Although the program was modest, it became the object of acrimonious and extensive negotiations over the next two years between House staff advocating the program and Senate staff resisting it. Ultimately, the program was accepted into the fiscal year 1989 and fiscal year 1990 Defense bills, but the Minority staff on the Senate Armed Services

96 Interview with Bob DeGrasse, Office of Representative Spratt.

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Committee -- to whom Nunn had delegated a large role -- repeatedly attempted to sabotage the program by expanding the scope and purpose of the program to include nuclear warhead modernization. This would undo the program's central purpose so Markey, Spratt, and Kennedy, and their respective staffs, devoted many hours to lobbying conferees on behalf of their program. In one of the few votes taken in the fiscal year 1989 conference, the conferees explicitly rejected the expanded mission for the Readiness Program. The next year Senator Nunn accepted minority language during the Senate Armed Services Committee mark-up of the Defense Authorization Bill which would transform the Readiness program into just one more weapons modernization program. Once again, Sen. Kennedy, and Representatives Markey, and Spratt scrambled to restore the program to its original status.

In addition to the Readiness Program, congressional test ban supporters fiddled with budget accounts and initiated programs within agencies. For the next several years, a few House and Senate staff prevailed upon the Armed Services committees to increase funding for verification research and technology done by DARPA (Defense Advanced Research Project Agency) and DOE's nuclear weapons laboratories. In addition, they obtained funding for a university consortium, the Incorporated Research Institutions for Seismology (IRIS) to install high-performance seismic stations in the United States and the Soviet Union under a cooperative agreement between the Soviet Academy of Sciences and the

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97 Personal interviews with Bob DeGrasse, Jeff Duncan and Christopher Paine.

98 Interview with Christopher Paine. The conference committee sessions are closed to all but the conferees and their staffs.
university research community in partnership with the U.S. Geological Survey. With these funds, IRIS was able to take over and expand upon the seismic network initiated by NRDC and the Soviet Academy of Sciences. Test-ban supporters also requested the OTA verification study and a study on weapons reliability by a Livermore physicist Ray Kidder who was sympathetic to a test ban.

Test ban supporters turned their attention to the Nuclear Test Ban Readiness Program and obtaining funding for IRIS -- both fairly modest initiatives -- because it was clear to them that it was futile to try to legislate test restrictions directly, despite the overwhelming House votes. The first obstacle they encountered was the Senate. The clash between the House and Senate on nuclear testing matters was consistent with a pattern of repeated House-Senate conflicts during the 1980s. Time and again a majority of the Senate sided with the Pentagon and the White House on national security issues, while the House has been more willing to reduce funding for strategic programs and promote nuclear arms control.

The difference between House and Senate receptivity to efforts to promote arms control, and in particular nuclear weapons testing restrictions, can not be fully explained by the greater conservativism of the average member of the Senate. It is true that the ratio of Democrats to Republicans is far greater in the House than in the Senate. Even after the Democrats regained control of the Senate in 1986, the Democrats still needed support from Republicans in order to pass legislation. However, most of the conflicts over testing policy occurred after the Democrats had retaken the Senate and Sen. Nunn was the Chairman of

99 Interview with Jeff Duncan.

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the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Structural and political factors also explain the uncompromising Senate position against a testing moratorium. Influence on nuclear weapons issues is far more centralized in the Senate than in the House. Senator Nunn's influence over the views and votes of other members on the Armed Services Committee, the "moderate" Democrats, and the leadership -- the three key groups identified by Markey and Downey -- is unmatched by any individual in the House. Nunn's opposition to testing restrictions thus placed a considerable barrier in the way of making inroads into any of those groups.

There was no arms control coalition in the Senate comparable to that in the House, which might have been able to challenge the Chairman for power and authority. For structural and political reasons, forming durable, issue-oriented coalitions, although difficult in the House, is nearly impossible in the Senate. Thus, is it less likely that more than a few Senators will choose to commit their efforts to a group effort. Even if they are interested in doing so, it is difficult to coordinate the schedules of several Senators.

Representatives Markey, Downey and Schroeder -- with backing from the House arms control coalition -- all devoted considerable effort to promoting the test ban legislation. In contrast, on the Senate side only Senator Kennedy's office was actively involved. Apparently, Senator Kennedy himself did not feel strongly enough about the issue to antagonize Sen. Nunn, or optimistic enough about its prospects to make testing legislation a top personal priority.

A close look reveals that the Senate is more responsive to the strategic policy
This is true because authority on nuclear weapons issues is far more centralized in the Senate, and because Senate aides are more tied to the strategic policy community than are House aides. Senate staff typically have more influence over their bosses and issue development than their counterparts in the House. Moreover, Senate aides on defense issues, particularly staff for members of defense related committees, are often more responsive to the views of the strategic policy community than their bosses. Many have been there longer than the Senators they serve and will go to, or have come from, jobs in the executive branch or defense contractors.

For example, the top Senate Armed Services Committee staff responsible for nuclear weapons policy during most of the 1980s previously worked in the military or the executive

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100 Much scholarly work on Congress assumes that members are tied to parochial district interests because of rising campaign finance requirements and are therefore not particularly responsive to national policy elites. This assumption is inaccurate for congressional behavior in many policy areas and particularly inaccurate for nuclear weapons policy. For a rebuttal of this assumption, see, Philip Brenner, The Limits and Possibilities of Congress (St. Martin's Press, 1983). In general, senators are more responsive to national policy elites than representatives, and senior representatives more responsive than junior ones.

101 Senators typically have to cover a wider range of issues and sit on more committees than their House counterparts. Consequently, Senators rely more on their staffs for policy work than House members. Moreover, Senate staff, as compared to House staff, have more prestige and better pay. Representative Obey recently noted this discrepancy in his complaints about the House "kiddie corp" staff which starts in the House and moves on to the Senate, other agencies, or the private sector.

102 These conclusions are based on examples set forth below and information provided in interviews with staff from both chambers.
New Mexico Senator Jeff Bingaman is a liberal Democrat on the Armed Services Committee whose state is home to the Los Alamos National Weapons Laboratory. Bingaman's personal views when he entered the Senate led him to support far-reaching arms control measures, including a test ban. However, his defense policy staff Ed McGaffigan -- who had help various State Department positions including the special assistant to the Under Secretary of State for Security Assistance during the Carter administration -- aided the laboratories' directors to counter the congressional testing legislation. The liberal Democrat Dale Bumpers from Arkansas, who sits on the Defense Appropriations subcommittee, was staffed by Bruce McDonald, a former State Department arms control official. McDonald was indifferent to a bilateral testing agreement and as a result, neglected to alert his boss to when the testing amendment would be debated and voted on in the Senate. Bumpers happened to be on the Senate floor at the time and gave an impromptu, very enthusiastic, speech in support of the amendment which was helpful to the amendment's sponsors, but was no substitute for Bumper's personal involvement in gathering support for the amendment.

103 Democratic staff William Hoehn previously was the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy and a Vice President of RAND. Bob Bell was an Air Force official.

104 The Council for a Livable World, a pro-arms control political action committee, raised thousands of dollars for Bingaman's election campaign in 1982 on the basis of his very pro-arms control positions. The Council decided not to renew its support in 1988.

105 McGaffigan passed on to the New Mexico weapons laboratories a confidential draft of the test ban moratorium legislation he had received from Kennedy's staff. The labs passed it on to the DOE which prepared and distributed a point-paper against the amendment before it was even introduced.
Conclusion

The success of the arms controllers in the House to pass testing legislation contrasted with their overall failure to affect U.S. policy as they intended. The House of Representatives repeatedly passed innovative legislation which represented a rare effort to use Congress's "power of the purse" to initiate a defacto bilateral arms control measure. The House amendment passed in 1986, '87, and '88 like a "well-oiled machine." However, it failed to produce significant softening of administration's hostility to test restrictions.

Despite the radical nature of the successful House legislation, most of the strategic policy community remained distant from the debate over U.S. testing policy. As suggested earlier, the political compromise agreed upon by the strategic policy community on this issue was acceptance, or support for, on-going negotiations on testing limitations as a part of the arms control agenda, but opposition to an actual agreement in the present or near future that achieved or advanced the goal of a comprehensive test ban. This position accommodated, albeit unequally, two views of the community: support for arms control and belief that nuclear weapons research is inherently valuable.

The bias against arms control in this equation was a product of adamant opposition to a CTB from the weapons laboratories, research community and military and lack of strong support for a test ban from arms control proponents at the periphery of the strategic policy community.\textsuperscript{106} For senior officials in the weapons laboratories, any compromise,

\textsuperscript{106} As discussed earlier, many of the dedicated, establishment arms control supporters believed agreement of explosive testing restrictions was low priority or shared the view that limits on research were inherently bad. The persistence of ambivalent feelings about a test ban is evidenced by a report issued in late 1991 by the National Academy of Sciences. The report represents the consensus
no matter how small, might put them on a "slippery slope" leading to a cessation of testing.\textsuperscript{107} This unwillingness to compromise, which was accepted by the strategic policy community, made the issue unattractive for many legislators and their aides to pursue. According to Rep. Spratt's chief aide, Bob DeGrasse, working on behalf of the test ban supporters was unpleasant because he did not receive any support, or even respect, for his work from experts in the nuclear weapons policy network or strategic policy community. DeGrasse suggested that dislike of the nuclear testing issue is not based as much on the substance of the issue, as on the company it keeps -- avid supporters of a test ban are sure to be "radicals" at the extreme left end of the policy network.\textsuperscript{108} A comprehensive test ban did have an organized constituency among the grass roots peace movement, but many legislators felt they fulfilled their obligations to that constituency with their support of the freeze resolution. Had the freeze movement survived and prospered, legislators advocating strict testing limitations might have come closer to realizing their goals because organized popular pressure might have neutralized the influence of the strategic policy community on among a group of respected arms control supporters and scientists. It calls for a radical revision of U.S. nuclear weapons policy including a no-first-use policy and 90 percent reductions in forces. However, concerning a test ban, the report reads: "the committee does not believe that a comprehensive nuclear test ban is critical to the policies recommended in this report and does not have a recommendation regarding one." \textit{The Future of the U.S.-Soviet Nuclear Relationship}, (National Academy of Sciences, National Academy Press, 1991), p. 39.


\textsuperscript{108} Interview with Bob DeGrasse. DeGrasse's happiness increased after he switched projects and, in some ways, switched sides. His next major assignment from Spratt was to work with former and present nuclear weapons designers to review the safety of the U.S. stockpile and the need for additional tests to correct the presumed problem.
this symbolic issue.

The original impetus for the House legislation came from two related sources: the momentum for arms control produced by the freeze movement and fight over the MX missile, and the administration's overt departure from the U.S. traditional sympathy for a CTB which reinforced its lack of credibility on arms control. Once the U.S. and the Soviet Union were once again involved in negotiations on verification of testing agreements, the legislation in both the House and Senate lost steam.

Although the low-kiloton test ban legislation had little chance of becoming law, this legislation still had an effect on U.S. policy. Its popularity in the House induced the administration to engage in negotiations on enhancing verification of the TTB and PNE treaties and subsequently to obtain their ratification. Congress also prompted increased attention from DOE to weapons safety and reliability. Neither of these two results, however, moved U.S. policy in the direction of a comprehensive test ban. In order to advance that goal, Rep. Markey and other test ban supporters sought funding for modest programs on seismic verification and test ban readiness, and requested studies on verification from the OTA and a Livermore physicist, Ray Kidder, sympathetic to a test ban. The passage of legislation, the verification programs, and the various studies did change the terms of a future debate on nuclear testing restrictions. The establishment of the network, together with the data it is currently producing, laid the groundwork for verification of an eventual test ban (or very low yield) treaty and thereby largely removed the verification issue from the debate. Lastly, the test ban campaign gave a voice to dissidents within the nuclear weapons research community.
Thus, the debate over nuclear testing was not fueled by conflict in or weakness of the strategic policy community. In fact, the strength of the community's position on this issue helped defuse congressional support for the test ban. However, the repeated success of the House legislation indicated that the open system of decision making had carried over from one issue to the next. Radical proposals and congressional activism had become acceptable within Congress.
In March 1983, as the House of Representatives continued its marathon debate on the nuclear weapons freeze resolution, and influential legislators in both chambers clashed over the MX missile program, President Reagan unexpectedly interjected a contentious new element into the on-going debate over U.S. nuclear weapons policy. The president proposed a major research program to develop a space-based, multi-layer system to defend the country against a full-scale Soviet nuclear attack. Reagan asserted that the U.S. should adopt a strategy based on an active defense against ballistic missile attack, rather than on deterrence through the threat of retaliation. Reagan's initiative, subsequently entitled the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), sparked a controversy that continues to this day.

When President Reagan reinvigorated the U.S. ballistic missile defense program, SDI seemed to pose a grave challenge to existing U.S. nuclear weapons policy. President Reagan's vision of a comprehensive strategic defense contradicted basic tenets of traditional U.S. strategic policy and, many believed, ignored basic truths about the nuclear age. It threatened to undermine the 1972 ABM Treaty, and many believed, jeopardized all future bi-lateral arms control with the Soviet Union. Lastly, SDI was certain to compete for resources with other defense programs as the program called for billions of dollars of federal funds in the near-term and many tens of billions of dollars in the long-term.

The policy context surrounding SDI quickly became confused because SDI
proponents advanced different rationales and sought to use the program to achieve varying objectives. The program's implications for U.S. strategic policy and arms control policy were ambiguous.

According to the pattern of congressional activism established by previous chapters, Congress is likely to become involved in an issue when there is a challenge to the status quo and when there is elite-level dissension. This chapter examines whether SDI did, in fact, challenge the status quo and the implications of a confused policy context for congressional involvement.

SDI's Origins

On March 23, 1983, President Reagan addressed a national television audience to defend his proposal for a ten percent increase in military spending. The speech reiterated Reagan's well known conviction that the Soviet Union's increasing military prowess imperiled American national security. Near the end of his speech, Reagan departed from his standard themes. He proposed that the United States accelerate research in exotic technologies in order to develop an anti-ballistic missile defense system to protect the American population and homeland.1 Finding common ground with the burgeoning nuclear weapons freeze movement, President Reagan questioned the morality of the U.S. policy of planning massive nuclear retaliation against aggressors in order to deter attacks against the U.S. "Would it not

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be better to save lives than to avenge them?" President Reagan asked. "Are we not capable of demonstrating our peaceful intentions by applying all our abilities and our ingenuity to achieving a truly lasting stability? I think we are -- indeed, we must!"

The president asserted that technological advances made it "reasonable" to begin developing defenses capable of destroying Soviet ballistic missiles and nuclear warheads before they hit United States territory. Accordingly, he called on "the scientific community who gave us nuclear weapons to ... give us the means of rendering these nuclear v .apons impotent and obsolete." A White House press briefing just before the speech indicated that President Reagan envisioned the use of futuristic, space-based, directed-energy weapons -- such as lasers and particle beams.² The media promptly christened Reagan's proposed technology "Star Wars," after the popular science fiction movie.³

For years strategic defense had figured among the most important issues for some members of what Adam Garfinkle calls the "Far Right."⁴ Ronald Reagan also had expressed concern about the lack of U.S. defenses against nuclear weapons for many years. During the 1980 presidential campaign, Reagan and his political aides

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⁴ For example, Phyllis Schlafly and Chester Ward, Strike From Space (The Devin-Adair Company, 1966).
considered offering a proposal to build strategic defenses.\textsuperscript{5} During the first two years of Reagan's presidency, a small network of White House officials, private political activists in Reagan's "kitchen cabinet," and strategic defense enthusiasts continued to press their case to the receptive president.\textsuperscript{6} When the White House finally decided to propose a major national program to develop strategic defenses, the domestic context was undoubtedly crucial.

Public concern about the nuclear arms race was at an historic peak when Reagan made his "Star Wars" speech. A few months earlier, millions of voters overwhelmingly had approved freeze referendum on state and local ballots. Nearly one million people had assembled the previous summer in Central Park to support the call for a bilateral end to the arms race. During the first part of 1983, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops circulated a pastoral statement on nuclear

\textsuperscript{5} For an account of the campaign discussion see Martin Anderson, Revolution (Harcourt, Brace and Jovanovich, 1988), pp. 85-87. Reagan did not discuss strategic defenses because his campaign staff decided the political response was too uncertain. Anderson, the campaign's head of policy development, wrote that "in 1980 it was clearly an idea whose time had not yet come politically." Although, Reagan did tell a journalist at the time of the 1980 primaries that should turn our expertise "loose on what we need in the line of a defense against their weaponry and to defend the population." Robert Scheer, With Enough Shovels, (Random House, 1982), pp. 233-4.

weapons, which endorsed a nuclear weapons freeze and concluded that nuclear deterrence was permissible only as a temporary strategy.\textsuperscript{7}

Public opinion polls consistently indicated that over 70 percent of the public, with solid majorities in every demographic category, favored the proposal for a bilateral halt to the arms race.\textsuperscript{8} The administration’s own polls revealed that public support for the president’s military build-up had steadily declined and a majority of Americans favored reductions in the military budget.\textsuperscript{9} By January 1983, Reagan’s job approval rating slid to the lowest point in his presidency -- 35 percent.\textsuperscript{10}

The mood in Congress also had shifted over the previous two years. Half an hour before Reagan’s speech, the House voted to reduce the administration’s requested increase in Pentagon spending by 50 percent. Both chambers were seriously contemplating termination of the centerpiece of the administration’s strategic program -- the MX missile system. The House was expected to conclude debate on the nuclear freeze resolution and approve it by a wide margin.

The White House seemed unable to stem the mounting tide against its defense policies. Advocates of strategic defenses seized the moment, arguing that the administration’s domestic difficulties provided a political rationale for their program.

\textsuperscript{7} The Catholic Bishops’ pastoral, "The Challenge of Peace: God’s Promise and Our Response," was released May 3, 1983.

\textsuperscript{8} Gallup Report, #208, January 1983, p. 13.

\textsuperscript{9} Lou Cannon, "President Seeks Futuristic Defense Against Missiles", Washington Post, March 24, 1983, p. 1. Administration strategists attributed the poll results to the 1982 recession as well as the freeze movement.

\textsuperscript{10} Gallup Reports, #209, February 1983, pp. 16-17.
As General Daniel Graham, the Director of an organization called High Frontier, wrote in a March 1982 letter to Defense Secretary Weinberger: "In light of the current country-wide press for 'nuclear freeze,' I wish to bring to your attention the value of the High Frontier concept as an effective counter." A month later he wrote to Weinberger that "the concepts we endorse constitute the best currently available riposte to the new surge toward 'nuclear freeze,' 'no-first-use' and other related proposals."\(^{11}\)

The "annex" to Reagan's March 23 speech was secretly planned and written by National Security Advisor Judge William Clark, his deputy Robert (Bud) McFarlane, domestic advisor Michael Deaver, and former campaign advisor and close associate economist Martin Anderson.\(^{12}\) With the exception of McFarlane, these men were political activists, ignorant of nuclear weapons policy. Their aim was to persuade the public that Reagan too was concerned, and planned to "do something" about the arms race, and thereby deflect the mounting criticism of the administration's defense policies.\(^{13}\)

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\(^{11}\) The first letter was dated March 13, 1982, and the second letter was dated April 14, 1982. Both letters were provided to Katherine Magraw by congressional staff.


\(^{13}\) These same political calculations were made throughout the first year or so of SDI's existence, as suggested by paper commissioned by High Frontier in late 1983. The paper said that "with appropriate political and emotional packaging,
Reagan won popular support for SDI by characterizing it as a means of making nuclear weapons obsolete.\textsuperscript{14} The political genius of Reagan's initiative was that it energized his traditional constituencies on the political right for whom the ABM Treaty was a travesty, while also disorganizing the freeze and arms control activists on his political left by appearing to adopt their hostility to nuclear weapons. The president's proposal to make nuclear weapons "obsolete" went even further than the freeze proposal, which was predicated on political acceptance of the mutual nuclear hostage relationship.

Over the next eight months, the Pentagon and the White House gave Star Wars an official name -- the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) -- and an independent institutional base within the Defense Department -- the SDI Organization (SDIO). James Abrahamson, a three-star Air Force General, was named Director of the new office. In February 1984, despite unanswered questions about the future system's architecture and mission, the administration announced plans for a five-year, $26

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\textsuperscript{14} Several public opinion polls suggested that most people, in some cases as many as 75 percent of the public, supported the idea of building a defense system against nuclear missiles. See, ABC/Washington Post polls dated April 1983 and January 1985, as reported in \textit{The Washington Post}, February 18, 1985. When survey questions cited possible costs, referred to a defense system as a nuclear weapons system, or mentioned weapons in space, the percentage of the public expressing support for defenses dropped below 50 percent. For example, see CBS/New York Times poll dated January 1985, available from the Roper Center, University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT.
billion SDI budget. By this time, Defense Department contractors and weapons researchers in private or academic laboratories had reoriented or expanded their work to take advantage of the lucrative new opportunities. Many new companies were formed to do likewise.\textsuperscript{15}

\textbf{The Star Wars Challenge}

As originally conceived, SDI threatened the established political compromise which endorsed both weapons development and arms control in the name of "strategic stability."\textsuperscript{16} President Reagan and other SDI supporters promised that SDI would protect the U.S. and thereby allow the U.S. to abandon the "policy" of MAD (mutual assured destruction).

Of course, MAD has never been a "policy" in the sense of being a preferred strategy for how to use nuclear weapons, as many SDI proponents and other conservatives alleged. MAD referred to the seemingly inescapable condition of each superpower's vulnerability to destruction by the other. Since the mid-1950s, when the Soviet Union first acquired an intercontinental nuclear strike capability, neither the U.S. nor the USSR could launch an attack against the other country without risking the destruction of its own society from a devastating retaliatory attack. The prospect


\textsuperscript{16} For elaboration on this political compromise, see, discussion of the strategic policy community in Chapter One.
of mutual suicide in the event that one side attacked another with nuclear weapons -
- given the acronym MAD -- deters both sides from attacking.

If populations could be protected from nuclear attack, then indeed it might be possible to transcend this "balance of terror." President Reagan, apparently, sincerely believed that it was possible for the United States to erect effective nationwide defenses. But virtually every analyst who was familiar with the superpowers' nuclear arsenals knew that an "astrodome-like" defense was not feasible. The agreement to forego development of comprehensive defenses, enshrined in the ABM Treaty, affirmed this judgement. The treaty also ratified a related enduring truism in the nuclear age: offensive nuclear systems are militarily superior to defensive systems.

17 More than any other program in foreign and military policy, SDI bore Reagan's personal imprimatur. The initiative exemplified the former President's proclivity for grand political gestures, his refusal to allow facts to get in the way of his personal view of reality, and his ignorance about the capabilities of the nuclear weapons under his command. For example, Reagan asserted that submarine-launched ballistic missiles could be recalled after they were fired. Years after introducing the START proposal he admitted he never realized how much more of the Soviet strategic arsenal was concentrated on land-based missiles than was the case for the United States. Late in his second term, he admitted he never understood what "this throwweight business is all about."

18 Strategic defenses would have to be virtually 100 percent effective in order to serve this function. If even one percent of the many thousands of Soviet warheads carried on ballistic missiles penetrated a "shield" and exploded on urban targets, the result would be disastrous. Moreover, even if one imagined that so complicated a system could be made to work "perfectly" against a determined adversary, a ballistic missile defense system still could not provide an effective defense of populations. Other means of delivery -- aircraft, cruise missiles, torpedoes, or even freighters, delivery vans or hand-held luggage -- could be used to carry nuclear weapons to their targets.
Ronald Reagan was not the first to express dismay with the concept of mutually assured destruction. Pacifists of all types, including many nuclear freeze activists, had been critical of American acceptance of a situation in which both nuclear superpowers issued a standing threat to indiscriminately slaughter millions of people. Some nuclear weapons strategists also had despaired of the concept of MAD and the ABM Treaty because they undermined the credibility of the U.S. policy of extended deterrence.19 The ABM Treaty directly constrained the development of the U.S.'s nuclear war-fighting capability. The MAD doctrine implied that any attempt to use nuclear weapons to further political or military objectives carried a risk of committing national suicide, given its recognition of U.S. vulnerability to destruction as an inescapable given. Furthermore, it lent support to the belief that the only legitimate function of nuclear weapons was to deter one's opponent from using similar weapons against the U.S.20 Even the creation of options for the use of nuclear weapons could raise the risk of nuclear annihilation by making the "unthinkable" more "thinkable."

Of course, United States doctrine and plans for nuclear operations throughout

19 Many nuclear weapons strategists attack MAD as both immoral and militarily unacceptable. See, for example, Fred Ikle, "Can Nuclear Deterrence Last Out the Century?" Foreign Affairs, January 1983, pp. 267-85.

20 This policy position is often called "finite deterrence" or "minimum deterrence." One prominent advocate of minimum deterrence, former Secretary of Defense McNamara, summarized the concept: "nuclear weapons serve no military purpose whatsoever. They are totally useless — except only to deter one's opponent from using them." Robert S. McNamara, "The Military Role of Nuclear Weapons: Perceptions and Misperceptions," Foreign Affairs, Fall 1983, p. 97.
the nuclear age rejected these logical conclusions, despite the widespread awareness of the "MAD" condition and acceptance of the ABM Treaty. Because U.S. declaratory policy emphasized the mutual deterrent characteristic of nuclear weapons, the mass public often assumed that this was the basis of U.S. policy. Every modern American president, however, tried to create alternatives to large-scale retaliation as a basis for U.S. security. Every doctrinal shift since the late 1960s emphasized the need for the development of "options" that withheld weapons while carrying out limited attacks.  

More generally, United States policy always has been driven by the quest, however chimerical, to derive political and military benefits from nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons development and employment policy have emphasized greater selectivity, flexibility, and precision in order to increase the credibility of the U.S. threat to use nuclear weapons and the military usefulness of nuclear weapons, if the threat failed to have its desired deterrent effect.  

U.S. plans called for using nuclear weapons in a disarming "first strike," in controlled strategic war scenarios premised on the idea of a "ladder of escalation," or on the battlefield.  

At a theoretical level, Reagan's goal of population defenses carried the notion of nuclear "escalation dominance" to its logical conclusion. However, by stimulating

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21 For an engaging discussion of the intellectual effort to incorporate nuclear weapons into U.S. political and military policies see Fred Kaplan, 

Wizards of Armageddon, (Simon and Schuster, 1983).

22 See Desmond Ball, "U.S. Strategic Forces: How Would They Be Used?"  


deployment of ever larger strategic forces needed to overcome defenses, the SDI program threatened to undermine attempts to develop limited nuclear strike options that could permit termination of a conflict short of all-out nuclear war. Strategic defenses, therefore, might undermine the accepted goal of strategic stability.

SDI also appeared to challenge the consensus view in support of negotiated restraints on both side’s arsenals to reduce the risks inherent in U.S. policy. In the political compromise struck between two camps of strategists -- one less inclined, the other more inclined, to use nuclear weapons in the political and military competition against the Soviet Union -- arms control had became a component of defense policy which served to complement a state’s ability to manipulate others’ perceptions of risk. SDI flouted this political compromise by undermining the ABM Treaty and imperilling the prospects for progress in arms control, given the Soviet Union’s strenuously objections to SDI.

High-level officials of the Reagan administration made no secret of their dislike for the ABM Treaty. Eugene Rostow, Reagan’s first director of ACDA, and Richard Perle both testified to Congress in the early days of the administration that they favored immediate, unilateral abrogation of the treaty.24 The 1980 Republican Party platform, written by Richard Allen, Reagan’s first National Security Advisor,

24 Richard Perle testified: "[The treaty] was a mistake in 1972 and the sooner we face up to the implications of recognizing that mistake the better." U.S. Congress, Senate Armed Services Committee, March 22, 1982. Perle first came to Washington in the late 1960s to lobby for the "Safeguard" antimissile system and against the ABM treaty. He initially was lukewarm about SDI, but once it appeared to offer a means of burying the ABM treaty and derailing arms control negotiations, Perle became one of its primary sponsors.
urged the development of "an effective anti-ballistic missile system, which is already at hand in the Soviet Union, as well as more modern Anti-Ballistic Missile technologies."²⁵

Although the 1972 ABM Treaty repudiated ballistic missile defense, the issue was not settled. From 1972 until 1980, the United States continued research on defense technologies at a funding level of between $500 million and $1 billion annually in constant (fiscal year 1986) dollars.²⁶ The primary rationale for the ongoing research -- which was accepted unquestioningly across the political spectrum -- was to "hedge" against Soviet unilateral abrogation or "breakout" of the treaty. Most of the U.S. effort was directed toward terminal defense of missile silos. The Soviet Union also continued BMD research after the 1972 ABM Treaty, in addition to maintaining a treaty-compliant defense system of limited capability around Moscow.

The Pentagon consistently pledged to limit SDI research in accordance with U.S. obligations under the ABM Treaty until the government made a formal decision to deploy a defense system. However, the existence of the SDI implied that the U.S. had already made a conditional policy decision, pending development of the technology, to modify or withdraw from the ABM Treaty. Long before that day might arrive, the SDI program threatened the ABM Treaty by conducting


experimental demonstrations which pushed beyond the limits of some of the treaty's key, but ambiguous, provisions. In 1985, the Reagan administration mounted a frontal assault against the treaty by offering a new interpretation that would allow the development and testing of exotic technologies for non-fixed ABM systems.

The Reaction from the "network" of nuclear weapons analysts and the Strategic Policy Community

Analysts, activists, and political commentators responded immediately and heatedly to President Reagan's March 23 speech. Among the first to react to SDI were former government scientists and arms control officials who had been key participants in the 1960s and early 1970s debate on ABM deployment. SDI challenged the objectives and promises of arms control to which these men had devoted much of their careers. More specifically, SDI challenged the ABM Treaty, which was a great personal and political achievement for many of them. Respected former weapons scientists, such as Richard Garwin, Wolfgang Panofsky, Hans Bethe, and George Rathjens, and former arms control negotiators, such as Gerard Smith, John Rhinelander, and Spurgeon Keeny, quickly opposed the program. For several years, these arms control pioneers opposed SDI at press conferences, in newspaper

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27 When the program was announced, Secretary Weinberger and President Reagan blunderingly suggested that the treaty restricted only deployment, and had nothing to do with research and development. See John Carnton, "Weinberger Says ABM Pact May Ultimately Need Amending," New York Times, March 25, 1983., p. 9; and "Transcript of Press Conference with the President," New York Times, March 26, 1983, p. 4.
and journal articles, and at conferences and congressional hearings.\textsuperscript{28} In February 1984, several prominent former arms control negotiators and organizations organized the National Campaign to Save the ABM Treaty. As chairman, they chose Gerard Smith, chief negotiator of SALT I. The Campaign concentrated on the threat to the ABM Treaty. As its Director explained, "The National Campaign is not anti-SDI, it is pro-treaty."\textsuperscript{29}

Former government officials who were critical of SDI argued that it was grossly irresponsible for a president to hold out the false hope of removing the threat of nuclear war through a technological fix. For example, McGeorge Bundy said that he believed "that the Star Wars speech is one of the most irresponsible and destructive utterances that a president has made in the nuclear age."\textsuperscript{30} Moreover, they argued that the ABM Treaty should be upheld and reaffirmed because what was


\textsuperscript{29} David Riley, director of the National Campaign to Save the ABM Treaty, date quoted by David Morrison, "Star Wars': A Thriving Cottage Industry," \textit{National Journal} (May 23, 1987).

true in 1972 was still true at that time -- namely, that pursuit of ballistic missile defenses would only stimulate the arms race further and threaten strategic stability. Lastly, they argued that preservation of the ABM Treaty was essential to further progress in negotiated reductions and constraints in offensive arms.\textsuperscript{31}

In the days immediately following the President's speech, several legislators associated with the informal arms control coalition sharply denounced the initiative as a futile and dangerous attempt to regain military superiority and "one of the most outrageous and misleading pieces of political propaganda that this Nation has seen in many years."\textsuperscript{32}

From the other side of the political spectrum, President Reagan's speech generated cheers. Among the most vocal were conservative political commentators identified as spokesmen for the "New Right" ideology.\textsuperscript{33} A few Pentagon officials immediately championed SDI, most notably Secretary of Defense Weinberger and Fred Ikle. The nuclear weapons designer Edward Teller, and some of his colleagues at Lawrence Livermore Laboratory, quickly emerged as key proponents of a space-

\textsuperscript{31} The "gang of four" -- McGeorge Bundy, George Kennan, Robert McNamara and Gerard Smith -- returned to the pages of \textit{Foreign Affairs} to argue that the president can reach good arms control agreements or he can insist on the Star Wars program "as it stands," but it is "wholly impossible to do both." McGeorge Bundy, et al, "The President's Choice: Star Wars or Arms Control," \textit{Foreign Affairs} (Winter 1984/85), p. 277.


based defense system.

Many of the strategic defense activists worked with High Frontier, a public interest organization whose sole purpose was to promote strategic defense. The group's director and founder was Daniel Graham, a retired Army lieutenant general, former director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, and a military advisor to Reagan during his presidential campaigns. For some years, General Graham had been advocating a near-term deployment of a system consisting of a relatively simple network of satellites and non-nuclear projectiles on space-based platforms and a ground-based point defense network, supplemented by passive civil defense measures. High Frontier's general ideas -- if not its specific proposal -- attracted politicians and activists who disliked the constraints on weapons development imposed by the ABM Treaty.

President Reagan's initiative also pleased a pre-existing constituency for strategic defenses on Capitol Hill. In the late 1970s, several members of Congress informally created the "laser lobby," a coalition named for its advocacy of laser-based defense systems. They were actively supported by a handful of defense enthusiasts from industry, a few "New Right" political activists, and organizations such as High Frontier. Sen. Malcolm Wallop, a conservative Republican from Wyoming; Rep. Ken Kramer, a conservative Republican from Colorado Springs, the home of the Air

Force Academy and NORAD; and their respective aides, Angelo Codevillo and John Bosma, led the coalition.  

The group's persistent efforts to obtain funding for development of hardware for a space-based defense system were completely unsuccessful. It was unable to generate sufficient interest by defense industry officials or politicians to even pass resolutions endorsing the High Frontier concept. The strategic defense constituency in Congress understandably expected that the president's initiative, and the popular support it seemed to engender, would greatly advance their cause.

Within a few months, the heated debate between the political "right" and "left" on SDI's political and strategic implications was partially supplanted by a more technical, discussion about the program, undertaken by legions of nuclear weapons experts. Two of the earliest technical studies were the products of panels of mostly non-governmental scientists and policy analysts appointed by the Defense Department in accordance with a National Security Directive signed by President Reagan in April 1983.

The first, chaired by Fred S. Hoffman, the president of the defense consulting firm Pan Heuristics, was charged with assessing the strategic implications of defensive

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35 For the argument for immediate deployment of a space-based BMD system based on "off-the-shelf" technology, see, Malcolm Wallop, "Opportunities and Imperatives for Ballistic Missile Defense," Strategic Review (Fall 1979); and Walter Mossberg, "Soviets Could Build Laser Weapons to Kill Satellites in 5 Years, Pentagon Aide Says," Wall Street Journal, February 11, 1981, p. 3. Wallop and Kramer and other strategic defense devotees were commonly classified as part of the "ideological Far Right." For example, see Adam Garfinkle, The Politics of the Nuclear Freeze.
systems. This panel concluded that defenses would be helpful to "retaliatory deterrence" and repudiated the concept of perfect defenses, or even significant population defenses. It recommended phased deployment of defense systems, starting with antitactical ballistic missiles in Europe. The panel's report had little immediate impact: its conclusions were not especially helpful to SDI proponents or opponents.

The second panel, called the Defensive Technologies Study, was charged with identifying the most promising approaches to effective strategic defense and charting a technically feasible research and development program. Under Secretary of Defense Fred Ikle, a strong SDI supporter, chose a team of 50 non-governmental scientists and engineers, including many of his former colleagues from RAND and other defense contractors. Ikle did not want officials actually responsible for making funding decisions within the bureaucracy to influence the report, believing they would

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36 The Study Team members were: Fred Hoffman, Director; Leon Sloss, Deputy Director; Fritz Ermath; Craig Hartsell; Frank Hoeber; Marvin King; Paul Kozemchak; Lt. Gen. C J. LeVan; James Martin; Marc Millot; Lawrence O'Neill; and Harry Sauerwein. The senior Policy Review Group were: John Deutch; Charles Herzfeeld; Andrew Marshall; Michael May; Henry Rowen; Gen. John Vogt; Seymour Weiss; Albert Wohlstetter; and James Woolsey.


38 The Study Team Leadership was: Dr. James Fletcher, Study Chairman; Dr. Harold N. Agnew, Vice Chairman; Major General John C. Toomay, Dr. Alexander H. Flax; Mr. John L. Gardner and Major Simon P. Worden. The Executive Scientific Review Group included: Edward Friedman, Lt. Col. Michael Havey, Solomon Buchsbaum, Daniel Fink, Bert Fowler, Eugene Fubini, Bobby Inman, Michael May, General E. C. Meyer, William Nierenberg and David Packard.
moderate the contractors' enthusiasm for high-tech programs.\textsuperscript{39} Former NASA Director James Fletcher was the Chairman.

The panel produced a twelve-volume, highly classified report in April 1984 which recommended a "technology-limited" program, to be funded at about $26 billion for five years.\textsuperscript{40} By definition, a technology-limited program is limited only by technical progress, not funding. Accordingly, the Fletcher report recommended that SDI research proceed as fast as the technology would allow, so a future administration and Congress could make a decision by the early 1990s on whether strategic defenses were feasible and desirable. The technical findings were more ambiguous than the bottom-line conclusion. The report concluded that a "peace shield" to protect the U.S. from nuclear attack was "not technically credible" and according to some people with the clearances to read the report, parts of it presented a case against the possibility of deploying effective defenses.\textsuperscript{41} However, some months later, study leader James Fletcher wrote that the panel "took an optimistic


\textsuperscript{41} For example, Theodore Postol, a former Pentagon official said that "If you read volume seven you wouldn't bother reading the rest of the report. It presents an overwhelming case against the possibility of a hope of mounting something useful." Cited in Tina Rosenberg, "Washington: The Authorized Version," \textit{Atlantic Monthly}, February 1986, pp. 26-30.
view of the emerging technologies and concluded that "a robust, multitiered ballistic missile [defense] system can eventually be made to work." SDIO adopted the Fletcher report recommendations as their blueprint for a crash technology program.

Many other technical studies followed. Professional scientific societies organized expert panels to evaluate the promise of SDI's various technologies. These panels usually rejected Reagan's vision in measured language, supported by exhaustive technical analysis. Some reports were undertaken explicitly to demonstrate the limited effectiveness of defenses against a determined adversary. Newsletters, conferences, and books on SDI proliferated. The outpouring of commentary was fueled by an influx of federal funds, as well as private foundations, into ballistic missile defense research and analysis. The national media extensively

42 James C. Fletcher, "The Technologies for Ballistic Missile Defense," Issues in Science and Technology, Vol 1, # 1, Fall 1984, p. 25. This article reviews the Study Team's conclusions concerning the most promising approaches for missile defense and critical technologies. This issue of Issues in Science and Technology also contains articles on SDI by George Keyworth and Sidney Drell and Wolfgang Panofsky.

covered the debate and a few experts became prominent media sources. As Lawrence Freeman wrote: "Never has so much been written by so many about so little." The strategic policy community eagerly joined the open debate. Many in the community did not participate in the public debate over the bilateral weapons freeze proposal because they did not believe the freeze proposal warranted serious consideration. SDI, on the other hand, was considered a very serious matter. It was not a citizen's initiative, but a presidential initiative involving the expenditure of billions of defense dollars.

Moreover, even before Reagan's speech, many analysts had started to reconsider strategic defenses. One indication that defenses were returning to the forefront of policy making was a two-day symposium in November 1979, held by the Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard University. The Brookings Institution had also nearly completed an edited volume about ballistic

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44 For example, John Pike, of the Federation of American Scientists, become a well known expert after the national press repeatedly quoted him and used his information on the program. The reputation of physicist Ashton Carter was also greatly enhanced by his well-received OTA study on SDI.


missile defense before Reagan's speech drew increased attention to the subject.\textsuperscript{47}

Several factors fueled the renewed interest in defenses. The principal one was the perception shared by many advocates of a new arms buildup -- that the strategic balance was shifting in favor of the Soviet Union. More specifically, the increased concern about the vulnerability of U.S. ICBMs led many defense analysts to consider strategic defenses.\textsuperscript{48} As Ashton Carter writes in the Brookings volume, "As frustration grew with these basing modes, the defense community began looking longingly at the "forbidden" alternative of BMD.\textsuperscript{49} Second, for many strategists, the technical challenge and strategic advantage of pursuing an offensive arms race had reached the point of diminishing returns.

Despite the renewal of interest in investigating BMD, most members of the strategic policy community believed that the ABM Treaty should not be lightly discarded. In particular, they resented the way President Reagan had sprung the new program on the nation and its NATO allies without consulting their community of strategic policy experts. If the U.S. was to repudiate a major arms control achievement, they believed that the "experts" should first study the matter, and then

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{47} Ashton B. Carter and David N Schwartz, eds. \textit{Ballistic Missile Defense} (The Brookings Institution, 1984). The book was nearly set to go to press when Reagan made his speech. The editors hastily added a few lines about the President's initiative to their introduction.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{48} LoADS (low altitude defense system) was under consideration as an alternative, or a means to enhance, the Carter administration's Multiple Protective Shelters for basing of the MX missile.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{49} Ashton B. Carter, "Introduction to the BMD Question," in \textit{Ballistic Missile Defense}, ed. Ashton B. Carter and David N. Schwartz, p.3.}
make policy adjustments in order to preserve both the existing compromise position, embracing both arms control and weapons modernization, and their own authority. For example, Leon Sloss, a highly regarded former government official and director of a major nuclear targeting study for the Pentagon in the late 1970s, said: "I've felt for a long time that we've undervalued defense but am distressed by the way it was sprung.... without laying the groundwork." Or as Gerold Yonas, then chief scientist for SDIO, acknowledged, "It would have been less disturbing had the studies been carried out quietly before the president made his specific program request in public." The "final" report of the Scowcroft Commission issued in 1984 voiced similar sentiments.

One of the most successful arms control agreements is the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty of 1972. That fact should not be allowed to obscure the possibility that technical developments at some point could make it in the interests of both sides to amend the current treaty... However, no move in the direction of the deployment of active defenses should be made without the most careful consideration of the possible strategic and arms control implications ... The strategic implications of ballistic missile defense and the criticality of the ABM Treaty to further arms control agreements dictate extreme caution in proceeding to engineering development in this sensitive area.

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52 The Commission was drafting its initial report on the MX missile when Reagan announced his plans for an intensified research program. Reportedly annoyed by the President's speech, the Commission essentially ignored it in the report.

53 President's Commission on Strategic Forces, Final Report, (Washington, D.C. March 21, 1984.)

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When Reagan announced SDI, the Scowcroft Commission was completing negotiations on its carefully brokered package to save the MX missile. Scowcroft reportedly said that the speech would kill the Commission and the MX. The Commission's report, which was issued a month later, flatly stated that existing technology offered "no real promise of being able to defend the United States against massive nuclear attack in this century."

Members of the strategic policy community, like traditional arms control proponents, were disturbed by the president's claim that nuclear deterrence was immoral and that SDI would render nuclear weapons obsolete. Richard DeLauer, Under Secretary for Defense, Research, and Engineering, for example, "went ballistic" when he learned of Reagan's initiative the morning it was to be announced. DeLauer was infuriated that nuclear policy could be the subject of "such a half-baked political travesty." William Perry commented that he "was incredulous. My first question was who in the world was advising him on this." Not only was the strategic policy community generally wary of involving the public in nuclear weapons policy making, but it believed that it was destructive to encourage public opposition to prevailing U.S. nuclear weapons policy. As James Schlesinger forcefully told participants at a MITRE Corporation conference:

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54 Nolan, p. 15.

55 Nolan interview with an unnamed Pentagon official who was in a meeting with DeLauer when he was told of the Star Wars section of the speech. Nolan, p. 15.

In the follow-up to the President's speech, a rather loose rhetoric developed within the administration in which the most fervent supporters of the SDI began to speak of the immorality of deterrence. Let me make this admonition clear. Within the Air Force, within the administration, and within the society as a whole, the justification for strategic defense should never be based on assertions regarding the "immorality" of deterrence. For the balance of our days, the security of the Western world will continue to rest on deterrence. Those were -- and are -- reckless words.  

Congress Bides its Time

Aside from occasional flashes of rhetoric, Congress did not debate SDI in the program's first two years. The congressional response contrasted sharply with the energetic response to SDI from those in academia, think-tanks and public interest organizations. Congress's lack of engagement can be attributed to two factors. First, legislators involved in nuclear weapons issues were engrossed in other controversies. As Sen. Nunn irritably told a Sunday morning talk show panel, there was plenty of time in the future to debate defenses. In the meantime, Nunn said, "we really need to be focusing on next week's military strategy and the question of whether we can achieve ... arms control stability within this decade." Second, Congress was not confronted immediately with large budget requests. Despite the rhetoric coming from Ronald Reagan and Secretary Weinberger and public interest in the program,


legislators were not certain of the Pentagon's commitment to SDI, or whether President Reagan's presidency would end with the 1984 elections. The only congressional activity on SDI was initiated by members of the "laser lobby."

A month before Reagan's Star Wars speech, Rep. Kramer had announced plans to introduce legislation calling for a fundamental shift in the United States's strategic posture away from strategies and weapons of nuclear reprisal and move instead toward a defense of the United States that might be implemented with non-nuclear technologies.59

After the President's speech, Kramer slightly revised his bill and promptly introduced it with high expectations. Senator William Armstrong (R-CO) introduced a companion bill in the Senate. The "People Protection Act," as it was called, did not seek funds but required that U.S. directed-energy research and military space activities be consolidated under a dedicated missile defense agency.

The House Armed Services Committee held hearings on the measure in November 1983, during which Defense Under Secretary Richard Perle did not endorse Kramer's measure, and Richard DeLauer explicitly opposed it. DeLauer, a respected weapons scientist who had been involved in the Air Force's search for an MX basing mode, had on several occasions indicated his support for developing point defenses. However, he warned Kramer that his plan to build space-based defenses was "staggeringly" expensive and he criticized the bill's emphasis on "saving

lives once the war starts" rather than keeping the war from starting in the first place.\textsuperscript{60} Both these criticisms obviously applied to Ronald Reagan's "vision" as well. A letter from the Defense Department's general counsel, Howard H. Taft, officially endorsed DeLauer's comments.\textsuperscript{61}

The People Protection Act died with the close of the hearings. It was never reported out of committee, nor did it attract additional cosponsors beyond the original 11 Representatives. Kramer and his allies from the "laser lobby" were disappointed that they did not receive support from the administration. As time went on their disappointment sharpened into frustration and anger at what they perceived to be wide-spread bureaucratic resistance to the president's goal for SDI.

Legislators concerned about the militarization of space found greater support for their efforts to encourage negotiations with the Soviet Union on space weaponry, than did the "laser lobby" found for its program. In July 1983, the Senate unanimously adopted an amendment offered by Sen. Paul Tsongas (D-MA) which prohibited the testing of the F-15 ASAT system against a space object unless the president certified that the United States is trying to negotiate an ASAT treaty or that tests were necessary to avert harm to U.S. national security.\textsuperscript{62} The same

\textsuperscript{60} U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Armed Services Committee, \textit{H.R. 3073 - People Protection Act}, 98th Cong., 1st sess., November 10, 1983. This hearing also contains a text of the legislation.

\textsuperscript{61} \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{62} This language was incorporated into the final version of the authorization bill. However, full ASAT funding was restored in the appropriations bill later that year. The conferees mandated that the funds could not be spent until 45 days after the president submitted a comprehensive report on U.S. ASAT policy.
month, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee adopted a resolution calling on the president to implement a three-stage strategy leading to a space weapons ban. These measures did not require any change in U.S. policy, but they signalled that SDI had heightened concern within the Senate about the weaponization of space.\textsuperscript{63}

The DoD's requested budget for SDI fiscal year 1985 -- the first year it was treated as a separate budget item -- did not cause significant controversy. The White House claimed that the requested $1.777 billion, not including DOE funds, was only about $300 million dollars above the budget planned for ABM research before SDI.\textsuperscript{64} The White House reportedly halved the funding request initially proposed by the new SDIO in order to eliminate a conspicuous target to opponents in an election year.\textsuperscript{65}

Both administration officials and legislators appeared to want to avoid a fight over the SDI budget. The House Armed Services Committee cut more than $400 million from the administration request in a closed session, citing budget

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\textsuperscript{63} For a description of the effect of Star Wars on the ASAT debate see Larry Pressler, \textit{Star Wars: The Strategic Defense Initiative Debates in Congress} (Praeger, 1986), pp. 8-19.

\textsuperscript{64} Initial Reagan Administration budget projections for the Pentagon's ABM research in FY85 was $1.527. This figure also represented a large increase in defense research. Pre-SDI five-year budget projections cited in U.S. Congress, Office of Technology Assessment, \textit{Ballistic Missile Defense Technologies}, OTA-ISC-254 (GPO, September 1985), p. 292.

Later in the budget cycle, the House Appropriations Committee quietly reduced the budget further to $1.09 billion — a five percent increase over the previous fiscal year, as allowed for overall defense spending under the FY 1988 budget resolution. This figure was not challenged on the floor. In the Senate, the moderate Republican Charles Percy offered an amendment to reduce the SDI budget by $100 million, although he had done practically no advance work on this amendment. After a brief debate during which Armed Services Chairman Sen. Tower effectively protested any changes, however modest, to his Committee bill, Percy's amendment fell just short of passing by two-votes. The House and Senate split the difference between the two chambers' appropriation levels to agree on $1.4 billion for SDI in fiscal year 1985.

Despite the lack of conflict over SDI's funding, many legislators were distressed by the gap between presidential rhetoric and administration statements concerning SDI's purpose. President Reagan and the Secretary of Defense Weinberger continued to appeal for SDI support as if population defense were a


67 Personal interview, Katherine Magraw with Douglas Waller, Chief Defense Aide to Sen. William Proxmire, Washington, D.C., September 24, 1990. According to Waller, who was emerging as one of the most active Senate staff on SDI, his office was surprised at the level of support for Percy's amendment, given the lack of advance preparation.

68 The DOE portion of SDI received an additional $215 million, bringing the total SDI budget in FY 1985 to $1.6 billion.
feasible, near-term prospect. The Pentagon's principal witnesses in congressional hearings held during March and April of 1984, Richard DeLauer, Fred Ikle, and DARPA Director Robert Cooper, argued that SDI would strengthen deterrence by protecting military targets and increasing an attacker's uncertainty.

Sen. Nunn noted that SDI managers and other officials seemed to have "already concluded that the objective of highly reliable population defense is unattainable." The witnesses, he said, made no mention of permeable umbrellas to protect populations from nuclear attack, and no assurances of escape from threat of mutual destruction as the linchpin of deterrence.

I believe this Committee must clarify this issue now, before we begin a multi-billion dollar technology exploration program. The American people have been led to believe that we are working to eliminate the need for offensive retaliatory capabilities by providing invulnerable defenses. If, instead, we are being asked to support a large and costly defensive program that is of only limited effectiveness in defending our citizens, then I think we fall back to a much larger debate about the role of ABM defenses as a complement to offensive nuclear systems. Such a system, I suspect, lacks the general public enthusiasm of the President's initiative, and would not be able to justify a five-year program of the magnitude requested.

Nunn repeatedly elicited statements from DeLauer and Ikle to the effect that they did not believe that strategic defenses could provide effective protection of

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69 Secretary Weinberger, address at the National Press Club, Washington, D.C., May 1, 1984.


71 Ibid., p. 2904.
populations or obviate the need for offensive forces.\textsuperscript{72} Even Sen. Barry Goldwater, a very conservative Republican from Arizona, expressed doubts that the Congress would find the money required for a space-based defense system given the growing federal deficit and the confused rationale for SDI. "I think you people had better come up with some cost ideas and come up with them fast," warned Goldwater.\textsuperscript{73}

Sen. Wilson, a member of the "laser lobby," on the other hand, prodded the witnesses to lend credence to Reagan's fantasy. Congress would be unlikely to approve large budgets for SDI unless the administration was unified behind President Reagan's vision, Wilson argued. Dr. Cooper finally responded that although he did not see "any combination of technology we have today guaranteeing ... elimination of offensive strategic forces," he did "hold out the hope that we can do that."\textsuperscript{74}

\textbf{Support for a "vigorous and robust" research program.}

Nunn, Wilson and Goldwater's predictions concerning congressional response to SDI were wrong. Beginning in 1985, the Congress did approve SDI budgets on the order of several billion dollars annually, reaching a peak of $3.95 billion in FY 1989.\textsuperscript{75} The administration requested 30 percent more on average than the Congress appropriated, but the budget was still unprecedented for a research

\textsuperscript{72} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 2924-2927.

\textsuperscript{73} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 2928.

\textsuperscript{74} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 2939.

\textsuperscript{75} In FY 1992, the SDI budget started to climb once again after two years of small decreases. Congress approved $4.1 billion.
program. With the exception of the president and his Secretary of Defense, however, administration officials carefully distanced themselves from the goal of building technologically advanced defenses to protect populations and make offensive forces obsolete. To reject this goal outright would be heresy, since it was apparent that the "astrodome" concept had the president's continued personal commitment. Administration officials and many SDI supporters resorted to semantic games in order to obscure their dissention. Of course, they were perpetrating a hoax on the public, as well as on their president.\footnote{This sort of "official" lying did not provoke outrage from the public or shame from those indulging in the charade. For example, Vice President Dan Quayle, a loyal supporter of SDI when he was in the Senate, acknowledged that SDI was sold to the public with unrealistic promises, but he defended this as an "acceptable use of political jargon." See "Quayle Outlines a Redefined SDI, Calling Reagan's Plan 'Political',' \textit{Washington Post}, September 7, 1989.}

Nunn also was wrong in predicting that the Senate would return to a debate about the strategic value of defenses and fundamental questions about nuclear doctrine. No such debate occurred. Instead, a political consensus gradually developed favoring a "vigorous and robust" research and development program on strategic defense technologies. The term "robust" meant a "multi-billion dollar" research program. As early as 1985, virtually all of the politicians and analysts engaged in the debate over SDI espoused this view, save those on the political far left and right. Reagan's election to a second term had boosted SDI's fortunes because of the president's apparent unwavering commitment to SDI. The drop in public concern about the nuclear arms race, the growth of a constituency for SDI
among defense contractors, and new backing for SDI among administration officials, together provided a sufficient base of support for a major research program.\textsuperscript{77} Even policy analysts who were critical of SDI, such as Herb York, condoned a "vigorous" research and development program. York wrote in a draft paper he circulated to his colleagues in February 1985:

\begin{quote}
We conclude, therefore, that it is right and timely to reconsider broadly the role of strategic defense in our overall national security arrangements, and in particular to carry out a vigorous program of research into the various new, sometimes rather exotic, ideas for defense such as those now being explored under the direction of the Strategic Defense Initiative Office.\textsuperscript{78}
\end{quote}

When the executive branch presented the next fiscal year budget to Congress in late January 1985, it included $4 billion for SDI, a 163 percent increase over the previous year's budget.\textsuperscript{79} SDI was becoming one of the largest single items in the defense budget, overtaking, for example, funding for MX missiles and the Trident II SLBM. The massive funding for SDI account was striking because the defense budget was no longer expanding.\textsuperscript{80} After months of negotiation, Congress ultimately

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\textsuperscript{77} In the beginning of January, The New York Times ran a six-part series on SDI on the front page for several consecutive days: this was a clear reflection of the political acceptance of a major research program on strategic defenses.
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\textsuperscript{79} Of this total, $3.7 billion was for Defense Department programs, and $307 million for Energy Department programs.
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\textsuperscript{80} The Pentagon's FY 1986 budget request for a real increase of 5.9 percent over the previous year was sharply criticized by Sen. Nunn and other Senate Armed Services Committee members. (The requested increase of 5.9 percent was moderate relative to the requests made in FY 1984 and FY 1985 for 10 percent and 13.3 percent.) Their criticism was widely reported in the press. For example,
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decided to reduce the FY 1986 budget nearly two percent in "real" terms from the previous year. 81

Sen. Nunn, Rep. Aspin and other prominent legislators qualified their criticism. Les Aspin, who previously had scorned the program, now said he supported a major research effort because "it is too appealing a possibility to dismiss without examination." 82 Sen. Nunn said that he agreed that research on futuristic defense systems was "absolutely essential." 83 However, Nunn admonished, the administration had failed to provide a "sustainable rationale" for the program and therefore, the "real challenge is to come up with a definition that makes sense ... and will aid future presidents in their negotiations with the Soviets."

In taking up the challenge Nunn identified, many legislators became engaged in debate over SDI's implications for new arms control agreements and the future of the ABM Treaty. As factions within the executive branch clashed over these issues, legislators sought to ally the Congress with one side or the other in this

see The Wall Street Journal (February 5, 1985). A widespread consensus had emerged early in 1985 among influential legislators and observers that the most the Pentagon would receive would be an increase of three percent above inflation.

81 This translated into about a $3 billion increase. The budget was reduced further by automatic reductions imposed by the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings deficit reduction law. The actual FY 1986 defense budget totaled $286.7 billion, a real decrease of more than five percent from the previous fiscal year.


Legislators also devoted considerable effort to determining the annual budget for SDI. After 1985, the SDI budget became the object of a predictable, annual battle with a set pattern.

**The Annual Budget Battles**

The first move in the pattern was the administration's request for a large increase in SDI funding from the previous year. The second step was the Senate and House Armed Services Committees's recommendation on a funding level less than the administration's request but above the previous year's budget, with the House committee supporting a figure substantially lower than the Senate's for bargaining purposes. In FY 1986, the Senate Armed Services Committee approved $3.0 billion and the House Armed Services Committee, $2.5 billion. The Senate committee made only a token effort to influence the program's direction by recommending that the SDI program should emphasize development of anti-missile techniques that could be deployed within the next 10 years, as a hedge against the possibility that the ABM Treaty might break down. In contrast, the House committee reallocated the $2.5 billion among SDI program's elements, cutting heaviest from those elements needed to deploy a defense within the next decade, such as kinetic energy weapons and detection devices. The contrast in the committees' judgments reflected the level of confusion about how to make sense of the program.

The next step was lengthy floor battles over the budget. When the Defense Authorization bill was taken up by the full House and Senate in June, more than
eleven amendments were offered to the Senate bill and nine to the House bill, to change the Committee's budget recommendation. Nearly all sought to decrease the SDI budget. Each one was soundly defeated.

The House considered a wider range of funding levels than the Senate. Rep. Ron Dellums from Berkeley, California, staked out the low end with an amendment to reduce the committee's recommendation to the level of the pre-SDI budget in fiscal year 1984 of $954 million. The high end was claimed by Rep. James Courter from New Jersey, also a prominent opponent of the freeze resolution, who tried to restore the program to the full $3.7 billion requested by the administration. In a demonstration of the symmetry of the House's left and right wings, Dellums' amendment received 102 votes and Courter's received 104. Other amendments proposed spending levels in between these two extremes. The closest vote (195-221) came on an amendment offered by Norman Dicks (D-WA) to trim the funding back to $2.1 and to place limitations on funding for projects which threatened U.S. compliance with the ABM Treaty. The House did agree to ban the expenditure of funds for any weapons activity that would constitute a violation of the ABM Treaty.

In the Senate, John Kerry (D-MA) staked out the left end of the spectrum of legislative options with an amendment to hold the FY 1986 funding level to the previous year's appropriation of $1.4 billion. Kerry proposed to deny funds for 11 projects within the program that he said were aimed at hardware demonstrations in

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violation of the ABM Treaty. The amendment failed badly, 21-78, garnering support only from the most pro-arms control Democrats and two liberal Republicans.

Senate staff and arms control lobbyists who opposed missile defense research had pinned their hopes on an amendment co-sponsored by William Proxmire (D-WI), Dale Bumpers (D-AR), John Chafee (R-RJ), and Charles (Mac) Mathias (R-MD). The Proxmire amendment presented an "alternative" SDI budget, which allocated $1.9 billion among SDI's major projects according to a simple logic.\(^{85}\) Demonstration projects considered technically premature and/or potential violations of the ABM Treaty were held to a four percent funding increase, enough to cover inflation. Funding for most other SDI projects was increased by 30 percent. A few research programs on "traditional" ABM systems received even larger increases: this was justified as a hedge against a treaty break-out. The sponsors hoped their approach would demonstrate that it was possible to go beyond "visceral" pro and con reactions to the program, and "help set up a rational program of research."\(^{86}\)

Senators Nunn and Warner argued against Proxmire's amendment on the grounds that Proxmire and his co-sponsors should not be the ones to determine SDI's orientation. Moreover, they said that the amendment called for too large a budget

\(^{85}\) SDIO had defined five major program elements: SATKA (surveillance, acquisition, tracking, kill assessment), directed energy weapons, kinetic energy weapons, systems concepts and battle management, survivability, lethality and key support technologies. Proxmire's amendment allocated funds to the programs within these five elements, and he added two other elements -- point defense technology development and threat analysis.

\(^{86}\) Interview with Douglas Waller.

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reduction, thereby courting a presidential veto. Nunn and Warner, however, promised that they would not continue to support SDI unless the administration developed a "more compelling mission" for the program. Despite considerable staff work and lobbying from arms control organizations, Proxmire's amendment failed by a wide margin, 38-57.

The amendment received unexpected support from Bennett Johnston of Louisiana and Lawton Chiles of Florida, both influential Southern democrats to the right of center within their party on defense issues. Both senators sat on the Defense Appropriations subcommittee with Proxmire, and Sen. Chiles was also the ranking Democrat on the Budget Committee. Sen. Johnson's floor speech surprised his colleagues because it was so blunt:

What have we discovered? We have not discovered anything except a speech which was wrong. It was wrong, Mr. President, we know that. Is there anybody in here -- the senator from Virginia, [Warner] the senator from Georgia, [Nunn], any of you -- who will get up on this floor and say the president was right, that we have any possibility of making nuclear weapons obsolete? Of course not.... There is only one thing sure about the ABM, and that is if we do eventually find it, whatever it is, whether it is a point defense or a space ray or an ionized beam or an electron beam or a neutrino beam, that it is going to violate the ABM Treaty and put us into a new space race with the Russians.

By the time of the next annual budget battle in 1986, Proxmire, Johnston, and Chiles had assumed the leadership of the anti-SDI faction in the Senate and had

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88 Congressional Record, June 4, 1985, p. S7366.
charted a new strategy. They no longer tried to impose research priorities on SDI or question its value. They merely tried to limit SDI's budget growth and to prevent SDI from gaining so much momentum that it would imperil the ABM Treaty and ongoing arms control talks. They rejected the original Bumpers-Proxmire approach of legislating the allocation of funds within the SDI account because it was guaranteed to provoke the opposition of Sen. Nunn and much of the Armed Services Committee and it left them open to the charge of "congressional micromanagement." Their new strategy was to become sufficiently well informed about how SDIO was spending its billions of dollars that they could educate other legislators and continue to raise questions about the program's management and orientation. This strategy of eroding the program's credibility was likened by one staff member to "Chinese water torture."

The three offices devoted tremendous staff time to this issue. Douglas Waller, James Bruce, Douglas Cook -- staff for the three lead Senators -- organized weekly classified briefings with outside experts and government officials responsible for SDI. The influential and centrist political positions of the hosts helped attracted good attendance from Democratic and Republican offices. Waller and his colleagues reasoned that other staff would feel sufficiently confident to criticize the program for their bosses once they were armed with information on the various program elements

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89 Personal interviews, Katherine Magraw with Douglas Waller and with James Bruce, Legislative Aide for Sen. Bennett Johnson, phone interview, September 11, 1990.

90 Interview with Douglas Waller.
and the various technologies. They also hoped to develop a nascent legislative coalition.

In the fall of 1985, Waller, Bruce, and Cook visited several major SDI facilities and met with over forty top scientists, engineers, managers, and analysts conducting SDI research. Their purpose was to evaluate claims made by Gen. Abrahamson and other SDI supporters that the program was achieving technical "breakthroughs" and "tremendous progress." To the staff members' surprise, they found that SDI's top researchers shared profound technological skepticism about the program, tinged with scorn for and amusement at the exaggerated promises coming out of Washington.91

The three detailed their findings in a report entitled, "SDI: Progress and Challenges."92 The report concluded that there had been "no major breakthroughs" that made "mid-to-late 1990s deployment of comprehensive missile defenses more feasible than it was three years ago." Moreover, they wrote:

91 Interview with Douglas Waller. These scientists were generally very supportive of SDI, despite their skepticism. Hugh Dewitt, a physicist and SDI critic at Lawrence Livermore laboratory, observed: "I think that the great majority of the lab's technical people view the President's speech as somewhat off the wall and the programs being proposed as being, in the end, intrinsically rather foolish. But, obviously, the lab is benefiting right now and will continue to benefit, and everybody's rather happy with the marvelous new work." Quoted in the Los Angeles Times, September 22, 1985.

contrary to claims by administration officials and SDI's top leadership, the program's scientists and military planners across the country have not concluded that SDI is militarily and economically feasible. They presently have little idea whether it is.93

The report's authors were surprised again when SDIO declassified the report promptly without making significant deletions.94 They released their report in March 1986, just as the Senate was considering the fiscal year 1987 budget resolution. The report received a lot of attention and gained the reputation as a "credible" source of information for members who had not yet determined their position on SDI or wanted additional reasons to support a call for funding cuts. SDIO said the reported misrepresented the state of the program, but issued no official rebuttal.

The first tangible result of the anti-SDI leadership's work was a bipartisan letter signed by 46 Senators to Armed Services Committee Chairman Barry Goldwater and the ranking Democrat Sam Nunn, asking that growth in the SDI budget in the FY 1987 budget be held to three percent.95 A few weeks later, two more senators signed the letter, bringing the total number of signers to 38 Democrats and 10 Republicans. The administration's budget request included a 77 percent funding increase for SDI to $5.4 billion.

The Senators' letter supported a "vigorous ballistic missile defense research

93 Ibid., p. 22.

94 Waller hypothesized that SDIO was cooperative because his employer and his co-authors' employers were all members of the Defense Appropriations subcommittee. He further speculated that they did not anticipate the report's tremendous reception.

program ... as a hedge against Soviet breakout from the ABM Treaty," but noted that there was no sound rationale for increasing SDI's budget by 77 percent while the entire DOD budget was to be held at zero real growth in order to meet the budgetary goals set by the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings deficit reduction law. (Congress needed to find $20 billion savings from DoD's funding request to make their target.) The letter also expressed concern that SDI was "being rushed to a premature development decision in the early 1990s in order to meet an unrealistic schedule."

The letter had an immediate effect on the committee's deliberations. Sen. Nunn recognized that if he did not develop a "compromise" position capable of carrying the committee, he could find himself alienated from moderate Democrats and Republicans and on the losing side of a battle on the Senate floor. Nunn developed a compromise position with the committee's most moderate Republican, Bill Cohen of Maine, to reduce the SDI request from $5.4 billion to $3.9 billion and to include language in the committee report calling for the program to be "refocused." Nunn's "compromise" won support from all nine Democrats on the committee and Cohen, to give him a 10-9 winning vote.

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98 Personal interview, Katherine Magraw with anonymous Senate Armed Services Committee staff, Washington, D.C. September 24, 1990.
The prescribed reorientation had several elements. Echoing the view expressed in the letter to the Committee from the 48 senators, the committee directed that SDI should be directed to "hedge against the possibility of a Soviet ABM 'breakout' in the near term." Second, the Defense Department should emphasize technologies for point defenses of "U.S. retaliatory forces and command, control and communications systems" rather than technologies for area defenses. Third, SDI should be used as a "bargaining chip" in arms control negotiations with the Soviet Union. Finally, Nunn and Cohen created -- and the committee approved -- the "Balanced Technology Initiative" (BTI) to respond to criticism from within the military that research for conventional weaponry was suffering due to SDI's budgetary excesses. The committee shifted $490 million from the SDI account to conventional research initiatives, under the heading of BTI, to encourage the creation of a more advanced technology base for the military.

House Armed Services member Charles Bennett of Florida created a companion to BTI in the House bill. Unlike BTI, Bennett's "Conventional Defenses Initiative" (CDI) was intended to encourage the further development of existing technologies. Both initiatives were treated as major congressional initiatives by the

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100 The Senate committee report noted that the research and development budgets of the individual services were steadily shrinking while SDI funding was steadily expanding and overtaking them.
national media and trade press. Industry trade magazines were particularly enthusiastic that the new programs would sustain high levels of military research funding. SDI officials protested that the programs would provide members with a way to divert money from the latter while still appearing "pro-military." Despite their auspicious beginnings, neither BTI nor CDI advanced beyond the first year.

When the committee bill came before the full Senate, Sen. Johnston, Proxmire, and Daniel Evans (R-WA) offered an amendment to reduce SDI funding to $3.2 billion, which would allow three percent growth level as endorsed by the letter from the anti-SDI coalition. Johnston and Proxmire's amendment gained considerable ground from their previous year's effort, but it fell short of passage by one vote. Several other amendments to modify the committee position also failed.

Johnston and Proxmire's show of strength encouraged the House to approve a much lower number than the Senate committee for bargaining purposes. Rep. Charles Bennett, a moderate Democrat on the Armed Services Committee, who had newly acquired a taste for challenging the Pentagon as a result of his involvement in the MX debate, offered an amendment to cut the Armed Services Committee mark of $3.7 billion back to $3.1 billion. His amendment passed easily with a 63 vote margin, with 33 Republicans voting for it. Following Bennett's win, the House

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102 Funding for BTI was reduced to $200 million in September by the Defense Authorization conference committee. Neither the BTI nor CDI were heard of again after 1986.
proceeded easily to defeat other proposed budget levels ranging from $1.3 billion to the administration's full request. The final SDI budget determined by the House-Senate conference on the defense authorization bill, attended by the leadership of the two Armed Services Committees, was halfway between the House and Senate authorizations.\textsuperscript{103}

During the next three years, Congress extracted a political agreement on the level of funding for SDI for the coming fiscal year by following the pattern developed during 1985 and 1986.\textsuperscript{104} The budget level was the key indicator, however imprecise, of whether the program was gaining or losing support in Congress. A close observer of Congress's funding debates theorized, tongue partly in cheek, that the final funding level each year was equal to the administration's request less the previous year's cut multiplied by the president's popularity rating.\textsuperscript{105} The spending

\textsuperscript{103} The conference was very contentious because the House bill contained a number of arms control provisions that the administration adamantly opposed and that Senate leaders also opposed. The sudden news that President Reagan was going to meet with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in Iceland gave added bargaining power to the administration. The even split between the House and Senate SDI budgets was one of the few areas in which the House position was given its due. See Chapter Four on nuclear testing for a more complete discuss of the Iceland summit and its effect on the conference committee.

\textsuperscript{104} The Democrats won control of the Senate in the 1986 elections and Sen. Nunn became Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee. The change in party control did not change the outcome of votes of SDI.

\textsuperscript{105} Interview with John Pike, director of Space Policy for the Federation of American Scientists, Washington, D.C. September 20, 1990. Pike also said that the Committee machinations and the series of votes over funding levels were not significant because "everyone knew roughly what the final number would be before the process began. There were close votes, but the point is Nunn never lost and the House and Senate always split the difference in conference."
levels were only indirectly related to congressional evaluation of the many separate program elements since, with only a few exceptions, Congress did not direct SDIO how to allocate funds among the program elements.\textsuperscript{106}

Nunn’s budget for SDI was never overturned on the floor, although Proxmire and Johnston’s amendments to reduce the budget continued to come within one or two votes of passage. Each year, the House voted on a range of budgets, occasionally approving an amendment to reduce modestly the House committee figure. The conference committee repeatedly split the difference between the two chambers, despite the strong show of Senate support for a lower budget.

Battle for control of SDI

The continued lack of a defensible rationale for SDI did not prevent Congress from appropriating billions of dollars for the program, but it did invite policy makers from the administration, Congress, and strategic policy community to help develop what Sen. Nunn called a "sustainable rationale." The policy ambiguities surrounding SDI led to unusual circumstances and opportunities. SDI became the object of a struggle within the administration over the future of U.S. arms control policy. As Strobe Talbott writes:

\textsuperscript{106} Congress annually earmarked on the order of $10-15 million for medical research of the free electron laser and money for SDIO management. A few other small allocations were made such as earmarking funds for research, conducted with NASA, on an Advanced Launch System to reduce the cost per pound of lifting payloads into space. In 1989, Congress directly legislated spending limits for individuals programs.
The saga of SDI quickly became the story of creative disobedience on the part of various cabinet and sub-cabinet officials. They swore allegiance to the president's vision of SDI even as they tried to subvert -- or, as they no doubt believed, sublimate -- his goal for the twenty-first century to serve their very different purposes for the near term.\footnote{Strobe Talbott, "SDI During the Reagan Years," in On the Defensive? The Future of SDI ed. Joseph Nye and James Schear, (The Aspen Strategy Group, University Press of America, Inc., 1988), p.14.}

One side of the intra-administration conflict was led by Richard Perle, Fred Ikle, Kenneth Adelman and Caspar Weinberger. As discussed earlier, Reagan's repeated statements of his desire to replace Mutual Assured Destruction with Mutual Assured Survival was an ideal opening for those in the administration who believed MAD was an unhelpful concept, opposed arms control, and particularly regretted the ABM Treaty. Perle and his deputy Frank Gaffney initially were dismayed by the President's speech. Perle worried that SDI would divert resources and attention from the build-up of offensive forces and provide Congress with another reason to oppose a build-up.\footnote{Strobe Talbott, The Master of the Game: Paul Nitze and the Nuclear Peace (Alfred A. Knopf, 1988), p. 232. Talbott writes that in 1983 and 1984 when SDI came up at meetings, Perle would "smile indulgently and wait for it to pass." Gaffney was similarly disinterested initially. See Nolan, p. 190.} However, after nearly two years of quietly disparaging SDI, Perle came to see it as a means of promoting what he wanted the administration to achieve, namely to render the ABM Treaty -- and arms control -- "impotent and obsolete." By the time of Reagan's second term, the military build-up was waning and arms control had been politically resurrected. Perle and other like-minded nuclear strategists may have viewed SDI, despite the president's fantastic ideas, as
their last hope to block arms control and, more generally, to take control of policy making from the architects of the arms control orthodoxy. Perle took charge of SDI policy in the Pentagon and began advocating higher SDI budgets and an unyielding U.S. position in negotiations with the Soviet Union which was seeking assurances that the U.S. would continue to observe the ABM Treaty.

Fred Ikle's interest and commitment to the program also deepened. Ikle told the Senate Armed Services Committee in February 1985, that the program to develop antimissile defenses was not "optional" and certainly not a negotiating "bargaining chip," but "central" to U.S. military planning into the next century.109 This contradicted statements he made to Congress a year earlier.

The Pentagon's assault on the ABM treaty proceeded along three fronts. The first involved experimental demonstrations of technologies in "grey areas" where the ABM Treaty's application is ambiguous.110 In the long run, continued pursuit

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110 The ABM Treaty strictly limits development of defenses against strategic ballistic missiles, and prohibits giving other types of systems an ABM capability. However, the technological capabilities needed for some other military missions overlap with the technologies of strategic missile defense, creating "grey areas." The ABM Treaty bans development and testing of ABM systems and components that are not at fixed, land-based sites. It also bans testing of a non-ABM system or component "in an ABM mode." However, there is ambiguity in the legal definition of what constitutes an ABM component, rather than an ABM "adjunct" or a non-ABM system without ABM capability; and of what constitutes testing "in an ABM mode." Some U.S. experiments exploited these ambiguities. For example, the administration claimed that the Airborne Optical Adjunct and the
of grey-area technologies would erode the treaty's significance. Second, the administration announced its finding that a "permissive" interpretation of the treaty, as opposed to the "restrictive" one that had held sway for thirteen years, was legally correct. The permissive interpretation, if implemented, was likely to end the ABM Treaty regime as well as sabotage the START talks. Third, the Pentagon tried to obtain a congressional commitment to future deployment in the near-term of a "Phase I" ABM systems.

An opposing faction in the administration sought to use SDI as a means of achieving an arms control agreement, rather than blocking arms control. Secretary of State George Shultz, his assistant, Paul Nitze, and White House staff Robert McFarlane were the chief representatives of this view. McFarlane, one of the officials who prepared Reagan's 1983 Star Wars speech, became so enamored of this agenda that he claimed at the end of the decade that the "arms control potential" of SDI was always at the "center" of his motives.¹¹¹

Paul Nitze had remained uninvolved with SDI for well over a year after the program's introduction. Nitze became interested when the Soviet Union suggested that it might be willing to resume the suspended START negotiations as long as the

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¹¹¹ Talbott, The Master of the Game, p. 204.

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issue of strategic defenses was on the table. Following the 1984 elections, Nitze was given the new position of special arms control advisor to the president and the Secretary of State. From this post, Nitze promoted a negotiating strategy based on U.S. willingness to accept constraints on SDI research in exchange for Soviet willingness to make deep reductions in their large MIRVed ICBMs. The prospective arms control deal, labeled the "grand compromise," would take care of the Soviet weapons that Nitze and other conservative strategists found most threatening and preserve the ABM Treaty in the short-term. But, the "grand compromise" would cost the U.S. little or nothing since SDI was still just a research program.

To advance his agenda for the immediate future without rejecting outright the president's vision for SDI, Nitze promulgated the so-called "strategic concept." The concept set a timetable for the "managed evolution of deterrence" which led ultimately to the president's goal of the "elimination of nuclear arms." However, long before that endpoint, the U.S. and the Soviet Union would enter a transition period during which the levels of offensive arms would be reduced and levels of defensive weapons increased. Even before that transition period, Nitze argued, the U.S. must pursue "a radical reduction in the power of existing and planned offensive nuclear

112 In 1985 and 1986, the Soviet Union proposed a series of far-reaching arms control agreements to the United States, including a proposal to reduce their ICBM warheads from approximately 6,400 to as low as 3,600. It also retreated from the position that defense research was unacceptable, and began to explore ways to restrict SDI by reaffirming and clarifying the ABM treaty.

113 Nitze considered the SALT II Treaty unacceptable precisely because it did not adequately constrain Soviet heavy missiles.
arms, as well as the stabilization of the relationship between offensive and defensive nuclear arms, whether on earth or in space.\textsuperscript{114}

At the same time, Nitze publicly declared that before SDI could be deployed it must meet three criteria. The defense system must be assured of success in thwarting a massive enemy attack; it must be survivable; and it must be "cost-effective at the margins," that is it must be cheaper to enhance the defenses than to mount offensive countermeasures.\textsuperscript{115} According to Talbott, Robert McFarlane circulated "Nitze's criteria," along with his "strategic concept" to the bureaucracy as a presidential directive and tried to weave references to them into speeches and congressional testimony by government officials. Congress wrote into law in 1985 a prohibition on deployment of any defense system unless the president certifies to Congress that it met the "Nitze criteria" of survivability and cost-effectiveness at the margin.\textsuperscript{116} SDI enthusiasts, on the other hand, dismissed or deemphasized the criteria. Weinberger told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee:

\begin{quote}
I really do not know what cost-effective at the margins means. It is one of those nice phrases that rolls around easily off the tongue and people nod rather approvingly because it sounds rather profound.... I would think that the additional cost in protecting people's lives, in protecting
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{114} Paul Nitze, address to the Philadelphia World Affairs Council, February 20, 1985.

\textsuperscript{115} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{116} Secretary Weinberger complained in closed committee hearings, with some justification, that the criteria were impossible to apply. Weinberger also believed, of course, that they were unwise. See Talbott, \textit{The Master of the Game}, p. 235.
this nation, would be far worth anything that it would cost.\textsuperscript{117}

The U.S. negotiating stance on SDI was the source of tremendous intra-administration conflict.\textsuperscript{118} Elements of the strategic policy community and expert community offered Nitze and others in the administration encouragement and technical support for the idea of offering the Soviet Union restraints on U.S. SDI research in exchange for large reductions of Soviet heavy ICBMs.\textsuperscript{119} Experts from RAND including President Donald Rice, Arnold Horelick, Arnold Kanter and Ted Warner prepared a presentation which showed, on the one hand, the value of using SDI as leverage in arms control talks, and on the other hand, the dangers of pursuing SDI unilaterally.\textsuperscript{120} With help from McFarlane, the RAND team briefed officials in the Pentagon, the State Department and Congress and prepared several follow-up studies for use in inter-governmental deliberations.

The Committee on International Security and Arms Control, a standing committee of the National Academy of Sciences (CISAC), also became involved in promoting negotiations involving SDI. Prior to meetings in Moscow with Soviet


\textsuperscript{119} According to Strobe Talbott, George Schultz, Robert McFarlane and Frank Carlucci were sympathetic to using SDI to advance arms control.

weapons experts, the committee consulted with Nitze and his aide James Timbie on negotiating a more precise definition of the boundary between allowed and prohibited activities under the ABM Treaty.\textsuperscript{121} Led by Wolfgang Panofsky and Michael May, CISAC presented a list of devices associated with SDI technologies that would be prohibited in space if their size or power was greater than certain specified levels. This so-called "threshold limits approach" was initially conceived by John Pike, the associate director for space policy of the Federation of American Scientists.\textsuperscript{122}

Along with the annual deliberations over SDI's budget, legislators became openly involved in the struggle over SDI's implications for U.S. strategic policy and arms control. The situation appeared to offer openings to both policy entrepreneurs and consensus rebuilders. In actuality, the policy entrepreneurs inside and outside Congress were isolated and unsuccessful. Instead, consensus rebuilders spearheaded the political defeat of this attempt to disrupt the status quo by determining how to accommodate a strategic defense program in the status quo. Two issues, in particular -- the reinterpretation of the ABM Treaty and "early deployment" -- provided


legislators with an opening to become deeply involved.

Reinterpretation of the ABM Treaty

Of all of the issues surrounding SDI, the Defense Department's proposed reinterpretation the ABM Treaty most exercised the Congress. In addition to strategic issues, the administration proposed reinterpretation challenged Senate authority since the executive branch was claiming the authority to unilaterally "reinterpret" a treaty in a manner which conflicted with the understanding provided to the Senate at the time of the treaty's ratification. Not surprisingly, most Senators objected and were supported by the virtually unanimous opinion of constitutional lawyers and scholars of American government.\textsuperscript{123}

The new interpretation was orchestrated by Richard Perle's office. In October 1985, Robert McFarlane prematurely revealed the proposed reinterpretation on a Sunday morning talk show. Under the new "permissive" interpretation, the treaty's ban on development and testing of space-based and other mobile ABM systems and components would not apply to "exotic" technology ABMs, thereby clearing the way for key SDI programs, such as the space-based laser and particle beam programs. This interpretation clashed with the understanding held by the U.S. and the Soviet Union since the treaty's ratification in 1972 and the explanations provided to the

\textsuperscript{123} See for example, testimony of Louis Herkin, University Professor, Columbia University and Lawrence Tribe, Professor of Constitutional Law, Harvard University, in U.S. Congress, Senate, Joint Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on the Judiciary, The ABM Treaty and the Constitution, 100th Cong., 1st sess., 1987.
Senate when the treaty was approved. The administration's case for a new "legally correct" interpretation was presented by Abraham Sofaer, legal adviser to the State Department. Sofaer argued that U.S. negotiators -- and therefore the U.S. Senate -- had been tricked by the Soviet Union into thinking they had an agreement restricting development of defensive systems based on new physical principles, when in fact the Soviets had not agreed to this.

The announcement created a storm of controversy and an outpouring of commentary. The legal and constitutional case for the administration's position was patently weak.\textsuperscript{124} The move was widely viewed as an under-handed attack on the popular ABM Treaty. Just a few days earlier six former Secretaries of Defense released a joint statement which urged "President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev to negotiate new measures which would prevent further erosion of the Treaty and assure its continued viability."\textsuperscript{125} All of the members of the U.S. negotiating delegation for the ABM Treaty, with the exception of Paul Nitze,


\textsuperscript{125} Harold Brown, James Schlesinger, Robert McNamara, Melvin Laird, Clark Clifford and Eliot Richardson, Joint statement, released October 3, 1985.
unequivocally rejected the reinterpretation.\textsuperscript{126} Whatever Nitze said in 1985, seven years earlier Nitze had stated in writing that in 1972 the U.S. and Soviet Union clearly intended to ban the development and testing of "exotic" ABM systems.\textsuperscript{127}

The storm was subdued by an announcement five days later that the administration would continue to follow the traditional interpretation, while reserving the right to adopt the new interpretation. This formula was the outcome of a reportedly "knock-down, drag-out" meeting of high-level administration officials which pitted Secretary of State Schultz and Paul Nitze against Defense Secretary Weinberger and ACDA Director Kenneth Adelman.\textsuperscript{128} In fact, the new "permissive" interpretation of the treaty was largely irrelevant to SDI's continued progress since the research program on "exotic" technologies could be pursued for at least five years before it would come up against the treaty's prohibitions as they were then being interpreted by the Reagan administration.\textsuperscript{129}

The simmering controversy came to a head in 1987 when Secretary


\textsuperscript{127} Nitze participated in correspondence among several treaty negotiators and two researchers on the treaty's coverage of exotic ABMs. For description of correspondence see Talbott, \textit{Master of the Game}, pp. 239-240.


Weinberger and others in the Pentagon reinvigorated their campaign to make the reinterpretation of the treaty the "legally correct interpretation." Leaked minutes of an NSC meeting on February 3rd indicated that a heated debate had occurred among the top defense and foreign policy officials of the administration over whether to apply the "broad" interpretation. The minutes indicated that Defense Secretary Weinberger persuaded President Reagan to insist upon the new interpretation against the advice offered by Secretary of State Schultz, National Security Adviser Frank Carlucci and Joints Chiefs of Staff Chairman Admiral Crowe.130

The leaked minutes reportedly enraged Sen. Nunn, who had just become the Chairman of the Armed Services Committee.131 The day the news report appeared, Nunn wrote President Reagan that the adoption of this policy before reaching consensus in the Congress would cause "severe problems" and would subject SDI to "much deeper cuts than would otherwise occur."132 Moreover, he warned, the refusal to accept the interpretation of the ABM Treaty that was presented to and ratified by the Senate in 1972 "would provoke a Constitutional confrontation of profound dimensions."

Nunn next delivered a series of speeches in the Senate to announce the findings of his review of the negotiating record, which the White House claimed


131 Janne Nolan, Guardians of the Arsenal, p. 224.

formed the basis of their case for a new interpretation. Over the course of three days in March, Nunn denounced the administration's claim that testing of certain space-based anti-missile weapons would not violate the ABM Treaty. He contested the administration's arguments one by one, making detailed references to international law and technical definitions of terms.

The Senate and House both held hearings on the ABM Treaty reinterpretation at which Democratic and Republican legislators battered Judge Sofaer and Richard Perle with hostile questions. The tone of the hearings was set by Sen. Nunn's comment that Sofaer's arguments were "sadly indicative of the kinds of half-truths, misrepresentations, and unsubstantiated assertions that have emanated from the Office of the Legal Adviser since the beginning of this controversy."

In April, the House Armed Services Committee adopted a clause proposed by Chairman Aspin which reinstated the traditional interpretation of the ABM Treaty. The clause prohibited the obligation or expenditure of funds in the next two fiscal years for the testing, development, or deployment of ABM systems or components that are sea-based, air-based, space-based or mobile land-based,

133 Nunn's legislative aide, Robert Bell, a long-time Washington defense analyst, spent several weeks reviewing the treaty's negotiating record. The administration initially refused to release the record. When it relented, it classified the record so highly that only senators and six staff members could see it.


"regardless of physical principles used." The clause had only symbolic meaning because no funds were requested for fiscal year 1988 or 1989 to test or develop mobile/space-based ABMs using "exotic" technology.

The Senate Armed Services Committee passed a similar amendment co-sponsored by Carl Levin (D-MI) and Sam Nunn. Levin-Nunn, as it was called, prohibited the "expenditure of funds for testing and development of mobile/space-based ABM's (including ABM's using exotics) unless the President submits a report to the Congress and the Congress passes a joint resolution repealing the prohibition."

The day after the vote in the Senate Armed Services Committee, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee voted 11-8 to add the Levin-Nunn provision to the State Department funding bill mandating continued compliance with the traditional interpretation. The House, which considered the Defense Bill before the Senate, approved language comparable to Levin-Nunn by a margin of over 100 votes.

The Armed Services Committee report accompanying the defense bill stated that Levin-Nunn was a procedural provision to protect congressional authority that in no way prejudged the merits of that debate. However, it was clear that the legislation was a rejection of the administration's "reinterpretation" of the ABM Treaty. In effect, the amendment gave Congress veto power over any move to accelerate the timetable for testing and deployment of SDI or to weaken the ABM Treaty. Moreover, given the symbolism of the reinterpretation issue, the amendment

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was a political challenge to the position that SDI should be pursued regardless of its effect on existing arms control agreements and on-going negotiations, or on other defense programs.

The Senate Republican leadership and the administration strongly objected to Levin-Nunn, thereby highlighting its significance. In May, the Defense Department sent Sofaer’s report to the Congress stating the case for implementing the broad interpretation of the ABM Treaty. In an unclassified cover letter accompanying the congressional version, Weinberger stressed the "startling" importance of adopting the broad interpretation. Weinberger claimed that every month SDI was constrained by the traditional interpretation would cause a 1 1/2 to 2 month delay in the deployment of defenses, while immediate recognition of the broad interpretation would save the U.S. two years and at least $3 billion.

The issue became a power struggle between Minority leader (and then presidential candidate) Sen. Dole on the one side and Majority Leader Robert Byrd and Sam Nunn. Dole tried to portray support for the treaty interpretation effort a litmus test of whether a member was truly committed to the ultimate deployment of SDI. As Senate Minority Leader Robert Dole declared:

Make no mistake about it -- this is really a debate on SDI; on the real, legal options available to the President. Some are resorting to complex legal gymnastics, with only one real result: To tie the President’s hands, and to kill SDI.\(^{137}\)

Dole and Warner enlisted 30 other senators to sign a letter to Reagan urging him to

\(^{137}\) Congressional Record, April 2, 1987, p. S4404.

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veto the Defense bill if it retained the Levin-Nunn language. Nunn's response was to threaten additional reductions in the SDI budget if Reagan denied the Senate a decisive role in the ABM Treaty decision. Opponents of the Nunn-Levin amendment attempted to prevent the Senate from considering the Defense Bill by using parliamentary tactics to force procedural delays and sustain filibusters. Nunn stood firm, threatening to hold up all pending Senate business -- including the nomination of Supreme Court nominee Robert Bork -- until the matter was resolved. The bill remained stalled for months until eleven Republicans agreed to join the 49 Democrats in breaking the filibuster. On September 17, the Senate rejected Sen. Warner's amendment, 38-58, to delete the Levin-Nunn provision from the defense bill.

The administration did not veto the bill, despite its earlier threats to do so. The administration's two strongest advocates of a deadlock -- Richard Perle and Defense Secretary Weinberger -- had left the government, and there was a general desire on all sides to resolve the confrontation before an upcoming summit meeting between Reagan and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev. The congressional conferees on the bill and administration officials reached a compromise on SDI restrictions which maintained the restrictions embodied by the Levin-Nunn amendment, but gave the Defense Department a substantial fig leaf to cover their defeat by deleting the language in the bill echoing the ABM Treaty. SDI testing for FY 1988 was restricted to the specific tests the administration had proposed in an SDIO report of April 1987 and which, all agreed, conformed to the traditional
interpretation of the ABM Treaty. In addition, no funds could be used to acquire equipment or prepare for future tests without prior congressional approval. Despite the circuitous language, the SDI "at-any-cost" advocates were defeated. It was an enduring defeat. Every year since the confrontation in 1987, without controversy or clever language, Congress forbade SDI tests which do not conform to the traditional interpretation of the ABM Treaty.

Sen. Nunn was widely hailed by both liberal arms controllers and members of the strategic policy community for his leadership role in defeating the brash gambit by SDI devotees to destroy the major product of the three-decade old arms control enterprise. In January 1988, Sen. Nunn received a special award from the Arms Control Association (ACA) "in recognition of his outstanding service to the nation in successfully opposing revision of the Antiballistic Missile Treaty."\(^{138}\)

### The Early Deployment Debate

Many legislators acted assertively to defeat a second initiative as well: an effort to obtain a commitment to deploy a partial defense system in the near future. President Reagan, Secretary Weinberger and Gen. Abrahamson initially resisted early deployment of a partial system as damaging to SDI's goals. As late as 1986, Reagan told a group of SDI supporters:

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I know there are those who are getting a bit antsy, but to deploy systems of limited effectiveness now would divert limited funds and delay our main research. It could well erode support for the program before it's permitted to reach its potential.\(^{139}\)

As the political constraints on SDI's future mounted, the program's ardent supporters worried that the program was politically doomed unless they could obtain a commitment to deploy some defenses within a few years. Some proponents of strategic defense, such as the High Frontier staff, had become particularly bitter because SDI was being "researched to death."\(^{140}\) These SDI supporters reasoned that a tangible product -- a "Phase I" system representing a first increment of limited scope -- would help them rally public and congressional support for SDI in the present and thereby maintain the political momentum needed for continued funding growth in the future.

Shortly after Reagan made the comment cited above, he received a letter written by five of the most committed SDI supporters in Congress and co-signed by Edward Teller, Eugene Rostow, Livermore laboratory scientist Lowell Wood, former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Jeane Kirkpatrick, and former Secretary of State Alexander Haig.\(^{141}\) The group of prominent conservatives stated that the


\(^{140}\) High Frontier was biting in its criticism of SDIO. The organization's June 1986 newsletter complained that "we are no closer to a defense against ICBMs than we were in March 1983...If you scratch someone in the SDI office, he bleeds RESEARCH."

\(^{141}\) The five were: Senators Malcolm Wallop (R-WY), Pete Wilson (R-CA), and Dan Quayle (R-IN), and Reps. Jack Kemp (R-NY) and Jim Courter (R-NJ).
"imperfect but significant defensive options" which have already been proposed, should be fully developed without constraints in order to be ready for deployment "while the political will to do so undeniably exists." The legislators organized letters and visits to officials and SDI researchers to press their argument. They were especially concerned that the administration was preparing to agree to limits on SDI in the next summit meeting between Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev, scheduled for December 1987.\footnote{For an account of "gang of five's" activities and excerpts of letter see, Warren Strobel, "Congressional 'Gang of 5' changes course of SDI debate," \textit{Washington Times} February 16, 1987, p. 1.}

Rep. Jack Kemp became a particularly forceful advocate of early deployment. Kemp was seeking the Republican presidential nomination and his support for SDI figured prominently in his bid for the conservative vote. In response to the lobbying campaign, by the end of the year a number of high administration officials -- Secretary Weinberger most insistently -- advocated near-term deployment. The system designs under consideration called for some combination of space-based kinetic kill vehicles (SBKKV), an exoatmospheric reentry vehicle interception system (ERIS) and possibly terminal defenses.\footnote{See Tim Carrington, "Conservative Backers of Reagan Wage Campaign to Bar His Agreeing to SDI Limits with Moscow," \textit{Wall Street Journal}, November 30, 1987.} SDIO claimed that these technologies

\footnote{THE SBKKV system consists of small rockets on battle stations in space. These rockets would be fired at Soviet missiles in the boost phase and destroy them on impact. The ERIS system is a non-nuclear ground-based rocket interceptor intended to destroy Soviet warheads in the midcourse phase. Ironically, the "Phase One" architecture resembled the High Frontier plan which had been rejected several years earlier. As recently as late 1986, Gen.}
were mature enough to permit a deployment decision in the early 1990s. Accordingly, in April 1987, SDIO asked the Defense Acquisition Board to approve the development of six programs which constituted Phase I. The Pentagon claimed that Phase I would be capable of destroying some significant percentage of nuclear warheads in a Soviet first strike -- press reports said the classified requirement was between 2 and 50 percent -- and provide some limited population defenses. Two additional rationales advanced for Phase I were that it would lay the foundation for more extensive deployments in the future and compel the Soviet Union to make operational and doctrinal changes in their ballistic missile forces.

Although the "gang of five" were able to persuade Weinberger and Reagan, they failed to influence their congressional colleagues or members of the strategic policy community. An amendment offered by Rep. Kemp directing the Pentagon to prepare for deployment of Phase I defenses in 1993 was soundly defeated, 121-302.\(^{145}\) Instead, the House adopted an amendment requiring specific congressional authorization for deployment of any element of an anti-ballistic missile system.

SDIO did receive the boost it sought from the Defense Acquisition Board. The six programs were approved for "demonstration and validation testing," a stage

\[^{145}\text{Kemp called his amendment a "consciousness raising effort." He was also trying to turn the upcoming presidential elections into referendum on SDI. Pat Towell, "Critical Showdown Over SDI Under Way on Capitol Hill," Congressional Quarterly, May 16, 1987, p. 975.}\]
known as Milestone I. But this victory was obscured by a report by a task force of the Pentagon's Defense Science Board, which was leaked in July to the Washington Post just before the Defense Acquisition Board released its findings. The report approved the concept of phased deployment, but sharply criticized the Defense Department's plan to begin demonstrations of ground-and space-based weapons for a missile defense system that could be deployed in the mid-1990s.

Ultimately, the early deployment scheme backfired. Many members of Congress said that their willingness to cut the administration's budget request for SDI was bolstered by the impression that the program was being reshaped to emphasize near-term deployment of some defenses for political reasons. The House further reduced the SDI budget in order to insure that the outcome of the House-Senate conference committee would support "a robust program of research, but not a move to premature, early deployment." On the Senate side, Johnson and Chiles argued for a budget reduction on the grounds that SDIO's plans for an early deployment of Phase I would use funds needed to develop the more advanced

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146 "Milestone I" is an early step in DoD's multi-part weapons acquisitions procedures.


148 Fazio's amendment reduced the committee's recommendation of $3.6 billion to $3.1 billion. The original administration request for FY 1988 was $5.7 billion. Fazio is quoted in Edward Walsh and Helen Dewar, "House Votes to Reduce SDI Funds $500 Million," Washington Post, May 13, 1987.
systems thereby diminish the effectiveness of the whole program. The Johnston-Chiles-Proxmire amendment to reduce the FY 1988 SDI spending level to $3.7 billion, an increase over the previous year just large enough to cover inflation, nearly passed on September 22, 1987, but was defeated by Vice President Bush's tie-breaking vote. Voting transcended party lines, as 13 Democrats joined 37 Republicans to support the committee SDI budget of $4.5 billion and nine Republicans joined 41 Democrats to advocate reducing the budget to $3.7 billion.

When the defense budget was considered the following year, influential moderates from the Armed Services Committees in both chambers, such as Sen. Nunn and Rep. Spratt, overtly opposed the Phase One system proposed by SDIO and the SBKKV system in particular. (SBKKV's estimated cost had risen with each new official and unofficial study, while estimates of its survivability and military effectiveness had fallen.) Following the lead of Rep. Spratt, Congress directed that no more than 40 percent of the total SDI budget could be spent on Phase I technologies. This spending cap limited the space-based interceptor budget to $85 million, as compared to SDIO's request for $330 million. In addition to reducing the amount of funding available for development of a space-based interceptor, Congress set a minimum level of funding for the ground-based kinetic interceptor and the ground-based eximer laser.

The spending constraints and the Levin-Nunn provision on the ABM Treaty

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prompted headlines to the effect that Congress had dealt Reagan a severe blow. For the first time since SDI's introduction, a majority of Congress decided to allocate SDI's budget as a direct means to influence its direction. Up until then, Congress authorized a lump sum for SDI and did not divide the request into the usual "line items" for specific research and development programs. With the presidential election approaching, Reagan vetoed the fiscal year 1989 defense bill.\textsuperscript{150} Acrimonious negotiations eventually produced a compromise in which Nunn and Aspin agreed to eliminate the spending constraints, but retained the prohibition on any testing that would result in a breach of the ABM Treaty and held the budget at zero growth.

Despite its capitulation, influential legislators -- Sens. Nunn and Warner, Reps. Aspin and Spratt -- clearly communicated the wide-spread political agreement that the U.S. would neither prepare to deploy space-based interceptors in the near future nor seek an abrupt demise of the ABM Treaty.

In 1990, Congress passed -- and President Bush did not veto -- legislation which cut the SDI budget 25 percent from the previous year and redirected SDI away from the Phase I system.\textsuperscript{151} Congress reorganized SDIO into five component

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\textsuperscript{150} Defense Secretary Frank Carlucci and the White House National Security Adviser, Colin Powell, reportedly argued against a veto. Many congressional Democrats charged that Reagan vetoed the bill in order to draw attention to defense policy, on which they believed presidential candidate Michael Dukakis was vulnerable. See Susan Rasky, "Progress Made on Military Bill," \textit{The New York Times}, September 27, 1988.
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\textsuperscript{151} By 1990, the Phase I architecture had evolved to include a space-based defense system called "brilliant pebbles," in place of the SBKKV. The "brilliant
"program elements" and determined the budget for each. The five components included phase I defenses, limited protection systems, anti-tactical missile defenses, follow-on systems, and research and support. Sen. Nunn proclaimed:

For the first time, the Congress has basically become the board of directors on this program, and we've told them what we expect the program to do.\textsuperscript{152}

In search of a sustainable rationale

Sen. Nunn had given his opinion on how to spend SDI's billions two years earlier in a keynote speech at the Arms Control Association's annual fundraising and membership dinner.\textsuperscript{153} Nunn proposed that the U.S. should consider developing a limited system to protect American territory against accidental and unauthorized nuclear attacks by the Soviet Union or other nations.\textsuperscript{154} He called this the Accidental Launch Protection System or ALPS. Such a system might require only pebbles" system was to have over 4,000 individually orbiting missiles. The overall FY 1991 SDI budget was $2,890 million, down from $3,819 million in FY 1990.


\textsuperscript{154} Nunn's call for an accidental launch protection system sounded like an uncanny echo from the antiballistic missile debate of 20 years earlier. In 1967, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara was skeptical about the technical feasibility and wisdom of U.S. plans to develop an ABM system designed for Soviet missile attack, but found it politically advisable to recommend a "thin defense" intended to address a missile threat from China.
a "modest amendment" to the ABM Treaty, Nunn stated, and would be in the common interests of both superpowers.

Nunn's speech surprised and embarrassed his hosts who had just presented him with an award for his "outstanding service" in successfully protecting the ABM Treaty.\textsuperscript{155} In the view of the ACA staff, deployment of a limited defense system such as Nunn endorsed could constitute a fatal step toward abrogation of the ABM Treaty. Nunn's proposed ALPS appeared particularly foolhardy because ballistic missile defenses would be an inefficient way to address the problem of accidental launches, if indeed this theoretical problem required a solution.\textsuperscript{156} Both the push for near-term deployment, and the unilateral reinterpretation of the treaty, had been defeated. Yet, as a member of the audience told Nunn during the "question and answer" session:

\begin{quote}
...now you come forth with a suggestion that could have the effect of lending some political impetus to the SDI program ... putting the United States on a slippery slope toward more and more anti-missile deployments.\textsuperscript{157}
\end{quote}

Nunn replied that he merely was proposing research and trying to define a logical, and sensible, purpose for the billions of dollars annually appropriated for strategic

\textsuperscript{155} Personal interview, Katherine Magraw with Matthew Bunn, Arms Control Association senior policy analyst, Washington, D.C. September 15, 1990.

\textsuperscript{156} According to 1988 testimony from William Crowe, Chairman of Joint Chief of Staff, the probability of an accidental missile launch by either the U.S. or the Soviet Union was "very, very, low." U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Subcommittee on Defense Appropriations, Committee on Appropriations, FY 1989 Department of Defense Appropriations, part 1, p. 108. For a critical evaluation of ALPS, see Foundation for the Future, pp. 131-133.

\textsuperscript{157} Ibid., p. 7.
defense research. Nunn said somewhat defensively that "... under the best arms control regime there is a case to be made for trying to find ways to prevent the danger of accidental launches."\footnote{158}

Nunn's ACA hosts should not have been surprised. Nunn, along with Rep. Spratt and many other influential policy analysts, had expressed interest in a less technically visionary anti-missile defense to protect key installations. He acknowledged that his interest was in protecting the Senate's role in treaty ratification and legitimate policy processes, not the ABM Treaty per se. Nunn did not object to the administration's gradual erosion of the treaty with a test program. The administration outlined tests which it said complied with the strict interpretation of the treaty, even though these tests pushed into the "grey areas" of the treaty or circumvented it with artificial restrictions on how the experimental item was to be built or tested.\footnote{159} Arms control activists in public interest organizations warned that the proposed tests would gradually unravel the treaty by whittling away at the distinction between treaty-compliant tests and development of militarily effective ABM weapons or components, regardless of SDI's long-term fate.\footnote{160}

Lastly, when Nunn took on the fight, the case for "reinterpretation" was extremely weak and it was only a matter of time before it was defeated. Credible,\

\footnote{158} \textit{Ibid.}

\footnote{159} See footnote 114.

high-level former and current officials denounced it and congressional moderates and liberals found common ground by rejecting it. Nunn’s role in defeating it was important, but as one Senate aide commented, "Nunn leads from the rear."\textsuperscript{161}

In 1991, Sen. Nunn once again boosted SDI’s fortunes, although by then the cold war had ended and the SDI budget was on a downward trajectory.\textsuperscript{162} This time, Nunn did not offer ALPS as a proposal but pushed through legislation committing the U.S. to deploy a single-site, treaty compliant ABM system at Grand Forks by 1996.\textsuperscript{163} The system’s intended purpose is to defend against accidental nuclear attacks and future third-world nuclear powers.

It is impossible to predict the likelihood of deployment of strategic defenses in the near future, given the transformation of the U.S. security environment now that the arms race is over and the Soviet Union no longer exists. Despite the dawn of a new era, however, the political acceptance of Nunn’s legislation can be traced to the consensus formed during the 1980s, which supported limited strategic defense as long as it did not imply a repudiation of arms control or upset the U.S.-Soviet strategic relationship. A January 1992 study on strategic deterrence, commissioned by the Commander in Chief of SAC and written by persons who were part of the

\textsuperscript{161} Interview with Douglas Waller.

\textsuperscript{162} In the aftermath of the Persian Gulf War, anti-tactical ballistic missiles were extremely popular, but this did not necessarily mean that there would be renewed interest in strategic defenses.

\textsuperscript{163} Congress appropriated $4.1 billion for SDI FY 1992, reversing the budget’s downward movement. The bill also contained the 1996 target date for deployment at Grand Forks.
strategic policy community during the 1980s, affirms the new consensus.

With consensus building in the US government that ballistic missile defenses are needed in the emerging security environment, the challenge will be to build those defenses consistent with the ABM Treaty. The emerging consensus appears to favor a thin strategic ballistic missile defense which complies with the ABM Treaty (or a modified ABM Treaty), and virtually unlimited theatre missile defenses.\textsuperscript{164}

\textbf{The Emerging Consensus and the Narrowing Scope of Conflict}

The administration's gambit to unilaterally reinterpret the ABM Treaty sparked intense congressional involvement. However, this issue was not a political dividing line. As argued above, the strategic policy community and the majority of the nuclear weapons policy network rejected this undisguised attack on arms control, even though there were divergent views on the enduring value of the ABM Treaty. Nor was the desirability of an ABM research program a dividing line. Even the leaders of the Senate opposition to SDI conceded this point by word and action. As the critical staff study by Doug Waller, et. al, acknowledged:

Public debate on the SDI has often centered on the desirability of performing a robust research program. The authors of this report consider that question moot. Public support for research is broad and bipartisan. The more relevant question involves the pace and direction

\textsuperscript{164} Briefing paper by Thomas C. Reed, Chairman of the Strategic Deterrence Study Group, "The Role of Nuclear Weapons in the New World Order," October 10, 1991. The briefing paper included recommendations and excerpts of the study conducted by the Strategic Deterrence Study Group. This group is associated with the Joint Strategic Target Planning Staff, Strategic Advisory Group. A Xerox copy was obtained by Katherine Magraw from congressional staff.
The pace of the program was a divisive issue as testified to by the annual congressional budget debates. Yet, these debates were less about strategic defenses than about the balance of power between different factions within Congress and the administration. Moreover, one's position on the pace of the program did not serve to divide opponents from proponents. Former Secretary of Defense Harold Brown, for example, who was quite critical of the program, still recommended a research program which dwarfed all other military research programs. Brown told Congress in 1987 that he endorsed a "robust program of research and of technology development" for SDI and that an increase "on the order of 10-15 percent per year ... is justified."

While respectful of the ABM treaty, virtually all legislators, except the few on the political extremes, accepted a "vigorous" research program. This position faded imperceptibly into a position which held that it was permissible for the U.S. to research its way out of the limits of the treaty. However, in this view, it was important that this be done gradually, and with due process, in order to avoid a rupture between the U.S. and the Soviet Union and domestic political conflicts.

The political left and right were pushed to the sidelines by this narrow, often

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165 Waller, et. al SDI: Progress and Challenges, p. 2.

technical, discussion. By engaging in the argument over whether SDI would fail at the level of the technical gadget, the freeze and arms control supporters had no effective response to the argument that "[w]e should fully fund these parts of the research program to get a fix -- sooner rather than later -- on the realistic, scientific prospects." Nuclear freeze supporters refrained from capitalizing on President Reagan's explicit condemnation of nuclear weapons in his case for SDI, because that would have been misinterpreted by many as a form of support for the program.

The political right was also sidelined, even though they had a legitimate ownership claim on strategic defenses. The congressional "laser lobby," their allies in High Frontier, and some stalwart conservative analysts, became embittered by their failure to use Reagan's initiative as a launching point for a popular campaign for strategic defenses and a U.S. victory in the arms race with the Soviet Union. Many blamed SDI's supporters in the administration and Congress. Sen. Wallop, for example, condemned the "entrenched and timid military bureaucracy" for turning the quest for missile defenses into a "dead end" research program. Although the White House could not afford to alienate these individuals because they represented an important constituency for the president, they had only a minor role in congressional deliberations.

Along with the exclusion of policy entrepreneurs on the political right and left,

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the American public and public opinion did not play an important role in the debate over SDI as they had in the debates over the freeze proposal and the MX missile. The architects of Reagan's 1983 initiative largely realized its objective of disengaging the public by providing reassurance that the government was responding to the public's concerns as expressed through the nuclear freeze movement. The more the debate became a technical discussion about what was possible, the less involved became the middle class and professional arms control constituencies that had filled the ranks of the nuclear weapons freeze movement.

The nuclear weapons freeze campaign incorporated a strong condemnation of Star Wars into its political message. Presidential candidate Walter Mondale tried to reinforce the message of the freeze campaign with television advertisements accusing President Reagan of arming the heavens. Neither of these efforts maintained the level of public involvement of the early 1980s. Even arms control lobby organizations found it difficult to engage their most dedicated local activists who had done sophisticated organizing during the freeze and MX debates. As one lobbyist explained, it was difficult to get people excited about an amendment asking for only $1.9 billion for a weapons program.169

On the other side of the issue, High Frontier and associated organizations created a political action committee to help pro-SDI candidates, and aired

169 Interview with John Isaacs, Legislative Director of Council for a Livable World, June 25, 1990. Isaacs used $1.9 billion as an example of the budget proposed by the most "radical" amendment, that is the amendment offering the largest reduction from the president’s requested SDI budget.
commercials. They held seminars and rallies around the country. They tried to duplicate the freeze movement's success with state ballot initiatives. These efforts to organize people into pro-SDI activists collapsed.\textsuperscript{170} And High Frontier was plagued constantly with financial and internal problems.

**Conclusion**

When President Reagan unexpectedly invigorated the U.S. ballistic missile defense program, it appeared as though SDI would threaten the strategic orthodoxy from the political right, just as the freeze proposal had from the left. After several years of debate over the program, many nuclear weapons analysts described SDI as one of the most controversial programs in the history of American defense policy.\textsuperscript{171}

SDI certainly consumed thousands of hours of federal FTEs (full-time equivalents) annually and inspired countless books, articles and conferences. A relatively large number of legislators became engaged in SDI policy making. The White House's initiative to reinterpret the ABM Treaty provoked Senators to warn the administration of "constitutional crises," and respected members of the nuclear

\textsuperscript{170} For example, in 1987, one of High Frontier's top priorities was a drive to put strategic defenses on the California ballot in 1988. The campaign was abandoned in spring 1988 for lack of funds and organizational capacity.

policy network to decry a "scandal."  

Moreover, the policy context of the program was confused by the fact that most officials and political activists who supported SDI advanced objectives for the program other than President Reagan's. Some believed defenses would enhance deterrence by protecting our retaliatory forces or complicating Soviet calculations for achieving success in an attack. Some wanted to use SDI as "leverage" in negotiations with the Soviet Union. Others argued the U.S. must match Soviet BMD (ballistic missile defense) research. The confusion surrounding the program's objectives and scope offered legislators an opening to help determine the program's future.

However, the controversy over SDI was not as profound as it appeared. Over the first two years of the program, a consensus emerged that a significant SDI research program could be accommodated -- at least for a time -- within the existing framework for arms control and nuclear deterrent policy. This consensus originated among members of the strategic policy community and subsequently was embraced by most lawmakers and policy makers. Had the Soviet Union not abandoned its original refusal to engage in arms control as long as the U.S. aggressively pursued SDI, the program would have been far more contentious. As it turned out, the U.S. and Soviet Union made considerable arms control progress despite SDI, and many

172 Sen. Nunn first raised the prospect of a "constitutional confrontation" in a letter to President Reagan, February 6, 1987. See footnote 134. Gerard Smith wrote that "the reinterpretation is little short of a scandal, born not of a careful reading of the treaty text and its negotiating record, but of an ideological opposition to the ABM Treaty and scorn for the entire arms control framework painstakingly built up over the last two decades." Smith, "Clearing the Record," Arms Control Today September 1987.
analysts argued, with some credibility, that SDI facilitated achievement of U.S. negotiating objectives.

Consequently, policy entrepreneurs, inside and outside of Congress, were unable to use SDI to make the case for a major departure from established policy. Consensus rebuilders, however, found great demand for their services. The strategic policy community still had reason to be wary of SDI, given its momentum, confused policy context, and potential as an ideological weapon in the hands of both nuclear war-fighters and nuclear abolitionists. Legislators were particularly important because executive branch officials were handicapped by their commander-in-chief's grandiose "vision" of SDI. The continued involvement of leading legislators, allied with other members of the strategic policy community inside and outside of government, insured that SDI did not disrupt the existing orthodoxy or the incremental process of gradually re-shaping the orthodoxy.
Chapter VI: Congress and Nuclear Weapons

During the 1980s, nuclear weapons policy moved to the top of the congressional agenda. Congress's role in shaping policy during this period has gone unappreciated thus far by most scholars, who remain impressed by the institutional barriers to purposeful congressional policy making and executive branch dominance in foreign and military policy. The policy debates analyzed in the preceding chapters suggest that the importance of these standard observations to an explanation of congressional actions in nuclear weapons policy has been overstated. Congressional involvement determined the outcome of some important weapons acquisition issues, influenced the general political climate for arms control and strategic policy goals, and changed the process for making strategic policy decisions.

In fact, Congress never was the "rubber-stamping silent partner" of the

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1 For example, in a recent work Thomas E. Mann suggests that increased congressional activism in the making of American foreign policy since the 1960s has harmed U.S. national security by causing executive-legislative conflict. The conflict obstructs the executive branch from successfully formulating and conducting foreign policy. Mann recommends a series of reforms which he says will restore a "balance" between the branches by recognizing their comparative advantages. James Lindsay recognizes the marked increase in the Congress's influence over nuclear weapons policy in the 1970s and 1980s, but is ambivalent about the implications of this change. Most often, he interprets the congressional role in relation to the executive's as negative and limited, and often ineffectual. Thomas E. Mann, "Making Foreign Policy: President and Congress," in *A Question of Balance* Thomas E. Mann ed. (The Brookings Institution, 1990); and James M. Lindsay, *Congress and Nuclear Weapons* (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991).
executive branch that many scholars have depicted. Starting in 1946 with the creation of the Atomic Energy Commission, a civilian agency with the power to control all aspects of nuclear energy, legislators have been intimately involved in U.S. nuclear weapons policy.\(^2\) What changed in the late 1970s and 1980s was the form and extent of congressional involvement. The dominant mode of congressional involvement in nuclear weapons policy during the post World War II era can be characterized as a "closed" system. This "closed" system was challenged, and frequently superseded, by an "open" system in the 1980s. This dissertation has explored the features and policy implications of the open system, and identified the political and institutional factors that prompted the emergence of this new mode of congressional involvement.

This concluding chapter describes the general characteristics of a new open system of decision making manifested in the four policy studies, and presents a political theory which relates increased congressional activism to the loss of political authority of an elite "strategic policy community." This community's authority eroded as it was unable to resolve privately and quietly serious

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\(^2\) Prominent examples are numerous. In the 1949 debate on the development of a hydrogen bomb, Sen. MacMahon, Chairman of the JCAE, was a key advocate of development. In the 1950s, the Senate Armed Services Committee led the campaign against nuclear testing bans while the Senate Disarmament Subcommittee under Sen. Humphrey promoted testing restraints. Sen. Jackson was a principal patron of the development of the nuclear Navy and strategic bomber forces and was an important voice in the process of formulating U.S. arms control negotiation positions. Key legislators aggressively pushed development of an ABM system in the late 1960s, and in 1969 other legislators effectively opposed deployment of ABMs. In the early 1970s, the Senate Armed Services Committee conducted a government-wide debate on developing counterforce weapons.
contradictions and conflicts in U.S. nuclear weapons policy. As the strategic policy community lost some measure of control over the debating and decision-making process, conflicts over nuclear weapons issues spilled over into the congressional arena, where policy making "opened up." As both a consequence, and a further stimulus to congressional involvement, nuclear weapons issues became a partisan and ideological issue in the mass electorate. Lastly, in light of my findings, this conclusion discusses patterns of congressional behavior and the peculiar politics of nuclear weapons policy making.

The "Open" System

Although the four policy debates differed in significant ways, each clearly exhibited some attributes of an "open" system of congressional involvement. One of the most striking features, common to all the debates, was that the major avenues for exerting congressional influence on U.S. policy were independent of committee structures, and out in the open. The full House conducted the largest debate in its history on the nuclear weapons freeze proposal, and in addition, many legislators used appearances on the national media or before gatherings of activists to engage in public discussion about the freeze proposal and the nuclear arms race. Legislators used the media to communicate to each other and to administration officials, as well as to publicize their role in the decision making process. SDI and the MX missile also engendered repeated lively debates on the House and Senate floor. The Senate and House defense committees, which
supported President Reagan's 1981 decision to base the MX in fixed silos, were bypassed in the search for another solution to the MX basing problem by a small group of legislators attempting to construct a "compromise" proposal.

Dissident committee members and new arms control leaders raised serious challenges to the defense committees' bills on the floor in each of the policy debates. The full House overturned the decisions of the Armed Services and Appropriations Committee several times on whether and how much to fund the MX program, SDI and nuclear tests. Successful amendments to the Senate Armed Services Committee bill were far less frequent because the Committee could count on the support of a coalition of Republicans and conservative Democrats. Moreover, the Committee leadership frequently anticipated serious challenges by modifying its position in order to stave off a defeat.

Informal coalitions outside the defense committees often supplemented factions within the committees as the key political unit. The leading supporters and opponents of the freeze resolution assembled informal House coalitions -- the liberal "arms controllers" and the "New Right" Republicans -- both of whose agendas were broader than the freeze proposal. The other policy debates also spurred the formation of informal coalitions, including the Scowcroft Commission Report sponsors, the pro-SDI "gang of five," and the SDI budget cutters. Following the freeze debate, the House Democratic Caucus also became an important forum for policy deliberations on all nuclear weapons issues, particularly the MX missile program and U.S. testing policy.
The repeated public deal-making by legislators and administration officials indicated that the interests of additional new parties had to be accommodated, and demonstrated how important it was to deliberately construct political compromises in order to win majority support for strategic modernization. Rep. Aspin and his congressional colleagues, members of the Scowcroft Commission, and some administration officials even acted out, somewhat disingenuously, scripted exchanges in order to generate support for the MX missile. The negotiations over the language of the freeze resolution among freeze supporters in the House was less public, but just as intense.

The four policy debates featured new participants. In addition to informal and formal coalitions, legislators who had not been particularly influential in previous nuclear weapons deliberations assumed leadership roles. For example, pro-freeze advocates Rep. Markey and AuCoin and anti-freeze advocates Rep. Kemp and Gingrich were unlikely, but prominent, leaders, as were Rep. Gore and Sens. Kennedy and Chiles on other issues. The debates also spurred the formation of some unusual alliances, such as the conservatives and liberals who joined together to defeat the Midgetman missile, and the fiscal conservatives and liberals who fought to reduce the SDI budget.

Another attribute of the open system that emerged from the policy debates is congressional willingness and capacity to legislate policy against the wishes of the White House. For example, Congress capped the MX missile program at 50 missiles by denying procurement funds for additional missiles, handing the Air
Force a considerable defeat. Congress also initiated development of the Midgetman missile system, and then controlled the pace of the program by tying funding for the MX to Midgetman development. Regarding the ABM Treaty, Congress prevented the Reagan administration from implementing a new unilateral interpretation of its limitations on development and testing by denying funds for any demonstration tests which would violate the existing interpretation. Late in the decade, Congress imposed its priorities on the SDI program by directing how research funds were to be allocated. Congress prevented the U.S. from exceeding the SALT limits, limited the numbers of specific weapons, and declined to permit modernization of obsolete tactical nuclear weapons. Another striking example was the House legislation prohibiting the use of funds for nuclear explosive tests above one-kiloton, provided that the Soviet Union adhered to the same restriction and accepted in-country seismic stations to verify its compliance. The House measure amounted to a congressionally-initiated test ban with the Soviet Union and showed none of the usual congressional inhibition about overtly managing policy.

Of course, Congress also continued to influence policy indirectly by pressuring the executive branch to continue the quest for arms control with the

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3 Reagan's promised nuclear build-up never happened in terms of raw numbers. When Reagan left office in December 1988, the total number of U.S. warheads had declined three percent since 1981, and was 16 percent less than the originally projected number. See, William Arkin, "The Buildup that Wasn't," Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, (January/February, 1989), p. 8. The number of warheads on strategic nuclear weapons increased during the 1980s, but the increase was far less than the administration had originally planned.
Soviet Union. At the urging of some legislators, the U.S. negotiating position was reformulated to incorporate aspects of the build-down proposal. The U.S. resumed negotiations on testing limitations and sought ratification of the TTTB and PNET only as a means of defusing congressional interest in a complete test ban.

Lastly, the policy debates occasionally became part of broader partisan conflicts. Openness of decision-making went hand-in-hand with politicization of nuclear weapons issues. This, in turn, offered legislators the opportunity to use these issues for partisan purposes. Partisanship was more visible in the overwhelmingly Democratic House than in the Senate which was under Republican control until January 1987 and Democratic control thereafter. Regardless of which party was in control of the Senate, the Democratic and Republican leadership and ranking members of the defense committees held relatively similar positions on defense issues and worked together in a spirit of collegiality bred by the "unanimous consent" requirement of the institution. The same can not be said of the House. House Speaker O'Neill encouraged the Democrats's use of nuclear weapons policy for partisan purposes. Partisan conflicts entered most obviously into the freeze debate, during which Democrats tried to associate their party with the popular movement and cast Reagan as a dangerous arms racer. House Republicans also tried to use the freeze resolution debate to rouse their Republican colleagues to rebel against the entrenched Democrats. The House Democratic Caucus sponsored the one-kiloton testing
moratorium amendment, in part, because this amendment was one element of the House Democrat's challenge to Ronald Reagan on arms control. However, in this case, House-Senate conflict was also an important factor since some House leaders accepted this amendment with full knowledge that it would be bargained away in negotiations with their Senate colleagues as part of a package deal on a range of contentious issues. In the debate over the MX missile, some House Democrats tried to use the MX to distinguish themselves from Ronald Reagan and the Republicans, but other legislators -- those working with the Scowcroft Commission -- sought to blur the distinction between the parties' positions. Ultimately, the MX and Midgetman missile votes did not split cleanly along party lines. Likewise, some Republicans sought to portray the lack of Democratic enthusiasm for SDI as a mark against the party. However, their efforts were undermined by the bi-partisan coalitions in both chambers, but particularly in the Senate, in favor of a high-level of ABM research spending.

In general, the efforts to use nuclear weapons issues for partisan political ends were undermined consistently by parallel efforts to construct bipartisan positions that would permit weapons programs to proceed in concert with arms control negotiations. Leading Democratic and Republican legislators, with help from an array of influential nuclear policy experts and commentators, crafted "compromise" positions and urged other legislators to accept them in the name of national security.

This search for compromise also undermined the shift toward an "open"
system of decision-making. The proposed compromises on the freeze proposal, the MX missile, and the SDI sought to change these debates from ideological concerns involving the whole Congress to technical, strategic and budgetary concerns more adeptly addressed by experts.

**The Strategic Policy Community and Congressional Behavior**

A popular proverb instructs that politics is the art of the possible. This proverb begs the question of who decides what is possible. In any society, dominant institutions have various means of promoting policies that advance their interests and ideologies and obstructing policies that hurt them. Intellectuals and theorists play an important role in legitimating and rationalizing these institutional interests. They also help to shape, and manage changes to, prevailing policies by setting the limits of responsible public opinion to which leaders must respond. Alexander de Toqueville observed that political theorists -- not princes, ministers, and lords -- shaped the events leading to the French Revolution, and suggested that political theorists played the same role elsewhere. In the field of nuclear weapons policy, a community of intellectuals and theorists -- the strategic policy community -- often exercised considerable authority in defining "the possible."

The strategic policy community determined the limits of the national debate on nuclear weapons policy by providing an over-arching structure for making decisions about arms control and arms acquisition. This structure framed the options for such decisions in terms of a persuasive and accepted strategic
logic. Like all political theorists, the community's policy views were constrained by social realities. The range of options represented compromises brokered by the community which accommodated the competing interests of the U.S. military establishment as well as dominant political, economic, and ideological interests. The community's role in shaping policy was complemented by its role in legitimizing policy. The community buttressed its compromise positions with a theoretical rationale for stable nuclear deterrence and promoted it to policy makers and the public as a consensus position.

Key legislators were involved in shaping and implementing the consensus. In the closed mode of congressional decision making, these few legislators debated the issues among themselves and other relevant policy makers. They wielded tremendous influence over congressional decisions by exerting control over the congressional agenda and by leading the large number of "swing" legislators whose positions on any given controversial weapons program are not fixed by strong ideological orientations.

By the 1980s, the political authority of the strategic policy community had eroded to the point where it experienced difficulty in performing either its policy-shaping or legitimation functions. The case studies demonstrate that the strategic policy community's loss of authority stemmed from inherent contradictions and weaknesses in its set of beliefs and policy positions. This had several related consequences: the community's inability to resolve long-simmering conflicts over nuclear weapons policy and arms control objectives became apparent to outsiders,
contradictions led to policy reversals which eroded the community's credibility, and the community's relatively weak position left it vulnerable to challenges from dissenting former community members.

The community's loss of political authority led to a loss of its control over the debating and decision-making process. As a result, conflicts spilled over into the congressional arena. Open congressional involvement encouraged activist and grass-roots activity and this, in turn, further stimulated congressional involvement. The result was that for a brief time nuclear weapons issues became a partisan and ideological issue in the mass electorate. In addition to broadening the scope of conflict within the government, the wider congressional involvement meant that individuals on the periphery of strategic policy community, or even those far outside of the community, competed successfully for the ears of Congress and the public.

Senators and Representatives assumed two distinct new roles in the open system. Several seized the political opportunities presented by confusion and disarray in policy making to act as "policy entrepreneurs." For example, Sen. Kennedy and Rep. Markey exploited the opening provided by the popular freeze initiative, and by the elite-level unhappiness with both traditional arms control and the Reagan defense agenda to advance a dramatically different approach to U.S. national security policy based on an end to the arms race. Reps. Downey and AuCoin sought to disrupt business as usual by terminating the MX missile program. Reps. Markey, Schroeder and Gephardt, made themselves leaders of
the nuclear test-ban, the oldest cause on the arms control agenda. From the other side of the political spectrum, Reps. Gingrich, Hyde, and Kemp placed themselves at the head of the anti-freeze movement and used their position to galvanize the New Right. Sen. Wallop, and Reps. Kramer and Kemp tried to capitalize on President Reagan's enthusiasm for a space-based missile shield, which they shared. These policy entrepreneurs worked with political activists and lobbying organizations to advance their legislation.

Alternatively, some legislators responded to the widened scope of conflict by acting as "consensus rebuilders." They worked with members of the strategic policy community to reconstruct both a rhetorical and substantive consensus that could end the divisive debates over strategic modernization and arms control and allow both activities to move forward. For example, Sens. Percy, Cohen and Nunn worked with Glenn Kent and other RAND staff and administration figures to champion the build-down proposal. They hoped to attract both the marginal political supporters of the nuclear freeze and the moderate supporters of strategic modernization. Reps. Aspin, Gore and Dicks worked with the Scowcroft Commission and administration officials to reach agreement on deploying the MX missile. Sen. Nunn, Rep. Spratt, and others developed and promoted a rationale for the SDI program that coupled large expenditures for research with restraints on the program's near-term impact on the U.S.-Soviet strategic relationship.

Individual legislators can be compared to an organizational unit in a political system which seeks to maximize its relative powers within its sphere of
operations. Senators, and to a lesser degree Representatives, have sizable staffs working for them, dedicated to promoting their member's political career.

Although the party leadership may occasionally exert a claim on their votes, U.S. legislators are relatively free to establish their positions independently of their parties. Legislators gained political power by functioning as policy entrepreneurs or consensus rebuilders. Morton Halperin's description of organizational behavior fits the profile of the consensus rebuilder, who see themselves as long-term players in nuclear policy making.

Stands on issues are affected by the desire to maintain influence. This could lead to support for certain policies which will require greater reliance on the organization. Participants prefer courses of action which will require information from them or which they will be asked to implement.  

Reps. Aspin and Gore's political strategy for congressional action on the MX missile clearly demonstrate Halperin's point. In their "deal" with the White House, Aspin and Gore incorporated "check-points" in the form of repeated congressional votes. They intended to use these to create an on-going role for themselves as judges of the White House's performance. The supporters of the "build-down" proposal, who pressured the administration to incorporate it in the U.S. negotiating position, hoped to create a similar position for themselves.

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4 In contrast, most European members of parliament must rely on their parties for their policy position and career advancement. British members of parliament have only one or two staff aides.

The Decline of the Strategic Policy Community

With the advent of the Reagan administration, the strategic consensus and the political arrangements which sustained it, started to fall apart. Neither was secure prior to Reagan's election, as most graphically demonstrated by the U.S. failure to ratify the SALT II Treaty, which represented the policies of three administrations -- Democratic and Republican -- and years of tedious negotiations with the Soviet Union. The contradiction between, on the one hand, acceptance of "strategic parity" with the Soviet Union as the basis for arms control negotiations, and, on the other hand, endorsement of the need to enhance deterrence with nuclear war-fighting capabilities created enormous political pressures on the treaty. The price of an agreement was a defense build-up which included the MX missile and several varieties of cruise missiles. The result was that the agreed rules of competition between the superpowers were so lax that each nation might rightly question the other's long-term objectives when both exercised all the military options open to them. Many arms control proponents began to question the ultimate value of the treaty. Conservatives saw only the spectre of Soviet superiority, or at best, a distasteful "parity" with the U.S. They took their fight against SALT II to the public with a well-financed and well-orchestrated campaign aimed at key influential segments of the population.

Ronald Reagan brought into office with him the leaders of the campaign against SALT II, persons who were no longer committed to operating within the consensus as defined by the strategic policy community. They were determined to
escape arms control, or at least to subordinate it in order to pursue an arms buildup. Former officials identified with the mainstream arms control policies of the 1970s lost their positions and much of their access to executive branch policy makers.

SALT II's failure -- and by implication the failure of traditional arms control -- and the Reagan administration's controversial policies catapulted the freeze proposal onto the national agenda. Overt elite-level conflict over nuclear weapons policy created fertile conditions for the growth of a popular movement by fueling the belief that mass political action was legitimate and necessary to control the nuclear threat. Members of the strategic policy community lacked the authority to stem the spreading freeze movement, while arms control proponents on the periphery of the strategic policy community encouraged it. The national media, ever attuned to brewing conflicts among political elites, encouraged the growth of the freeze by covering it extensively as a social protest movement.

The mobilization of the public under the banner of the freeze proposal was both a product, and a contributing cause, of the upheaval in policy making. Congressional involvement, and the media attention which followed, caused the rapid growth of the freeze movement. On the other hand, the movement spurred the emergence of the open system of congressional decision making, in part by giving nuclear policy issues a grass roots political dimension. Moreover, the concept of a freeze discredited the assumptions and modes of thinking underlying U.S. nuclear doctrine by suggesting that the nuclear arms race was irrational,
unnecessary, and dangerous.

Ironically, President Reagan reinforced the freeze movement's message over the course of the decade in concert with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. Reagan proved to be remarkably unencumbered by orthodox views on U.S. nuclear policy. Although SDI carried the notion of nuclear "escalation dominance" to its logical conclusion, Reagan's commitment to SDI appeared to be based on his belief that it would render nuclear weapons "impotent and obsolete." Reagan repeatedly suggested that a world without nuclear weapons was possible, desirable, and morally superior. While Reagan's early talk about firing nuclear warning shots early in a conflict scared the public and encouraged the growth of the popular movement for a freeze, his subsequent sales pitch for SDI and summit performance scared the strategic policy community. Reagan's argument for SDI threatened to stigmatize nuclear weapons while raising unrealistic public expectations about escaping from the unpleasant realities of nuclear deterrence. His discussion with Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev in Reykjavik about getting rid of all ballistic nuclear-armed missiles suggested it was possible, even easy, to dramatically reverse the arms race. Nuclear weapons policy had become unmoored from its anchor in the strategic policy community, leading Zbigniew Brzezinski to lament about the consequences of departing from the

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6 Under the terms of the INF Treaty that Reagan negotiated, the U.S. agreed to withdraw brand new weapons that members of the strategic policy community had deemed essential only a few years earlier to "fill a gap in the spectrum of deterrence" and "couple" U.S. and Western European security.
community's bi-partisan consensus:

On arms control we are treated to such spectacles as the freeze proposal which anyone knows is fundamentally a hoax designed to placate certain segments of the population and not a workable solution for effective arms control. And, of course, we are also treated to unrealistic prospects of foolproof defense systems becoming attainable in the near future.\(^7\)

A major episode in the decline of the strategic policy community, the controversy over the MX system, began before Reagan assumed office. The MX debate exposed the contradictions between the theoretical tenets of a stable deterrent policy and the community's endorsement of seemingly "unstable" weapons -- such as the MX -- and held up the views of this community to public ridicule. First the strategic policy community and the Defense Department endorsed the view that U.S. national security was so gravely threatened by the so-called window-of-vulnerability that tens of thousands of acres of pristine public lands in Utah and Nevada should be sacrificed to solve the problem. Two years later, after losing the political debate over deployment of the racetrack system to an unlikely coalition of ranchers, Mormons, environmentalists, and disarmament activists, many members of the community walked away from the problem. Others in the community proclaimed that deMIRVing was the preferred solution to strategic instability, yet endorsed the 10-warhead MX missile anyway. Still others in the community believed deMIRVing was low priority and that procurement of the MX was important for psychological reasons, to demonstrate

\(^7\) Zbigniew Brzezinski, "The Three Requirements for a Bipartisan Foreign Policy," The Washington Quarterly, (Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University, 1984), p. 17.

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"national will."

Despite the interventions of members of the strategic policy community -- primarily through the Scowcroft Commission -- the question of modernization of U.S. land-based nuclear forces was not resolved smoothly, nor was the authority of the strategic policy community fully restored. The intellectual pastiche of the Scowcroft Commission package could neither conceal the confusion in U.S. strategic doctrine nor present a consistent rationale for the MX that also was compatible with fiscal responsibility and common sense. Antonia Chayes, an Under Secretary of the Air Force in the Carter Administration, decried the confusion:

The legacy of the Scowcroft Commission report has been confusion and an exposure of the weakness and inconsistencies that have characterized the shifting rationale for ICBM modernization from the late 1960s.8

The more discredited and confused the rationalizations became, the less compelling were the unwritten rules limiting debates over new weapons systems in Congress to a few committee "experts."

The debate over U.S. nuclear testing policy was not fueled by conflict within the strategic policy community. In fact, the strength of the strategic policy community's position on this issue helped defuse congressional support for the test ban. However, the repeated success of the House test ban amendment indicated that radical proposals and congressional activism had become acceptable within


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Congress.

The upheaval in policy making was reflected in new arguments which sometimes blurred the classic lines between "hawks" and "doves," and new policy roles assumed by legislators. During the freeze debate, all legislators became proponents of one form or another of arms control and many expressed the view that the on-going arms race was illogical and counter-productive. During the MX debate, legislators representing a range of political views questioned why the U.S. needed a large counterforce missile for a retaliatory second-strike, or if the U.S. could afford billion-dollar bargaining chips. Many of the arguments advanced to support and oppose SDI turned the classic debate over nuclear weapons on its head. The strongest SDI proponents echoed Ronald Reagan's argument that defensive nuclear weapons were morally superior to offensive nuclear weapons, which were by implication, immoral. Many SDI opponents defended the status quo as inevitable and stable.

**Congress Reconsidered**

Most studies of the congressional role in foreign and defense policy portray Congress as a public critic which sets limits on permissible executive branch behavior. Foreign policy analysts Charles Kegley and Eugene Wittkopf depict the executive branch as the "initiator" and the legislative branch as "the respondent."³

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Robert Dahl crafted an enduring analogy over two decades ago, likening the executive branch to "the motor" of the system and Congress as "the brakes."¹⁰ Judging from Congress's record during the 1980s, a better analogy for the institution's role in nuclear weapons policy is that members of Congress competed for a turn at the steering wheel, along with other policy makers, when the regular drivers were having difficulty maintaining a steady course.

In contrast to the negative and reactive role generally ascribed to the legislative branch, Congress demonstrated a capacity for sustained policy direction and initiation. A congressional hand on the steering wheel did not necessarily mean that Congress increased its authority in relation to the executive branch. With the exception of the disagreement over the constitutional authority of each branch to interpret treaties, the policy debates were not struggles between the executive and legislative branches for authority. Rather, they were fights that pitted legislators against one another and executive branch officials against one another in cross-branch alliances.

The overt congressional hand at the steering wheel observed in the preceding chapters revealed that Congress performs two functions which are in opposition to one another. On the one hand, open congressional involvement broadened, and even fueled, conflict over nuclear weapons policy. On the other hand, legislators also played a decisive role in re-narrowing the scope of conflict.

For example, congressional involvement insured that the freeze proposal remained a social protest movement, and not a viable arms control proposal. Due to congressional intervention the MX missile debate was subdued, although not entirely resolved. Congress did not spark a national debate on SDI as it had done with the nuclear freeze proposal. Rather, key legislators helped to insure that SDI did not disrupt the existing orthodoxy or the incremental process of gradually re-shaping the orthodoxy.

The Politics of Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy

This dissertation did not attempt to draw parallels between the politics of nuclear weapons and other policy areas. However, the previous chapters suggested several reasons for concluding that nuclear weapons policy making has unique characteristics compared to other public policy areas. First, there is tremendous emphasis placed on the virtues of consensus, bi-partisanship, and harmonious policy making. The catastrophic consequences of a nuclear war with the Soviet Union argue against subjecting nuclear weapons policy to politics "as usual." Second, the public and elected officials are more dependent on the "experts" than in other areas of public policy because nuclear weapons policy is based on untestable propositions about the psychology of leaders and forces under stress and the performance of weapons systems. Third, the extensive government program of classification and secrecy about nuclear weapons matters, and the use of a particularly abstract and acronymic language to discuss nuclear weapons,
made it difficult for individuals outside of policy circles to gain a foothold in the
debate.

Lastly, the psychology of the cold war encouraged homogeneity and stifled
dissent in many areas of foreign policy, including nuclear weapons policy. As
William Schneider wrote:

Debates over foreign policy at the elite level have usually not -- until
Vietnam -- resulted in the mobilization of mass political forces in such a
way as to enlarge the sphere of conflict. Rather, the impulse has been to
avoid and discredit divisiveness, to emphasize unity even at the cost of
repression.11

In fact, the strategic policy community shares many traits with the "foreign
policy establishment" of the early years of the cold war.12 The "foreign policy
establishment" refers to a homogeneous group of bankers, lawyers, and Foreign
Service officers which is widely credited with establishing the fundamental axioms,
objectives, and world-view which guided U.S. foreign policy from the end of
World War II through the Vietnam War. Like the foreign policy establishment,
the strategic policy community has no formal function in government. The
political function of both is to broker and promote a consensus on policy. This
consensus limited debate and endowed policy with an apolitical, non-partisan cast.

11 William Schneider, "Public Opinion: The Beginning of Ideology?" Foreign

12 The foreign policy establishment is the object of several good journalistic
and scholarly studies. See, for example, Walter Isaacson and Evan Thomas, The
Wise Men: Six Friends and the World They Made (Simon and Schuster, 1986);
and Gregory Hodgson, "The Establishment," Foreign Policy (Spring 1983), pp. 3-
40.
The members of the strategic policy community, like those of the foreign policy establishment, had a definable ideology. But their dogma was that of the center and they were concerned primarily about methods and procedures. "It was almost more important to [members of the establishment] how things were done than what things were done." Walter Dean Burnham's view that consensus in the United States "is far more procedural and political than substantive or social" seems particularly applicable to defense and foreign policy. In other words, Burnham suggests that the particular political process for developing a consensus is more meaningful to the participants than the substantive content of the consensus.

The Vietnam War debacle demoralized, discredited and divided the foreign policy establishment. Eventually, this elite group dissolved, an outcome which accompanied -- and one could argue, was a prerequisite for -- the reassertion of congressional powers in foreign policy making that occurred in the early 1970s. In much the same way, the difficulties of the strategic policy community in the 1980s had the effect of spurring congressional activism.

Many analysts trace the roots of the Vietnam War debacle to the rigidity,


15 As Gregory Hodgson wrote, "Among the casualties of the Vietnam war have been the unity, the credibility, the influence, and perhaps and survival in any recognizable form of the American foreign policy establishment." p. 6.
some would say the dogmatism, of the foreign policy establishment.\textsuperscript{16} U.S. nuclear weapons policy was plagued by a similar inflexible attachment to formal precepts that failed to correspond to changing political circumstances. Virtually all nuclear modernization was justified by orthodox U.S. nuclear policy as a means of preventing any 'misperception' by opponents, or wavering allies, that the U.S. might lose its resolve to resort to nuclear weapons in a crisis. The Scowcroft Commission Report clearly illustrated this point. The Commission argued that the MX was necessary to demonstrate national "will and resolve." They further argued that their recommendations should be accepted in the name of "restoring consensus" and ending the dispute over the MX program. At a more general level, the intellectual work of the strategic policy community provided legitimation for an on-going -- and by many accounts, irrational and even absurd -- arms race.

The end of the cold war raises the possibility of a radical transformation of the politics of nuclear weapons, and perhaps of foreign policy as well. It remains to be seen whether nuclear weapons policy making eventually will be transformed into a de-mystified, routine job of managing a finite deterrent posture and enforcing global non-proliferation measures. In this case, one might expect that the distinction between closed and open modes of congressional decision making would collapse and the strategic policy community would lose its privileged position in the absence of the peculiar political atmosphere generated by the cold

\textsuperscript{16} See, for example, David Halberstam, \textit{The Best and the Brightest} (Random House, 1969).
Before that eventuality, nuclear weapons policy may cease to be a principal preoccupation of members of the strategic policy community given the absence of the cold war context and the prospect of billions of dollars for nuclear weapons procurement. Although, hopefully, some members of the community and members of Congress will devote their considerable talents and energy to the problems of elimination of nuclear weapons and global non-proliferation as they have devoted themselves to managing the strategic competition with the Soviet Union.
Appendix: The Approximate Membership of the Strategic Policy Community of the 1980s.

The strategic policy community is a fluid, informal group of individuals. It keeps no membership roster, nor does it have formal criteria for membership. Consequently, the task of differentiating members of the strategic policy community from the broader network of nuclear weapons experts and policy makers is complicated and subjective. One feature that distinguishes members of the strategic policy community is their extensive involvement in activities which provide them with opportunities to advance their views to policy makers and to each other. (See introduction for further discussion of the community.) In order to provide empirical support for the concept of a strategic policy community and an illustration of its composition, I derived an approximate list of its members based on their participation in such activities. See Table I for a list of the strategic policy community membership and their participation in key activities.
APPENDIX: TABLE I: The Approximate Membership of the Strategic Policy Community

Allen, Gen. Lew Jr.
Former Chief of Staff, Air Force; Cal Tech

Con. Hearings: 81 SAS; 82 HAS
SALT - SAS & SFR

Commissions:
Committees: CISAC
Advisory Boards: JSTPS-SAG

Aspin, Les
U.S. House of Representatives

Con. Hearings: Formal statements in HASC hearings

Commissions:
Committees: Aspen Strategy Group
Advisory Boards:

Brown, Harold
Former Secretary of Defense

Con. Hearings: 82 HFA; 82 SFR; 83 SAS; 85 HAS
SALT - SAS & SFR

Commissions: Scowcroft Commission
Committees:
Advisory Boards: RAND

Buchsbaum, Solomon
Vice President, AT&T Bell Laboratories

Con. Hearings: 85 SAS
Commissions: Townes Panel
Committees: ('86 Aspen conf.)
Advisory Boards: RAND
Defense Science Board

Bundy, McGeorge
New York University

Con. Hearings: 82 HFA; 82 SAP; 83 SAS
Commissions:
Committees:
Advisory Boards: Carter's GAC
Carnesale, Albert
Harvard

Con. Hearings: 85 SAS, 85 HAS, 86 HAS, 87 HFA
Commissions:
Committees: Aspen Group conferences
Advisory Boards:

Carter, Ashton
Harvard

Con. Hearings: 85 SAS
Commissions: Strategic Deterrence Study Group
Committees: Aspen Group conferences
CISAC
Advisory Boards:

DeLauer, Richard
Def. Under Sec. for research and engineering, TRW

Con. Hearings: 81 SAS; 82 HAS; 83 SAS, 84 SAS
Commissions:
Committees:
Advisory Boards: Defense Science Board

Deutch, John
MIT

Con. Hearings: 83 SAS; 86 HAS
Commissions: Hoffman Study Team
Scowcroft Commission
Strategic Deterrence Study Group
Committees: Aspen Strategy Group
Advisory Boards: JSTPS-SAG
Defense Policy Board
CNO Exec
Defense Science Board

Doty, Paul
Harvard University

Con. Hearings:
Commissions:
Committees: Aspen Strategy Group Activities
CISAC
Advisory Boards: Carter's GAC
Dougherty, Gen. Russell E.
Director, Air Force Ass.; former CINCSAC

Con. Hearings: 81 SFR
SALT - SAS & SFR

Commissions:

Committees:

Advisory Boards: Defense Science Board
IDA Trustees

Drell, Sidney
Stanford, former head of SLAC

Con. Hearings: 85 SAS

Commissions: Warhead Safety Study Team

Committees: Aspen Strategy Group

Advisory Boards:

Flax, Alexander
Former President, IDA

Con. Hearings:

Commissions: Fletcher Report

Committees: CISAC

Advisory Boards: Defense Science Board
IDA

Foster, John
TRW, former DOD official

Con. Hearings: 86 SFR

Commissions: Warhead Safety Study Team

Committees:

Advisory Boards: Defense Science Board

Garwin, Richard
IBM

Con. Hearings: 84 HFA, 84 SAS

Commissions: CISAC

Committees:

Advisory Boards:
Gayler, Noel
Former Director of the NSA

Con. Hearings: 82 HFA, 82 SFR, 83 SAS, 84 HFA, 85 HAS
SALT - SAS

Commissions:
Committees:
Advisory Boards: IDA

Goodpaster, Gen. Andrew J.
West Point

Con. Hearings:
Commissions: Townes Panel
Integrated Long-Term Strategy

Committees:
Advisory Boards: Defense Science Board
IDA

Gore, Albert
U.S. House of Representatives and Senate

Con. Hearings: 82 HFA, 84 HFA

Commissions:
Committees: Aspen Strategy Group
Advisory Boards:

Haig, Alexander M. Jr.
Former Sec. of State, SACEUR

Con. Hearings: 81 SFR
SALT - SAS & SFR

Commissions: Scowcroft Commission
Committees:
Advisory Boards:

Herzfeld, Dr. Charles
Vice Chairman, Aetna, et al. Tech Ventures

Con. Hearings:
Commissions: Hoffman Report
Committees:
Advisory Boards: Defense Policy Board
CNO Exec
Hoffman, Fred
Director, Pan Heuristics

Con. Hearings: 85 SAS
Commissions: Hoffman Study Team, chairman
Committees:
Advisory Boards: Defense Policy Board
CNO Exec

Ikle, Fred
Under Sec. of defense for policy; Former Dir, ACDA

Con. Hearings: 81 SAS; 84 SAS; 85 SAS; 85 SAS; 86 SAS
SALT - SAS & SFR
Commissions: Integrated Long-term Strategy, Co-chairman
Strategic Deterrence Study Group
Committees:
Advisory Boards:

Inman, Admiral Bobby
former deputy director, CIA

Con. Hearings:
Commissions: Fletcher Study Team
Committees: Aspen Strategy Group
Advisory Boards: CNO Exec
Defense Science Board

Jones, Gen. David
Former Chairman, JCS. (Ret. '83.)

Con. Hearings: 82 SFR; 83 SAS
SALT - SAS & SFR
Commissions:
Committees: Aspen Strategy Group
CISAC
Advisory Boards:

Kent, Lieut Gen. Glenn
Air Force, RAND

Con. Hearings: 83 SAS, 85 HAS
Commissions: Townes Panel
Committees:
Advisory Boards:
Kerr, Donald
VP, EG&G Corp

Con. Hearings: 84 SAS, 86 SFR
Commissions:
Committees:
Advisory Boards: JSTPS-SAG

Kissinger, Henry
Former Sec. of State

Con. Hearings: SALT - SAS & SFR
Commissions: Scowcroft Commission
Committees:
Advisory Boards:

Lederberg, Joshua
President, Rockefeller University

Con. Hearings:
Commissions: Integrated Long-Term Strategy
Committees: CISAC
Advisory Boards: CNO Exec
Defense Science Board

Marshall, Andrew
OSD/Net Assessment

Con. Hearings:
Commissions: Hoffman Study Team
Committees:
Advisory Boards: Defense Policy Board
CNO Exec

May, Michael
Livermore Laboratory

Con. Hearings: 84 SAS
SALT - SFR
Commissions: Townes Panel
Fletcher Study Team
Hoffman Study Team
Committees: CISAC
(86, 87 Aspen conf.)
Advisory Boards: RAND
Defense Science Board
Nunn, Sam
U.S. Senate
Con. Hearings: Formal statements at SASC hearings
Commissions: Aspen Strategy Group
Committees:
Advisory Boards:

Panofsky, Wolfgang
Stanford University
Con. Hearings: 87 SFR
SALT - SFR
Commissions: CISAC, Chairman
Committees: Carter's GAC
Advisory Boards:

Perry, William
Former Defense Under Sec. for Research and Engineering
Con. Hearings: 81 SAS; 83 SAS
SALT - SAS & SFR
Commissions: Scowcroft Commission
Committees: Aspen Strategy Group
CISAC
Advisory Boards: Defense Science Board

Rice, Condoleezza
Stanford
Con. Hearings:
Commissions: Strategic Deterrence Study Group
Committees: Aspen Strategy Group
Advisory Boards: RAND

Robinson, Paul
Head, Nuclear Testing Talks; VP, Sandia; VP, Ebasco
Con. Hearings: 85 HAS, 86 SFR
Commissions: Strategic Deterrence Study Group
Committees:
Advisory Boards:
Rowen, Henry S.
Stanford; former President of RAND

Con. Hearings:
Commissions: Townes Panel
Hoffman Study Team
Committees:
Advisory Boards: Defense Policy Board
CNO Exec
Defense Science Board

Rumsfeld, Donald H.
former Secretary of Defense

Con. Hearings: SALT - SAS
Commissions: Scowcroft Commission
Committees: ('86 Aspen conf.)
Advisory Boards: RAND
Reagan's GAC

Schlesinger, James R.
Former Secretary of Defense and Energy

Con. Hearings: 82 SFR; 83 SAS; 85 HAS; 85 SAS; 86 HAS
Commissions: Scowcroft Commission
Committees: ('86 Aspen conf.)
Advisory Boards:

Scowcroft, Lt. Gen. Brent
Former (and present) National Security Advisor

Con. Hearings: 83 SAP; 83 SAS; 85 HAS; 86 HAS, 87 HFA
Commissions: Townes Panel
Scowcroft Commission, chairman
Committees: Aspen Strategy Group, co-chairman
Advisory Boards: RAND
Carter's GAC

Slocombe, Walter
Caplin & Drysdale; former Dep. Ass. Sec. of Def. for Policy

Con. Hearings: 82 SFR
Commissions: Strategic Deterrence Study
Committees: Aspen Strategy Group
Advisory Boards:
Sloss, Leon
Leon Sloss Ass.; former acting Dir., ACDA

Con. Hearings: 82 HFA; 85 SAS
Commissions: Hoffman Study Team
Strategic Deterrence Study Group
Committees:
Advisory Boards: JSTPS-SAG

Sonnenfeldt, Helmut
Brookings Institution; former counselor to State Dept.

Con. Hearings: 85 HAS, 86 HAS
SALT - SFR
Commissions: (87 Aspen conf.)
Committees: CNO Exec
Advisory Boards:

Steinbruner, John
Brookings Institution

Con. Hearings: 84 HFA, 84 SAS; 87 HFA
Commissions: Aspen Strategy Group
CISAC
Committees:
Advisory Boards:

Townes, Charles
Prof., Univ. of California, Berkeley, Nobel Laureate

Con. Hearings: 82 HAS
Commissions: Townes Commission, Chairman
Warhead Safety Study Team
Committees:
Advisory Boards: Defense Science Board

Vessey, John
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff ('82-'86)

Con. Hearings: 83 SAP, 83 SAS
Commissions: Integrated Long-Term Strategy
Strategic Deterrence Study Group
Committees:
Advisory Boards: Defense Science Board

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Warner, Edward L. III
RAND

Con. Hearings: 85 HAS
Commissions: Strategic Deterrence Study Group
Committees: Aspen Group conferences
Advisory Boards:

Warner, John
U.S. Senate

Con. Hearings: Formal statements at SASC hearings, 82 SFR
Commissions:
Committees: Aspen Strategy Group
Advisory Boards:

Weiss, Seymour
Sy Associates Inc.

Con. Hearings:
Commissions: Hoffman Study Team
Committees:
Advisory Boards: Defense Policy Board
CNO Exec

Wertheim, Rear Adm. Robert
VP, Lockheed Corp.

Con. Hearings:
Commissions: Strategic Deterrence Study Group
Committees: CISAC
Advisory Boards: JSTPS-SAG
Defense Science Board

Wohlstetter, Albert
Pan Heuristics

Con. Hearings:
Commissions: Hoffman Study Team
Integrated Long-Term Strategy, Co-chairman
Committees:
Advisory Boards: Defense Policy Board
CNO Exec
Woolsey, R. James
Shea and Gardner; Delegate to START; former Navy Under Sec.

Con. Hearings: 84 HFA; 85 SAS; 86 SAS; 86 HAS
Commissions: Townes Commission
             Hoffman Study Team
             Scowcroft Commission,
             Strategic Deterrence Study Group
Committees: Aspen Strategy Group
Activity Boards: CNO Exec
Discussion of Methodology

To establish the potential population, I compiled a list of participants in four different sorts of activities: congressional hearings, special government commissions tasked with producing studies on a major defense policy issue, defense policy advisory boards, and non-governmental standing committees. All told, I included the participants in 25 hearings, seven commissions, seven advisory boards, two standing non-governmental nuclear weapons policy committees and 10 conferences sponsored by one of the committees. This list came to over 500 individuals. See Table II for comprehensive list of activities with titles and dates.

For the purposes of this study, I defined the members of the strategic policy community as those who were active in three out of the four categories, or who were active at least twice in a single category and at least once in an additional category. This group came to 51 individuals.

Most of the activities selected occurred during the period under study, 1981-1988. I also included at least one activity in each category which took place shortly before or after Reagan's two-term presidency in order to guard against exclusion of individuals who held government office throughout the Reagan years. Full-time government employees were ineligible to participate in many of these activities.

As discussed earlier, this exercise suggests that the strategic policy community is something more than merely a creation of the study, and it provides
an approximate membership list for illustrative purposes. This method of selection is unsuitable for the purposes of producing a definitive membership list - if one even existed -- for several reasons. First, although I took steps to guard against biasing the results, my selection of activities was subjective and was not exhaustive. Second, not all members of the strategic policy community conformed to one pattern of involvement in policy debates. Third, my method of selection may have omitted individuals who served in either the legislature or executive branch throughout the time period under consideration, although I tried to correct for this potential bias by including activities during the end of the Carter administration and beginning of the Bush administration. Lastly, individuals with technical and scientific expertise may be over-represented because technical issues are more often referred to formal commissions and boards than policy ones.

Several individuals who seem to be obvious candidates for membership in the strategic policy community given their role in policy debates did not meet the particular criteria established here. For example, Paul Nitze was a witness in many congressional hearings -- including those on SALT held while he was a private citizen -- but he was not active in any other category, many of which

1 See discussion in Chapter I, pp. 46-49.

2 This is an obvious point. I will provide but one example: fiscal year 1987 was the earliest year I was able to obtain membership lists of the advisory boards. Although turnover is slight judging from the pattern in the late 1980s, it is a safe assumption that I missed some individuals who were members in the first half of the 1980s.
excluded government officials. Nitze, however, certainly meets the subjective
description of members of the strategic policy community. Nor did Alton Frye,
the Director of the Washington office for the Council on Foreign Relations, meet
the criteria. Yet Frye was a principal author of the "build-down" proposal, a close
associate of Senators Cohen and Nunn, and host of many private meetings of
other individuals on the list. Other possible members of the strategic policy
community who were excluded by the criteria are: Frank Carlucci, Thomas Reed,
Jan Lodal, Joseph Nye, and Bernard Schriever.

This method of selection also may have produced some individuals who do
not sufficiently share the policy views of the strategic policy community to be
considered "full-fledged" members. Two individuals on the list who probably fall
into this category are Noel Gayler, McGeorge Bundy and Richard Garwin.

It is a reasonable inference that the group I isolated is influential.
However, the data presented here does not directly support that interpretation.
One logical criterion of influence is the judgment of an individual's colleagues. A
study of reputations which asked a large number of government officials and
individuals in the nuclear weapons policy network to name the most influential
individuals in nuclear weapons policy would supplement the data compiled here.

**Congressional Hearings**

During the 1980s, congressional committees held approximately 100
hearings which addressed solely, or in large part, U.S. nuclear weapons policy.\(^3\)

It was not necessary, or constructive, to use all these hearings to help establish the strategic policy community. I used a set of guidelines in choosing the hearings to insure that I was not prejudicing my results.

o I selected hearings which addressed policy issues as opposed to program and budgetary issues. All major hearings devoted to any one of the four policy debates covered in this dissertation were included. In the absence of hearings dedicated to a single topic, I used the relevant parts of the annual hearings held by the Armed Services Committees on that fiscal year's Defense Authorization bill. I excluded witnesses testifying about matters other than nuclear weapons policy -- i.e. chemical weapons, conventional weaponry, etc.

o Many defense related hearings hear testimony exclusively from Defense Department officials who have programmatic or bureaucratic responsibility for weapons programs. I selected hearings which included testimony from non-governmental witnesses. These hearings tended to have more discussion about policy and a witness list which represented a broader range of political and institutional perspectives.

o In keeping with the previous two guidelines, I excluded hearings held by

\(^3\) Nearly all nuclear weapons related hearings are held by one of six committees: Senate and House Armed Services, Senate and House Appropriations, Senate Foreign Relations and House Foreign Affairs. Subcommittees of these committees also hold their own hearings. Occasionally another committee will hold a special defense related hearing, such as a 1981 House Interior Committee hearing on MX basing or a 1987 Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on the reinterpretation of the ABM Treaty.
the Appropriations Committees. These hearings tend to have only government witnesses and to focus on programmatic concerns. The one exception was a 1983 Senate Appropriations Committee hearing on the resolution to release funds for the MX missile. I included this hearing because it was the principal hearing on the Scowcroft Commission report.

I sought an approximately equal distribution of hearings in terms of years, committees and subject matter. Although I exempted two major multi-part hearings on SALT II, conducted in 1979 during the Carter administration, from this requirement.

Distribution of hearings by Committee:

- Senate Armed Services Committee (SAS): 7
- Senate Foreign Relations Committee (SFR): 5
- Senate Appropriations Committee (SAP): 1
- House Armed Services Committee (HAS): 5
- House Foreign Affairs Committee (HFA): 5

Distribution of hearings by year: (The abbreviation used below and in Table I represents the year and committee of the hearing.)

1979: SALT-SFR, SALT-SAS

1981: 81 SAS, 81 SFR
1982: 82 HAS, 82 HFA, 82 HFA, 82 SFR
1983: 83 SAP, 83 SAS
1984: 84 HFA, 84 HFA, 84 SAS
1985: 85 HAS, 85 SAS, 85 HAS, 85 SAS
1986: 86 SAS, 86 HAS, 86 SFR
1987: 87 SFR, 87 SFR, 87 HFA
1988: 88 HAS, 88 SAS
Government Commissions

The list of commissions includes the major government-appointed study groups or commissions including non-governmental individuals during the 1980s, whose mission was to produce reports and recommendations on nuclear weapons policy relating to the subject matter of this dissertation. I also included one later commission, the Strategic Deterrence Study Group, which released a draft report in January 1992.

Standing Private Committees

Two standing committees were included: the Aspen Strategy Group, under the auspices of the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies, and the Committee on International Security and Arms Control (CISAC), a standing committee of the National Academy of Sciences. Of all standing, private committees, these two are among the best-known and sustained a high level of activity throughout the 1980s. The Aspen Strategy Group hosted conferences two or three times a year. At least one of these conferences -- usually the summer session in Colorado -- included a roughly equal number of group members and invited guests. Typically the summer conferences generated a volume of edited essays or a report of the proceedings. CISAC activities included twice yearly meetings with Soviet counterparts, seminars for the Academy's entire membership, and a few major studies which were published as books.

For the purposes of this study, individuals were considered active in the
Aspen Strategy Group if they were a member of the group at any point from 1984 to 1990, or if they attended three or more of the major conferences held by the Strategy Group in the U.S. during that time period. (Table I notes the attendance at fewer than three conferences in parentheses for individuals whose involvement in the other categories earned them a place on the list.)

**Advisory Boards**

The advisory boards represent the major advisory boards concerned with nuclear weapons policy. I also included the Defense Science Board, which is more technically oriented than the others, but still addresses policy matters. Two General Advisory Committees on Arms Control are included: one appointed by President Carter -- whose members overlap substantially with the committees appointed by President’s Ford and Nixon -- and the board appointed by President Reagan.

In addition, I included the board of trustees of RAND and IDA (Institute for Defense Analyses), two of the 38 Federally Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDC). FFRDCs are research institutions sponsored by a government agency to perform basic or applied research. A high proportion of IDA and RAND’s defense work is policy related, in contrast to technical studies.

**Criteria**

Members of the strategic policy community are identifiable by their
participation in various policy making forums. In order to select for both extent and breadth of involvement, the criteria for inclusion was involvement in three out of the four categories, or involvement at least twice in a single category and at least once in an additional category. A partial exception to this standard was made for legislators whose ability to participate in the selected activities was limited because of their office. Rep. Aspin and Cheney, and Senators Gore, Nunn, and Warner were all members of the Aspen Strategy Group. All except Cheney were also, not surprisingly, very active in congressional hearings, and therefore were included in the strategic policy community list.

Breadth of involvement was especially useful to weed out individuals who participated in one activity because of their professional responsibilities or technical expertise but were not often asked to develop policy positions with other members of the strategic policy community. For example, as noted earlier, the majority of witnesses at congressional hearings concerning nuclear weapons policy are Department of Defense officials. They are called to testify because they have operational or bureaucratic responsibility for defense programs, or because they represent an viewpoint held by an important faction within the administration. Gen. Abrahamson, the Director of SDIO, testified at 75 percent of the hearings concerning SDI. Likewise Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger, the Chiefs of Staff of the military services, and managers of specific weapons program were frequently at the witness table. Richard Perle, Under Secretary of Defense, testified more times in my collection of hearings than any other individual.
However, these individuals did not participate in other activities of the strategic policy community.

Individuals who possess specific technical information and expertise also are asked to testify and to serve on technically oriented commissions and boards. The approximately 60 members of the Defense Science Board included many scientists or engineers doing defense research in universities or aerospace companies who do not otherwise develop a profile on policy matters. These individuals did not meet the requirement of breadth of participation.
Hearings


3. Senate, Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Strategic and Theater Nuclear Forces, Strategic Force Modernization Programs, 97th Cong., 1st sess., Oct, Nov., 1981. (81 SAS)


6. House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on International Security and Scientific Affairs, Overview of Nuclear Arms Control and Defense Strategy in NATO, 97th Cong., 2nd sess, Feb, Mar, 1982. (82 HFA)

7. House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Strategic Arms Control and U.S. National Security Policy, 97th Cong., 2nd sess. April, May, June, 1982. (82 HFA)

8. Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Nuclear Arms Reduction Proposals, 97th Cong., 2nd sess., April, May,, 1982. (82 SFR)


11. House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on International Security and Scientific Affairs, Arms Control in Outer Space, 98th Cong., Nov.,1983, April,
May, July, 1984. (84 HFA)


22. Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, The ABM Treaty and the

403
Constitution. 100th Cong., 1st sess., Mar, April, 1987. (87 SFR)


Government Commissions


3. Hoffman Study Team. A study team formed by the Pentagon October 1983, to evaluate the strategic implications of SDI, chaired by Fred Hoffman. The team's work was done under the auspices of the Institute for Defense Analysis. I have included both the members of the Study Team and the Senior Policy Review Group. The team report was entitled: Ballistic Missile Defense and U.S. National Security.

4. Fletcher Study Team. A study team formed by the Pentagon in October 1983, to describe a technically feasible research program for strategic defense, chaired by James Fletcher. I have included the Study Team Leadership and members of the Executive Scientific Review Group. The team's report, The Defensive Technologies Study, was issued in April 1984.

6. Warhead Safety Study Team. A team formed by DOE in Fall 1990 to review the safety of the nuclear weapons stockpile, chaired by Sidney Drell.


**Non-Governmental Standing Committees**


2. Committee on International Security and Arms Control (CISAC), a standing committee of the National Academy of Sciences.

**Defense Advisory Boards**

1. RAND Board of Trustees during the 1980s. RAND is a Federally Funded Research and Development Corporation (FFRDC) which issues many classified studies and reports on nuclear weapons and defense policy, among other issues.

2. Institute for Defense Analyses (IDA) Board of Trustees during the 1980s. IDA is also an FFRDC. It is concerned solely with nuclear weapons and defense policy.

3. Defense Policy Board, membership during FY87. The Defense Policy Board is appointed by the DoD, and reports its recommendations directly to the Secretary of Defense.

4. Chief of Naval Operations Executive Panel (CNO Exec), membership during FY87. This panel is appointed by DoD and advises the Secretary of the Navy.

5. General Advisory Committee on Arms Control and Disarmament (GAC), serving under President Carter and under President Reagan. The GAC is a standing committee appointed by the president. Its purpose is to advise the Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency and occasionally advise the president and Sec. of State.
6. Scientific Advisory Group for the Joint Strategic Target Planning Staff (JSTPS-SAG), membership from FY86 to FY90. This advisory group is appointed by the Department of Defense. Its purpose is to advise the Director of Strategic Target Planning.

7. Defense Science Board, membership in FY87. Appointed by DoD, to provide technical advice to the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff.
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U.S. Congress, Senate. Committee on Foreign Relations. *Nuclear Arms Reduction Report together with minority and additional views to accompany S.J. Res. 212*. 97th Cong., 2nd sess. S.


U.S. President's Commission on Strategic Forces, Report of the President's Commission on Strategic Forces. April 6, 1983.


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(conducted in D.C. in person unless otherwise noted)

Jan Kalicki                        Feb. 27, 1990
I.M. Destler                       Mar. 8, 1990
Larry Smith                        May 18, 1990
Peter Franchot                     May 24, 1990
John Isaacs                        May 25, 1990 and
                                    June 25, 1990
Rudy DeLeon                        May 25, 1990
Nancy Donaldson                    May 25, 1990
Mike Mawby                         May 30, 1990 (by phone)
Betsy Taylor                       May 30, 1990 (by phone)
Alton Frye                         June 13, 1990
Ivo Spalatin                       June 30, 1990
Jeffrey Duncan                     July 25, 1990
Michelle Robinson                  July 25, 1990
Herb Lin                           July 25, 1990 (by phone)
Henry Hyde                         July 26, 1990
Edward Markey                      July 29, 1990
Bob DeGrasse                       July 29, 1990
Christopher Paine                  November 27, 1989 and Aug. 5, 1990
Charles Archambeau                 August 9, 1990 (by phone)
Douglas Waller                     Sept. 9, 1990
John Pike                          Sept. 30, 1990