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PAST AS PRELUDE: THE DEFENSE DEBATE IN THE COLD WAR

BY

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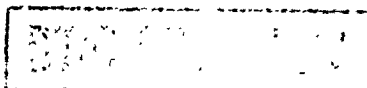
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To Emily Anne and Curtis Michael II

CHAPTER ONE:
INTRODUCTION

In analyzing the development of defense policy and the defense budget for Fiscal Years (FY) 1991 and beyond, it is important to remember that the defense policy system is always evolving and changing. Witness the current impact on policy planning of the events in Eastern Europe in 1989 and the Persian Gulf in 1990. In order to gain insight into present policy-making, one must first analyze the evolution of the present policy making system and the political setting within which defense policy has been made during the Cold War years.

The focus of this review will be on the defense policy process and institutional changes since 1945 in policy areas outside of actual military conflicts such as Korea and Vietnam, though both events have had a profound implications for policy development in subsequent periods of peace. The focus upon some of the changes in the institutional structures is designed to show the changes within the executive branch and in congressional-executive relations as well as the effect that Congress and extragovernmental actors have had upon executive decisions.

Defense policy and budget-making since 1945 has traditionally given the highest priority to an estimate of the Soviet Union's capabilities and intentions coupled with the United States' desire for a credible defense within its

economic capabilities and political will.[1]   There has been a tension between the need for "enough defense" to counter the threat of total war and the fear that "too much defense" would bankrupt the economy, which is the fundamental source of strength for the United States or for any country being defended.   There is also a fear that "too much defense" might lead to the creation of a garrison state.[2]   The main venues for this competition with the Soviet Union have been strategic nuclear confrontation, the defense of Europe, and the various world-wide contingencies for confrontations with third parties.

It is important also to understand that the developments to be discussed here occurred during the Cold War era and this period has had certain distinctive characteristics of its own.   Some world leaders originally expected this period to be one of unheralded international cooperation designed to avoid future global conflicts. However, it took shape in the reality of American economic and military supremacy in the world coupled with the vacuum of power in Europe, the advent of nuclear weapons and other technologies, the creation of two main alliances or spheres of influence by the U.S. and the Soviet, the fall of

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[1]Samuel Huntington, The Common Defense, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), 25.

[2]Harold Lasswell, "The Garrison-State Hypothesis Today" in Changing Patterns of Military Politics, ed. Samuel P. Huntington, (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1962), 51-70.

colonialism and rise of nationalism, and the growth of world
trade and finance. These and other factors all have
combined to frame the nature of American defense policy in
the post-war era.

How the United States dealt with these issues and how
much control it has over events is a matter of continuing
debate. At ti.... the United States has sought to avoid its
position at the head of the free world, even though many
other nations and peoples continue to look to the United
States for guidance and assistance, despite their public
posturing to the contrary. At other times the government
has sponsored interventions abroad that overstepped the
nation's legal bounds or its will to commit resources. This
has led at times to alienating both domestic and foreign
opinion.

The development of defense policy and budget-making
both resembles and differs from other areas of policy
formation. For example, organized, civilian constituency
appeals beyond those involved in defense contracting have
been somewhat limited. Notable exceptions include President
Truman's attempt to start universal military training in the
1940s. The most important constituent voice concerning
defense policy has been inside the government, primarily the
military services: the Army, Air Force, and Navy
organizations. However, defense industry contractors have
succeeded in mobilizing support in Congress for various

weapons systems. This pattern has changed somewhat since
the Vietnam War with the emergence of several public
interest lobbies and grass roots organizations focusing on
defense policy issues. Interest groups with varying goals
have been able to form coalitions to attempt to block not
only Department of Defense (DoD) projects but also to alter
the focus of national security policy.[3]

During this period there have been efforts to
centralize the defense organizations in the executive branch
or to streamline the policy-making process and make it more
responsive to the will of the White House. The military
services have at times been resistant to such
centralization. At the same time, Congress has itself
become increasingly decentralized. This decentralization
has resulted in a shift in the defense policy-making
process. Congress has become less of a "court of last
resort" for dissatisfied members of the military or the
executive branch and is now more involved at earlier stages
in the policy process. Congress not only approves executive
plans for Department of Defense reorganizations, but now
provides the impetus and forum for restructuring the
military organization as evident in the Defense
Reorganization Act of 1986.

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[3]A case study of the effect of grass-roots
organizations and interest group lobbying concerning the B-1
bomber is found in Norman J. Ornstein and Shirley Elder,
Interest Groups, Lobbying and Policymaking, (Washington,
D.C., Congressional Quarterly Press, 1978), 187-220.

The Department of Defense and the services have long held the monopoly of policy and procurement expertise within the executive branch. Moreover, each of the military services represent the most visible and vocal constituency for defense spending. The services compete with each other for defense dollars over weapons systems, missions and the size of their forces.[4] Advances in technology, as much as foreign policy objectives, have been a key factor in the competition among the services for funds and preeminence.

In addition, the military services have developed the most sophisticated congressional relations and liaison system within the executive branch. Much of this development stems from congressional constituent services conducted for individual servicemen, but this liaison activity influences other areas as well. Increasingly, as Congress has become more involved in the details of defense management, the services have become more concerned with inputs (congressional budget making) than with outputs.

The services' procurement systems are difficult to analyze, much less to manage. With the length of time required to undertake research, development, and production of various weapons systems much effort is expended by the

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[4]An example of competing interests concerning the procurement for a close air support system for the army is found in Craig Liske and Barry Rundquist, The Politics of Weapons Procurement: The Role of Congress, (Denver: University of Denver, 1974).

services and contractors to keep systems under development. Congress has usually been hesitant to either wholeheartedly finance or totally eliminate weapons systems.[5] Despite its distinctive features, much of what takes place in procurement and military construction policy resembles the way in which other domestic policy making is handled in Congress.

The Constitution mandates that Congress share control over the military with the president. For much of the Cold War period until the 1970s, the Armed Services Committees in Congress had seemingly allowed the executive to control the monopoly of expertise and make the crucial policy decisions. The standard argument was that the armed services committees better represent defense interests to Congress rather than representing congressional and the public interest to the Pentagon. This was not unlike the way in which other clientele committees performed in Congress.

Since the 1970s, however, members of Congress who serve on the armed services committees have become less captive to the interests of the defense establishment and have begun to develop their own policy agenda. Some critics allege that legislators now micromanage the business of the

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[5]For an excellent analysis of the defense budgetary process see Aaron Wildavsky, The New Politics of the Budgetary Process, (Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman, and Co., 1988.

Defense Department.[6] Coalitions of varying durability have formed within Congress to shape policy. These coalitions are allied with external supporters from other areas of the government, such as the DoD, or more rarely, the private sector. Both Houses of Congress and the defense committees compete for power in determining policy.[7] On occasion, the members of each body have competed with their respective armed services committee for control over policy. There are more challenges to armed service committee jurisdiction both over investigatory turf and in floor debate. Individual members and other committees have become less prone to deferring to the decisions of the armed services committees.

Congress has been transformed by seasons of reform and changes in membership. This transformation has affected all policy areas. The legislature has expanded its information pool, both through institutional reforms and the increasing availability and use of non-governmental information and sources of expertise. As time has passed, more legislators have been able to become involved in policy formation. In the era of shrinking opportunities and large defense budgets of the 1980s, many congressmen have seen the defense budget

[6]A scholar who sharply critiques the recent role of Congress is James M. Lindsay, "Congress and Defense Policy," Armed Forces and Society, Vol. 13, No. 3, (Spring 1987): 371-401; and "Congress and the Defense Budget," The Washington Quarterly, 5, No. 4, (Winter 1988): 57-74.

[7]Much of the study by Liske and Rundquist examines the interplay and competition between the two houses and among the defense committees to set defense procurement policy.

aь the last area to draw upon in providing constituent service. Members of Congress accomplish this goal through either creating or protecting employment for defense contractors and on military installations within their districts or states, often referred to as "porkbarreling".[8]

Moreover defense policy, unlike many domestic policies, deals with issues of national security. Public debate on defense issues is limited by the fear that it may compromise vital national security interests. Critics counter that this fear prevents close scrutiny of defense issues and results in the adoption of unwise defense policies and programs. This concern only heightens the tensions that normally exist between the executive and the Congress.

The President is not only the country's chief administrator, exercising an influence over domestic policy as the head of the federal bureaucracy, but he also has the constitutional power of serving as the commander in chief of the armed forces. Some argue that, with the presence of a large standing army, this power gives the president an overwhelming advantage over Congress in shaping defense policy and in controlling its implementation.[9] Others

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[8]Lindsay, (1988), 85.

[9]Christopher J. Deering, Congress, the President, and Military Policy," Annals, The American Academy of Political and Social Science, No. 499, (September 1988): 136-147.

contend that there are actually two presidencies: a weak president in domestic matters and a strong foreign and defense policy president.[10] Presidents also had two other tools with which to influence congressional activity: impoundment and the veto. Even with these powers, Congress could still block presidential initiatives as much as the president could thwart Congress. It is interesting to note that with the loss of impoundment powers in the 1970s, presidents since then have seldom resorted to exercising their veto powers over defense policy measures.

Presidents, aided by congressionally-approved reforms, have made several efforts to centralize and streamline defense policy-making. The Secretary of Defense has evolved from being a facilitator to becoming an administrator. The Secretary of Defense not only has influence on defense policy making but also manages the budget for military. The Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), especially its chairman, have become more influential in policy making since its inception. The creation of an enlarged bureaucracy for the

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[10]The main debate has been between those in the affirmative led by Aaron Wildavsky, "The Two Presidencies," in Perspectives on the Presidency, ed. Aaron Wildavsky, (Boston. Little, Brown and Company, 1975, 448-461. Those who look at key votes to determine presidential success in Congress claim that there is no significant difference between the amount of domestic and foreign/defense policy victories for the president. See Lee Sigelman, "A Reassessment of the Two Presidencies Thesis," Journal of Politics, Vol. 41, (1979) 1195-1205. See also George Edwards III, At The Margins, (Yale University Press, 1989), Chapter 4.

Secretary of Defense, albeit centralized, may actually
reduce a president's ability to influence decision-making.
In addition, the military services have usually resisted any
centralization of policy development, fearing a loss of
influence either with the White House and Congress. Members
of both houses of Congress have been able to offset the
centralization in the executive branch due to the
decentralization of Congressional organizations and
functions. This decentralization may not only be a reaction
to the perceived stranglehold on the functions of government
by presidents and the executive branch. It may also be a
response to the frustrations of failed policies such as the
Vietnam War.

Moreover, there has been a diffusion of expertise on
defense issues both within and outside of government. The
sources of such expertise within the government have also
grown as agencies have multiplied and expanded, both in
Congress and the executive. Expertise outside of government
has increased as more individuals who have participated in
defense policy formation inside government find themselves
"outside". Often they are lured away by non-government
employment, or they may be ousted from government by
turnovers in presidential administrations. Others have
simply retired from military or government service.
Citizens' lobbies, think-tanks and other groups have grown
in their ability to challenge governmental positions on

defense issues. The press and academia provide additional sources of expertise, publicizing and framing issues, or uncovering controversy and mismanagement.

Finally, there has been a diffusion of defense policy-making as our alliance members, especially in Europe, have recovered from the effects the World War II and are gradually becoming full partners in the policy decisions formulated within NATO. The task of developing defense policy has increasingly shifted to them European nations have been especially concerned with the deployment and use of nuclear weapons on their soil. Foreign countries are now major constituents of American defense policy. They have become active players in defense policy decisions and even weapons procurement issues.[11]

As is true in domestic policy, iron triangles and issue networks play an important role in defense policy making.[12] An iron triangle has been described as an alliance among executive agencies, congressional committees, and special interests. This troika may limit what the president is able to accomplish on his policy agenda (except

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[11]An example of foreign involvement in United States weapons procurement may be found in Andrew Cox and Stephen Kirby, Congress, Parliament, and Defence, (London. MacMillan Press, 1986), chapter 5.

[12]Hugh Heclo, "Issue Networks and Executive Establishment," in The New American Political System, ed. Anthony King, (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute, 1978), 87.

those elements of his agenda which are viewed as useful by the members of the iron triangle). The iron triangle is also able to effect policy changes outside the span of the president's agenda and priorities. However, the iron triangle model appears to be monolithic and does not adequately reveal the level of friction within this triangle. Inter-service and intra-service rivalries within the military as well as the dualistic nature of the services' organizations competing with the centralized agencies in the headquarters of the Department of Defense limit the usefulness of the iron triangle model. The issue networks model is a more appropriate description of the intricacy of relations between the executive and legislative branches and the involvement of outside policy experts and the media. Issue networks are fluid coalitions of policy groups and actors. They tend to include more than the usual interests of special interests, such as contractors, the military and congressmen. There are more disparate viewpoints contained in an issue network than might exist in an iron triangle. Alliances tend to be temporary in nature and are based on particular issues, such as weapons system procurement.

Members of Congress work within issue networks for various reasons. Members and committee staffs rely on the military, in general, for much of the information they use to formulate policy decisions. Members are drawn to

particular military services for various reasons. Members

usually consider constituent service in terms of the

industrial and military installations that may be located in

a legislator's state or district. Members also form ties

with a particular military branch through prior military

service. Finally, members may develop congressional

responsibilities or find appealing policies which may lead

them to favor one service over another.[13] But the military

budget is usually not a major issue with voters, except when

a weapons decision affects employment where they live.

Some of what Congress does regarding military policy

may be difficult to measure although several scholars have

attempted to do so.[14] As Lawrence Radway points out:

> Congress is probably most influential...when it
> works silently and invisibly within the nervous
> systems of the President and his chief advisors,
> dissuading them from actions which might provoke a
> hue and cry on Capitol Hill-in a word when it
> exercises its capacity to deter.[15]

Radway's argument implies that the study of

congressional impact on defense policies and budget may not

be easily determined by precisely quantifying the net

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[13]Huntington, 387.

[14]Lindsay, (1986), (1988); and Edward J. Laurence,
"The Changing Role of Congress in Defense Policy-Making,"
Journal of Conflict Resolution, Vol. 20, No. 2, (June 1976):
213-253.

[15]Laurence I. Radway, "Forging the National Position,"
in National Security and American Society, eds. Frank N.
Trager and Philip S Kronenberg, (Lawrence KS: The
University Press of Kansas, 1973), 147.

changes wrought by Congress in the dollar amounts requested
by the administration for defense purposes, or by counting
the number of weapons systems cancelled, postponed, or added
to the administration's request by Congress. What is seen
at a committee or sub-committee hearing or read in the
Congressional Record does not necessarily reveal the various
ways in which members of Congress can influence executive
decisions on defense policy. In addition, there is a
problem with focusing on the armed services committees as
the chief avenue through which congressional interaction
with the executive over defense policy issues takes place.
Moreover, even at the height of executive supremacy over
defense policy making, other committees besides the armed
services and members of Congress were deeply involved in the
defense policy debate.

What follows is a review of some of the major changes
in the Cold War era to review the changes in the
relationship between the Congress and the executive as well
as some of the changes within both the executive and
Congress.

CHAPTER TWO:
PRESIDENTIAL HIGH TIDE

The Truman Policies

Although the 1940s and 1950s have been regarded as the high point of presidential dominance over defense planning, both Truman and Eisenhower had to deal with not only with various factions inside the executive, but with congressional factions allied with factions within the defense establishment. Presidents could manipulate congressional mandates, such as budget appropriations or treaty reservations, but they did so at the risk of alienating members of Congress. This alienation created the foundation for later moves by Congress to challenge presidential authority.

The public's desire for demobilization and a general fear of a renewed depression led to a rapid downturn in defense spending after the end of World War II. Relations with the Soviet Union also deteriorated quickly after the war, turning the planned era of peace and international cooperation into a bipolar confrontation between the West and East and what would soon be termed the Cold War.

Prior to the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, the Truman Administration had submitted defense budget requests to Congress which were based on four assumptions which ultimately proved to be fallacious: the Soviet Union would have no nuclear capability until 1952; it would be feasible,

with the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization
(NATO), to restore European military strength and the
balance of power in the immediate future; World War III, or
total war was the only major military contingency for which
to plan; the economy could only afford a 15 billion dollar
defense budget.[1]

In the uncertainty of the early post-war period,
defense requirements were not directly linked to foreign
policy objectives. Despite the establishment of new organs,
such as the National Security Council, to coordinate defense
and foreign policy, there was still a lack of coordination.
In 1949, the first Defense Secretary, James Forrestal, had
tried unsuccessfully to get Secretary of State George
Marshall to provide planning guidance in order to develop an
armed forces capable of supporting the United States policy
objectives. Marshall declined to testify before a defense
appropriations subcommittee to discuss policy and no
Secretary of State has done so since 1945.[2] Marshall, being
a retired general, has wanted to distance himself from
military matters while he was Secretary of State.[3]Marshall

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[1]Warner R. Schilling, "The Politics of National
Defense: Fiscal 1950," in Warner R. Schilling, Paul Y.
Hammond, and Glenn H. Synder, Strategy, Politics, and
Defense Budgets, (New York: Columbia University Press,
1962), 249.

[2]Schilling, 255-256.

[3]Douglas Kinnard, The Secretary of Defense.(Lexington,
KY. The University of Kentucky Press, 1980), 21-22.

might have provided a useful precedent, but if he had
complied with these requests, there is no certainty that
planners would have been able to determine military
requirements necessary for most foreign policy objectives.
Forrestal had an incredible time trying to coordinate the
services to agree on policy or budgetary matters. His
greatest challenge came from Air Force Secretary Stuart
Symington over the proper size of the Air Force.[4] The
confusion of policy and budget constraints climaxed in 1949
with the "Admiral's Revolt" discussed below.[5]

Defense Institutions and Congress in the 1940s

Defense institutions underwent major revisions after
World War II. Pressure for both unification of the armed
forces and the creation of a separate air force date back to
World War I.[6] Pressure for both unification of the armed
forces and the creation of a separate air force date back to
World War I. Both the War Department, which controlled the
Army and the Army Air Force, and the Navy Department were
looking for ways to streamline command and control and to
develop logistics support based on their experiences during

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[4]Kinnard (1980), 28-29.

[5]Schilling, 189.

[6]The crux for much of the interservice rivalry can be
traced to the development of the airplane which blurred the
division of ground and naval forces. See Paul Y. Hammond,
Organizing for Defense, (Princeton: Princeton University
Press, 1961), chapter 4.

World War II. President Truman had been an advocate of a
centralized, unified military establishment while he was a
senator. He pushed for adoption of a War Department
unification plan after he became president. Naval leaders
acknowledged that some form of consolidation was necessary.
Still they feared that the War Department's plan would make
the Navy subservient to the other services by losing control
of both its aviation assets and the Marine Corps. It is
interesting to note that Truman appointed Secretary of the
Navy James Forrestal, a principal architect of the Navy's
unification plan, as the first Secretary of Defense.

The National Security Act of 1947 was a compromise
between the War Department and a Navy Department and their
congressional allies. The result of debate in Congress
within the defense committees over military reform yielded a
decentralized consolidation of the these departments in the
National Defense Organization. The Act created three
separate military departments, the Army, the Air force, and
the Navy. The main proponents in Congress for consolidation
were Army and Air Force advocates, such as Senator Chan
Gurney (R-SD), who was the first chairman of the Senate

Armed Services Committee.[7] The final congressional coalition
that supported the compromise unification plan did so for
various reasons: 1) the need to create a separate, but equal
air force; 2) support for the Navy Department's desire to
retain naval aviation assets and the Marine Corps; 3) the
supposed economy of unification; 4) the affirmation of a
civilian control within a unified, decentralized system that
the compromise plan was expected to bring.

The three civilian service secretaries had cabinet
status and held seats on the newly created National Security
Council (NSC).[8] Combined logistical matters were handled by
a separate National Resources Board. The Secretary of
Defense oversaw the National Military Establishment at two
levels: a series of committees and boards, including the
Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) and the three military
departments. His duties were a coordinating not an

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[7]Efforts to unify the armed services date to the
immediate post-World War I period. General George Marshall
began the effort that culminated in the unification of 1947
was began within the War Department in 1943. Congress had
gotten involved in the debate by holding hearings on the
subject in April 1944. Debate was postponed until 1946 due
to the war effort. For a detailed account of the
unification effort, see Hammond, Chapters 8 and 9,

[8]The NSC was created for several reasons, which
included providing the military establishment formal
channels to receive planning guidance from the State
Department. In the original draft of the bill, the NSC was
intended to be a bridge between Congress and the President
as well as a possible replacement for congressional
committees as the focal point of interservice rivalry. This
"intention" was modified in the final version of the
National Security Act of 1947 since the President could not
appoint members of Congress to the NSC, Ries, 30-32.

administrating function.[9] The JCS was a continuation of a
wartime committee made up of the service chiefs. The JCS
was limited to providing a formal forum for coordination of
joint service activities and providing the civilian
leadership with military advice.

Congress had previously consolidated its defense
committees as a part of the Legislative Reorganization Act
of 1946 in anticipation of the defense unification in the
executive branch. Each chamber formed one armed services
committee (House-HASC, Senate-SASC) and one defense
appropriations subcommittee (House-HAC, Senate-SAC). Members
of these committees came from the old committees. It
appeared that the relationships between Congress and their
clientele in the armed services would be little changed by
either World War II or the post-war legislative reforms.[10]
The new armed services committees were criticized by some as
being more concerned with the "how" of defense spending and
not the "why", failing to establish a linkage between
defense organization, spending and foreign policy goals.[11]
Congress sought to cut the defense budget to help balance

[9]John C. Ries, _The Management of Defense_, (Baltimore:
The Johns Hopkins Press, 1964), 88-89.

[10]It can be argued that the Legislative Act of 1946
did lay the groundwork for the later expansion of
congressional subcommittees and increased congressional
staffs.

[11]Edward A. Kolodziej, _The Uncommon Defense and
Congress, 1945-1963_, (Athens, OH: Ohio State University
Press, 1966), 36.

the budget. Congressional cuts trimmed the administration
requests, which as a rule had already slashed services'
requests. The authorization (armed services) committees
only legislated broad authorizations for force structure in
general terms of airframe and ship tonnage and troop levels.
Authorized tonnage regularly exceeded the annual
administration budget requests and congressional
appropriations. Theses committees did not authorize
specific weapons programs. The House Appropriations sub-
committee (HAC), meanwhile, acted as the keepers of the
treasury and the Senate Appropriations subcommittee was
regarded as an appeals court of sorts, reinstating most cuts
the services endured in the HAC.[12] The compromise
appropriations bill usually split the difference in the
amount of budget cuts approved by each house of Congress.[13]

The Air Force was the preeminent service after the end
of World War II. Air power and strategic bombing had
seemingly been the decisive factor in the Allied victory.
Many in Congress clearly favored the Air Force and its
Strategic Air Command (SAC), which was in charge of the
long-range bomber force, and so appropriated extra funds for

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[12]This phenomenon was not unique to the defense budget
process, see Robert Ash Wallace, "Congressional Control of
the Budget," Midwest Journal of Political Science, Vol. 3,
(1959): 155.

[13]Richard A. Aliano, American Defense Policy from
Eisenhower to Kennedy, (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press,
1975), 15.

additional strategic bomber units. This was done at the expense of the other services' allocations requested by the administration during every budget cycle. The Navy attempted to rival the Air Force with an emphasis on the abilities of its aircraft carrier fleet. Moreover, Navy witnesses repeatedly questioned the United States' military doctrine reliance on strategic nuclear bombing in open congressional testimony.[14]

After the fall of China and with other Cold War tensions heightening, there was much debate within the Truman administration in 1949 over the size and nature of the defense budget. Both Forrestal and Marshall left the Cabinet early in 1949. The services were at odds; each member of the JCS had developed his own service's budget plan independently. The Secretary of Defense had a separate plan, while the Budget Bureau lobbied the president to maintain its own target for the defense budget. The internal debate within the Truman administration over approximately five different requests ranging between 13 and 30 billion dollars created confusion in a Congress that was waiting for the administration's final budget request. In addition, there was media attention to the split between Air Force Secretary Stuart Symington, who advocated a 70-group Air Force, and President Truman, who maintained that a 48-group Air Force was adequate for national defense

[14]Kolodziej, 111.

purposes.[15] In scenes that were more apropos to the budget battles of the 1980s, it took Congress until the second quarter of FY 1950 to agree on a budget. Representative George McMahon (D-TX), chairman of the HAC, somewhat tongue-in-cheek declared that there had been negligible savings found in unification of the armed forces.[16]

The services, prior to 1949, had accepted most budget cuts, partly because each service received a fairly equal share of the budget. The Navy broke ranks when it discovered that Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson planned to cut funding for the new "United States" class super-carriers to finance procurement of the Air Force's B-36 bomber. The Navy Secretary, John Sullivan, resigned in protest. The Navy leaked reports about technical problems with the procurement of the B-36.[17] A HASC subcommittee, led by naval advocate James E. Van Zandt (D-NY) and supported by HASC chairman Carl Vinson (D-GA), a long-time naval proponent, held hearings concerning the propriety of B-36 contracts. Despite much finger pointing, the hearings revealed no evidence of any wrongdoing by the Air Force or the B-36 contractors. Secretary Johnson, supported by the Air Force, the Army, and most importantly, President Truman,

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[15]Schilling, 71.

[16]Congressional Quarterly Almanac 1949, Vol. 5, (Washington, DC. Congressional Quarterly, 1950), 220-225.

[17]Kolodziej, 109-113.

was able to defeat the "Admirals´ Revolt" and removed the
Chief Naval Officer, Admiral Denfeld from office.[18]

Truman had another problem with defense policy that
year. He openly advocated an Army project, Universal
Military Training to replace the selective service draft
which was due to expire in 1949. This defense issue was one
of the few that had an organized grass-roots opposition from
the public, mainly from various church and labor groups.
The House Appropriations Defense Sub-committee (HAC) cut the
request for Universal Military Training and appropriated its
$800 million fund request to increase the Air Force budget.
This was done without any clear idea of what the Air Force
planned to do with the money. There was little debate in
committee´s hearings regarding the efficacy of one policy
over another in providing a more rational or effective
defense.[19]

During this period, Truman organized several ad hoc
committees, such as the Hoover Commission and the
Rockefeller Panel Fund, which concluded that the development
of "an integrated national strategic plan has been beset by
interservice rivalry [and that military plans were] ...a
patchwork of compromise"[20] Out of these studies, Congress

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[18]Schilling, 71 and Ries, 114.

[19]Schilling, 78.

[20]Schilling, 225.

enacted the 1949 amendment to the 1947 National Security
Act. The debate in Congress centered around the same
concerns that had been present in 1947: the question of
civilian control, efforts to achieve economy, and the need
to protect individual service prerogatives. Senator Wayne
Morse (R-OR) attempted to consolidate power in the office of
the Secretary of Defense but most of his efforts in this
direction failed. The 1949 Act increased the power of the
Secretary of Defense, giving him statutory authority over
each of the services. The Act reorganized the National
Military Establishment into the Defense Department, removed
the service secretaries from statutory membership in the NSC
and cabinet-level status, and created the position of
Chairman of the JCS.[21] This effectively reduced the role of
the individual services, cutting back even more on the
authority of their civilian secretaries in policy
development.

Truman, in view of the problems he faced in 1949,
welcomed these changes. However, Ries argues that these
changes actually *weakened* the office of the Secretary of
Defense to the degree that secretary was no longer the agent
of presidential control and had assumed the role of an
administrative manager. The Secretary of Defense, more
involved with day-to-day business could be subject to agency
"capture", thus reduced the ability of president to affect

[21]Schilling, 109.

policy. Agency "capture" though can be affected by the closeness of the professional or personal relationship between the Secretary of Defense and the President as well as the amount of responsibilities and authority the Secretary delegated to either his staff or the military services. The Chairman of the JCS and the service boards now were the focal point for resolving interservice disagreement.[22] Members of Congress supported the act, mainly because it was billed as a cost-cutting reform, with potential savings of as much as 1.5 billion dollars per fiscal year.[23] The gradual move from a decentralized to a centralized organization in the Pentagon had begun.

Truman's defense policy was ultimately not altered by events in Europe or China, changes in Soviet intentions or capabilities, but rather by the events in Korea. Truman endorsed NSC-68, a plan calling for increased military commitments world-wide, shortly after the war started. He then increased military aid to Europe and strengthened NATO. Truman redefined NATO from a military alliance into a military force, and also began the rearmament of Germany.[24] With the emphasis now clearly on increasing defense spending, Louis Johnson was replaced by George Marshall as Secretary of Defense. Truman's presidency ended with the

[22]Ries, 145.

[23]Schilling, 110.

[24]Kolodziej, 130.

military stalemated in the Korea, but preoccupied with the Soviet threat to Europe. The administration thought that the Korean invasion was a prelude to war in Europe in the near future.[25]

Truman's presidency marked the beginning of a new era in defense policy as well as a new organizational structure designed to plan and carry out national security goals. While the military establishment was more centralized than at the end of World War II, one could not say that there was an effective hierarchical system of management established. Debate within the administration (sometimes spilling over into Congress) continued over what defense policy should be, and how and what services and weapons systems could adequately support that policy.

On most defense issues, Congress appears to have been little more than a sounding board for the administration's problems and disagreements. Congressional debate over defense policy usually reflected the debate within the executive branch. Floor debate over defense budgets, while at times lively, was limited by committee and floor leaders to only a few days during each budget cycle. Many members of Congress may have shied away from fundamental public debate over defense policy during much of the Truman

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[25]This war was expected to come in 1954 and the administration deemed that year as a "time of maximum danger".

administration due to the sweeping changes to the defense establishment brought on by the end of the World War II and the collapse of the wartime alliance. Congress' strength was not in its ability to frame the debate but to act in reaction to the administration's activities.

Despite criticism, Congress was actually quite involved in military affairs. Members initiated an abundance of legislation in the areas of soldiers' and veterans' benefits and military construction which would rival any more recent spate of congressional activity in defense-related policy. There were also congressional investigations of fraud and preparedness mismanagement during World War II and the Korean War. As a freshman Democratic senator from Texas, Lyndon Johnson parleyed the reputation he gained in these investigations into becoming the Senate Majority Leader within a few years.

Emphasis on the activity of the armed services committees overlooks the defense policy debate which occurred elsewhere in Congress. In September 1950, Truman deployed four army divisions to Germany without consulting Congress, much to the chagrin of the Senate, which had ratified the NATO treaty two years earlier. The Senate had done so with the understanding that troops would *not* be sent to Germany to underwrite the military alliance. The deployment led to a great debate centered in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee over the NATO deployment in the

Winter of 1951. Although Truman won the qualified support of the Senate, there was strong criticism of the action he had taken mainly from isolationist Republicans. Troops in Europe and defense burden-sharing with Europeans in general remains a source of antagonism between the executive and the legislative into the 1990s.[26]

Eisenhower and the "New Look"

President Dwight D. Eisenhower's defense strategy departed from Truman's strategy in two ways. First, he increased reliance on the Air Force and its strategic nuclear bombing capability as the bulwark of defense. This was the means to implement a strategy of "massive retaliation". Secondly, he did not view the Soviet threat as a changing or improving adversary. Indeed if the Soviets ever did change, it provided Eisenhower with no impetus to alter his own vision of what the United States' defense strategy should be.[27] He advocated stability in defense spending. Eisenhower termed this strategy the "long haul" or the New Look.

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[26]For a detailed account of this antagonism, see Phil Williams, _The Senate and U.S. Troops in Europe_, (London: MacMillan Press, 1985).

[27]This belief, called "the time of maximum danger" was touted in the follow-up to NSC-68 in NSC-141, as the likelihood of Soviet invasion around 1954-55. See Huntington, 63.

This strategy was contradictory in some ways. Eisenhower was regarded as a military expert, since he had been the supreme allied commander in Europe during World War II and the first commander of NATO. An internationalist, Eisenhower was at odds with much of the Republican party led by Senator Robert Taft (R-OH). United States commitments abroad increased above the levels of the Truman administration with the establishment of new treaty organizations in the Middle East and Southeast Asia. The increasing military commitment abroad conflicted with the Administration's desire to hold down spending. This contradiction may have led Eisenhower to use alternative, paramilitary means such as the CIA to secure his foreign policy goals.

Eisenhower also differed with Truman on his choice of advisors. Whereas Truman relied on experienced soldiers, and statesmen, and New Deal warriors from President Roosevelt's administration, Eisenhower appointed businessmen with little military experience to his cabinet. His choice of Charles Wilson in 1953 and later Neil McElroy and Thomas Gates Jr. as his Secretaries of Defense were no exception. Eisenhower was clearly his own top military advisor.

Eisenhower did agree with mainstream Republicans over domestic policy. He wanted balanced budgets, lower taxes, and other anti-inflationary policies. The defense budget was approximately 70 percent of the federal budget at this

time, so it was a natural target for reductions to achieve
these domestic policy goals.[28] After the Korean War ended,
Eisenhower's defense budgets did not return to the levels of
1945-1950. They were larger when measured in real terms,
but were comparable, as a share of the gross national
product, to the levels of the pre-Korean War period.

The Eisenhower administration sought to contain
defense spending by a reliance on the cheapest form of
deterrence: air-delivery nuclear weapons, continental air
defense and reserve forces. The total number of Air Force
units declined somewhat with the Korean demobilization, but
there was still a greater emphasis on these forces. The
Navy and Army's forces declined at steeper rates.[29]
Eisenhower considered the strength of the economy a crucial
element of our total defense policy and he approached the
JCS with this argument to defend the "long haul".[30]

Initially, the services aligned themselves with
Eisenhower's strategy. After the end of the Korean War,
there was pressure in Congress to cut the defense budget to
levels even lower than the administration requested. The

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[28]Douglas Kinnard, President Eisenhower and Strategy
Management, (Lexington, KY: The University of Kentucky
Press, 1977), 2.

[29]Huntington, 85.

[30]Kinnard (1977), 50, 64.

largest cut to any administration's request in the post-World War II period (from 1945-1967) came in 1953.

Eisenhower increased the use of both the National Security Council and the JCS. He attempted to make the JCS his personal staff by appointing new service chiefs shortly after he took office in 1953. Eisenhower stressed unanimity of effort in the JCS. Kinnard argues that this denied the services of their usual professional role of effectively advising the president on military matters. The members of the JCS chafed under their inability to present opposing viewpoints and advice. Eisenhower repeatedly forced the JCS to agree to lower estimates of their budget requirements so as to conform with his vision of the "long haul".[31] As long as the military leaders felt that the administration was protecting the military from further budget cuts, there was little open dissent or resentment. The services also sought to avoid a repeat of the painful Admiral's Revolt of 1949.

Despite outward appearances, there were cracks developing in the services' unanimity. Technological developments (such as improved targeting and accuracy) and fears of Soviet nuclear capabilities led Air Force planners to undermine Eisenhower's strategy of massive retaliation (targeting Soviet cities) with a strategy of counterforce

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[31]Kinnard (1977), 57.

superiority (targeting Soviet strategic forces).[32] The Navy had assumed a low profile in the period after its failure to win more appropriations in the Admirals' Revolt of 1949, but both Navy and Army planners began to develop doctrines that emphasized a finite deterrent and limited warfare strategy rather than massive air power.

The Army, which had associated itself with the Air Force doctrines through much of the Truman administration, became the main source of dissent against the New Look policy within the Eisenhower administration. This dissent and indeed all interservice rivalries, never again matched the intensity of the Admirals' Revolt. The Army's dissent was based on several factors. Technological innovations enabled the Army to attempt to compete with the Air Force in nuclear, missile, and aviation fields.[33] The creation of a huge "technocratic bureaucracy dominated by those skilled in management of men and machines" transformed the pre-war, cloister-like mentality of the tiny officer corps which had dated to the frontier days.[34] There was a rise to the top of men with innovative perspectives, such as Lieutenant

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[32]Kolodziej, 296.

[33]For example, the Army was able to, over time, reduce its reliance on Air Force close air support as it developed a combat support helicopter fleet. An in-depth study of how the Army did this is found in Frederic A. Bergerson's The Army Gets an Air Force, (Baltimore: the Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980).

[34]Aliano, 100.

General James Gavin. These innovators relied on several
tactics to attempt to break the Army out of the doctrinal
and budgeting restrictions of the "long haul". Tactics
included congressional testimony, information leaks, public
addresses and interviews, military publications, and
occasionally retirements "in protest".[35]

Continental air defense is an example of a
technological development leading to shifting service
missions and heightened interservice competition. The
Soviets were viewed as becoming increasingly capable of
striking the United States with both nuclear bombers and
ballistic missiles. Initially the Air Force concentrated on
its strategic bomber capability and had little interest in
this mission. Continental defense had traditionally been an
Army function. The impetus for an improved continental air
defense grew out of the recommendations of an ad hoc
scientific study group.[36]   This new requirement led the
Army and the Air Force to compete for the expanded mission
and consequent funding for defending the territorial United
States. The Air Force planned for an area defense using
their Bomarc missile system. The Army was more interested
in point or local defense using their Nike-Hercules missile
system. Originally conceived as complementary systems, the
competition between the two missiles' proponents grew as the

[35]Aliano, 122.

[36]Huntington, 326-341.

systems' capabilities and ranges became similar during development and testing.

Congressional interest in air defense policy was indirectly stimulated by the military construction sub-committees which authorized funding for construction of new bases.[37] Both services had requested funds to build new bases to accommodate their missile systems. Congressional committees took opposing sides on this issue. The House defense appropriations subcommittee sought to cut funding of the Bomarc, while the Senate Armed Services Committee moved to cancel the Nike-Hercules program. The Defense Department produced the ultimate compromise on the matter by proposing a mix of the systems, yet favoring the Nike-Hercules.[38] Senator Richard Russell (D-GA), chairman of the SASC was dissatisfied with the selection process issue was the catalyst for increased congressional oversight and led to line-item authorizations of missiles. The Army fomented opposition to the administration in other ways. It shifted its doctrine in the early 1950s to fighting in a nuclear war. This shift was an attempt to get on the atomic bandwagon, in an effort to forestall further funding cuts.

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[37]Bernard K. Gordon, "The Military Budget: Congressional Phase," _Journal of Politics_, Vol. 23, No. 4, (November 1961): 689-710; and Raymond H. Dawson, "Congressional Innovation and Intervention in Defense Policy: Legislative Authorization of Weapons Systems," _American Political Science Review_, Vol. 56, No. 1 (March 1962): 42-57.

[38]Kolodziej, 305-306.

It also reflected a growing realization that the Army might have to fight in a nuclear-enriched environment. The Army proposed new equipment and weapons systems that would have both a nuclear capability and survivability in nuclear war. Army units started to reconfigure into a pentomic configuration which was touted as being more flexible in a nuclear environment.

Army Chief-of-Staff General Matthew Ridgway had been the lone public dissenter against the Eisenhower New Look strategy in 1955, in part because he feared that it would reduce the role of the Army.[39] He resigned over planned troop cuts and was replaced by General Maxwell Taylor. Taylor was the architect of the strategy of Flexible Response, which emphasized that a lower threshold of war existed than had been considered in the New Look. Initially, Taylor was supportive of Eisenhower's position, but he later became a vocal opponent of the New Look strategy. Eisenhower himself initially supported the pentomic plan, believing it would require less manpower. Taylor argued that the manpower requirements were larger under the pentomic plan.[40] However, Taylor's growing dissent had little effect on slowing the reduction in the army's strength.

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[39]Kinnard (1977), 32-35.

[40]Kinnard (1977), 58.

The Army and Navy found allies outside government.
Key among these were a number of academics who were critical
of the theoretical limitations of the New Look. These
included Albert Wohlstetter, Oskar Morgenstern, Henry
Kissinger, William Kaufmann and Bernard Brodie. Most of
these outsiders argued that the New Look's reliance on
nuclear deterrence and massive retaliation made no allowance
for conventional threats. Others began to worry when this
strategy shifted away from "superiority" in nuclear forces
to "sufficiency" in Eisenhower's second term (the New New
Look), even while the Soviets were increasing their nuclear
capabilities.[41]

The Navy, meanwhile, through technological innovation,
undermined the Air Force's monopoly on strategic weaponry.
Admirals, such as Hyman Rickover, were able to gain
congressional support in developing nuclear submarines and
the Polaris submarine-launched ballistic missile.

Despite innovations and changes, the debate over the
New Look was ineffective in producing any substantive change
as long as Eisenhower remained president. Eisenhower was
not moved to change his policy by internal administration
dissent, the fall of Indochina, the launch of Sputnik,
Khruschev's rhetoric or even congressional criticism.[42]

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[41]Huntington, 85.

[42]Kinnard (1977), 46, 109-113.

CHAPTER THREE:
THE TIDE TURNS

Congressional Challenge: Building Coalitions

Congress, in the post-war period, has sometimes been characterized as being little more than a defense lobby as the task of deliberating over defense policy has largely shifted to the executive branch.[1] This does not imply that Congress has not had any input into policy development, but its influence has not been reflected in ways that scholars, such as Kolodziej, have measured such influence through the use of voting records and congressional testimony.

In fact, as mentioned previously, in the immediate post-World War II period, members of Congress busied themselves with issues they deemed important, such as veterans' affairs and investigation of the executive branch's management of the war effort and war preparedness. Congress was more concerned with its role of providing constituent service and review of the implementation of administration policies. Indeed some consider the armed services committees to be among the best committees in Congress at providing oversight in the 1950s.[2] Where there was genuine disagreement with planned administration policies, the President was obliged to wage protracted

[1]Huntington, 135.

[2]George B. Galloway, Congressional Reorganization Revisited, (College Park, MD: University of Maryland, 1956), 9.

battles with the Congress. Examples of such issues include
universal military training and military protection of
Europe. Unilateral administration decisions, such as the
troop deployment to Europe in 1950, cost the president
support in his efforts to deal with later issues. As one
writer put it:

> Congressional challenges to policy, even when they
> come after the administration position has been
> determined, at least force the administration to
> confront the issue again and to articulate a
> defense of its course.[3]

Still many view Congress' involvement in policy-making
as being at best tenuous. Most congressional challenges
were not coordinated or very probing, being limited to
individual actions. The president wielded two powerful
tools to limit congressional challenges to his authority in
determining the policy and the budget: his role as commander
in chief and his ability to impound appropriated funds under
the authority of the 1921 Budget and Accounting Act.
Congress has normally deferred to presidential authority,
especially in times of war or crisis due to the president's
constitutional powers as the commander in chief.
Presidential use of the impoundment tool was ostensibly
designed to allow the president to be economically prudent.
The executive was not obligated to continue to spend money
on those projects that cost less than the amount originally
approved by Congress. Appropriated funds could be held back

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[3]Huntington, 146.

or transferred to other accounts. Truman and Eisenhower
both used this tool to avoid spending money, in part or
entirely, on projects they did not support or deem
necessary. The threat of impoundment discouraged serious
congressional dissent. Impoundment powers not only affected
defense policy but other areas of government operations as
well.

Still, Congress retained the ability to have an impact
on presidential decision making. Eisenhower, although
allied with the mainstream of his party, was the object of
congressional criticism from fellow Republicans because he
did not sufficiently reduce the defense budget following the
termination of the Korean War.[4] This early congressional
criticism may have helped shaped the character of the New
Look policy. Later in Eisenhower's term, the debate in
Congress centered not only on attempts to increase the
defense spending, but also on the effects of such measures
on domestic initiatives, such as education and the highway
system, as well. Opposition to Eisenhower's New Look came
from a loose coalition of congressional witnesses such as
retired General Ridgway and General Taylor, who along with
Lieutenant General Gavin had resigned over Eisenhower's
refusal to seriously consider their defense policy
proposals. Members of the Air Force testified to Congress
that the United States was losing its nuclear superiority

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[4]Aliano, 31.

with the advent of Soviet production of an equivalent to the
(then) new B-52, and the development of Soviet
intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs).[5]

Slim majorities or lack of a majority for the
presidential party in Congress may have contributed to
congressional-presidential friction. Partisan politics may
have influenced Truman to increase defense spending and
vigorously pursue the war in Korea to offset criticisms that
the United States had lost. Partisan politics also plagued
Eisenhower through much of his term in office. Democratic
members of Congress had sought ways to discredit the
Eisenhower administration in an attempt to seize the White
House, if not in 1956, then in 1960. Some Democrats focused
on defense policy as an area where they felt the Republican
administration had allowed the country to fall behind the
Soviets. It is interesting to note, however, that partisan
debate over defense budgets and authorizations, no matter
how intense, seldom reveals itself in congressional voting
behavior in regard to committee bills in the 1950s (see
table 1 and 2).

The Senate was the focal point of the debate. Some of
the rising stars of the Senate concerned themselves with
defense issues, seeing this area as a credible means to
attack the Eisenhower administration. These senators

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[5]Kolodziej, 227-232.

included Lyndon B. Johnson (D-Texas), Stuart Symington (D-Missouri) (a former Secretary of the Air Force), Henry Jackson (D-Washington), and John F. Kennedy (D-Massachusetts). All were potential candidates for the 1960 Democratic nomination. There were potential allies inside the administration among the Army innovators mentioned above for these Democratic critics. The Senate provided the administration's internal opposition with a forum in which to challenge the administration. The New Look came under more intense criticism with each passing session of Congress, but the Democrats, despite majorities, could seldom muster enough votes to undermine Eisenhower's strategy. The key Democrats, such as Senator Richard Russell and Representative Carl Vinson, who controlled the armed services committees were generally more supportive of the administration than their fellow Democrats.

The most crucial test of the New Look came in 1957. There was enormous outrage, fueled by academia, the press, Congress, various elements in the defense establishment, and the public when the Soviet Union launched the first intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) carrying the Sputnik satellite in October 1957. Senator Lyndon Johnson, now the Senate Majority Leader, compared Sputnik to Pearl Harbor in 1941.[6] Support for Eisenhower's New Look dwindled considerably within the defense community and key members of

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[6]Aliano, 109.

Congress were now viewed as the champions of increased defense spending.[7]

Despite unrest over administration policies, members of Congress were unable to agree on where they should increase defense spending. Various groups of legislators supported different proposals from within the Defense Department. Each service clamored for procurement of new weapons systems and expanded missions. The Navy lobbied for nuclear submarines and an increased antisubmarine warfare capability. The Army sought increased troop strengths and expanded missile capabilities. The Air Force wanted its own ICBMs and more bomber squadrons. Some number of legislators supported each of these divergent views but no group was able to enact its preferred program. Concurrently, there were domestic pressures on Congress to increase defense spending to help ease the recession of 1957-58. Eisenhower's defense budgets requests, however, remained constant, even as Congress continued to attempt to rearrange the allocations. Efforts at forcing the administration to revamp its policies peaked with the FY 1961 authorization bill, in which the House reallocated almost 4 billion dollars, about 10 percent, of the administration's original request to different programs.[8]

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[7]Aliano, 101.

[8]Kolodziej, 313.

In 1957, an administration ad hoc defense study group, the Gaither Committee, criticized the New Look strategy, but this did not move Eisenhower to alter his position. Their report called for increased defense spending, especially for ICBMs and intermediate-range ballistic missiles (IRBMs). Samuel Huntington compares Eisenhower's response to the Gaither Report to Truman's response to NSC-68. In 1957, as in 1950, a firm ceiling on military spending existed, and the leadership of the Department of Defense was identified with economy measures. The difference in the success of NSC-68 was that there was more support for it within the administration.[9] NSC-68 was an internal White House document, where the Gaither Report was not. In addition, NSC-68 gained more support due to the reality of the Korean War which had far more impact on the political realities than did Sputnik. The Gaither report, however, was seized upon within Congress to buttress criticism of the New Look.

Reforms of the Defense Organization

In 1953, early in his term, Eisenhower sought and obtained further organizational revisions of the Defense Department in an effort to consolidate the power of the Secretary of Defense and strengthen the advisory capacity of the JCS. The service departments increasingly became subdivisions of the Defense Department while the size and

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[9]Huntington, 111.

scope of the Defense Secretary's own bureaucracy grew. The separate service boards were replaced by six assistants to the Secretary of Defense. It was envisioned that the JCS would not meet as heads of operating separate departments but as a military advisory board to the Secretary of Defense.[10] Congressional opposition to further centralization of the military was limited by its deference to a president with a military background- Dwight D. Eisenhower.[11]

Late in Eisenhower's administration, in the midst of the rising congressional opposition, Eisenhower became increasingly frustrated with continued interservice rivalries and the growing rivalry between the service departments and the Department of Defense. He asked Congress for another department reorganization in 1958. His goal was to further centralize the services and increase the authority of the Secretary of Defense through the creation of unified commands. Congress' primary concern at this time was to maintain its "effective participation in defense policy-making" by ensuring it would have access to alternatives presented through controversies and disagreement.[12] Congress assented to most executive demands for centralization in the hope that defense policy and

[10]Ries, 160-165.

[11]Ries, 166.

[12]Ries, 137 and 141.

weapons procurement would become more orderly and less
expensive. At the same time, some members acknowledged the
possible loss of congressional ability to affect the
decision-making process which these reforms represented.[13]
The full impact of the 1958 reorganization was delayed until
after the departure of the Eisenhower administration due to
the frequent turnover of successors to Secretary of Defense
Charles Wilson.

At the end of the Eisenhower administration, with
Congress aggressively attacking the administration's defense
requests as inadequate, the Defense Department and
Eisenhower started to reverse its position by releasing
portions of previously impounded funds.[14] The armed
services committees began to emulate domestic policy
authorizing committees when they started to authorize
specific programs. This was initially limited to aircraft
and missiles. It is interesting to note that this was a
Senate initiative, an amendment to the Military Construction
Act of 1959 by Senator Richard Russell (D-Georgia), the
chairman of SASC. This amendment was passed over the
opposition in the House by the powerful chairman of HASC,
Carl Vinson (D-Georgia). However, when it was first applied
to the FY 1961 budget, it was Vinson, not Russell, who

[13]Ries, 211-212.

[14]Kolodziej, 323.

aggressively used this new arrangement to shape the defense budget!¹⁵

Peacetime Build-up: Kennedy

The coalition of advocates for defense policy revisions found solace in the administration of John F. Kennedy, when he became president in 1961. Kennedy had campaigned extensively on the theme of the need to close the "missile gap" created by the perception that the Soviets were way out in front in nuclear and ICBM technology. Kennedy also wanted to increase the American commitment to stopping the spread of communism in the Third World by strengthening conventional and special operations capabilities. The policy of massive retaliation was replaced with the concept of flexible response, which had been advocated by Maxwell Taylor. The emphasis on new weapons systems, such as land and sea launched ICBMs which had been slow during the "long haul", was apparent. Soon after the election, the missile gap was found to be non-existent. But efforts to promote a defense build-up were still fueled by international tensions over Berlin, Cuba, and Southeast Asia.

Kennedy quickly became disenchanted with the advice of the JCS in 1961, due to military setbacks in Laos and the

15Kolodziej, 371-382.

Bay of Pigs fiasco in Cuba. He thus ignored the JCS and appointed a Special Advisor on Military Operations based in the White House, not the Pentagon. He tapped Maxwell Taylor for the post. Some argue Kennedy should have replaced the members of Eisenhower's JCS at the beginning of his term, indicating that the JCS should reflect the president's will, not unlike the Council of Economic Advisors.[16] This may also be problematical for presidents. Increasing the overtly partisan political nature of military appointments could undermine the appointee's supposed position as an impartial military advisor. In addition, by reaching down into the ranks to select a service chief, presidents may undermine their appointee's ability to effectively lead the service they head. Junior officers may be unwilling to challenge officers that technically outrank them as was the case with the JCS dealing with MacArthur during the Korean War.

Kennedy's strongest proponent in developing defense policy, however, was not a military man such as Taylor but Robert McNamara, the Secretary of Defense. McNamara clearly was the most influential Secretary of Defense to date. He was the first Secretary of Defense to outshine the Secretary of State. McNamara, using the power vested in the office of the Defense Secretary by the Defense Reorganization of 1958,

[16]Keith C. Clarke and Laurence J. Legere, eds., The President and the Management of National Security, (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1969), 177.

sought to become the focal point for planning in the defense establishment. McNamara was an organizational powerhouse. He indirectly merged the services, which had been a goal of Eisenhower, by creating the unified Strike Command to implement the new doctrine of limited warfare.[17] He increased the control of the Defense Department over the services by consolidating intelligence and logistics functions.

McNamara established the Planning, Programming and Budgeting System (PPBS) and long-range five-year defense program planning. Formerly the administration had given budget ceilings to the services, an arrangement that allowed them to decide for themselves which systems to develop. PPBS eliminated these ceilings but required the services to justify individual weapons programs through a cost effectiveness measuring system. This system attempted to eliminate waste and streamline weapons procurement. McNamara shifted the initiative for developing policy to his office and increased civilian control through this planning system which focused on the functional categories that were, by definition, wider than the normal responsibilities of any one military service or department.[18] The service departments were thus limited to administration, training

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[17]Ries, 188.

[18]Clarke and Legere, 177.

and logistical functions.[19] The services did not have the
documentation to counter any of McNamara's arguments and
thus had to defer to the judgments of civilian planners in
the Department of Defense. Moreover, the military
organizations failed to build effective coalitions of
support within either the administration or Congress to
block McNamara. McNamara cancelled such weapons systems as
the TFX (the forerunner of the present day FB-111 jet
fighter-bomber) and the RS-70, the planned replacement for
the B-52 manned strategic bomber. Service appeals to
Congress for funding these programs were successful but
ultimately failed.[20] The administration impounded funds for
systems such as the RS-70, which Congress funded over
McNamara's objections.[21]

The services had lost the leverage of their expertise
to McNamara. The Defense Department was not cancelling most
weapons systems for non-military reasons such as budgetary
concerns. Now the Defense Department was cancelling or
deferring systems because they weren't deemed effective by
the PPBS staffers. At the same time, McNamara's staff
forced new weapons systems and doctrines upon the somewhat

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[19]Clarke and Legere, 174.

[20]Kolodziej, 361.

[21]Arnold Kanter, Defense Politics, (Chicago:
University of Chicago Press, 1979), 42.

reluctant services.[22] Whereas Eisenhower supposedly
deprofessionalized the military by stifling debate within
the JCS, McNamara undercut military authority by forcing its
leaders to defer to civilian decisions about the efficacy of
weapons systems.[23]

The services outlived the "McNamara Revolution".
The JCS increased the use of civilian research think-tanks
such as the RAND Corporation and the Institute for Defense
Analyses in response to McNamara. The officer corps
remained largely service-oriented. Career progression and
military training, which were oriented to service needs and
a fear of the adverse effect of joint service, limited the
impact of McNamara's attempt to create a unified command
system.[24] To be sure, McNamara was successful in quieting
the dissension which had dogged the last half of the
Eisenhower administration. The extent to which he achieved
this goal through organizational reforms is uncertain, since
there were sizeable increases in defense spending for all
the services at that time which also helped to quell

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[22]Examples of this force-feeding of weapons systems
include the M-16 for the Army, the A-7 and F-4 aircraft for
the Air Force, and the airmobile and counterinsurgency
doctrines for the Army. It must be stressed that although
each of these systems had advocates within their respective
services, they went against the grain of majority opinion
within each of the services.

[23]David C. Hendrickson, Reforming Defense, (Baltimore:
The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), 53-56.

[24]Clarke and Legere, 198.

dissent. Dissension within the services also decreased as a result of the fact that they were all united in opposition to McNamara.

The military services exhibited parochial behavior during the Vietnam War period. They were increasingly associated with specific defense contractors competing for missions as well as funding for projects. The split between the Navy and the Air Force over a McNamara proposal to create a common fighter is an example. The Air Force aligned with the Boeing Corporation in favor of its fighter design, while the Navy wanted the Grumman/General Dynamics designed plane. Coincidentally, these firms had been the main suppliers to these respective services in the past. To complicate the issue in Congress, McNamara's cost analyses led to the choice of the Grumman design, despite several published tests proving the superiority of the Boeing design.[25] Members of Congress lined up with home state contractors in support of either the Navy or Air Force position. It is interesting to note that even though the Grumman/Navy design won McNamara's final approval, the Navy later dropr·d the design. The tenacity of the Air Force planners eventually led to the procurement of its design choice after the departure of McNamara.

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[25]Eugene Lewis, _American Politics in a Bureaucratic Age_, (Cambridge, MA: Winthrop Publishers, 1977), 115-148.

Congress saw its influence in defense policy diminish
from the late Eisenhower period as controversy over defense
policy within the administration subsided. Kolodziej lists
three main reason for this development: Kennedy's strong
leadership as President, McNamara's strong civilian
leadership of the Department of Defense, and the defense
committees' changed practices in both the authorization and
appropriations process.[26] But McNamara, in spite of his
success elsewhere, had difficulty in seeking increases for
conventional forces and ICBMs from Congress. Legislators
such as Carl Vinson had become accustomed to air power's
supremacy and did not want to forsake long-range manned
bombers in favor of newfangled missile technology.
Opposition from traditional Democrats was overshadowed by
the Republicans. Republicans tried to make the questionable
reliability of missile technology a campaign issue in the
1964 presidential election.[27]

McNamara's program eventually unraveled in the
administration's pursuit of its limited war doctrine in the
Vietnam War. Vietnam, as most wars do, initially kindled
united congressional support for the administration. Unlike
Korea, Vietnam was not accompanied by any noticeable shifts
in the overall defense policy of the administration which

[26]Kolodziej, 326.

[27]Congressional Quarterly Almanac 1964, Vol. 20,
(Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly, 1965), 444.

might have aroused opposition in Congress. However, the
length and character of the war eventually raised questions
in Congress about the containment policy of successive
presidential administrations.

Congressional perceptions of the international scene
changed, in part due to the Vietnam experience. The
Communist bloc, with the split between the Soviet Union and
China, was no longer seen by some as being a monolithic
force. The value of nuclear weapons, the bulwark of the
American defense strategy, was increasingly questioned by
members of Congress. By 1967, the Johnson administration
made strategic arms limitation the cornerstone of its
nuclear policy.[28]

Almost as much as Korea had crystallized the
containment doctrine in 1950, Vietnam, by 1968, had called
containment into question. This questioning became focused
in Congress, especially in the Senate Foreign Relations
Committee chaired by William Fulbright (D-AR). New
challenges for control over the direction of military and
foreign policy were building within Congress.

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[28]Lawrence Freedman, The Evolution of Nuclear
Strategy, 2d ed., (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), 256.

CHAPTER FOUR:
CONGRESSIONAL CHANGE

Decentralization

Congressional dissatisfaction with its institutional procedures for influencing defense issues and policy making during the Vietnam experience led to reforms and changes that affected policy making in all areas. Conversely other reforms, such as the Budget Impoundment Act, which were primarily targeted at domestic programs also had an impact upon defense policy making in Congress.

Criticism of administration defense policy and budget requests within Congress became fashionable in large part due to the Vietnam experience. Opposition to Vietnam, both by veteran congressmen and freshmen anti-war representatives, created a seemingly permanent anti-defense bloc in Congress. This was manifested in the Johnson administration's unsuccessful attempt to fund procurement of the anti-ballistic missile in 1968.[1] The problem for the military and the executive was two-fold: first, there was McNamara's precedent of "meddling" in military affairs which to some made the military appear to be unable to properly

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[1]Laurance, 247.

budget and select weapons systems. Secondly, the Vietnam experience made many others perceive the military establishment as untrustworthy and incompetent. Though Congress' involvement in military issues declined somewhat immediately after Vietnam, it never returned to the low pre-war levels and it soon began to expand again ultimately eclipsing Vietnam era activity through the 1980s (see tables 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6). Much of this expanding involvement may, however, be traced to the result of reforms and rules changes in Congress that were not expressly enacted for the purpose of bringing about change in defense policy.

By 1970, the Vietnam War had been dragging on for five years. That year, Congress, especially the House, began to enact a series of reforms and rule changes over the next five years which would alter its internal structure and institutions as well as its relationship with the executive branch.[2] The first of these reforms was the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970. This act required committees to make public all recorded committee votes, to limit proxy and teller voting, and to encourage open hearings and limit the power of the committee chair to cancel or not schedule meetings.[3] In 1973, the House Democratic Caucus's Subcommittee Bill of Rights further restricted committee

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[2]For a broad view of the impact of these reforms see Walter J. Oleszek, Congressional Procedures and the Policy Process, 3d ed., (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 1989).

[3]Lindsay (1987), 379.

chairs´ powers to appoint members to subcommittees. These
new rules mandated formal jurisdiction, staffing, adequate
budgets for staff and research, and authorization to hold
hearings.[4]

At the same time, the Senate adopted reforms designed
to limit senators to membership on only one of the
"prestige" committees (Appropriations, Armed Services,
Finance, and Foreign Relations) and to limit senators to
only one subcommittee chair per committee.[5] The effect of
these reforms was to increase the ability of junior
committee members to exert influence, as well as reduce the
power of legislators with seniority, thus decentralizing the
centers of power. At the same, reforms decreased the
ability of committees to coordinate their activities as
easily as before when several members were on both
committees.

There was also an increase at this time in the number
and influence of non-committee forums. Much pressure for
rules reform and other changes in the House came from the
revitalized Democratic Caucus. Other new caucuses were
formed in the 1960s. One of the first of these was the
Members of Congress for Peace Through Law (MCPL). MCPL was
founded in 1967. It was both bicameral and bipartisan.

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[4]Lindsay (1987), 379.

[5]Lindsay (1987), 380.

MCPL and later caucuses provided information on issues for debate and policy development within Congress to non-committee members. It also provided an avenue through which members could make contact with outside defense experts and achieve liaison with citizens' peace groups.[6] Other caucuses were later formed, such as the Military Reform Caucus, led by Senator Gary Hart (D-CO) and the National Security Caucus. These caucuses reflected the diffusion of activity within Congress away from the committee system and provided an outlet through which non-committee members could expand their knowledge and influence.[7]

There were two significant legislative reforms at this time. Both became law over presidential vetoes. One reform was the War Powers Act of 1973, in which Congress attempted to define limits of a president's use of military force abroad without congressional consent. This Act, spearheaded by Senators Thomas Eagleton (D-MO), Jacob Javits (D-NY) and Representative Clement J. Zablocki (D-WI), was in reaction to President Nixon's secret invasions of Cambodia and Laos during the Vietnam War. The more profound change to defense policy making was the Budget Impoundment and Control Act of 1974. Efforts to pass this legislation were fueled

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[6]*Congressional Quarterly Almanac 1970*, Vol. 26, (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly, 1971), 395.

[7]Susan Webb Hammond, "Congressional Caucuses in the Policy Process," in *Congress Reconsidered*, 4th ed., eds. Lawrence C. Dodd and Bruce Oppenheimer, (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1989).

primarily by President Richard Nixon's impoundment of funds for domestic programs. These efforts gained momentum as the Watergate scandal unraveled.

The Impoundment Act expanded congressional agency charters and created new budget committees and agencies, such as the Congressional Budget Office (CBO). Congress obligated the Government Accounting Office (GAO) to investigate administration practices and to improve the oversight function of Congress.[8] This Act limited the ability of a president to impound funds appropriated by Congress, which, especially in the case of Richard Nixon, appeared to undermine the intent of Congress. Reprogramming of funds now required congressional approval, usually by the set of committees that had jurisdiction over the authorization and appropriation of these funds. Congress also initiated a new budget cycle to allow for more time to review legislation in committee as well as to allow for more floor debate on budget issues. The very first year of its existence, the Senate Budget Committee, chaired by Senator Edmund Muskie (D-ME) led a serious challenge to the SASC authorization bill on the floor of the Senate. Muskie argued that the bill exceeded the guidelines of the budget resolution.[9]

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[8]Cox and Kirby, 16.

[9]Congressional Quarterly Almanac 1975, Vol 31, (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly, 1976), 365.

The net effect of all these reforms was to improve the opportunities for junior members of Congress to influence the decision-making and policy process. The reforms were designed to provide individual members and committees with help in investigating and reviewing administration policy and budgets. The changes also sought to provide the general public with greater access to the decision-making processes of Congress with open hearings and publicizing results committees and floor votes. In addition, these reforms allowed individual members of Congress an opportunity to provide much greater constituent service to their districts, states and benefactors.

Watergate not only led to some of the reforms listed above, but also to a considerable turnover in Congress with the election of a large freshmen class in 1974. These new legislators, mainly liberal Democrats, was the first beneficiaries of these reforms, which considerably reduced the ability of the executive branch to maintain a monopoly on either the policy process in general, or defense and foreign policy in particular. These new congressmen, along with veteran liberals, became a potent force almost immediately. House Armed Services Committee chairman F. Edward Hébert (D-LA) and three other committee chairmen were unseated in a revolt of the Democratic Caucus against the House leadership in January 1975. Although Hébert was only replaced by the next ranking member, Melvin Price (D-IL),

this revolt demonstrated the strength of the dissatisfaction that existed among rank-and-file House members.[10]

The House Democratic Caucus began to seat more liberal and vocal members, such as Les Aspin (D-WI), Patricia Schroeder (D-CO) and Ronald Dellums (D-CA) on the House Armed Services Committee. In 1973, Aspin cast the only vote dissenting from the usual unanimous support given to the committee's authorization bills. He then led a successful revolt against his own committee on the House floor (which was later overturned by the conference committee) to enact deep defense cuts for FY 1974.[11]

At the same time, numerous other committees became involved in defense policy and began to affect the defense budget, even if only indirectly. This change began in 1969 when several committees, such as the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the Government Operations and Foreign Affairs Committees in the House, and the Joint Economic Committee challenged the armed services committees' jurisdiction over procurement of a number of controversial weapons systems.[12] In the mid-1970s, first the Senate and

[10]Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, Vol. 31, No. 3 (January 1975): 111-116.

[11]An interesting analysis of Aspin's efforts to cut defense authorizations in 1973 is found in Philip B. Heymann's The Politics of Public Management, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987): 137-144.

[12]Congressional Quarterly Almanac 1969, Vol. 25, (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly, 1970), 260, 278.

then the House stripped the HASC and the SASC of jurisdiction over the Central Intelligence Agency and of intelligence gathering in general with the creation of standing intelligence committees. Over time other committees began to find defense acquisition fertile ground for investigations and publicity. For example, the House Energy and Commerce Investigations subcommittee, chaired by John Dingell (D-MI), became a leader in reviewing several procurement scandals, including B-1 bomber inadequacies and spare parts acquisition.[13]

The roles and duties of the armed services committees and the defense appropriations subcommittees have themselves become increasingly blurred. From the limited line authorizations, which initially affected only aircraft and missiles in FY 1961, the HASC and SASC's line-item authorizations now nearly span the entire budget.[14] Conversely, the HAC and SAC hold hearings specifically designed to review defense policy and not just the cost of various defense policies. The HAC and SAC, during the defense build-up of the Carter presidency, commonly violated ᵗ standing rule of Congress by appropriating funds that authorizing committees (HASC and SASC) had not previously authorized.[15]

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[13]Lindsay (1988), 65.

[14]Lindsay (1988), 64.

[15]Lindsay (1988), 59.

This diffusion of power has led to increased demands on the defense establishment by Congress for information on which to base decisions. From FY 1976 to FY 1987, committee requests for reports from the Department of Defense, general provisions in the law, and other annually mandated non-recurring actions by Congress directed at DOD increased 350 percent (see Table 6).[16] Although some would argue that many reporting requirements are an unnecessary burden, others claim that the reporting process generally serves a useful function.[17] The increase in reporting requirements may also be a manifestation of Congress' effort to gain some form of control over the military's implementation of defense policy.

Reform has also brought about significant changes in floor activity. Floor amendments to defense authorization bills have increased at a prodigious rate in recent years. The average number of amendments to authorization bills in the House and Senate jumped from 20 and 24, respectively, per year between 1970 and 1976 to an average of 75 and 67 amendments between 1980 and 1986. There are several factors responsible for this rise (see Tables 4 and 5). First, the

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[16]The Defense Department Comptroller tracks requirements for reports. This increase does not include the number of requirements for *recurring* reports from the Department of the Defense.

[17]Ellen Collier, "Foreign Policy by Reporting Requirement," The Washington Quarterly, Vol. 5, No. 4 (Winter 1988): 75-84.

HASC and the SASC have been the traditional allies of the military. Critics of defense spending or military reformers, unable to effect changes to the committee bill have used floor amendments in hope that the entire House membership might be more sympathetic to reforms or to cuts in defense spending. The committees have been subject to more ideological and partisan factionalism over the years. Clashes between members have resulted in an inability to reach a consensus on authorization bills in committee and the decision to settle issues on the floor of the chamber. The authorization bill itself has grown in size and complexity thus becoming more vulnerable to amendment. Increased amending may also indicate the increasing importance of policy and constituent-serving entrepreneurs in defense policy and budget-making.[18]   These entrepreneurs are sometimes categorized as those who seek constituent service or other gain outside the normal comm˙˖tee channels of the legislative process.[19]   Some of the amending activity is an effort by HASC and SASC members to protect the committee bill from alterations by non-

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[18]Lindsay, (1988), 61.

[19]Robert Salisbury and Kenneth Shepsle, "US Congressmen as Enterprise," *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No. 4, (November 1981), 559-576.

committee members or even other committees.[20] The House
Government Operations Committee unsuccessfully tried to
amend the authorization bill five times in 1981.

There are also other reasons why there is so much
amending activity. As the committees have increasingly
altered administration requests, the Defense Department has
found legislators to offer amendments on the floor to change
the committee bill. There has been, especially in the
1980s, an increase in the number of issues that many
legislators believe to be contentious. These issues include
strategic nuclear weapons systems upgrades, the Strategic
Defense Initiative, and military involvement in Central
America.

It is interesting to note the differences between
House and Senate amending activity. Non-committee members
in the Senate have been more likely to offer amendments than
their counterparts in the House (see tables 4 and 5). The
Senate, over time, has been more likely to approve
amendments. The House has only recently become more
amenable to amending activity. Successful amending activity
has increased and HASC chairmen have used procedures to get
large numbers of amendments passed. In recent years, HASC

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[20]Most amendments, however, fail to pass on floor
votes, especially in the House. For an in depth study of
floor activity and committee power, see Steven S. Smith's
Call to Order, (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution,
1989).

chairmen, such as Melvin Price and Les Aspin have offered amendments en bloc on the floor. This procedure has saved time, but might also increase the propensity of legislators to offer amendments to the authorization.

Access to Information Expanded

Congress has not only been decentralized, but it has also been inundated with information. The increase in the size and capabilities of personal, committee and sub-committee staffs has increased legislators' access to information.[21] Within the Congress, there are several agencies that provide the members with information. These include the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), the Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) which has studied such issues as the effects of nuclear war and the basing mode of the MX missile, the General Accounting Office (GAO) and the Congressional Research Service (CRS).[22] These organizations conduct original analyses and use non-governmental agencies for technical information and policy assessments. However, the military services and the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) provide Congress with the bulk of information which the legislature uses to evaluate defense policy.

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[21]Harrison W. Fox and Susan Webb Hammond, Congressional Staffs, (New York: The Free Press, 1977).

[22]Cox and Kirby, 23.

Computers have also aided in providing information,
especially with respect to defense contracting. Every
member of Congress, through Congress' computer network, can
discover how to create constituency-based coalitions to pass
legislation. All government contract award information is
stored in the system's files by congressional district.

Members are now freer, with increased staffs and
alternative sources of information outside the committee
system, to specialize in such issues as defense policy.
Their staffs can do detailed research, frame issues, and
facilitate decision making in areas of policy where members
have no expertise.

As a result, the key player in defense policy on the
Hill can no longer rely on junior members and non-committee
members to defer to them, as Richard Russell and Carl Vinson
were once able to do. Individuals, such as Les Aspin and
Senator Sam Nunn (D-GA), have become technical defense
experts and policy analysts in their own right. They are
able to argue defense topics persuasively, not only within
their institution, but with the media and especially the
executive branch and the Pentagon.[23]

Reforms and the increase in the number of challenges
to committee legislation in the House from both within the

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[23]Senator Nunn has been influential in defense policy
since the time he helped establish new NATO troop levels as
a freshman senator in 1973. See Williams, chapter 7.

armed services committee and on the floor have not
drastically altered the composition of committee membership
despite the growth of a liberal faction within it.[24]   The
House armed services committee is still essentially a pro-
defense, client-oriented committee.   The HASC has changed
but it can still be termed, as did Lewis Anthony Dexter, "a
real estate committee".[25]   Most members' pro-defense
constituent bases in their home districts consist of
military installations, not defense contractors.

Congress' impact on budgeting has been significant
within the parameters requested by the administration (see
Table 6).   A significant number of programs are altered by
Congress.   The impact of the legislature on budgeting shows
no clear trend or significant change over time, except that
since Vietnam, Congress has seldom increased spending over
an administration's request (see Table 3).   Congress, with
some exceptions, did not cut defense requests any greater in
any year during the 1970s or 1980s than it did in the 1950s.

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[24]For a discussion on committee factions, see Glenn R.
Parker and Suzanne Parker, Factions in House Committees,
(Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1985).

[25]Lewis Anthony Dexter, "Congressmen and the Making of
Military Policy," in New Perspectives on the House of
Representatives, ed. Robert L. Peabody and Nelson W. Polsby,
(Chicago: Rand McNally Publishing Company, 1963), 310.

Other Forms of Decentralization

The proliferation of non-governmental agencies has also contributed to the decentralization of defense policy, although its direct impact on executive planning is hard to measure. Samuel Huntington hints at the potential of non-governmental groups in The Common Defense. He categorizes these groups as consisting of executive agency and departmental alumni, private scholars and experts, as well as university centers and private research centers. Huntington feels that this group's influence will probably grow, but finds their role from 1945 to 1960 was quite limited.[26]

President Kennedy had given credence to a large segment of prominent private interests in 1961 by espousing the philosophies of several academic, retired military and other critics. Vietnam and Watergate mobilized public opinion to activity and led to the formation of numerous public interest organizations. These groups greatly increased public awareness of defense issues.

An example of this development is the Project on Military Procurement. This tiny organization provided a forum for disgruntled "Pentagon employees" to publicize known waste and inadequacies of equipment in the military procurement system by revealing tests conducted by the

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[26]Huntington, 175-176.

military that had been suppressed during congressional
review. The resulting publicity created a furor within
Congress and with the public over the mismanagement
practices which were revealed.   Legislators who had
previously been pro-defense vigorously attacked the
Pentagon.[27]

Public interest groups concerned with defense issues
include Common Cause and the National Taxpayers Union.
Peace groups and environmental groups such as the Women's
International League for Peace, SANE (Citizens' Committee
for a Sane Nuclear Policy) and Environmental Action have
also been involved in defense issues. Scientists have
formed the Federation of American Scientists to lobby and
inform Congress on defense and other issues.

The defense industries and strong defense advocates
have been able to channel their energies into think-tanks,
lobbies, and grass roots organizations which have attempted
to support defense spending, and these groups have helped
counter the influence of the peace and public interest
organizations. In some cases defense interests and public
interest groups converge when certain weapons systems
policies bring them together in opposition to the
administration's position, albeit for different purpose.
For example, it is plausible that cruise missile

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[27]Dina Rasor, _The Pentagon Underground_, (New York:
Times Books, 1985).

manufacturers may have given tacit or other support to the
anti B-1 bomber coalition, even though some members of that
coalition almost certainly opposed the deployment of cruise
missiles as much as they did the deployment of the B-1
bomber.

Finally, the press and television media have been able
to frame defense issues for public debate and provide an
information sharing service between and within the executive
and the legislative branches of government. For example,
DoD provides a daily newspaper and periodical clipping
service which summarizes articles from around the country
dealing with defense-related topics. This paper, called the
Current News Early Bird, not only circulates inside the
Pentagon but in other executive departments, the White
House, and on Capitol Hill.[28] Moreover, every office on the
Hill or in the Pentagon that has a television set usually
has it tuned either to C-SPAN or Cable News Network (CNN).

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[28]The impact of the Early Bird is discussed in Hedrick
Smith's The Power Game, (New York: Random House, 1988), 160-
163.

TABLE 1

Chamber Votes for Defense Authorization Bills
FY 1952-1989[1]

Year	House	Senate	Conference Bill House	Senate
1952	353-3	VOICE	348-2	VOICE
1953	332-7	VOICE	VOICE	VOICE
1954	VOICE	VOICE	VOICE	n/a
1955	346-0	VOICE	VOICE	VOICE
1956	316-2	VOICE	VOICE	VOICE
1957[2]	377-2	VOICE	VOICE	VOICE
			VOICE	VOICE
1958	379-2	80-0	256-135	VOICE
1959	VOICE	VOICE	VOICE	VOICE
1960	379-2	89-3	VOICE	85-0
1961	407-4	VOICE	VOICE	VOICE
1962	402-0	VOICE	VOICE	VOICE
1963	404-0	85-0	VOICE	n/a
1964	374-33	VOICE	VOICE	VOICE
1965	336-0	80-0	VOICE	VOICE
1966	396-0	85-0	VOICE	VOICE
1967	356-2	VOICE	359-2	81-1
1968	401-3	86-2	VOICE	VOICE
1969	363-15	54-3	323-15	VOICE
1970	311-44	81-5	VOICE	58-9
1971	326-69	84-5	341-11	VOICE
1972	332-58	82-4	VOICE	65-19
1973	334-55	92-5	336-43	73-5
1974	367-37	91-7	VOICE	69-12
1975	358-37	84-6	305-38	88-8
1976[3]	332-64	77-6	398-60	42-48
			VOICE	63-7
1977	298-52	76-2	339-66	78-12
1978	347-43	90-3	350-40	VOICE
1979[4]	319-67	87-2	VOICE	VOICE
			367-22	89-3
1980	282-46	89-7	300-26	VOICE
1981	338-62	84-3	360-49	78-2
1982	354-63	92-1	VOICE	VOICE
1983	290-73	84-8	251-148	77-21
1984	305-114	83-15	266-152	83-8
1985	298-98	82-6	VOICE	VOICE
1986[5]	278-106	91-4	VOICE	94-5
1987	255-152	86-3	283-128	VOICE
1988	239-177	56-42	264-158	86-9
1989[6]	252-172	VOICE	369-48	91-4
			229-183	64-30

Source: <u>Congressional Quarterly Almanac</u>,
(1951-1988).

[1]Votes prior to 1961 list votes for military construction authorizations. Authorizations for specific procurement programs began in 1961 and gradually have expanded to cover most areas of the defense budget. Does not include data concerning supplemental authorizations or rescissions.

[2]President Eisenhower vetoed the first bill.

[3]The Senate rejected the first bill.

[4]President Carter vetoed the first bill.

[5]The conference committee had to modify the original conference report for House approval.

[6]President Reagan vetoed the first bill.

TABLE 2

Chamber Votes for Defense Appropriation Bills
FY 1952-1989[1]

Year	House	Senate	Conference Bill House	Senate
1952	348-2	79-0	VOICE	VOICE
1953	VOICE	66-0	VOICE	VOICE
1954	386-0	VOICE	VOICE	VOICE
1955	378-0	VOICE	VOICE	VOICE
1956	384-0	80-0	VOICE	VOICE
1957	377-0	88-0	79-57	VOICE
1958	390-0	71-0	VOICE	VOICE
1959	394-1	74-0	VOICE	VOICE
1960	392-3	90-0	VOICE	85-0
1961	377-3	85-0	402-5	83-3
1962	412-0	85-0	380-0	VOICE
1963	388-0	88-0	VOICE	VOICE
1964	410-1	77-0	336-3	VOICE
1965	365-0	76-0	359-0	VOICE
1966	407-0	89-0	382-0	VOICE
1967[2]	393-0	86-0	305-42	VOICE
1968	407-1	84-3	365-4	74-3
1969	333-7	55-2	213-6	VOICE
1970	330-33	85-4	VOICE	VOICE
1971[3]	274-31	89-0	328-30	VOICE
			234-18	70-2
1972	343-51	80-5	293-39	VOICE
1973	322-41	70-5	316-42	VOICE
1974	336-23	89-2	336-32	VOICE
1975	350-43	86-5	293-59	VOICE
1976	353-61	87-7	314-57	87-9
1977	331-53	82-6	323-45	VOICE
1978[4]	333-54	91-2	361-36	VOICE
1979	339-60	86-3	VOICE	77-3
1980	305-49	72-3	VOICE	VOICE
1981	351-42	73-1	321-36	73-1
1982	335-61	84-5	334-84	93-4
1983	346-68	incorporated into CR		
1984	328-97	86-6	311-99	74-6
1985	incorporated into CR			
1986[5]	359-67	VOICE	261-137	VOICE
1987	incorporated into CR			
1988	incorporated into CR			
1989	360-53	90-4	327-77	VOICE

Source: Congressional Quarterly Almanac,
(1951-1988).

[1]Does not include votes on supplemental appropriations or rescissions.

[2]The House rejected the reserve call-up and dependent school funding provisos in the original conference bill.

[3]The first bill was rejected by the Senate in the voice vote.

[4]The conferees sent the bill back to the chamber as no compromise could be reached over the B-1 bomber.

[5]Final appropriation package part of a continuing resolution (CR).

TABLE 3

Defense Appropriations Made by Congress, FY 1948-1989[1]
(in billions, all numbers are rounded)

FY	Admin Request	House	Senate	Final	ColE÷B
1948	9.08	8.42	8.93	8.74	0.96
1949	n/a				
1950	13.25	13.27	12.73	12.95	0.98
1951[2]	13.07	12.91	13.29	13.29	1.02
1952	57.68	56.03	61.10	56 94	0.99
1953	51.39	46.21	46.4	46.61	0.91
1954	40.72	34.43	34.51	34.37	0.84
1955	29.89	28.68	29.22	28.8	0.96
1956	32.23	31.49	31.88	31.88	0.99
1957	34.15	33.63	34.73	34.66	1.01
1958	36.13	33.56	34.53	33.76	0.93
1959	38.2	38.4	40.04	39.6	1.04
1960	39.25	38.85	39.59	39.23	0.999
1961	39.34	39.34	40.38	40.0	1.09
1962	46.4	42.71	46.85	46.66	1.09
1963	47.91	47.84	48.43	48.14	1.004
1964	49.01	47.09	47.37	47.22	0.96
1965	47.47	46.76	46.77	46.75	0.98
1966	45.25	45.19	46.88	46.89	1.04
1967	57.66	58.61	58.19	58.07	1.01
1968	71.58	70.29	70.16	69.94	0.98
1969	77.07	72.23	71.89	71.87	0.93
1970	75.28	69.96	69.33	69.64	0.92
1971	68.75	66.66	66.42	66.60	0.97
1972	73.54	71.05	70.85	70.52	0.96
1973	79.59	74.58	74.57	74.37	0.93
1974	77.25	74.49	73.77	74.22	0.96
1975	87.06	83.39	82.1	82.58	0.95
1976	97.86	90.22	90.72	90.47	0.92
1977	107.96	105.59	104.09	104.43	0.97
1978	112.44	110.33	110.06	109.75	0.98
1979	119.3	119.18	116.53	117.38	0.98
1980	132.34	129.97	131.66	131.35	0.99
1981	154.75	157.45	161.16	159.99	1.03
1982	200.88	197.52	208.87	199.90	0.995
1983	249.61	230.75	233.75	232.03	0.93
1984	260.93	247.06	253.04	249.82	0.96
1985	292.27	270.06	279.39	274.4	0.94
1986	303.95	276.6	288.25	281.16	0.93
1987	299.03	267.77	274.7	274.0	0.92
1988	293.89	266.78	278.04	278.98	0.95
1989	283.16	282.6	283.78	283.83	1.002

Source: _Congressional Quarterly Almanac_ (1947-1988).

[1]Does not include any supplemental requests or appropriations.

[2]Part of the Omnibus Appropriations Act for FY 1951.

[3]The original Johnson bill was $2.5 billion higher.

Table 4

House Floor Activity on Defense Authorization Bills
FY 1962 to FY 1989[1]

Year	origin of amendments passed			origin of other amendments[2]			Grand Total
	HASC	Non-HASC	Total	HASC	Non-HASC	Total	
1962	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
1963	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
1964	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1965	0	0	0	3	1	4	4
1966	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1967	0	1	1	0	0	0	1
1968	1	2	3	0	2	2	5
1969	1	0	1	3	3	6	7
1970	3	2	5	8	7	15	20
1971	0	1	1	8	14	22	23
1972	2	0	2	11	8	19	21
1973	0	0	0	11	3	14	14
1974	1	4	5	8	0	8	13
1975	2	0	2	4	2	6	8
1976	1	2	3	9	3	12	15
1977	1	0	1	6	5	11	12
1978	1	5	6	9	2	11	17
1979	2	4	6	10	4	14	20
1980	9	7	16	8	7	15	31
1981	14	3	17	2	7	9	26
1982	10	13	23	6	19	25	48
1983	26	15	41	8	19	27	68
1984	25	7	32	7	7	14	46
1985	24	18	42	12	11	23	65
1986	50	46	96	17	10	27	123
1987	49	37	86	17	11	28	114
1988	48	42	90	19	18	37	127
1989	46	34	80	15	15	30	110

Source: _Congressional Quarterly Almanac_ (1961-1977), _Congressional Record_ (1978-1988)

[1]Lists those floor amendments to the bill considered for the first time by the House prior to conference committee. Amendments are grouped by their source of sponsorship, either by or not by a member of the House Armed Services Committee. Amendments with more than one sponsor are grouped according to the first sponsor that appears on the amendment.

[2]Other amendments include those rejected in the House by any means or those withdrawn by their sponsors.

Table 5

Senate Floor Activity on Defense Authorization Bills
FY 1962 to FY 1989[1]

Year	origin of amendments passed			origin of other amendments[2]			Grand Total
	SASC	Non-SASC	Total	SASC	Non-SASC	Total	
1962	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1963	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1964	1	0	1	1	0	1	2
1965	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
1966	0	0	0	3	0	3	3
1967	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1968	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1969	0	2	2	0	5	5	7
1970	2	9	11	4	5	9	20
1971	2	12	14	1	14	15	29
1972	3	6	9	2	16	18	27
1973	2	8	10	3	7	10	17
1974	10	25	35	6	11	17	52
1975	6	16	22	2	12	14	36
1976	5	9	14	2	9	11	25
1977	4	8	12	3	4	7	19
1978	1	4	5	0	3	3	8
1979	11	3	14	3	1	4	18
1980	3	6	9	1	1	2	11
1981	5	11	16	5	4	9	25
1982	7	8	15	2	0	2	17
1983	10	19	29	14	17	31	60
1984	22	25	47	6	6	12	59
1985	35	47	82	5	20	25	107
1986	38	43	81	10	17	27	108
1987	24	30	54	9	22	31	85
1988	42	47	89	10	20	30	119
1989	31	36	67	8	13	21	88

Source: Congressional Quarterly Almanac (1961-1977),
Congressional Record (1978-1988).

[1]Lists those floor amendments to the bill considered for the
first time by the Senate prior to conference committee.
Amendments are grouped by their source of sponsorship,
either by or not by a member of the Senate Armed Services
Committee. Amendments with more than one sponsor are
grouped according to the first sponsor that appears on the
amendment.

[2]Other amendments include those rejected in the Senate by
any means or those withdrawn by their sponsors.

TABLE 6

Congressional Directions and Line Item Adjustments, Selected
Fiscal Years

	Fiscal Year						
	1970	1976	1978	1982	1985	1986	1990
Congressional Directions:							
Reports/Studies	36	114	153	221	458	676	861
Other Actions	18	208	229	210	113	184	n/a
General Provisions in the Law	64	96	101	158	213	227	n/a
Line Item Dollar Adjustments (adds and cuts):							
Authorizations	180	222	270	339[1]	1315[2]	1145	776
Appropriations	650	1032	1183	1119	1848	2156	1128

Source: Office of the Comptroller, Department of Defense

[1]Operations and Maintenance were not previously authorized.

[2]Ammunition procurement and other miscellaneous procurement were not previously authorized.

CHAPTER FIVE:
LOW TIDE FOR POST-VIETNAM PRESIDENTS?

Prior to the reforms of the 1970s, presidents were able to block or delay congressional actions, mainly through powers of impoundment. Examples of this presidential success include Truman's blocking of a fifty-eight group Air Force, Eisenhower blocking development of missile technology, and Kennedy blocking procurement of a follow-on manned bomber. Congress, though, also could disapprove or at least modify administration proposals. Witness Truman's failed efforts at getting Universal Military Training, congressional modification of Eisenhower's defense reorganization plans, and the unsuccessful Johnson/Nixon efforts to field an ABM system or a fleet of fast deployment logistic ships in the late 1960s. When Congress restricted the president's impoundment powers, it gave itself more authority over defense policy making, while presidents would be more likely to use their other powers, such as the veto, to control defense policy decisions.

The effects of Vietnam, while creating a permanent anti-defense and defense reform coalition, were in some ways short-lived. Although there were changes in the perceptions of what the United States' role in the world should be, the

underlying fear of Soviet aggression remained. The same
year that Vietnam ended, the policy of détente was tested by
the Yom Kippur War in the Middle East. By 1975, advocates
of increased defense spending were gaining ascendancy in
Congress. During the Ford Administration, Defense Secretary
James Schlesinger planted the seeds for increased spending
over the coming years.[1] The nest year, President Ford
requested a peacetime supplemental defense appropriation, in
part to overcome tough competition from strong defense
advocate Ronald Reagan during the 1976 Republican primary
season. The request was only partially honored by a
Congress that was wary of increased defense spending.

Carter and Reagan

The effects of the loss of power and the
decentralization of Congress may have been most felt by the
presidencies of Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan. It is
ironic that neither president left office supporting the
same defense strategy and policies as he did when took
office. Carter ultimately supported bigger defense budget
increases and was unable to conclude any major arms control
agreements, while Reagan trimmed his planned increases and
supported arms control.

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[1]Congressional Quarterly Almanac 1976, Vol. 32,
(Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly, 1977), 275.

Jimmy Carter had campaigned for the presidency in 1976 on the issue of cutting the defense budget. However, in the 1980, he campaigned on his record of having reversed the decline in defense spending that had characterized his Republicans predecessors, Presidents Nixon and Ford.[2] Carter was overwhelmed by events in his term, including the Iran hostage crisis, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and the general perception that the Soviets had become more aggressive in the 1970s with the revelation that a Soviet army brigade had been stationed in Cuba.

Carter's original plans for defense cuts were based upon more nuclear weapons agreements with the Soviets, such as Strategic Arms Limitations Talks II (SALT II) and adoption of a nuclear-free.zone in the Indian Ocean. As an indication of Carter's support for arms control, he appointed Harold Brown as Secretary of Defense. Brown had been a delegate to the SALT talks in the 1970s. These plans were both scrapped by 1980. Carter could not carry out his promise of troop withdrawals from Korea. This became a major policy battle both within Congress and the executive. Carter fired Major General Singlaub, a commander in Korea, who had publicly warned that troop withdrawals would lead to general war. Congressional reaction to this was swift, and

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[2]Michael Wormser, ed., U.S. Defense Policy, 3d ed., (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 1983), 26.

even some its leading liberals, such as Senator Hubert
Humphrey (D-MN), opposed Carter's plan.[3]

Carter had vacillated on whether or not to produce and
deploy enhanced nuclear weapons (the so-called neutron bomb)
in an effort to increase the Europeans' role in policy
decisions over nuclear weapons. There was a public
disagreement within the administration, involving the NSC,
the State Department's Arms Control and Disarmament Agency
and the Army, and also between the United States and her
NATO allies over the efficacy of these weapons. The media
had much to do with framing the public awareness and
opposition to such a seemingly immoral weapon before Carter
had made a final decision on producing the weapon. The
argument continued in Congress, which at the urging of such
members as Senator Claiborne Pell (D-RI) and Congressman
Chris Dodd (D-CT), voted not to fund continued development
without a European commitment to deployment. This vote was
a public embarrassment for the Carter administration and led
to Carter's final decision not to continue development.[4]
The administration only backed deployment of the MX missile

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[3]Wormser, 19.

[4]For an in depth review of the events surrounding the
decision over whether or not to build the neutron bomb, see
Shari Wasserman, The Neutron Bomb Controversy, (New York:
Praeger, 1983).

in 1980 when the political pressures to do so became
irresistible.[5]

Carter had also fought with Congress over expensive
weapons system procurement. He defeated a strong effort
within Congress to fund the B-1 bomber, the latest
replacement offered for the B-52 bomber in 1977. Instead
Carter favored development of less expensive air-launched
nuclear cruise missiles even in the face of Air Force
objections. Carter was the first president to veto a
defense procurement authorization bill. Carter objected to
the bill because it authorized funds to build a Nimitz-class
aircraft carrier. By 1980, Congress was split among
supporters of cruise missiles, the B-1, and development of a
new generation of bombers using so-called stealth
technology. Stealth bombers were favored by such senators
as John Culver (D-IA) and John Glenn (D-OH).[6]

Congress, led by the leadership of the armed service
committees and the appropriations subcommittees, built up
pressure on the administration to increase defense spending
over Carter's objections. Cater had few allies within the
military. The members of the JCS went public with their
dislike of the Carter defense policies in congressional
testimony, much as the service chiefs had done during the

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[5]Wormser, 18 and Ornstein and Elder, 187.

[6]Congressional Quarterly Almanac 1980, Vol. 36,
(Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly, 1981), 61.

latter part of the Eisenhower administration. Carter,

unlike Eisenhower, did not have the power of impoundment to

dissuade congressmen or the military from their endeavors.

By 1980, he did not have the political will to attempt to

face Congress down anymore. Unlike Eisenhower in the late

1950s, Carter was facing reelection. The pressures of the

Iranian hostage crisis and the Soviet Union's invasion of

Afghanistan were telling. There was a public split in the

administration between the NCS advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski

and the Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance over these and other

issues. In 1980, Congress again authorized and appropriated

funds for procurement of a large Nimitz-class nuclear

aircraft carrier as well as substantial pay increases for

the military over Carter's objections. But this time Carter

did not veto the measures. The FY 1981 defense budget

appropriation approved by Congress was 5.2 billion dollars

above the administration's request. It was the first time

since 1966 that Congress appropriated more funds to defense

than an administration requested.[7] The total amount

appropriated annually between FY 1979 and FY 1981 jumped 43%

or over 45 billion dollars (not adjusted for inflation).

But this jump is partially attributable to the efforts of

Carter's successor in 1981.

When Ronald Reagan campaigned in 1980, he capitalized

on the public's belief that the nation needed a stronger

[7] Wormser, 24-25.

defense to counter the Soviet threat as well the humiliation at the hands of "third rate" powers such as Iran. His electoral victory marked the resurgence of the much of the Cold War rhetoric that had been somewhat dormant in the executive branch since Vietnam. Just as John F. Kennedy had used academic critiques of Eisenhower's New Look in the 1950s in his election campaign in 1960, Reagan capitalized on the arguments of several defense strategists about the failure of strategic policy, arms control and détente in the 1970s. The proponents of enlarging defense spending included such figures as Paul Nitze, Colin Gray, Jeanne Kirkpatrick, and others.[8]

But the Reagan Era, despite its rhetoric and long-range plans, was actually no great departure from the trend set in motion during the Carter administration. An early indicator of this was the appointment of Casper Weinberger as the Secretary of Defense. Weinberger was a close associate of Reagan and had previously been head of the Federal Trade Commission and the OMB under President Nixon. Weinberger quickly overruled the expansionist proposals of the Pentagon transition team, headed by hard-line theorist

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[8]Reagan's nuclear strategy was supported by the arguments presented in Colin Gray's "Nuclear Strategy: The Case for a Theory of Victory," in American Defense Policy, 6th ed., ed. Schuyler Foerster and Edward N. Wright, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 103-121 and Paul Nitze's "Deterring Our Deterrent" in The Use of Force, 3d ed., ed. Robert Art and Kenneth Waltz, (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1988), 349-360.

William R. Van Cleave. This move indicated that there might not be any massive build-up of strategic arms designed to close the "window of vulnerability". Reagan secured large supplemental defense appropriations from Congress in 1981 and many weapons systems that had been halted or delayed during the three previous administrations were rushed into production. These included previously cancelled systems such as the B-1 bomber.

Reagan, like most post-war presidents, was limited to advocating weapons systems conceived and developed during previous administrations until the announcement of the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), commonly known as "Star Wars" in 1983. Presidents, despite limitations, do have the ability to frame debate through the introduction of a highly innovative idea. In fact, there was a small movement in the Senate touting a space-based anti-missile defense before the Star Wars announcement. The movement, calling for a "defense dominance" strategy was made by conservative Senators Malcolm Wallop (R-WY), Harrison Schmitt (R-NM), Pete Domenici (R-AZ), and Howard Heflin (D-AL). However, it is doubtful if this movement would have gained attention or become a focus of partisan activity and floor debate so quickly if were not for its adoption by Reagan.

Reagan's efforts to progressively increase defense spending started to unravel during his first term. This was due to the burgeoning budget deficit and the recession of

1982. There was mounting pressure from many members of
Congress to maintain spending for domestic programs. Plans
for an ever-increasing defense build-up were finally dashed
in 1985. The defense budget authority approved by Congress
for FY 1986 grew nominally, but actually declined in real
terms due to the affects of inflation. Congress trimmed
second-term administration defense budget requests, with the
exception of FY 1989, between 15 and 23 billion dollars.
However these cuts were, on the whole, relatively similar in
size to other congressional efforts to decrease defense
spending. Presidential requests were no more "dead on
arrival" as Congressman William Gray (D-PA), chairman of the
House Budget Committee, put it than the requests of previous
administrations. However the defense budgets, especially
the authorization bill became the focus of partisan activity
not only in floor debates but also in voting activity,
especially in the House (see table 1). The large number of
votes cast against defense authorizations bills along party
lines has few precedents.

SDI, along with other strategic weapons systems such
as the MX missile, were perennial items of conflict between
the Reagan administration and members of Congress during
defense budgets debates in Congress. Defense mismanagement
and the rushed procurement of troubled weapons systems such
as the Bradley Fighting Vehicle or the M-1 main battle tank,
were also topics of concern. American foreign policy in

such areas as Central America and the Persian Gulf were
hotly debated in Congress. Burden sharing by allies became
an important topic in congressional efforts to reduce the
deficit and to avoid closing military bases in the United
States. Elements within the administration, including
agencies that had suffered cutbacks by the Reagan
administration, and the Budget Director, David Stockman, as
well as members of Congress began to call for defense cuts
of up to 30 billion dollars over three fiscal years.[9]

The issue of secrecy became increasingly divisive.
The top secret "black" budget[10] increased at a much faster
pace than the overall defense budget during the Reagan
administration. Some, such as John Dingell, charged that,
without the adequate oversight that other areas of the
budget received, there was much mismanagement within these
programs. Senator Barry Goldwater (R-AZ), chairman of the
SASC in the 99th Congress, countered that his committee
provided adequate oversight of those programs. Still
members of Congress and outside interest groups, such as the
Project on Military Procurement and the Federation of

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[9]Wormser, 30.

[10]This budget contained funding for development of
such items as the stealth bomber, CIA and other intelligence
operations, classified research, procurement, and
construction projects.

American Scientists, continued to question the efficacy of
the bulging "black" budget.[11]

The Reagan administration's emphasis on a strategic
weapons build-up versus a conventional build-up cost the
Defense Department some of its traditional support in
Congress. Some legislators criticized the fact that despite
an influx of money the services were not adequately funding
the most glaring needs revealed in the 1970s, such as the
need for adequate sea and airlift, close air support, and
operations and maintenance.[12] Pro-defense Congressmen
William Dickinson (R-AL) and Charles Bennett (D-FL), and
moderates such as Senator J. Bennett Johnston (D-LA) teamed
up with liberals such as Congressman Ron Dellums (D-CA) to
become increasingly intransigent over strategic defense
increases. Other defense spending, as well as domestic
programs, started to suffer freezes or cutbacks under the
weight of the tremendous federal budget deficit and
corrective measures taken to deal with it. Congress
initially refused to fund the administration's request for
initial production of the MX missile in 1982, which marked
the first time since the Vietnam War that Congress had
denied a presidential request for a major weapons system.

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[11]David C. Morrison, "Pentagon's Top Secret 'Black'
Budget Has Skyrocketed During Reagan Years," National
Journal, 1 March 1986, 492-493.

[12]Hendrickson, chapter 4.

During this period, Congress also continued to expand
its role in developing defense policy. Procurement reform
became an annual target of congressional activity in the
1980s. The services had entered a period of relative
harmony due to the increased defense expenditures which
benefited all the services. But events such as the failed
Iranian Hostage Rescue in 1980 and the invasion of Grenada
in 1983, although a military victory, revealed shortcomings
in the ability of the services to effectively cooperate.
Over the initial objections within the Reagan
administration, the House sponsored a plan for a DoD
reorganization at the urgings of retired General David Jones
who had been chairman of the JCS under Presidents Carter and
Reagan. House efforts, led by Bill Nichols (D-AL), Ike
Skelton (D-MO) and Les Aspin stalled in the Senate for
several years as SASC chairman John Tower was opposed to the
plan. In 1986, despite continued opposition by Casper
Weinberger, conservative SASC chair Barry Goldwater paved
the way for final congressional approval of a
reorganization. The Nichols-Goldwater Act of 1986 was
dubbed the most sweeping reform of the DoD since its
establishment. The Act increased the authority of the
chairman of the JCS in his policy and advisory role to the
president, and made the chairman much more of a leading
figure on the JCS. The Act gave more authority to the seven
unified commands of multi-service operations around the
globe. It increased the amount of joint service that

commissioned officers must perform, in an effort to reduce
individual service parochialism. In addition, the Act made
the first attempt at reducing the reporting requirements for
the services and DoD to Congress.[13]

The armed services committees continued to come under
pressure from the rest of Congress in the late 1980s.
Increasingly, the committees could not get bills through the
committee mark-up phase or enacted on the floor without
intense partisan and ideological struggles. These struggles
were within the committee itself, with other committees and
even with individual congressmen. Votes for authorization
and appropriation measures had gone from being non-partisan
in the 1950s to areas of partisan activity. The voting on
most measures was along party lines, especially in the House
where Republicans refused to defer to the Democratic
majority's cuts or changes in the Reagan administration's
requests.

In 1985, the House Democratic Caucus again rebelled
against the seniority system by ousting chairman Melvin
Price (D-IL) and electing the 8th ranking member of the
HASC, Les Aspin (D-WI) to chair the committee over several
more senior and more conservative members. Aspin's
leadership was tenuous. He tried to appear moderate and
conciliatory. He was deemed too conservative by liberal

[13]Congressional Quarterly Almanac, 1986, Vol. 42,
(Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly, 1987), 455.

members of the House and too liberal by most members of the committee and the sub-committee chairs. Aspin barely survived a challenge for his leadership post on the committee by Marvin Leath (D-TX) in January 1987.

Senator Sam Nunn (D-GA), the current chair of the SASC, has attempted to enact multi-year defense authorizations for several years, but the budget process has been stymied and often is unable to produce new budgets by the start of each fiscal year. Increasingly instead of multi-year budgets, there have been multi-budget years with increased use of continuing resolutions and budget reconciliations to meet Gramm-Rudman deficit targets.[14]

Several factors led the Reagan administration to become increasingly ineffective on a number of issues halfway through its second term. These included the departure of experienced personnel, a shift from an antagonistic to a conciliatory posture in dealing with the Soviets (which fostered internal dissention within the administration over policy direction and raised questions within Congress over the continued large size of administration defense budget requests), and the fact that it was now a lame duck administration in which more and more

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[14]For an in depth study of the budgetary process in the 1980s see Aaron Wildavsky, The New Politics of the Budget Process, (Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1988).

of the headlines went to the large number of presidential
contenders who declared their candidacy early. But by far
the most debilitating problem for the administration was the
Iran-Contra scandal which was uncovered in November 1986 and
haunted the administration through the remainder of its
term.

In a parting blow at Congress, Reagan vetoed the FY
1989 defense authorization bill over some arms control
provisos. He did so despite opposition to a veto from
within the Republican ranks of Congress and within his
policy advisors. Some thought that the veto was designed to
curry favor with conservatives so as to help Vice-President
Bush's election chances that Fall.[15]

Conclusions

Defense policy has seldom been a logical extension of
American foreign policy aims or national security needs
alone, especially since there are numerous alternatives to
support our foreign policy aims, as expressed by the various
factions within the defense community aligned with defense
contractors and elements within Congress. There has been
little consensus during the Cold War as to what constitutes
a credible defense for the United States and what this

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[15]*Congressional Quarterly Almanac, 1988*, Vol. 44,
(Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly, 1989), 399.

country's role should be in the defense of American allies
and other interests.

The pluralistic characteristics of American political
institutions has allowed numerous entrance points into the
policy process. Such entry may result from events which
alter perceptions and decision points, but new information
sources, new personalities and ideas, reforms and ever-
shifting coalitions which alter the balance of power in
decision-making. These coalitions have become more fluid
over time. The recurring nature of the policy process means
that the decision points themselves are fluid. What is
defeated today may rise in triumph next week, next year or
even as far away as in the next decade, perhaps only to be
replaced or altered soon afterward as a result of some new
technology or innovation.

As the defense organization in the executive branch
has been centralized over time through legislative reforms
of its structures, Congress has itself become more
decentralized through reforms and rules changes. Defense
committees and congressional elites have been broadened.
The ability of the traditional defense committees to control
the debate over defense policy within Congress has declined.
There have been increased efforts to amend committee bills
and challenge committee jurisdiction. Information is key,
it is not only whom you know, but it is also what you know
that is, in an era of increasing specialization, required to

be successful. Congressional activism in defense issues has had the dual effect of being both unifying and divisive in the domestic debate by reacting to local and parochial claims and seeking to serve the national interest at the same time.[16] This debate has been complicated with the emergence of varying special interest and interest group activity which has taken advantage of the diffusion and decentralization which has occurred over the past 45 years.

Presidents have seldom been in complete control of the defense debate, even such Presidents as Truman and Eisenhower could not control the discussion or prevent it from adversely affecting their policy goals. Presidential control has grown more tenuous with the growing decentralization within Congress. It seems that presidents may only gain advantage by developing new policy initiatives, such as counterinsurgency for the Kennedy administration and SDI for the Reagan administration. Congress has not been able to effectively dominate the shaping of defense policy, in part because of the very reforms which have also weakened the executive.

The clash of special interest coalitions and a search for a rational policy may only worsen as defense funds are slashed from the budget in the wake of events in Eastern Europe in 1989. The defense budget and policy process may

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[16]Radway, 150.

be profoundly altered by the events of 1989. There may be new actors in the process or at least the present balance of participation may shift in favor of new players. President Bush, Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney, and the JCS have counselled Congress that defense reductions are now possible but that change must be slow. This is, indeed, the first time that there may be a build-down in peacetime of the magnitude of a post-war demobilization. The events in the Persian Gulf War may have a great impact not only in tempering calls to cut the defense budget, but also on the character and nature of future efforts to reorganize or reform the military.

Will the perceived changes of the Soviet threat result in only minor revisions or sweeping change in the United States' defense policy process? Will Congress be able to maintain an influential role in policy development? What power shifts will occur in the House and the Senate in the 1990s? Will new leadership emerge in Congress? What will be the background and character of future political appointees by presidents? In the face of declining budgets, coupled with the losses and changes of missions, will the military services become increasingly fractional or will they cooperate to establish coherent budget and mission priorities? Will events overwhelm the Bush administration just as democracy has overwhelmed Europe, or will the pro-defense interests retain some influence and avoid deep cuts

in their programs and personnel? How formative will the early events and issues of this post Cold War period be towards shaping our future decision making and defense policy?

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