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# **The Role of Congress in the Strategic Posture of the United States, 1980 - 1990**

## **Force Modernization and SDI**

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*National Institute for Public Policy*

**February 2010**

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# **The Role of Congress in the Strategic Posture of the United States, 1980-1990: Force Modernization and SDI**

## **Introduction**

This is the third in a series of three papers to examine the role of Congress in the development of the doctrinal and material strategic posture of the United States over the three decades of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. This paper examines the role of the 97<sup>th</sup> through 102<sup>nd</sup> Congresses, covering the period 1980-1990, the last decade of the Cold War, and corresponding to the administration of President Ronald Reagan and the first part of the administration of President George H.W. Bush.

As explained at length in the first paper, the role of Congress in building the U.S. strategic posture is underappreciated by both historians and policymakers. Congress is especially underestimated as regards its ability to influence the intellectual direction of the strategic posture by adopting and implementing theories and doctrines that guide development of strategic forces and plans for their employment. Yet the congressional record is a rich resource, not least for being unclassified and providing meticulous detail on debates and the thinking of the Congress, presidential administrations, and the armed services on the ideas and concerns that shaped the U.S. strategic posture. This resource is underutilized by historians of U.S. strategic policy.

This paper is a modest attempt to illuminate and correct the record on the role of Congress in the making of the strategic posture. It is primarily an intellectual history on how the ideas and thinking prevalent in Congress affected plans and programs that

became the material capabilities, and limitations, of the U.S. strategic posture. For this purpose, the paper shall draw heavily from the congressional record, letting the actors speak for themselves as much as possible, to demonstrate the richness of this resource, and because it is the best way to tell the story.

The chief themes for this period are three.

First, contrary to views popularized by critics in Congress, the press, and academia, the strategic posture favored by the Reagan administration and its allies in Congress—that included not only Republicans but also a number of Democrats—was not a radical departure from that of the Carter administration with regard to offensive nuclear forces and their strategic rationale. Reagan administration strategic offensive programs and their purposes were largely continued from the Carter administration, but with more success because of a more supportive Congress.

Second, the Reagan administration did seek a radical departure from the past with missile defenses pursued under the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). SDI attempted to render obsolete the doctrine of assured destruction and its mutual hostage relationship between the United States and the USSR. Arms control theory held that the mutual vulnerability of populations was the basis for strategic deterrence and “stability” between the two sides. President Reagan and his congressional allies believed otherwise, but could not overcome the dominant strategic culture in Congress, academia, the press, and within his own administration that viewed strategic defenses for protecting populations as “destabilizing.”

Third, while the Reagan administration and its congressional allies often were condemned as reckless “nuclear war fighters” who impeded arms control progress, they

in fact secured significant arms control achievements. The Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty was the first arms agreement to eliminate an entire class of nuclear weapons. The Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) began an arms control process that, for the first time, stopped the buildup of offensive strategic nuclear weapons and resulted ultimately in their deep reduction, a process that continues today. At the same time, congressional opponents effectively used the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty to thwart what President Reagan hoped would be his most important national security legacy—the SDI. Thus arms control proved the dominant factor shaping the U.S. strategic posture.

### **Strategic Doctrine**

The circumstances of Ronald Reagan’s election in 1980 created the impression among the American people, in Congress, and in the media, that the national security policy of his administration would depart radically from that of the Carter administration by being far more assertive and ambitious in a number of directions, including nuclear forces and strategy. President Carter was seen in certain quarters as “weak on defense.” During his tenure, Iranian militants seized the American embassy in Tehran, leading to a protracted hostage crisis and catastrophic rescue attempt; the USSR invaded Afghanistan; Soviet conventional and theater nuclear forces posed a growing threat to NATO; and a “window of vulnerability” opened to a theoretical Soviet first strike against U.S. strategic forces. Pointing to these challenges, Reagan promised to bolster U.S. military strength.

The Soviet nuclear threat and perceived weaknesses in the U.S. strategic posture played a salient role in Reagan's election campaign. Candidate Reagan made an issue of President Carter's cancellation of the B-1 and advocated reviving the strategic bomber.<sup>1</sup> Reagan called for deployment of the MX intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM)<sup>2</sup> and his supporters lambasted President Carter for not doing so. Forgotten was that President Carter had tried hard to deploy the MX, but was thwarted by a hostile Congress. The MX was part of the Democratic National Committee campaign platform, but it quickly became Reagan's missile.<sup>3</sup> Other Carter administration nuclear weapons programs—the Trident II submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM), the air-launched cruise missile (ALCM), the Pershing II intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM), and the ground-launched cruise missile (GLCM)—became identified primarily with the Reagan administration as a result of later press and congressional criticisms of President Reagan's strategic programs.

The only real difference between candidate Reagan's and President Carter's strategic programs was the B-1 bomber. But the phenomenally short memory of the Washington establishment and Reagan's willingness to more enthusiastically stump for Carter administration strategic programs made them Reagan's own.

Once elected, the conservative Reagan brought conservatives into his administration. This inspired trepidation among those in Congress and in the growing "nuclear freeze" movement—an effort supported by many in Congress—who feared the Reagan administration would inaugurate a dangerous new nuclear strategy based on "war fighting" and "first strike" capabilities. For example, one critic noted that President Reagan brought into his administration 32 members of the Committee on the Present



Danger. Two founders of the committee were elevated to particularly important posts, with Eugene Rostow becoming director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency and Paul Nitze serving as chief negotiator with the Soviets on theater nuclear arms control.<sup>4</sup> A number of senators and representatives and like-minded advocacy groups were at odds with the push by the committee for significantly increased U.S. conventional and nuclear forces to maintain “Peace Through Strength,” a committee motto adopted by candidate and President Reagan.

Such was the success of the Reagan presidential campaign that Reagan supporters, too, expected the new administration to embark on a radical departure from the national security policies of the Carter administration. They expected that President Reagan would implement his “Peace Through Strength” credo by modernizing U.S. nuclear forces, closing the strategic “window of vulnerability,” and taking whatever steps were necessary to deter Soviet aggression. Forgotten was that President Carter had, in fact, attempted all these things, but was thwarted by Congress.

Accordingly, supporters and opponents alike tended to interpret the Reagan administration’s strategic policies and programs as ambitiously, or aggressively, new and radical. In fact, the Reagan administration largely continued the strategy and programs inherited from its predecessor.

### ***Continuities in Reagan Administration Policies***

A case in which the press—and many in Congress—misconstrued Reagan administration strategic policies as new and aggressive occurred early in the president’s first term. In May 1982, an internal Department of Defense (DoD) planning document, the *Fiscal Year 1984-1988 Defense Guidance*, leaked to the *New York Times*. In an

article entitled “Pentagon Draws Up First Strategy For Fighting a Long Nuclear War,” *Times* reporter Richard Halloran wrote that the *Defense Guidance*, signed by Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger, said the United States must have capabilities for waging “protracted” nuclear war and “prevailing” in such a conflict. The guidance, according to Halloran, “went beyond President Carter’s Presidential Directive 59 [PD 59], which focused American nuclear strategy on attacks on specific military and political targets.”<sup>5</sup> Twenty-five years later, however, after a number of key strategy directives of the Reagan administration had been declassified, Halloran in another article concluded that, in fact, “it seemingly was not so large a step from...PD-59 to Weinberger’s *Defense Guidance* and its theoretical acceptance of protracted nuclear war. Indeed...the Reagan approach rested in the mainstream of U.S. strategic thought, even if it didn’t appear to be that way.”<sup>6</sup>

In none of the particulars cited by Halloran in either the earlier or later article did the Reagan administration’s nuclear strategy differ significantly from the Carter administration’s Presidential Directive 59. PD 59, too, had made provision for conducting limited nuclear attacks and for fighting a protracted nuclear war. It directed that “improvements should be made to our forces, their supporting C3 [command, control, communications] and intelligence, and their employment plans and planning apparatus, to achieve a high degree of flexibility, enduring survivability, and adequate performance in the face of enemy actions.”<sup>7</sup> Like PD 59, the Reagan administration’s *Defense Guidance* also included the requirement for “assured destruction” of Soviet military forces and industry. This requirement had been a dominant feature of the U.S.

strategic posture under every president since John F. Kennedy, whose defense secretary, Robert McNamara, introduced the assured destruction concept.<sup>8</sup>

Although the statement in the *Defense Guidance* that the United States, if forced into a nuclear war by Soviet aggression, should endeavor to “prevail” was widely viewed as evidence that the Reagan administration had aggressive designs to triumph over the Soviet Union in a nuclear conflict, and perhaps even initiate nuclear war, the notion of “prevailing” was not that different from the “countervailing strategy” described in PD 59:

Our strategic nuclear forces must be able to deter nuclear attacks not only on our own country but also on our forces overseas, as well as on our friends and allies. To continue to deter in an era of strategic nuclear equivalence, it is necessary to have nuclear (as well as conventional) forces such that in considering aggression against our interests any adversary would recognize that no plausible outcome would represent a victory or any plausible definition of victory. To this end and so as to preserve the possibility of bargaining effectively to terminate the war on acceptable terms that are as favorable as practical, if deterrence fails initially, we must be capable of fighting successfully so that the adversary would not achieve his war aims and would suffer costs that are unacceptable, or in any event greater than his gains, from having initiated an attack.<sup>9</sup>

While PD 59 was classified at the time, its main provisions and the Carter administration’s “countervailing strategy” were described and explained at length in open congressional testimony.<sup>10</sup> The continuity of strategic ideas between Presidents Carter and Reagan should have been apparent.

Similarly, though the Reagan administration, particularly in its first years, was criticized on Capitol Hill and elsewhere as hostile to negotiations and agreements to limit nuclear arms, policy guidance issued by President Reagan shows that he, like his predecessors, supported arms control measures and efforts to improve strategic stability. For example, National Security Decision Directive 15 (NSDD 15), signed by the

president in November 1981, put arms control first, calling for “no deployment of the U.S. Pershing II and GLCMs” if the Soviets agreed to eliminate their equivalent systems. The directive also made it U.S. policy to “seek subsequent limits with significant reductions for other nuclear weapons systems” and “negotiate in good faith to achieve global, equal and verifiable levels of weapons.”<sup>11</sup>

National Security Decision Directive 195, issued four years later, reaffirmed the president’s determination “to ensure that every opportunity to achieve equitable and verifiable reductions in the size of existing nuclear arsenals is exploited fully and to the best of our ability.” The same directive indicated that the SDI was aimed not at securing a U.S. unilateral advantage, but was part of a strategy to move both the United States and the Soviet Union away from their mutual hostage relationship and toward a “cooperative transition to more reliance on defenses.”<sup>12</sup>

In National Security Decision Directive 247, approved in October 1986, President Reagan supported limits on nuclear testing and identified nuclear elimination as his ultimate goal: “[A]s I have made clear to [Soviet] General Secretary [Mikhail] Gorbachev, once our verification concerns have been satisfied and the [Threshold Test Ban and Peaceful Nuclear Explosions] treaties have been ratified, and in association with a program to reduce and ultimately eliminate all nuclear weapons, we are prepared to engage in discussions on ways to implement a step-by-step parallel program of limiting and ultimately ending nuclear testing.”<sup>13</sup>

Despite these positions, the view that the Reagan administration adhered to a novel, aggressive, and dangerous strategic doctrine fueled congressional opposition to strategic programs intended to support a doctrine that in reality was largely a continuation

of the policies of previous administrations. Opposition also arose from a belief that the administration was insufficiently committed to arms control. The strategic offensive program that generated the most controversy on Capitol Hill was the MX ICBM. In large part to gain greater backing for the MX, the administration chartered a bipartisan group, the Scowcroft Commission. The story of that commission highlights some of the differences between the Reagan administration and its congressional critics regarding matters related to nuclear doctrine.

### *Scowcroft Commission*

Throughout most of its two terms, the Reagan administration had a slim Republican majority in the Senate, a House controlled by the Democrats, and a legislative branch polarized ideologically over issues of national security. As noted, President Reagan advocated what he termed “Peace Through Strength”—increasing and modernizing U.S. conventional and nuclear forces to deter Soviet aggression. He was strongly supported by congressional allies that included a number of Democrats, led by Senators Henry Jackson and John Stennis. Congressional critics, the majority of whom were Democrats, perceived the Reagan strategic buildup as likely to spur arms competition and heighten international danger, and preferred negotiations and treaties to lessen tensions and constrain or reduce the nuclear weapons of both sides

In an effort to forge a new strategic consensus between the administration and Congress, between those advocating strategic force modernization—particularly deployment of the MX—and those preferring arms control, President Reagan established the President’s Commission on Strategic Forces. The purpose of the commission was to review the administration’s nuclear policies and programs and fashion a strategy that

combined “Peace Through Strength” with “stability through arms control” and could be supported by both the executive and legislative branches.

The commission became known as the “Scowcroft Commission” for its chairman, Brent Scowcroft, a retired Air Force lieutenant general and national security adviser to President Ford. General Scowcroft was widely respected by both political parties. The commission was bipartisan and included a number of respected Democrats who served in the Carter administration; this was done in order to enhance the credibility of the group with Congress. President Carter’s secretary of defense, Harold Brown, became a leading spokesman for the commission before Congress.

In an April 1983 hearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC), commission members defended key parts of the Reagan administration’s nuclear strategy and presented strategic force modernization and arms control as complementary objectives. Issues and arguments in this hearing became battle lines between the Reagan administration and its opponents in Congress that persisted throughout, and in some ways beyond, its tenure.<sup>14</sup>

General Scowcroft called for a “new direction” in ICBM modernization and arms control that would enhance “stability.” The centerpiece of the commission plan was deployment of 100 MX missiles in existing Minuteman silos to induce the Soviets to negotiate reductions in their most threatening ICBMs. The plan envisioned deployment of a mobile Small ICBM (SICBM or “Midgetman”) in the 1990s as a hedge against the vulnerability of silo-based ICBMs to missile attack or SLBMs to improvements in anti-submarine warfare. The plan also proposed that future arms agreements focus on limiting warheads rather than launchers to reduce the incentive to deploy large, vulnerable,

multiple-warhead missiles that made inviting targets. The commission, in General Scowcroft's words,

recommended what we think is an important new departure. We are proposing new directions, both in ICBM forces and arms control. This departure fundamentally is to integrate strategic force programs with arms control and to move both of them in the direction of stability.

We would accomplish this through a three part program. The first part of this program would be the immediate deployment of something like 100 MX missiles, for a number of reasons [including to] demonstrate national will and cohesion. We have now had four Presidents who have said that the MX missile is important. ...Next, we believe that the MX deployment is essential in order to reduce immediately the substantial imbalance in the capability of U.S. ICBM forces compared to those of the Soviet Union. The Soviets can with their ICBM forces put our strategic forces and other critical targets at risk in a way that the United States cannot begin to match. We feel that some redress of that balance is an important objective.

Also, and very importantly, the MX missile, we believe, is essential to induce the Soviets toward negotiations...which would permit the United States and encourage the Soviet Union to move in the direction of greater stability.

Over the longer run, the Commission proposes...a small single warhead missile as the second part of our program, looking toward deployment probably in the early 1990s. ...It should be small...for survivable basing, which...almost certainly would include mobile basing.<sup>15</sup>

All of these recommendations, it is important to note, were endorsed by the Reagan administration.

General Scowcroft called for a new consensus behind both strengthening the strategic posture and arms control: "We are proposing a major new departure for the United States in the direction of enhanced stability for our strategic forces, an approach that hopefully may permit a consensus to develop to allow us to put the divisiveness of the past, both in arms control and in our ICBM force modernization, behind us and allow

us to move forward with a more common perspective in our efforts to preserve both peace and freedom.”<sup>16</sup>

Likewise, Commissioner Harold Brown told the SASC that combining strategic force modernization and arms control was the most sensible strategy and deserved consensus support: “I also urge that those devoted to strategic arms control and reduction and those devoted to strategic force modernization now join those of us who have always supported both.”<sup>17</sup>

Former Secretary Brown called upon the Congress to close ranks behind the MX as essential to arms control, and because ICBMs offered special characteristics needed to maintain a strong deterrent: “ICBMs have some special capabilities—good communications, command and control, retargeting capability, and higher accuracy than other ballistic missile capabilities, and the combination of promptness and hard target capability is an important characteristic.”<sup>18</sup> Emphasizing the centrality of ICBM modernization to an effective nuclear strategy and success in arms control, General Scowcroft noted, “For the Soviet Union, ICBM forces are really the coin of the realm.”<sup>19</sup>

Along with laying out a way ahead on ICBM modernization and arms control, the commission endorsed preparedness for protracted nuclear conflict, limited nuclear operations, and strategic flexibility. Asked rhetorically by SASC Chairman John Tower if assured destruction alone was sufficient to uphold deterrence, General Scowcroft replied in the negative:

...whatever we may think the character of a nuclear war would be and whatever we think any rational person would be deterred from starting, we have to put ourselves in Soviet shoes and look at what would constitute deterrence for them. It was in that context that I think the Commission clearly rejected the idea of minimum deterrence and felt that some kind of equivalence is essential.<sup>20</sup>



General Scowcroft also stressed, however, that the number of MX missiles planned—100—was strongly influenced by arms control calculations, that is, the force was large enough to persuade the Soviets to negotiate away their SS-18 heavy ICBMs, the chief threat to U.S. land-based missiles, without being so large as to threaten the Soviets with a first strike:

GENERAL SCOWCROFT: ...I think 350 [MX missiles] would be a number that we think would cause problems and we think ought to be avoided at this time. That would clearly constitute a first strike capability against Soviet hardened targets.

SENATOR [J. James] EXON: You are telling me, General, that 350 indicates a first strike threat to the Soviet Union, but 100 does not?

GENERAL SCOWCROFT: Yes, sir.<sup>21</sup>

Commissioners argued that U.S. nuclear strategy required the MX ICBM, the future SICBM, the Trident II SLBM, the B-1 bomber, and the ALCM, as all of these were synergistically linked to make an effective deterrent. Enhancing the survivability of each leg of the triad of bombers, ICBMs, and SLBMs also would enhance the deterrent value of all legs, by complicating or rendering impossible a knockout blow against the three legs simultaneously.<sup>22</sup>

Clearly leading the witness, Republican Senator Strom Thurmond, an ardent supporter of the MX, elicited from General Scowcroft a tutorial for MX opponents on why the missile, if based in silos as the commission recommended, could still survive a Soviet first strike because of the “synergistic survivability” of the triad:

SENATOR THURMOND: I certainly hope that the Congress can proceed in the near future with the President’s proposal for our strategic forces. The concept of a strategic triad has served us well, but we have failed to modernize a very important part of that triad.

The Soviet Union, however, has not failed to see the importance of modernizing its strategic forces, and we have left ourselves in the precarious position of having to redress a serious imbalance.

I have a few questions. ...First, General Scowcroft, last year the Senate Armed Services Committee rejected basing MX missiles in existing Minuteman silos because it was felt that they would not survive a first-strike. The Commission now recommends doing this.

Without ballistic missile defense, what will make this basing scheme survivable?

GENERAL SCOWCROFT: We think, Senator Thurmond, that we can still rely over the near term on the synergistic survivability that the ICBM force and the bomber force provide to each other. Because of the fact that these two forces have to be attacked by different weapons systems we tend to think that the Soviets cannot time an attack that can destroy simultaneously both the bomber force and the ICBM force.<sup>23</sup>

Moreover, said the commission, the MX would give the United States hard-target counterforce capability comparable to that of Soviet missiles, and with prompt responsiveness and targeting flexibility for limited nuclear operations. Later, the mobile SICBM would complement the MX and Trident II by providing a more survivable hard-target-capable weapon in case either or both of the other missiles became vulnerable to Soviet attack in the 1990s.<sup>24</sup> Alternatively, the Trident II, based at sea and also able to destroy hard targets, would offer a hedge against the vulnerability of land-based missiles.

With regard to modernization of the bomber force, the B-1 would be more survivable than the aging B-52. The ability of the B-1 to penetrate enemy airspace would complicate the air defense problem for the Soviets and compel Moscow to expend disproportionate resources to counter the bomber. The ALCM would extend the life of the B-52 by making possible standoff attack and avoiding the need for penetrating sorties.

The ALCM also would impose additional complications and expenses on Soviet air defenses by threatening to overwhelm them.

Senator Thurmond spoke for the Republican majority on the SASC when, during the hearing, he endorsed the Scowcroft Commission's, and Reagan administration's, plan to close the "window of vulnerability" by modernizing U.S. strategic forces.<sup>25</sup> In addition, both Senator Tower, the committee chairman, and Senator Stennis, the ranking Democrat, voiced their approval of the commission's effort. "It is my belief," said Senator Tower, "that the President's Commission on Strategic Forces has performed a very significant service to the Nation. It has, in the midst of great confusion and political turmoil, undertaken to provide a clear and comprehensive vision of America's deterrent and arms control policies and the strategic forces required to implement such policies."<sup>26</sup> Senator Stennis told chairman, "I want to join in with all the sentiment of thanks for these gentlemen for what they have done on this old, complicated problem. As I listen to them, I am impressed with the points they make."<sup>27</sup>

Yet the bipartisan consensus offered by the Scowcroft Commission also met with sharp resistance, especially to the recommendation for the MX. Both the commission and the Reagan administration adopted the option of silo basing for the MX—even though silos were increasingly vulnerable to Soviet attack—because the Soviet advantage in counter-capable ICBMs was growing rapidly and deploying MX missiles in existing silos was the most expeditious way to address that threat. Democratic Senator James Exon, reflecting views widespread among MX critics in Congress, charged that silo deployment of MX constituted a radical departure from "all the strategic planning of all the previous administrations with regard to the MX and our deterrent." He continued,

...vulnerability has always been a critical issue. Now it seems to be no longer as important, and I do not understand that. It seems to me that if, as was the overriding concern back then, it did not make any sense to put MX's in Minuteman silos because they were vulnerable, I do not know what has changed.<sup>28</sup>

Senator Exon expressed the view of many congressional critics of the Reagan strategic modernization program when he claimed that the plan to place MX in silos proved the “window of vulnerability” did not really exist, and so a major premise for the program was a fiction. The senator “salute[d] the Commission for shooting down essentially the ‘window of vulnerability’ bugaboo that has plagued our defense planning for a long, long time.”<sup>29</sup>

Republican Senator William Cohen also challenged the alleged “window of vulnerability” that was the chief justification for the MX and the overall Reagan strategic modernization program that the Scowcroft Commission endorsed. Senator Cohen construed General Scowcroft’s description of the “synergistic survivability” of the triad to mean that the “window of vulnerability” was an exaggeration. “Since it is impossible for the Soviets to attack our bomber force and ICBM force simultaneously,” the senator argued, “then the window of vulnerability was never quite as wide as it was suggested. ...It was never quite as wide because of this incapacity or inability of the Soviets to target, both by their SLBM’s and ICBM’s.”<sup>30</sup>

Congress had rejected, during the Carter administration, the most survivable basing mode for MX, a sort of shell game in which mobile MX missiles would hide among “Multiple Protected Shelters” (MPS). Senator Cohen noted that Congress opposed MPS basing for MX because it was incompatible with arms control verification:

SENATOR COHEN: If I recall, the Air Force back in December 1978 did, in fact, recommend the vertical MPS as being the most cost-

effective and militarily effective basing mode that one could find for the MX. ...[D]ue to SALT II considerations, questions began to arise as to whether or not that violated the provisions of SALT II [the second Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty, signed in 1979]. And therefore we started searching for another type of basing mode....

GENERAL SCOWCROFT: Yes. ...Both MPS and CSB [“Closely Spaced Basing,” another proposed MX basing mode] do raise questions about about arms control which are not raised by our present recommendations.<sup>31</sup>

Commissioner John Deutch acknowledged that the decision to base MX in vulnerable silos reflected arms control considerations:

Candidly,...I am convinced that it is more important to choose a basing system that will lead to an integration of our arms control efforts. ...if we were only talking about military effectiveness, against which I would dissent, I would think that the vertical silo MPS, the vertical silo, widely spaced, with deception...would be the most desirable [basing system]. ...But again, I want to stress to you that I believe an important contribution of our Commission is the melding of the military effectiveness issue... with the arms control aspects.<sup>32</sup>

Yet Congress during the Carter administration had opposed MX deployment in vulnerable silos, requiring a long search for a basing mode compatible with survivability and arms control that ultimately yielded no successful result. In a sharp exchange with Democratic Senator Carl Levin, General Scowcroft reluctantly admitted that vulnerable silo-basing of MX was made necessary because of the “political practicalities” imposed by congressional opposition to other, more survivable basing modes:

SENATOR LEVIN: General, you have said...this Commission was able to consider “political practicalities”....  
...What were the political practicalities you were referring to specifically?...

GENERAL SCOWCROFT: Specifically, we felt that the MPS deployment or the closely spaced basing deployment, whatever their military merits, were not politically practical at the present time.

SENATOR LEVIN: To Congress? To the President? To whom?

GENERAL SCOWCROFT: Different ones to different elements.

SENATOR LEVIN: Which to which element? Who would not buy which element?

GENERAL SCOWCROFT: I guess we felt that with MPS, the time had passed. ...And, since on closely spaced basing the administration had recommended it, that the Congress would not accept it.

SENATOR LEVIN: The Congress would not accept it even though it was militarily preferable?

GENERAL SCOWCROFT: Yes, the Congress would not accept it.<sup>33</sup>

Senator Levin opposed a silo-based MX as dangerous and read into the hearing record a quote from William Perry, under secretary of defense for research and engineering during the Carter administration and a Scowcroft Commission member: “My concern is that if we had this very accurate, very threatening missile in unprotected silos, if [the Soviets] do not go to a survivable system themselves, that that simply increases the hair trigger on both sides. ...I am opposed to putting a weapon that lethal in an unsurvivable mode for reasons I have described as hair triggering the alert.”<sup>34</sup> Senator Levin added, “Those [comments] are reflective of the Congress’s reaction to a proposal once before that we put the MX in fixed holes. ...it seemed that just about everybody was convinced that we should not do that.”<sup>35</sup>

Democratic Senator Jeff Bingaman took the position that the silo-based MX would encourage a Soviet first strike, not advance arms control: “It seems to me that in fact the Soviets would be able to use 20 of their SS-18s...with 10 warheads each, and take out these MX missiles, with 2 warheads per MX missile. ...And therefore, instead of providing an incentive to them to get serious about arms control, it might in fact, as

many critics have said, provide an incentive for them to look more seriously at a first strike.”<sup>36</sup>

Ultimately, the MX was deployed in silos, although the size of the force was scaled back. Other elements of the Reagan strategic modernization program remained contentious. Whatever the prospects may have been for the Scowcroft Commission to forge a new strategic consensus, President Reagan introduced a controversial new proposal into the debate, at roughly the same time the commission issued its report, that was almost guaranteed to make consensus impossible.

### *Strategic Defense Initiative*

On March 23, 1983, President Reagan announced a major innovation in U.S. national security policy—the Strategic Defense Initiative. SDI promised ultimately to replace nuclear deterrence, and the threat of mutual annihilation, with strategic defenses that could shield the American people from nuclear attack. President Reagan, whose interest in missile defense was evident for many years prior to the announcement and influenced by the advice of many people, including retired Army general Daniel Graham and Admiral James Watkins (the chief of naval operations), was finally moved to announce SDI after a spring 1983 meeting with Edward Teller. Teller, a prominent defense scientist who played the leading role in developing the hydrogen bomb, proposed that new space-based technologies that could destroy incoming Soviet missiles and warheads.<sup>37</sup>

President Reagan initially envisioned SDI as a crash program, like the Manhattan Project for the atomic bomb, to develop revolutionary strategic defenses against nuclear weapons that, in effect, would render those weapons obsolete. It was hoped that SDI

would replace assured destruction with “assured survival.” As the president said in announcing the project:

...since the advent of nuclear weapons, [U.S.] steps have been increasingly directed toward deterrence of aggression through the promise of retaliation. ...What if free people could live secure in the knowledge that their security did not rest on the threat of instant U.S. retaliation to deter a Soviet attack, that we could intercept and destroy strategic ballistic missiles before they reached our soil or that of our allies? I know that this is a formidable technical task. ...But isn't it worth every investment necessary to free the world from the threat of nuclear war? We know it is.<sup>38</sup>

The Strategic Defense Initiative immediately met enormous criticism and resistance from virtually all quarters, from Congress, the media, academia, even from within the president's own administration. SDI was at odds with the arms control theory that shaped Washington's dominant strategic culture. In particular, SDI challenged the keystone principle of the theory that endorsed mutual vulnerability as “stabilizing” and rejected as “destabilizing” and provocative of arms racing and heightened tension anything that threatened to neutralize the assured-destruction retaliatory capabilities of the United States or the Soviet Union.<sup>39</sup>

Members of President Reagan's own Scowcroft Commission did not favor the Strategic Defense Initiative. All of the commissioners supported arms control; their proposed grand compromise to win support from Congress for the Reagan strategic modernization program justified that program as necessary to achieve arms control agreements with the Soviet Union. In addition, commissioners were familiar with the “great debate” of the 1960s and 1970s over the failed effort to provide the United States with strategic missile defenses. Billions of dollars and years of research had been devoted initially to the Nike-Zeus missile defense system to protect the U.S. population



from Soviet nuclear attack, then to the more limited Sentinel system to defend U.S. cities from a smaller-scale attack by China, and finally to the further diminished Safeguard system to shield, not cities, but U.S. ICBMs. The Safeguard defense was terminated shortly after becoming operational in 1975. Three decades of effort to build missile defenses yielded no significant capability.<sup>40</sup> This history proved for many, including some of those who supported strategic defense in principle, that as a practical political matter the Strategic Defense Initiative was doomed to fail.

For example, Commissioner John Deutch, at the 1983 Senate Armed Services Committee hearing discussed earlier, recommended against deployment of defenses to protect missile silos, let alone the population. Deutch, speaking for the commission, thought work on missile defense should be limited to research and development. He said that “while the Commission recommended a very vigorous antiballistic missile defense research and development program, the Commission judgment was that at the present time there was no system which gave the proper combination of practicality, cost and technological capability which would justify deployment now.”<sup>41</sup>

Commissioner Harold Brown told the senators that the commission had decided to maintain toward SDI “a decent silence on this issue.” Brown went on to declare for offense-based deterrence and against strategic defenses, arguing that SDI would be a mistake that would lead away from nuclear reductions through arms control.<sup>42</sup>

Congressional critics strongly opposed SDI as contrary to arms control, sound national security policy, and technological feasibility. The initiative reinforced the belief of those who had been arguing all along that the “nuclear hawks” of the Reagan administration were insincere about arms control and were secretly pursuing a reckless

“first strike” and “war winning” nuclear strategy against the Soviet Union. Critics argued that the concept of transitioning away from nuclear deterrence and assured destruction to a defensive strategy was not sound. The Congressional Research Service (CRS), an authoritative source on the views of Congress, noted that SDI opponents perceived a comprehensive missile defense as more suitable for supporting “a massive counterforce first strike” than for defending against a first strike:

There is a...concern about the proposed transition from an offense dominated strategy to a defense dominated or balanced strategy. ...nationwide BMD [ballistic missile defense] systems might not be very effective against a determined first strike, but they may be much more effective against weaker retaliatory strikes. A strong counterforce capability combined with a relatively effective BMD on either side could be even more unstable than the current situation. The prospect of a massive counterforce first strike sufficient to reduce retaliatory capabilities to a level that could be defeated by BMD could, in effect, neutralize deterrence. It is clear that adding defenses to the current force structure requires very careful consideration of the defensive and offensive capabilities of both sides.<sup>43</sup>

One of the more effective congressional challenges to SDI was mounted by critics who argued against the program on constitutional grounds. Democratic Senator Sam Nunn led this faction in the Congress, and probably made the most complete and cogent statement of their case in a series of presentations to the Senate in March 1987.<sup>44</sup> (He summarized his argument in an article published later that year.)<sup>45</sup> According to Senator Nunn, the Reagan administration had illegally reinterpreted the ABM Treaty in order to permit advanced research and development under the Strategic Defense Initiative that the agreement in fact banned:

For the past two years, the United States has been embroiled in a contentious and arcane internal dispute over the correct interpretation of those portions of the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty which pertain to the development and testing of futuristic or so-called exotic ABM systems. This controversy was precipitated in October

1985, when the Reagan Administration announced with no advance notice or congressional consultations that the interpretation of the treaty which successive U.S. administrations upheld since 1972 was incorrect....

My analysis finds that the Reagan administration is in serious error on its position on this crucial issue—wrong in its analysis of the Senate ratification debate; wrong in its analysis of the record of subsequent practice...and wrong in its analysis of the negotiating record itself.<sup>46</sup>

Moreover, Senator Nunn argued that the Reagan administration's reinterpretation of the treaty, in order to pursue SDI, was unconstitutional, infringing on the power of the Senate with regard to treaties:

Treaties are, after all, the law of the land, and the President is charged with executing the law. Moreover, the Senate has a crucial constitutional role in treaty-making and thus has a direct interest in ensuring that treaties are accurately presented and faithfully upheld. If the president can unilaterally change treaty obligations which were clearly understood and accepted by the Senate at the time it consented to ratification, it dramatically alters the Senate's constitutional role as a co-equal partner in this area.<sup>47</sup>

Congressional opponents used the constitutional argument with great effect to limit research and development for missile defense, impeding the original purpose of the SDI—to find a defensive alternative to deterrence based on nuclear retaliatory threats and mutual vulnerability. Two years after announcing the SDI, President Reagan issued a presidential order that SDI research be conducted in accordance with the “restrictive interpretation” of the ABM Treaty favored by SDI critics in Congress.<sup>48</sup> In a 1989 Senate Armed Services Committee hearing, Republican Senator Malcolm Wallop, an SDI supporter, lamented that Congress imposed “restrictive” treaty limits to cripple the program: “I accept but am disappointed...in what the Congress has done to constrain the country which we all seek to serve. ...we have so confined SDI according to treaty

interpretations imposed by the Congress that we probably cannot get to a full-scale development decision.”<sup>49</sup>

Thus constrained, the Strategic Defense Initiative no longer could credibly be represented as a “Manhattan Project” to find an alternative to assured destruction and mutual vulnerability. Other strategic rationales were necessary to justify continued funding of the SDI program by Congress. SDI became, like the Safeguard system before it, a means of protecting U.S. nuclear retaliatory capabilities, particularly ICBMs, from a disarming Soviet first strike. As SDI supporter Paul Wolfowitz, under secretary of defense for policy in the George H. W. Bush administration, explained in a 1989 congressional hearing, the purpose of SDI became to enhance nuclear deterrence, not replace it, except perhaps in the distant future:

Upon entering office, President Bush called for a comprehensive review of our national security strategy...including SDI.

We did, and based on that review, have determined the following with respect to the SDI program:

...[I]n pursuing SDI we do not seek superiority, but rather to maintain the strategic balance and to place deterrence on a more stable basis....

What does the President’s decision say about our views on the scope and purpose of SDI? First, the decision takes into account SDI’s long-term goal of developing, if feasible, defenses against ballistic missiles that could be so effective as to permit a fundamental shift in our strategy from emphasizing the threat of retaliation to emphasizing direct denial of Soviet war aims and providing a true damage-limiting capability for the United States should deterrence fail.

Further, the President’s decision recognizes that the national debate over SDI has tended to focus perhaps too much on this long-term prospect of a fundamental shift to defense dominance. In point of fact, the deployment of active defense need not necessarily be a radical departure from current U.S. deterrence strategy.<sup>50</sup>

The shifting justification for SDI, from protecting populations to protecting forces and assured destruction, like the rationale for the Safeguard defense, undermined a sustainable strategic case for the program. As Democratic Senator John Glenn argued, there were better alternatives to SDI, proven and cheaper technologies for reinforcing nuclear deterrence:

We have gone from the Astrodome defense, which was the original Concept. We then went to SDI Phase I, a space-based interceptor. ...now we are off on Brilliant Pebbles....

And so we wind up with all the extra costs and shifting from one program to another. Many SDI proponents are advocating a partial defense to protect the land-based strategic missiles, and so that is another one. And if the goal of SDI becomes optimizing the survivability of our land-based systems, would it not be less expensive and far more stabilizing from an arms control standpoint to go with the most survivable land-based missile we have, and that is the Midgetman [SICBM]?<sup>51</sup>

By 1989, even Senator Nunn could support the Strategic Defense Initiative, providing any technological breakthroughs were shared with the Soviet Union, to enhance strategic stability. The reason behind Senator Nunn's support completely reversed the purpose of SDI, from rendering nuclear deterrence obsolete to upholding assured destruction..<sup>52</sup>

### ***Extended Deterrence for NATO***

While the SDI controversy was under way, the Reagan administration continued the Carter administration effort aimed at modernizing NATO theater nuclear forces in order to shore up the credibility of extended deterrence. The USSR was deploying SS-20 intermediate-range ballistic missiles, each carrying three warheads, at a rate of roughly one missile per week. Consequently, the Soviets commanded an increasing numerical

superiority in long-range theater nuclear forces, a fact widely acknowledged, including by the Congressional Research Service.<sup>53</sup>

In a 1982 hearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee, General Bernard Rogers, commander in chief of the U.S. European Command, testified that the Soviet buildup tilted the theater nuclear balance in favor of the Warsaw Pact:

With respect to the balance, the favor is toward the Warsaw Pact, in quantitative measures at all ranges except less than 150 kilometers. That disparity runs from 3 to 1 to about 4.5 to 1 for the Warsaw Pact for ranges greater than 150 kilometers. ... Impacting on that balance is also the greater reliance that the Soviet Union has on missiles and rockets which gives the Warsaw Pact advantages in penetrability, survivability, and reliability as well as in time urgent responsiveness.

With respect to what occurred in 1981 which impacts on the balance, the Soviet Union added an average of six SS-20 launchers per month. It fielded over 70 launchers last year. That results in the addition of over 200 warheads, not to include refires which double that number if the refire missiles are counted....

There has been in 1981 the continued deployment of the SS-21 and SS-22 and preparation to deploy the SSX-23, all replacing the FROG and the SCALEBOARD and the SCUD, and there was a continued production of the Backfire bomber at more than 25 last year.<sup>54</sup>

General Rogers warned the committee that the SS-20 force could give the Soviets “escalation dominance,” the ability to deter NATO or U.S. nuclear use to defend Western Europe from a conventional attack, because of the preponderance of Soviet nuclear firepower. Moreover, reflecting concerns shared by both the Carter and Reagan administrations, General Rogers warned that Soviet escalation dominance threatened to undermine the political cohesion of the NATO alliance, and could enable the Soviets to achieve victory “without ever having fired a shot”:

...I would suggest that there is no consideration of their attacking today...why should they; if they are patient, and if current trends

continue, the Soviets can be successful and accomplish that objective I mentioned earlier of dominating Western Europe without ever having fired a shot. ...Under current conditions with the status of our conventional forces, and particularly our lack of sustainability, we have built ourselves a short war. ...we face two options in NATO under current conditions. We either have to escalate to theater nuclear weapons, which is one of the options built into our strategy of flexible response, or we have to capitulate. Neither one of those is viable in my view....<sup>55</sup>

Both the Carter and Reagan administrations had the same answer to the Soviet SS-20 threat—modernize and increase U.S. long-range theater nuclear forces in NATO. Specifically, the Pershing II intermediate-range ballistic missiles and ground-launched cruise missiles to be based in NATO-Europe would balance the SS-20. Pershing II and GLCM would redress the theater nuclear balance not in numbers—the Soviets would still have better than a five-to-one advantage in missile warheads—but by threatening to disrupt the Soviet war plan. In the event of a Soviet invasion of Western Europe, Pershing II and GLCM missiles could attack Soviet and Warsaw Pact command-and-control centers, transportation hubs, and air and ground forces, thereby impeding Soviet reinforcements necessary to overwhelm NATO defenses. And, as noted earlier, deployment of Pershing II and GLCM would, it was hoped, provide an inducement for the USSR to negotiate an arms control agreement limiting theater nuclear forces.

Both the Carter and Reagan administrations also argued that part of the answer to the growing Soviet theater nuclear threat to NATO was modernization of U.S. strategic nuclear forces. The Soviet ability to threaten a disarming first strike against U.S. ICBMs could give the USSR escalation dominance at the strategic level, thereby undermining extended deterrence to NATO. As attested by Assistant Secretary of Defense Richard Perle in a 1982 SASC hearing:

...we believe it essential to retain the capability to use nuclear weapons

if necessary to deter their use by the Soviets and to forge a vital link to the ultimate guarantor of NATO security, the strategic nuclear forces of the United States. ...Through the 1970s NATO had high confidence that this posture would deter Soviet aggression. Despite Soviet conventional superiority on the ground in Central Europe...the West possessed demonstrable superiority in strategic nuclear capabilities.

But as we moved into the mid-to-late 1970s we began to lose this superiority in strategic forces. This profound change in the strategic environment meant that it was no longer clear that the posture NATO had developed and maintained for over two decades would suffice to deter the Soviet Union. In particular, it was feared that the Soviets could come to believe, however mistakenly, that they could threaten to use nuclear weapons based in the Soviet Union against our European allies without risking nuclear retaliation against the Soviet homeland.<sup>56</sup>

Despite the bipartisan lineage of the Reagan administration's strategy and program for theater nuclear forces, critics in Congress saw danger in the plans to modernize and build up theater and strategic nuclear forces. Some thought the administration was exaggerating the Soviet threat.<sup>57</sup> Behind closed doors, however, in a classified hearing of the Senate Armed Service Committee, even the those who publicly criticized the administration's plans came to share much of its concern over the theater nuclear imbalance. Defense Department officials briefed the SASC on a sobering litany of problems with existing U.S. and NATO theater nuclear forces, including inadequate range, insufficient reliability, and inaccurate warhead fuzes. The declassified record of that session reflects little or no real division among the senators over the Soviet theater nuclear threat or the deficiencies in NATO theater nuclear capabilities.<sup>58</sup>

In the end, Congress gave the Reagan administration everything it wanted for theater nuclear modernization, persuaded by the worrisome force imbalance, the need for alliance solidarity with NATO-Europe, and the "dual-track" approach which coupled Pershing II and GLCM deployment with negotiations to eliminate intermediate-range



nuclear-armed missiles on both sides of the East-West divide. With regard to the negotiations, Senator Nunn was assured by Assistant Secretary Perle that arms control would “complement, not drive” NATO theater nuclear modernization.<sup>59</sup>

A year after Pershing II and GLCM deployments began, in a 1984 hearing of the House Armed Services Committee (HASC), Republican Congressman Gerald Solomon predicted, accurately, that the deployments would pressure the Soviets to negotiate. He recounted that

...in Geneva last year...after our head-on meeting with our counterparts from the Soviet Union...there was a reception and I was talking with a Soviet general. ...This general said...“We can never agree to let you deploy one missile. One intermediate range missile. One. We would have our heads cut off.” He continued: “The only way we can ever negotiate is for you to go ahead and deploy, as you have said you would. ...Once you have deployed, then we can negotiate.”<sup>60</sup>

### **Strategic Programs**

Congress, particularly critics of the Reagan administration, had greater success than the president in shaping the U.S. strategic posture during the 1980s, as measured with reference to the strategic force programs over which the legislative and executive branches clashed. The Reagan plan for improving the strategic posture, as discussed in the previous section, ultimately included the MX ICBM, the Small ICBM (Midgetman), the Trident II SLBM, the B-1 and B-2 bombers, the Pershing II and GLCM intermediate-range missiles, and the Strategic Defense Initiative. Congress placed important restriction on the SDI, a program that was a priority for the president. Congress constrained the MX missile—a critical capability for the nuclear strategy of both the

Carter and Reagan administrations—cutting the force to 50 missiles (half what President Reagan wanted) and preventing deployment in a survivable basing mode, which President Carter as well as President Reagan sought. Congressional opposition to the basing modes proposed for the MX—Multiple Protective Shelters and Closely Spaced Basing—reflected worries about the implications for arms control and stability as well as considerations of feasibility and cost. Congressional views influenced the decision of President George H.W. Bush to terminate the SICBM program. Trident II and B-1 were deployed, but both were supported by Congress as well as the executive branch. Congressional opposition, the ending of the Cold War, and the escalating costs of the B-2 program moved the Bush administration to constrain deployment of the bomber to a force of 20 aircraft, as opposed to the 132 that were originally planned. The Reagan administration achieved deployment of the Pershing II and GLCM—before the missiles were eliminated under the 1987 INF Treaty—but Congress also supported both the deployment and the treaty.

A more detailed account of congressional actions on each of these strategic programs follows.

### ***Strategic Defense Initiative***

As discussed, SDI was a long-term research program to explore the possibility of developing a nationwide defense against nuclear missile attack, and so reduce reliance on retaliatory threats and mutual vulnerability to prevent nuclear war. The SDI program explored advanced-technology kinetic energy weapons and directed energy weapons to intercept ballistic missiles or their warheads at various stages of flight. Kinetic energy weapons included such systems as small rockets based in space, anti-ballistic missiles,

and electromagnetic rail guns to destroy incoming warheads by collision.<sup>61</sup> Among the directed energy weapons researched were lasers and particle beams.<sup>62</sup> In addition, SDI explored technologies for target surveillance, acquisition, tracking, kill assessment, and battle management.<sup>63</sup>

The Strategic Defense Initiative Organization (SDIO), the Defense Department administrative unit chartered to pursue President Reagan's vision for missile defense, took a major step toward making SDI an operational reality by proposing to Congress a plan for phased deployment of a Strategic Defense System (SDS). The SDS "would be developed and deployed in incremental phases specifically designed to outpace any evolving threat. ...[E]ach phase of deployment would be sized and given sufficient capability to achieve specific military and policy objectives and lay the groundwork for subsequent phases. ...[A]s the defense elements are deployed, they could effectively defend against the threat that is anticipated for their employment period."<sup>64</sup> Phased deployment of SDI would permit moving from research and development on the most advanced defensive technologies to fielding those capabilities that were ready or nearest to maturity.

From the beginning, Congress successfully used its power of the purse to oppose a crash SDI program to achieve defensive technological breakthroughs on an accelerated basis. Over the first five years of the SDI, Congress regularly halved administration funding requests for SDI, reducing investment in the program from \$28 billion to \$13 billion. "[I]t was the sense of Congress," according to a Congressional Research Service report of the time, "that future research plans and budgets must be based on realistic projections of available resources. A future policy of slow, no, or negative growth would

make it very difficult to develop a specific defense system and to continue developing long-term technologies.”<sup>65</sup>

Congress exercised close oversight on SDI.<sup>66</sup> In 1985, for example, Congress legally prohibited deployment of any SDI system or component without certification from the president that the proposed capability was “cost-effective at the margin,” meaning the defense it offered was cheaper to achieve and maintain than any Soviet offensive response or countermeasures to defeat that defense. Arguably, this criterion could serve as a justification to prohibit deployment of SDI, as critics could always devise counters, whether realistic or not, they would claim could defeat SDI on the cheap.<sup>67</sup>

In addition, Congress legally prohibited deployment of any SDI system or component without specific congressional authorization. It also made illegal the use of funds for tests or for buying hardware for tests that would violate the “restrictive interpretation” of the ABM Treaty discussed earlier.<sup>68</sup>

The proposal for moving toward deployment of the first phase of the planned Strategic Defense System received a chilly reception from Congress. “Many Members believe that it is premature to concentrate on a system whose validation might violate the ABM Treaty and whose deployment would most certainly violate the Treaty,” said a 1988 CRS report. The 1989 defense authorization act expressed the sense of Congress that, in the words of the CRS report, “Members found it too early to authorize funds for full scale development and deployment [when] specific systems and technologies still must be designed and developed and the strategic utility of the system debated.”<sup>69</sup>

In light of congressional opposition, President Bush in 1989 reduced proposed SDI funding by \$1 billion for 1990 and by \$8 billion for the five-year planning period.<sup>70</sup> This began a downward spiral of political and budgetary commitment to SDI that included abandonment of the goal of protecting the population from large-scale ballistic missile attack, emphasis on theater rather than strategic missile defense, and a downgrading of the organization responsible for missile defense research and development.

### *MX Missile and Small ICBM*

MX was a ten-warhead missile offering a delivery accuracy-warhead yield combination that made it more effective than other U.S. ICBMs for destroying hard targets, like missile silos and command centers. As an ICBM, MX offered significant operational advantages over other strategic systems in close command and control and in responsiveness for threatening or executing counterforce attacks.<sup>71</sup> MX was seen as the centerpiece for implementing the more flexible nuclear strategy envisioned by the Carter administration in PD 59, continued by the Reagan administration in its strategic guidance, and endorsed by the Scowcroft Commission.

As discussed, MX encountered considerable opposition on Capitol Hill. In reviewing the MX debate, a CRS report summarized the arguments of congressional opponents of the missile:

MX is not needed because it does not fit with U.S. strategy. MX is a first-strike weapon. Its accuracy and yield give it a very high probability of destroying Soviet silo-based ICBMs, which account for 59% of Soviet strategic warheads, vs. 17% for U.S. ICBMs. By threatening Soviet ICBMs, MX will increase pressure on the Soviets to strike first in a crisis. ... Yet the United States does not gain a military advantage from MX to offset this risk it poses, since this Nation does not

plan to strike first. Nor is silo-based MX useful as a second-strike weapon, which U.S. policy requires: it could not survive to retaliate, so could not deter by threat of retaliation. It is a use-or-lose weapon, which is highly destabilizing.<sup>72</sup>

The Carter administration had wanted to deploy 200 MX missiles, but was prevented by Congress from doing so until a survivable basing mode could be found. The Reagan administration lowered the number of missiles requested to 100, hoping Congress would agree to deploying this smaller force in existing silos (then occupied by Minuteman ICBMs), pending development of less vulnerable basing.<sup>73</sup>

In 1985, Congress agreed to the deployment of 50 MX missiles in silos, but prohibited deployment of additional missiles unless it approved a more survivable basing mode. A year later, the Defense Department proposed basing MX as a rail-mobile missile, kept in garrisons during peacetime, but dispersed over the national rail system to survive during a crisis. DoD also proposed accelerated development of the Small ICBM (SICBM or Midgetman) to complement MX. In early 1989, Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney proposed moving the 50 MX missiles already in silos to the rail-garrison basing mode, while continuing development of the SICBM.<sup>74</sup>

The SICBM program was intended to develop a small, accurate, single-warhead ICBM that could be transported on a hard mobile launcher (HML). The HML was a special truck, armored and designed to survive nuclear effects. Each HML would carry one missile. The idea was to provide a survivable basing mode for U.S. ICBMs that would require a Soviet first strike to expend many warheads in order to destroy a single SICBM HML dispersed in a large deployment area, thus forcing upon the Soviets a highly unfavorable exchange ratio.

The Small ICBM had stronger support on Capitol Hill than in the Pentagon. In Congress, Democratic Senator Albert Gore and Democratic Representative Les Aspin, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, were prominent among its proponents. Gore, Aspin, and others saw the SICBM as the ideal “stabilizing” weapon: the missile would create no first-strike incentives because it was highly survivable; its single warhead meant the Soviets would need to expend more warheads than they would destroy in a first strike; and it would not offer the United States the purported first-strike advantage of a highly accurate, multiple-warhead ICBM, like the MX. These congressional advocates were willing to pay tens of billions of dollars to gain the “stability” claimed for the SICBM, while the Defense Department and the Air Force preferred to deploy, at considerably less expense, additional MX missiles in the rail-garrison basing mode.

In 1990, Congress imposed limits on both the MX and SICBM programs. The defense authorization act for fiscal year 1991 cut all funding for procurement and military construction for the rail-mobile MX, explicitly prohibited deployment of the missile in that basing mode, and reduced research and development funding for both MX and SICBM. The act also expressed the sense of Congress that MX and SICBM “ha[d] failed to achieve the political consensus necessary for deployment of both systems” and that deployment of both was “unaffordable.”<sup>75</sup>

In an August 1990 speech, President Bush essentially acquiesced to Congress on the MX and SICBM, saying, “we can defer final decisions on our land-based ICBMs as we see how...START [Strategic Arms Reduction Talks]...proceed[s] but we must keep our options open. And that means completing the development of the small ICBM and

the rail-based Peacekeeper [MX].”<sup>76</sup> With the end of the Cold War, neither rail-mobile MX or the Small ICBM was ever deployed.

### *Trident II SLBM*

The Trident II (or D5) submarine-launched ballistic missile was designed to carry 8 to 12 warheads with an accuracy-yield combination suitable for destroying hard targets. This was the first SLBM with counterforce capability comparable to that of ICBMs, making the missile a hedge against the Soviet threat to the survivability of the land-based missile force. Trident II also offered greater range than the initial version of the missile, enabling submarines armed with Trident II to hide in a much greater expanse of ocean and still stay within striking distance of their targets in the Soviet Union.<sup>77</sup>

Trident II had some critics in and out of Congress who denounced it as a “first strike” weapon. The most dangerous moment for the future of the program occurred late in the Carter administration, in 1980, when the House Armed Services Committee “zeroed out” funding for the missile. The Senate Armed Service Committee, however, restored all \$97 million of the administration’s request for the Trident II program.<sup>78</sup>

Trident II generally enjoyed broad bipartisan support in Congress during the Reagan years. Many of the leading critics of the MX missile, like Congressman Aspin, were or became champions of Trident II. Many MX critics perceived Trident II as a “stabilizing” missile because of its survivable basing mode, on submarines hidden at sea, and as an alternative to MX in the long-term because of its hard-target capability. Consequently, unlike MX, Trident II enjoyed a relatively smooth ride through the halls of Congress.<sup>79</sup>



Perhaps the greatest controversy surrounding Trident II also underscored its wide support. In 1987, when the SLBM was in flight-testing prior to deployment, HASC Chairman Aspin led opposition in the House and Senate protesting plans to flight-test the missile with 12 warheads instead of 8. In petitions to President Reagan and Defense Secretary Weinberger, Aspin and over 100 other congressional members cautioned that, under SALT II counting rules, if the missile were tested with 12 warheads, it would count as a 12-warhead missile for arms control purposes. Trident II with 8 warheads had some advantages, such as enabling the United States to have more ballistic missile submarines under SALT II counting rules, warheads of higher yield, and somewhat better capability to destroy hard targets. The Aspin protest caused a stir in the press but did not stop the Navy plan to flight-test the missile with more than 8 warheads. The larger significance of the incident is that a Democratic congressional leader hostile to MX was, at the same time, so supportive of Trident II that he was willing to battle the Reagan administration in order to protect the missile from being crippled by what he perceived as a threat from arms control.<sup>80</sup>

### ***B-1 Bomber***

The B-1 was a penetrating strategic nuclear bomber with a swing-wing design and a payload capacity comparable to that of the B-52. Originally designated the B-1A, the aircraft underwent a variety of changes that resulted in the new designation, B-1B.<sup>81</sup> (The B-1 bomber today has only conventional missions.)

A Congressional Research Service report—reflecting a view widespread in Congress—explains why, compared to ICBMs and SLBMs, strategic bombers are “more flexible and more stabilizing”:

Bombers are considered more flexible because pilots can use their judgment to seek and attack hard-to-find or mobile targets, make on-site damage assessments of targets, and attack targets not destroyed by ballistic missiles; and because aircraft can be recalled after takeoff. The manned bomber is considered more stabilizing in that its relatively slow speed (compared to land- or sea-based missiles) makes it unsuitable for starting a nuclear war—it can only be used for second-strike, retaliatory purposes.<sup>82</sup>

Canceled during the Carter Administration, but revived by President Reagan in line with a campaign pledge, the B-1 drew considerable political flak from critics in Congress, often led by Democratic Representatives Ronald Dellums and Barbara Boxer, who were concerned about the cost and effectiveness of the bomber.

Many Democrats in Congress supported the B-1, however, if only because the program was an important source of employment in a significant number of congressional districts and states. Congress, dominated by the Democrats during the Carter administration, opposed and tried to reverse President Carter's decision to end the B-1 program.<sup>83</sup>

During the Reagan administration, despite the criticism directed at the revived B-1, the Democratic-controlled House defeated several attempts by members of the majority to terminate the program. For example, in November 1983, the House defeated by a wide margin (175-247) an amendment that would have canceled \$439 million to begin procurement of the B-1. In May 1984, the House rejected (163-254) an amendment by Representative Dellums that would have ended all funding for B-1 procurement. And three years later, the House rejected an amendment by Representative Boxer that would have canceled \$376 million for further B-1 research and development.<sup>84</sup>

Overall, Congress supported the B-1, appropriating funds for all 100 bombers planned as part of the Reagan strategic force modernization program.<sup>85</sup> Congress backed

the B-1 during the 1980s because of strong White House support, concerns about the U.S.-Soviet strategic nuclear balance, as well as more parochial interests.

### ***B-2 Bomber***

The Advanced Technology Bomber (ATB), eventually designated the B-2, was deeply classified throughout much of its developmental life, in order to protect the secrets of the revolutionary stealth technologies that it difficult to detect by radar and other sensors. In August 1980, during that year's presidential race, the Carter administration publicly disclosed that the Defense Department was working to develop stealth aircraft, including the ATB.<sup>86</sup> The B-2 was designed as a strategic penetrating bomber that, instead of relying on speed for penetration of Soviet air defenses, could pass through radar coverage with a low risk of being detected, tracked, and intercepted. The B-2 promised to defeat the increasingly formidable Soviet defenses that threatened existing strategic bombers.<sup>87</sup>

The secrecy surrounding the B-2 also made it, unlike the B-1, less visible on public and congressional radar screens. The B-2 enjoyed bipartisan support from key congressional leaders, like Senator Sam Nunn and Republican Senator John Warner of the Senate Armed Services Committee. Both of these senators preferred the B-2 to the B-1 and together had sufficient influence on the SASC to advance the stealth bomber.<sup>88</sup>

The B-2 was a casualty of escalating costs and the end of the Cold War. In their original congressional requests, defense officials in the Reagan administration called for 132 B-2 bombers, based on classified targeting requirements. After the collapse of the USSR and the apparent disappearance of the B-2's mission, planned procurement fell to 75 aircraft, and then to 21 B-2s.<sup>89</sup>

### *Pershing II and GLCM*

The Pershing II was an intermediate-range ballistic missile reportedly carrying a variable-yield warhead or earth-penetrating warhead, the latter of which could be used to strike underground command bunkers. The missile had a maneuverable reentry vehicle (MARV) with active radar guidance that imparted high delivery accuracy. The missile was mounted on a mobile launcher.<sup>90</sup>

The GLCM was a nuclear-armed, subsonic cruise missile with a range of 2,000-2,500 kilometers. A terrain-matching guidance system made the missile highly accurate. Like the Pershing II, the GLCM was mounted on a mobile launcher.<sup>91</sup>

As discussed previously, the purpose in deploying these intermediate-range missiles was to answer the challenge posed by SS-20 IRBMs and other Soviet theater nuclear forces that had no counterparts in NATO and created an imbalance heavily in favor of the USSR. In December 1979, NATO announced its collective decision to deploy 572 new nuclear missiles in Western Europe: 108 Pershing IIs and 464 GLCMs.<sup>92</sup>

Congress supported, and enacted no measure to impede, the development and deployment to NATO-Europe of Pershing II and GLCM. Despite much public argument in Congress over the Soviet theater nuclear threat and the nuclear policies of the Reagan administration, congressional actions reflected a consensus supporting the necessity of the missiles and their deployment. Congressional leaders, and Congress as a whole, were aware that NATO governments had decided for Pershing II and GLCM over vehement public protests in their own countries. Congress recognized that stopping, reducing the number, or delaying the missiles could seriously weaken the NATO alliance.

Thus Congress supported development and deployment of the Pershing II and GLCM. All Pershing II missiles were stationed in West Germany. Of the 464 GLCMs, 160 went to Great Britain, 96 to West Germany, 112 to Italy, 48 to the Netherlands, and 48 to Belgium.<sup>93</sup> All were later removed and destroyed under the terms of the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty.

### **Arms Control**

Congress played no small role in the impetus behind the Reagan administration's arms control policy, as the major justification to Congress for Reagan's strategic modernization program was to achieve "stability" and progress in arms control agreements.

As hoped, the Pershing II and GLCM deployments in NATO-Europe led the Soviet Union to negotiate with the United States an agreement to eliminate all ground-launched missiles of intermediate range (500-5,500 kilometers), including the SS-20. President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev signed the INF Treaty in December 1987. The treaty was the first to ban an entire class of nuclear weapons. The treaty was also highly favorable to the United States in that many more Soviet weapons, and more effective Soviet weapons, were eliminated; ultimately, a total of 2,692 weapons were removed from service, 846 by the United States and 1,846 by the Soviet Union. These weapons were removed under an inspection regime of unprecedented rigor. After hearings and debate, the Senate in May 1988 ratified the treaty, with conditions, by a vote of 93-5.<sup>94</sup>

In June 1982, President Reagan tabled the first Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) proposal in talks with the Soviets at Geneva. Instead of seeking only to limit the nuclear arms competition as previous presidents had tried to do with the SALT I and SALT II agreements, Reagan's proposal would for the first time dramatically reduce strategic nuclear forces. Though conceived and largely negotiated by the Reagan administration, START was signed in July 1991 by President George H. W. Bush and General Secretary Gorbachev. The treaty prohibited its signatories from each deploying more than 6,000 warheads on a total of 1,600 ICBMs, SLBMs, and bombers.<sup>95</sup> In October 1992, the Senate approved the treaty, 93-6.

Congressional critics of the Reagan administration strategic modernization program used START, while the agreement was under negotiation, and SALT II, its unratified predecessor, to challenge various systems—including MX, Trident II, B-1, and ALCM—for being “destabilizing,” “sending the wrong message” when arms talks were under way, or otherwise impeding the progress of arms control.<sup>96</sup> In addition, congressionally mandated “Arms Control Impact Statements” (ACIS) required the administration to document annually that every strategic program was consistent with arms control treaties and policy. Congress made submission of the impact statements a requirement of law. Inconsistency with arms control requirements could result in the termination of a program, as it did on one occasion during the Carter administration.<sup>97</sup> The ACIS requirement was a reminder to the executive branch of the important role played by Congress in overseeing strategic programs and of the need to take into account congressional concerns.<sup>98</sup>

The impact statements, from the perspective of the executive branch officials who had to produce them, may not have seemed a particularly onerous requirement, as essentially the same impact statements were submitted year after year. The statements submitted by the Reagan and other administrations justified virtually every covered weapon system or defense program as consistent with arms treaties and arms control theory, which may have been simply playing the game with Congress. But the Reagan record of ACIS compliance may also have reflected at least some acceptance and internalization of arms control theory and, more importantly, evidenced acknowledgement of the right of the Congress to monitor strategic programs for their fidelity to arms control.

The Congress certainly perceived the impact statements as a potentially powerful tool “to strengthen and enhance” congressional influence on strategic programs and policy, as stated in the legislation establishing the ACIS requirement, and as noted routinely in the congressional foreword to every ACIS report: “It is the intent of Congress that the preparation of ACIS will result in greater integration of arms control considerations by the executive branch in major defense and nuclear programs. Publication of these statements...should also enhance congressional assessment of the impact of the administration’s proposed defense and nuclear programs...on arms control policy and negotiations.”<sup>99</sup>

As noted, congressional critics of the SDI also used arms control to place constraints on that program. Senator Nunn and others argued that development and testing of advanced strategic missile defenses violated the ABM Treaty. They further maintained that the Senate, as part of its treaty ratification role under the Constitution,

was legally bound to ensure U.S. compliance with treaty provisions. By enforcing a strict interpretation of the ABM Treaty, Congress legally and financially constrained SDI research, development, and testing and scaled back President Reagan's vision for rapid pursuit of a nationwide ballistic missile defense.

## **Conclusions**

Contrary to the popular view, the Reagan administration and its allies in Congress did not represent a radical departure from the Carter administration in nuclear strategy, particularly in the rationale for offensive strategic forces. Reagan administration offensive strategic programs and their purposes largely continued from the Carter administration, but with more success because of a more supportive Congress.

President Reagan did attempt a doctrinal and technological revolution in the Strategic Defense Initiative. But the Reagan administration and its allies in Congress could not overcome the dominant strategic culture in Congress, the press, and academia, that embraced arms control theories hostile to strategic defense of national populations.

Important arms control successes were achieved by President Reagan and his allies in Congress. The INF Treaty eliminated an entire class of nuclear weapons. The START Treaty reversed the vertical proliferation of strategic weapons and began a process of deep reductions that continues.

Congress ultimately had greater influence than the administration in shaping the strategic posture. Congressional critics succeeded in constraining the number and basing of the MX missile, which played a key role in the nuclear strategy of the Reagan



administration. Congressional opponents effectively used the ABM Treaty to impede the Strategic Defense Initiative and President Reagan's effort to move away from mutual vulnerability as the basis for deterrence and toward greater reliance on defense against nuclear attack.

Congressional predominance in strategic matters was remarkable in that President Reagan's Republican Party controlled the Senate for all but two years of his administration. Moreover, Reagan was politically popular and aggressive about using the bully pulpit to advance his agenda. The success of the critics of Reagan's strategic program, despite political circumstances highly favorable to the president, suggests that even a minority in Congress, when supported by allies in the press and academia, can prevail in shaping the strategic posture. Though the critics were a minority in the Senate, their views were dominant in the larger strategic culture. A Senate minority allied with arms control "stability" theory—that saw danger in making U.S. strategic forces too threatening—proved more powerful than a president and Senate majority advocating "Peace Through Strength."

Finally, as in previous congresses, a relative handful of actors became opinion leaders for the whole Senate and House, and on their efforts usually turned the outcomes of policies and programs that determined the U.S. strategic posture. The battle over strategic posture in the Congress was joined and determined by perhaps two dozen members. Then, as today, even a single member on a key committee or subcommittee, or skilled at building coalitions—like Senator Nunn on the issue of SDI treaty compliance—could have a decisive effect on the future strategic posture.

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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Fred Kaplan, *The Wizards of Armageddon* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), p. 390.

<sup>2</sup> Although the Reagan administration officially dubbed the ICBM the “Peacekeeper,” its original designation “MX” for (“Missile Experimental”) remained the common usage and is the name used here.

<sup>3</sup> House Foreign Affairs Committee (HFAC), *The Role Of Arms Control In Defense Policy*, 98<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1984), p. 22.

<sup>4</sup> Kaplan, *The Wizards of Armageddon*, op. cit., p. 386.

<sup>5</sup> *New York Times*, May 30, 1982. For a discussion of the Carter administration’s Presidential Directive 59 and the controversy related to that guidance, see the second paper in this series: Peter Pry, *The Role of Congress in the Strategic Posture of the United States, 1970-1980: Sufficiency to PD 59* (Fairfax, Va.: National Institute for Public Policy, 2009).

<sup>6</sup> Richard Halloran, “Protracted Nuclear War,” *Air Force Magazine*, Vol. 91, No. 3 (March 2008), p. 57.

<sup>7</sup> Presidential Directive 59, “Nuclear Weapons Employment Policy,” July 25, 1980 (Top Secret/Sensitive; declassified in part, August 20, 1996), p. 2.

<sup>8</sup> Keith Payne, *The Great American Gamble: Deterrence Theory And Practice From The Cold War To The Twenty-First Century* (Fairfax, Va.: National Institute Press, 2008), especially Chapter 5.

<sup>9</sup> Presidential Directive 59, “Nuclear Weapons Employment Policy,” op. cit., p. 1.

<sup>10</sup> See, for example, the briefing by Secretary of Defense Harold Brown and Secretary of State Edmund Muskie in Senate Foreign Relations Committee, *Nuclear War Strategy*, 96<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., September 16, 1980 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1981) (Top Secret; declassified, February 18, 1981).

<sup>11</sup> National Security Decision Directive 15, “Theater Nuclear Forces (Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces),” November 16, 1981 (Secret; declassified, May 17, 1991).

<sup>12</sup> National Security Decision Directive 195, “The U.S. Position: Nuclear and Space Talks,” October 30, 1985 (Top Secret; declassified, February 13, 1996), pp. 2, 5.

<sup>13</sup> National Security Decision Directive 247, “Ratification of Existing Treaties Limiting Nuclear Testing,” October 10, 1986 (Secret; declassified, May 17, 1991), p. 1.

<sup>14</sup> See, for example, Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC), *Department Of Defense Authorization For Appropriations For Fiscal Years 1990 And 1991*, 101<sup>st</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., May-June 1989 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1989), Part 1, pp. 60, 193, 233, and Part 2, pp. 279, 290, 310.

<sup>15</sup> Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC), *MX Missile Basing System And Related Issues*, 98<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., April 18, 1983 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1983), pp. 3-4.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., pp. 20, 35.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., pp. 3-4.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>29</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., pp. 25-26.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>35</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>37</sup> Kaplan, *The Wizards of Armageddon*, op. cit., p. 389. For an account of the influences on President Reagan that led to his Strategic Defense Initiative, see Donald R. Baucom, *The Origins of SDI, 1944-1983* (Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 1992).

<sup>38</sup> Quoted in Payne, *The Great American Gamble*, op. cit., p. 167.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., pp 166-169.

<sup>40</sup> Congressional Research Service (CRS), *Evaluation Of Fiscal Year 1979 Arms Control Impact Statements: Toward More Informed Congressional Participation In National Security Policymaking*, Report prepared for the Subcommittee on International Security and Scientific Affairs of the House Committee on International Relations, 95<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., January 3, 1979 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1978), pp. 86-90; and John W. Finney, "Safeguard ABM System Shut Down: \$5 Billion Spent in 6 Years Since Debate," *New York Times*, November 25, 1977.

<sup>41</sup> SASC, *MX Missile Basing System And Related Issues*, op. cit., p. 14.

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., pp. 21-22.

<sup>43</sup> John D. Moteff, *The Strategic Defense Initiative: Program Description and Major Issues*, Report No. 88-721SPR (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, October 25, 1988), p. 32. Other congressional criticisms of SDI based on “technical feasibility,” “strategic policy/military utility,” “arms control” implications, “alliance reactions,” “technology transfer concerns,” and “militarization of space” are explained in Cosmo DiMaggio, Arthur F. Manfredi, Jr., and Steven A. Hildreth, *The Strategic Defense Initiative: Program Description and Major Issues*, Report No. 86-8 SPR (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, January 7, 1986), pp. 23-41; and Paul E. Gallis, Mark Lowenthal, and Marcia S. Smith, *The Strategic Defense Initiative and United States Alliance Strategy*, Report No. 85-48F (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, February 1, 1985).

<sup>44</sup> See “Part One: The Senate Ratification Proceedings,” *Congressional Record—Senate*, March 11, 1987, pp. S 2967-S2986; “Part Two: Subsequent Practice Under the ABM Treaty,” *Congressional Record—Senate*, March 12, 1987, pp. S 3090-S 3095; “Part III [sic]: The ABM Negotiating Record,” *Congressional Record—Senate*, March 13, 1987, pp. S 3171-S 3173; and “Part Four: An Examination of Judge Sofaer’s Analysis of the Negotiating Record,” *Congressional Record—Senate*, May 20, 1987, pp. S 6809-S 6831.

<sup>45</sup> “The ABM Reinterpretation Issue,” *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (Autumn 1987).

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>47</sup> Loc. cit. For the Reagan administration’s responses to these charges, see Office of the Legal Adviser, *The ABM Treaty, Part I—Treaty Language and Negotiating History; Part II—Ratification Process; and Part III—Subsequent Practice* (Washington, D.C.: Department of State, May 11, 1987 and September 9, 1987); and Abraham D. Sofaer, “The ABM Treaty: Legal Analysis in the Political Cauldron,” *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (Autumn 1987), pp. 59-75.

<sup>48</sup> Senate Armed Services Committee, *Department Of Defense Authorization For Appropriations For Fiscal Years 1990 And 1991: Strategic Forces And Nuclear Deterrence*, 101<sup>st</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., June 15, 1989 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1989), p. 500.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 503.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 485.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 504.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 516.

<sup>53</sup> John M. Collins and Patrick M. Cronin, *U.S./Soviet Military Balance: Statistical Trends, 1975-1984*, Report No. 85-83 F (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, April 15, 1985), p. 25.

<sup>54</sup> Senate Armed Services Committee, *Department Of Defense Authorization For Appropriations For Fiscal Year 1983: Strategic And Theater Nuclear Forces*, Part 7, 97<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., March 1, 1982 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1982), pp. 4328-4329.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., pp. 4335-4336.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., pp. 4371-4372.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 4367.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., pp. 4386, 4388, 4392, 4397.

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> HFAC, *The Role Of Arms Control In Defense Policy*, op. cit., pp. 33-34.

<sup>61</sup> Moteff, *The Strategic Defense Initiative: Program Description and Major Issues*, op. cit., p. 15.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>64</sup> Strategic Defense Initiative Organization, *Report to Congress on the Strategic Defense System Architecture* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, January 1988), pp. 19, 12, 3.

<sup>65</sup> Moteff, *The Strategic Defense Initiative: Program Description and Major Issues*, op. cit., p. 44.

<sup>66</sup> For a thorough account of congressional oversight of SDI, see Robert J. Crawford and Steven A. Hildreth, *Congress and the Strategic Defense Initiative: A Detailed Overview of Legislative Action, 1984-1987* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, August 25, 1987).

<sup>67</sup> Moteff, *The Strategic Defense Initiative: Program Description and Major Issues*, op. cit., p. 43; and Department of Defense Authorization Act for 1986, Public Law 99-145, Section 222. The Reagan administration declared that SDI had to be “cost-effective at the margin” as a matter of policy before Congress made this a legal requirement, but a self-imposed declaratory policy can be reversed, modified or favorably interpreted more easily than a legal prohibition backed by Congress. For administration statements regarding the cost-effectiveness criterion, see, for example, Paul Nitze, “On the Road to a More Stable Peace” (address before the World Affairs Council in Philadelphia, February 20, 1985), *Department of State Bulletin*, Vol. 85, No. 2097 (April 1985), p. 28; and National Security Decision Directive 172, “Presenting the Strategic Defense Initiative,” May 30, 1985 (Secret; declassified in part, November 27, 1992), p. 10.

<sup>68</sup> Department of Defense Authorization Act for 1986, Public Law 99-145, Section 222; and National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Years 1988 and 1989, Public Law 100-180, Section 225.

<sup>69</sup> Moteff, *The Strategic Defense Initiative: Program Description and Major Issues*, op. cit., p. 43.

<sup>70</sup> Steven A. Hildreth, *The Strategic Defense Initiative: Issues for Congress*, Report No. IB85170 (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 1992), p. 1.

<sup>71</sup> Jonathan E. Medalia, *Strategic Forces: MX ICBM (Weapons Facts)*, Report No. I884046 (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, August 28, 1987), pp. 2, 4; Congressional Budget Office (CBO), *Modernizing U.S. Strategic Offensive Forces: The Administration’s Program and Alternatives* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Budget Office, May 1983), Table B-4, p. 84; and U.S. Air Force, “‘Peacekeeper’ ICBM,” fact sheet, available at <http://www.hill.af.mil/library/factsheets/factsheet.asp?fsID+5762>.

<sup>72</sup> Jonathan E. Medalia, *MX, “Midgetman” and Minuteman Missile Programs*, Report No. IB77080 (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, March 1, 1991), p. 5.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.; and Medalia, *Strategic Forces: MX ICBM*, op. cit., pp. 2-4.

<sup>74</sup> Medalia, *MX, “Midgetman” and Minuteman Missile Programs*, op. cit., pp. 1, 4.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>77</sup> Jonathan E. Medalia, *Trident Program*, Report No. IB73601 (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, March 22, 1991), p. 3; “Trident II D-5 Fleet Ballistic Missile,” available at <http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/systems/d-5-bkg.htm>; U.S. Navy, “Trident Fleet Ballistic Missile,” Navy Fact File, January 17, 2009, available at [http://www.navy.mil/navydata/fact\\_display.asp?cid=220&tid+1400&ct+2](http://www.navy.mil/navydata/fact_display.asp?cid=220&tid+1400&ct+2); *Jane’s Weapons Systems 1988-89* (London: Jane’s Information Group, 1989), pp. 28-29; and CBO, *Modernizing U.S. Strategic Offensive Forces*, op. cit., Table B-4, pp. 84-85.

<sup>78</sup> Medalia, *Trident Program*, op. cit.

<sup>79</sup> Richard Halloran, “Navy Trident 2 Explodes In Its First Underwater Test Firing,” *New York Times*, March 22, 1989.

<sup>80</sup> David K. Shipler, “Summit Hopes Ride on Talks Today,” *New York Times*, October 30, 1987; and Michael R. Gordon, “U.S. Plans To Test Submarine Missile With 12 Warheads,” *New York Times*, October 7, 1987. Nonetheless, despite Rep. Aspin’s support, others in Congress remained concerned about Trident II’s high accuracy and its implications for “stability”; see, for example, Medalia, *Trident Program*, op. cit., p. 10.

<sup>81</sup> U.S. Air Force, “B-1B Lancer,” fact sheet, available at <http://www.af.mil/information/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=81>.

<sup>82</sup> Dagnija Sterste-Perkins, *B-1B Strategic Bomber*, Report No. IB87157 (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, January 21, 1992), p. 2.

<sup>83</sup> Martin Tolchin, “Effort to Revive B-1 Bomber to Be Pushed in House,” *New York Times*, October 17, 1977.

<sup>84</sup> Sterste-Perkins, *B-1B Strategic Bomber*, op. cit., p. 13.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>86</sup> “New U.S. Plane Said to Foil Radar,” *New York Times*, August 21, 1980.

<sup>87</sup> Sterste-Perkins, *B-1B Strategic Bomber*, op. cit., pp. 1-2; and “B-2 Spirit Stealth Bomber, USA,” available at <http://www.airforce-technology.com/projects/h2/>.

<sup>88</sup> Sterste-Perkins, *B-1B Strategic Bomber*, op. cit., pp. 10-11.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid, p. 3; and “B-2 Spirit Stealth Bomber, USA” op. cit., p.1. President Bush cut the planned buy of B-2s to 20 aircraft in 1992, and then, in 1996, President Clinton used \$500 million appropriated by Congress to upgrade a B-2 test-flight vehicle to full operational status, making for a fleet of 21 bombers.

<sup>90</sup> Cliff Lethbridge, “Pershing II Fact Sheet,” available at <http://www.spaceline.org/rocketsum/pershing-II.html>.

<sup>91</sup> U.S. Air Force, “BGM-109G ‘Gryphon’ Ground-Launched Cruise Missile,” fact sheet, available at <http://www.hill.af.mil/library/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=5739>.

<sup>92</sup> Jed C. Snyder, “European Security, East-West Policy and the INF Debate,” *Orbis*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (Winter 1984), pp. 913-970; Lethbridge, “Pershing II Fact Sheet,” op. cit., p. 2; Lynn E. Davis, “Lessons of the INF Treaty,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 66, No. 4 (Spring 1988), pp. 720-734; and Rose Gottmoeller, “Looking

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Back: The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty,” available at [http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2007\\_06/LookingBack](http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2007_06/LookingBack).

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.; and Donald R. Cotter, James H. Hansen, and Kirk McConnell, *The Nuclear "Balance" in Europe: Status, Trends, Implications* (Cambridge, Mass.: United States Strategic Institute, 1983), pp. 39-47.

<sup>94</sup> Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, *Arms Control and Disarmament Agreements: Texts and Histories of the Negotiations* (Washington, D.C.: Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, 1990), pp. 345-349; and “Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty,” available at <http://www.atomicarchive.com/Treaties/Treaty/15.shtml>.

<sup>95</sup> Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, “Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START1): Executive Summary,” available at <http://www.dod.mil/acq/treaties/start1/execsum.htm>; and “Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I),” available at <http://www.fas.org/nuke/control/start1/index.html>.

<sup>96</sup> See, for example, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, *Strategic Weapon Proposals: The Foreign Policy And Arms Control Implications Of President Reagan's Strategic Weapons Proposals*, 97<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., November 1981 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1981).

<sup>97</sup> CRS, *Evaluation Of Fiscal Year 1979 Arms Control Impact Statements*, op. cit., p. 36.

<sup>98</sup> See, for example, House Foreign Affairs Committee (HFAC) and Senate Foreign Relations Committee (SFRC), *Fiscal Year 1981 Arms Control Impact Statements*, Joint Committee Print, 95<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1980); HFAC and SFRC, *Fiscal Year 1984 Arms Control Impact Statements*, Joint Committee Print, 98<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1983); and HFAC and SFRC, *Fiscal Year 1985 Arms Control Impact Statements*, Joint Committee Print, 98<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1984).

<sup>99</sup> CRS, *Evaluation Of Fiscal Year 1979 Arms Control Impact Statements*, op. cit., p. III; and HFAC and SFRC, *Fiscal Year 1985 Arms Control Impact Statements*, op. cit., p. III.